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CHAPTER 10

The Career of a Diacritical Sign

Language in Spatial Representations and Representational Spaces

BRIGITTA BUSCH

INTRODUCTION: LANGUAGE AND SPACE

The notion of peripheral multilingualism establishes a relation between language and space or rather between language practices and spatial practices. In social sciences and cultural studies there has over the past decades been an increasing interest in concepts of space and spatiality. Scholars contributing to this spatial turn—such as Edward Soja (1996), Doreen Massey (2005), and Edward Said (1993)—primarily refer to the work of the French philosopher, sociologist and geographer Henri Lefebvre (1991) whose work dismisses the understanding of space as a container.

The spatial turn in the social sciences has also influenced recent work in applied linguistics, allowing interrelations between language and space to be explored from different perspectives. In the field of dialectology and linguistic geography, Viat (2004) questions and deconstructs the notion of linguistic border referring to research in social geography. He views linguistic borders as a product of social positioning and of sharing representations of space, which results in the construction of territoriality. Drawing on semiotic theory and multimodal discourse analysis, Scollon and Scollon (2003) explore how language is materially placed in the world. They introduce the concept of geosemiotics to grasp the social meaning and indexicality of the placement of signs and discourses in the material world. Analysing language as a local practice, Pennycook (2010: 1) questions the notion of language as a pre-given system. Language, as he stresses, does not only 'happen' in particular spaces and at particular times, but contributes to organizing space and giving

meaning to it. Therefore, language practices should be understood as the result of speakers' interpretation of a particular place and at the same time as reinforcing the specific reading of that place. Pennycook (2010) and Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) refer to Lefebvre's theories of spatiality to understand language practices as spatial practices. In the proliferating literature on empirical studies of linguistic landscapes (e.g. Shohamy and Gorter 2009; Jaworski and Thurlow 2010), very different approaches to space can be discerned, a common theoretical grounding—as Jaworski and Thurlow (2010: 14) deplore—is still missing.

Lefebvre (1991) defines space as a social product and underlines that every society produces its own specific space. For an analysis of the production of space (spacialization) he develops a conceptual triad which encompasses the following dimensions (1991: 33):

- (1) *Spatial practice* 'embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation.' These everyday practices of appropriation of space ensure continuity and to some extent social cohesion.
- (2) *Representations of space* meaning conceptualized space; discourses on space by scientists, planners, social engineers; expert knowledge—'i.e. a mixture of understanding (*connaissance*) and ideology' (1991: 41)—which conceives of space.
- (3) *Representational spaces*, space lived directly through its associated images and symbols which have their source in history. It is the 'dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects.' (1991: 39). It embodies 'complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life' (1991: 31).

Lefebvre's concept of the social production of space defines space as perceived (*perçu*) through spatial practices, conceived through representations and theories of space (*conçu*) and lived (*vécu*) as representational spaces. These three dimensions of the social production of space do not exist independently but are dialectically interlinked. Lefebvre (1991: 132) also dedicates a chapter to the relationship between language and space in which he applies the spatial triad to language and discourse: 'Every language is located in space. Every discourse says something about a space (places or sets of places); and every discourse is emitted from a space. Distinctions must be drawn between discourse *in* space, discourse *about* space and the discourse *of* space.'

The bipolarity of centrality and peripherality which is already addressed by Lefebvre (1991) in relation to the nation-state is developed further especially by scholars in post-colonial studies who criticize the centre-periphery dichotomy as a Eurocentric concept of domination (Soja 1996). For the purpose of our concern in this volume, namely exploring the notion of peripheral multilingualism, I will rely on Lefebvre's spatial triad to approach the notion of peripherality: peripherality

as produced by 'central' social practices (e.g. economic marginalization of regions and population); peripherality as a concept in spatial representations (e.g. as linked to state borders which separate the inside and the outside); peripherality as lived experience of being marginalized and excluded (e.g. as the speaker of a language other than the state language).

Investigating peripheral multilingualism from a perspective of space as a social production is more than just describing and analysing new linguistic practices in regions marginalized with respect to being far away urban centres. Focusing on questions of how peripherality was (and is) produced and how the centre-periphery binary can be displaced, this approach challenges the more static notions of linguistic practices conceived as practices tied to a specific territory. Taking the Austrian region of Southern Carinthia as an example—the homeland of a linguistic minority in a region commonly defined as borderland, rural, and structurally weak—I will examine how the seemingly static relationship between language and territory is being dislocated. Addressing the relationship between language and space I will try to apply Lefebvre's multidimensional approach in considering different aspects: spatial practices (e.g. of nation-state building) that correlate with specific language policies (e.g. of assimilation), discourse about language and space (e.g. translated into linguistic maps that draw clear-cut language boundaries), and representational spaces (e.g. interventions in the public space). The main focus will be on the third aspect, namely on the question of how changes on the economic and political macro level are translated on a micro level into linguistic manifestations in the representational space. In particular I will examine how two forms of irony, a contesting and a postmodern variant, challenge the traditional bipolar and asymmetrical language regime and give expression to growing linguistic diversification.

In the first part of this contribution, I will briefly sketch how the drawing of the national border and the resulting ethnolinguistic polarization have inscribed into the representational space the binary logics of centre-periphery and majority-minority. The second part focuses on a creative subversive intervention in public space—the addition of Slavic diacritic signs in German inscriptions—and discusses this popular campaign in the context of changing language regimes and changing connotations of the state border. The third part outlines a series of events organized by artistic and commercial actors, which takes up and comments on the fluidity of translanguaging practices under the conditions of super-diversity (Vertovec 2007).

LANGUAGE AND TERRITORY

Every social formation and every epoch produces its own idea of space; space itself has a history in Western experience (Foucault 1984). Retracing this history reveals the genesis of present conceptions of space and traces of the past in the contemporary.¹ Almost until the end of the twentieth century the drawing of the state border in 1920 has been formative for the spatial arrangement in the region of Carinthia.

After the collapse of the multi-ethnic and multilingual Hapsburg Empire, Austria was constituted as a nation-state. The programmatic orientation towards ethnic and linguistic homogeneity was initially present in the official denomination of the state as '*Deutschösterreich*' (German-Austria). The new state established on the other side of the border was also defined in terms of ethnicity as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Within the Austrian nation-state, Carinthia was marginalized politically as a contested buffer zone, economically as a cul-de-sac far away from the industrial centres, and geographically as a zone of liminality between the 'civilized world' of settled lands and the uninhabitable mountain environment. Right from its inception, the border was reified as a 'natural' line separating the inside from the outside and loaded with mythical connotations. That which lies on the other side of the border became the construct of the fundamental, irreconcilable 'other'. What is left in the dark on the other side can thus act as a screen for the projection of fantasies, for the threatening and also the exotic and the desirable. From a Eurocentric perspective, this was, on the one hand, the 'dark continent' open for discovery and colonization, and, on the other hand, the East and the Balkans (Todorova 1999). In Carinthia the topos of the stronghold, first against the Slavic Balkans and later against the communist 'threat', dominated ideas of space. The drawing of the Austrian border had a strong impact on the daily lives of the population in the area by cutting through existing family connections and economic relations. It also altered the previous language regime in conferring on the speakers of Slovene the status of a linguistic and ethnic minority. It thereby accentuated already existing linguistic polarizations which were based on an urban-rural divide, urban centres and sub-centres being associated with the German language while the surrounding rural areas became associated with Slovene. Within the nation-state framework the linguistic minority is singled out as disturbing the imagined homogeneity. On the Carinthian side, the idea of matching the 'natural' political boundary with the linguistic one by means of forcing a process of assimilation to the German language has been a political constant over the years. On the Slovenian side the fantasy of uniting the divided nation, if not in one single state then at least culturally, has been equally cherished. In this constellation the minority in Carinthia has constantly been under suspicion of equivocation and potential disloyalty. During the Nazi regime, the use of Slovene in public was prohibited and from 1941 onwards speakers of Slovene were deported on a massive scale, with acts of resistance entailing brutal persecution.

The spatial logic that dominated the twentieth century resulted in binary oppositions between inside and outside, between centre and periphery, between majority and minority. Similarly a binary opposition between German and Slovene was constructed through language ideologies, that is, 'beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language structure and use which often index the political economic interests of individual speakers, ethnic and other interest groups and nation-states' (Kroskrity 2005: 1). The area was not seen as a zone of language contact and transition but imagined as a language border with a clear-cut line dividing two distinct and

incompatible 'language families' with their respective normative centres that watch over linguistic correctness and purity. The drawing of external boundaries separating one language from another and of internal boundaries defining the legitimate speakers of the language were argued with linguistic differences deriving from the languages' inherent laws. Gal (2001: 31–33) describes a similar language ideological process for nineteenth-century Hungary. In Carinthia, the speakers of Slovenian were perceived as being divided into a core group and a marginal group engaged in an assimilation process, whereby language was seen as a marker. Language maintenance and the Slovene standard language were linked to ethno-political consciousness whereas dialects with heavy borrowings from German counted as a sign for the willingness to assimilate. In the late 1980s the sociolinguistic situation was described as unstable bilingualism, characterized by increasing language shift from a recessive minority language to the dominant majority language and by a diglossic situation with a strict separation in function between Slovene, as a merely spoken domestic and intimate language, and German, as language of public and written communication (Österreichische Rektorenkonferenz 1989: 89–90). This constructed dichotomy between the minority and the majority language remained firmly rooted in the monolingual paradigm, in which the idea of having one single language is considered as norm. This homogenizing idea is a European 'invention' intimately linked to processes of nation-state building (Busch 2004; Makoni and Pennycook 2006).

Visible Polarizations in the Representational Space

The representational space is also structured according to the logic of binary oppositions which leave visible and invisible marks and traces. As in other peripheral border zones, there is also in Carinthia a large number of landmarks and memorial sights commemorating the history and myths of the disputed border area, the victims and the heroes of the battles. In the 1970s and 1980s several of these sites were the targets of vandalism and even bomb attacks. Particular locations still serve as stages for annual commemoration ceremonies, marches in traditional costumes, cultural events that keep the myths alive. However, in Carinthia one of the main disputes concerning language in space is about topographic signs. It was not until 2011 that a compromise was reached on this issue which has been at the top of the regional political agenda for decades. In the State Treaty of 1955, Austria entered into commitments concerning the rights of the Slovene-speaking minority in Carinthia, and among these was the obligation to set up bilingual topographic signs in the bilingual area. After protests by the Slovene-speaking minority and the Yugoslav State, the Austrian government finally decided to fulfil the obligations in 1972. The reaction from German-speaking nationalistic circles in Carinthia was immediate and thoroughly organized. In what came to be known as the Ortstafelsturm (assault on topographic signs), overnight the bilingual road signs that had been erected on the

previous day were destroyed. Parts of Carinthia remained without any topographic indications for a decade, as the authorities declined to confront German-speaking nationalistic circles about the issue. A later law allowing only for very few bilingual signs was constantly criticized by minority representatives and finally suspended by the Supreme Court in 2002. In the following years a postmodern restaging of the old myth of the threatened *Heimat* by the right-wing Populist Party under Jörg Haider served to prevent a political solution.

What is at the core of the issue around the topographic signs is first of all the power of naming and renaming. Germanizing Slovene homonyms and toponyms has a long history in Carinthia. The Nazi regime first decreed and enacted the erasure of all signs in Slovene in the public space and then denied the Slovene-speaking population the right to live in this space. A master plan aimed at what is euphemistically called ethnic cleansing—replacing the deported Slovene-speaking population by resettling German-speaking families from Northern Italy—only came to a halt because of armed resistance in the area. The violent iconoclastic assault on the topographic signs in 1972 revived these traumatic experiences of violence and erasure (Kert-Wakounig 2010). The act of renaming is in itself an act of violence and imposing power. It is a symbolic act but also a performative one. In the case of toponyms, renaming can function as a landmark and support claims to a territory. In the Carinthian debate two strands of policy discourse can be discerned. From the nationally oriented German-speaking side, it was argued that Slovene toponyms could encourage the neighbouring state to uphold territorial claims. This argument is based on a concept of space that maintains the equation of language, territory, and nation. The concept of space that guides the argument of the Slovene organizations in Carinthia is different in so far as it is not based on an assumption of exclusive ownership. The argument is that bilingual signs mark a space which not only allows for the recognition of linguistic difference but also guarantees full participation in social, cultural, and economic life by respecting this ‘otherness’. In Carinthia as in most European regions with officially recognized minority languages, linguistic rights are primarily framed as territorial rights. This spirit is also visible in the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages,² which defines these languages in Article 1 explicitly as ‘traditionally used within a given territory of a State’. In Carinthia the territorial definition of linguistic rights resulted in a complicated mosaic of laws and regulations which makes it difficult to know actually where and when Slovene can be spoken. The rights to bilingual education, to bilingual topographic signs, to the use of Slovene in administrative procedures, to the use of Slovene in court procedures are all linked in a different way to the territory of particular municipalities. There are only a few municipalities in which the whole spectrum of linguistic rights can be enjoyed by Slovene speakers. These incoherent zones with more and with less linguistic rights form a complex pattern which is part of the lived representational space.

CHALLENGING ETHNOLINGUISTIC DIVISION

The following two sections will deal with the process of dislocation of the inter-linked binary logics of centre–periphery, majority–minority, and German-speaking/Slovene-speaking and of the reconfiguration of the articulation between language and space. I will explore these processes by doing a close reading of two interventions in public space which in different ways ironically comment on and transform linguistic hierarchies and practices in the representational space. Both interventions were initiated by the cultural centre UNIKUM³ located at the University of Klagenfurt. This bilingual initiative was founded in 1986 and has since then, in cooperation with artists, organized cultural events which focus on the Austro-Slovene-Italian border area. UNIKUM is known for its conceptual art projects that comment in a critical and often satirical manner on the political situation in Carinthia. Right from the beginning UNIKUM has adopted a policy of multilingualism and has often made the unequal relationship between the regional languages a topic of its projects.

One of UNIKUM’s most popular projects was the production and distribution of a set of stickers with the title ‘*Haček (k)lebt!—Haček živi!: Aktion zur Ergänzung von einsprachigen Ortstafeln*’ (*Haček is alive (and sticks)!—campaign for enhancing monolingual topographical signs*) which was launched in 2002 when the debate on the bilingual topographical signs was once again high on the political agenda. Already, within a few days, stickers originating from the UNIKUM sheet (see Figure 10.1) could be seen throughout Carinthia. The art project triggered a passionate discussion in the media and the regional authorities announced that the use of the stickers in public spaces would be severely sanctioned. Nevertheless, *haček* stickers were placed on all kinds of public inscriptions: Figure 10.2 shows one on a topographic sign, Figure 10.3 on the door plate indicating the office of the nationally oriented *Kärntner Heimatdienst*. The success of the sticker campaign was to a large extent due to its playful character which employs strategies of irony to undermine the hegemony of monolingual German signs in the Carinthian public space. This strategy becomes apparent in several instances.

The term *haček* used in the title of the sticker sheet is already a deliberate choice and demonstrates a translanguaging strategy. The term translanguaging (e.g. Garcia 2009; Creese and Blackledge 2010; Li 2011) refers to a growing corpus of empirical studies which have focused attention on linguistic practices—especially among young people in urban spaces—that have also been designated by terms such as language crossing (Rampton 1995), polylingual languaging (Jørgensen 2008), and metrolingualism (Otsuji and Pennycook 2010). These studies emphasize the creative, playful, and subversive use of heterogeneous communicative resources to create meaning.

Such translanguaging practices can be identified in the way in which the term *haček* is employed by the initiators of the campaign. *Haček* stands for a diacritical sign, an inverted circumflex, which indicates when placed in the Slovene language

Haček (k)lebt!

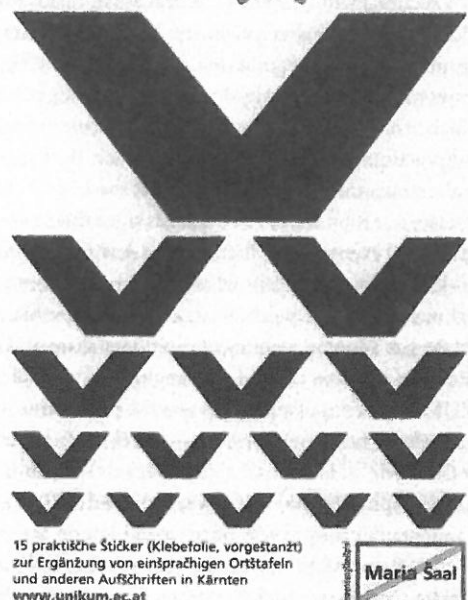


Figure 10.1:
The UNIKUM sheet with haček-stickers in different sizes. UNIKUM, Klagenfurt/Celovec

over the letters c, s, z the palatalized phonemes č, š, ž pronounced as [tʃ], [ʃ], [ʒ]. *Haček* is derived from *háček*, meaning in Czech 'small hook'. Whereas in Slovene this diacritic sign is called *strešica* (little roof) and not *haček*, the term is current in German—often written in the Germanized spelling 'Hatschek'. In Austria the *haček* is seen as emblematic for Slavic languages, in Carinthia particularly for the Slovene language. In language ideological discourse it is linked to sounds that are qualified as difficult to pronounce for German speakers, as 'tongue twisting' or as 'harsh and ugly'. Although the etymology of the term 'Tschusch' (čuš) is not entirely clear it does not seem to be a coincidence that there is a clustering of palatalized consonants in this ethnic slur, which is in colloquial Austrian German used as a pejorative expression for foreigners, especially of Slavic origin, in Carinthia also for Slovene-speaking persons (Priestly 1996). Although the diacritic sign which is discussed here is only part of a grapheme in the Slovene language and thus has no meaning by itself separated from the letter above which it is placed, it becomes within the Carinthian political context nevertheless an ideologically loaded sign in which different meanings and connotations intersect. Vološinov (1973: 20) speaks of the multi-accentuality of the sign, and observes the presence of conflicts

Die Haček-Maler gehen um

Immer mehr Ortstafeln und Hinweisschilder beschmiert. Exekutive und Land warnen: Das ist Sachbeschädigung! Hohe Strafen drohen.

■ VON GEORG LUX

Klagenfurt, Bürgerservice, Freiheitliche. In Kärnten sind seit Wochen unbekannte Haček-Maler unterwegs. Dutzende Schilder – zuletzt eine Klagenfurter Ortstafel und das Türschild eines Villacher FPÖ-Büros – wurden beschmiert. Jetzt warnen die Exekutive und das Land (als größter Verkehrsscheiteneigentümer) die Täter: Was wie ein harmloser Lausbubenstreich aussieht, ist juristisch keineswegs harmlos. Sondern, wie die Haček-Maler schreiben würden, Sachbeschädigung und damit strafbar!

Wer eine Ortstafel beschmiert, steht überhaupt gleich mit beiden Beinen im Kriminal. Denn zur Sachbeschädigung kommt dabei ein Verstoß gegen die Straßenverkehrsordnung, wie der Villacher Polizeijurist Arnold Komposch erklärt. „Eine Ortstafel ist ein Verkehrszeichen und ein solches darf

laut Gesetz nicht verändert werden.“ Pardon kennen die Gesetzeshüter keines. „Sollten wir einen Täter erwischen, wird er natürlich angezeigt“, sagt Komposch. Und auch beim Land Kärnten hält man

Ausschau nach den Haček-Malern, um ihnen saftige Rechnungen zu schicken.

„Bis zu 800 Euro kostet uns die Wiederherstellung einer beschmierten Tafel“, so Albert Kreiner, Leiter der Abteilung Infrastruktur beim Land.

„Wenn wir herausfinden, wer da am Werk war, fordern wir von den Verantwortlichen, dass sie für den Schaden aufkommen. Das ist derselbe Vorgang wie bei einem Unfalltenker, der ein Verkehrszeichen beschädigt hat.“ Kreiner glaubt, dass vielen Tätern nicht bewusst ist, wie teuer ihnen ihre Mal-Aktionen kommen können. Denn, so der Landes-Jurist, „Der Vandalismus am Straßenrand nimmt immer mehr zu.“



Yorzer Spieß. Eine neue Tafel kostet bis zu 800 Euro

Figure 10.2:
A press cutting showing the haček sign on the topographic sign announcing Klagenfurt, the capital of Carinthia. Kleine Zeitung, Kärntner Ausgabe, 26 April 2002



Figure 10.3:
The haček sign on the door plate of one of the major German national organizations. Photo J. Zerzer

and contradictions in signs that embody competing voices and interests. Removed from its usual Slovene language context and used 'out of place' in a German language context, the diacritic sign picks up yet another *ideological* meaning. It stands for contestation and resistance against the dominant discourse of monolingualism. To quote again Vološinov (1973: 23): 'In actual fact, each ideological sign has two faces, like Janus. Any current curse word can become a word of praise, any current truth must inevitably sound to other people as the greatest lie. This *inner dialectical quality* of the sign comes out fully in the open only in times of social crisis or revolutionary changes.'

The postcard-sized sticker sheet designed by UNIKUM gives in small print on the bottom of the page instructions for use, demonstrating how German words can be defamiliarized and transformed by adding diacritic signs wherever the letters c, s, or z appear:

15 praktische Sticker (Klebefolie, gestanzt) zur Ergänzung von einsprachigen Ortstafeln und anderen Aufschriften in Kärnten

15 čonvenient štickerš (on adhešive foil, perforated) to čomplement monolingual topographičal šignš and other inšcriptionš in Čarinthia

In the left-hand lower corner, the sticker sheet displays as '*Anwendungsbeispiel*' (example for use) a miniature image of the topographic sign at the town exit of 'Maria Saal' modified to 'Maria Šaal'. The display of the modified topographic sign invokes images deeply anchored in the Carinthian 'collective memory'—namely those of monolingual signs being enhanced with Slovene toponyms in the quest for minority rights, as well as those of the so-called *Ortstafelsturm*, the forced removal of bilingual road signs in 1972 (see Figure 10.4).

The municipality of Maria Saal, which is given here as an example, is situated near the Carinthian capital of Klagenfurt. Although today Maria Saal is not considered to be located within the bilingual area, it has a traditional Slovene name, *Gospa sveta* (Our Lady). In German language historiography, as well as in the Slovenian language historiography, Maria Saal/*Gospa sveta* has a special place due to its history reaching back to the Celts and the Romans and due to the medieval ceremony of enthronement of the Karantanian dukes which took place nearby and included an oath of investiture in the Slovene language. In mythified interpretations this location has been constructed as a crucial site or even the cradle of Sloveneness.⁴ Such locations, which play a role in nation-founding myths, are often located in peripheral and disputed areas, at the 'frontier' to the 'other'. On Slovenian dialectal maps⁵ which depict the linguistic border between the German-speaking and the Slovene-speaking or bilingual territory, up to the middle of the twentieth century the border line runs right through Maria Saal. When UNIKUM started the sticker action, the mayor of Maria Saal immediately responded that bilingual topographic signs were not an issue in his municipality and that in any case there was no Slovene-speaking minority in the town.



Figure 10.4:
A picture taken during the Ortstafelsturm assault on the bilingual topographic signs. Photo H. G. Trenkwalder

The Writing and Reading of a Diacritic Sign

Taking the example of Maria Saal does not mean a claim for the ownership of space, but an intervention in space with a transformative character. The *haček*-campaign points to the absurdity of establishing a reified link between language and territory. A fine-grained analysis of how the '*haček*-ization' works allows us to understand how with the means of translanguaging and irony, ethnolinguistic polarization can be undermined. For the analysis I draw as a first step on Bakhtin's (1986) thoughts on the sacred word and parody, as a second on Derrida's (1972) concept of deconstruction and thirdly on Pennycook's (2009) understanding of graffiti as a spatial and linguistic practice.

In the modification from Maria Saal to Maria Šaal shown for example on the UNIKUM sticker sheet, the *haček* is placed on a topographic sign. The topographic sign itself has a range of meanings: It displays the official name of a municipality or locality; it is a symbol of state authority and has a perlocutionary force with regard to different administrative areas (e.g. traffic regulations). It indicates that the state authority holds the power of naming and also indicates language policy regulations. The wording displayed on the topographical sign is what Bakhtin (1986: 133) defined as an authoritarian or sacred word, that is 'with its indisputability, unconditionality, and unequivocalty' removed from dialogue and 'retards and freezes thought' ignoring 'live experience of life'. The addition of the *haček*

on such an authoritarian word causes an irritation in the eyes of the beholder by slightly displacing the original text and so achieving an alienation effect. It functions as a metalinguistic comment, in Bakhtin's words (1986: 133) as a parodic antibody which challenges and profanes the authoritarian word and brings it back into dialogue.

The addition of the diacritic sign makes a reference to the forgotten, denied, and repressed Slovene language: traces of Slovene are inscribed into the German toponym. The modification from Maria Saal to Maria Šaal creates a chain of signs that can neither be attributed clearly to German or Slovene. By a translanguaging gesture it transgresses the reified 'boundaries' between the two languages and the mutually exclusive constructions of identity. The addition of the *haček* is a displaced and displacing way of writing (Derrida 1972: 36). It can be seen as an act of deconstruction of the binary logic of two monolingualisms. Derrida (1972: 35) conceived the practice of deconstruction as a double gesture, whereby the first step consists of acknowledging that a binary opposition is not a relationship of peaceful coexistence but of hierarchization. The second step or gesture consists of displacing the field in which the opposition originated and in revealing what the binary logic excluded to constitute itself. In our case it points to the impossibility of a closed and 'pure' Germanness, as well as of a closed and 'pure' Sloveneness and to the existence of a marginalized and excluded other. Inscribing the *haček* into the dominant German language refers to the traces of the excluded other that leave 'a phantomatical map "inside" the said monolanguage' (Derrida 1998: 65).

Shortly after the launch of the UNIKUM *haček* campaign, stickers appeared throughout the bilingual area in Carinthia and beyond. The rapidly evolving dynamic is due to the fact that the *haček* by its form lends itself to becoming a powerful symbol. It bears all the characteristics that Chakotin (1971: 190) qualifies as important in the context of political propaganda: it is easily applicable and replicable, has a high recognition value, and when applied it transforms other signs, but is itself difficult to alter or erase. The *haček* inscriptions can be seen in the same way as graffiti: as a subversive act of reappropriation of public space in which hegemonic relations are symbolically inscribed. As Pennycook (2009: 307) stresses, graffiti 'are not only about territory but about different ways of claiming space. They are also transformative in the sense not only that they change the public space but that they reinterpret it.' From one perspective graffiti is viewed as transgressive social behaviour, as little more than vandalism; from another as the creation of a (subcultural) community using language as style (Pennycook 2009: 302). It is not only the result that matters, the presence of the sign in public space, but also the specific location where it is applied and the illicit act of applying it as an *espèglerie* in joking competition with others that 'allows for human agency and sense of play' (Pennycook 2009: 306). The addition of the diacritic sign invites the reader to engage in the language game and pronounce familiar names and words with a new parodic accent. Cunning and mockery are employed as a strategy to question deadlocked polarizations. The

'*hačekization*' can be interpreted as an ironic utterance which comprehends both, the 'onlooker's gaze' and her or his distanciation from the latter. Hence, it bears a dialogic character; irony in this case is employed as a subversive strategy of self-empowerment (Böse and Busch 2007).

Moving Beyond Bipolar Logics

In contrast to the linguistic militantism of the 1970s claiming the rights of minority language speakers, the above discussed *haček*-intervention in the public space questions the very logic by which the notions of minority and majority are conceived. It cannot be seen as an isolated action but rather as an action that mirrors and represents a number of geopolitical, economic and social changes that took place from the 1990s onwards and altered the articulation of language and space. On the geopolitical level, with the end of the bipolar world division and the process of European integration, borders became more permeable and changed their connotation. When Slovenia was proclaimed an independent state in 1990, the former Austro-Yugoslav border not only changed in political denomination becoming the Austro-Slovene border but subsequently also in its geopolitical 'supra-determination' (Balibar 1997: 375) and in connotations. It was no more considered as a dividing line between two ideologically different systems and, with Slovenia's accession to the EU in 2004, became an EU-internal border. The new geopolitical situation opened an opportunity for the two peripheral regions which were separated by the border to intensify cooperation and exchange.

Almost immediately after Slovenia's EU accession in 2004, international commercial chains began to regroup parts of Austria and Slovenia to one single marketing region. One of the first was Hofer, a subcompany of the German supermarket retailer Aldi, which began its expansion into the Slovenian market in 2005. In the same year products with bilingual product descriptions and names were put on sale also in the Austrian Hofer stores. In the then current situation in which every bilingual inscription in a public place immediately aroused a heated debate, it is interesting to note that commercial language policies as the one described remained uncommented.⁶

Another change is linked to greater social and demographic mobility. Whereas moving to urban areas in the past usually entailed a language shift from the socially disregarded minority language to the dominant one, today this is not necessarily the case. An educated urban elite has emerged that retains Slovene as a family language, passes it on to the next generation and creates a linguistic environment in which bilingualism can be practised. Interpreting statistical data, demographers attest that the Slovene-speaking population has overcome its traditional disadvantaged status in the sense that its educational level has become higher than that of the monolingual segment of the Carinthian population (Reiterer 1996: 150). The growing importance of Klagenfurt as a regional centre where Slovene is also present

in the local cultural and economic life has given rise to an urban vernacular, derived from the standard language and encompassing elements from different local dialects (Schellander 1988), as well as to a specific regional variety of standard Slovene (Busch 2010).

These developments contributed to an increase in the prestige and functionality of Slovene in Carinthia. This is for instance visible in the rising number of students in bilingual education: the enrolment quota for dual medium Slovene-German education in elementary school rose from the all-time low of 13.5 per cent (1976/77) to 44 per cent for the school year of 2010/11.⁷ While in the 1970s, it could be assumed that all children attending bilingual instruction spoke either exclusively or mainly one of the Slovene dialects at home, today, the pattern of knowledge of Slovene is different. According to information provided by teachers nearly three quarters of students enter school without previous knowledge of Slovene. Obviously parents from German-speaking backgrounds enrol their children in dual medium schools because they consider the option to learn an additional language as an educational opportunity and not as a choice linked to ethnic identification (Wakounig 2008: 321).

A change can also be observed concerning discourses on language and space. Whereas representations of space were formerly characterized by an almost obsessive focus on the course of the political and linguistic borderline separating an imagined Germanic and Slavic space, in this period the idea of an enlarged trilingual transborder region which encompasses Carinthia, Slovenia, and parts of Northern Italy is beginning to be promoted. The trilingual slogan '*senza confini—ohne Grenzen—brez meja*' which wishes away the borders is becoming emblematic for envisaged cooperation on the economic, touristic, political, and cultural level. The idea of a regional trilinguality is nevertheless again based on the three national languages in the respective nation-states disregarding other regional languages such as Friulian or languages of migration. Italian, which is introduced in Carinthia as a possible third language to alter the German-Slovene opposition, is mainly used for symbolic purposes, but has also begun to play a certain role in language policy (e.g. by being promoted as a subject in school).

NEW SPATIO-LINGUISTIC CONFIGURATIONS

The above discussed developments indicate a reversal of the bipolar logics that have characterized spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces over a long period. The increased permeability of the state border opens the way for a gradual disenclavement of the borderland and re-weights language ideologies formerly linked to the geopolitical divisions. Representations of space that were formerly determined by discourses emphasizing the polarity between two states belonging to two different ideological systems are progressively replaced by discourses presenting the enlarged region as trilingual and 'without borders'. All

these phenomena of transition and discontinuity suggest the emergence of new spatio-linguistic configurations linked to processes of increasing global mobility which result in new and ever more complex social formations and networking practices beyond traditional belongings, processes for which Steve Vertovec (2007) has coined the term super-diversity. Bauman (1998) discusses globalization as a transition from national economies based on industrial production and territoriality to a globalized market based on the transfer of knowledge and information. In this context he raises the question of peripherality in terms of a 'progressive spatial segregation, separation and exclusion' (Bauman 1998: 3). While the 'time/space compression' (Bauman 1998: 2) interlinks the increasingly global and extraterritorial elites in the centres, other regions are marginalized and 'localized' as no-man's-lands because they are excluded from the relevant communication flows. In structurally weak regions such as Carinthia, the fear of being left with the marginalized locals is omnipresent and frequently compensated for by different kinds of political activism, characterized by Bauman (1998: 3) as neo-tribal and fundamentalist.

In some domains it seems, nevertheless, that peripherality is not just a disadvantage but can also be turned into an advantage (see e.g. McLaughlin, this volume; Coupland, this volume). One aspect often mentioned in this context is the possibility of drawing on the idea of the periphery as a counter-world to the central areas (as Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes; Jaworski and Thurlow; and others in this volume point out). Precisely because of its quality of peripherality, it can be perceived as possessing values such as authenticity and unspoiltness, values which can be commodified. In peripheral areas such as the South of Carinthia, in the last few years there has also been a certain inward movement that has slowed down the demographic drain. This counter-movement is, on the one hand, due to a rising number of jobs which are now less tied to specific locations (e.g. in the IT sector). On the other hand, traditional small-scale economic structures which were preserved can provide a certain basis of subsistence when complemented by other activities (e.g. in the field of cultural work or soft tourism). Finally, the temporary placement or long-term stay of asylum seekers and refugees in municipalities of Southern Carinthia can also be seen in connection with the municipalities' location near the border.

Speakers on the Move

Increased mobility of the inhabitants, their participation in translocal networks of communication, as well as social ties and partnerships that reach far beyond the confines of the greater region, have led over the past decade to a linguistic diversification that resembles small-scale language regimes and linguistic practices described up to now mainly for urban areas. In one of the rural border municipalities, Eisenkappel-Vellach/Železna kapla Bela, a citizens' initiative,⁸ promoting

social integration and language learning organized in tandem pairs and conversation circles, counted among the 2,500 inhabitants more than fifteen languages other than Slovene and German, among these the languages of former Yugoslavia, as well as Turkish, Kurdish, Hungarian, Italian, French, English, Polish, Farsi, Ukrainian, and Russian.

As far as Slovene is concerned, the sociolinguistic situation that was traditionally framed in terms of language maintenance versus language shift, standard versus dialect has become far more differentiated. What was almost unthinkable some twenty years ago has become an everyday experience: there are learners of the minority languages and therefore there are speakers of 'Slovene with an accent' (Busch 2010). This includes individuals learning Slovene as children or as adults, in formal or in informal contexts and with different language backgrounds. The motivations are equally varied: for some it means returning to a 'lost' family language, for others acquiring a new family language within a linguistically mixed partnership; some learn Slovene for professional or economic reasons; for immigrants with a Slavic language background it often proves to be the first language of social contact in the new environment. There is very little recent sociolinguistic research into the developments in Carinthia. One recent, as yet unpublished study,⁹ carried out among learners and alumni of bilingual schools indicates changing self-perceptions: most of the young people interviewed do not define themselves in terms of membership of an ethnic or linguistic group. They stress their participation in different spaces of communication in which they make self-confident use of their heteroglossic linguistic resources and present themselves as polyglot and as rooted. Their linguistic practices of language crossing and translanguaging as means of style and stylization resemble what has been described earlier by Rampton (1995) and other authors for urban areas.

The Alphabet Soup

The intermingling of the local and the global, of codes, registers, and styles that refer to different linguistic spaces, was the topic of another event organized by the UNIKUM cultural initiative a few years after the *haček*-campaign. It is again the diacritic sign on the letters c, s, and z that plays a central role. For this UNIKUM project a local enterprise began to produce a special version of pasta for alphabet soup adding the letters č, š, and ž to the so far 'monolingual' alphabet. The pasta was packed and labelled as '*buhštabenzupe*' (see Figure 10.5). '*Buhštabenzupe*' figures as a transliteration of the German word '*Buchstabensuppe*' (alphabet soup) into a 'Slovenized' spelling. Unlike the *haček* campaign, where the Slovene diacritic sign was inscribed into German words and names, in the *buhštabenzupe* case, hybridity is foregrounded. The package information sheet accompanying the pasta details the contents as '*Buhštabenzupe—gewürzt und veredelt mit slowenischen Š, Č und Ž-Nudeln*' (seasoned and enhanced with Slovene Š, Č, and



Figure 10.5:
The alphabet soup with the supplementary 'Slovene' letters č, š, ž. Photo G. Pilgram, UNIKUM

Ž pasta). The commercial slogan consists of two parts in the two languages: '*Z dvoječnim okusom! Zweisprachig schmeckt besser!*' (With bilingual flavour! Bilingual tastes better!). The local Carinthian pasta enterprise profited from the joint action with UNIKUM which served as a promotion campaign for the local pasta manufacturer, spreading its brand name. It discovered a market niche for custom-made products—one of their next clients being Jörg Haider's right-wing party BZÖ. The at best pragmatic and market-oriented attitude of the commercial partner is in clear contrast to the cultural and socio-political ambitions of UNIKUM.

As with the *haček* project, the *buhštabenzupe* project was very popular and a series of events took place not only in Carinthia but also in Vienna where small tasters with alphabet pasta were distributed at the International Book Day bringing questions of peripheral multilingualism right into the centre. To launch the *buhštabenzupe*, a series of events where alphabet soup was cooked and served was organized. These events also featured a jazz music and poetry performance in the style of slam poetry by the well-known Carinthian author Jani Oswald. His poems written for the *buhštabenzupe* events¹⁰ revolve—as in the following extract of a poem named 'composition'—around the topics of cooking, mixing, stirring up, spicing, and savouring.

composition

	Nicht allein das
ABC	bringt den Menschen in die Höh bei
A and O	da kauft man so keiff
soso tatà	tàta pápa čudovito črkovito župo
X4U	and nix for me ist wie etwa
A-A-A	tripple Ah Papá isst Buchstabensuppe kar tako psst ach nur so Suppé, Franz von schon von črkovita Tscherkowitter Čajkovskij Tschudowitter
Pjotr	Ilijič
Čuš	windischer

Using techniques such as transliteration, alliteration, onomatopoeic word creations, and different kinds of wordplay and puns, Jani Oswald draws on a broad range of linguistic resources and discourses referring to the local and its commodification (hooks 1992), as well as to the repertoire of cultural and economic globalization.

As in the *haček* project, in the *buhštabenzupe* project irony serves as a means to undermine ethnolinguistic categorizations and polarizations. But whereas in the first project language policy activism was a core concern, the second foregrounded hedonistic and culinary aspects and used a postmodern variant of irony combined with a rather arbitrary use of quotations (Rorty 1989; Colebrook 2004). There is reference to a globalized repertoire in which Slovenian is one of the elements, an element of distinction that functions in a postmodern sense as symbolic capital. Linguistic heterogeneity in this context is seen as a resource for constructing socially interpretable and interpreted styles (Auer 2007).

The *buhštabenzupe* events can be interpreted following bell hooks (1992) as a cultural commodification which she refers to as 'eating the other': messages of social change are not taken up for their content but rather as an arbitrary element of style. In fact, the *buhštabenzupe* events are meant to be both: the commodification and the ironic commentary on commodification. In the postmodern variant of irony, it is not the origin of the quotation that matters, but its appearance as a reference as such. For the commercial project partner this form of quotation lacked the dimension of self-empowerment, the quotation rather served as an eye-catcher, as a free-floating signifier without a signified.

CONCLUSIONS

Like Lefebvre, Michel Foucault (1984: 1) sees space as historically conditioned, as having itself a history in Western experience which needs to be retraced. Developing a larger historical picture, Foucault, in 'Of Other Spaces' (1984), explains that space in the Middle Ages was seen as a hierarchical ensemble of places in which every person and every thing had its emplacement, while in the Modern Age space becomes an infinitely open space, and extension was substituted for localization. In his text (1984: 1), he sketches a present-day (bearing in mind that he was writing in the late 1960s) understanding of space that anticipates the conditions of globalization and super-diversity: 'We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein.'

If every era has its own understanding of space, then there is also a specific understanding of the connection between language and space linked to that specific moment in history. Space cannot simply be seen as a container that encompasses particular languages or language practices. Language comes into play on all three levels described by Lefebvre: on the level of spatial practices, of representations of space (discourses on space) and of representational spaces (space lived directly through its associated images and symbols). Language practices are themselves spatial practices and space is also constituted through language practices. Language ideologies are often linked with representations of space (e.g. monolingualism as the norm with nation-state ideologies). And, language is present as signs and symbols in the representational space, for example, visible in the form of topographic signs, invisible in the naming of places and locations.

The peripherality of European border regions is determined by different connotations that define the border as hermetic or permeable, as a zone of contact or of separation. The nation-state ideology has for a long period led to a conception of state borders as lines unambiguously separating the inside from the outside which also resulted in politics of linguistic homogenization within the state territories: state borders were ideally supposed to be reified as 'natural' separations between distinct national languages. Contesting linguistic homogenization could be interpreted as a sign of ambiguity or a lack of loyalty towards the centres: 'peripheral' speakers who were not willing to assimilate to the dominant language were frequently considered as 'not quite ours' or 'not ours at all'. Such forms of repeated Othering, of identification and misidentification due to 'suspicious' language practices, contributed to establishing and to reinforcing discursive categories of ethnolinguistic belonging which exerted a formative and constitutive power on the speaking subjects.

Analysing the situation in Southern Carinthia, shows that speakers of a language traditionally labelled as a minority language can no longer be unambiguously territorially localized or ethnically identified, and that they see themselves as

multilingual subjects with complex and changing linguistic repertoires rather than as bilinguals oriented towards competing centres. The main focus has been on the transition from modernity, linked to the logics of territorial extension, to postmodernity, characterized by simultaneity, networking and the deterritorialization of linguistic practices.

Focusing on spatial representations and representational spaces, the co-presence of different notions of space and different discursive formations on language in space, connected to different moments in history, become obvious. As Heller and Labrie (2003: 16) observe for the context of French in Canada, different types of competing discourses on linguistic diversity can be discerned in different phases of history, but are today also simultaneously present: the traditionalist (*traditionaliste*), the modernizing (*modernisant*), and the globalizing (*mondialisant*). In the Carinthian context I identified the co-presence of different discursive formations on language and space: a traditional ethno-territorial discourse which is restaged in a postmodern version; a discourse of multiculturalism which finds its expression in the idea of an enlarged trilingual region; and finally a postmodern emphasizing a globalized form of linguistic diversity.

NOTES

1. This overview draws on my earlier sociolinguistic work on the situation in Carinthia (Busch 1999, 2003a, 2003b).
2. *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, European Treaty Series 148 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 1992).
3. <http://www.unikum.ac.at/>.
4. A Slovene Tourism Agency, for example, proposes guided tours to 'the cradle of sloveneness and our first statehood' (*zibelka slovenstva in naše prve državnosti*). http://www.alpetour.si/index.php?page=alpI_raziskuje&item=168&predmet_id=&drzava_id=&id=133, accessed May 2011.
5. See, for example, Fran Ramovš, *Karta slovenskih narečij v priročni izdaji*, Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana, 1957.
6. The data that this chapter is based on were collected in the framework of research projects carried out between 2006 and 2011, financed by the Austrian Ministry of Education and Culture and by the Austrian Office for Minorities at the Chancellery (Volksgruppenabteilung im Bundeskanzleramt) (Busch 2010; Busch and Doleschal 2008).
7. All data in this paragraph according to press information and reports by Landesschulrat für Kärnten (Carinthian school authority).
8. <http://www.gesk.at/de/sprachentauchboerse>.
9. Unpublished study financed by the Austrian Office for Minorities, carried out 2011 by B. Busch and G. Gombos, *Gelebte Mehrsprachigkeit: Eine*

qualitative Untersuchung der Schulerfahrungen von AbsolventInnen des mehrsprachigen Kugy-Zweiges des BG/BRG für Slowenen und ihres Umgangs mit Mehrsprachigkeit.

10. Jani Oswald, *Frakturen* (Klagenfurt/Celovec: Drava, 2007).

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