

Multilingualism and language ideologies in German-speaking communities in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

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Language ideologies are values and attitudes that, apart from the exercise of power, serve to structure the social environment of groups of speakers (van Dijk 2015; Spitzmüller/ Warnke 2011, Blommaert 2005). From the 19th century onwards, such evaluations of the internal variation in German and of contact varieties of Portuguese were socially shared and negotiated in Southern Brazil. Aspects of language ideology emerge discursively both in print media (travel reports, fiction, research) and in everyday orality. This becomes evident, e.g., in the heterogeneous semantics of the language concept *Deutsch* 'German' in German-speaking groups using different varieties (Hunsrück, Pomeranian, etc., cf. Altenhofen 2016; Auer 2005) and actors (descendants, researchers, travelers).

Despite their obvious relevance for the context of German in Brazil, language ideologies have not been reflected in research to a large degree. In this contribution we analyze the role of (language) ideologies in discursive debates on linguistic concepts of German in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Based on positioning theory (e.g., Spitzmüller/Flubacher/Bendl 2017) and discourse linguistics (e.g., Spitzmüller/Warnke 2011), positioning in the sense of evaluations and stances (in context) are analyzed on three levels of discourse:

- a) Intratextual level: proper nouns (*Deutsch*, *Deitsch* 'German', *Plattdeutsch* '(Low) German', *Brasilianisch* 'Brazilian (Portuguese)'), collocations (*unser Deutsch* 'our German') and lines of opposition (*German versus dialect*);
- b) Actor level: Positioning in attitudes by local speakers;
- c) Transtextual level: ideologies (language homogeneity) and indexical values of elements from the intratextual level (e.g., *Deutsch* versus (dialectal name) *Deitsch*).

The qualitative analysis of the data draws on 58 semi-structured interviews from ten different speaker groups in Rio Grande do Sul. The data was recorded as part of a dissertation project (2017/2018) and a study trip to Southern Brazil (2019).

The analysis indicates a high level of indexical symbolism at the word level, both in print media and in individual speakers' attitudes. The construction of hierarchical configurations displayed in the use of variety names (*intratextual level*), which is supported by attributes used in their context (*mixed language, dialect, fine German*, etc.), often trace back to ideological components of language homogeneity, such as linguistic purity, monocentrism (Eurocentrism) and the primary role of written language (*German writing*), which have been handed down more or less since the 17th century (Faulstich 2008). Beginning with World War II (at the latest) - due to the nationalization campaign by President Getúlio Vargas (1937-1945) - the homogeneity ideology of Portuguese also played a central role in local discourse.

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