

Teaching and Learning Pluricentric Languages: How can we Integrate Linguistic Diversity and Variation in Schooling and Higher Education?

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While there seems to be general consensus nowadays among linguists that many languages are pluricentric, i.e. multiple varieties are considered legitimate and standard in their individual contexts, the issue of linguistic diversity is still largely ignored in the context of foreign language teaching.

In this talk, I will try to explore some of the complex pedagogical implications of dealing with linguistic diversity in the classroom. In particular, some pivotal questions in this context will be addressed:

- How can we achieve a heightened awareness of linguistic diversity in the classroom?
- What are students' and teachers' attitudes towards different varieties?
- How can we prepare our students for encounters with different varieties, including those which are typically not considered to be a dominant variety?
- What are the challenges for teachers and textbooks authors, for instance, when dealing with authentic materials?
- How consistent are teachers in their own language usage (e.g. regarding pronunciation, spelling or lexical choice)? Is it still justified to promote the popular demand among teachers for consistency?

The first part of the presentation will focus on the consequences of the current paradigm shift in the use of the two main varieties of English (AmE and BrE) in the context of English Language Teaching. Subsequently, similarities and differences between the teaching of English and various other pluricentric languages (e.g. German, Spanish) will be discussed. In the second part, specific suggestions are made on how the aspect of linguistic diversity can be incorporated more successfully into curricula and teaching materials and how tasks can be used to achieve greater sensitivity in dealing with other varieties.