

AWARENESS OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD VARIATION IN L2:
ORIGINS, PREVALENCE AND IMPLICATIONS
FOR SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated awareness of and attitudes toward language variation among college level learners of German as a foreign language. The first part, language samples of varieties of English and German, was presented to students with Likert-type/Osgood semantic differential response sheets to explore patterns of reactions indicative of students' attitudes. The second part, a questionnaire including demographic items, items on German language background, and special items on language variation in English and German, was designed to examine possible connections between awareness and attitude in English, in German, and across languages, as well as any potentially related demographic or linguistic background factors. The third part, interviews of volunteers, was included to provide qualitative insights into the web of life experiences, linguistic background, and awareness of and attitudes toward language variation. The underlying purpose of the study was the establishment of baseline data on awareness of and attitude toward language variation among college students with a view to incorporating these findings into language planning, teacher training, materials development, and classroom practice.

Variation awareness was found to be well-developed among students, especially in L1 where up to 90% declared having experienced variation as opposed to 70% for L2, German. Attitudes toward variation were quite positive in L1 and slightly negative in L2. Awareness and attitudes were found to correlate strongly both within the languages and across languages. Overall, students found it important to learn about variation in L1 and L2 (4 out of 5 on a scale from 1-5). According to interviewees, language variation has a strong cultural component and awareness thereof has the potential to enhance communication.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations can be formulated. Students' rich linguistic background and sometimes dormant metalinguistic capacities should be taken advantage of. Curricula, materials, and teacher training modules reflecting a concern for language variation should be developed. Finally, collaboration between L1 and L2 instructors and/or programs could contribute to disentangling the web of variation awareness and attitudes, cognition and affect, acceptability, appropriacy and critical language use.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem

Language varies as much as any living system based on characteristics of the speaker, the purpose of the speech event, and/or the location of the interaction. That is one of the reasons why foreign language students often experience considerable frustration in their first encounter with members of the target population, native speakers of their language of study. They have been listening to one idealized version of the target language only and have been practicing dialogues based on set phrases used in a well-defined situation somewhere in a fictionalized Germany but nowhere in particular--a Germany where everybody speaks with the same accent, uses the same expressions, and never mentions material that has not been studied before. Yet, in real life, after landing safely at Munich airport, all of a sudden vowels sound different, word endings disappear, and a spade is not called a spade anymore but a spud. Students are confused. They “know” the language but are not prepared to interact successfully.

In teaching foreign languages in the US, varieties are not often used. Learning a second/foreign language (S/FL) can be a daunting endeavor by itself, especially if students are unsure about the workings of their own language (a fact suggested, among others, by the inclusion of “English grammar for students of German” (Zorach, 1994) under suggested readings for basic language classes). Most students have little or no exposure to the foreign language outside the classroom (except for Spanish in some areas of the US or ethnic neighborhoods in the big cities), and are surrounded by an educational climate that introduces foreign language learning late in their academic career and

discounts the value of a first language other than English. These are some of the reasons why, traditionally, foreign language teachers and material developers have chosen to present only one variety of the target language. Expenses may be an initial factor in streamlining materials but can be controlled as seen in the recent German-Austrian-Swiss coproduction of the first book in a joint textbook series: *Dimensionen* (Jenkins et al., 2002). Yet, hidden lies a motivation of a more philosophical nature: the Western technocratic worldview based on standards, on one truth, and on the prevalence of the written word, or, more brutally, on political and economic clout. The arbitrariness of the choice of which variety of the foreign language to present as “the standard” is a result of this ideological backdrop. Overall, though, traditional language teaching was done with the best of intentions--to keep things simple for students.

Today, with the prevailing focus on communicative competence (cf. Canale & Swain, 1988) in the field of foreign language teaching, students are trained in grammatical, textual, strategic, and sociolinguistic skills. Pure grammar translation and pattern drills have long been replaced by an interaction-oriented approach to language learning. Even within this wider framework, however, one aspect of sociolinguistics is still being neglected for the most part. More attention needs to be paid to real use of language in real life situations. Real life situations involve varieties--variations in use of language among native speakers. If we want to help students develop communicative competence to prepare them for real life encounters, we need to provide knowledge of variation for the benefit of a more complete understanding of the target language and of the workings of communicative competence itself. In research and in the classroom, this process should start with an inventory of degree of awareness of and prevailing attitudes toward language variation (saying the same thing in more than one way) among students.

Background and previous research

Recently, sociolinguistic aspects such as the role of the interlocutor and the type of situation have been increasingly included in the research process of second language acquisition (e.g., Preston, 1989). One aspect not studied thus far, however, is the potential interrelationship between awareness of and attitudes toward variation in L1 and variation in L2. Given the findings of interlanguage research, the hybrid language learners use on their way to L2 acquisition, an understanding of the different levels of interaction between L1 and L2 can contribute to clarifying the learning process. For example, awareness of variation in L1 may lead to better developed metacognitive skills and thus higher proficiency in L2. (This relationship has been suggested by research on bilinguals for language awareness in general, e.g., Thomas, 1988). Examining this potential contributing factor to L2 proficiency is one of the motivations for the present study. Furthermore, whereas L1 variation has been studied from the political, the social, and psycholinguistic angle, attention to variation in the target language has been neglected. This gap in research is significant since variation is a fundamental parameter if we regard language in use as a crucial target language characteristic. Since language in use, as opposed to textbook language, varies according to speaker and context, an understanding or even command of variation may therefore enhance communicative competence of learners which, in turn, may lead to more successful interaction between learners and members of the target population.

On the attitudinal level, a positive attitude towards variation in L2 (and L1, e.g., Christian, 1997) may support the learning process. Attitudes toward language variation in L1 may result in similar attitudes toward variation in L2. If we posit communicative competence, which focuses on the appropriate choice of language in use and includes sociolinguistic parameters such as variation, as the goal for L2 acquisition/FL learning,

attitudes toward variation could greatly affect learning outcomes. This hypothesis is based on Gardner & Lambert's (1959, 1972) findings concerning attitude, motivation, and language learning among learners of French in Canada and areas of the US with a historical French connection. According to these studies, a positive attitude toward the language and its speakers as well as the corresponding integrative motivation were closely related to the process and success of learning. These findings have been corroborated, and also disputed, in numerous studies since (cf. chapter 2). In the present study, I have taken Gardner's foundational model in its various stages as the point of departure, but tried to incorporate several other factors that were suggested over time into the research design.

On the psycholinguistic level, the receptive skills would be trained by exposure to a variety of forms, and on the social level, students who can accommodate (cf. Giles et al., 1987) to their interlocutors' variety may be better received, that is, more successful in their interaction. By raising the students' awareness of variation and identifying the origin of their attitudes toward it, teachers can help students apply their awareness in the learning process and provide access to a whole new range of linguistic tools, enhancing the students' communicative competence. It was thus the aim of my research to investigate students' awareness of, and attitude toward, language variation, explore the origins of these attitudes together with a possible relationship among awareness and attitude for L1 and L2, and suggest implications for teaching a language with variation.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate language variation as a potential means for improving communicative competence among foreign language learners. The approach taken in this case was to investigate awareness of and attitudes toward language

variation in L1 and L2. Based on these concepts, possible linkages between awareness and attitudes both within and across languages were chosen for further exploration. Finally, student input of a substantial manner had to be included.

With this general plan in mind, the initial move was to gauge students' awareness of language variation in L1 (English) and L2 (German). Awareness can be seen as a first step because it does not necessarily entail command of variation or even ability to classify and label. In this sense, variation awareness can be considered a conscious perception of differences. Even though my main interest was directed towards L2, I expected some useful insights by starting out with L1. By gauging students' awareness, I hoped to find some baseline data that would help explain answers to the first research question: What level of variation awareness can be detected among students?

My subsequent intention was to reveal students' attitudes toward language variation, both in L1 and L2. Attitudes, here defined as the surface manifestation of partly unconscious evaluation of some phenomenon based on underlying beliefs (my definition), can contribute to success or failure of many endeavors, in this case, language learning. Studies have shown that immigrants to the US are more successful in acquiring English if they identify with at least some of the values of the target culture like work ethics or concepts of time, that is, if they show a positive attitude (e.g., Ogbu, 1987). As with Gardner and Lambert's (1959) original findings, attitudes again seem to be influential in the success of language learning. By exploring students' attitudes toward language variation in L1 and L2, a more accurate picture of their language attitudes would emerge, and pedagogical ramifications could be deduced. Once attitudes have surfaced to the level of consciousness, they can be examined critically and, if need be, questioned. In other words, a better understanding of the students' frame of mind could help expand their openness to learning.

The logical next step was to pursue possible connections between students' awareness and attitudes, both in L1 and L2. While awareness can be considered a neutral term and attitude its judgmental counterpart, both are in some way connected. This connection may be either sequentially, that is, first awareness then attitude, or parallel, one receptive, the other action-oriented. If the mode and degree of connection could be clarified, interactions might be better understood, and again pedagogical implications deduced. For example, teaching strategies aiming at awareness raising could be devised that might at the same time influence attitudes. If we list heightened linguistic and cultural awareness and a positive attitude towards the language and the variations used by its speakers among the goals of language learning, an understanding of the interrelationship between awareness and attitude should be helpful.

On the applied level, an exploration of the role of awareness of and attitude toward variation in the language learning process could contribute to clarify and improve that process. Several studies, particularly among bilingual students, have shown language awareness to be helpful in second language acquisition (e.g., Cummins, 1978) because it can support the monitor function (Krashen, 1981) and contribute to interlanguage development. In the same vein, variation awareness could increase the number of metacognitive tools available to students and thus enhance the language learning process another step. Attitudes would either support or hinder this learning process by embracing or ignoring the existence and meaning of variation.

Technically, language awareness can contribute to metalinguistic skills, one example being the monitor. According to Krashen (1981), the monitor, representing the learned as opposed to the acquired part of language, is a mental mechanism that functions as an output filter, checking the planned output against an internalized set of rules. Metalinguistic skills may range from an overall understanding of the workings of language to comparative abilities, from generalization to a focus on a particular feature.

In the case of language variation, awareness of this characteristic in any language could expand the notion of how language works and might have the potential of developing or improving metalinguistic skills for negotiating the foreign language, both in relation to L1 and within L2. Again, attitudes may support or prevent the use of this type of knowledge based on the students' willingness to incorporate the concept of variation into their worldview and, more pragmatically, into their language learning toolkit.

Most importantly, though, students' evaluation of the potential benefit or extra burden that an inclusion of language variation into the foreign language classroom would entail has to be studied carefully. If we are to have any success at all in raising awareness or addressing attitudes about variation among students, we have to understand the students' perspective to ensure their collaboration, that is, foster a positive attitude toward our pedagogical goal. On one hand, such an evaluation represents the conclusion drawn by the student based on his/her personal variation awareness and attitudes. On the other, this final judgment would be indicative of a students' degree of responsiveness to or appreciation of language variation. More effective pedagogical strategies could be developed based on this profile.

Lastly, we should take into consideration the notions of native speakers concerning variation. In the case of German, certain varieties (national, regional, class) are less prestigious *in certain contexts*. Whereas in the US, variation is often labeled undesirable (because different) and/or a sign of deficiency (cf. AAVE), European varieties sometimes carry important connotations that change according to context. One of the most prominent examples may be the German-speaking part of Switzerland with its diglossic (cf. Ferguson, 1959) situation--*Hochdeutsch* in writing and *Schwyzerdütsch* in speaking across all regions and social strata. A critical reflection on variation and its meaning within the culture of origin (the US) and the target culture (German-speaking countries and regions) would thus need to be included, a task that might challenge

teachers and students alike. But Kramsch's notion of a third place (1993) might help to build this bridge between languages and cultures, between the people that inhabit them.

Research questions and methods

The following questions were designed to fulfill the research purpose of gauging awareness of and attitudes toward language variation among American college students learning German:

- *What level of variation awareness can be detected among students both for L1 (English) and L2 (German)?*
- *What are students' attitudes toward variation in L1?*
- *What are students' attitudes toward variation in L2?*
- *What possible relationships exist between language attitudes in L1 and L2?*
- *How important is inclusion of language variation into language teaching according to students?*

The questions were designed to address the overarching theme, awareness of and attitudes toward language variation, from different angles (awareness vs. attitude, L1 vs. L2, the learning process, beliefs and practices). The questions were furthermore structured to include the various levels of interaction between the different aspects involved (from awareness to attitude and from L1 to L2). Contentwise, the five research questions cover the different subgoals of the study mentioned in the previous section: a) determining the level of students' variation awareness, b) teasing out students' attitudes toward variation, c+d) exploring possible linkages between awareness and attitudes and between L1 and L2, and e) eliciting students' opinions about inclusion of variation into

the foreign language classroom. Based on the research questions and a thorough review of previous work in the field, suitable data collection instruments (response sheets, questionnaires, interview questions), materials (voice samples) and processes (survey method) were determined (cf. chapter 3 and app. A-D). Different approaches (direct and indirect) and types of data (quantitative and qualitative) contribute to the final product.

One hundred and thirteen college students taking German as a foreign language in one of the nine classes chosen for the study were invited to participate. They were asked to listen to 16 voice samples, 8 in English and 8 in German, and to record their reactions to the individual speakers on response sheets provided (see appendix B). Next, they were requested to fill out a questionnaire containing demographic items, questions about their linguistic background, and items on variation awareness and attitudes in L1 (English) and L2 (German). 21 students volunteered for a follow-up interview to explore the interplay of language awareness, attitudes, proficiency, and personal linguistic background. This three-step design ensured that elusive psychological constructs like awareness and attitudes could be approached and described in several ways if not directly measured.

Significance of the study

The most important contribution of this type of research would be toward the achievement of communicative competence, that is grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence (Canale and Swain, 1988), by focusing on language in use and on communication that is not only grammatically correct but socioculturally appropriate. Communicative competence has been the declared goal of foreign language education since the late eighties. One of the premises of the development of communicative competence is the focus on language in use, which, as not only variationists have proved, varies according to context. By explicitly addressing language variation, communicative

competence may be enhanced through an awareness of different settings of communication, an understanding of implications of variation, and a wider choice in its active use on the part of the learner. However, in order for learners to accept variation as a practical tool rather than solely a judgmental aspect of language, awareness and attitudes have to be raised to a level of consciousness. The ultimate significance of the study thus lies in suggesting ways how to contribute to this process.

A more immediate and tangible benefit to be drawn from the study could be an increased understanding of students' attitudes toward varieties of English (L1) and German (L2). An increased understanding of students' attitudes should in turn have an influence on the teachers' expectations, inform their consideration of students' attitudes, and provide a basis for pedagogical steps that might be appropriate. The final purpose would be the improvement of student learning based on an inclusion of their previous linguistic experience.

A related benefit could be the possibility for learner-centered instruction based on greater insights into students' attitudes. With the advent of constructivist philosophies, learners have moved into the center of attention as teachers have become facilitators in the students' learning process. This learning process has come to be viewed differently and in a differentiated way. Differences in learning styles, academic background, and motivation have been emphasized as major contributors to the learning experience. By factoring knowledge about a particular student's attitude into the teaching/facilitation matrix, barriers to learning might be removed and students could develop their knowledge more consciously.

The question of consciousness is closely related to the next significant advantage that could be derived from the present research. Through an exploration of language variation, students could expand their knowledge in the form of consciousness raising. Students possess a wide variety of linguistic schemata they are not aware of, one of them

being the concept of language variation. By raising their awareness and making attitudes explicit, students might be able to use their L1 experience and L2 knowledge in a more differentiated manner.

On a more political level, both foreign and second language education have been looking for possible ways to approach the goal of linguistic diversity proposed within the framework of multicultural education. This issue encompasses both students' linguistic diversity and target culture diversity. By embracing these levels of diversity in the classroom, teachers could provide an inclusive framework for all students while at the same time moving away from the monolithic image of the target culture. Students would become aware of this fundamental given and learn to evaluate their own attitudes toward it. Again, self-reflection and comparative reflection would be encouraged.

Finally, the results from the study should provide additional supporting evidence for the inclusion of variation into SL/FL teaching. No matter whether students are already aware of language variation and manifest a strongly developed attitude or whether they are rather incognizant or indifferent at best, the range of answers should provide good reasons for including this issue. If students are unaware, consciousness raising would seem appropriate to open new avenues. If students have very pronounced attitudes, further inquiry as to the sources of these would be suggested. Some students might actually appreciate language variation when confronted with it.

Scope and limitations

The research described in this dissertation investigated awareness of and attitudes toward language variation among college students acquiring German as a foreign language. Even though results may suggest follow-up or replicational studies, no generalizations can be made beyond the circumstances of this particular project.

The subjects of the study were college students in a large research-oriented land grant university in Southwest United States. Students at community colleges, high schools, private institutions, or in different geographical settings may show different patterns.

The language chosen for the study was German. Even though similar results may be obtained in a corresponding study of another of the most frequently taught languages or even the less commonly taught languages, again based on geographic location, percentage of heritage learners, or different motivation, no generalization can be claimed.

Finally, the timing of the research in a period of decline for some of the traditional foreign languages (Draper & Hicks, 2002) as well as bilingual education on one hand, and an increased focus on linguistic diversity on the other, has provided data that may not be replicable in a different environment. One could also say that a society that does not appreciate, let alone promote, foreign languages might produce findings that are different from those of a society that includes three foreign languages throughout a school career.

However, based on the research design including quantitative and qualitative measures, it was hoped that the resulting thick data would provide insights into the connections and interactions among different aspects of learning a foreign language that may well be transferable to other settings. Language variation, language awareness, and language attitudes may be better understood as contributing factors to foreign language learning and to the achievement of communicative competence.

Definition of terms

Language variation is a term that may mean different things to different people. While structuralists are looking for variable patterns to explain variation and change, interactionalists focus on speaker behavior (cf. Milroy & Milroy, 1997). For the purpose

of this study, *language variation*, saying the same thing in more than one way (Labov, 1972) depending on speaker, context and interactional purpose, focused on national varieties for the language samples (e.g., British vs. American English) and several more categories (age, gender, etc.) for the questionnaires and interviews (see appendix C). National varieties have to be at least partly codified to count as such and should be easily recognizable by their speakers (ingroup) as well as speakers of other varieties (outgroup).

Language awareness can be defined as the ability to reflect on language use. For the purpose of this study, it was focused on the receptive side, that is, the students' ability to distinguish among variations and comment on them. The productive potential of language awareness has only been touched upon insofar as it can aid in the linguistic choices to be made according to context and thus contribute to the ultimate goal of communicative competence.

Language attitudes describe a subject's mostly unconscious disposition or reaction to a particular variety or form based on preconceived notions about the speakers of this variety. Attitudes usually coincide with an underlying value system and may or may not lead to a particular behavior. They might often be the only visible manifestation of hidden preferences.

Language ideology, the dominant opinion over what constitutes the right way of speaking or writing a particular language, influences our notion of standard and variation. In foreign language teaching, language ideology is manifested in language attitudes of students, based at least partly on their L1 experience.

Communicative competence, a term coined by Hymes (1972) for L1 and applied to L2 most notably by Canale and Swain in the late eighties (e.g., 1988), has been posited as the goal for contemporary language teaching as it combines several competencies in one, among them sociolinguistic competence. It focuses on successful interaction based on linguistic and cultural understanding, on context, and language in use.

Language in use, as opposed to idealized versions of grammarians and textbooks, attempts to describe language as it is spoken/written by the population. Language in use is by definition authentic, should be used both as input and output criterion, and depends on the context, the speakers involved, the topic, and the situation.

Organization of the dissertation

Chapter 2 is dedicated to reviewing previous research in the areas of language variation, language awareness, language attitudes and attitude measurement, language ideology and communicative competence.

Chapter 3, research design and methodology, describes the instruments and proceedings that were used in the study (language samples, questionnaires, interviews), introduces the subjects that participated (University of Arizona Department of German Studies, levels 102, 202, 300, 400/500 students), and discusses the various methods of data analysis applied.

In the findings and discussion section (chapter 4), findings from the research (data collection) are presented and discussed with respect to their overall significance. Findings from the different approaches to data collection (direct and indirect) and the different methods of analysis (quantitative and qualitative) used in combination in this study are being compared and present the reader with a multidimensional picture of the process.

Chapter 5 explores contributions, implications, and limitations of the study. Among the contributions, most of the benefits described under “significance of the study” are addressed. Under implications, suggestions for curriculum development, use of materials, teacher training, and classroom practice are discussed. Limitations reflect the

issues mentioned under “scope and limitations” as well as any issues that have arisen in the data collection and/or process of analysis.

The reference section presents a list of resources used in the elaboration of the dissertation. It encompasses early groundbreaking work as well as more recent applications in the various fields. It should serve both to legitimate the study and its findings and to provide the reader with suggestions for further reading.

The appendices contain a copy of the data collection instruments, statistical tables with the results of the quantitative tests conducted, the coding system for the qualitative analysis, as well as information on the language samples used.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will provide an overview of the literature related to the different components of the study both in conceptual framework and landmark studies. Based on the purpose of the study, examining awareness of and attitudes toward language variation among college-level learners of German as a foreign language, language variation, language awareness, and language attitudes were identified as primary subfields. An overview of attitude measurement is included to demonstrate the conceptual and methodological issues involved. Language ideology needs to be taken into consideration, since variation many times is defined as deviation from a “standard” or “norm” established by some linguistic and other “authority”, and is ultimately often manifest in language attitudes. Finally, *communicative competence*, the goal of contemporary language teaching, with its subcomponent “*sociolinguistic competence*” closes the circle by suggesting the usefulness of knowledge about language variation for foreign language learners.

Language variation

Language variation, a term often used interchangeably with *sociolinguistics*, has been investigated widely in the US over the past five decades. Labov (e.g., 1966, 1972) is generally considered the founding father of the discipline of investigating synchronic patterns of linguistic differences. However, as Koerner (1995) demonstrates, the field of sociolinguistics actually professes much deeper roots in German and French linguistics of the nineteenth century, in dialectology, historical linguistics, and language contact

studies. Dialectology investigates language variation from a purely geographical perspective and historical linguistics traces language change over time. Language contact studies examines border areas or bilingual populations and the phenomena this situation causes, from codeswitching to structural assimilation.

Language variation as it applies to second language acquisition has been studied intensively from the psycholinguistic standpoint. This subdiscipline focuses on interlanguage, the speech produced by learners trying to communicate in their second language (L2) with considerable input from their first language (L1) operations (e.g., Tarone, 1988). Similar studies have been undertaken in the field of first language acquisition to identify patterns in the development of language (i.e., overgeneralization: *go-ed* for *went*). These two phenomena, variation in first language acquisition and in interlanguage, are only peripherally relevant to this study since they only occur diachronically and only in the acquisition process. Still, they fall under the umbrella term of language variation since interlanguage and developmental language vary from standard L2 or L1 in a systematic way.

Going back to language variation in L1, the phenomenon of language as a living system that changes and adapts itself over time and across different speakers and contexts, has been the object of study for sociolinguists since Labov's (1966) famous "department store study" where he tried to elicit different pronunciations of the "r" variable across different department stores in New York representing different socioeconomic environments. Linguistic variation, according to Labov (1972), concerns the possibility of expressing the same thing in two or more different ways. His definition was based on phonological variables but has since then been extended to include morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic variation. A set of variables that follow a certain pattern within a clearly defined speech community can then form a

variety, a speech style identifiable by outgroup members and used by ingroup members to distinguish themselves from the outgroup.

While Labov was mainly focusing on the intersection of social class and linguistic change, he did include gender as one of the crucial variables (e.g. 1998). Several female scholars (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1993; Eckert, 1989), however, look at gender in a qualitative rather than quantitative way. Even though they agree that female speech is "marked" in our society, their concepts of strategies, style, and identity convert this markedness into a tool of agency rather than a symptom of discrimination. Actually, the female lead in Labov's *Principle II*, unstable linguistic communities, could support this active role beyond the caregiver explanation that Labov provides to explain the female predominance in situations of linguistic change.

The Labovian type of variation study, which has brought similar findings in Britain (e.g., Trudgill, 1974), is part of the so-called first wave (Eckert, 2001) of studies on language variation, looking at variation from the socioeconomic perspective. The second wave, according to Eckert, describes the so-called culturally defined speech communities. As opposed to the former, whose research subjects tried to resist social stigma through choice of speech pattern, the latter actually declared their group membership through their linguistic behavior. These acts of affiliation can be translated into the development of intercultural sensitivity in the context of foreign language learning, an approach to foreign language teaching that particularly gained popularity in the late eighties and early nineties (e.g., Kramsch, 1993; Seelye, 1993). The third wave, the construction of social meaning through (linguistic) practice or style is an obvious child of the postmodern. This last perspective is, however, extremely helpful in conceptualizing the place of variation in foreign language teaching. If students are made aware of the different ways with words within the target community, they can more easily construct their own linguistic identities as a learner, visitor, or member of the culture.

This plurality of perspectives is echoed by several European scholars. According to Berruto (1987), varieties cannot be clearly defined. They can encompass anything from an idiolect (one person) to a national variety of a language. The term ‘variety’ can thus be seen as a general and neutral one, denoting markedness of some sort and co-implication, while at the same time representing some degree of homogeneity and discreteness. The markedness and co-implication aspect is further elaborated upon by Bierwisch (1987), who emphasizes the connotational effect of varieties. A variety is something different from the standard, a fact that endows its use with an additional indexical function. An example would be the different connotation of informal versus formal address in urban and rural settings, or work and play (cf. Agar, 1994). For foreign language learners, these levels of distinction may be hard to master, but an awareness of their existence could lead to a more conscious approach in choosing a synonym, allophone, or style.

Depending on the linguistic and political development of a country, different degrees of variation may be present. For example, whereas France underwent an early process of linguistic unification, Italy has maintained a fair share of variation, dialects, and language pockets. Polezzi (1997) describes the two independent developments of (literary) restandardization versus neo-Italian standard, the latter based on educated regional dialect. For Italian as a foreign language, Polezzi favors the latter standard as being more descriptive and culturally conscious, especially in the development of receptive skills. A discussion of varieties and their contribution to Italian culture and society could help foreign language students acquire some of the repertoire that makes its native speakers more effective communicators and understand the variable linguistic identity it represents. Unfortunately, as happens with most languages, foreign language teachers and materials developers are more purist than the native population and, in Polezzi’s study, rejected “educated” Sicilian (as used by regional newscasters) as

unsuitable for teaching. Regional markedness, however standardized, still seems to be one of the most strongly rejected forms of variation, especially among language teaching professionals.

In the case of German, Ammon (1995) investigates national varieties and their interdependence. Some terms and concepts he includes are linguistic distance and hypernymia, official language and dialect, variant and variety, speech/language community and language center, pluricentricity, pluri-areality, and plurinationality, the differentiation between standard and non-standard, and between national varieties. According to Ammon, codified variants, used and known variants, situation-independent variants, non-exchangeable variants, nationwide ("Gesamtregion") variants, specific variants, and non-specific variants determine a national variety more in terms of autonomy and specificity than their counterparts. Among linguistic categories, orthography, phonology, lexicality, grammar, and pragmatics are included in the empirical studies reviewed by Ammon.

Barbour and Stevenson (1990), like Clyne (1995), offer an "outsider's" perspective on the issue of variation in German. Coming from a sociology of language standpoint rather than from a tradition of dialectology, the former include categories like urban social dialectology, the continuum from standard to dialect, and lessons to be derived from multilingual and multidialectal communities. This international approach is seconded by Clyne, who focuses on the position of German in the world, the situation inside German-speaking countries, and the linguistic functioning of countries with German-speaking communities. His conclusions based on official legislation and unofficial language attitudes alike are insightful both from the descriptive point of view and the potential they have to offer for actual language planning.

Going back to English, Saville-Troike (2002) dedicates a substantial part of her *Ethnography of Communication* to the different categories of varieties. They include

setting, purpose, region, ethnicity, social class, status, role, role-relationship, sex, age, personality states, and non-native speakers. Except for setting and purpose, all other variables are speaker-dependent. While age, sex, and ethnicity cannot be changed, region (of origin) and social class can be changed only with difficulty. Status, role, role-relationship and personality states are most flexible. Because these categories of variation are, however significant, hardest to grasp, they will not be included in the study. Non-native status of speakers, finally, has certainly an important effect as a potential role-model for second/foreign language learners, especially in strategic competence, i.e. in the acquisition of pragmatic rules, the negotiation of power differentials, and the compensation for lack of linguistic skills and/or authority.

The above mentioned categories of variation, which go beyond the purpose of this particular project, easily demonstrate the complexity of the issue's concepts and terminology. The spectrum of variation categories chosen for this study includes national origin, ethnic group, regional background, sociogeographics, social class, gender, age, mode, register, and degree of standardization. These categories should cover most types of variations students, or any person for that matter, are likely to encounter. For the language samples that participants reacted to, I decided to focus on national origin for the following reasons (for a more in depth discussion, see also chapter 3): First, national varieties, even though in some cases as arbitrarily defined as supranational standards, are manageable units and are more readily available for teaching purposes than, for example, regional variants, which are innumerable, or age-influenced variation, which fluctuate tremendously. Second, students typically plan to go to or have been in a particular country which has shaped or will shape their linguistic and cultural image of the entire target community. Third, one of the first questions asked when meeting somebody who looks different, speaks differently, or behaves differently tends to be "where are you from?" This is not to say that using the national varieties perspective is the only way to

approach the issue or that one should be content with it. It is hoped that follow up studies will continue the work with different categories of variation.

Language attitude

Attitudes and beliefs have been demonstrated to be highly significant in language learning. Both are psychological constructs, attitude representing the affective domain, “a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (Allport, 1954) and beliefs, the cognitive domain, “propositions held to be true” (Goodenough, 1963).

According to Gardner (1982), attitudes influence the process and outcomes of language learning more strongly than aptitude. In this context, attitudes have been measured as they contribute to motivation to learn a language. Among these motivations, Gardner distinguishes between integrative (internal, people or subject-oriented) and instrumental (external, benefit-oriented) motivation, the former being more decisive in the language learning endeavor. In the case of German, Neidt and Hedlund (1967) have been able to correlate positive attitude with increased proficiency. Attitudes further influence language learning behavior insofar as a positive attitude towards the language community has been shown to increase perseverance in the study of a language (Bartley, 1970). Gardner quoted these and other studies to support his claim about the significance of attitudes, while at the same time pointing out the lack of studies that would support the opposite claim, that is, language aptitude contributing to positive attitude.

Over time, attitudinal and motivational research has shifted from the integrative-instrumental dichotomy back to the intrinsic-extrinsic dimension firmly rooted within the area of social psychology (e.g. Ryan & Deci, 2000). Gardner (2001) extends his

definition of integrative motivation to include attitudinal, goal-directed, and motivational variables. The latest developments, however, emphasize the multidimensional, dynamic and contextual nature of motivation and attitudes (Volet, 2001). These conceptual changes constitute an attempt to do justice to the complexity of the learning process from a psychological point of view and have led to new methodological approaches in attitudinal research, including mixed methods, multiple data sources, and a shift from variable-centeredness to person-centeredness. As chapter 3 will show, these changes have been highly influential in the research design of this study.

Within the general tendency to expand the approach toward attitude and motivation, Oxford and Shearin (1996) include the following variables in trying to explain language learning motivation: Attitudes, beliefs about self, goals, involvement, assistance/environment, performance links, demographics/personal. These variables have been borrowed from various theories (e.g. goal theory) and represent an attempt at categorizing individual circumstances. As can be seen, attitudes still occupy the first rank. All variables listed above are included in the present study in one way or another.

McGroarty (1996) provides an overview of how teachers', students', and parents' attitudes all influence second language learning. Societal attitudes toward "proper" language tend to influence language policies which in turn influence language attitudes of the groups most directly affected: teachers, students, and their parents. Language attitudes and motivation are thus closely tied to language policies, norms and standards. In an effort to resist this pervasive tendency towards streamlining, McGroarty opts for incorporating students' background, searching for ways of expression relevant to students, and exploring multiple forms of language. In her mind, awareness-raising is just the first step which should then lead to pedagogical action.

Outside the US, Baker (1992) offers insights into how language policies and attitudes are interrelated. In his monograph on attitude and change in the context of

Welsh bilingualism, Baker emphasizes the role of the community and policy makers in creating an atmosphere conducive to the maintenance of Welsh by fostering a positive attitude towards the minority language and (additive) bilingualism as such. If we want to examine students' attitudes toward language learning, be it their second language, a foreign language, or a particular language, we have to bear in mind where those attitudes might originate.

Even though more concerned with beliefs than with attitudes, Horwitz' (1999) comprehensive five-category Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) provides valuable insights into students' beliefs and their changes over time. Especially the category on motivation showed a high level of extrinsic motivation of EFL learners as opposed to a considerable level of integrative motivation for American foreign language students. One replication of the study at Duke University (McFadden & Tufts, 2000) revealed some interesting details as to the priorities within the learning process. For example, it showed that students taking German at Duke University consider it particularly important to speak with a good accent. This implies that students hold different beliefs depending on the language they are studying and the place they are studying at. The finding furthermore suggests that beliefs about standard/correctness are closely linked with phonology, at least for students of German at Duke University.

As far as attitudes towards varieties are concerned, Giles et al. (1987) conclude that status or prestige of speakers are crucial in the evaluation process. In this process, listener background and notions come into play. Standard and non-standard varieties (or thus perceived) are accorded differential status. In language learning, the influence of attitudes varies from dominant to non-dominant groups. The consequences of attitudes for linguistic action have not been studied extensively (e.g., Ajzen/Fishbein, 1975), but would seem decisive in the development of curricula and methods, because the extent to which variation is included in the curriculum and the way it is presented in materials and

techniques will convey an image to the students. Thus, if we want students to become sociolinguistically aware if not necessarily skillful users of variation for the purpose of communication, an unbiased approach favoring linguistic diversity would seem most effective.

A balanced approach to varieties in language teaching is also supported by Bradac and Giles (1991). They distinguish between two opposed or complementary components of language attitudes, status and solidarity. Status refers to the prestige a variety enjoys among speakers of the language, and solidarity to the feeling of companionship a speaker of that variety evokes. Based on this distinction, the researchers argue that a particular variety might be high in status but low in solidarity. This attitudinal reaction may apply both to the mother tongue and to a foreign/second language. As an example, Bradac and Giles mention the high status of RP (Received Pronunciation, British standard) English among language learners on one hand, and the high solidarity effect of standard AE (American English) on the other, possibly due to the pervasive nature of American entertainment culture (my explanation). Including varieties into language teaching, such as specifically addressing their distinct connotations, and raising awareness about language attitudes in the students' L1, might help avoid the formation of stereotypes while at the same time facilitating communication in the desired format.

In a study among ESL learners, Al-Kahtany (1995) investigated the reactions of Saudi Arabian subjects to three varieties of English: Standard American English, Black English, and Indian English. Age, proficiency, and type of motivation were significant variables in the subjects' attitudes towards the language samples. Standard American English was considered the easiest to understand, followed by Black English and Indian English. Length of stay in the US also seemed to be a determining factor. Even though the fact that subjects resided in the US during this study could be a confounding factor, the results of this study clearly show distinct attitudes toward varieties of the target

language among second/foreign language learners. Unfortunately, the study did not explore the reasons behind the clear preferences manifested by the subjects.

For EFL learners, Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997) found a clear preference for British RP (Received Pronunciation, also called BBC English after the network) English among Austrian college students. The students were given a choice between UK standard and UK dialect, network American and regional American, and non-native UK and US speakers. According to the authors, this preference may have been due to the prevailing paradigm, the higher level of exposure, and/or the relative geographical proximity to the UK. As expected, students preferred the variety with which they were more familiar. For non-familiar varieties, students with US American experience or interest tended to be more open towards the British varieties. Students with a British English background, however, did not show the same degree of openness toward US varieties. Austrian non-native speakers of English with either British or American accent scored lowest. As an aside, the voice stimuli used in this study were female only and consisted of a short reading. Using one gender throughout obviously eliminates gender bias but the reading reduced the varieties to accents.

A study by Chiba et al. (1995) for Japanese students of English confirmed the preference for native-speaker accents over non-native speakers. The main difference to the Austrian study was the Japanese preference for American English as opposed to British English. Again, the question of relative geographical proximity and the resulting closer economic, political, and educational ties may play a role here, even though much of Asia seems to be more inclined towards the British variety, both for historical and political reasons. However, these preferences are not set in stone but fluctuate in our era of globalization. One last point worth mentioning about this study is the indication of higher tolerance for non-native speakers among students with instrumental motivation, similar to the US-oriented group in the Austrian study.

A reverse study, looking at American attitudes toward Japanese-accented speech, was conducted by Cargile and Giles (1998). The two dimensions of interest were the degree of fluency and message content (aggressive vs. non-aggressive), which were examined in the domains of status, attractiveness and dynamism. Results showed that higher fluency led to higher ratings, aggressive messages brought a gain in dynamism and partly in status, and Japanese-accented people were generally ranked favorably in status and dynamism but unfavorably in attractiveness. Among English varieties, they fall into the same category as British and Malaysian. It is suggested that the cultural stereotype of competitiveness might elevate Japanese-accented speakers onto the same plane Americans hold.

In another study about non-native speakers in the US, Brown (1988) investigated American college students' attitudes toward non-native instructors. After students had watched a video of a short academic lecture on the same topic given by different people, they filled out a questionnaire on aesthetic qualities and language competence of the speakers. Significant correlations existed between the perceived level of education and aesthetic qualities of the speaker as well as perceived country of origin and language competence. Even though the video seems to distract from the mere linguistic aspect of attitudes, the results show a clear bias. Brown suggests a two-way approach to the situation, working on the speakers' presentation but also on the listeners' willingness to respond. The question again can be reduced to awareness, attitudes, and variation.

Attitudes about varieties of English have also been investigated beyond the British English - American English dichotomy. In Australia, Gallois and Callan (1989) presented two generations of Anglo Australians with speech samples of mainstream Australian versus Italian Australian and Hispanic Australian. Interestingly, male Australians were rated higher on the status component than female Australians followed by Italian females and Italian males. In the Hispanic versus Anglo part, Hispanics were

constantly rated higher than Anglos, irrespective of gender. Overall, parent versus child ratings showed no significant difference except for one qualifier, level of education. The authors interpret the divergent findings as pertaining to threatening (Italian) versus non-threatening because few in numbers (Hispanic) outgroups.

Continuing to travel around the globe, a truly international study has been carried out by Van der Walt (2000) on the international comprehensibility of South African varieties of English. Trying to argue against the introduction of an outside standard (British or American) into the South African school system in order to safeguard international comprehensibility, the researcher was able to prove that all South African varieties, albeit to differing degrees, were comprehensible to first and second/foreign language speakers of English in Germany, the Netherlands, USA, and Canada. More “non-standard” varieties did turn out to be more easily understood by native speakers. The researcher’s attempt at using authentic communication (radio and TV shows) presented some problems (visual aide, varied difficulty level content-wise) but her three-part test design was able to demonstrate that sometimes perceptions of comprehensibility did not coincide with actual understanding. Overall, the study impresses through its design and spectrum of participants and could be used as a model for validating varieties of German, Spanish or any other language.

Closing the circle, a recent study of attitudes among heritage language learners toward different varieties of Spanish (Duisberg, 2001) showed a marked preference for standard varieties in the academic setting of heritage language programs. Students’ habits of language use, particularly their exposure to presumably standard language outside the classroom context through reading or listening to the radio, were found to correlate significantly with more positive attitudes toward standard varieties and higher levels of proficiency. These findings once again underscore the importance of exposure to language and language varieties inside and outside the classroom for the benefit of

heightened language awareness and possibly increased proficiency. In the particular context of heritage learners, however, it would be especially important to incorporate and validate the individual linguistic background of the students themselves as speakers of a variety in order to acknowledge their cultural identity and prevent discrimination against their variety.

Attitude measurement

In the current study, I decided to measure attitude both directly and indirectly. This two-way approach is often used in attitude research because of the nature of attitude as a partly unconscious and emotionally laden psychological construct. First, in the indirect measurement, students were asked to react to a set of language samples by checking off their answers on an instrument consisting of items using Likert scales and Osgood semantic differentials. Since students were not aware of the ulterior purpose of this instrument, revealing attitudes and stereotypes about variation, their answers were non-mediated. Second, in the direct measurement, which has a more problematic validity, students were asked to fill out an open-ended questionnaire. The problematic nature of this type of measurement lies in the possibility that subjects might provide the answer they perceive to be most appropriate rather than the most honest one because they have a chance to reflect on and modify their initial gut reaction. By the same token, this instrument provides students with an opportunity to reflect and articulate their own opinions and thus may have some pedagogical effect. It was hoped that this combination of instruments would provide both spontaneous and in depth views of students' attitudes toward language variation.

Osgood's semantic differential and Likert scales measure two dimensions of attitudes, direction and extent. As Allport (1967) states, attitudes tend to be either

positive or negative in direction. Even though people sometimes shy away from expressing strong attitudes due to the present societal climate, most concepts researched in attitude studies will evoke some positive and/or negative feelings. Depending on the extent, which is usually measured on a scale from one to five, attitudes can be more or less pronounced. Indifferent or unclear attitudes may be the result of collapsing too many stimuli into one concept. Allport suggests subdivisions into contributing factors as a way to overcome this situation. In the present study, the introduction of different kinds of variation was the chosen avenue for trying to avoid this pitfall. On the other hand, the existence of contradictory attitudes within one human being as well as the changing nature of attitudes contribute to the difficulty in measuring them, according to Allport. Further barriers to the detection of “true” attitudes lie in the filter of reflection erected by participants thinking about their attitudes combined with a certain evasiveness in answering questions that are inherently personal and might provoke a politically incorrect reaction. It was hoped that the first instrument, the response sheets for the language samples, would provide as honest an insight as possible.

The difference between attitude and belief mentioned in the previous section may also cause both conceptual and measuring problems, as Fishbein (1967a) clearly states. On one hand, beliefs may be the foundation for all attitudes; on the other, diametrically opposed beliefs may lead to the same attitude or similar beliefs may lead to divergent attitudes. For example, two students might have divergent beliefs about the forms and extent of language variation but might both be either positively or negatively inclined towards studying it. In order to disentangle the conceptual web, participants were presented both with evaluational belief statements (e.g., “This speaker uses appropriate language”) and a series of semantic differentials (e.g., intelligent-stupid). Furthermore, the open-ended questionnaire as well as the interviews should complement the direct attitudinal measures with some underlying belief framework.

The complex relationship between beliefs and attitudes also applies to the relation between attitudes and behaviors, maybe even more strongly so. All three concepts share the object or phenomenon they refer to but represent different angles of a mental predisposition. They are similar but not the same and not necessarily sequential. One of the reasons, according to Fishbein (1967b), can be found in the fact that attitudes apply to a stereotype of an object but behavior may depend on situational, individual, and intentional factors. Fishbein thus suggests an approach to attitudes based on the three aspects--belief, attitude, and behavioral intentions. These behavioral intentions are included in the present study in questions such as 'Would you go to Germany/Austria/Switzerland on an exchange program?'. The purpose of this design is to cover as many attributes of attitude as possible and not to predict any behavioral patterns based on the results of the study.

Concerning the measurement of language attitudes, Ryan et al. (1987) distinguish between three types: analysis of public treatment, direct assessment, and indirect assessment. In the case of language learning, a textbook analysis might fall into the first category, Gardner and Lambert's (1972) questionnaire into the second, and student ratings of different teachers on tape into the third. My study combines the second and third categories. Basically, attitudes toward two languages, two varieties, two dialects, two accents can be measured in this way. Again, as the authors note, listener effects have to be taken into account.

Some of the difficulties of attitude studies according to Wölck (1986) lie in the choice of scales and the use of evaluative terms. Care also needs to be taken in developing the stimulus which should consist of natural speech. Another more basic problem concerns the researcher's intention of measuring subjective and partially unconscious phenomena with instruments that might only deliver a picture of attitudes mediated by the subject's perception of his/her attitude. Osgood's semantic differential

(1957) still serves as the basis for most attitudinal instruments together with a Likert-type scale (1932).

Language awareness

Language awareness, or the conscious experience of the workings of language and its application in the production of discourse, has been shown to increase proficiency in foreign and second language learning. It is mostly conceived as metalinguistic knowledge, often more narrowly defined as grammatical judgment, and its transferability from one language to the other is at the heart of second language acquisition (SLA) research. An early model of metalinguistic awareness was presented by Bialystok and Ryan (1985), who distinguish between analyzed knowledge and control over it as the two dimensions influencing metalinguistic proficiency. Whereas Bialystok and her colleagues mostly worked with children, the same model can be applied successfully to college students, as for example in Renou (2001), who investigated teaching methods and their effect on L2 proficiency (in French) via the development of metalinguistic awareness. Results showed a significant correlation between grammaticality judgment and proficiency for the overall sample and the grammar group. The communicative group scored higher on control tasks (i.e., oral judgment).

Thomas (1992) defines metalinguistic awareness as being able to see language as a system, reflecting upon its mechanisms, and evaluating its application. In several studies, including one by Thomas (1988), a clear indication of advantages among bilinguals over monolinguals in acquiring another language has been detected. Furthermore, it was found that bilinguals with formal language instruction had an advantage over bilinguals who had purely acquired the language (Thomas, 1988). These

findings suggest a non-negligible effect of metalinguistic awareness in language learning as well as factors contributing to this awareness.

The basis for research on metalinguistic awareness among bilinguals was laid by Cummins (1978) with his developmental interdependence hypothesis, expanded in his common underlying proficiency model of bilingualism (1980). The most recent work, conversational versus academic language (Cummins, 2000) was tested by Lasagabaster (2000) with reference to Spanish-Basque bilinguals studying English. A positive correlation with all academic skills as well as speaking supports Thomas' (1988) findings that metalinguistic awareness is most significant with formal language teaching. These findings suggest that stimulating the *monitor* function, the awareness component of second language acquisition (cf. Krashen, 1981), could well contribute to overall gains in linguistic and general academic performance.

Another level of distinction is introduced by MacLaren (1989), who probes the difference between linguistic awareness and metalinguistic consciousness. While he considers consciousness to be a more profound state, his move is towards merging the two concepts into "metalinguistic awareness". Titone's (1985) distinction between awareness as the implicit stage and consciousness as the intentional manipulation seems helpful for learning. Natsolous (1986) hierarchy ranks awareness as one form of consciousness. In MacLaren's discussion of Natsolous theories, consciousness is linked to attitude ("...a general attitude towards the self within the language community", p.9), which is a helpful if not exclusive link between those concepts and their importance in language learning.

Language awareness, however, comprises more than simply metalinguistic awareness or consciousness (Luchtenberg, 1997). It includes a wide variety of contributing elements, such as cultural awareness, language policy (especially status planning), and pedagogy. According to Luchtenberg, an equation of language awareness

(“Sprachbewußtheit, Sprachaufmerksamkeit,...”) with grammar does not do justice to the potential resource this concept represents in mother-tongue teaching, bilingual programs, and foreign language classrooms. Still, this equation of awareness with grammar has so far been the one preferred by linguists and educators alike for the purpose of promoting language awareness in the domain of German as a second language. A more comprehensive approach to language awareness has yet to find broader acceptance among researchers as well as policy makers. However, one of the most important steps for the promotion of this complex resource lies in the development of teacher training curricula that explicitly and comprehensively include such an approach. It is hoped that data from the current study may serve as a stepping stone in this process.

An example of language awareness or lack thereof amongst teachers in Germany is presented by Davies (2000). According to her study, most teachers are not adequately prepared for non-standard dialects in their classroom due to the optional character of sociolinguistics courses in their teacher preparation program. Even though most teachers seem to allow non-standard language use in the classroom, it is not acknowledged as a resource but only accepted as a secondary option. Consequently, variation is considered something to be eventually overcome rather than a valid option. While this study once more addresses language variation and in particular dialect in the first language, its conclusions are applicable to any context of language learning (first, second, foreign) and any type of variation (regional, national, ethnic...).

An effort to fill the gap in sociolinguistic preparation of teachers is described by Christen (1991). Offering a class on Swiss dialectology at the University of Geneva, Christen conducted a study among her students and compared results with her experience teaching in Germany. Linguistic identity as defined by family, friends, and command of the language was one of the salient commonalities among students. Notwithstanding this background, most students had not been aware of the full extent of the diglossic situation

in German-speaking Switzerland or of the wide variety of alemannic dialects or realized that these dialects actually possessed structure, rules, and significant connotations.

Christen suggests that sociolinguistic training for teacher candidates could lead to a more rational appreciation of variation, thereby influencing attitudes positively and improving understanding and communication.

Salkie (1994) reports on a university program in applied linguistics with a focus on language awareness. Based on the three potential benefits of language awareness according to Hawkins (1993), raising interest in the workings of language, integrating first and second language teaching--one of the main foci of this dissertation--and facilitating second language learning by building on first language knowledge, a program was developed. Course objectives in the category of analytical skills included "recognize and describe the main social, situational, and geographic varieties of English and French" (Salkie 1994: 41). Besides the explicit inclusion of variation, the program philosophy emphasizes students' experience with language as the starting point for linguistic training. This student-centered, applied rather than purely conceptual approach to linguistics is mirrored in the research purpose and design of this dissertation as well.

Another three-tiered approach to language awareness is presented by van Lier in an interview given to Cots and Tusón (1994). The three elements constitutive of language awareness suggested in his work are "knowledge about language, sensitivity to language as it is used in social settings, and a critical perspective of language" (p. 57). Besides the inner cognitive circle of competence and the second layer of sociolinguistic appropriateness, a language ideology aspect is introduced into the equation. Or, as van Lier explains, the interrelatedness of knowledge and values, very much in the Bourdieuan sense, has to be thematized. As far as language variation is concerned, critical language awareness would link variation awareness with attitudinal work, one of the goals of the present study.

Critical language awareness according to Fairclough (1992) centers around language in use, discourse, its relation to power, and its underlying ideology. As opposed to traditional language awareness scholars, who propose a value-free approach to how language works, critical language awareness proponents emphasize the social embeddedness of language, its conditioning effect, but also its liberating potential. Fairclough emphasizes the need to include the learner's experience and pre-existing capabilities into a new and negotiable form of linguistic practice. In other words, the learner, once aware of different linguistic alternatives and their connotation, may then make an informed choice as to which alternative to use.

In his emphasis on linguistic practice, Fairclough echoes Freire's (1983) principles of critical pedagogy for literacy development (p.10): Reading the world (and its social circumstances) and reading the word (the linguistic manifestation of these circumstances) are intertwined and ask for a writing or re-writing of the world, a continuous process of reshaping the world through the word, by means of critical linguistic practice. In language awareness terms, critical awareness allows students to decipher not only the linguistic code but also its social/political meaning, which in turn provides them with the possibility to act discriminately, to participate in the reshaping of the world .

James and Garrett (1992) propose an even wider concept of language awareness divided into five domains: affective, social, power, cognitive, and performance. This division demonstrates the many different aspects involved in language awareness similar to the different factors contributing to attitudes. It also suggests parallels between the affective domain of awareness and the affective component of attitudes, the cognitive domain of awareness and the cognitive component of attitudes, as well as the performance domain of awareness and the behavioral intention component of attitudes. Awareness, thus, may include awareness of attitudes or may simply be a more conscious approach to language in its various manifestations and roles. Critical awareness would

include some form of questioning of these outward manifestations and reflections on their underlying motivations.

Language ideology

Language attitudes can be considered one of the manifestations of language ideology. The concept of standardization, for example, and the value that is attached to a particular standard, serve the purposes of those who use this particular standard. The opposite of standard, variation, has often been defined as a lack of standardization. In our first language, we absorb the prevailing ideology through direct and indirect messages from our parents, peers, teachers, and the media. In a foreign language, we are both influenced by our L1 ideology and the L2 ideology presented by the teacher and/or the textbook. Since ideology works on a subtle level, it may influence our attitudes toward variation without our noticing. On a more conscious level, language ideology carries programmatic decisions in foreign language departments and curricular decisions by teachers. Choosing whether to include variation or not is thus not only a pragmatic but also a political decision.

As Woolard (1998) suggests in her overview on the field of language ideology, consensus exists neither concerning the definition of the term nor the implications, similar to the plethora of perspectives on variation and varieties. For the purpose of this study, I consider Silverstein's (1979) definition focusing on the rationalization and justification of beliefs about language use the most appropriate, since it focuses on language use, one of the tenets of communicative competence, and emphasizes the subjective nature and classificatory purpose of beliefs. As far as ideology and varieties are concerned, Heath's (1989) discussion of the concept narrows the focus to the prime area of interest. Furthermore, the nature of ideology that is expressed in Bourdieu's term

doxa (1977), that is an underlying, implicit structure, will contribute to the clarification of the link between unconscious assumptions and behavior. Woolard's emphasis on ideology as a "behavioral, practical, prereflective, or structural phenomenon" (1998, p. 6), finally, relates to the pervasive character and symptomatic nature of ideology as it is manifest in the language classroom on both the teacher's and the learners' side.

According to Gramsci (1957), languages are social products. Any conversation is thus embedded in the societal linguistic and extralinguistic values of its time, shaped by them and redefining them at the same time. However, as San Juan (1995) rightly comments, the product language is not homogeneous but varies according to social variables such as region, class, age, gender, among others. These variations may be in conflict with one another or may take up specific positions within the hegemonic structures underlying any society. If we want to apply these concepts to variation in foreign language teaching, we have to see variation as a result of sociohistorical differences instead of solely a grammatical or lexical item. Raising students' awareness of the broader meaning of variation in terms of language ideology and its use by dominant or subordinate groups, may contribute to effective decoding of extralinguistic messages and enable students to make a conscious decision as to which variation to choose.

From a similar perspective, Gee (1992) defines ideology as "beliefs about the appropriate distribution of social goods such as power, prestige, status, distinction, or wealth" (p. 142) and concludes that Discourses (sic) are thus by definition ideological, deciding about the right and wrong of being, doing, and speaking. This power of discourse as defined by Gee combined with *cultural capital* in the Bourdieuan sense places any form of human communication, including language teaching, in its sociopolitical context.

Keeping in mind that discourse competence is one of the sub-competences making up communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1988; Bachmann, 1990; Celce-Murcia, 1995), it thus follows that the language use which is taught in first, second, and foreign language classrooms is inherently ideological. By recognizing this fact and placing language learning in a framework that allows for critical sociolinguistics to contribute to the learning process, teachers can help students in making choices among different ways of approaching a communicative event.

Teachers, in fact, enjoy a very prominent position in the language classroom. According to Mc Groarty (1995), they are “double agents“, of the dominant culture and of pedagogy. In their first capacity, they represent the (linguistic and cultural, among others) values of society, and are supposed to transfer them onto the students, or in a more liberal setting, provide the basis for students to critically examine them. In their second capacity, they decide what to include and exclude in their teaching and how to present it. As far as the language itself is concerned, teachers are supposed to represent “the standard”, being the arbiter of what is right or wrong. But they could also reclaim the floor to dispel this and other language myths. In the context of language variation in the foreign language classroom, teachers are similarly agents of language policy, curriculum, and pedagogy. Thus any implementation of implications derived from the findings of this study will have to rely on the collaboration of teachers in order to be viable.

The question of standard versus non-standard in second-language teaching is examined by Andrews (1995) at the example of Russian American intonational patterns in Russian. Due to the different intonations of English and Russian, Russian emigrés using the American intonational pattern tend to be rated low by Russian native speakers because of the similarity of this pattern to a southern Russian low prestige variety. Whereas Andrews, with a brief disclaimer about the arbitrariness of standards, seems to

be most concerned about saving L2 learners from potentially low prestige dialects, the reverse situation, the question of reception of “standard” speakers in southern Russia is not taken into consideration (maybe rated high in status, that is successful, but low in solidarity, that is not very popular). On a more general level, the point of providing language variation as a resource or a repertoire to students rather than a problem to be fixed would seem more beneficial in this context.

Language ideology in the context of language variation has become most obvious in the discussion about the teaching of standard English, *aka* the Ebonics debate. In support of a diversity-oriented model, Wolfram and Christian (1989) suggest guidelines for the teaching of standard English taking into account the group reference factor, local community norms, the systematicity of dialects, and language in use. While all of these guidelines aim at linguistic awareness, the underlying issues of language ideology and language rights should be acknowledged as well. Even though varieties differ from dialects in so far as they are partially coded and sometimes include a written component, the benefits of language awareness and critical language use would be the same.

Hymes (1996) and Lippi-Green (1997) provide a wider framework for language ideology and discrimination, facts and fiction, hidden powers and daily repercussions. While Hymes addresses some of the current language myths such as (literary) standard, proper use, right and wrong, prevalent in what he calls the linguistic “terra incognita” of the US, Lippi-Green describes in detail the channels and institutions that serve to propagate those myths, from the educational system to the media, the workplace and the judicial system. The hegemonic process which is institutionalized serves to uphold the barriers and gates between the different variations with the tacit consent of (almost) everybody. The fact that this process is very subtle and mainly subconscious calls for variation awareness-raising both in L1 and L2 if we want our students to have a basis on

which to decide how to deal with variation as a language learner and a member of a language community.

Communicative competence

Communicative competence is the declared goal of contemporary language teaching among teachers, institutions, and professional organizations alike. This philosophy constitutes the foundation for *the five C's* (communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities) proposed by the Standards for Foreign Language Learning as a framework for language teaching and learning (ACTFL, 1996). Students will not only be able to form grammatically more or less correct utterances, but they will be able to understand and use language in context, act socioculturally in an appropriate way, and choose from a variety of forms available. Students who demonstrate a high level of communicative competence will interact more successfully both through comprehensible and appropriate coding of their message and acceptance by the interlocutor. Awareness of and attitude towards language variation can enhance this process by providing additional clues as to the context, the socioculturally appropriate way of acting, and more choices for expressing what there is to say. Sensitivity towards speakers of different varieties can furthermore contribute to successful interaction by creating a feeling of solidarity based on the principle of accommodation (cf. Giles et al., 1987), according to the human tendency to approach or assimilate the style of one's interlocutor.

The concept of communicative competence was developed by Hymes (1972) for L1 speakers. His concept is based on language in use and language in context, thus a skill that must be acquired. For him, communicative competence includes grammatical, psycholinguistic, and sociocultural abilities. The four basic levels of his model are

grammatical possibility, psycholinguistic feasibility, cultural appropriacy and actual performance (or language in use). These levels provide a complex framework with both options and constraints. Language variation would add considerable more options in the categories of possible, redefine somewhat the category of appropriate, and certainly have considerable impact on the category of performed. Furthermore, in contrast to previous models like Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole* and Chomsky's dichotomy of *competence* versus *performance*, Hymes' four levels encompass both areas.

Hymes (1967) offers yet another way of looking at communication and the way it is embedded in social interaction and context. After more than three decades, his acronym of SPEAKING (S for setting, P for participants, E for ends, A for art characteristic, K for key, I for instrumentalities, N for norms of interaction and of interpretation, G for genre) is still being used as a point of reference by many a researcher interested in the relationship between content, context, and structure of communication. Hymes' eight pieces of the puzzle of communication can and will, of course, vary individually or jointly. For students trying to develop communicative competence in a foreign language, it is thus more than helpful to become aware of these different elements that contribute to the realization of any communicative act.

These communicative acts or speech events may take place within or across speech communities. According to Gumperz (1968), a speech community is a group of people that share linguistic codes and communicative behaviors and set themselves off from other speech communities by differences in these codes or behaviors. Speakers of one language may be part of different speech communities (e.g. ethnic groups), whereas at the same time, speakers of different languages may share one speech community (e.g. linguists). In learning a foreign language, students have to decode and follow the rules of a different speech community (or speech communities). This task might be facilitated by

raising their awareness of the commonalities and differences within and among the speech communities they belong to in their first language/culture.

Following Hymes' and Gumperz' footsteps, some more ethnographic views on communicative competence are offered by Saville-Troike (2002). Her categories include linguistic knowledge, interaction skills, and cultural knowledge. Each category is again subdivided in four or five fields so that the model resembles that of Bachmann (1990) in complexity, albeit with a different focus. Two subcategories of linguistic knowledge, range of possible variants and meaning of variants in particular situations are especially relevant to this study. By knowing, recognizing, or actively using the range of possible variants, language variation can be a resource for students. Secondly, by detecting the meaning of variants or the connotation, miscommunication may be avoided.

A similar concern for a multidimensional, applied approach to communication and language teaching can be found in Halliday's (1973) sociological semantics. Focusing on the meaning potential as the central category, with interfaces to grammar and behavior, Halliday emphasizes both the prevalence of meaning over other categories in the communication process and the numerous possible combinations among the three. Language variation would again add a considerable number of options in all three categories. Different varieties might even require different grammar, different meanings and connotations emerge, and the appropriate behavior may be quite different indeed.

For second language learners, Canale and Swain (1988) have proposed a division into grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competences. This system has been expanded by Bachmann (1990) to include grammatical and textual (organizational), and illocutionary and sociolinguistic (pragmatic) competences. The category of sociolinguistic competence is further subdivided into sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety, sensitivity to differences in register, sensitivity to naturalness, and ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech. This multilevel approach to language

competence illustrates very clearly the complexity of communication but also the variety and complexity of resources which students can utilize. Language variation is one stepping stone towards communicative competence and should therefore be included in any language teaching that calls itself communicative.

Drawing from ethnographic, linguistic, and pedagogical traditions, Savignon (1991) sees the essence of communicative language teaching in the collaborative nature of meaning making. This approach places the learner in the center of attention while emphasizing language use as social behavior. Ideally, collaboration should be extended to include teachers, learners, curriculum developers and researchers, and draw from all relevant disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research. One of the issues to warrant further research according to Savignon is variation, especially in connection with the notions of norms and appropriateness. It seems that this suggestion has been slowly but gradually taken up by researchers over the past ten years. The present study is only one example.

A more recent model of communicative competence (Celce-Murcia, 1995) divides the sociolinguistic sub-competence into sociocultural, formulaic, and paralinguistic competence, all contributing to the central discourse competence, as is linguistic competence. Strategic competence lies in the effective use of all these competences. Even though less refined than Bachmann's, Celce-Murcia's model is significant in its focus on the sociolinguistic aspect and the interdependent rather than hierarchical design. While language variation is not mentioned specifically in this model, as opposed to Bachmann's, it could very well be added next to sociocultural competence. The main attraction lies in the resource-like approach to communicative competence as consisting of a network of skills contributing to discourse competence, i.e., the ability to form a coherent message that is linguistically correct, culturally appropriate, and illocutionarily effective.

A somewhat related way of looking at language variation and communicative competence is the repertoire (or repertory), or the set of linguistic varieties a speaker has at her/his command enabling her/him to play different roles within different speech communities in different contexts (cf. Hawkins, 1984). Again, the focus on Hawkins' examples, like most language awareness work, is on second language learners. However, the same principles apply to foreign language learners at different educational levels. Based on the repertoires students bring from home, or from their first language, they can develop a similar repertoire in their second/foreign language. The more aware they are of their own repertoire, the easier it will be to build a repertoire in their new language. Instead of clinging to one correct version that fits all, students will learn to play with the entire range of repertoires provided by the teacher, the textbook, videos, audio, or the web.

An applied example of variation used in the development of communicative competence in French is provided by Valdman (2000). His variation categories comprise diatopic (geographic), diastratic (social), and diaphasic (situational) variation. Geographically, Quebec French, similar to Austrian German, has its own internal standard but Parisian French continues to be regarded as the international standard. Social and situational variation may sometimes overlap, a phenomenon already described by Labov. As far as linguistic features, vocabulary, morphosyntactical and phonological features present some salient distinctions to be included in teaching. For this purpose, Valdman suggests a pedagogical norm to be developed based on frequency of variants and connected attitudes. Beyond that norm, sensitizing students to variation rather than making them acquire the entire spectrum is recommended.

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature relevant to the purpose of the study. The main purpose of the study was to investigate language variation as a

potential means for improving communicative competence among foreign language learners by exploring students' awareness and attitudes. Language variation has been shown to be speaker and context sensitive rather than purely a pattern of variables. Language awareness encompasses not only grammar but affective, cognitive, social, performance and power domains. The combination of affect, cognition, and performance leads us to the concept of attitude, a psychological construct that turns out to be more complex than simply the sum of its parts, especially if we start comparing and combining it with motivation. The power domain is, in turn, closely related to language ideology, which is based on commonly held beliefs about language and its appropriate use. Finally, communicative competence requires its share of all aforementioned concepts: a sufficient level of awareness of variation concomitant to language in use, the appropriate attitude toward making good use of it, and a keen sense of detecting the underlying ideology in order to make informed choices.

In the following chapter, the methodology and research design will be presented. They have been chosen based on some of the most common procedures suggested by the literature. However, the main feature of the study design is its multidimensional nature, combining direct and indirect approaches as well as quantitative and qualitative procedures.

Chapter Three

METHODS

This chapter will explain the various procedures and instruments used in the study. First, the research design and its objectives will be outlined. Second, the participants or research subjects as well as the reasons for choosing this particular population and sample will be presented. Next, the materials and instruments used in the process of data collection will be described. Subsequently, the process of data collection, including the pilot study, will be introduced step by step. Finally, the approach for coding and organizing the data will be clarified.

Research design

The primary objective of the study was a) to gauge the awareness of American college students studying German as a foreign language with respect to language variation in their own language (English) and in the foreign language they were studying (German) and b) to investigate their attitudes towards these variations. The following research questions were designed to explore these objectives:

- 1) *What level of language awareness can be detected among students both for L1 and L2?*
- 2) *What are students' attitudes toward language variation in L1?*
- 3) *What are students' attitudes toward language variation in L2?*
- 4) *What possible correlations exist between language attitudes in L1 and L2?*
- 5) *How important is inclusion of language variation into language teaching according to students?*

Whereas awareness is a cognitive state which can be studied through direct questioning, attitudes are a subconscious reaction to a stimulus and must therefore be investigated through indirect means. That is why the research design for this study includes both direct and indirect measures of the students' level of awareness and attitudes toward language variation.

Table 1: Research design

Indirect	Direct	
<i>Attitude measurement</i>	<i>Questionnaire</i>	<i>Interview</i>
a) voice samples b) response sheet (Likert scale & Osgood semantic differential)	a) demographic items b) linguistic background (general, variation L1, var. L2)	9 open-ended questions
quantitative	quantitative & qualitative	qualitative

In this part of the study, language variation was equated with national varieties, in this case limited to a choice of the following for the indirect instrument:

Table 2: Voice samples - varieties chosen

English varieties:	German varieties:
- American English (US),	- Austrian German (A),
- New Zealand English (NZ),	- German German (D), and
- British English (UK), and	- Swiss German (CH)
- Canadian English (CAN) as well as	

While language variation studies in the Labovian sense tend to focus on social stratification of language, for foreign language learners, differences according to the places they might visit abroad seem to be more applicable. That is why variation according to national origin was chosen as the category of study. Within this category of variation, the different varieties were selected according to speaker availability for English and based on the three main German-speaking countries for German. More categories, such as gender, ethnicity, or age, were included in the direct instrument.

The total number of samples, sixteen, was mainly determined by time constraints. Since both English and German samples had to be included into the study, eight different samples in each language were the upper limit in order to be able to administer the listening part and the questionnaire within one hour. Including one male and one female voice per variety in order to remove gender bias reduced the number of varieties to four. Furthermore, listener fatigue played an important role, making any activity over 30 minutes problematic. The midway switch from English to German helped revive the subjects' interest and concentration.

The selection of the English varieties was made based on availability of speakers but also degree of distinctiveness. The US English variety was included as the baseline, purportedly the standard version of English for the population under study. The New Zealand variety was assumed to be quite unfamiliar and quite distinct from the US version. The British variety again was chosen for its clearly different pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and usage. The Canadian variety was included as a possible second North American standard and a way to detect highly aware students.

The German varieties were chosen based on the three major German-speaking countries, Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, and the speakers were again included based on availability. Germany as the biggest country, considered the model for standard

German by most text-books, teachers, and students, was represented by 4 speakers, while Austria and Switzerland included one female and one male speaker each. Students were assumed to have some familiarity with the German variety, possibly some understanding of the Austrian variety due to either travel, previous instructors, or teaching materials and least familiarity with the Swiss variety.

The varieties of English and German were played as digital audio-recording to the students in the form of language samples in order to elicit students' evaluations of these speakers. For this purpose, students were provided with one response sheet per sample/speaker consisting of seven evaluative statements about the speaker to be rated on a Likert scale, and a 14-item Osgood semantic differential. The semantic differential was divided into the attitude dimensions of "status" (prestige) versus "solidarity" (popularity), a two-pronged approach which has developed over the years in attitude measurement (e.g. Wölck, 1986). This quantitative part of the study was designed to gain a perspective on what percentage of the student population might hold which level of awareness or which attitudes. Awareness of and attitudes toward the selected varieties in their native language and in their language of study were thus first investigated in an indirect way.

A background questionnaire consisting of demographic and linguistic items was administered right after the students had filled out their response sheets. Its purpose was to detect any possible correlations between awareness, attitudes, and factors such as instructional level, exposure to language, and gender. This questionnaire furthermore contained a series of open-ended questions designed to elicit information about the students' variation awareness in L1 and L2 and details about their attitudes toward variation in both languages.

Semi-structured interviews with a total of 21 volunteers from the different instructional levels were conducted to add a qualitative dimension to the study and to describe the students' attitudes in their own words. Whereas quantitative data can offer

some information as to the extent of a certain attitude among a population, qualitative data can provide clues as to the reasons for the development of a particular attitude. Together, the two types of data contribute to a multidimensional picture of the issue. Awareness and attitudes have been measured and documented in numbers and words, directly and indirectly, objectively and subjectively, separately and in combination. Triangulation, the use of multiple methods as an alternative to validation in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), is thus achieved

Participants

The population chosen for this study were college students studying German as a foreign language. The reason for choosing college students is their potential exposure to different varieties as they progress in their studies, be it due to different teachers they might have had, be it through visits abroad or exchange programs. Furthermore, college students typically come from different parts of the country and will thus have experienced language variation of some sort, albeit subconsciously. They may also be more articulate about their life experiences due to their age and academic background. The choice of German as the language of study was due to the native-speaker status of the researcher, who pursued German Studies as a minor field.

The Department of German Studies at the University of Arizona, where the study was conducted, offers a basic language program, an undergraduate major and minor in German, as well as a masters degree. German can also be chosen as a minor area of specialization of a doctoral program. The department is composed of nine full-time faculty members and served 402 students within its programs during the time of data collection (total enrollment). It was thus possible to recruit enough participants at various instructional levels. This helped to track differences in awareness and attitude according

to instructional level (beginners to near-native command of German). Native-speakers were also included for comparison purposes.

The lowest level included in the study was GER 102, Beginning German II, also called second semester German. Two sections of 20 students each were asked to participate. The next level under study was GER 202, Intermediate German II or fourth semester German. This is the last semester of the basic language requirement program. Two sections of 10 students each were asked to participate. Both level 102 and 202 are attended by language requirement students as well as minors and majors. The third year of German study was represented by GER 301, Voices Past and Present, and GER 300, Encounters in Language and Culture, bridge courses between the basic language program and classes for majors and minors, and GER 313, Studies in Genre, a content course on the undergraduate level. A total of 25 students participated at that level. The highest instructional level was represented by GER 475/575, Advanced German Usage, a cross-listed undergraduate/graduate class focusing on language skills, and GER 501, Appropriating and Reshaping the Past, a graduate content class. Overall, 18 students participated at that level. Overall, the return rate was high at 75% due to the in-class administration of the various instruments.

The sample of participants reflects the student population found at the different instructional levels. Undergraduate and graduate students were not separated into different groups for various reasons. First, as can be seen in the cross-listed classes, the line between those two groups may often be more administrative than language-based, depending on the background of the individual student. Second, the minimum number needed for statistical calculations would not be reached, particularly if we further subdivide native from non-native speakers or teaching assistants from non-teaching assistants. Since none of these subgroups is overrepresented in the sample, that is, the ratio between the subgroups within the sample reflects the ratio among these groups in

the larger population under study, results should not be considered skewed. Furthermore, the study was designed to investigate awareness and attitudes along a continuum subdivided into instructional levels for the purpose of establishing discrete sub-units. The two theoretical end points are thus the absolute neophyte and the native speaker, respectively.

While the position of the researcher as a teaching assistant in the department helped to secure a large pool of participants and contributed to the high return rate, particularly for survey research, certain issues must be considered. For the language samples in German, neither the researcher's voice nor any other teaching assistant's voice could be included in order to avoid any potential bias toward that speaker among respondents. The fact that at the time of data collection the researcher taught one section of GER 202 could not be avoided due to the limited number of sections available at the 202 level. The researcher's group comprised 17 students, with 15 returning the questionnaire and three volunteering for the interview.

Materials and Instruments

(see appendices for full details)

The materials and instruments used in this study corresponded to the three-tier design, consisting of 1) the indirect attitude measurement based on digital voice samples (a transcription is included in appendix A) and a response sheet containing Likert scales and Osgood semantic differentials (see appendix B), 2) the background questionnaire (demographic items and sections on language awareness and attitude in L1 and L2 - appendix C), and 3) semi-structured qualitative interviews (for interview questions see appendix D). The voice samples were recorded for this study in particular, but the descriptors of the semantic differential were collected from instruments previously tested

by other researchers, notably Duisberg (2001) in her doctoral dissertation. The demographic survey and open-ended questionnaire were based on previous unpublished studies by the author, and the interview questions were again developed for this specific study. All instruments were piloted and analyzed with a similar population prior to the actual data collection. The pilot study involved two sections of intermediate students of German at the community college. Based on the experience of administering the instruments and the feedback received from one of the participating students, modifications ranging from logistics to question wording could be incorporated. A detailed description of the pilot study is provided under the heading of data collection later in this chapter.

INDIRECT ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT:

a) Voice samples

For the indirect attitude measure, students listened to 16 voice samples as described in Table 3.

Table 3: Voice samples - number and gender of speakers

16 samples:			
8 native speakers of English		8 native speakers of German	
4 male	4 female voices	4 male	4 female voices

The voice samples were recorded from about 30 speakers, half of them English native speakers, half of them German native speakers. Out of the resulting 30 voice samples, 16 were chosen based on similarity of content, intelligibility, and existence of male/female speakers of a variety. All speakers were students at the University of Arizona, which was

not only a convenience sample but also helped to control for co-variables like age and educational background. The most prominent independent variable that was left was their country of origin, corresponding to the main research interest of national varieties. One male and one female voice each were selected for United States, Canada, New Zealand, and United Kingdom varieties, Austria and Switzerland. Two male and female voices were chosen for Germany to see whether national variety was actually perceived more strongly than regional variety.

All speakers spoke freely on the topic of their daily schedule. This topic was chosen in order to provide a non-emotional, repetitive, familiar theme, that would result in similar statements among subjects. That way, it was hoped that respondents would not judge the samples by their content or the emotions they aroused in them but on their language. For the purpose of equal length and quality, recordings were made digitally and then edited to an approximate length of 30-45 seconds. Two versions of the recordings were then compiled with different sequences in order to control for listener fatigue and inter-sample effects as listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Sample versions

Version 1:	Version 2:
female CAN	male CAN
male UK	female UK
female US	female NZ
female UK	female US
male US	male NZ
male NZ	male UK
female NZ	male US
male CAN;	female CAN
male D/urban	female A
female CH	female D/rural
male A	male D/rural
female D/rural	male A
male CH	female D/urban
female D/urban	female CH
male D/rural	male CH
female A	male D/urban

In order to assure close to equal exposure to the two versions, each version was administered to one of the two parallel sections that were chosen at each level (e.g., German 102 section 2 listened to version 1 and section 4 to version 2).

For the spoken text, a choice between a scripted version and freely spoken samples had to be made. Whereas a scripted text would have reduced the speaker personality variable, other, more important aspects like word choice would have been

lost. Since variation is usually concerned with language in use, that is language used by people, original samples seemed to respect this principle better than scripted versions. Furthermore, language variation (e.g., national or regional) is not limited to phonetic variation but includes also semantic (vocabulary), syntactic/morphological (grammar), and pragmatic (choice of the above according to context) variation. Using a scripted text would thus have eliminated all but phonetic variation, which is important but often not sufficient for distinctions among variations.

Speakers were recruited from among volunteers who answered an email distributed on the *international student listserv* asking for collaboration in the project. 30 volunteers came to the multimedia learning lab to make a recording. From these samples, only those varieties that were matched for gender could be included. Choices between all available samples were also made based on clarity of speech and information included. A proposed collection of samples was circulated among the committee members of the dissertation to fine-tune the instrument. No objections were raised and in one case each for English and German one sample was preferred over another. Since all recordings were made digitally, sound quality was constant.

In selecting the German speakers, it was obvious that they had to be unknown to the participants to avoid bias. Thus, all teaching assistants at the University of Arizona, including the researcher, were excluded from the selection process. Speakers were again selected from among volunteers answering an email distributed on the *international student listserv* asking for collaboration in the project. Final selection was again made based on clarity and informational content. During the administration of the listening part, if one of the participants recognized the voice of one of the speakers, that particular page of the response packet was excluded from analysis. This only happened three times altogether. Difficulties in selecting speakers may have limited somewhat the choice

between samples. The careful selection process on the other hand has contributed to a minimum of bias towards speakers or their varieties.

One way to avoid these kinds of problems typically occurring in the process of speaker selection is by means of the so-called matched-guise technique. This technique has been used in research on attitudes toward language variation since its inception (e.g., Williams, 1972; Giles & Powesland, 1975). In the case of matched-guise, the same speaker takes on different roles and their speech patterns, for example standard “white” American English and African American Vernacular English or French-speaking versus English-speaking Canadian. Studies using this technique have shown a difference in rating for the same person speaking depending on their perceived origin. According to psychologists, this happens because people tend to form an opinion about a person by attributing to them the qualities we associate with the group we think they belong to. This manner of categorizing or stereotyping (e.g., ethnic) is a way for our brains to handle the huge and continuous information influx. If somebody thus speaks “like a Mexican American” in his/her pronunciation, word choice, etc. we might consider that person lazy and uneducated because that is a common stereotype of that particular ethnic group. However, that person might be a university professor, or even a person of different ethnicity wearing the figurative Mexican sombrero. Even though researchers claim that using this method is the only way to exclude any confounding personal variables, this method was not deemed applicable in this study, since the main focus in this project is language in use, produced naturally in spontaneous conversation. While talking into a microphone about one's daily routine might not be equivalent in naturalness to chatting with one's friends, it does provide the speakers with more freedom of expression, and thus variation, than reading a scripted version of Jane Doe's morning.

b) Likert scale/Osgood semantic differential response sheets to voice samples

This data collection instrument consisted of two parts: Part one comprised seven evaluative statements with their corresponding five-point Likert scales, part two 14 pairs of opposite descriptors linked by a five-point Osgood-type semantic differential (see appendix B). The points for both scales were situated on a continuum from *strongly agree* via *neutral* to *strongly disagree*. An odd-numbered scale was chosen to allow for undecided answers. Both, in the pilot and the actual study, participants used this option only on few occasions, notwithstanding possible listener fatigue in the later samples. In addition to the 16 pages corresponding to the 16 speakers, 8 in English and 8 in German, a 17th page was included listing all the descriptors from the semantic differential asking for a general ranking of importance of the named qualities. This last page was added to see which descriptor was the most meaningful or decisive. That way, a speaker who received low points on an unimportant descriptor would not be ranked as low as another who received low points on an important descriptor.

The purpose of the evaluative statements in part one was to test the acceptability of the speaker as a speaker, as a teacher, as a person, and to gage the familiarity of the students with the particular variety. The descriptors occupying opposing poles of the semantic differential in part two were incorporated from a recent study on language awareness among heritage learners of Spanish (Duisberg, 2001). They were validated both by the researcher in the above mentioned study and during the pilot phase of the present study by using the Cronbach's Alpha test for inter-item reliability (see appendix E). Seven of these descriptor pairs can be subsumed under the categories of status and solidarity, as listed in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptors used in semantic differential

Status:	Solidarity:
hard-working--lazy	caring--thoughtless
independent--dependent	exciting--boring
intelligent--stupid	friendly--unfriendly
strong--weak	generous--selfish
successful--unsuccessful	a good friend--a poor friend
talented--untalented	sincere--fake
wealthy--poor	warm--cold

Those two categories have emerged over time in attitude studies as being the most prevalent dimensions of attitudes. Typically, a person rated high on status would be rated low on solidarity, i.e., a supposedly standard speaker will score high on status, receiving respect from the raters, but low on solidarity, expressing a certain distance. Similar to the randomization of voice samples, descriptors were listed randomly, switching between status and solidarity as well as positive and negative poles in the listing.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE:

a) Demographic survey (Section I, see appendix C)

The demographic survey contained demographic data typically collected by researchers in any study, like age, gender, ethnic background, and socioeconomic status. It also contained study-specific questions relating to the instructional levels of students, exposure to the language, and other factors that were thought to contribute to students' level of awareness and their attitudes, for example, other foreign languages studied or time spent in target language communities. Care was taken that in most items both

quantitative and qualitative analysis would be possible. For that purpose, items were designed to contain a yes-no option and at the same time an open-ended component asking for clarification or examples.

b) Linguistic background (Sections II & III, see appendix C)

Section II of the open-ended questionnaire asked students about their experience with language variation in their native language, English (with some exceptions, that were coded correspondingly). A distinction was made between passive experience and active use of language variation. Furthermore, the different aspects of language variation, pronunciation, vocabulary, and pragmatics, were included. Finally, attitudes were gauged with two items asking for the relative importance of learning about variation in English and German and whether it constituted an enrichment or an obstacle to communication.

Section III of the open-ended questionnaire examined awareness of and attitudes toward variation in the foreign language, German. Linguistic awareness was included as well as cultural awareness and attitudes. Knowledge about and attitudes toward the three German-speaking countries in question were examined. Again, both quantitative and qualitative coding of the responses were possible. Furthermore, the last question, concerning the helpful or problematic nature of language variation in foreign language learning, was designed to match up with the question on variation as enrichment or obstacle in the previous section.

Data collection

The pre-pilot

Before even conducting a regular pilot study with full classes, the entire set of instruments (voice samples, Likert scale and Osgood semantic differential response sheet,

and background questionnaire) was tested on two colleagues, native speakers of English with a low to intermediate level of German. This extra step was included to ensure quality data even from the pilot in order to better adapt the instruments and procedures for the actual data collection. The insights gained from the pre-pilot concerned every aspect of the process, from time management to logistics, from content to organization and wording. The invaluable feedback I received from these two helpers, building on the previous comments from my doctoral committee, largely contributed to a smooth process of data collection that was both less stressful for the participants and more fruitful in the resulting data.

The pilot study

The data collection procedure was first piloted with two German 200 level classes at Pima Community College, which also served to fine-tune the instruments both from the logistics standpoint and the enhancement of clarity of wording. Students received one package containing the Likert scale and Osgood semantic differential response sheets to accompany the voice samples and a the background questionnaire containing demographic and linguistic items. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study was included as the first page and could be kept by the students for further reference.

The basic order of administration proved to be feasible with students listening to the 16 samples first, having approximately 2 minutes to mark their answers on the response sheet after each sample. This time interval tended to be longer for the first couple of samples and could be reduced after students had become familiar with the instrument. Also, students listened to the English samples first, in both versions, to make sure they were familiar with the system before delving into the more challenging part of listening to German. All samples had been burned onto a CD which made administration convenient and standardized. Approximately 30 minutes were estimated for this part of

the data collection; the pilot study helped to make sure that time could be kept below 40 minutes.

Right after, students were asked to fill out the demographic survey and the attached open-ended questionnaire on language variation. It was estimated that 15-20 minutes would suffice to fill out the questionnaire. Altogether, it was hoped that both instruments could be administered within one class period of 50 minutes. This goal limited both the sample numbers to 8 each per language and the number of questions on the open-ended questionnaire. In practice, only classes that met for an hour or more could comfortably complete both parts, which was the case in the pilot study. It was thus decided that other classes with the typical 50 minute duration could return the questionnaire the following day or week.

The method chosen for identifying the two parts of the package, response sheets and questionnaire, as being from the same student was a continuous numbering of packages and subparts. This way, students could hand in the response sheets even though they might take the background questionnaire home for completion. For the interviews, students were simply asked to point out their questionnaire to the researcher in order to number the tape. That way, no personal identifying information about the student was on record.

During the pilot study, clarification questions mostly concerned questions A and B of section II, asking for the students' active and passive experience with different categories of language variation. These questions were thus reworked in several steps to insure comprehensibility and clarity for the actual data collection. Changes in wording and formatting contributed to eliminating blank answers and answers only half-filled as a clear sign of student frustration with the task. Furthermore, interruptions due to student questions could then be kept to a minimum.

A statistical analysis of the data from the pilot study confirmed the reliability of the response sheets and helped establish answer categories for the demographic survey. Collapsing qualitative answers from the pilot into answer categories increased the percentage of data that could be included into the quantitative analysis for the actual data collection by providing more checkable categories on top of the purely qualitative information requested from respondents.

The project was prefaced by about 5 minutes of explanations on the part of the researcher about the purpose of the study in addition to the written cover page. Also, teachers were informed and asked permission well in advance of the administration of the instruments. This way, a 100% participation of students was attained since the study was incorporated into the usual classroom teaching. The corresponding return rate was thus near perfect in the pilot study.

Care was taken in making the project appealing and worthwhile for the students to participate. For example, time was allotted to discuss the different voice samples once the answer sheets had been collected. Students were thus not only given the opportunity to reflect on their own linguistic practice and to expand their listening skills in the foreign language but also gave valuable feedback on the samples to the researcher. In this respect, the collaboration of the classroom teachers was essential and granted without reserve.

One student from the pilot study expressed an interest in being interviewed and provided substantial comments during the meeting. The interview, or rather conversation, was held at a coffee shop on campus in an unstructured format in order not to preclude any comments on any aspect of the study. That way, options could be added to some of the questions, for example, to question 4, section III, on exposure to variation in the foreign language classroom: The initial categories of *teacher* and *textbook* were expanded to include *audio*, *video*, and *web-based material*. Suggestions on wording and

formatting were also included in the remodeling process. The fact that the volunteer was a non-traditional student with a clear interest in the topic, but from a non-linguist, non-educator perspective, contributed to the usefulness of her insights and comments.

The study proper

After the approval of the project by the head of department of German Studies and the basic language director, professors and teaching assistants were approached to determine which classes could be included in the study. Thanks to the cooperation of everybody involved, two sections at each instructional level were available for participation and could be scheduled within a time frame of two weeks. Timing was also of importance in order not to interfere with the regular class syllabus, exams etc. Students were informed beforehand by their teacher about the project, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the applicability of insights gained from participating to their language studies. The actual data collection took place in April of 2001.

On the day chosen for data collection in the participating classes, the background and purpose of the study were briefly explained to students. Next, the voluntary nature of their participation as well as the potential interest of the study to them as language learners were touched upon. Finally, instructions were provided on how to fill out the different instruments. After some minutes for reading through the statement of consent and for asking any questions, the study usually began 5-10 minutes into class time.

First, the voice samples were played to the students. On each instructional level, one group or parallel section listened to version one and the other to version two. As in the pilot study, students were given just enough time to fill out the corresponding answer sheet after each speaker. At the same time, it was possible to reduce this answering time as students grew more accustomed to the task. Depending on the interest of the particular group, the time available, and the consent of the respective teacher, information on the

country of origin of the English speakers was discussed with the researcher at the end of the study after all questionnaires had been collected. The German samples were played again and discussed in greater detail. Students also contributed their experience with different varieties to the class discussion.

After this part of the study, which had to be administered in class, students were asked to fill out the background questionnaire, including demographic data and linguistic items. Thanks to the honing of the instrument after the pilot study, few students asked questions concerning the information they were requested to provide on the questionnaire. In the case of 50-minute classes, several students preferred to take their time and complete the questionnaire at their leisure outside of class. Most of them returned the completed questionnaires to their teacher within a few days. The teacher forwarded them to the researcher. Matching of Likert-scale/Osgood semantic differential response sheets collected right after administering the voice samples and background questionnaires turned in later was possible with the help of continuous numbering of all packages, subparts, and pages. Student X received a package with an X on each page of the response sheets and each page of the questionnaire. These numbers also served as the case numbers for the subsequent statistical analysis. However, even in 50 minutes classes, a fair number of students were able to finish both parts thus contributing to the return rate. Average class size was 15 students.

Interviews were conducted with 21 students who had participated in the previous stage of the study, which amounts to 20% of overall participation. Volunteers for the interview were requested to sign up for this purpose before leaving class after the administration of the listening response instrument and the open-ended questionnaire. An average of 5 students signed up for each level of instruction (5-4-6-6) so that the interviews span the same range of instructional levels as the main instruments.

Interviews were conducted within 2 weeks of the initial data collection and extra credit for participating in interviews was given to students by their teachers.

The interviews took place in the researcher's campus office. That way, students could access the site easily and did not have to take out extra time. The office also provided some privacy (other teaching assistants sharing the space moved their office hours and preparation work to other offices at the times when interviews were being held) but was still situated within the official university setting.

This set-up also allowed for easy access to the questionnaires and made audio-taping of the interviews easier. Students coming in for an interview were thanked for their willingness to participate and asked whether they minded being audio-taped. All students without exception agreed to the taping. They were then asked to identify their questionnaire from the stack pertaining to their class. The number on top of this questionnaire was used to mark the particular tape. That way, the interview could be linked to the respective questionnaire without any personal identifying information about the student. Once the interviews were transcribed, the last possible clue, voice recognition, was removed.

The interviews were designed to explore students' criteria for good speakers of English and German, the resulting attitudes, and the reasoning behind those criteria and attitudes. Students were asked directly whether they thought language variation should be included into language teaching and why. Finally, possibilities for utilizing any new ideas about language variation in their language study were discussed so that participants would walk away from the study with some applicable gain in awareness/knowledge. (For the exact wording of interview question see appendix D.)

Data organization and coding

The response sheets, which consisted of 7 evaluative statements and 14 pairs of descriptors as well as an extra page on relative importance of these descriptors (see appendix B) was coded in the following way: The first six statements were rated on a 4-point Likert scale plus neutral option from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with 4 being the highest score on the side of strongly agree. Thus, if a participant, for example, strongly agreed to the statement “I can understand this speaker”, they would receive 4 points. The last statements, “I can identify this speaker’s nationality” had an open-ended part to it. Participants received 2 points if they correctly identified the variety, 1 point if they were close (e.g., Australian instead of New Zealand), and 0 points if they did not respond to this item or chose a totally unrelated variety (e.g., Irish instead of New Zealand).

The 14 pairs of descriptors on the Osgood semantic differential were divided into the categories of “status” versus “solidarity” and again ranked on a scale from 1-4. If a participant, for example, remained neutral between the poles of “intelligent” versus “stupid”, this speaker would not receive any points on his “status” scale. Altogether, speakers could receive a maximum of 28 points on either or both the “status” and the “solidarity” scale, but usually higher scores in one dimension were offset by lower scores in the other one. Results from the descriptors were then correlated with the first seven statements of the form. The last page, asking for relative importance of descriptors in evaluating a speaker, served to confirm the face validity of the descriptors. The answer pattern to this page paralleled the answer patterns for the different voice samples.

The demographic questionnaire was designed to correlate levels of awareness and dimensions and degrees of attitudes to a series of personal factors. In order to conduct statistical analyses, data has to be coded numerically. That is why even nominal data

were given numbers. First, instructional level, expressed in years of study, years of exposure, self-evaluation, GPA, and current instructional level was coded. Each item had 4 or 5 maximum points, and the total number of points were tallied to reach a proficiency indicator. Linguistic awareness (and possibly attitude) points were also taken into consideration in such items as visits to a German-speaking country, family/friends in a German-speaking country, other foreign languages studied, and number of places participants had lived within the US and abroad. Subjects were again awarded points for each “yes” answer in each of the above categories. Reasons for learning German and future career plans were coded qualitatively to enhance the insights into motivation for language study.

Section II, on variation in English, also received numerical coding. Participants “gained” one point for each type of variation they had experienced or used and an additional point if they were able to articulate the corresponding situation. Again, for any mention of words, phrases, or pronunciation typical of their home area they would receive one point as well as for any difference they were able to articulate between their home area and Tucson, the place of current residence. Relative numbers of words versus phrases or pronunciation and type of difference were also tallied to explore which category was more important in determining variation.

The last two questions in section II related to attitudes, and participants received points if they checked “enrichment” as the effect of language variation and up to 5 points each for the degree of importance accorded to the learning about variation. The reasons provided for the decision between language variation as enrichment and language variation as obstacle were also examined qualitatively to supply answers to the reasoning behind an interest or disinterest in language variation. Answers to this question were also compared to question 5, section III about the helpful or problematic nature of integrating language variation into the foreign language classroom.

Section III on foreign language learning again added points for linguistic awareness for question 3 on linguistic awareness and question 4 on inclusion of variation in teaching participants had experienced. Question 3 on the helpful versus problematic nature of language variation in the foreign language classroom added points in the case of choosing the 'helpful' option. Questions 1 and 2 on interest in study abroad and associations with different German-speaking countries were examined qualitatively for cultural awareness and predominance of any particular country or feature.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and examined question by question (from 1 to 9) and according to levels. Themes that emerged during the multiple readings of the script were grouped and analyzed. They were examined for connections between different questions or levels and overarching patterns. In reporting the findings, interpretations by the researcher were interspersed with direct quotations from the interviews.

Chapter four

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the analyses of data collected to investigate language awareness and attitudes among college-level learners of German. The following research questions were guiding the analysis and will be referred to throughout:

- 1) *What level of variation awareness can be detected among students both for L1 and L2?*
- 2) *What are students' attitudes toward language variation in L1?*
- 3) *What are students' attitudes toward language variation in L2?*
- 4) *What possible correlations exist between language attitudes in L1 and L2?*
- 5) *How important is inclusion of language variation into language teaching according to students?*

First, a preview of salient findings will be provided. Some of these findings were expected, some could be called serendipitous. Most of the findings directly contribute to answering the research questions, others suggest avenues for further study. Overall, salient findings were condensed in an introductory section to guide the reader through the following detailed discussion of findings derived from the individual data collection instruments.

Second, demographic information about the participants will be presented and their general language background in German will be discussed. Based on this information, a general picture of the sample population can be drawn and the overall background in German will help to put findings into perspective. Next, students' level of language awareness and their explicit attitudes will be outlined based on the overall

answering pattern to the questionnaire. These figures will offer a quick overview on whether or not students are aware of variation and whether they harbor positive, negative, or a combination of attitudes. Both these sections are based on frequency counts and will serve to provide a general overview of findings.

Third, language awareness and attitudes will be analyzed with a view to variables such as years of study, years of exposure, and places lived. Correlations will be examined using the chi square test and regression analyses will be used to determine the order of importance of contributing variables. Cross-language tests, comparing patterns for English and German, will also be included. This part of the analysis was designed to explore possible contributing factors to variation awareness and attitudes from the participants' background. Furthermore, the possibility of similar patterns of awareness and attitude in L1 and L2 were explored.

Next, reactions to the various speakers of English and German will be discussed with a view to their ranking on the status and solidarity dimensions. Differences in rating according to the students' background will be explored, both for demographic and language background variables. Reliability of descriptors was confirmed with the Cronbach α for internal consistency ($\alpha = .7332$ for status and $.8970$ for solidarity). This test is used to demonstrate similar answer patterns to similar items. By looking at the reaction to speakers, students' attitudes toward certain varieties were examined. In addition, differences in identification patterns were analyzed.

Finally, the interview data will be presented based on the nine interview questions and with a particular emphasis on differences according to instructional level. Analyses of response sheets and background questionnaire were based on the total number of students (85) who returned their questionnaire. Interview data were collected from 21 participants only, that is 20% of the overall sample of 113 (or 25% of valid returns of 85). Interviews were transcribed verbatim and semantically coded. Whenever possible,

students' comments were included verbatim into the write-up to include their voice in the reporting. This last set of data proved particularly valuable in establishing links between the various subquestions on awareness and attitude.

Preview of salient findings

As far as variation awareness was concerned, participants reported an impressive level of awareness with up to 90% who claimed having experienced variation in L1. The variation category named by most students was variation according to national origin. As could be expected, variation awareness was lower in L2 with 70% reporting being aware of linguistic differences within German.

Attitudes toward variation turned out to be clearly positive in L1 and slightly negative in L2. This difference mirrored the different results for awareness in L1 and L2. The most striking finding, however, was that learning about variation was rated highly important in L1 (5 out of 5) and important (4 out of 5) in L2. This finding should be particularly relevant in future pedagogical decision-making (see also chapter 5).

The relationship between awareness and attitude in L1 and L2 proved highly significant. Linguistic background variables like years of study, current class level, and other foreign languages correlated significantly with level of awareness and direction of attitudes. The most clearly visible correlation, however, was found between attitudes in L1 and attitudes in L2 (.952). This finding suggests a close link between L1 and L2 waiting to be explored in language teaching.

The most conspicuous finding from the analysis of the voice samples concerned gender. Whereas gender of participants did not produce any significant patterns, gender of speakers of the voice samples showed a clear bias. Both in L1 and L2, the voice samples most easily identified and most difficult to identify were female. Even though

gender had been factored into the research design by choosing a male and a female voice per variety to avoid bias, this finding confirms the confounding nature of gender beyond expectation.

Interviews, finally, demonstrated that the list of criteria for good speakers and good writers both in L1 and L2 is still headed by "grammar". Fluency and vocabulary occupied rank 2 and 3, again in both languages. This finding is striking insofar as in times of communicative language teaching, such a clear advantage of grammar over other criteria may seem counter intuition.

After this brief preview of most salient findings, the following sections will describe results in greater detail. The corresponding figures will be provided in tables throughout the text and in the appendices, when indicated. Implications of these findings can be found in chapter 5, where recommendations and conclusions will be provided.

Descriptive summary of questionnaire data

As can be seen from the previous paragraphs, the order of discussion of findings does not follow the order of administration of instruments. The order of administration of instruments was a compulsory one for methodological reasons. It had to follow the direction from indirect to direct instrument in order not to bias respondents for the indirect part. The change in sequence in the discussion of findings has been made for the benefit of the reader and with the purpose of presenting an overall picture of participants first, to set the scene so to speak. Furthermore, this new sequence follows more closely the logical order from the general to the specific, from description to numbers, and from persons to variables. The following discussion thus moves from the background questionnaire (descriptive and inferential analysis) to the voice sample response sheets and finishes with a presentation of findings from the interviews.

Demographic background

The participants of the study were chosen because they attended German language and culture classes at the University of Arizona. German was chosen because, unlike Spanish, it is a language not readily available to most students. University students were chosen because they could easily be grouped according to class level with the potential of detecting differences between those subgroups. A total of 113 questionnaires were administered with a return rate of 87% (98 students) for the response sheets. However, since not all students turned in both instruments, the actual cases available for analysis amount to 75% (85 students). For the purpose of analysis, the participants were grouped into four instructional levels, GER 102 (first year), GER 202 (second year), GER 300 (bridge course), and GER 400/500 (advanced). The lower levels included both language requirement students, who have to take a language for one or two years as a requirement of their major and might thus be differently prepared and/or motivated, and German majors and minors. The upper levels were exclusively language majors and minors as well as teaching assistants and native speakers. Students were fairly evenly distributed among the four groups, or rather representative of their relative numbers, if we take into consideration the smaller class sizes of higher level classes. The following table summarizes participant numbers across levels.

Table 6: Participant numbers across levels

levels	<i>102</i>	<i>202</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>400/500</i>
students	26	23	18	13
percentages	33 %	29%	22%	16%

As far as general demographic data are concerned, the sample showed an expected distribution if we compare it with the general university population (women 52%). Women outnumbered men only slightly at 46 to 38 (55 versus 45%). This relatively even distribution is due to the higher number of study participants from the beginning and intermediate class levels which include many language requirement students. At the more advanced class levels, women more clearly outnumber men. The same holds true for the interview volunteers with a 3:1 gender ratio (16 women and 5 men).

Agewise, almost two thirds (52 students or 63%) of participants were in the lowest age-group, 17-21, that is, undergraduate students. On the other hand, one can also say that one third of the students (31 or 37%) were older than 21. The two other age groups that both comprised 12 (about 15%) each were 22-26 and older than 31. The smallest group was the one between 27 and 31 at 7 (less than 10%). However, age did not turn out to be a statistically significant factor in any of the analyses.

The students' ethnicity with 75 (close to 90%) of white background and 5 (6%) of Hispanic origin seems to indicate that students of German do not quite reflect the overall university demographics. This may be due to the low visibility of minority aspects of German culture, something that has started to change in recent years. Even though the overall university population is also predominantly white (67%), the total university figures are not quite as extreme as the figures for students of German (90%). Hispanics account for 13% of the overall student population at this university.

Socioeconomically, the majority of students ranked themselves either in the lowest or in the highest income bracket. This apparent divergence can be explained if we look at the subquestion on the income provider. Those students who fell into the highest category listed one or two parents as provider (40 or 58%); whereas those in the lowest group provided their own income (23 or 33%). Their income as students is thus understandably small.

Table 7: Demographics

gender	age	ethnicity	SES
46 (55%) female	52 (63%) < 21	75 (90%) white	40 (58%) > \$60,000
38 (45%) male		5 (6%) hispanic	23 (33%) < \$20,000

Academic background

This section corresponds to the questionnaire items concerning students' majors, future career plans, and knowledge of languages other than English or German. GPA was also included in the questionnaire but excluded from analysis due to the low percentage of students providing this piece of information. The majors mentioned most often were double major including a language and double major in fields other than language.

Looking into the future, the career plans of students demonstrated a strong and continued academic orientation. Among the three top goals were teaching, graduate school, and law school chosen by 6, 10, and 12 students. However, an almost equal number of students also answered "don't know" (13 or 19%). Overall, 36 different majors were mentioned. Concrete reasons for studying will be discussed in the "German background" section.

Looking into the students' past, the number of different places students had lived both in the US and abroad might contribute to the degree of variation awareness. Among the participants of this study, almost every student had lived in more than one place within the US, quite a few in several. On the international plane, 35 (over 40%) had lived abroad, some for several years and in different places, most, however, for one year. This latter percentage, 40% of students having lived abroad at some point, is quite outstanding

and may have contributed to the high level of variation awareness displayed by the students.

Similar to the different domiciles that were assumed to contribute to variation awareness, additional languages were also examined as potential factors influencing language awareness. Besides German and English, 51 students (59%) knew an additional language, mostly Spanish (18 or 21%) or more than one additional language (14 or 16%). The latter number is probably mostly due to the European students (e.g. Polish, Italian) and TAs among the group. They reflect the 10% international students that can be found at this university. Those students who had neither English nor German as their native language (12 or 15% total) were particularly insightful during the interview. Overall, the percentage of English native speakers was 80% (66 students).

German language and ethnic background

As far as the acquisition of German was concerned, an interesting if somehow expected difference manifested itself in the distribution of answers to the items “years of study” and “years of exposure”. While the number of students reporting 1-2 years (27), 3-4 years (20), or 5 or more years of study (25 students) is distributed pretty evenly with an average of 24, the number of years of exposure clearly exceeds this figure with 31 students in the category of 5 or more years. The figures for the other categories in exposure are 17 (1-2 years), and 15 (3-4 years), or half the number for the highest category. Additionally, 30% of students reported more than one source of exposure to German, the choices being family, friends, work, or other. Use of German outside of class mainly fell into the categories of “sometimes” (34 students or 41%) or “rarely” (26 or 32%). Students thus seemed to either have considerable exposure to the language, or not much at all.

Analyzing the reasons for learning German, the heritage language factor turns out to play a major role. 23 participants (28%) listed family members of German background and/or residing in a German-speaking country as their reason and 13 (16%) called German interesting. This finding is quite significant as it shows the close connection between language/culture and identity, and opens the door to German beyond grammar and textbook. Some students had actually been exposed to a variation of German other than textbook standard due to their family background.

Based on the answers to the previous question about reasons for studying German, where family ties are the main motivator for studying German, it does not come as a surprise that 52 students (62%) reported having either friends or family in a German-speaking country. However, if we divide this question further, it turns out that only 26 (31%) have family but 43 (51%) have friends in a German-speaking country. While 50 (59%) have friends and/or family in Germany, 12/11 (14/13%) listed Austria or Switzerland.

A similarly high percentage resulted from students' answers to the question on visits to German-speaking countries. 48 students (57%) said they had visited a German-speaking country, most of them for close to one month. 46 (55%) had visited Germany, 28 (33%) Austria and 23 (28%) Switzerland. This distribution indicates a considerable number of people who visited more than one German-speaking country and thus were exposed to more than one variety of German.

Finally, in the self evaluation of their language skills, the students showed a pattern that reflected that receptive skills are easier to acquire than productive skills. They ranked themselves highest on reading (with a mean of 2.305 on a scale from 0-4), followed by listening (2.285), speaking (1.94), and writing (1.88). The receptive skills were thus judged better developed or easier to acquire. Overall, students ranked themselves within the average range for all skills. This pattern among skills was later

confirmed in the interviews but with a higher percentage of “good” marks. Interviewees thus showed a higher degree of self-confidence overall in the language skills.

Variation awareness and attitudes

In order to determine variation awareness, students were asked in the questionnaire to check which type of variation from ten given categories (national origin, ethnic group, regional background, sociogeographic, social class, gender, age, mode, register, degree of standardization--see table below) they had experienced or used. They were also asked to explain in which situation they had experienced or used that particular type of variation. The difference between experienced and used was incorporated to distinguish between passive/receptive awareness of variation and active/productive use of it. Overall, students showed a high level of awareness, ranging from 90% who had *experienced* national, regional, and age variation to 60% for sociogeographic variation. The figures for the category of variation *used* were considerably lower and interestingly also concerned different categories. Students responses ranged from 67% for mode and register to 27% for ethnicity.

Table 8: Categories of variation

	<i>Experienced (n=85)</i>	<i>Used (n=85)</i>
National origin	76 (90%)	29
Ethnic group	71	23 (27%)
Regional background	75	37 (44%)
Sociogeographic	51 (60%)	24
Social class	63	32
Gender	63	38
Age	76	54
Mode	67	57 (67%)
Register	65	57 (67%)
Degree of standardization	59	31

In a subsequent question, students were asked whether they could name any words, phrases, or pronunciations that only people from their area, where they were born or grew up, would know. In this item, which examined regional variation only, 45 students (60%) actually provided some words, 37 phrases and 35 pronunciations (50% each). If we compare these numbers with the percentage range for variation *used* (67-27%, 44% for regional variation) from the above table, we can see a good fit. Numbers from this item fall within the variation *used* percentage range and confirm that actual naming of variation (active) requires a higher level of awareness than mere recognition (passive, with percentages from 90% to 60% for variation *experienced*).

The next question added another layer of complexity by requiring students to compare regional variation between their hometowns and Tucson. Only 27% of students were able to furnish an example of variation for their hometown and 55% for Tucson.

Among the categories of variation mentioned most often was again “words”, especially Spanish and Native American words in Tucson, pace, and “an argumentative way of agreeing”, also for Tucson. The fact that several students were natives of Arizona if not Tucson may have contributed to the low number of students able to provide examples for this question.

As far as L2 was concerned, an impressively high 55 students (70%) claimed they were aware of linguistic differences within German. 18 (23%) were able to list more than one example of these differences. The most common difference mentioned was the North-South divergence, that is, regional variation (also possibly national variation, Austria and Switzerland being to the south of Germany). This figure can be considered quite high especially compared with the following numbers.

With the intention to determine the sources of students’ awareness of language variation in L2, students were asked to check whether their teachers, textbooks, audio material, video material, or web activities included linguistic differences. With the exception of “teacher” (37 students or 50%), the resulting figures were rather low: textbook 14 (18%), audio 12 (17%), video 11 (15%), and web 9 (12%--half of which may be due to one exposure to Swiss dialects by the researcher’s class). The teacher thus seems to be the most influential factor, at least in a formal learning environment, which in turn suggests a follow-up study on awareness of and attitudes toward language variation among teachers (see chapter 5).

Moving on to attitudes toward language variation, a positive overall orientation emerged. For L1, English, 76 students (93%) considered language variation an enrichment. At the same time, 48 (72%) considered it an obstacle to communication. The question was subdivided into enrichment and obstacle and demonstrates a differentiated approach to the issue. That is to say, students were not forced to decide whether variation was an enrichment or an obstacle but could check both categories and

state their reasons. The reason most commonly provided for the enrichment category was “interesting” and for the obstacle category “harder to understand”.

Attitudes toward variation are clearly less favorable toward L2, German. Asked for their opinions about language variation in a foreign language, 76% considered them helpful. This did not prevent 84% from considering them problematic as well. Even though this is an obvious shift from the parallel question about L1, in which enrichment had more clearly outweighed obstacle, the relatively high percentage for both problematic and helpful does suggest some ambivalence rather than a purely negative attitude toward language variation in L2. The most frequent supporting argument for the “helpful” choice was “increase understanding” and for “problematic” the fact that it was “hard on beginners”.

The stronger bias against variation in the foreign language may be related to the overall impressions of the various countries. Asked where they would prefer to spend a summer-intensive course, 49 participants ranked Germany first (75%), 37 Austria second (57%), and 40 Switzerland third (65%). The reasons for their particular choice offered were that in Germany they would learn the basic language, that people spoke the most standard, or that they had visited, wanted to live there or had the most knowledge about Germany. These explanations indicate a clear bias toward Germany and the variation of German that is spoken there that goes beyond the fact that Germany is the largest of the three countries. While textbook bias may be one of the contributing factors to this state of affairs, other factors should not be excluded (see chapter 5 for full discussion).

Students’ associations with the three German-speaking countries were also quite clear-cut. For Germany, beer was the most often named descriptor. Austria was either equated with Mozart or Vienna, and Switzerland was overwhelmingly identified with its mountains. These associations, supported by other research (e.g., Schulz & Haerle, 1995), may also contribute to the choice of preferred country. However, this is just one

possible factor influencing students' preference besides their family background, previous experience with one of the countries, future interests, and different level of knowledge.

If we compare attitudes toward variation in English and German from the learner's point of view, we can detect a positive attitude in both cases, L1 again being slightly at an advantage compared to L2. Asked how important learning about variation in the two languages was, students gave consistently high marks. On a scale from one to five, five being the highest possible value, the mode (the value most students chose) for L1 was five and for L2 four. The median (the score with an equal number of scores above and below) reduces the value for L1 to three while for L2 it remains at four. If we consider the mean or average, both values meet at 3.45. We can thus say that students consider it important to learn about variation in both their native language and their foreign language.

Table 9: Importance of learning about variation

	<i>How important (L1)</i>	<i>How important (L2)</i>
1 (not at all)	3 (3%)	5 (6%)
2	20 (23%)	13 (16%)
3	22 (26%)	20 (25%)
4	17 (20%)	25 (31%)
5 (very)	24 (28%)	18 (22%)

N=86

Inferential analysis of questionnaire data

Correlation between awareness/attitudes and demographic data

After describing the results for the individual questions one by one in the previous section, this section will provide some ideas as to the interrelatedness among the individual variables. Initially, every participant was given an overall language awareness score that included their German background, awareness and attitudes in L1 and L2. It was thought that by adding points for every variable thought to be influential in developing awareness and/or attitudes, students could be more easily grouped according to their overall level of awareness or attitudes. This total score was designed as a shortcut to interpreting responses to the language samples. However, the only significant variable influencing overall language awareness scores was years of studying ($t=2.986$, $sig.=.004$). Other variables tested, including years of exposure, friends or family, visits, places lived internationally, and attitudes in L1 and L2 proved to be statistically non-significant. Language awareness and attitudes proved to be too complex to be reduced to such a cumulative model. Even if we believe that all those variables play a part in the development of awareness and attitudes (which may or may not be the case), any calculations without consideration of their relative importance will be doomed to failure.

Years of exposure, visits to German-speaking countries, class level, use of German outside of class, and other foreign languages all showed a significant relationship to the self-evaluation of the participants in all four skills. A regression analysis confirms visits to German-speaking countries and other foreign languages as the most significant variables in the self-evaluation of participants in all four skills. It seems thus that participants who had been exposed to German more than the average student, who had visited one or more German-speaking countries, and who spoke more languages besides

English and German rated their proficiency in German higher than those who did not have that background.

Other foreign languages seems to be a highly influential variable. It shows significant correlations with attitudes in L1 (enrichment vs. obstacle), comparative importance of variation in L1 and L2, and attitudes in L2 (helpful vs. problematic). Especially the correlation with variation as an enrichment is convincing at .911 followed closely by the correlation with variation as helpful (L2) at .814. It appears that the familiarity with more than one foreign language contributes strongly to attitudes about language, but also to language awareness. Awareness of linguistic differences in German shows a correlation of .861 with other foreign languages. Other variables that show a significant correlation with attitudes both in L1 and L2 include years of exposure, current class level, friends and/or family in a German-speaking country, visits to a German-speaking country, places lived within the US and abroad, and the level of self-evaluation in all four skills. Current class level in particular shows a significant relationship with the importance of learning about variation in German ($t=9.948$, $sig.=.000$, $R^2=.847$).

Table 9 summarizes results for correlations among the following questionnaire items (cf. appendix C):

Section I: Demographic information

9. Other foreign languages?

Section II: Variation

3. Would you consider differences in language use an enrichment and/or an obstacle to communication?

Section III: Foreign Language Learning

5. Would you consider learning about linguistic differences within a foreign language helpful or problematic when learning that particular language?

Table 10: Correlations with other foreign languages

		<i>other lang</i>	<i>enrichment</i>	<i>obstacle</i>	<i>helpful</i>	<i>problem</i>
<i>other foreign languages</i>	Pearson C	1.000	.911**	.658**	.814**	.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	113	113	113	113	113
<i>L1 variation enrichment</i>	Pearson C	.911**	1.000	.639**	.800	.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	113	113	113	113	113
<i>L1 variation obstacle</i>	Pearson C	.658**	.639**	1.000	.587**	.586**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	113	113	113	113	113
<i>L2 variation helpful</i>	Pearson C	.814**	.800	.587**	1.000	.687**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	113	113	113	113	113
<i>L2 variation problem</i>	Pearson C	.657**	.627**	.586**	.687**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	113	113	113	113	113

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations among attitudes in L1 and L2 indicate a close relationship between those attitudes. For questions three (enrichment vs. obstacle) in L1 and five (helpful vs. problematic) in L2, a highly positive correlation of .835 demonstrated that attitudes about both languages are clearly related. Similarly, the importance of learning about variation in L1 and L2 respectively shows a near perfect correlation of .952. If we further correlate

the question on importance of learning about variation with the enrichment/obstacle and helpful/problematic pairs, we find a similarly high level of significance. This means that attitudes in one language may transfer to another language. For pedagogical purposes, it furthermore implies that working on attitudes in one language will possibly influence attitudes in the other language (see chapter 5 for further discussion).

Table 11: Enrichment/Obstacle

		<i>how important L1</i>	<i>how important L2</i>
<i>how important is learning about variation in L1</i>	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.952**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
<i>how important is learning about variation in L2</i>	Pearson Correlation	.952**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 12: Attitudes L1/L2

		<i>helpful</i>	<i>enrichment</i>	<i>obstacle</i>	<i>problematic</i>
<i>variation in L2 is helpful</i>	Pearson Cor	1.000	.835**	.604**	.707**
	Sig. (2-tail)		.000	.000	.000
	N	113	113	113	113
<i>variation in L1 is an enrichment</i>	Pearson Cor	.835**	1.000	.721**	.639**
	Sig. (2-tail)	.000		.000	.000
	N	113	113	113	113
<i>variation in L1 is an obstacle</i>	Pearson Cor	.604**	.721**	1.000	.673**
	Sig. (2-tail)	.000	.000		.000
	N	113	113	113	113
<i>variation in L2 is problematic</i>	Pearson Cor	.707**	.639**	.673**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tail)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	113	113	113	113

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Indirect attitude measurement

After discussing findings from the questionnaire, we now turn to the results of the analyses of data from the indirect attitude measurement. The indirect attitude measurement consisted of 16 voice samples and the corresponding response sheets, which in turn were made up of seven evaluative statements linked to a Likert scale and 14 pairs of descriptors in the form of an Osgood semantic differential. The main points of analysis concerned speaker qualities and preferences, extent of identification of individual variables, country preferences in relation to speaker preferences, and

demographic factors related to any of the above. The latter points were analyzed by correlating questionnaire data with data from the indirect attitude measurement.

Speaker qualities, preferences, and identification:

Eight native speakers of English and eight native speakers of German were rated by 98 participants (87% return rate) on a semantic differential scale (Osgood, 1957) combined with a Likert scale (Likert, 1932). The fourteen descriptors included seven qualities associated with status and seven with solidarity. An overall frequency for all speakers detected *intelligent* as the highest taker for status and *wealthy* as the lowest. This last finding was also confirmed in the interviews when several students mentioned they could not determine the wealth of a person based on their speech. For solidarity, *sincere* was the most important indicator and *exciting* the least.

Correlations of status and solidarity ratings with demographic variables showed few significant relationships. For status, *hard-working* and *intelligent* were significantly correlated with ethnicity. For solidarity, *sincere*, *friendly*, *exciting* and *caring* were significantly correlated with ethnicity and *sincere* was furthermore correlated with *household income*. Overall, it seems that ethnicity plays a role in attitudes toward speakers, maybe because citizens of German-speaking countries tend to be depicted as exclusively Caucasian. Alternatively, it may be that the descriptors used in this study carry different connotations for members of different ethnic groups.

In order to bolster reliability and validity of the instrument, a seventeenth page was added after the sixteen speaker pages to gauge the importance of the fourteen qualifiers among participants (see appendix B2). If, for example, participants rated *exciting* as a low priority, a low score on *exciting* would not denote such a negative attitude as for example a low score on *sincere*, an important quality according to student answers to page 17. For status, the same dichotomy between *intelligent* as the most

important predictor and *wealthy* as the least important confirmed responses to the speakers. For solidarity, *sincere* was superseded by *good friend* as the top qualifier, albeit by a margin of one percent (1%) but *exciting* stayed at the bottom of solidarity values. As can be seen from this comparison, descriptors used in this study are reliable measures.

The overall attitude score, combining status and solidarity values, was analyzed for demographic effects (gender, age, household income, and ethnicity). Again, ethnicity was the one variable that showed a significant effect on the overall score. That is to say, participants potentially rated speakers differently when they were perceived to be from the same or a different ethnicity from the participant's.

As part of the task, participants were asked to identify the speakers' nationality. The correct identification was mildly related to years of exposure ($t=2.425$, $\text{sig}=.018$) but inversely related to years of study ($t=-2.998$, $\text{sig}=.004$). This interesting divergence may be due to the fact that exposure can contain a wide variety of dialects. Study, on the other hand, may reflect the exclusive focus on one standard. However, these are just conjectures and cannot explain the greatly disparate results.

If we correlate country preferences with speaker ratings, some interesting results emerge. Students who named Austria as the preferred country for a summer intensive program coincided most in their opinions about the German dialect-speaking woman (6 descriptors), followed by the Swiss male and the Swiss female. Among the students with a preference for Germany, the German male dialect-speaker received the most attention (4 descriptors). For students wanting to go to Switzerland, the Austrian female speaker seemed to be most easily classifiable (5 descriptors) before the Austrian male speaker (2 descriptors). These results indicate a different listening and/or reaction pattern towards certain speakers based on the country preference of respondents.

As far as the correct identification of the speakers, results confirm the almost intuitive supposition that familiar varieties are easier to identify. Among the English samples, the Canadian female, US female, Canadian male, and US male were identified correctly as North American (collapsed coding) by 87.5%, 87%, 84%, and 81% of participants. The New Zealand female speaker was most difficult to identify at 35% (NZ/AUS were collapsed here). The rate of correct identification for the German samples was predictably lower with the female German standard speaker at 58% on the upper end of the spectrum and the female Austrian speaker at the lower margin at 10%. These findings indicate that variations of students' first language are easier to recognize than L2 variations, that familiar varieties are easier to identify than unfamiliar ones, and that female speakers seem to be more clearly categorized, both in the identifiable and in the non-identifiable categories.

Table 13: Level of identification

	<i>English samples</i>	<i>German samples</i>
<i>most identified</i>	Canadian female (87.5%)	German standard female (58%)
<i>least identified</i>	New Zealand female (35%)	Austrian female (10%)

These results could be explained with the help of the concept of markedness of female speech. On the one hand, as Labov (1972) and Trudgill (1974) postulated in their early work, female speakers tend to hypercorrect in order to make up for their lower societal status. On the other hand, a reverse trend has been detected for the lowest class, where female speakers again seem to be at the (other) extreme end, arguably in order to compensate for the lack of status within their own social class, supporting the case for

covert prestige of low status varieties. According to Tannen (1993), this seeming contradiction can be explained by the different effects that the same linguistic strategies may have in the complex web of power versus solidarity so characteristic of most if not all interactions in hierarchical societies. In our case, it would seem that female voices are not necessarily more easily recognizable, rather they mark the poles of the continuum.

Interviews

After discussing results obtained from the questionnaire data and the indirect attitude measurement, we will now move to the findings from the interviews. Interview data differ from the data previously described in various aspects. They were obtained last in the sequence of investigation, involved only 21 subjects, and were analyzed in a purely qualitative way. The discussion of interview data is last in the order of presentation of findings but occupies the most pages and, in the opinion of the researcher, the most prominent place. Questionnaire data were collected to gain an overview, set the scene, discover the main directions. Attitude data were elicited through the indirect measurement to avoid the conscious filter of the reflective brain and document the patterns at work when confronted with different varieties. Interview data were included into the research design to make connections, to focus on individual cases, to let students speak for themselves.

The interviews were conducted with a total of 21 volunteers, 5 men and 16 women, from all different class levels in German (GER 102, GER 202, GER 300/301/313, and GER 475/575/501), the male subjects being proportionally distributed among those levels (i.e., at least one male volunteer per level, two at the 102 level). German native speakers (4) and TAs (4), both native (2) and non-native (2), had participated in the study and were also represented among the interviewees (2+2). The

volunteers answered 9 questions addressing their linguistic background (see appendix D for list of questions), designed to explore the factors contributing to the linguistic awareness and attitudes of individual students. The student volunteers are examples of the student population under study, if not necessarily the average representative. Every graduate class and/or cross-listed upper division class has a high percentage of teaching assistants and native speakers. That is why, for the purpose of this study, those two special groups were included in the sample without further subdivisions (also for numerical reasons). The fact that the students were volunteers may play a part in their answering behavior, as may be the fact that they were promised extra credit for their participation. However, qualitative research is not so much concerned with the idea of numerical representativeness as with the detailed description of phenomena, context, and interplay or the confluence of particular circumstances that lead one person to think, talk, or act in a particular way. In the following section, the responses provided by the students will be presented question by question and taking into consideration the different class levels. Interview data were analyzed through repeated reading, sifting and scanning, and semantic coding based on the interview transcripts. They were triangulated with questionnaire data and the data from voice sample response sheets. This continuity was initially established in the data collection process by interview question number one, aimed at linking the two stages of data collection in the mind of the student:

1) Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

Do you remember taking the questionnaire?

Is there anything you want to ask about it or add to it?

Students had filled out the response sheets to the voice samples and the questionnaire about one week before the interview. The first question was designed to

connect the interview to the voice samples and the questionnaire. Furthermore, giving the students the first turn in speaking about any aspect they remembered was meant to prevent any non-deliberate steering of the students' responses by the interviewer in any particular direction. In order to refresh their memories and also to label the interview tape with the same number as the listening responses and the questionnaire, students were asked to recognize their questionnaire from the stack of their class and tell the researcher the number that was written on top of the first page. In this way, interviews could be related to the questionnaires and numbered without any identifying information on the students. If they chose to, students could refer back to their questionnaire answers during the interview but most chose not to. Students were then asked whether they consented to the interview being tape-recorded and all interview subjects gave their consent without reservations. All interviews were audible and could be transcribed verbatim. The following themes emerged from the analysis of answers to question number one.

Comprehensibility of samples:

Obviously, the most basic question was whether students (at the lower levels of proficiency) could understand the German samples, hear a difference at all between the varieties presented, identify the national origin of the speakers and whether English samples would be perceived as easier to identify throughout the instructional levels. Only one student, at the 102-level, reported that he could not understand the German samples, but only pick out individual words. That student was the only one among the 102 group that had not lived abroad, had never been to a German-speaking country, and had no friends or relatives from there. He also stated that the English samples all sounded "just English to me". The lack of international experience and the corresponding low to non-existent variation awareness in English combined with no exposure or even personal ties to German may explain his difficulties in distinguishing between English varieties and his

problems in understanding the German samples. At the 202-level, students claimed they were able to understand the German samples with one exception who said he could not understand the Swiss ones. However, it turns out that this student labeled the Austrian speaker Swiss and the Swiss speaker Austrian. It may be that “hard to understand” equals “Swiss” in this student’s concept of German dialects, as it does for many native and non-native speaker. At the 300 level, some students actually said they found the task of identifying varieties and ranking the speakers easy in general. In this task, students first had to rank the speaker on short evaluative statements regarding comprehensibility, language skills, competence, and attractiveness as a friend or teacher, then try to identify the variety they spoke, and finally rank them on personality traits denoting status (e.g., intelligent) and solidarity (e.g., sincere). This statement concerning the perceived ease of the task did not refer to the German samples in particular but could be interpreted as a higher level of language awareness and confidence at a higher instructional level.

Distinctiveness of varieties:

As to the difference between varieties, almost all students reported noticing differences, ranging from mere tone, speed, voice, intonation, flow to words, phrases, or “accents”. At the lower instructional levels and for students who had not been to a German-speaking country, the most obvious differences between samples often consisted in personal characteristics of a speaker like voice or speed and students confused these aspects with proper prosody characteristics of a variety like intonation or pronunciation of vowels.

Identification of varieties:

The identification of varieties was a trickier point. Students who were able to identify the English varieties stated that they had friends from outside the US or had

heard the accents on TV. Few had actually been to the countries where these varieties are spoken. Mostly students were able to identify North American versus other varieties of English. The distinction between Canadian and US proved rather difficult. Similarly, the New Zealand variety was most often confused with Australian and also occasionally Irish. Or as one student put it: “the only thing I was stumped on was trying to pick up words or phrases I hadn’t heard before in certain regions of the US or places I hadn’t lived and I couldn’t do that.”

For the German varieties, only students at the most advanced level, 400/500, students who had been to German-speaking countries, TAs and native speakers (but not all of them) were able to identify most of the German samples. Interestingly, two higher-level students who were not native speakers of German found the German varieties actually easier to identify than the English ones, reversing the general trend of English samples being easier to identify than the German ones. In one case, it may be due to the fact that the student was a native speaker of French from Canada and thus not as familiar with variation in English. In general, it may be that visits to German speaking countries and a more in depth study of the language results in greater attunement to varieties in the language of study than in the native language. Even at the lower levels though, students from both sections/teachers pointed out that, without being able to place the varieties, they had noticed differences among the TAs they had learned from.

Language attitudes:

Another point worth mentioning with respect to samples is the confirmation of results of previous studies regarding preconceived notions about certain varieties. Several students mentioned Southern varieties of the US as having negative connotations for them as opposed to the British accent which was perceived as a sign of intelligence and education. As for the German samples, these preconceived notions were quite

disparate based on the personal experience of the students. While students who had Swiss friends, Swiss teachers or had been to Switzerland called the variety “cute” or “flowing”, others labeled it unintelligible. Similarly, students who had been to Austria, or had had an Austrian teacher or friend had a positive attitude; whereas one student thought Austrian German was difficult to understand, quoting a friend who had studied in Austria and had told him that “you can’t understand the Austrians”. Linguistic and cultural stereotypes thus influenced the evaluation of speakers by students already at the lower proficiency levels and even if speakers were identified incorrectly.

Appropriateness of descriptors:

Concerning the response sheet, several students across levels mentioned that it was hard for them to rate qualities like wealthy, selfish, or successful based on a short recording on the topic of daily routines. The occasional student, however, confessed that by critically contemplating their answer patterns they realized they were linking aggressive voices with successful or ranking male/low voices higher than female/high voices. They had started to realize how attitudes influenced their ranking behavior. Also pace could be influential, a slow speaker was either considered well-reflected and intelligent or boring and clueless. While some students complained about the short duration of the samples, one actually declared how surprising it was that people have a pretty clear idea about somebody just after listening to their voice for a short time. The topic of the sample was also criticized by one student as boring and unrelated. Another student mentioned that the speakers sounded boring. However, after a brief rationale for this was provided by the researcher, students accepted these explanations.

Exposure, awareness and attitude:

Three students at the lower levels expressly mentioned that the topic of language variation was new to them, they had never thought about it or had never heard such varieties (particularly in German) before. This suggests an untapped potential of language awareness, or lack thereof, that could be addressed in the language classroom, both in English and the foreign language of choice. On the other hand, international students, people with military background, and border area residents showed not only a higher level of language awareness but also a clearly positive attitude towards variation (e.g., “diversity is my life” or “if you want to make friends, you have to adapt”). An integration of language variation into the foreign language classroom might help students who do not possess such a rich life experience to appreciate the nature of language and its varieties.

Native language versus foreign language:

Lastly, the different native languages of the interviewees have to be taken into consideration. At the 300-level, two students had Spanish as their native language and one student Polish. All three reported that they had problems identifying the varieties both in English and in German but claimed they would be able to do it easily in their native language. At the 400/500-level, two students were native speakers of German (and TAs) and one of them had French as her mother tongue (also a TA). They all reported it easier for them to identify the German samples than the English samples, including the French native speaker who was from Canada. For the German native speakers, the findings confirm the general trend that it seems to be easier to identify varieties in their native language than in a foreign language, whereas the French native speaker seems to suggest that among foreign languages, the one that is the object of study rather than a tool for daily life may be learned more consciously.

The fact that six out of the 21 volunteers were not native speakers of English should be taken into consideration but as an asset rather than a “confounding variable”. Native speakers of Spanish are to be found in all classes across the university, native speakers of German are a numerous part of the graduate student population in German studies, and international students and recent immigrants are on the rise in university programs across campus. What may be a problem in the quantitative paradigm (the non-native speakers are too diverse to constitute a subgroup by themselves: TA or not, graduate or undergraduate, German or other native language) contributes a plethora of experience to the qualitative picture. While qualitative research is not aimed at establishing representativeness *per se*, the composition of graduate courses reflecting the TA population is not too different from the group of interviewees. Likewise, the more mainstream composition of lower level classes is reflected in the demographics of the interview sample. Comments from non-native speakers of English and/or TAs are introduced as such throughout the narrative.

Answers to the introductory question demonstrated a basic metalinguistic understanding in most students since they were able to comment on their experience with the samples. They were able to reflect on the samples, the response sheet and the overall task of identifying and evaluating the speaker. Two students (200 and 500 level) even started to discover the influence of their language attitudes in the rating process without explicit prodding by the interviewer. Previous exposure to varieties as well as a metalinguistic or comparative approach to the study of (a foreign) language both seem to contribute to heightened variation awareness. Overall, students answers to the first question suggest various levels of language awareness that could be put to good use in the language learning process.

2) *How would you characterize a good speaker/writer of English?*

The second question was designed to explore students' criteria for a "good" writer and/or speaker of English, their native language (in most cases). On one hand, the students' descriptions of a good speaker were of interest, and on the other, the reasons behind their choice of descriptors were just as important. With a view to the research questions, it was hoped that these descriptors as well as information about their genesis would contribute to the bigger picture of the development of language attitudes. By the same token, the degree to which students would be able to explain their choice of criteria could be indicative of their level of language awareness. As far as the interview sequence, question number two was the first one in a series of four exploring the students' linguistic value system or language ideology.

2) *How would you characterize a good speaker/writer of English?*

3) *According to these criteria, would you consider yourself a good speaker/writer of English? Why/Why not?*

4) *How would you characterize a good speaker/writer of German?*

5) *According to these criteria, would you consider yourself a good speaker/writer of German? Why/Why not?*

The set of questions was designed to compare criteria for good speakers/writers in both languages. While question number two asked for criteria of a good speaker in English, question number four was addressing the same point for German. Questions number three and five asked for a self evaluation of the students' command of the respective language based on the criteria they had just furnished. In this way, consistency between professed attitudes and self-evaluation could be examined as well as possible transfer of

attitudes between L1 and L2. The following criteria emerged from the interviews and are presented in the order of frequency in which students mentioned them.

Grammar:

The main criterion for a good speaker of English that emerged throughout all levels was grammar. Even though it was mentioned more frequently on the lower levels, it was found at every level. Similar concepts that were named include word order, sentence structure, form, comprehensible sentences, proper sentences, and speaking in phrases. Examples of improper grammar provided by the students ranged from incorrect verb conjugation (I be) to inappropriate contractions (ain't), from double negatives to erroneous use of pronouns (you and me vs. you and I). Some students, however, accepted those versions in spoken English for informal contexts. The reason given by some of the students championing good grammar was their own experience in their family (e.g., a father who had been an English major) or at school (where they were corrected). Given that this question was addressing their criteria for a good speaker in their native language, it is interesting to see that grammar still is the first criterion that comes to mind.

Fluency:

Fluency or pace was another popular criterion for a good speaker. Fluency was described as the absence of "hum's", filler words such as "like", or "expressing oneself without having to think too much". Similar concepts mentioned were pace, speed, and flow. These concepts were mentioned both at the lowest level and the highest level of proficiency but more often at the higher level.

Vocabulary:

Vocabulary or choice of words was also mentioned at the lowest and the highest level but more often at the lower level. Vocabulary referred both to the range of words used by the speaker and the appropriate word choice according to context. Articulating ideas and expressing oneself could also be subsumed under vocabulary to some degree. Interestingly, one student from a bilingual (French/English) background referred to somebody who could maintain a conversation in French without code-switching to English as a good speaker. This, of course, stirs up the old controversy about code-switching as a deficit model or an aggregate model.

Comprehensibility:

Comprehensibility was the next criterion, mentioned more often at the higher levels. This may be due to the fact that some TAs were included in this group who might have chosen this descriptor based on their pedagogical background. On the other hand, it might also denote a move from a more fragmented evaluation of language to a more holistic model. Similar concepts include “clear”, “understandable”, “articulate”, and “express oneself”.

The concept of comprehensibility seems to encompass both form and content. Several other terms could be subsumed under that category such as “concise”, “specific”, “clear”, “no empty expressions”, or “nothing offensive or ignorant”. These terms could also be viewed as an expression of rhetoric skills, or as one student put it, “the difference between a good speaker and a good communicator.”

Prosody:

Some more rhetorical elements mentioned at the higher levels include voice and intonation. Whereas voice is a personal feature usually considered inherent and not

learned or changeable unless one chooses to take voice lessons or become a newscaster or politician, intonation is a prosodic feature that is acquired both in the native language and any foreign language. It is also a variable in sociolinguistics, differing along categories such as gender, regional background or ethnic group.

Slang:

The use of slang was another factor mentioned by students at all levels except for the lowest one as inappropriate for a good speaker. However, some students made a distinction between “cool slang” or the intentional use of slang for indexical purposes as opposed to the use of slang out of ignorance. Similarly, slang was sometimes accepted for spoken language as opposed to written language.

Context:

This distinction according to context is mentioned repeatedly at the higher levels. It denotes a high level of language awareness and indeed variation awareness. Mostly, these contexts refer to the distinction between formal and informal (register) and spoken versus written (mode). A good speaker/writer would thus have to handle a wide range of styles and adapt their language according to circumstances.

The ‘ideal’ native-speaker and arbitrariness/relativity of standards:

Several interesting contrasting opinions emerged for this question. One student, an English native speaker at the 102-level, argued that non-native speakers were the best speakers because native speakers tend to use slang. On the contrary, another student, a non-native speaker of English and German TA at the 500 level called every native speaker of a language a good speaker. This would support the theory of language in use which gives precedence to actual usage over prescriptive rules.

Similarly, while one student at the 400/500 level questioned the concept of proper English for the US context, another student at the same level admitted to preferring proper English to a real strong accent like New Zealand or Australian which sounded “twisted.” Along the same lines, a student at a lower level preferred the British accent as more proper and denoting intelligence. The question of accent will be dealt with more extensively under question number six.

Lastly, two more distinctions were mentioned by one student each. The first one, a German native speaker, ventured that the difference between a good speaker and a bad speaker was bigger in English than in German. This statement hints at the fact that criteria for good speakers may be language or culture dependent. Scholarship on contrastive rhetoric supports this opinion (cf. Connor, 1996). A second student thought that the men from the samples spoke more sloppily. This statement is in line with general sociolinguistic findings attesting a higher level of correctness to female speakers as a way of acquiring social status (cf. Labov, 1972; Silva-Corvalán, 1989).

Good speaker versus good writer:

A subquestion that emerged during the interviews concerned the possible connections between being a good speaker and a good writer. Most students saw some degree of relatedness between those two skills but only a minority saw either no connection at all or inversely, a perfect correspondence. Several students mentioned that it was quite possible to speak improperly but write in good form because of the time factor and the chance to edit. Whereas speaking provides an opportunity for feedback, writing may be a gift, needs practice and requires the ability to present a decontextualized argument in a logical sequence. Speaking and writing represent different skills and if that difference is not developed, students, for example freshmen, will write as they speak and receive bad grades. For good writing, discourse that can be understood by all native

speakers of a particular language was suggested. For speaking, the ability to adapt to the environment, for example US versus UK, was mentioned as desirable. Writing was considered more difficult and a more developed form of expression, requiring different vocabulary and sentence structure. Nervousness was mentioned as an obstacle to good speaking.

Overall, answers to this question confirmed a focus on traditional linguistic categories such as grammar (accuracy), fluency, and vocabulary. Higher-level features like context, style (here: slang), and prosody were also mentioned. Comprehensibility as a criterion suggests a more pragmatic approach. The distinction between criteria for writing and speaking is indicative of some level of language and variation awareness (mode: oral vs. written). The most interesting aspect, however, lies in the students' raising of the ambivalent nature of native-speakerness and standards as criteria since it concerns two of the most hotly debated issues in language ideology.

3) According to these criteria, would you consider yourself a good speaker/writer of English? Why/Why not?

This question was designed to engage students in reflections about the criteria they had just mentioned with a view to their own performance. Similar to the questionnaire section where students were asked to evaluate their level of proficiency in the four skills, albeit for German, and the previous interview question on criteria for a good speaker/writer, question number three compared the two productive skills. The reasons for their self-evaluation were assumed to coincide with the criteria for good speakers/writers offered in the previous question. The importance of this question lies in the exploration of their own language development together with the development of language attitudes, the reflection on criteria often times adopted unconsciously in the

process of first language acquisition and schooling, and the analysis of a potential gap between the linguistic self-image and the chosen model.

Balance of skills:

The most striking result was that overall the balance was quite even between speaking and writing. The majority of people considered themselves good writers and/or speakers of English. On the highest instructional level, most people said they felt almost equally comfortable in speaking and writing, while at all other instructional levels, the number of people who preferred writing overall equalled the number who preferred speaking. That is to say that at the lower levels, students tended to evaluate their skills differently from students at the highest level. Even though one can hypothesize over the possible reasons for such a discrepancy, the particular composition of the 500 level group (TAs, native speakers of German and French) needs to be taken into consideration.

Criteria for self-evaluation:

The students who considered themselves good speakers and writers of English explained this fact with their personal background. One student had a father who was an English major and the other, a non-native speaker of English, cited the educational and cultural background in her home country. The latter student added that she felt quite confident in English in the informal settings with her friends but still recognized a gap between her language and the language of her professors.

The students who ranked their competence in speaking English lower attributed it to their anxiety level. However, according to one student, this feeling of nervousness may be situation dependent. The lack of vocabulary, which has to be immediately accessible in speaking, was also mentioned as a personal impediment to good speaking. This, of course, relates to the time factor, which has been mentioned before in the context

of writing versus speaking. Finally, the neighborhood was brought up as an influential factor in the development of speaking skills. If you grow up listening to dialect and “incorrect” language, your speaking will reflect this. This observation parallels research on literacy, notably Heath (1983).

Those students who did not consider their English writing ability up to par mentioned the lack of formal training in the language (in the case of a native speaker of Spanish), insufficient practice (a student who was writing more in her foreign languages than in her native language, English), and the higher expectations at the adult writing level. The student who offered this last reason found it harder to attract the reader’s attention as opposed to in her childhood, when everybody had praised her work. This may be due to the different jargons or cants (cf. Phillips, 1982) people have to acquire in their professional lives, making successful communication more challenging, or the more direct and concrete communication possible at the more basic (i.e., linguistically less sophisticated) levels of interaction, for example in the child-family structure.

Differences according to language:

Among the non-native speakers of English, the French speaker ventured that her speaking and writing skills were comparable in French but her writing was in need of improvement in English. A native speaker of German stated that her writing and speaking skills in English were about equivalent but clearly less developed than in her native language and in her first foreign language, French. She added that she felt some linguistic and cultural barriers towards English, which she found useful but could not embrace as much as French. This student had also mentioned previously that for her, the different languages were like different personalities.

From the answers it seems that students evaluate their skills with reference to traditional models (English major, proper neighborhood, formal training). Even though

they profess a certain degree of comfortableness with their skills, the less developed skill is regarded as deficient in as much as it does not conform to expectations or standards. Furthermore, students seem to be taking for granted some of the categories mentioned in the previous question, like grammar and comprehensibility, and judge themselves more harshly. Whereas attitudes in the previous question seemed to concern more strictly linguistic features, in their self-evaluation students seem to focus on social acceptance (“anxiety”, “cultural barriers”, “attracting attention”).

4) How would you characterize a good speaker/writer of German?

This question was designed to explore the students’ criteria for a good speaker in the foreign language with the exception of the two native-speaker TAs for who it was their first language. The thoughts of this subgroup on criteria for foreign language skills can be found in the previous two questions. On one hand, it was of interest to see whether students would have developed some criteria for the second language, on the other, whether those criteria would be the same as for their first language or whether the learner’s perspective required different ones. Interestingly, the same or similar concepts emerged as with English, albeit with other examples and/or explanations. Most concepts were mentioned throughout all instructional levels with some of the more stylistic elements limited to the upper levels.

Grammar:

Grammar and related concepts were again mentioned by students at all levels. Whereas basic grammar points such as sentence structure and finishing a sentence were named, more sophisticated levels of grammar were also cited. One student mentioned the way to bend grammar to fit one’s need; another argued that flow is necessary in good

German because the verb usually comes at the end, and yet another suggested that non-native speakers may be able to play with the language more intentionally because of their understanding of its grammar.

Pace:

Besides grammar, pace was the second most often mentioned quality for a good speaker. As opposed to the requirements for flow and speed for the native language, here a slow or deliberate pace, especially at the lower levels, with pauses between words, was considered desirable. Finishing the words (not “swallowing the endings”), similar to finishing the sentences, was quoted as helpful, as were clear pronunciation, an expressive intonation and a low voice.

Vocabulary:

As far as vocabulary was concerned, some opposing opinions were voiced, even though students at all levels agreed on the importance of this element. While one student argued for colorful vocabulary without technical jargon, another considered just this technical terminology a sign of good speaking. Similar to the opinion on “not a single word in English” for the French-Canadian native speaker for the first language, a German native speaker independently brought up the same idea of avoiding “foreign words”. Slang was equally unpopular, especially at the higher levels, as were abbreviations.

Style/dialect:

In the same vein, stylistically “Hochdeutsch” (high/standard German) was clearly favored over regionalisms like Swabian and Bavarian, two dialect regions that differ starkly from the North of Germany, which is supposedly the standard variety. Southern Germany as such and rural dialect were rated low as well, similar to the Southern US and

rural Texan varieties that were mentioned for English. Overall, writing in “formal style” (vocabulary, structure,...) was deemed more appropriate than writing based on spoken German and “professional language” (as in jargon, structured arguments...) was appreciated more than “journal writing” (as in informal communication, limited vocabulary...), even though the latter may be more easily understood, especially by language learners.

Comprehensibility:

Comprehensibility was regarded as a *conditio previa* for good speakers/writers but idiomatic usage would be the characteristic quality. Beyond mere comprehensibility, clarity was mentioned several times and at all levels, as were conciseness and making the point. An underlying prerequisite would be “knowing what you are talking about”. A good speaker/writer would thus require both form and content, more than just plain comprehensibility.

Cultural paradigms:

The next higher level of complexity that was mentioned were organizational and referential arguments. The conveying of ideas was emphasized, in particular their presentation in German, as opposed to a word for word translation. Similarly, the inclusion of German culture, explicit or implicit, was brought up. German literary giants like Thomas Mann were quoted by one student as an example of good writing. Poetic language and citations were also included as features of good speaking and/or writing. Finally, Western logic was mentioned, referring to a well-structured speech according to the Aristotelian paradigm. This concept could be applied to English or to the foreign language as well. Except for the citations and poetic language, the aspects mentioned in this paragraph were provided by English native speakers.

Perceived level of command:

A final group of comments referred to the perceived level of command of the language. Similar to the question on English, one student again suggested the native speaker as an example for a good speaker/writer. This opinion was supported in a way by another student who declared that “somebody who has been abroad or somebody who gets to speak a lot in class” would be good speakers of German. For one student, no difference existed between criteria for German and for English. A native speaker of neither German nor English mentioned the fact that some native speakers are able to adapt to the level of non-native interlocutors as a sign of good speakers. Lastly, from the learner’s perspective one student was quite clear about that only “somebody who catches on early” can be a good writer.

Besides the traditional categories that were also mentioned for English, like grammar, vocabulary, and comprehensibility, a clear focus on standard language and high culture could be detected. Whether this shift is due to less actual experience with variation in German and the corresponding risk of misperception, a general view of Germanic culture as being more exclusive, formal, and standard-oriented--which may or may not be true--or a curriculum that promotes literary language and canonical culture remains to be explored.

5) According to these criteria, would you consider yourself a good speaker/writer of German? Why/Why not?

This question was designed to mirror question three about their own performance in English, asking students to apply the criteria they had just furnished for a good speaker/writer of German to their own performance in that language. In the questionnaire

part, they had already rated themselves in the four skills. This time, they were asked to focus on the productive skills and provide some reasons for their self-evaluation. Some points to consider were their overall evaluation tendencies, whether these tendencies were changing with increasing proficiency, which criteria they would provide to support their evaluation, whether there was any relation between speaking and writing, and whether there was any connection between their evaluation of skills in English and German.

Overall confidence:

In general, their self-evaluation was quite confident. Most students focused on the aspects of the language they were comfortable with or thought they had a good command of. Only few mentioned any weaknesses and if so, only in contrast to the strong points they had listed. The overall descriptors they used for their performance in German ranged from “decent”, “ok”, “average”, “between good and bad”, to “good”. This last qualifier was not used at the 102 level, indicating maybe a slight lack of confidence on the beginning level since the students were explicitly asked to rate themselves as speakers/writers of German with respect to their current class level and not compared to native speakers or advanced students.

Grammar:

Among the criteria they were using to evaluate their performance, students at all levels once again mentioned grammar above and beyond any other descriptors. Formal style and proper but simple sentences were preferred. Following grammar, vocabulary was considered the next best indicator for measuring their language performance. More holistic indicators included expressing oneself, coming to the point, and being understandable. Finally, on a more advanced level, the ability to mix styles, to adapt to circumstances, to be creative was added. Adapting in this context also included having a

different personality in each language. Intonation, voice, or pace were not mentioned at all; only one student stated that one of her strengths was enunciation.

Differentiated skills:

As far as speaking and writing were concerned, the overall balance between better speakers and better writers was fairly even. However, the number of students who rated themselves equally good in both skills was low. On the lowest instructional level, a clear predominance of writing over speaking could be observed. Reasons for preferring writing again included the time factor, creativity, and the related use of images and metaphors. Speaking was considered easier because one could speak without having to worry about articles and endings and “without having to think”. One student put the question into a wider perspective by indicating that comprehension was better developed than either writing or speaking.

Criteria for self-evaluation:

Interesting observations included one student who, being an English native speaker, considered her German writing better than her English because she could be more creative. In English, she felt confined by the rigid structure of the Aristotelian essay, whereas in German, with a more flexible approach to sentence structure and ordering of ideas, she could better accommodate her urge to express herself. Whether this observation about the different degrees of structuredness are accurate or reflect a different level of familiarity with rules, the importance of the statement lies in the student's perception. Another student, a native speaker of French and TA, admitted that her German was better outside the university context, because of the pressure of native speaker colleagues and scrutiny by students. Two factors that helped with the language were an immersion program (for speaking) and teaching (for vocabulary and grammar).

Frame of reference:

One of the main differences between the students' self-evaluation of their performance in English and German seems to be the frame of reference. In English, the native language for most participants, evaluations and supporting rationales tended to be influenced by personal background and factors outside the classroom or formal instruction. On the other hand, in German, which has been learned in class by most participants, criteria for evaluation appeared to follow more formal and pedagogical criteria. Only students who had been exposed to the language in the target community demonstrated a more holistic or contextual type of evaluation. It would seem that the principle of communicative language teaching, even though practiced in the classroom, has not yet taken root in the students' approach to evaluating foreign language needs and skills.

6) What role does language variation play in your evaluation of a good speaker?

This question was the first to be more directly related to the purpose of the study. Yet, this statement should not serve to discount the previous questions. Similar to the progression in the overall set-up of the study--from the indirect attitude measurement (the voice samples and corresponding response sheets) toward the more direct instrument (the open-ended questionnaire)-- the move from the non-directional opening question via the more indirect questions about linguistic values in their native language and the foreign language--both general and in relation to their own performance--to the more direct question on attitudes toward language variation, the attempt was made to let students reach their own conclusions in a step-by-step process.

The advantage of such a straightforward question lies in the fact that students' answers, at least on first interpretation, correspond more closely to the research questions. However, since the responses to direct questions, which make their objective clear, tend to be filtered by respondents according to their idea of an appropriate answer, they have to be taken with a grain of salt. Still, at that point in the interview, students seemed to have become sufficiently comfortable as far as speaking openly without too many reservations. The key points of interest for this particular question included whether students thought and/or claimed that language variation influenced their judgment, whether such a process could be detected for both languages, and what triggered these reactions.

Awareness of attitudes:

Most students, either through the study or because of previous sensibilities, admitted some kind of influence of language variation on their evaluation of a speaker. Some called it subconscious, others used expressions like "I guess I do", "I try not to", "one should not", and "some people do". Several students mentioned the concept of stereotypes in this context, that is to say, they showed an awareness of the ambivalent nature of generalized attitudes. Again, this issue was brought up without specific input from the researcher. Most students did report being able to tell where people are from within the US. One of them actually suggested that in the US certain accents were judged more harshly. In general, students seem to be or have become to some degree aware of their language attitudes. Only one student said that he went by content and that Europeans were better at language learning, presumably meaning Europeans were better at picking up the variation.

Examples of variations and their connotations in English:

Some of the examples of variation in English that students mentioned included for example the difference between US English and UK English. Even though some students thought that UK and AUS English sounded more intelligent, or preferred a UK accent over a NY accent, several others declared that these differences referred to language and not to people or that it was good to know the difference to be able to adapt. One must of course bear in mind that for the purpose of this study, only national variation within the same socioeconomic and educational bracket and as little regional distinctiveness as possible was included due to the limitations on time and sample numbers.

Varieties or accents that provoked negative predispositions according to the students included the US South (several mentions), rural Texan, California, Ohio backhills, and the British Cockney. New York was cited as the “urbane” (as in sophisticated, mundane) counterpart. Some images those accents conjured up in the minds of the students were rural, poor, uneducated, bad grammar (e.g., no conjugation). Drawn out syllables were an indicator for that type of image for at least one of the students. The choice of descriptors (e.g., urbane, having a clearly prestigious connotation) was telling by itself. However, several other students argued that though these particular forms might not be correct they were not automatically wrong either.

Examples of variations and connotations in German:

For German, students, especially at the higher levels, were also able to provide some examples of variation they had experienced or that would influence their evaluations of a speaker. Some of the examples for unpopular varieties were Bavarian, Swabian, and Saxonian. Saxonian was seen as the language of shop assistants and workers whereas *Hochdeutsch* was felt to be spoken by successful business people (Comment from an English native speaker (non-TA) on his experience as an exchange

student in Leipzig). One student who preferred *Hochdeutsch* hinted at the possibility that this might change with time, similar to his switch from US English to British English as the favorite variety. Another student whose first exposure had been a German dialect was very comfortable with it. Yet another student actually regretted not being able to speak the dialect of a small village he visited because it made him feel “out of place”. For some students, variation in German mirrored their experience with English. They could hear a difference, but did not necessarily associate any particular qualities. Overall, students who had been to a German-speaking country had come across variation like Southern Germany versus the variety spoken in Berlin, had to adapt, but did not have any “bad experiences” (miscommunication, unfriendly treatment,...).

Features of variation:

The elements students were listening for in order to determine accents or varieties included fluency, pace, intonation, words, and voice. Some categories of variation they were using to place speakers by were age, social class, region, gender--even though some also refuted this--and, to some extent, city versus country. Style was mentioned under this heading as well. One student actually found that writing was more revealing about a person than accent.

Comprehension in context:

In general, students emphasized that comprehensibility was the key. For this purpose, knowledge of different accents and the cultural history of different regions would actually be helpful, not so much for understanding slang or dialect but for placing the conversation into meaningful context. One example a student gave was Georgia sweet tea versus NY coffee. If you did not know that Georgians pick their favorite restaurant according to the sweet tea they serve, or that tea always arrives at the table

with sugar in it, you would not know why a certain conversation took place. According to this student, language variation has a clear cultural component.

Personal background:

The personal background, however, proved to be most influential in the evaluation of variation as such. One student, even though at the lowest instructional level in German, explained that she had been exposed to varieties through friends and family and did not have an accent herself due to her international background. Another student and TA, who through her Canadian background is familiar with non-Parisian French and non-US English, emphasized that this variation awareness translated very much into her approach to German.

7) Has participation in this study had any effect on your approach to language learning and if so, what?

This question was designed to see whether students had consciously integrated some of the material discussed in this project into their metalinguistic toolkit. One of the reasons for the question was the intention on the part of the researcher to make this project a meaningful experience for the participants, an experience they might be able to profit from in their future language learning career. Of course, one might see this question as a leading one, in the sense that students would feel compelled to say something positive about the study. However, given the wide range of answers to this question, most seemed to be genuine and interested. The fact that interviewees were volunteers might also have contributed to the interest expressed by most participants.

Interest:

The qualifier most often used to describe the project was interesting. This catch-all term was, however, usually followed by some concrete examples that validated the statement. Participation in the project in their own words helped students see language as a whole, how language evolves. Thus they were able to transcend the more compartmentalized or component approach to language often presented in foreign language textbooks for the sake of pedagogy and practicality (e.g., grammar, vocabulary,...). Some just loved accents, some reported that the project got them interested in learning something new, like British English or the variety spoken in Berlin, called “Berlinish” by one of the students.

Awareness:

Second, reflecting on the issues of language variation and attitudes seems to have contributed to a higher degree of language and attitude awareness. Students acknowledged that participation in the study has “made me aware, of prejudices for example”, led them to “revalue what I think of as proper or regional dialects.” One student told about an incident where some relatives from Ohio had referred to a plane as an aeroplane, which she would now accept more readily. Another student made a case for Swabian as a valid way of speaking German. Strong accents in general should be seen not only as a problem but also as a bonus.

Reflection and discussion:

Participating in the project also made students think about language, talk to their friends about it, and wonder about people in the US who might not understand them. One example that was quoted in this context was “the mall”, a Tucson/University of Arizona term denoting the green strip in the middle of campus and not a shopping center. People

from out of state might not understand this term. Variables such as age and gender were also mentioned as categories that had become salient through the project experience.

Effect of differences on language learning:

Some students simply reported being intrigued by the differences. These differences in communication patterns, in sounds, and the underlying reasons stimulated some metalinguistic thoughts. However, those differences were not of purely linguistic nature, but strongly related to culture and sometimes just to personality. Revaluing one's own preconceived notions about variation, a boost in confidence for target community interactions, and preparation against culture shock were among the effects mentioned. Being aware of those differences in English was perceived as easier and also as helpful for the detection and understanding of differences in German, which were sometimes difficult because of vocabulary and pace.

Different TAs with their different linguistic and cultural background were a first hand example of variation and could prepare students better for variations in the target language. One student actually commented that he felt more confident now thinking about a future visit to Germany, that he would be able to understand the local population. The fact that those different sounds only denoted different places and not different languages also seemed reassuring. The example given was that it was just another form of German and not Finnish.

The differences were furthermore perceived as options rather than mutually exclusive versions. Students commented on the idea that different did not necessarily mean incorrect. One student felt more confident after having heard some German informal language that was actually acceptable. S/he had previously assumed, like many others, that there was just one "correct" way of expressing oneself. In general, students

reported being more open to accents, particularly in German, as a result of participating in this project.

Past experience and future plans:

Overall, there was a continuum from students who said they had never heard such variations before, referring to the German samples, to one student who had already taken a linguistics class. Some students also gave examples of variations they had noticed before taking part in the study. The different pronunciation of “zwanzig” (twenty), which can be pronounced with an {x} sound or a {k} sound, was mentioned in this context.

On the highest level, especially among TAs, a more pedagogical impact was observable. One TA mentioned noticing the reactions of the students participating in the project and was encouraged to include more variation in the future. Another TA was wishing for more material on variation to include in her teaching. A special class on variation on the advanced level was also suggested. Overall, integration of variation into foreign language teaching was considered, if not a top priority, so at least an issue.

8) *What suggestions would you like to make for language teachers specifically about language variation?*

This question was designed to explore whether students thought it meaningful to include language variation into the teaching of German as a foreign language, at what level, to which extent, under which form, or any other considerations they might bring up. Even though students might not have the pedagogical training to design a curriculum, syllabus, or lesson plan, they are able to express clear preferences as to the content and way of instruction. Apart from the conclusions the researcher will be presenting at the end of this report concerning the inclusion of language variation based on her overall

analysis and interpretation of the data, this question was yet another attempt to include the students' own voices in the picture. They are, after all, the recipients of instruction, in traditional terms, or the decision-makers in their learning process, in more contemporary terminology.

Appropriate level:

The main concern of the students was not so much the question whether to include language variation but at what level and in which form. The answers ranged from "yes, definitely;" to "yes, but only at the higher level;" to "yes, the sooner the better". Whereas the group arguing for a later introduction of variation outnumbered the group in favor of immediate exposure, even the former conceded some sort of mentioning of the topic at the beginning level.

The inclusion of language variation at the beginning level created some controversial viewpoints. While some students thought that it could do no harm, would be beneficial if included from the beginning, and should definitely be included in the requirement classes, another group did not favor language variation in required classes, even criticized the current listening comprehension at the 100-level as too difficult. However, most students agreed that it could be mentioned, the students be made aware of its existence, and may even be of interest, if not of necessity at that level. An example given for the initial introduction of variation was the different pronunciation for two (*zwei* vs. *zwo*, mode) and the typical variation in greetings, the token variation element of every textbook. The levels most often mentioned for the inclusion of language variation were 200 and up and 300. There was no difference in the degree of favorableness or unfavorableness toward the inclusion of language variation between instructional levels.

Ways of inclusion and potential benefits:

The progression of inclusion was usually described as “best every once in a while,” “when it comes up,” or “at the end of the chapter.” Again, general awareness and the introduction of the idea of variation was given preference. At the higher levels, where students would go to Germany (which was mostly mentioned) or German-speaking countries, the topic of language variation was considered clearly beneficial. It would be particularly helpful to adapt to the language they would encounter there. It would also serve as a confidence booster, since students would see their particular interlanguage as another valid variety. One student mentioned the German “r”, which she always thought she could not pronounce, until she realized that some native speakers actually did not pronounce it the “official way” either.

The list of possibilities for including language variation into the daily lesson plan was impressive. Students included movies, tapes, lab sessions, transcripts of variations, examples, native speakers (albeit “without thick accent”, at least for one of the students), different texts, and a textbook that would include varieties. As one student mentioned, even in Germany, particularly in the country, you will encounter variation and textbook language does not really exist. Another student actually suggested an entire class on the topic.

Some more recommendations were exposure to different variations, just listening instead of actively mastering them, and having different speakers utter the same phrase. As one student mentioned, this process would particularly benefit auditive learners like herself. Having teachers share their own personal experience--some have already done so--would also help with the linguistic and cultural aspects of variation. They could provide synonyms and thus increase the students vocabulary.

Metalinguistic awareness:

Another point mentioned was that once a dialect is understood, others might be easier to decode. The word changes and the different forms word stems may take were offered as examples. This type of metalinguistic understanding was evident even among those who were not so much in favor of language variation. They argued that since they had received little grammar instruction in English at school, foreign language instruction should focus on just these manageable basics. It stands to reason that those students who feel unsure about the workings of the English language might be overwhelmed by variation in German. Actually, one of the intermediate students who preferred a focus on standardized language reported she had noticed no difference among her teachers of German and considered thick accents a potential problem. On the other hand, exposure to variation and the realization that there is not necessarily one correct answer might help just those students overcome their anxiety.

However, grammar was not the concern number one for a change. Actually, as one student said, variation would be a good way of going beyond grammar. Having spent one semester in Vienna, another student wished her teachers had focused more on colloquial language and dialects. The student who was first exposed to Swabian admitted she was still confused between high German and that particular dialect.

Back to attitudes and ideology:

Finally, from the philosophical point of view, students across all instructional levels seemed to come up with good reasons for including variation. At the 102-level, one of the students clearly stated that there was no definite way of speaking and only writing should be universal. From her own experience, she objected to the way her classmates who spoke dialect had been treated in elementary school. Along similar lines, several students brought up the possibility to dispel stereotypes, to become aware of

attitudes (that may have to be taken into account by the teachers, as one TA pointed out). However, the lack of material on variation suitable for instructional purposes still seems to be an obstacle, especially for those teachers who are not familiar with variation.

Some students and TAs (300 and 500 level) also thematized the issue of which variations to include and which variation to use as something of a standard. Several expressed the need to include the Austrian and Swiss varieties to a greater extent than is currently the case. The existence of “a” standard regardless of any variation that may be “added” still appears to be a necessity in foreign language teaching. Overall, though, statements like “you can only know something when you understand where it comes from”, “it does not matter where you are from”, and “the opportunity to learn about new places” illustrate the new trend towards diversity and pluralism.

To summarize suggestions offered by students, the general trend pointed towards the progressive inclusion, mainly at the intermediate and higher levels, focusing on awareness rather than active mastery, and including a wide range of activities, from authentic materials like movies to the invitation of native speakers. Benefits would include increased metalinguistic awareness, better preparation for a visit to German-speaking countries, and a general openness to different ways of seeing the world.

9) *Is it important to learn variations of a language? Why/Why not?*

This question was designed to sum up the conclusions that students might have drawn from participating in the study. In the big picture, it relates directly to research question number five (*How important is inclusion of language variation into language teaching according to students?*). With respect to the questionnaire, it refers back to the questions about enrichment versus obstacle in L1 and helpful versus problematic in L2. The question was posed directly in order to have a straight answer from the students on

top of the conclusions of the researcher based on students' answers to the questionnaire and other interview questions. In that way, it constitutes a certain safeguard against misinterpretation of less direct questions. Compared to the other questions, which deal with students language awareness and attitudes in L1 and L2, its origin and its interrelatedness, this question aims at the implications of findings from the former for actual classroom practice.

Inclusion of variation:

The overwhelming majority of students qualified the inclusion of variation into language teaching as important, helpful, useful, or beneficial. Even though several coincided in their opinion that only awareness, for example through the announcing of differences by the teacher, and no active command of variation was required, only one student ranked variation awareness pretty low in importance. Most other students found it interesting and were curious about it. Some concerns were however repeated about learning “the formal language first to make a good impression,” to learn the basics first, some kind of newspaper language that everyone could understand. The 100-level was again mentioned once as too confusing to start exposure to variation.

Preparation for real-life encounters:

Students also agreed that language variation would be particularly beneficial for communication to people who “move around”, who actually plan to go to a German-speaking country. That way people would know what to expect and wouldn't “think they were in the wrong country” as one student put it whose boyfriend had gone to Switzerland unprepared. Another student actually made a case for more variation in language teaching based on her experience, wishing she had had more exposure to

colloquial and regional language in class. Words and pronunciation were cited as the most observable parameters.

Textbook language, as several students pointed out, does not prepare for real life encounters with the average German speaker. Both high German (in the form of national standards) and some version of language in use should be taught. One student went so far as to call an exclusive focus on high German stupid. Exposure to different dialects would train the ear to tune into certain forms as corresponding to a previously learned standard. Added synonyms, for example by familiarizing oneself with British English which one student had experienced through her roommate, make for enriched vocabulary, varied speech, and greater expressiveness. In one's native language, thus, variation awareness does not hurt either and its acquisition could be regarded as a natural process. People grow up with it but may also choose to actively pursue it.

Communication and understanding:

The ultimate goal mentioned by many students as a justification for including variation was to understand people, to understand self and other, individual and group, identity and difference. An understanding of variation "opens doors," proves that there exists "more than your own little world." Both in your native language and any foreign language, language is connected to culture, a link almost half of the students brought up, linking people to their history and geography. In this context, understanding the way variation works leads to a better understanding of one's own country and the country/ies where the foreign language is spoken.

According to students, understanding and accepting languages and dialects contributes to a deeper understanding of oneself as a human being with respect for others. Stereotypes and biases can be reduced, initial judgments based on accents can be reconsidered. Variation will not be perceived as a deviation from some standard, as

“stupid,” but as another way to express the same content. This could boost a student’s confidence by demonstrating that there is more than one correct way of saying things.

Summary:

Several students at the 300 and 500 level established a link between linguistic values in L1 and L2. Whereas Northern Germany, a region from which vernacular has all but disappeared (according to one German native speaker and TA), needs to recast its vision of Southern Germany as being all Bavarian dialect, proponents of American English will have to reconsider their own position. Just like Europe is slowly moving away from its exclusive preference for British English, teachers of German should offer the same choice of varieties (beginning with the national level) within their language. Only if such a language policy is applied across the board will it be credible.

Overall, students have not only demonstrated a high level of variation awareness and a considerable understanding of the workings of language attitude, but also presented rationales, strategies, and practical examples for the inclusion of language variation in the foreign language classroom. Even though some linguistic concepts and ideologies are still deeply entrenched in their subconsciousness, the current trend towards diversity and cultural pluralism seems to have had some impact on general attitudes, at least on the surface level. Language variation should therefore be included into the foreign language classroom to a far larger extent than has been the case so far. This would prepare students who actually visit German-speaking countries much better for their experience abroad and would provide students who have no such desire or opportunity with a bigger picture of language and its impact on human communication and behavior.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter takes findings from both the quantitative and the qualitative analyses, synthesizes them within the framework of the five research questions, and proposes pedagogical and administrative implications of the findings. The results from the quantitative analysis have been presented in terms of statistically significant relations among variables included in the questionnaire, such as years of exposure and awareness of linguistic differences within German. The results from the qualitative analysis have been structured according to the nine interview questions. This section aims at linking the individual results, suggesting possible contributing factors, and pointing out future research options.

Summary

Going back to the immediate goal of the study, establishing baseline data on variation awareness and attitude in L1 and L2 among college students taking German as a foreign language, the data and its analysis lead up to the following conclusions: Variation awareness is well-developed among students, especially in L1, but variation is not necessarily used actively (or at least not consciously) in communication. Familiar varieties are easier to identify and more acceptable. Personal and linguistic backgrounds of students are related to the level of variation awareness. Language awareness in L1 and L2 seems to be largely acquired outside the classroom.

Attitudes toward variation in L1 and L2 are quite differentiated, with positive attitudes (“enrichment”) predominating in the students' first language and negative ones

(“problematic”) in language of study. However, within both languages, different varieties are evaluated differently. Even though varieties are judged more problematic in L2, students are still overwhelmingly rating them as important to learn. L2 attitudes seem to be related to L1 attitudes as well as to a series of variables of personal linguistic background. The study with its focus on language awareness seems to have helped to raise language attitudes to a new level of consciousness, at least for the participating students.

Language ideology, especially concerning standard, right and wrong, or proper use (cf. Hymes, 1996) came to the surface as an influential factor for both L1 and L2, and some students started to reflect on it. The idea of grammaticity as the most important criterion for a good speaker in both L1 and L2, the denigration of certain varieties as sounding stupid or uneducated both in L1 and L2, and the clamor for “standard” language, particularly in L2, are examples of the underlying ideology. Whereas some students questioned the validity of evaluations of a person based on their variety, grammaticity and standard remained largely unchallenged.

Communicative competence was brought up by the students many times during the interview. Variation was seen not only as a linguistic but also as a cultural aspect. The usefulness of learning about variation was considered in improving communication. Language in use in the target countries was identified as different from textbook language and constructed dialogues. Especially students who were planning to go to German-speaking countries were thought to benefit from variation awareness.

Discussion of findings according to research questions

1) What level of variation awareness can be detected among students both for L1 and L2?

Students' awareness of language variation in their native language, English (81%), was found to be quite high. Up to 90% had experienced some of the categories of language variation (national, ethnic, regional, sociogeographic, social class, gender, age, mode, register, degree of standardization) included in the study and up to 70% had used one or more of these categories actively. In addition, 50% (pronunciation, phrases) - 60% (words) of students were able to provide concrete examples of variation in English, phonological, lexical, and pragmatic. These numbers indicate a potential of language awareness that could, and in the researcher's opinion, should be exploited to a far greater degree in language teaching. In L1 instruction, awareness of language variation could be used to explain some of the workings of language from a resource perspective rather than focusing only on the deficit model of lack of grammatical understanding and standard (academic) usage. Such an approach cannot replace grammatical and academic training but might provide a framework for students to position themselves within their linguistic environment. The potential benefits for L2 instructions will be discussed in detail in a later paragraph.

The type of variation students were most aware of was the type of variation with which they were familiar. In the English samples, the Canadian and US female speakers (according to research, from Labov, 1972, to Silva-Corvalán, 1989, they are more standard than their male counterparts to try and redress the status imbalance between the genders) were identified correctly as North American speakers by 87.5 (for the Canadian speaker) and 87% (for the US speaker), followed by the Canadian and the US male speakers at 84 and 80.5%. These results were supported by interview comments where

students explained that they were able to recognize varieties from the movies, because they had friends from the places the varieties were spoken, or, only in few cases, that they had been to those countries. By the same token, some other students complained they were not able to identify most of the varieties just because they had never heard them before, never been to those places, and could not detect telling differences because they did not know what to listen for. If we want to improve students' variation awareness and overall language awareness, it might thus be helpful for those students with limited exposure to varieties to include some of these maybe in an English composition assignment where they would have to listen to and write a reaction paper on different speakers.

Variation awareness, and this aspect has emerged from the interviews, is not only seen as a purely linguistic tool but has broader cultural ramifications. That is to say, students were aware of not only the different semantic meaning but the pragmatic implications, the contextual clues. Examples of this cultural awareness included the sweet tea of Georgia (mentioned by a 102 level native speaker of English) and the different cultural degrees of formality mentioned by several non-native speakers of English, who could compare it against their own language and culture background. Especially with a view to language teaching beyond the purely linguistic apprenticeship, with communicative proficiency and intercultural communication in mind, a broader approach to variation, including more than the token greetings and cultural trivia, could be truly helpful in the development of first and second language skills. Even more so, if it is already existent among students.

Reasons, or rather contributing factors to the awareness of language variation clearly well-developed among some students were found in the demographic information provided by participants. 40% of students had lived abroad (a number probably higher than the average college students'), 60% of participants knew another language besides

English and German, 60% had friends/and or family in German-speaking country, and 60% had visited there. This combination of exposure, intrinsic motivation, and general linguistic training may have been quite influential in developing linguistic and cultural awareness in general and variation awareness in particular. Significant correlations have been found between these variables and language attitude, which will be discussed in detail in the section on attitudes.

As far as variation awareness in the foreign language, German, is concerned, a high level of awareness among this group of students can be detected. 70% claim to be aware of linguistic differences in German--which is less than the 90% for some categories of variation experienced in English (national variation) but still above the 60% value of the lowest category (sociogeographic variation)--and 25% were able to provide more than one example of linguistic differences within German. Again, this is half the 50% of the English results (students who had provided different words, phrases, or pronunciation as examples for regional variation between their hometown and Tucson) but in a foreign language it is quite noteworthy. Among students, the concept of language variation clearly exists even for the foreign language. It is now up to the individual language program director, curriculum developer, and language teacher to make use of this potential and put it to work for the benefit of students.

However, the source of this awareness calls for more detailed treatment in a further study. Some students indicated in the interview that they could tell a difference between the different TAs they had had as teachers. In the questionnaire, 50% responded that their teacher included variation in the classroom. The figures for variation in the textbook and other materials were much lower at 12-20%. If we compare these figures to the 70% overall awareness, the gap seems to suggest that students may develop their variation awareness not so much in the classroom as through outside exposure, be it friends, family, visits abroad or others. This leaves a wide field of potential activities for

enhancing variation awareness in formal instruction thus contributing to the expansion of communicative competence. Even more so, if we take into consideration that in the interviews, several students, especially at the lower levels, stated that they had never heard varieties of German before and that language variation in the foreign language was something entirely new to them.

Similar to L1 awareness, where familiarity facilitated identification of varieties, visits to the country, friends or family, past or present teachers made it easier for students to recognize certain varieties in German. However, the level of recognition was much lower than in L1. The German female “standard-like” speaker was most easily identified by 58% of the respondents (compared to 88% for the top English speaker) followed by the German male ‘standard-like’ speaker. On the other end of the spectrum, the female Austrian speaker was only identified correctly by 10%. Some misidentification may also be due to student bias. For example, one student (200 level) thought all Swiss were unintelligible and thus labeled an Austrian he could not understand as Swiss. Another student (400 level) confessed in the interview that he initially had not thought much of the Austrian variety since a German friend of his had declared Austrian speakers unintelligible. Short of sending every student on a mandatory study abroad program, increased efforts on the part of the teacher to expose students to more varieties in the classroom could be more than helpful. In the interviews, students provided a long list of possible integration tools for language variation, from native speakers to movies.

In line with the finding that other languages known are significantly related to language awareness and attitude, students whose native language was neither English nor German (4 out of 21 interviewees, 3 of them undergraduates) were particularly articulate about variation in the foreign language during the interview. They had one more language to compare. Furthermore, while English was their instrumental language for everyday use, German was the language to which they had dedicated more conscious

time. Those students also provided most examples of variation in German during the interview. Unfortunately, no language samples in their native language were available to investigate these connections further. For the classroom situation, drawing on the experience of multilingual students in dealing with language variation in the foreign language might give the entire classroom community, including the teacher, an additional resource.

Summarizing the conclusions to be drawn from answers related to language awareness, it can be said that variation awareness is usually further developed in L1 than L2. Variation awareness furthermore depends on the degree of exposure to or experience with varieties, which is mostly acquired outside the formal instructional setting through visits abroad or family background. Relative familiarity with one variety over another contributes to the recognition and level of acceptance of the variety in question. Overall, variation awareness is clearly accessible to students if they are confronted with the topic.

Conclusions to be drawn for foreign language teachers include the potential availability of L1 variation awareness, an opportunity which has yet to make its way into the agenda of curriculum planners. From this latent potential, the need arises to consciously address the issue by engaging students in the learning dialogue. One avenue for tapping this potential lies in the collaboration with L1 instructors. Before engaging students in the process, both L1 and L2 instructors need to reflect on their own level of awareness in L1. In the case of L2 instructors, regardless of whether the foreign language they are teaching is their L1 or L2, both languages and their potential for variation need to be addressed.

2) *What are students' attitudes toward language variation in L1?*

Overall, students showed a positive attitude toward variation in L1. This judgment is based on the fact that 90% of participants considered language variation an enrichment. At the same time, only 70% considered it an obstacle. These figures reflect the structure of the question with two subquestions, one concerning enrichment and one concerning obstacle. This particular structure was chosen to address the complex nature of variation that cannot be easily reduced to a simple “yes” or “no”. Accordingly, most students are aware of the pros and cons of language variation, as evidenced in their qualitative comments, but in the end, advantages of language variation outnumber shortcomings. As far as the importance of learning about language variation is concerned, the value most chosen (24 out of 86) on a scale from 1 to 5 was actually 5, that is, very important. These results, of course, refer to language variation in general and not any particular variety. For the purpose of language teaching, the positive attitude should be taken as grounds for including more variation into the curriculum process. If students show an interest in the topic, they are more likely to benefit from it. Furthermore, in the interviews, students provided good reasons for the integration of variation, from understanding of self and other, improving communication, to simple joy with language games.

However, not all varieties are created equal. For national varieties, similar to the ones represented in the samples, many students had very strong opinions. The North American varieties (US & CAN) were obviously the most familiar ones--in the choice of samples, care was taken that no obvious regionalisms were distinguishable--and most liked by most students, thus they ranked higher on the solidarity scale. UK varieties were often called more educated, more proper, and more correct. Speakers of antipodean (NZ, AUS) varieties, by contrast, were labeled ‘twisted’ and inappropriate for teaching.

Within the US, certain regions were also very much maligned, in particular the South. Rural, uneducated, poor, and bad grammar were some qualifiers associated with this variety.

Even though such judgments are in line with previous research in language attitudes, some personal idiosyncrasies are also involved (e.g., one student, a native speaker of English, who reported changing his preferences from US to UK English). And, as could be seen from the statistics, ethnicity seems to play a role in judging speakers; students from different ethnic background tended to evaluate speakers differently. Furthermore, the fact that several students reported that taking part in the study had made them aware of their attitude is pointing in the direction of a more conscious approach to attitudes. What is more, other students emphasized that not entirely correct in pronunciation, for example, (in the prescriptive sense) did not automatically mean wrong (as a value judgment) and that evaluation may be directed solely toward a variety and not reflect on a person. Even though this latter statement may sound too idealistic, judging by what is generally assumed about the workings of attitude (an ingrained, subconscious set of ideas hard to influence through rational arguments or even counterevidence), it demonstrates a certain level of discernment among students. Thus, the overall positive attitude toward language variation has to be interpreted in a more differentiated light. Attitudes of students have to be brought to the conscious level if any change toward a more inclusive attitude is to be achieved.

Another aspect of language attitude is expressed in the criteria students mentioned for the evaluation of a good speaker. Grammar, fluency, and vocabulary are the three qualities most often mentioned by interviewees. This indicates a rather conservative, standard-based approach to language. Furthermore, with English as the native language, such a strong focus on grammar seems almost exaggerated. One would assume that grammar is taken for granted in the native language and that factors like range of

vocabulary, style, or persuasiveness might be more decisive. In the following section on language attitude in L2, these criteria will come up again. As far as native speakers are concerned, an interesting pair of contrasting opinions came up. While one student (non-English native speaker) thought that a native speaker is equivalent to a good speaker, another student (native speaker of English) thought that only a non-native speaker can represent a good speaker because native speakers do not speak properly. It seems that the native speaker debate that has been raging within the teaching profession could be extended to include some student voices.

Summarizing students' responses, their direct and indirect statements about attitudes, it can be said that students profess an openness toward variation in general. However, this changes as soon as individual varieties come into play. Awareness of these attitudes can lead to reflection. For teaching purposes, the positive overall attitude could be used as a stepping stone for guided reflections on what causes students to call some varieties less desirable than others. The issue of linguistic and cultural bias and stereotypes has been raised by students in the interviews and could be incorporated into the curriculum. Lastly, the concept of standard, good language, and native-speakerness could be examined in the language classroom.

3) What are students' attitudes toward variation in L2?

Overall, students' attitudes toward variation in L2 are not as positive as in L1. 75% of participants consider linguistic differences in L2 helpful, whereas the corresponding figures for L1 amounted to 90%. What is more, 80% consider those differences in L2 problematic, compared to 70% for L1. These results mirror the double item on enrichment and obstacle for L1 and thus provide the same complex picture of attitudes toward variation, this time for L2. Even though the gap between L2 attitudes is

only 5%, disadvantages of language variation in L2 do outnumber advantages in the minds of students. On one hand, this close result shows a pretty balanced, if not positive attitude towards variation. On the other, in the interviews students recalled several instances when they experienced variation in German and wished they had been better prepared. That may be why on a scale from 1 to 5, most students (25 out of 81) ranked the importance of learning about variation in German with a 4, i.e., important. For teachers, these results show both the frustration students feel about language variation in the foreign language and the need to include varieties more into the teaching agenda to remedy this situation. Some suggestions as to the ways and means of inclusion were proffered by the students themselves in answer to interview question number eight.

As far as national varieties are concerned, students show clear preferences. The German variety was considered the 'most basic, most standard' one and Germany was thus the preferred country for a summer intensive program by 70% of participants. Attitudes toward regional varieties within Germany and toward Austrian and Swiss varieties depended on the individual student's experience or lack thereof. While one student who had been to Switzerland and had friends there found this variety cute, others called it unintelligible. Similarly, students who had been to Austria or knew Austrians were clearly positively inclined toward the Austrian variety, whereas another student said they were unintelligible based on the judgment of a friend of his who had visited Austria. As mentioned before, these preconceived notions can lead to misjudgments insofar as speakers that are hard to understand may be labeled Swiss, whereas they may be Austrian or even German regional variety speakers.

Criteria for a good speaker/writer of German, reflecting another set of linguistic attitudes, resemble closely the criteria listed for a good speaker of English. Grammar, pace, and vocabulary were the three indicators mentioned most often. On the one hand, this demonstrates once again a rather conservative and school-oriented approach to

evaluating a speaker. On the other, it shows a clear relation between criteria for L1 and criteria for L2. Differences concerned pace (in L2, students were more concerned with a slower pace), standard and literary language. *Hochdeutsch* was mentioned as an indicator for good German. However, mid-Atlantic (an artificial, neutral variety with neither typically British nor American features, used as an international lingua franca) or RP (Received Pronunciation, also called Queen's English or BBC English, the British prestige variety) were not listed for English. Similarly, poetic language, citations, and writers (Th. Mann) were named for German, but no author was suggested as a model for English. It seems that German is considered a more standard-bound language. The context of study (German class) or the lack of a language authority in English (like *Duden* (2003) for German, *Alliance Française* for French, or *Real Academia* for Spanish) may have influenced responses.

Attitudes and self-evaluation as speakers/writers/students of German brought similar results to the ones obtained for English. Some students preferred writing because they had more time to comply with the stringent rules of German grammar. Others preferred speaking because they felt they could more easily get away with missing endings. As could be seen from the quantitative analysis, students' self-evaluation in all four skills improved with other languages that they knew and visits they had made to German-speaking countries. If they could relate varieties to similar differences in their native language (other than English) or any other language, they felt more comfortable using this resource playfully. They also became more comfortable with their own learner variety once they had experienced different variations in the target community.

Summarizing students' attitudes toward variation in L2, it can be said that they are less positive than their attitudes toward variation in L1. Similar to L1, grammar, pace, and vocabulary are the three leading criteria for a good speaker in L2. Finally, a considerable bias, or positive discrimination, toward Germany as the country with the

“correct” language can be detected. Implications for language teaching that can be deduced from these findings include a need for exposure to more varieties to raise the students’ comfort level with linguistic differences in the foreign language and some basic theoretical clarifications about the nature of regional and dialectal variation in German. However, even for the foreign language some positive attitudes have emerged, particularly among interviewees. It thus seems most important to include beginning level and requirement students in the variation equation to avoid fixation on some arbitrary standard.

4) *What possible correlations exist between language attitudes in L1 and L2?*

The correlations between L1 and L2 language attitudes proved very strong. If we compare the “yes” answers to language variation as an enrichment (L1) on one hand and the “yes” answers to language variation as helpful (L2) on the other, they correlate at .835. If we look at the degrees of importance conceded the learning of language variation in L1 and L2 respectively, an even higher correlation emerges: .952. These close to perfect correlations between attitudes toward variation in L1 and L2 clearly suggest some pedagogical potential. If variation awareness and a positive attitude toward variation could potentially contribute to the development of communicative competence, promoting the integration of language variation into L1 teaching may have some positive outcome on L2 awareness and attitudes. By the same token, references to language variation in L1 may help in L2 teaching. Traditional categories of variation, such as formal versus informal or oral versus written could be used as a starting point to explore the nature of language variation. National and regional variation, including information on their connotation for native speakers, could be added later on.

Some of the demographic variables that are significantly related to attitudes toward language variation include other languages known, years of exposure--but not years of study--class level, visits to German speaking countries and friends or family there, places lived in the US and abroad, other languages known, and self-evaluation in the four skills. These results are interesting since one reason for the extended demographic questionnaire was to explore different variables that might influence language attitude. The different items on this questionnaire were purposefully chosen because the researcher expected some relationship between those variables and language attitude. The fact that the variables mentioned above actually show a significant relationship with attitudes as defined and measured in this study confirms these pre-study expectations.

Summarizing the correlations between attitudes toward language variation in L1 and L2, it can be said that these correlations are quite high, that the corresponding importance attached to learning about variation is equally highly significant between L1 and L2, and that a series of linguistic and demographic background variables show a tendency to also significantly relate to these attitudes. Other languages known, exposure to German, class level, family and/or friends in and visits to German speaking countries, number of places lived, and self-evaluation in the four skills are positively related with attitudes. Teachers might thus want to take advantage of the fact that attitudes correlate highly between L1 and L2 and include the awareness and attitude potential that stems from students' L1 experience into their planning of L2 instruction. After analyzing the L1 potential in collaboration with the students, specific fields of application for L2 could be determined, keeping in mind students' needs and interests.

5) How important is inclusion of variation into language teaching according to students?

On a scale from 1 to 5, students gave language variation a 4 (i.e., important) with respect to the importance of learning about it in the foreign language classroom. The comparative value had been 5 out of 5 for learning about variation in L1. During the interview, that ranking was supported by qualifiers like “helpful, useful, beneficial” amongst others. Especially at a higher level and for students who would be about to go to a German-speaking country, it was considered advantageous to learn about variation. Several students mentioned that textbook language was quite artificial and different from the colloquial language they had encountered in the street. Overall, students do attach importance to variation in the foreign language. Even though, or just because, they label it problematic, students have an interest in learning about it.

Some of the ways of integrating variation into the classroom that were suggested by students include the language lab, movies, or native speakers. Furthermore, they emphasized the need for exposure to different varieties rather than active mastery. The moment and extent of including variation deemed appropriate varied, but many students favored a step by step approach, at the end of each chapter, when it came up in the textbook or materials, or whenever the instructor had some experience to share. Students obviously appear to have a pretty clear idea of when, what, how, and how much variation should be included in the foreign language classroom. The pedagogical implication of this result could be a needs analysis at the beginning of the semester to gage the level of variation awareness, attitudes, and interest to incorporate into the syllabus or lesson plans. Sometimes, students might actually know more about or have a keener interest in variation than their teacher. Some training modules for teachers on that topic might thus be necessary. These modules might include awareness raising and attitude sensitivity in both L1 and L2 of the teachers, familiarization with materials available for the inclusion

of variation into the lesson plan on the web, from cultural institutes, fellow teachers or the community, interdepartmental cooperation between the foreign languages but also English composition, as well as additional incentives for teachers to familiarize themselves with the topic (travel grants etc.).

The main reasons mentioned by students for wanting to learn about variation were improved communication, understanding of self and other, and developing metalinguistic skills. Successful communication requires sociolinguistic awareness and thus variation can contribute to the meaningful transfer of linguistic and cultural messages.

Understanding of self and other, one of the main benefits of intercultural experiences, is enhanced by some knowledge of connotations and implications evoked by a particular variety. Finally, some students mentioned the possibility of developing metalinguistic skills by comparing different variations that may follow a certain pattern. More philosophical motivations were language as a whole and the arbitrariness of standard.

Recommendations

If we want to translate the findings of this study into pedagogical principles, it would seem easiest to start by exploring the variation experience most students have in their L1. In this way, students would be able to draw upon their own linguistic background when later on dealing with variation in L2. Some varieties could be presented in class and then the students might have to interview some of their friends or family about the topic. Ideally, that awareness raising should begin or include the L1 class environment. However, if that is not the case, it might be worthwhile spending a unit on such a topic in L2 instruction to set up the basis for language awareness in L2.

Along with the exploration of variation awareness, the attitudes associated with those varieties will probably emerge quite naturally in the conversation of students.

Furthermore, students could be presented with videos about “prospective teachers” using different target language varieties and be asked to rate them as to comprehensibility, professional preparation, and language level, e.g.. This approach has been used in research for the purpose of judging international teaching assistants’ level of acceptability (e.g., Brown, 1988). A very short debriefing about language attitudes would be helpful also.

As far as the foreign language is concerned, variation awareness can be introduced right from the beginning, by including native speakers, in person, or on audio or video tape, from different target culture backgrounds, introducing the typical lexical variation for forms of address or food, and briefly mentioning that linguistic pluralism exists in the foreign language as much as in English, and maybe outlining some of the most apparent differences. If previous activities have been carried out in L1, that comparison will be even easier.

Attitudes toward language variation in the foreign language are being formed quite early, sometimes even before students start learning the language, through comments from friends, family, their L1, or other subjects at school, such as history. In the foreign language classroom, these preexisting stereotypes could be explored by having students share any previous linguistic and cultural knowledge or beliefs. Exposure to a wide range of varieties of the foreign language over time will hopefully contribute to a more open attitude. Also, the attitudes linked to different varieties by the native speakers of the language might be worthwhile including at a more advanced level.

By working on the awareness of and attitude toward variation in the foreign language from the beginning of instruction, students can develop an ear and an understanding of what these varieties mean, both on the level of pure comprehensibility and on the level of social significance or connotation. Similar to what Chick (1996) proposes, students could then choose to comply or not comply with standards of

appropriacy, or declare themselves member of one group or another. Students may find it easier to cope with their first contact with the target community; people living in German-speaking countries, and, at a higher level, might even be able to accommodate more easily. Furthermore, it is quite conceivable that they develop an interest in such linguistic and cultural diversity and enjoy exploring the many ways of a language. Even for the most instrumentally oriented students, though, additional coordinates to navigate the unknown foreign lands should be useful.

In order to adopt such an approach, the necessary basis would have to be established at the level of curriculum, materials, and teacher training. The curriculum or program guidelines, would have to include the principle of linguistic diversity; that is to say, the curriculum would need to posit as one of its goals the exposure to and integration of language variation in the process of developing the students' communicative competence. This goal could easily be integrated into the foreign language standards, the five C's (ACTFL, 1996); it is relevant to each of them--communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, communities.

As far as materials are concerned, the choice of textbook as well as accompanying material should reflect the same principles of linguistic diversity. Care should be taken that the various countries and regions that make up the target area are represented in the content and not the footnotes (e.g., Baßler & Spiekermann, 2001). If the main textbook, for some reason, cannot fulfill this requirement, appropriate supplementary material in the form of audio, video, or web-based materials, should be made available.

Most importantly, teachers would have to be encouraged to embrace the curricular goal of linguistic diversity, make use of the materials at their disposition, and exchange their own experiences with variation in the language they are teaching with their students and colleagues. If native speakers from several regions of the target language culture are among the instructional staff, reciprocal visits to each other's classes and the classes of

non-native speaking teachers would be one way to utilize this resource. A formal workshop providing both a conceptual framework for linguistic diversity (including philosophical/political underpinnings, a sociolinguistic overview of the target culture, and concrete pedagogical applications) as well as concrete data at the beginning of a school year or as part of in-service training might be helpful. Of course, teachers' own awareness of and attitudes toward variation would have to be taken into consideration.

As can be seen from the above suggestions, language variation can be included into foreign language teaching in a well-structured and at the same time easily modifiable way. If both the institution and the teachers are committed to placing this resource in the hands of the students, variation awareness, combined with a discussion of attitudes, can be integrated as one more stepping stone toward communicative competence. Recently, trends in that direction have been observed but on a large scale, unfortunately, language variation is still a resource neglected for the most part in foreign language teaching.

Limitations of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore variation awareness and attitudes among US college students learning German in a large land-grant university in the Southwest. Data collection was carried out in the spring of 2001. Participants, context, place, and time of the study naturally place some limitations on the findings as far as generalizability is concerned. Participants were college students; other age groups or institutions might have yielded different results. The place, a large land-grant university in the Southwest hosts a student population that is quite different from a small liberal arts college in the Northeast, with more German than Spanish background. The current times of increase for foreign languages overall but decrease for some of the traditional languages (French, German), standardized testing movements on one hand but focus on

(linguistic) diversity on the other further preclude generalization to other times and populations. Finally, the context of administering the questionnaires during class time and with corresponding introductions to the topic by some of the teachers may have harbored different results than an anonymous survey over the web. Last but not least, the context of German as the target language precludes generalizations to other languages, especially Spanish and less commonly taught languages.

The study design focused on the recognition of national varieties. Even though other categories of variation were included in the questionnaire, no conclusions can be drawn as to the attitudes toward social variation, age variation, or regional dialects. Similarly, national, and partly regional variation was the main focus in the interviews.

The language samples that participants had to react to were collected from volunteer international students from different English-speaking and German-speaking countries, who were asked to speak freely about their morning routines rather than read a text. This way, a reasonably authentic speech sample was produced but the personality factor of the speaker could not be entirely excluded. However, for the purpose of the study, the latter problem was deemed less important. Speaker personality could thus be considered a confounding variable and may have interfered with the evaluation of language samples.

The topic of the voice sample, morning routines, was chosen for its relatively value-free content as opposed to, for example, personal interests or hobbies. Thus, content as a confounding variable was limited as much as possible but could only have been fully excluded by using a scripted version. As mentioned before, use of a scripted version would have limited variation and was therefore rejected. A transcript of the voice samples has been included in appendix A for the benefit of the critical reader.

The speakers had furthermore to be selected from a small pool of volunteers. Especially for German, a choice between speakers of the same variety was thus mostly

unfeasible. Speaker samples were not tested statistically for the occurrence of features typical of a particular variety since this would not have been possible with the short speech sample which was to be as similar as possible between speakers. Whereas prosodic features of a variety can be found even on a short sample, lexical and syntactic features may require hours of taped material for them to occur. The distinctiveness of speakers could thus be improved in a follow-up study.

Lastly, the study was not experimental in nature and thus a cause-effect relationship between the different variables on one hand, and awareness and attitude on the other could not be established. Correlation and regression analyses simply detected some significant connections between some of the variables. However, since it was not the aim of the study to prove any causality but rather to explore existing levels of awareness and attitudes from different angles, this caveat is solely meant to prevent any misinterpretation of findings.

Interview data were based on volunteers which limits their generalizability to larger sections of the population under study and even more so for other similar populations. However, since qualitative data are by definition not collected for the purpose of generalizing the findings but to illustrate one or more particular cases, reservations on these grounds should not be leveled. The fact that the volunteer design produced more linguistically inclined interviewees does not constitute a problem given the availability of quantitative data from the questionnaire.

The researcher's bias, always present if not openly declared, must not be excluded from this section. As a native speaker of the Austrian standard variety of German, pluricentricity in the tradition of Clyne (1992) is one of the cornerstones of my approach to language teaching. The already well established D-A-CH-L initiative for the teaching of German as a foreign language in Europe (a collaboration of experts from Austria,

Germany, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland) is one of the recent applications of this principle to language planning.

On the language acquisition side, I believe that language awareness of bilinguals and multilinguals is one of the contributing factors to their linguistic success (cf. Cummins, 2000). Awareness of language variation in all its manifestations (national varieties are only one aspect) provides the students with a complex picture of linguistic reality in the target communities and may contribute to metalinguistic understanding of the workings of language in general and the language of study in particular.

Furthermore, I espouse the goal of communicative competence for language teaching, including a critical reflection on the term “appropriateness.” (cf. Chick, 1996) Exposure to different varieties of a language, different versions of language in use, should equip students with the necessary framework for the development of sociolinguistic competence and thus improve their overall communicative competence.

Finally, I support the view that attitudes are highly influential in language learning (cf. Gardner, 1982). I further believe that by making students aware of their language attitudes in combination with a more comprehensive exposure to language in all its variation we can contribute to the understanding of self and the other and hopefully to the creation of a third space (cf. Kramsch, 1993) between or among different cultures and subcultures, languages and varieties--between communities of learners.

Suggested further research

As mentioned before, this particular study examined variation awareness and attitude in L1 and L2 for American college students taking German as a foreign language. Several avenues for future research can thus be deduced from the above described limitations of the study. Different participants (e.g., high school students, community

college or liberal arts students, students learning LCT languages), a different region within the US, a different type of language program at a different type of institution might render a different set of results.

The focus of this study was on national varieties. In a future study, focusing on another category (e.g., regional, or ethnic) or emphasizing one particular linguistic feature (e.g., phonology, lexis) might offer some deeper insights. Also, the inclusion of non-native varieties might add an interesting perspective to the topic, as would bilingual or code-switching varieties.

Based on the findings from this study, gender suggests itself as a variation category for further study. The fact that female voice samples occupied both extremes of identification, lowest and highest, and in both languages, demonstrates the markedness of female speech. On the other hand, gender of participants was not a significant variable in answering patterns. This combination of findings calls for further clarification.

The language pair contrasted in this study was English (L1) and German (L2). Investigating other foreign languages or conducting a study with ESL learners from a variety of linguistic backgrounds could provide a different perspective. Some participants of this study had neither English nor German as their native language. If a more extensive collection of samples in a series of languages could be collected, more than one native language could be examined.

Another possible project worth studying would be an exploration of variation awareness and attitudes among teachers, no matter whether they are teaching their native language or a foreign language. These could then be contrasted with the results for students and examined for coinciding and divergent opinions.

Finally, an experimental study could be set up, with one group receiving instruction including variation and the control group without variation instruction. Pre- and post-test instruments could measure what effect on awareness and attitude such a

change in program would entail. Alternatively, a case study of students going to study abroad or students moving through the course levels might complement the qualitative results obtained thus far with a longitudinal, in depth perspective.

Conclusion

The original purpose of the study, investigating the potential of language variation for the improvement of communicative competence, constitutes the basic frame of reference. The immediate goal was to establish baseline data on students' awareness of and attitudes toward language variation that might be taken into consideration in outlining the curriculum, developing the syllabi, and planning the lessons. The ultimate goal is, of course, an optimization of the learning experience for students learning a second/foreign language.

Both quantitative and qualitative data have been analyzed carefully with reference to the five research questions and with the purpose of study in mind. Based on the results, it can be said that language variation is a concept readily available to students through L1 and generally considered in a positive light by them. Language variation in L2, on the other hand, is not as unanimously embraced by students. This may be due to lack of awareness, preexisting attitudes, or simply a feeling of being overwhelmed. Variation thus seems to pose additional challenges to the language learner at first sight. At the same time, however, it is considered useful for communicating with people from the target community.

Beyond the results from this particular study, political, acquisitional, and pedagogical arguments speak in favor of the inclusion of language variation in FL classrooms. Political concepts such as linguistic diversity, pluricentricity (Clyne, 1992), and ethnolinguistic democracy (Fishman, 1995) support language variation. From the

standpoint of SLA research, Cummins' interdependence hypothesis (1978), Krashen's monitor model (1981), and research on attitudes and motivation (e.g., Gardner, 1982) provide a rationale for language variation, awareness raising, and attitude consciousness. On the pedagogy side, the National Standards for Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 1996), the concept of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1988), and the preference for authentic language-in-use all favor language variation.

Since communicative competence is the goal of foreign language teaching, it would be denying the students an important tool in their resource kit if we were to leave out target language variation in our daily teaching. In order to develop variation awareness--a largely receptive skill--a variety of sources and teaching materials would be essential. A unit on awareness raising thru L1 at the beginning of the semester would set the stage and brief comments on particular variations whenever they emerge in the course of the semester would complement the program.

Language variation is not only a phenomenon occurring in every language as a living system, a luxury for those who enjoy playing with language at the expert level, and a right for those who happen to speak a particular variety as a native "dialect". It is a highly instrumental and operational concept, useful, sometimes necessary in order to understand an interlocutor in either L1 or L2. It is thus my hope that this study will stimulate discussions among educators about integrating language variation into the curriculum, into the teaching materials, and into the teaching practice of foreign language classrooms.

APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPT OF VOICE SAMPLES

ENGLISH SAMPLES

Sample 1

I start off my day by leaving my bed when the alarm goes off and getting ready, shaving, all the normal things...and then racing furiously to my first class which actually is not a class I am taking, but is a class I am a section leader for. And I sit through that class, just keep up to track with everything that the students are going to be doing. And then I am off to my next class which is physics class that I never actually attend, I usually sit outside and do the homework for that day. And then I go my linear algebra class where I have lots of fun...

Sample 2

Wednesday is my busiest day. Usually I like to wake up before my alarm but I'll set my alarm to 7 a.m.. So I am usually awake before my morning wash and my personal devotion, probably 15 to 30 minutes. Then I usually have breakfast. I log on to my internet website, see what messages I have, check my email, send out a few messages to my family or whatever is important...Then by the time I've had breakfast I have a wash, get dressed, catch the bus and come down to the university. Usually there is like a million things that I need to do before class...

Sample 3

Okay, well, on Monday mornings the alarm usually goes off just after 6, but that's for Chris, so I don't need to get up then...I usually roll over and get up about 7, have breakfast, the usual sort of stuff and then I go and get into the gym at 8 a.m. and work out there for about an hour. Then I go to classes, there is a class from 9-10, then another one from 11-12, and then a final class from 3 that goes through to 5. That is pretty much my Monday...

Sample 4

Well, I work fulltime and go to school. So I usually get up at 7 o'clock, so I can get to work by 8 / 8:30. First thing I do when the alarm goes off is I go outdoors and get my newspaper, come on in and take a shower, put the iron on if I need to iron my outfit for the day. Go in and have breakfast which is usually 'Cheerios' and if not, then bread and cheese. Iron my clothes, pretty much after that right after go to work...

Sample 5

Okay, well, today wasn't really very interesting. So I rather talk about yesterday. I got into work about 9 o'clock. I still had some preparations and things to get ready for the class I teach which is at 11, so that kept me busy. Headed off to class at about 10:40 or so, had to leave early because I had to set up a laptop in the class, so I had to get in there at pretty much 10 minutes to. So I taught the class which usually exhausts the hell out of me. And so get back to the office about noon, and then headed off and just had some lunch, just to wind down and relax...

Sample 6

Okay, this semester is a really exciting semester for me because I am studying for major exams and so my days are about as boring as they could be. I wake up around 6:30 when my girlfriend gets up to go teach elementary school and then we kind of have breakfast

together and usually by 8 o'clock I sit in front of my computer, checking my email, looking for soccer scores on the internet, I am a terrible addict of soccer and the information. Then I start work about 8:30...

Sample 7

I wake up on most days at about 4 in the morning so that I can start getting ready for school. I have to get up early because my days are pretty busy. I check my email, that is the first thing that I do and see if I have anything from my professors or other students. And then I take a shower, eat, and go to school. I ride the bus to school. And on Mondays I go to the library for quite a while. And have to ... I meet people on Mondays for library work...

Sample 8

Hi, my name is Erin, and I am going to talk about my day. As typical, this morning I would set my alarm a lot earlier than I actually woke up. I set it for five o'clock, so I could get up and get lots of work done. But I hit snooze probably about eight times and got up two hours later. The first thing I have to do is feed my cats because they won't let me do anything else, they get under my feet...well, I walk around until I feed them. And I do that...and I scoop their little box, which is probably my least favorite chore of the day. And then I go about doing stuff for myself...

GERMAN SAMPLES

Sample 1

An einem normalen Wochentag läutet der Wecker bei meinen Kindern um dreiviertel sieben. Meine Kinder sind neun und elf Jahre alt. Dann kommen sie zu mir in mein Schlafzimmer, wo ich noch fest schlafe um dreiviertel sieben und versuchen mich dann in der nächsten halben Stunde ungefähr dreimal zu wecken, bis ich dann ganz müde aufstehe, ins Bad gehe, mir dort meine Zähne putz und mich wasch. Dann geh ich in die Küche und mach ein Frühstück, wobei meine Kinder, neun und elf, aber das hab ich eh schon g'sagt, ein Müsli essen und ich trink meistens nur einen Tee...

Sample 2

Also, am Montag steh ich meistens um sechs Uhr auf. Da geh ich erst mal mit meinem Hund für 'ne Stunde in den Wald, so. Dann kommen wir heim, dann mach ich ihm Frühstück und mir selbst. Und dann geh ich um 10 in die Uni, dann hab ich 2 Stunden Vorlesung. Danach kann ich dann in die Mensa zum Essen gehen. Und danach geh ich wieder in die Bibliothek und lerne etwas. Und danach geh ich meistens dann heim und hab nochmal Training oder...je nachdem, was eben gerade ansteht. Am Dienstag und Donnerstag hab ich erst um 12 Unterricht und dementsprechend kann ich da morgens lange Radfahren...

Sample 3

Ja, ich ...also heute morgen bin ich um 7 Uhr aufgestanden und bin ich erst mal 'ne Viertelstunde liegengeblieben, dann hab ich mein Müsli gegessen, und...hum...hab den Hund gefüttert...den wir haben, den wir aber loswerden wollen, weil irgendwie unsere Wohnung ist ein bisschen zu klein, wir haben nur zwei Schlafzimmer und...aber jedenfalls..hum...dann bin ich in die Dusche gegangen, hab kurz geduscht...

Sample 4

Hallo, ich bin der Lorenz und ich werde euch jetzt von meinem normalen Tag erzählen. Normalerweise steh ich erst um 11 Uhr auf, und der Grund ist, dass ich erst um halb ein Uhr Klasse hab. Manchmal muss ich aber auch schon früher aufstehen, um 8 oder 9 Uhr, wenn ich vorher was zu erledigen hab. Das mag ich leider nicht,... weil ich hab mich jetzt schon daran gewöhnt, lang zu schlafen und spät schlafen zu gehen. Frühstück ess ich normalerweise zu Hause. Ich ess normalerweise Toast und...Toast und Marmelade oder ..oder irgendein Müsli...

Sample 5

Ja, ich heisse Anja. Ich bin ein Postdoc hier im Chemiedepartment, ich habe einen regelmäßigen Tagesablauf. Ich wache so um 7 Uhr auf meistens, aber mach das Frühstück so ganz gemütlich bis 8 oder so und komm meistens eigentlich erst so um halb neun / neun aus dem Haus und komme dann, weil ich mit den Fahrrad fahre, so um neun/halb zehn an der Uni an. Und da schau ich erst mal, was ich so an email habe und beschäftige mich damit, beantworte alles, was ich so schnell beantworten muss, und fange dann an, im Labor zu arbeiten...

Sample 6

Jetzt werde ich euch etwas von meinem Tagesablauf erzählen. Normalerweise steh ich so unter der Woche um sieben Uhr auf. Dann wasch ich mich zuerst einmal und dusche und mach mich parat. Danach geh ich in die Küche, wo ich mir mein Früh-stück zubereite. Und danach pack ich meine Sachen und mach mich dann so gegen 8 Uhr auf den Weg zur Uni. Meistens hab ich dann den ganzen Morgen Vorlesungen ...und am Mittag bleib ich entweder an der Uni oder geh zurück nach Hause.

Sample 7

Ja, heute morgen bin ich so um sieben Uhr aufgeweckt...worden von meinem Wecker und ja...da war ich noch ein bisschen müde, und da hab ich gedacht: jetzt bleib ich noch ein bisschen im Bett, und dann war's dann halt so sieben Uhr dreißig, bis ich endlich aufgestanden bin und meine Vorlesung ist halt schon um acht und dann bin ich zu spät gekommen für die Vorlesung. Aber das ist nicht so schlimm, weil ich glaube es war sowieso ziemlich langweilig dort, ich bin darein gekommen und die Leute haben ausgesehen, als schlafen sie...!

Sample 8

Also, in der Regel steh ich recht früh auf, für meine Verhältnisse recht früh hier. Das kann sein: vor um sieben...hum...eigentlich nie später als neun. Der Tag fängt an mit Duschen und 'nem ausgiebigen Frühstück, ganz besonders wichtig ist da schwarzer Tee, den brauch ich sehr dringend, um mich auf den Tag vorzubereiten. ...Hum...ja, vormittags, das erste ist eigentlich immer das Computerlabor, um rauszufinden, ob emails da sind, oder nicht...

APPENDIX B: INDIRECT ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT

You will be listening to eight different people in English and eight different people in German. Please check your reaction on the following scales as quickly as possible. (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree)

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Example: | strongly
agree | _ _ X _ _ _ _ | strongly
disagree |
| a) I can understand this speaker. | | _ _ _ _ _ | |
| b) I would like to have this speaker as my teacher. | | _ _ _ _ _ | |
| c) This speaker knows what she or he is talking about. | | _ _ _ _ _ | |
| d) This speaker seems like a nice person. | | _ _ _ _ _ | |
| e) This speaker speaks properly. | | _ _ _ _ _ | |
| f) I have heard this type of English/German before. | | _ _ _ _ _ | |
| g) I can identify this speaker's nationality (<i>please name</i>): | | _____ | |

Now please evaluate the speaker on the following pairs of opposites:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| I would rate this speaker as... | <i>neutral</i> | | |
| | intelligent | _ _ _ _ _ | stupid |
| | sincere | _ _ _ _ _ | fake |
| | cold | _ _ _ _ _ | warm |
| | weak | _ _ _ _ _ | strong |
| | hard-working | _ _ _ _ _ | lazy |
| | friendly | _ _ _ _ _ | unfriendly |
| | boring | _ _ _ _ _ | exciting |
| | dependent | _ _ _ _ _ | independent |
| | successful | _ _ _ _ _ | unsuccessful |
| | a good friend | _ _ _ _ _ | a poor friend |
| | selfish | _ _ _ _ _ | generous |
| | below average | _ _ _ _ _ | talented |
| | wealthy | _ _ _ _ _ | poor |
| | thoughtless | _ _ _ _ _ | caring |

On a scale from 1 (highly desirable) to 5 (not desirable), how would you rank these qualities? (please circle)

intelligent	1	2	3	4	5
sincere	1	2	3	4	5
warm	1	2	3	4	5
strong	1	2	3	4	5
hard-working	1	2	3	4	5
friendly	1	2	3	4	5
exciting	1	2	3	4	5
independent	1	2	3	4	5
successful	1	2	3	4	5
a good friend	1	2	3	4	5
generous	1	2	3	4	5
talented	1	2	3	4	5
wealthy	1	2	3	4	5
caring	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C: BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Section I: Demographic Information

Please fill out the following information about yourself. All personal responses will remain anonymous and are included for statistical purposes only.

1. Years of studying German (please check one box)
 - Less than one year
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-4 years
 - Five or more years
2. A) Years of exposure to German: _____ years B) Where or by whom were you exposed to German? (mark all that apply)
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Work
 - Other _____
1. Reasons for learning German: _____
2. Current class level €102 €202 €300/301 €Other: _____
3. Family/friends in German speaking country? €Yes €No
Who? €Family €Friends
Where? €Austria €Germany €Switzerland
4. Visits to German speaking country? €Yes €No
Where? €Austria €Germany €Switzerland
How long? ____ (months) ____ (weeks) ____ (days)
5. A) Self evaluation of command of German:

	Poor	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent
Listening:	€	€	€	€	€
Speaking:	€	€	€	€	€
Reading:	€	€	€	€	€
Writing:	€	€	€	€	€

 B) German GPA: _____
8. Use of German outside of class: €Daily €Frequently €Sometimes €Rarely €Never
9. Native language? _____ Other foreign languages? _____, _____, _____
10. Gender: €Male €Female
11. Age: €17-21 €22-26 €27-31 €32 and above
12. Major: _____
13. Place(s) you have lived and number of years:
 - Within the United States: _____
 - Other Countries: _____
14. Ethnic Origin: €White €African American €Hispanic €Asian €Native American €Other
15. Household income (please define who represents your household income): Who? _____
€below \$20,000 €\$20,000-40,000 €\$40,000-60,000 €above \$60,000
16. Future career plans: _____

Section II: Variation

Please answer the following questions about language variation in English according to your own experience and beliefs.

Studies on how people speak have shown differences in the use of English (and any other language for that matter) according to the following variations:

- National origin** (e.g., British English vs. American English)
- Ethnic group** (e.g., New York Jewish vs. Ebonics)
- Regional background** (e.g., Northeast vs. Midwest)
- Sociogeographics** (e.g., Urban vs. Rural)
- Social class** (e.g., working class vs. lower middle class)
- Gender** (e.g., male vs. female)
- Age** (e.g., children vs. teenagers vs. adults)
- Mode** (e.g., oral vs. written)
- Register** (e.g., formal vs. informal)
- Degree of standardization** (e.g., newscaster vs. everyday speech)

A) Which kinds of variations from the list above, if any, have you experienced in the past and in which situation?

Variation Type	Experienced?		Type of Situation
	Yes	No	
National origin			
Ethnic group			
Regional background			
Sociogeographics			
Social class			
Gender			
Age			
Mode			
Register			
Degree of standardization			

Which of these variations, if any, do you use and in which situation?

Variation Type	Use?		Type of Situation
	Yes	No	
National origin			
Ethnic group			
Regional background			
Sociogeographics			
Social class			
Gender			
Age			
Mode			
Register			
Degree of standardization			

1. Can you think of words, phrases, or pronunciations in English that only people from your area would know (i.e., birthplace, where you grew up, or where you spent most of your life)?

Words _____

Phrases _____

Pronunciation _____

2. Did anything in Tucson strike you as different (words, phrases, pronunciation) in comparison to your area (i.e., birthplace, where you were raised, or where you spent most of your life)?

Your area _____

Tucson _____

3. Would you consider differences in language use an enrichment and/or an obstacle to communication?

Enrichment Yes No Why? _____

Obstacle Yes No Why? _____

4. On a scale from 1 (very important) to 5 (not important at all), how important do you think it is to learn about language variation?

English 1€ 2€ 3€ 4€ 5€ German 1€ 2€ 3€ 4€ 5€

Section III: Foreign Language Learning

Please answer the following questions about language variation in German according to your own experience and beliefs.

1. If you were to attend a summer intensive language program, which country would you choose and why? Please rank the following three countries from 1 (most preferred place) to 3 (least preferred place).

_____ Austria _____ Germany _____ Switzerland

For the country you preferred the most, why did you choose this country?

2. What do you associate with the following countries:

Austria _____

Germany _____

Switzerland _____

3. Are you aware of linguistic differences within German? €Yes €No

Please list _____

4. Does your teacher or your learning materials (textbook, audiovisual, web base, etc.) include linguistic differences within German, and if so, what kind?

Teacher: €Yes €No If yes, what kind? _____

Textbook: €Yes €No If yes, what kind? _____

Audiotapes: €Yes €No If yes, what kind? _____

Videotapes: €Yes €No If yes, what kind? _____

Web base: €Yes €No If yes, what kind? _____

5. Would you consider learning about linguistic differences within a foreign language helpful or problematic when learning that particular language?

Helpful: €Yes €No Why? _____

Problematic: €Yes €No Why? _____

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**Interview questions**

- 1) Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. Do you remember taking the questionnaire? Is there anything you want to ask about it or add to it?
- 2) How would you characterize a good speaker/writer of English?
- 3) According to these criteria, would you consider yourself a good speaker/writer? Why/Why not?
- 4) How would you characterize a good speaker/writer of German?
- 5) According to these criteria, would you consider yourself a good speaker/writer? Why/Why not?
- 6) What role does language variation play in your evaluation of a good speaker?
- 7) Has participation in this study had any effect on your approach to language learning and if so, what?
- 8) What suggestions would you like to make for language teachers specifically about language variation?
- 9) Is it important to learn variations of a language? Why/Why not?

APPENDIX E: CRONBACH- α

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA) STATUS

		Mean	Std Dev	Cases
1.	INTELL	4.1585	1.1273	82.0
2.	HARD	3.8049	1.2012	82.0
3.	SUCCESS	3.2439	1.1062	82.0
4.	TALENT	3.2561	.9271	82.0
5.	WEALTH	2.4390	1.1557	82.0
6.	INDEPEN	3.6951	1.0386	82.0
7.	STRONG	3.6585	1.0911	82.0

Covariance Matrix

	INTELL	HARD	SUCCESS	TALENT	WEALTH	INDEP	STRONG
INTELL	1.2709						
HARD	.6116	1.4429					
SUCCESS	.2818	.6778	1.2237				
TALENT	.3046	.3469	.4182	.8595			
WEALTH	-.4655	-.0985	.3484	.3553	1.3357		
INDEP	.3946	.7422	.5815	.3260	-.0373	1.0787	
STRONG	.2030	.7967	.4176	.3354	-.0705	.6354	1.1906

Correlation Matrix

	INTELL	HARD	SUCCESS	TALENT	WEALTH	INDEP	STRONG
INTELL	1.000						
HARD	.4516	1.000					
SUCCESS	.2260	.5101	1.000				
TALENT	.2914	.3115	.4078	1.000			
WEALTH	-.3573	-.0709	.2725	.3316	1.000		
INDEPE	.3370	.5949	.5061	.3385	-.0311	1.000	
STRONG	.1650	.6079	.3460	.3316	-.0559	.5606	1.000

N of Cases = 82.0

Reliability Coefficients 7 items

Alpha = .7332 Standardized item alpha = .7402

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

SOLIDARITY

		Mean	Std Dev	Cases
1.	SINCERE	4.2651	1.0716	83.0
2.	WARM	3.8494	1.0953	83.0
3.	FRIEND	4.1566	1.1206	83.0
4.	EXCITE	3.3735	1.0674	83.0
5.	GOOD	4.1446	1.2700	83.0
6.	GENE	3.6747	1.0944	83.0
7.	CARE	4.1325	1.1345	83.0

Covariance Matrix

	SINCER	WARM	FRIEND	EXCITE	GOOD	GENE	CARE
SINCER	1.1484						
WARM	.7843	1.1996					
FRIEND	.7263	.6763	1.2557				
EXCITE	.4852	.4960	.6115	1.1393			
GOOD	.9612	.7720	.8551	.7502	1.6130		
GENE	.4897	.4443	.5394	.5498	.8159	1.1978	
CARE	.8425	.7214	.8936	.5353	1.0782	.6778	1.2871

Correlation Matrix

	SINCER	WARM	FRIEND	EXCITE	GOOD	GENE	CARE
SINCER	1.0000						
WARM	.6682	1.0000					
FRIEND	.6048	.5511	1.0000				
EXCITE	.4242	.4242	.5113	1.000			
GOOD	.7062	.5550	.6009	.5534	1.000		
GENE	.4176	.3707	.4398	.4707	.5870	1.0000	
CARE	.6930	.5806	.7029	.4420	.7483	.5459	1.0000

N of Cases = 83.0

Reliability Coefficients 7 items

Alpha = .8970 Standardized item alpha = .8962

APPENDIX F: VOICE SAMPLES - INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Attribute score (status & solidarity) x Ethnicity

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
PearsonChiSqu	259.624	192	.001
LikelihoodRatio	63.283	192	1.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.387	1	.122
N of Valid Cases	81		

Dependent variable: Accuracy of ID scores**Significant predictor: Years of exposure**

Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.432	.186	.111	326.6713

Predictors: (constant), places lived internationally, visit GSC, years/expo, total score, years/study, fam/friends GSC

Coefficients

	Unstandard B	Coeffic. Std. Error	Standardiz Coeffic. Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Const)	526.137	176.975		2.973	.004
totalscor	2.177	2.749	.101	.792	.431
yrs/study	-134.113	44.735	-.389	-2.998	.004
yrs/expo	6.074	2.504	.280	2.425	.018
fa/fr GSC	59.091	75.717	.106	.780	.438
visit GSC	-62.309	90.295	-.089	-.690	.493
place liv	-1.188	2.433	-.056	-.480	.627

APPENDIX G: EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS:

102-level

Student 1: ...Well, I was in Georgia. So here it took a year to get out of the Southern speech. So when I call friends up I'll say "y'all" and stuff like that....I'll use words with them and speak slower when I am on the phone with them. But when I talk to family in Pittsburgh/Pennsylvania, I'll get faster and I use different words, it depends who I am talking to. Mainly because if I hear it, I'll start speaking it very quickly, because I lived all over the world. I'll hear it and I'll pick it up real quickly, accent and tone etc. That is just how I am.

Researcher: Maybe your background and your life experiences makes it easier for you to switch between different notes...

Student 1: Yes, my family is military and we moved all over the world. It's one of the necessities, if you want to make friends...to survive there, in the different places you are in, it's being able to adapt quickly.

....

Researcher: Does language variation play any role in your evaluation of a good speaker?

Student 1: It does. If you don't really know where this person is coming from, it is going to be hard to communicate with them. Speaking with people from the countryside, you could say something from the city and they would not understand you. Not just slang, but they would ask: Why would you do that? Even though you are coming from the same country, the people from the South eat different food etc., their family will have handed down recipes on different food than people up in New York, who are big coffee drinkers. In Georgia, we drink sweet tea. Here, you have to put sugar in your tea. There, it comes automatically to your table sweet. And you go to your favorite restaurant based on the sweet tea. If you want unsweetened tea, you have to ask for that, that is the southern custom. But if you go up North, it's different, big coffee drinkers. You have to understand where a person is coming from. You don't have to live there, but you have to understand where the person is coming from in order to keep an open mind to understand what they are saying.

===

Researcher: ...And is there any suggestion you might want to make to language teachers about variation from the experience you have had?

Student 2: In my English classes I've had when I was younger: They used to skid on a couple of kids who would grow up speaking in a certain way and got in trouble for that. I don't think you should do that. There is no definite way to speak a certain language. Like cultures are different. There is not only one culture, there is no one real way of speaking. Maybe just the writing. That would be the whole universal kind of thing. I would say: Let them speak. If they want to learn German in a certain way and speak German in a certain way they know from the past, then let them learn that way. Not that I had German teachers like that, but...

202-level

Researcher: ...What are your criteria for a good speaker of English?

Student 3: I don't know whether this is true for everyone but I thought it is when trying the survey. I just, for some reason, proper English and very intelligent people seem to lean towards a British accent. I don't know if it is just for me. I know in movies they usually use a British accent to symbolize wisdom or intelligence but it...definitely for me, I, every time I heard a British accent it was definitely a sign of intelligence...[later on in the interview]...I know, my sister and I watched that "Trainspotting" movie with this Scottish or Irish and they have such hard accents she walked away because she just can't understand it...

...

Researcher: Based on your criteria, would you consider yourself a good speaker and/or a good writer of English and why?

Student 3: Well, I'm a terrible writer of English. I think it greatly, I speak it wonderfully and I can communicate these beautiful ideas and tell stories and everything. But when I have to put it down on paper, it's like, I'm confused. I don't know what it is. It's not so much the English that really gets in my way. It's just my creativity and everything, and the words and everything. They just get stuck inside me, so I definitely would not consider myself a good writer at all...[later in the interview]...although I do think I can write better in German than in English. I think I can write more creatively just because, I don't know, it's just, oh I'm trying to find the words.

...

Researcher: Is it important to learn variations in your native language or a foreign language? Why or why not?

Student 3: I think it definitely is because it's part of everybody as a human being, you know, I don't know the different Chinese accents but I know the different American English accents and I think it's just part of becoming closer as a group of people that speak the same language even though there is different variations on it. And I think if you don't learn about it, you are really pulsing (?) yourself off and you really...you are losing a part of that, I mean it's exciting to hear somebody say something differently or hear a different word that you wouldn't have ever thought of or know what it meant. And it's really not so much for the learning that you can use it but just hearing and knowing that people are different. And I think that's just a great part of being a human being, I mean. I think, you didn't care about that if you didn't learn about it. That'd suck. It really, it'd stink because you wouldn't know about anybody else. That would be like learning about America not knowing that there is all these other countries in the world, you know...

===

Researcher: ...I mean, for example, do you think you are rating the British variety higher than the Australian variety?

Student 4: No, I don't think so, but it is interesting. I always do get the feeling anyway although that for some reason the British and the Australians sound more intelligent than

what the Americans do. I think so. And I think probably, their oral is more correct. I think more emphasis might be placed on grammar in Britain or even Australia.

300-level

Researcher: How would you characterize a good speaker of German?

Student 5: That is hard to say, because I would say grammar as well, but my first exposure to German was "Schwäbisch", that was actually the first form of German that I learned, thinking it was "Hochdeutsch". And I came back here to a 202 class and got back my first paper which I'd just written as I would say...marks to every single word, because they were all incorrect, grammatically, but I don't know, to the people in Schwabenland, you know, it's normal to them, that was correct to them. So I think with German it's a little bit harder to say, about what is correct, what is proper German, what's not...

...

Researcher: Do you think language variation plays any role in how you evaluate speakers?

Student 5: I think so a little bit. I had some relatives of a friend of mine were from the backhills of Ohio, typical country-type people. They were really excited when they were going to fly out to Arizona for the first time and have said "We are going to ride on an aeroplane". And that to me, just my god,...

...

Researcher: Do you think it is important to learn variations of a language of your own language?...or why bother?

Student 5: No, I think when I was over in Germany my neighbor was British. And we had the best time sitting and comparing different phrases and different words. I mean simple words like pants. You know to us, when I first said pants they blushed and could not ever see why. It was so much fun to figure out how we could speak the same language yet have completely different meanings and we could still understand each other though. And that was the neat part of it. And I think you know I, that my speech was greatly enriched by that exposure and, because when you learn different ways to express yourself obviously you ought to become more expressive and I think that that is really important and when people just live, work and play in a small region and they don't get that exposure. I think that's kind of sad....

===

Researcher: How would you characterize a good speaker of English?

Student 6: Basically, for a good English obviously the correct grammar. But there is a difference between speaking a good English and then being a good communicator. Speak it correctly, but if you have a lot of other faults in it then you're not gonna be able to communicate with other people as well, so...

Researcher: Like what for example? What is the difference between a good speaker and a good communicator?

Student 6: Like you could use perfect grammar and you know exactly what you're talking about. But then if you like express that very quickly or if your manner or the way of holding yourself. I think that affects communication more than whether or not you're just using basic good language skills. I think that would be different.

400/500 level

Researcher: ...So you had trouble with the Austrian accent. Have you ever been to Austria? No? Or talked to anybody from Austria? Or consciously known anybody from Austria, had teachers from Austria...?

Student 7: No, I had a friend who studies in Austria. He told me that you can't understand the Austrians...

...

Researcher: ...How come you can distinguish the Swiss variety? What is special about Swiss?

Student 7: Swiss is more flowing. Like "ja-ich". Pause-speak-pause-speak-pause etc. Ich finde es toll. It is like up and down, up and down. It is kind of slower too. I have been to Switzerland. My friend is from Switzerland. I would talk to him in German and he would try but he said: "Hach, I don't like German, I want to talk back to Swiss German." I can understand it then.

...

Researcher: ...So the [English] accent wasn't a problem, because all of them, within their accents, spoke properly...

Student 7: Not the Australians. And not the ones from New Zealand. I could understand them but I would not like to have them as my teachers because it is so twisted. And English people are not that bad. I would not want to have a teacher that has a strong accent, like from Australia or New Zealand.

...

Researcher: How would you characterize a good speaker of German?

Student 7: To be able to speak "Hochdeutsch". Just to be able to. You can speak "Dialekt", but just to know and understand Hochdeutsch, using the concept of being able to speak high German. You won't get a job in a corporate office, for example, speaking you dialect. Because no one will really understand. Let's say Frankfurt, or Hamburg, or Hannover. You work there and you are speaking Bayrisch. You have to communicate and be able to adapt to Hochdeutsch. Then try to speak Hochdeutsch.

Researcher: ...And how about a good writer of German?

Student 7: I guess, not using any slang. Not use any of the...what the Bayrisch would say. Just being grammatically correct and being able to use Hochdeutsch in writing.

...

Researcher: ...Just curiosity. You start now learning all these varieties...

Student 7: No, I don't want to. Maybe I want to learn more than German now. For example, I want to learn Berliner accent. They have a cool one: Juten Tach! It's interesting. And I do want to try to learn British. I want to take a vacation in England. I love the British accent for some reason. They sound so proper, they talk so... I just want to see what it feels like. So maybe if I stay there for 6 months and then go back to America, I'll have a different accent.

===

Researcher: What was your first impression?

Student 8: For me as a native speaker of German it was interesting to hear the English texts because when it was difficult to understand for me, I had the impression that the interviewed people were kind of distant or unfriendly...And then, what is interesting: I thought the men were nicer than the women for some reason, I don't know why...perhaps it's these American female speakers...I did not like them very much, even if I could not really judge....Something to do with a full voice...? Again, difficult to judge but I had my opinions.

...

Researcher: How would you characterize a good speaker in your own language, German?

Student 8: I like people that speak correct sentences...that use correct grammar....and something I really don't stand is when people make mistakes in grammar or something like this...I try to watch my language... I think for this dialect issue: At the beginning, when I first heard dialect when I moved in the South, I really didn't like this dialect. In the North of Germany we make fun of the Bavarians or laugh about the South dialect, Schwäbisch, e.g., ... For us, people who speak dialect are very funny, and are not taken very seriously. It is really like this: If you go to the university in Kiel and you speak in a Bavarian accent, nobody takes you serious. And this is stupid, but it is like this.

Researcher: What is for you a good speaker of English?

Student 8: For American English, I don't like this slang language very much. I don't like these empty expressions, this blablabla, I don't like these little Schreie...And this undergrad English, that is a little bit getting on my nerves...And it is interesting, before I came to the States, my English was kind of non-existent. And I was really impressed about people who spoke well, for example professors. There is such a big difference in English. In German, I did not observe such a big difference between good speakers and bad speakers...Intonation is important for me...and in American English, if it is more monotone, it seems to be more serious.

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