

ALBERT ERIK GRUBER

# WORDS OF POWER

A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPEECHES OF THE AUSTRIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL AND THEIR  
LINGUISTIC CHANGE ON A TEMPORAL, GEOGRAPHICAL AND POLITICAL LEVEL

# LINGUISTIC CHANGE

- ▶ **Active change:** we choose to change our language to
  - ▶ express oneself better,
  - ▶ blend into certain groups,
  - ▶ impress others, ...
- ▶ **Passive change:** we are influenced to change our language by
  - ▶ books, songs, mass media, games, ...
  - ▶ friends, co-workers, politicians, ...

# AWARENESS OF LINGUISTIC CHANGE

- ▶ **Dominant languages:** usually lead to public discussions, like
  - ▶ English today,
  - ▶ French in the 1900s,
  - ▶ Latin in the middle ages, ...
- ▶ **Subtle changes** (ie. neologisms)
  - ▶ Less public awareness, unless hot topics
  - ▶ Bundespräsidentenstichwahlwiederholungsverschiebung, Neuland, ...

# FORMS OF LINGUISTIC CHANGE

- ▶ Lexicon / choice of words
- ▶ Pronunciation / accentuation
- ▶ Shifts in case usage (dative > genitive)
- ▶ Plural of loan words (Pizze => Pizzas/Pizzen)

# LINGUISTIC RESEARCH INTO THE AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENT

## ▶ Main focus on:

- ▶ political affinities
- ▶ rhetorical patterns
- ▶ obvious phenomena in general

## ▶ Problems:

- ▶ Rarely research goes deeper.
- ▶ Complete corpus of speeches of the National Council has never been researched.

# GOALS AND FOCUS OF MY RESEARCH

- ▶ **Goals:**
  - ▶ Highlight less prominent changes.
  - ▶ Research a selection of those.
- ▶ **Focus on linguistic parameters:**
  - ▶ Use of dialect
  - ▶ Use of neologisms
  - ▶ Use of Austrian Standard („Österreichisches Deutsch“)
  - ▶ Use of „everyday“ language

# BASE OF MY RESEARCH

- ▶ Two databases:
  - ▶ Politicians (more later)
  - ▶ Speeches of National Council
- ▶ Speech database:
  - ▶ Linguistic units („words“) marked as
    - ▶ dialect, neologism, Austrian standard and/or „everyday“ language
  - ▶ Based on comparison with
    - ▶ dictionaries, databases, corpora, ...

# CORPUS LINGUISTICS

- ▶ Focus:
  - ▶ Large quantities of text
- ▶ Goals:
  - ▶ Find properties, patterns or differences



# POSSIBLE FOCUS OF QUESTIONS

- ▶ Does the use of neologisms vary between party A and party B?
- ▶ Is it more likely for a green female from Graz or a red male from Salzburg to use dialect?
- ▶ Has the age of a politician an impact on their use of "everyday" language?
- ▶ And how does this differ between the preplanned, scripted speeches and the debates with impromptu use of language?

# DATABASE OF POLITICIANS

- ▶ Personal parameters:
  - ▶ Party affiliations
  - ▶ Sex / gender
  - ▶ Places of birth / living
  - ▶ Age
- ▶ Combination with linguistic parameters:
  - ▶ Over 40+ combinations
  - ▶ Each new parameter increases combinations massively