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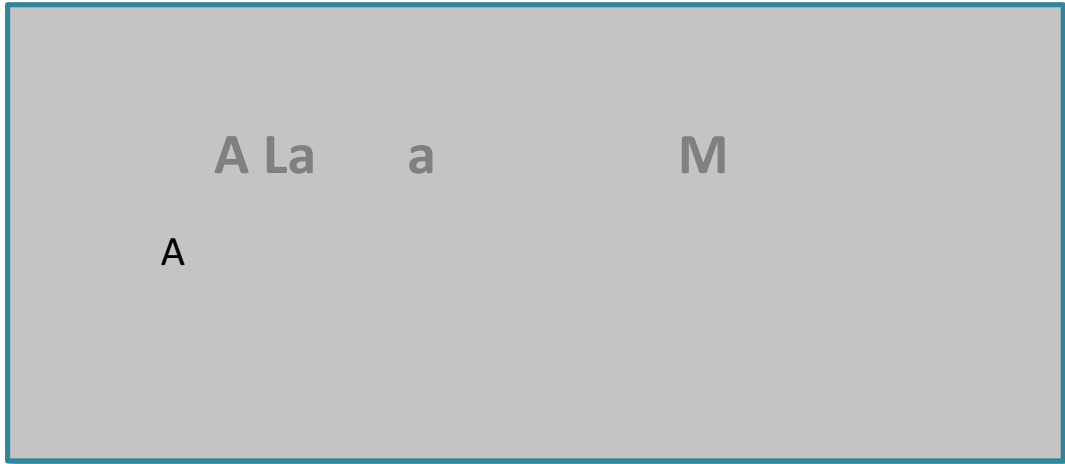# Working Papers

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A Language on the Move

Austrian Migrants in the United Kingdom and their German Mother Tongue

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The overarching aim of this paper is to put the mother tongue of migrants at the center of a project in migration studies, in order to explore its specificity, its potential, and its fluidity in sufficient detail. As the mother tongue of migrants is rarely the main focus of literature in migration studies, this dissertation also bases its arguments on literature from other disciplines such as socio-linguistics, psychology, and educational studies. In terms of methodology, this dissertation explores the mother tongue of migrants from a phenomenological perspective: it seeks to understand the 'lifeworld' of migrants through the lens of their mother tongue. In both its theoretical and empirical part, this paper addresses three levels on which the mother tongue of migrants is observable: the individual, the host country, and the transnational level. Empirical findings of this study are based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 18 Austrian migrants living in the United Kingdom.

Narratives from Austrian migrants provide this dissertation with a rich understanding of the functions and form of their mother tongue in identity questions, in integration aspects, and in transnational and translocal processes. Firstly, findings demonstrate how a person's (linguistic) identity can become more hybrid and complex within a context where the individual's mother tongue is no longer the main language spoken. Such results support a certain strand of literature which de-essentializes links between mother tongue and identity. Furthermore, findings underline that the mother tongue of migrants s

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First and foremost, I would like to thank every one of my Austrian interviewees. Throughout this research project, I not only heard fascinating stories about migrants and their mother tongues, but I also got to know wonderful people. Our conversations were deep, enriching, invaluable, and even funny on certain occasions.

My gratitude also goes to my supervisor Dr. Claire Dwyer and the constant support she provided. Every supervisor meeting was enlightening, in such a way that coming out of her office, I always had a clearer idea of the direction my dissertation should take.

Another thank you goes out to Charlotte and Samuel for proofreading my dissertation. Thank you for being patient when going over my long sentences. Charlotte and Samuel were tremendously helpful in providing useful alternatives turning my sometimes clumsy words into strong statements.

I am also grateful for all the kind words and encouragements from my family and particularly my friends from my MSc. They turned long, rainy afternoons of dissertation writing into intellectually stimulating debates on migration and we enjoyed extraordinary moments of friendship.

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Statistics 2015). This might be one reason for which Austrians are clearly under-researched as a migrant group in the British context. They are, however, an interesting case study because of two factors: their complex linguistic situation and their generally high English proficiency.

German – Austria's national language – is a language comprising different scales. The widest scale encompasses the German language on a pan-Germanic scale including speakers of all German-speaking countries. German is a pluricentric language (Utri 2013: 37) with several official variants adding a national scale to it: the Austrian variant (Austrian Standard German [SG]), the Swiss variant (Swiss SG) and the German variant (German SG). Differences between the Austrian and the German variants are mostly of lexical and phonological nature (Ender & Kaiser 2009: 269). They are one way for Austrians to differentiate themselves from Germans in terms of identity (Wodak

The mother tongue of a migrant is rarely the main focus of literature within migration studies. Nevertheless, it is a recurring theme, which has been touched upon in the context of identity, integration and transnationalism. This mirrors the premise of this dissertation by stating that the mother tongue of migrants is observable on the individual, the host country, and the transnational level.

Although the concept of identity is ambiguous (see Brubaker & Cooper 2000), it cannot be ignored in discussions about the mother tongues of migrants: language is considered one of the most important identity markers (Hall 1996: 4), helping human beings to make sense of themselves and their reality. Similarly to language, other 'taken-for-granted points of reference' (Block 2006: 26) fulfill comparable purposes. These include religion, ethnicity, or nationality (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*; Horvat & Muhvi!-Dimanovski 2012; Gogonas 2011; Ek 2009). These and many other identity markers (that also interact with each other) are thus a toolkit forming 'the ongoing sense the self has of who it is' (Mathews 2000: 16 f.) – identity. I

therefore about the origin of the individual. The identity of an individual with heavily accented speech

'translanguaging' help migrants adapt to multilingual situations when using their mother tongue as well as other languages in the most flexible, effective, and creative way. This process is in a sense a tool to navigate through complex linguistic environments – in a 'third space', to speak in Bhabha's terms (1994: 53 ff.), a space characterized by blurredness and hybridity. Nevertheless, in these situations

In current integration discourses migrants are thus presented as 'lacking' (sufficient) host country language skills. In some cases, this might mean that certain migrants speak multiple languages but not (yet) the one language required for 'successful' integration: the host country language. In this prevalent discourse all other languages – including their mother tongues – do not count.

Nevertheless, mother tongues of migrants can act as cultural capital (Bourdieu 2008: 282 ff.) and therefore as decisive integration asset. This has been acknowledged by a variety of scholars. It has been found, for instance, that migrants who consume news in their mother tongues are potentially better informed about the host country context (Christiansen 2004: 188). Another finding was that the mother tongue could help migrants establish a stable social network in their new home country (Akkaymak 2016: 2617; Ek 2009). Furthermore, literature has identified mother tongues of migrants as cultural capital, which can be transformed into economic capital (Bourdieu 2008: 281) in so far as they help migrants integrate into the host country job market (Föbker & Imami *forthcoming*: 10; Bodomo & Teixeira-E-Silva 2012: 84 ff.). Bodomo & Teixeira-E-Silva (2012) are the most explicit in saying that having the 'right' mother tongue in the given context can determine the success or failure of social inclusion and professional integration. With the notable exception of this particular piece of literature, the potential of the mother tongue of migrants in integration matters, however, has never been discussed at length. The second empirical chapter of this dissertation is designed to fill that gap. 54r(In5 (t4 (le)-754 (British)-754 (9ccan)513 0 Td [(less83h)-482.9stance54 ( )'

The success of social and professional integration in the host country context largely depends on factors such as discrimination, prestige, and stereotyping (Agoni 2015; di Saint Pierre *et al.* 2015). Speakers of certain languages are, for instance, less likely to be discriminated against because of their mother tongue (Bodomo & Teixeira-E-Silva 2012), while others are sometimes socially disadvantaged because of it (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*; Zolberg & Woon Silv4T Td72 Td [(5 Tf (33)]TT.7 (datj.9 8943 -1.74 Tlva)-s18 Tlva)-s18

al. 2002). Studies on these multifaceted linguistic processes observable at host country level further add to the complexity of mother tongues of migrants as a phenomenon.

Transnationalism as a concept tries to capture the ways with which migrants create social ties between their country of origin and their new home country (Glick Schiller *et al*. 1992: 1). Unsurprisingly, scholarly discussions around transnationalism need to acknowledge the mother tongue of migrants as a powerful tool to realize such kinds of social processes. As a crucial identity marker (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*; Barkhuizen 2013; Erdinast-Vulcan 2011), the mother tongue is also presented as a strong emotional reminder of the country of origin (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*: 7; Tannenbaum 2005: 248), which therefore strengthens transnational ties. Such practical and emotional attachments become obvious in various transnational practices linked to mother tongue usage: cross-border communication, transnational media consumption, and heritage language transmission within transnational families. In every one of these aspects, transnational practices depend on the maintenance of the mother tongue, which itself depends on the existence of these transnational practices.

This binary relationship between mother tongue maintenance and transnationalism has been studied by various authors from multiple angles. Frequent and intense cross-border communication, for instance, has been found to be one of the most important factors determining whether the mother tongue of migrants is maintained or not (e.g. Alba *et al*. 2002: 469). In a remarkable account about a Spanish-speaking individual in the United States, Ek (2009) shows how the survival of a migrant's mother tongue depends on sustainable transnational communication over many years. Another transnational practice – which is both enabled by the maintenance of the mother tongue and is also crucial for its preservation – is the consumption of transnational news media. Migrants use transnational news media in order to stay informed on the host country and the country of origin alike (Nevradakis 2011; Christiansen 2004). In this respect, their mother tongues help them to participate in political and social debates about their country of origin even though they do not live there anymore. Transnational news media consumption has also been presented as an element that has the potential to 'rejuvenate' a heritage language among younger migrants after it has been threatened to be lost (Nevradakis 2011). In Nevradakis' (*ibid*.) account on the Greek population in the United States, the broadcasting of popular Greek satellite TV programs in the US brought second generation Greek migrants closer to their transnational identity and therefore also to their heritage language.

The most salient transnational practice for the maintenance of mother tongues of migrants is arguably the process of heritage language transmission within transnational families. A heritage language can be preserved over multiple generations (Alba *et al.* 2002). One important reason for heritage language transmission is that transnational families want their loved ones to be able to maintain a transnational lifestyle (Hua & Wei 2016: 657; Nesteruk 2010: 278; Sigad & Eisikovits 2009: 74). In order to be successful, heritage language transmission is a task that concerns the whole transnational family. This shows that even though a mother tongue is called as such, fathers and extended family also have an undeniable role in its transmission to the next generation (Hua & Wei 2016; Kim & Starks 2010).

Despite the many ways in which scholars use the concept of transnationalism to engage with mother tongues of migrants, this conceptual approach has one important shortcoming: it still focuses too much on the nation-state system (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004: 1188) and therefore does not capture certain nuances that a mother tongue of a migrant can have. These nuances become most evident in multi-scalar languages – a category wherein German and many other languages can be found (see e.g. Weber 2015: 26; Ender & Kaiser 2009). Transnationalism, however, is only able to capture the national scale of languages and cannot get a hold of the many different varieties or dialects mother tongues of migrants might have. The concept I find useful for this purpose is the concept of translocalism (see Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013; Brickell & Datta 2011). This theoretical framework is able to capture local attachments that migrants cling to through the maintenance of dialects, for instance. However, it has never been used to understand the role played by mother tongues of migrants in their lives. Translocalism has traditionally focused on migrants' situatedness in multiple spaces and places, beyond the national scale (Brickell & Datta 2011: 4; see for examples Ndukwe 2017; Wessendorf 2005). Translocalism has yet to be associated with the fact that languages as well can be apprehended on the local and regional scale. The third empirical chapter of this dissertation will hopefully be able to fill this gap.

This dissertation is built upon the premise that the mother tongue of a migrant is observable on three different levels: the individual, the host country and the transnational level. These three levels have been explored in the literature part through the angle of existing work on mother tongues of migrants. As a response to this literature, the empirical chapters will analyse the three levels in the particular context of the focus group of Austrian migrants in the UK. These chapters are designed to point out specificities of this group and their mother tongue, challenge pre-assumptions in the literature about the mother tongue of migrants, and present new findings to fill certain gaps in the literature.

The empirical part is based on information gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 18 Austrian migrants in the UK who identified German as their mother tongue in some way. This qualitative approach – rooted in a phenomenological tradition – fits best to the aim of this dissertation: understanding the 'lifeworld' (Husserl 1964; see also King & Horrocks 2010: 176) of migrants through the lens of their mother tongues. This approach gives precedence to individual experiences as lived by the informants (their 'lifeworld') all the while mainly setting aside prevalent theories about them (*ibid*.: 178). I will therefore not prescribe a specific definition to 'mother tongue' and instead use my informants' various interpretations as their definition of 'mother tongue'.[3] For this purpose, semi-structured interviews are advantageous because they leave enough room for participants to reflect on their individual reality and 'lifeworld' (see Galletta & Cross 2013: 1 f.). These in-depth interviews are constructed as narratives on a meta-linguistic level, *i.e.* speech on the form and functions of their mother tongue.

This phenomenological method is a clear distancing from quantitative approaches, such as linguistic testing, which is used by many sociolinguists in the field of mother tongue maintenance and attrition (Kasparian & Steinhauer 2016; Gürel 2015; Ribes & Llanes 2015 to name just a few). Linguistic testing could not have provided what I was trying to capture: a holistic understanding of informants' approaches towards their mother tongue. However, refraining from linguistic testing meant that I was confined to participants' self-assessments

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[3] Thus this methodological decision does not conceptualize the mother tongue as the participants' first language nor as the language that the participants' mothers had taught them (even though the term is inherently gendered). It is simply conceptualized as the language that the participants themselves understand as their mother tongue(s). The decision to use the term 'mother tongue' also originates from the phenomenological tradition: the term 'mother tongue' was the one most of my informants preferred to use to describe their German. Even though other terms exist in the literature (first language, language of origin, native language), I decided to capture the 'lifeworld' of my participants by using their own words.

of their language skills in their mother tongue – a feature I was also interested in. In order to

Table 1: Interview Participants

Name	Date of Interview	Mode	Time Spent outside of a German-Speaking Country	Place of Residence	Profession

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Other aspects of my identity, too, such as my level of education or my gender, might have influenced the sample or the outcomes of the study. There are, however, certain limits to assessing a researcher's positionality because

> '[w]e cannot know everything, nor can we survey power as if we can fully understand, control or redistribute it. What we may be able to do is something rather more modest but, perhaps, rather more radical: to inscribe into our research practices some absences and fallibilities while recognizing that the significance of this does not rest entirely in our own hands' (Rose 1997: 319).

In order to ensure an ethical conduct of this study, information and consent forms (see Appendix 3 and 4) have been distributed to and signed by all interview participants. All participants' names and any information about them were anonymized. The names shown in Tale 1 are not their real names. This study did not pose any further ethical concerns because the participants were not part of a vulnerable group (minors, refugees, people in detention, etc.) and because the topics raised throughout the study did not cover any sensitive issues.

> 'Even when one attains a level of proficiency in the foreign language, the translated self remains incomplete. It is the selfhood of someone who will never feel at home in her own skin.'
>
> Erdinast-Vulcan (2011: 253)

This quote draws a pessimistic picture for migrants stating that changes in the linguistic environment result in feelings of estrangement and incompleteness. It is embedded in a sociolinguistic tradition in which the mother tongue is seen as one of the most salient 'taken-for-granted points of reference' (Block 2006: 26) in everyone's life (see e.g. Mange *et al.* 2009). With an essentialist understanding, challenging such an important point of reference can dramatically contest the (linguistic) identity of migrants.

Austrian migrants in the UK experience changes to the form and functions of their mother tongue, too. German is no longer predominant in their new home country. With regards to changes to the form of their mother tongue, all informants – regardless of time spent outside of a German-speaking country – reported some signs of attrition to their mother tongue (which I experienced as well when listening to their German). Surprisingly however, they had a positive attitude towards these changes. They did not report feelings of estrangement and incompleteness, but rather developed a certain hybrid linguistic identity (see Bekus 2014), which allowed them to skillfully navigate through their new multilingual reality. This attitude can be seen as a move away from essentialist understandings of language to a more agency-based one (Resnyansky 2016: 2055).

In this context, a hybrid identity should not be understood as an identity split into two halves – the German-speaking half and the English-speaking half (see Hutnyk 2005 for a critique of the concept of hybridity). The identities I have encountered throughout various narratives were far more complex and can be described as 'new versions of wholeness' (Jazeel 2005: 237; see Panicacci & Dewaele *forthcoming* for a counter narrative). In order to live such a hybrid linguistic identity, the Austrian interviewees had two main tools: their utilitarian and flexible language repertoire, and their fluid accent.

Most of the informants felt quite comfortable speaking in English prior to their migration to the UK

sentence. Many Austrians made use of this strategy to compensate for a sudden lack of German words. Although 'borrowing' and language attrition are closely linked to each other (*ibid*

sound as British as possible so that they could completely blend into their new linguistic environment. The 'playful creators' (*ibid*.: 65 ff.), on the other hand, did not wish to eliminate their non-native accent. They enjoyed being recognized as different and welcomed their accent as a sign of them being 'exotic' (Therese) or 'interesting' (Johanna). In this sense, their accent became a way for them to position themselves in a particular positive way (see Sung 2016 on identity-making through accents). Some, for instance, acted playfully on their accent in so far as they enjoyed playing guessing games with those who did not know where they came from.

> 'When they ask me where my accent is from, I find it interesting and I don't mind. Then, I always ask them to guess where I'm from. I don't tell them right away that I'm Austrian because they never know ((laughs)). And then I always find it funny when I say, no, I'm Austrian.'

Johanna's statement shows that she likes playing on her hybridity, which does not allow for immediate categorization. In the Austrian context particularly, this is possible because the accent is often rather difficult to ascribe to a certain nationality. Most informants told me that few could guess that their mother tongue was German. In social settings, the 'playful creators' took advantage of that ambiguity to consciously mark their identity as hybrid.

One might think that the first group, the 'faithful imitators', had more difficulties in balancing their identity particularly in situations where they did not succeed in sounding as British as native-speakers do. Members of this group, however, found another way to avoid a fractured linguistic identity. This was possible because of the location where most of my informants lived: multicultural and multilingual London. The normality of having an accent in

accent. This might be linked to the fact that Austrians want to distance and emancipate themselves from Germans (Renner *et al.* 2014; Oudenhoven *et al.* 2010: 50; Wodak *et al.* 2009: 57). The quote, which illustrates best how many Austrians feel when they are identified as German, originates from the interview with Marianne: 'If someone asks: Are you from Germany? I say: I beg your pardon!? You would never ask a Scot whether he's from England!' In this case, the comparison of the relationship between Scottish and English, and of the relationship between Austrians and Germans is a very accurate one (see also Millar 2005: 9).

This chapter showed how most Austrians manage to feel comfortable in their multilingual reality. They do not feel split apart even though their everyday life is characterized by the use of at least two languages. Their identities can therefore be seen as hybrid and as 'new versions of wholeness' (Jazeel 2005: 237). Their flexible language repertoire and their fluid accents are important tools they rely on to balance their English-speaking and German-speaking influences.

In matters of professional integration and social inclusion, the language repertoire of migrants is an omnipresent theme. It is crucial to notice, however, that language skills that migrants possess are often hierarchized in terms of their perceived importance (Resnyansky 2016: 2061). A certain strand of academic literature (e.g. Hoehne & Michalowski 2016; Guven & Islam 2015) and British policy papers such as *The Casey Review* (2016) and *The Interim*

Almost all Austrians have affirmed that their mother tongue had never been an obstacle to their social or professional integration. On the contrary, their German language skills were an asset in several situations. This is mostly due to the positive image that German conveys. This positive image is based on its linguistic prestige it has in the UK. Linguistic prestige is created through the fact that '[p]eople […] use the speech of others as a clue to non-linguistic information about them, such as their social background and even personality traits like toughness or intelligence' (Hudson 2012: 211). Stereotypes that are conveyed through language (Preston & Robinson 2005: 135 ff.), however, are not necessarily positive. In extreme cases, they can lead to social exclusion.

In the case of the Austrian informants, however, these linguistic stereotypes were mostly a motor for their integration success. It has been found that a prestigious language can be tremendously helpful for its speakers for insertion in the job market and in certain elite positions (see Bodomo & Teixeira-E-Silva 2012: 84 ff.). This is exactly what many Austrian respondents also reported. In the British context, the German language is a language of economic power and thus a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 2008: 282 ff.). This is probably more due to Germany's reputation than Austria's. Although German is a pluricentric language, it is rarely perceived as such outside of the German-speaking world. The German language is usually associated with Germany and the Germans.

Due to Germany's economic power, many Austrian interviewees happily accepted this conflation of all German-speakers. Although in other regards the Austrian group did not want to be seen as German, it acknowledged that in terms of professional integration the German reputation was mostly helpful for it. Informants highlighted the linguistic prestige of the German language, associating it to Germany's excellent reputation 'in the professional world and in education' (Alexander). Martin mentioned the fact that Germany was a 'big market' for the British people. He went on saying that this reputation was beneficial for his own professional progress in the field of architecture. Hermine went even further stating that Germany did not only convey a positive economic image but also a culturally interesting one: 'Germany has always been economically strong and it is a great country. It also has so many musicians, authors, scientists, and researchers. This is always advantageous.' Others mentioned the good reputation that German citizens have in the professional world and stated that this was advantageous for Austrians. Such positive stereotypes included

with her German skills and this was the reason why she was bullied in school. Later in London, however – now being multilingual with native proficiency in several languages – she has never been discriminated against because of her language. Her explanation for this was that London was a particularly multicultural place where differences in language skills did not matter as they did back in Vienna many years ago (see Block 2006 for accounts of London as a multilingual city).

This chapter has shown that the integration of migrants can be facilitated by their mother tongue skills. The Austrian case is in that sense an extreme example: many Austrians are dependent on their mother tongue skills for their successful professional integration in the British job market. Furthermore, instances of language racism are quite rare. Their social inclusion is not hindered by their non-native English skills. This chapter has emphasized however, that while Austrian migrants in the UK are privileged, such a positive picture cannot be drawn for every migrant group in the country.

All of my interviewees have affirmed that they lead transnational lives in some aspects. Their mother tongue emerges as a powerful tool in realizing such a lifestyle connecting their country of origin to their new home country. Reading the news in German is an integral part of most of the informants' daily routine. Communicating in German for professional or private reasons is nothing unusual for a majority of this focus group. Using German to maintain family ties to Austria has been mentioned as a necessity by all of the informants.

On the surface, these actions could all be described as transnational. A deeper look, however, reveals that the concept of transnationalism cannot always capture the complexity of the informants' multilingual reality. The limitation of the concept of transnationalism is that it is still confined to national borders (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004: 1188). The majority of the interview participants, though, said that their mother tongue was their dialect – not the Austrian national standard variant of German. This challenges the concept of transnationalism. Although the concept attempts to transgress national borders by emphasizing the ties between them, it does not sufficiently focus on scales other than the nation (Brickell & Datta 2011: 3) in which dialects, for instance, are localized. This final empirical chapter shines light on this tension.

The theoretical framework, which tries to go beyond the national scale, is the concept of translocalism. It helps understand migrants' situatedness in regions, towns or villages (*ibid*). As we have seen in the introduction, the different scales of interest with respect to the Austrian migrants' mother tongue are fourfold: the pan-Germanic scale, the national scale with different standard variants of German, the regional scale, and the local scale. This extraordinarily complex linguistic nature of German in general and German in Austria in particular has proven to be a stumbling block to the concept of transnationalism for this study. The concept of translocalism, in contrast, allows for a more nuanced approach and captures the importance that regional and local dialects have for many Austrian migrants in the UK. This importance was expressed in two ways. Firstly, many informants stated that their mother tongue was their dialect and not SG. Second, a significant number

Some informants described their linguistic repertoire in a highly nuanced way. They stated that, already prior to leaving Austria, they had been living in a situation of diglossia between their dialect and SG. This phenomenon has been described in the Swiss context where dialects differ significantly from Swiss SG (Weber 2015: 26; Ender & Kaiser 2009: 2). It has been stated, though, that Austrians rather live in a situation of 'dialect-standard-continuum' (*ibid*.: 2). In the course of this study, some Austrians have, nevertheless, emphasized that their linguistic environment has always been characterized by the frequent use of a foreign language: SG. When I asked Johannes, for instance, what his mother tongue was for him, he put it the following way:

> 'I always joke that my mother tongue is the dialect from the Waldviertel and that my first foreign language is German. […] But yes, of course, my mother tongue is German but it's not the language I grew up with.'

This quote shows quite well that, although Johannes would officially state that his mother tongue is German, the term mother tongue does not fully cover it. For him, his mother tongue is the language he was raised in, therefore the dialect from a particular part of Lower Austria. Karina, too, felt that SG was more of a foreign language to her. She had been working in a German transnational firm in London where all other colleagues spoke SG. She described this as a difficult experience '[…] because this would be the same for me if I had to switch to Spanish or Russian [which she had learned in school] because it is not intuitive.' Another interview participant, Johanna, had similar feelings towards her mother tongue. She told me of a telephone conversation that she had to make with a German client for her job in London. She described the call as a 'disaster' because she had to use SG. She would this wp-86ake o2(8 12 10612 ae

translocal rather than transnational: it was their dialect that triggered emotional responses related to their origin. Speaking of her dialect, Susanne, for instance, employed emotionally charged expressions such as 'family', 'traditions' or 'home'. The discussion of SG during the interview, however, did not provoke the same level of emotions with Susanne.

Speaking of the connection between their origin and their dialect incited many Austrian migrants to mention their 'true' identity. The mother tongue has been found to be a crucial identity marker in transnational settings (see e.g. Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*; Barkhuizen 2013; Erdinast-Vulcan 2011). In the case of Austrian migrants who understood their mother tongue as their dialect, their identity was shaped by translocality rather than transnationality. Karina put it most clearly:

> 'It [her dialect] is definitely connected to home. When do I speak my dialect? When I speak it with my family and that's it actually. […] Then I feel more like myself, like the person I am because I grew up with that and it's relaxing. […] There [in her region], you can speak normally, the way you just do it and everyone understands you and you don't have to change anything and this is practically your standard mode.'

This quote contains multiple references to Karina's ecof7y(od)]51.67 in fwr   Austrian

The transmission of one's mother tongue to loved ones – children, partners and friends – is a considerable concern for many migrants (Eriksson 2015: 156). Various members of the group of Austrians felt the same and for many that meant passing on their dialects. Again, this approach can be best captured by the concept of translocalism, which allows for the regional and local scale on which migrants' dialects are located. Austrian migrants who emphasized the importance of their dialects in questions of language transmission stated reasons ranging from authenticity and necessity to stereotypes.

Being authentic with their loved ones was an important concern when informants spoke of their language policy towards them. One explanation as to why they wanted to pass on their dialect rather than SG was that it was more 'natural' to them. Johanna was the most passionate about this topic: 'It would be very unnatural for me to speak Standard German with my children. Because Standard German is not my language! The language I grew up with is Carinthian.' Johanna stated that she wanted to pass on her Carinthian identity to her future children, which she would not be able to do in SG. This was the same for Johannes who taught his partner some words of his dialect. He explained this by saying that only his dialect could really capture his personality, which was tightly linked to his region of origin. Martin had a more practical concern: he also described his 'natural' mother tongue as his dialect but he would have wanted to raise his future children in SG (I will come to the reason for this in the next section). However, his fear was that he would fail because he had never really felt comfortable with SG.

Another reason for passing on their dialect was that some Austrians perceived SG through the lens of particular stereotypes. Linguistic features can trigger stereotypes among perceivers of a certain language. These stereotypes can be linked to social class, age or education (Preston & Robinson 2005: 135 ff.). In Austria, such stereotypes are ascribed both to dialects and SG. Erika, for instance, was afraid that her children might be viewed negatively if they spoke with their family back in Austria in SG. She feared that her grandparents in particular would not appreciate it 'if they did not speak properly'. Speaking 'properly' was seen to be the way everyone in the village speaks, meaning in their dialect. This was further underlined by Hermine who also raised her children in her dialect 'because otherwise if you are somewhere in Austria, in a small village, no one speaks Standard German. So pretentious and affected'. This statement shows that she associated SG with particular negative stereotypes, too, which she did not want her children to be identified with.

For Lukas, SG was an 'artificial' language that had a 'less personal character'. This consideration made him take the decision to raise his future children in his Styrian dialect.

On the other hand, some informants decided to do the contrary. Although their dialect was important to them, they were afraid it was less prestigious than SG

This last empirical chapter showed that the national scale was not sufficient to capture migrant experiences of the Austrian focus group. Questions related to their mother tongue and its transmission revealed that their lives are in many cases translocal. The concept of translocalism recognizes best the fact that their lives are oriented towards multiple localities that go beyond the national scale. Through the lens of language and looking at their sensitivity to dialect, we can clearly see that these Austrian migrants are not only driven by the national scale in their use of language. Other scales play a crucial role in that process as well.

literature on migration to the UK: Austrian migrants are usually overlooked as a group of migrants, but they proved to be a particularly interesting case for the discussion around migration and mother tongue.

Even though this dissertation tries to fill certain gaps in the literature, its limitations should be acknowledged. This dissertation has shown that the mother tongue of a migrant is an extremely complex phenomenon, which is dependent upon its origin, the host country context, and also the individual (migration) experience. Therefore, this dissertation cannot claim to speak for all migrants who live in a country where their mother tongue is no longer the main language spoken. It also cannot speak for all Austrians in the UK who speak German as their mother tongue. It should rather be seen as a qualitative dissertation, which tells the stories of the particular individuals whom I have interviewed. This does, however, not delimit its importance: in order to understand the phenomenon of the mother tongue of migrants in its whole complexity, its usage, and the migrants' relation to it, multiple accounts of very different individuals and migrant groups are needed. This dissertation is one of these accounts.

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UCL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

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Generelle Informationen
- •! **Wie lange leben Sie schon außerhalb eines deutschsprachigen Landes?**
- •! **Warum haben Sie Österreich ursprünglich verlassen?**
- •! **Welchen Beruf üben Sie hier in Großbritannien aus?**
- •! **Wie würden Sie Ihre Sprachkompetenz im Englischen selbst einschätzen?**
- •! **Würden Sie sich selbst als jemanden beschreiben, der/die ein besonderes Interesse an Sprache hat?**
- •! **Was ist der höchste Bildungsabschluss, den Sie absolviert haben?**
- •! **Wieso haben Sie sich für meine Studie gemeldet?**

1.) Gebrauch der Muttersprache
- •! **Mit welchen Menschen sprechen Sie Deutsch?**
  In welchem Land befinden sich diese Menschen?
  Welche davon haben Sie in Großbritannien kennengelernt?
  Wie viel Kontakt haben Sie mit den Menschen, mit denen Sie Deutsch sprechen?
  Wie wichtig ist es Ihnen, dass Ihre Familie oder Ihre Freunde Deutsch sprechen?
- •! **Wann sprechen Sie Deutsch?**
  In welchen Situationen sprechen Sie Deutsch (formell/informell)?
  Sprechen Sie eher am Telefon oder durch persönlichen Kontakt deutsch?
  Gibt es bestimmte Orte hier in Großbritannien, an denen Sie hauptsächlich Deutsch sprechen?
  Wie ist es für Sie, wenn Sie wieder einmal Zeit in Österreich verbringen, wo überall Deutsch gesprochen wird?
- •! **Wie oft sprechen Sie Deutsch?**
  Würden Sie gerne öfter Deutsch sprechen?

2.) Medien, Kultur und die Muttersprache
- •! **In welcher Sprache lesen Sie Zeitungen, schauen Sie Nachrichten und hören Sie Radio?**
  In welchen Situationen konsumieren Sie Medien lieber auf Deutsch?
  Warum glauben Sie, dass Ihnen in diesen Momenten deutschsprachige Medien lieber sind?
  Inwiefern macht es für Sie einen Unterschied, ob Sie österreichische, bundesdeutsche oder schweizerische Medien konsumieren?
  Wenn Sie versuchen, komplexe Sachverhalte zu verstehen, konsultieren Sie dann eher deutsch-sprachige Quellen oder englische?
  In welcher Sprache verwenden Sie Social Media Kanäle, wie z.B. Facebook und warum?
- •! **Schauen Sie Filme lieber auf Deutsch oder in einer anderen Sprache?**
  Wie ist es mit Büchern?
  Wenn Sie manchmal deutschsprachige Filme/Bücher bevorzugen, warum ist das so?

3.) Persönliche Beziehung zur Muttersprache
- •! **Sehen Sie eher das Deutsche als Ihre Muttersprache oder Ihren regionalen Dialekt?**
  Welchen Dialekt sprechen Sie?

Wie wichtig ist Ihnen dieser Dialekt?

Wie verwenden Sie Ihren Dialekt jetzt, da Sie nicht mehr in Österreich leben?

- ! **Welche Bedeutung hat Ihre Muttersprache für Sie?**

  Sehen Sie Ihre Muttersprache hauptsächlich als Instrument für Kommunikationszwecke oder ist sie auch etwas Emotionelles?

  Würden Sie sich selbst mit dem Deutschen definieren?

  Wie wichtig ist Ihnen die Tatsache, dass Sie österreichisches und nicht bundesdeutsches Deutsch sprechen?

  Wie sehr können Sie Sie selbst sein, wenn Sie nicht in Ihrer Muttersprache sprechen?

  Wie sehen Sie das Deutsche – als Ihre Muttersprache, als Ihre Erstsprache, als Ihre Herkunftssprache? Inwiefern macht das einen Unterschied für Sie?

- ! **Was verbinden Sie mit Ihrer Muttersprache?**

  Ist eine bestimmte Zeit für Sie gleichbedeutend mit Ihrer Muttersprache?

  Welche Personen, Orte oder Emotionen assoziieren Sie mit dem Deutschen?

- ! **Welche Sprache dominiert in Ihren Gedanken?**

  Inwiefern hat sich das verändert, seit Sie im Ausland leben?

  Wann wechseln Sie in Gedanken in eine andere Sprache?

  In welcher Sprache träumen Sie?

4.) Selbstvertrauen bezüglich der Muttersprache

- ! **Wie, glauben Sie, hat sich Ihre Muttersprache seit Ihrem Umzug verändert?**

  Glauben Sie, dass Sie immer noch so flüssig Deutsch sprechen wie damals als Sie in Österreich gelebt haben?

  Gibt es Momente, in denen Ihnen ein Wort auf Deutsch nicht sofort einfällt, aber in einer anderen Sprache schon?

  Glauben Sie, dass Ihre Satzstruktur manchmal vom Englischen beeinflusst wird?

  Wie oft verwenden Sie englische Wörter in deutschen Sätzen?

- ! **Gab es Zeiten, in denen Sie das Gefühl hatten, dass 9ㅋ3Tj (Tj /sn Zelrugelebt hab(eSsrDꞵ**

General information
- •! **How long have you been living in a non-German speaking country for?**
- •! **Why did you decide to leave Austria?**
- •! **What is your profession in the UK?**
- •! **How would you evaluate your language proficiency in English?**
- •! **Would you describe yourself as someone who is particularly interested in language?**
- •! **What is the highest level of education you have completed?**
- •! **Why did you decide to volunteer for my research project?**

1.) Use of mother tongue
- •! **With whom do you speak in German?**
  In which country do these people live?
  Whom of these people have you met in UK?
  How much contact do you have with people with whom you speak German?
  How important is it for you that your family or friends speak German?
- •! **When do you speak German?**
  In which situations do you speak German (formal/informal situations)?
  Do you tend to speak German on the phone or in person?
  Are there any particular sites in UK where you mainly speak German?
  How do you experience being in a German-speaking environment when you are back in Austria for some time?
- •! **How often do you speak German?**
  Would you like to speak German more often?

2.) Media, culture and the mother tongue
- •! **In which language do you read newspapers, watch the news or listen to the radio?**
  In which situations do you prefer media sources in German?
  Why do you believe that – in these moments – you prefer news in German?

- •! **How important is your mother tongue to you?**
  Do you see your mother tongue as a communication tool or rather as something more emotional?
  Would you define yourself with your German mother tongue?
  How important is it for you that you speak Austrian German rather than German German?
  To what extent can you be yourself in situations when you do not speak German?
  How do you understand the German language – as your mother tongue, as your first language, as your language of origin? To what extent does that matter for you?
- •! **What do you associate with your mother tongue?**
  Is there any particular time period that you associate with your mother tongue?
  Which persons, places or emotions come to your mind when you think of your mother tongue?
- •! **Which language dominates in your thoughts?**
  To what extent has that changed since you first moved to Great Britain?
  When do you switch languages in your mind?
  In which language do you dream?

4.) Self-confidence in terms of one's mother tongue
- •! **In what ways has your mother tongue changed since the moment you have stopped living in a German-speaking country?**
  Do you think that your German is as fluent now as it was at the moment when you stopped living in a German speaking country?
  Are there any moments when certain German words do not immediately come to your mind but in another language they do?
  Do you think that the structure of your German sentences is ever influenced by the English sentence structure?
  How often do you use English words in German sentences?
- •! **Were there any time periods when you had the impression that you might lose your mother tongue in a certain way?**
  If so, does that trouble you?
  Why did you have that kind of impression?
  Would you actively react against the attrition of your mother tongue if you had that kind of impression?
- •! **In which situations is it easier for you to express something in German than in English? And how has that change since you have moved?**
  Which subjects or emotions can you address more easily in German?
  In which language do you swear?
  Which events do you recount more easily in German?
  Are there people in your life to whom you could speak in another language than German but you still prefer talking to them in German?

5.) Passing on one's mother tongue
- •! **If you have/or would have children, would you want them to learn German?**
  How would you want them to learn German?
  Would you want them to go to a German-speaking school or attend German language courses?
  Which kind of German should your children learn – your dialect, Austrian German, Standard German? Does it matter?
  Which kind of role would the passing on of your mother tongue play in the passing on of the Austrian culture?

- **In which language would you raise your children personally?**
  Why would you want to raise your children in this particular language?
  In which language would you talk/read to them?
- **To whom in your life – who is non-German speaking – would you sometimes rather talk in German?**
  Would you like to teach these people German yourself?
  Would you appreciate it if these people learned German?
  What would change if these people spoke German?

6.) Perception of one's mother tongue by others

- **How do your friends/family members/colleagues who are non-German speaking perceive your German mother tongue?**
  If you speak English, do people sometimes point out your accent?
  Are there any moments when people talk to you about your mother tongue?
  How do you perceive these kinds of moments (positively/negatively)?
  How did you react on comments about your accent shortly after you have arrived in Great Britain?
- **To what extent, do you think, is your mother tongue an asset for you here in Great Britain?**
  To what extent did your mother tongue help you in professional regards?
  Did you ever have the impression that your mother tongue was an obstacle for you here in?
  In which moments do you prefer not to talk in German to others or when do you prefer others not to know that you are a German native speaker?
  When and in which situations are you proud that German is your mother tongue?

N.B.: All participants were asked the questions in bold. All other questions were optional. Some questions asked

Auszug aus dem Interview mit Johanna
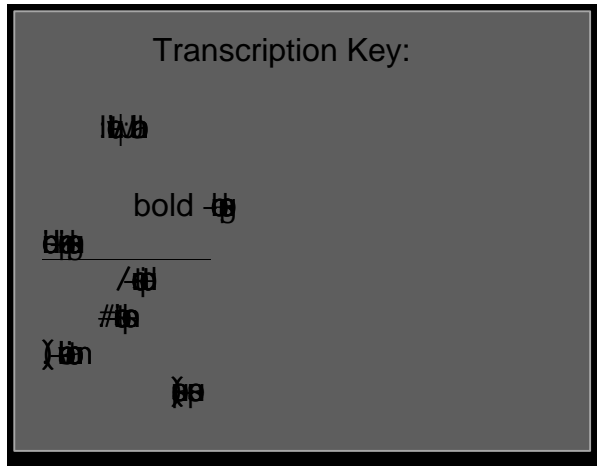
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