

<b>Institution: University of Manchester</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 28 (Modern Languages and Linguistics)</b>
<b>Title of case study: Modernisation of teaching German as a foreign language</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>This impact is on educational policy and practice in relation to the international teaching of German as a foreign language and is based on research into differences in linguistic variation between England and Germany. The differences lie in: perception of non-standard varieties in the two countries; the status of the standard language in each; and different attitudes towards it. The research stimulated debate, in Germany and abroad, about the variety of German appropriate for use in classroom instruction, and resulted in acceptance that teaching only the register of formal writing is not adequate to the needs of contemporary communication. New teaching manuals have been produced and curricula revised, placing greater emphasis on everyday speech.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Martin Durrell was Professor of German at Manchester University from 1993 to 2008 (and Emeritus from February 2008). The research led by him took place throughout this period, with the first major publication in 1999. It investigated qualitative differences in linguistic variation in England and Germany and the implication of this for the practice of teaching German as a foreign language (GFL) at all levels in the UK.</p> <p>The first stage was a detailed study [3.3] of the different perception of non-standard varieties in the two countries, and the different status of the standard language. In Germany the traditional perception, it was found, is of (a) regional dialects -- until very recently the primary language of most of the population and (b) a rigidly codified standard language acquired solely through education and not representative of the spoken usage of any section of the population. In England, the variety regarded as standard lacks the level of codification of German and is based on norms accepted by a particular social group, whilst non-standard varieties are primarily associated with particular social strata and regions.</p> <p>However, the relative flexibility of the 'standard' norms allows for significant variation between formal and informal discourse in a way that was unusual for standard German. A further key finding was that there has been a significant recent development in Germany: the use of the 'traditional' regional dialects has declined rapidly since the middle of the twentieth century, and the use has increased of a spoken form closer to the standard language – an informal register with relatively high prestige not dissimilar to that in England, but lacking the association with social class typical of the situation there.</p> <p>A second stage investigated the implication of these findings for the teaching of GFL. The results of this [3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.5] inform the account in the second edition of Durrell's <i>Using German</i> [3.6]. Here the concern was that teaching practice had been determined by the 'ideology of standard', the notion that only the formally codified standard language (so-called Hochdeutsch) is 'good' German and hence the only acceptable basis for classroom teaching, within the German speech area or outside it. Thus, the German generally taught was not the language variety learners would be faced with most often in practice.</p> <p>This was clearly demonstrated in a survey undertaken in collaboration with Dr Nils Langer (University of Bristol) [3.4]. This showed that students could be penalized for employing forms even in speech which, although almost universally employed by native speakers in informal situations, did not correspond to the prescriptions of the rigidly codified variety of formal writing. This variety, then, was being taught as if it was also normal usage in everyday speech. Learners could therefore find it difficult to participate effectively in the type of speech situation which they would encounter most frequently, the inevitable result being insecurity and demotivation. It was also shown that this contrasts markedly with the presentation of the language in comparable manuals for learning English, where the informal spoken register is introduced at an early stage and the differences between this and formal writing made explicit [3.1; 3.5]</p>

**3. References to the research** (AOR - Available on Request)

- 3.1 Durrell, M. 'Zur Relativierung von hochsprachlichen Normen in der deutschen Sprache der Gegenwart. Der Blick von außen.' In: Susanne Günthner, Wolfgang Imo, Dorothee Meer and Jan Georg Schneider (eds.), *Kommunikation und Öffentlichkeit. Sprachwissenschaftliche Potenziale zwischen Empirie und Norm*. Berlin & Boston: de Gruyter (= Reihe Germanistische Linguistik 296) 2012, pp. 85-101. (AOR)
- 3.2 Durrell, M. 'Deutsche Standardsprache und Registervielfalt in DaF-Unterricht'. In: Eva Neuland (ed.), *Variation im heutigen Deutsch. Perspektiven für den Sprachunterricht*. Bern, etc.: Peter Lang 2006, pp. 111-122. (AOR)
- 3.3 Durrell, M. 'Standardsprache in England und Deutschland'. *Zeitschrift für germanistische Linguistik* 27 (1999), 285-308. (AOR)
- 3.4 Durrell, M. 'Variation im Deutschen aus der Sicht von Deutsch als Fremdsprache'. *Der Deutschunterricht* 56/1 (2004), 69-77. (AOR)
- 3.5 Durrell, M. 'Register, Variation und Fremdsprachenvermittlung. Zum Problem des Deutschunterrichts in Großbritannien.' In: Gerhard Stickel (ed.), *Deutsch von außen*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter 2003, pp. 239-58. (AOR)
- 3.6 Durrell, M. *Using German. A Guide to Contemporary Usage*. 2nd.ed. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2003.(AOR)

**Evidence of quality**

All this work has been widely received, as Google searches attest, with [3.3] being cited in much subsequent work on the status of variation in German. [3.1], [3.2] and [3.4] were written at the invitation of leading German scholars in the field to contribute to a volume or periodical. Following the dissemination of this research Professor Durrell has been invited to speak about it at conferences, seminars or workshops in Heidelberg, Münster, Berlin (German Academic Exchange Service [DAAD]) and the Institut für Deutsche Sprache in Mannheim between 2000 and 2010. Overall, the findings and proposals have been widely cited and have gained widespread acceptance by other scholars working in German sociolinguistics and among teachers of German as a foreign language at secondary and tertiary level in several European countries.

**4. Details of the impact****Context**

Prior to the dissemination of this research, it was generally accepted that the formally codified prestige variety (Hochdeutsch) was the only acceptable basis for teaching GFL. The significant impact of this research has been to stimulate debate about whether this variety of German is actually the only appropriate form of the language to be taught to non-native speakers, whether in school or for adult instruction. The essential conclusion, which has now become generally accepted, is that it is no longer appropriate to teach German as it should be spoken (i.e. as prescribed by the strict codifications laid down in authoritative publications, which are widely ignored by native speakers), but as it actually is spoken.

**Pathways**

This conclusion became more widely disseminated internationally through encouragement by the Professor of German Studies at the University of Wuppertal and a senior colleague in German Linguistics and Translation Studies at the Copenhagen Business School and their invitation to contribute to a conference in 2004 [5.1] on the status of German and the teaching of the language organised by the DAAD in Berlin and attended by some two hundred scholars from across Europe, as well as to a special issue of *Der Deutschunterricht* (the leading publication aimed at teachers of German language within Germany [3.5]), as well as to a collected volume of papers on the principles which should underlie the teaching of German as a foreign language [3.2]. This volume, of some 550 pages, contains 36 papers by leading scholars (30 of professorial status) from 12 European countries, and Japan.

The views put forward in these papers and presentations of the early- to mid-2000s were initially rejected by the conservative teaching establishment within Germany, which held to the opinion that it was the duty of teachers only to impart 'correct' German to non-native learners. This opinion had informed all previous textbooks despite claims in them that they presented actual current usage. However, the conclusions were broadly welcomed by secondary and tertiary level teachers of GFL in other European countries and have proven to play a central role in the development of curricula [5.2; 5.8]. This is confirmed by the further references to Durrell's papers in the volume edited by the Professor of German Studies at the University of Wupperta [5.3] in respect of changing teaching practice at the Goethe Institute in Glasgow. The Goethe Institute is the organization which in turn influences the teaching of German across the globe.

### Reach and Significance

In the last few years, the discussions underpinned by the research have had increasingly substantial impact as the conclusions become more widely accepted for the practice of teaching GFL. The papers on the language variety to be used in teaching were in particular taken up in 2009 (with a precursor in 2007) as the basis for a debate in the journal *Info-DaF* ] between Werner Roggausch, the former head of teaching at the DAAD, and Péter Maitz (Augsburg) with Stefan Elspaß (Sakzburg) [5.4]. The debate informs the Project "Gesprochenes Deutsch für die Auslandsgermanistik" (Spoken German for the study of German outside Germany) at the University of Münster [5.5]. This is funded by the DAAD in order to assemble a corpus of authentic spoken language material which can be used by teachers of German as a foreign language.

Systematic account is now being taken of the need to base the oral component of second language instruction in German on the variety which German native speakers actually use in everyday communication and introduce this variety as well as the prestige variety of formal writing. Teaching manuals are now being produced which reflect this, notably the new textbook *Menschen* which was published in early 2012 by Hueber in Munich [5.6; 5.7]. Hueber is the leading publisher of instruction manuals for teaching German, and its products are most frequently adopted by the Goethe-Institute. The impact of Durrell's work in stimulating the reassessment on which these developments have been based is confirmed by the Heads of the Herder Institute in Leipzig (the leading university-based institute for Deutsch als Fremdsprache) noting the 'profound impact on German studies and GFL/GSL' worldwide [5.2] and the Head of the Department of Deutsch als Fremdsprache at the University of Munich [5.10]. Publications by the lead researchers on the University of Münster project, confirm the impact of the research in stimulating these developments and forming the initiative for the project [5.9].

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact.

All claims referenced in section 4.

- 5.1 Conference programme of Internationale Fachtagung GERMANISTIK IN EUROPA (18-22 February 2004), Berlin: [http://www.daad.de/presse/de/2004/8.1.1\\_0304.pdf](http://www.daad.de/presse/de/2004/8.1.1_0304.pdf)
- 5.2 Letter from Herder-Institut Leipzig 5 January 2012. Confirming the role of this work in stimulating debate on the need to broaden the range of German used in classroom teaching to include forms closer to natural everyday usage.
- 5.3 Ingrid Köster, "Sprachvariation als Gegenstand der (außer-universitären) Sprachvermittlung im Ausland". In: Eva Neuland (ed.), *Variation im heutigen Deutsch. Perspektiven für den Sprachunterricht*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2006, pp. 493-504.
- 5.4 Set of articles in the journal *Info-DaF* vol. 34, no. 5 (2007), pp. 515-530 and vol. 36, no. 1 (2009), pp. 53-82 with a discussion on the variety of German to be used in classroom teaching between Werner Roggausch, formerly in charge of language teaching at the DAAD and Péter Maitz (Budapest)/Stefan Elspaß (Augsburg), with extensive reference to Durrell's work.

- 5.5 Landing page for the Project "Gesprochenes Deutsch für die Auslandsgermanistik":  
<https://www.uni-muenster.de/forschungaz/project/4807?lang=de>
- 5.6 Details of portfolio of language-teaching materials at publisher's (Hueber) website:  
[http://www.hueber.de/sixcms/media.php/36/Prospekt\\_Menschen.pdf](http://www.hueber.de/sixcms/media.php/36/Prospekt_Menschen.pdf)
- 5.7 Letter from the Publishing Director of the Hueber Verlag 22 November 2011. Confirming the impact of Durrell's research in the development and conception of their new textbook Menschen.
- 5.8 E-Mail from the Eötvös Loránd University confirming the role of Durrell's work in training teachers of German in Hungarian schools and the discussion on the concept of norms in teaching German outside Germany.
- 5.9 E-Mail from the University of Münster, 4 November 2012, confirming the impact of Durrell's work for the initiative behind the establishment of the project "Gesprochenes Deutsch für die Auslandsgermanistik" at the University of Münster, together with a reference to papers by Dr. Imo and Professor Günthner which document this influence.
- 5.10 Email from the Head of the Department of Deutsch als Fremdsprache at the University of Munich.