

"WE SPEAK THE LANGUAGE THE GUEST WANTS"

Language attitudes and language use in touristic encounters in Austria



Professor Monika Dannerer
University of Innsbruck

26 Apr 2019 (Fri)

2:30-4:00pm

CRT-4.36, Run Run Shaw Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU

Tourists are on the move, searching for something that is different than what they can experience at home: scenery and climate, sports and leisure activities, food and traditions, languages and dialects, nature and culture. Although many of these special features of a targeted place are (still) part of everyday life for tourees, they become commodities for the tourists. They are "advertised" and "sold" (cf. Heller/Jaworsky/Thurlow 2014) and thereby transformed in their semiotic value. Being seemingly exotic, unique, archaic or at least "authentic" makes them even more precious (cf. Pietikäinen/Kelly-Holmes 2011; Pietikäinen et al. 2016).

In my presentation I will take up the role languages and varieties play in the search for difference, in this case also combined with the need for some "similarities" that allow for mutual intelligibility. Tyrol, the most touristic province in Austria, will serve as a lab for demonstrating different forms of language use for interacting with tourists. Based on a corpus of interviews with owners of hotels and private accommodations as well as with service providers, I will deal with the question of how hosts see "their language" in contact with the languages of the tourists. How do they treat their usage of local dialect, standard language and foreign languages in relation to their local identity and to the aim of authenticating the services they offer? And which role do (seasonal) employees play in tourism by bringing along languages and varieties that might differ from the local ones?



Monika Dannerer is professor at the department of German Language and Literature at the University of Innsbruck since 2014. She studied in Salzburg, Graz and Vienna and did her PhD at the University of Bielefeld/Germany. For many years she worked at the University of Salzburg in a pre-doc and post-doc position. Her fields of research are sociolinguistics, first and second language acquisition and language variation. She dealt with workplace communication, acquisition of narrative competences in late childhood as well as with languages and varieties at the university and in tourism.



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