

## Globalization and the Future of German





# Globalization and the Future of German

With a Select Bibliography

*Edited by*

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# Contents

Preface .....	ix
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
Globalization – Threats and Opportunities .....	3
<i>Bernd Hüppauf</i>	
<b>Globalization and Language</b> .....	25
The Past, Present, and Future of World English .....	27
<i>David Crystal</i>	
English as Threat or Resource in Continental Europe .....	47
<i>Robert Phillipson</i>	
Global English – A New Lingua Franca or a New Imperial Culture? ...	65
<i>Hans Joachim Meyer</i>	
English Rules the World. What Will Become of German? .....	85
<i>Rudolf Hoberg</i>	
Language Policies in East and West. National Language Policies as a Response to the Pressures of Globalization .....	99
<i>Petra Braselmann</i>	
<b>The Impact of English on the Vocabulary and Grammatical Structure of German</b> .....	119
German as an Endangered Language? .....	121
<i>Peter Eisenberg</i>	
Does “Denglish” Differentiate our Perceptions of Nature? The View of a Nature Lover and Language “Fighter” .....	139
<i>Hermann H. Dieter</i>	

<b>Internationalizing Science and Technology</b> .....	155
German as an International Language of the Sciences – Recent Past and Present .....	157
<i>Ulrich Ammon</i>	
The Future of German and Other Non-English Languages for Academic Communication .....	173
<i>Konrad Ehlich</i>	
<b>Language and Identity</b> .....	185
The German Language and the Linguistic Diversity of Europe .....	187
<i>Wolfgang Thierse</i>	
Language and National Identity .....	197
<i>Andreas Gardt</i>	
Yiddish and German: An On-Again, Off-Again Relationship – and Some of the More Important Factors Determining the Future of Yiddish .....	213
<i>Joshua A. Fishman</i>	
The Past and Future of the Pennsylvania German Language: Many Ways of Speaking German; Many Ways of Being American ....	229
<i>David L. Valuska and William W. Donner</i>	
<b>German in the USA</b> .....	243
Language Policies of the Goethe-Institut .....	245
<i>Nikky Keilholz-Rühle, Stephan Nobbe, and Uwe Rau</i>	
The <i>Kulturpolitik</i> of German-Speaking Countries in the USA .....	253
<i>John Lalande II</i>	
Self-Inflicted Wounds? Why German Enrollments are Dropping .....	265
<i>Robert C. Reimer</i>	
Meeting the Challenge: The Future of German Study in the United States .....	281
<i>Helene Zimmer-Loew</i>	
German in Wisconsin: Language Change and Loss .....	293
<i>Peter Wagener</i>	

<b>Language and the Creative Mind</b> .....	305
The Seductive Aesthetics of Globalization: Semiotic Implications of Anglicisms in German .....	307
<i>Prisca Augustyn</i>	
Critically “ <i>Kanak</i> ”: A Reimagination of German Culture .....	319
<i>Yasemir Yildiz</i>	
Globalization: A Look at the Positive Side .....	341
<i>John M. Grandin</i>	
Select Bibliography .....	349
List of Contributors .....	373





## Preface

It seems justified to say that in Europe language has never before been the subject of heated, or even public, debate, as was the case in the decades around the year 2000. It had by this time become obvious that English was now the dominant language world-wide. The implications, as well as possible responses to the continuing rise of English differ greatly between languages and nations. It is no surprise that the language debate was particularly heated in Europe since European languages are losing their traditional position and societies are concerned about the reduction of their national language to a 'small language.'

The situation of German is paradigmatic. In public debate and academic publications the question was raised whether German was among the dying languages, with a future reduced to the private sphere or folklore. Some commentators denied this possibility while others were seriously afraid of the future, and yet others considered it an inevitable implication of the tendency towards a global village that will only be possible if English is used as the language of communication all over the world. Whichever side one takes in this debate, it is obvious that linguistic changes cannot be discussed in terms of linguistic concepts only, since they are inextricably intertwined with social, political and economic tendencies.

The year 2001 was declared the *European Year of Languages*. It gave rise to many conferences, lectures and hearings considered worthy of media coverage. Official publications of the EU made an attempt to demonstrate the bright future of Europe's linguistic diversity. However, not every one agreed. In contrast to the celebration of languages, critical voices pointed out that the positive presentation of the diversity of European languages was little more than a deception. Presenting English as one of the many languages spoken in Europe, equal to Greek or Finnish, was seen by many commentators as an ill-conceived attempt to cover up the real situation. The European Year of Languages was meant to boost positive attitudes and foster a love of Europe's colorful plurality through a glowing image of its linguistic diversity. The contrary seems to have been achieved. Skepticism and even deep pessimism in relation to the future of European languages ensued. The debate was particularly intensive in Germany.

After two years of preparation, a conference addressing the topic of the future of European languages with a specific focus on German as a paradigm-

matic example was held in 2002 at New York University. New York seemed an ideal place for a re-examination of these issues. It is the power center of the drive towards English as a global language and, at the same time, it is distanced both geographically and mentally from the sites of political debate in Europe. The intention was to use this distance to create a different framework and to re-adjust the debate by defining the issues in a different way. It was hoped that the focus on the effects of *globalization* – rather than on the fear of domination – would lead to a reconstitution of the terms of the debate and liberate it from the sterile perspective of confrontation that perceives languages as being engaged in a struggle for survival.

This volume contains revised contributions to the conference, expanded by six solicited essays. A guiding principle that the editors adopted was to reflect the broad spectrum of the debate that is not limited to academic positions. Language policy is a field where scholarly research and public interest intersect and it is no surprise that not every argument used in this debate stands up to closer academic scrutiny, particularly where assumptions about the ‘nature’ of language are made. This has become evident in German speaking countries in the debate about foreign words and phrases. This is the major concern of *language societies* which have contributed to the intense public debate in recent years. Language is a *public good* and controversy over its current state and future development is a legitimate aspect of public discourse, open to all groups of society.

The decision to publish this volume in English rather than in German gave rise to strong criticism and warrants a brief explanatory comment. The book is addressed to a target group that can be called *international readership*. In the past ten years a large number of books on the language question have been published in German. Yet, the relationship between questions of language and globalization has been neglected. Furthermore, the European language debate is all but unknown in English speaking countries and the specific situation of German is even less well known. Publication in English, it is reasonable to assume, will lead the book to reach a new readership unfamiliar with the issues elaborated on in this anthology. The editors responded to the concern expressed about the problem of linguistic diversity by including abstracts of all essays in German.

The first chapter deals with the general effects that globalization has on language. Globalization manifests itself in the increased use of English as a second language world-wide, in the corresponding decrease of importance of other languages in second language acquisition and in the increasing presence of English in everyday life in non-English speaking societies. The question is raised whether this will lead to an ideal community of uninhibited communi-



cation where English as the new *lingua franca* enables individuals and groups to participate in an increasingly global market of information, entertainment and material goods, or, alternatively, whether (American) English is becoming a new means of expanding cultural and economic hegemony. Where linguistic diversity is seen as linked to cultural diversity, the dominance of English as the language of globalization is often held responsible for erasing cultural differences and creating a uniform and faceless world. For those who regard this as a genuine threat the question of language policy and strategies for supporting the various national languages is inevitable.

The second chapter focuses on the impact of English on the vocabulary and grammatical structure of German. What is at stake is less the replacement of one language by another, but the growing presence of English words and phrases in German. This controversy has gained considerable public appeal in the past years, involving the print and electronic media and has provided language societies with a specific and popular agenda.

The third chapter is concerned with the linguistic consequences of the internationalization of science and technology. It is their specialist languages that make the impact of English most obvious. Not only individual words and phrases are incorporated, but whole areas of communication have shifted to English. For many scientists, publishing in English has become common practice and they regard linguistic diversity in their professional sphere as a hindrance for efficient communication. In their attempt to keep their educational programs internationally attractive, universities in German speaking countries have begun offering entire degree programs in English.

From early on and, as a result of the political conditions, with renewed urgency since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, language played a major role in the construction of cultural and political identity in Germany, both of individuals and of societies as a whole. The fourth chapter deals with various aspects of this question, addressing German in the context of a multilingual Europe and America. Using the examples of Yiddish and Pennsylvania German, contributions deal with historical traditions of defining identity through language and also address current developments.

The increasing international importance of English has had obvious consequences for the international standing of German (and French, Italian, Russian etc.) as a second language. The situation of German in schools, universities and other institutions of learning and study in Europe has been the subject of comprehensive research in recent years. However, not much has been published on the presence of German in America, Australia and Canada. Chapter five therefore concentrates on the role German plays in education and the public life in the United States.

The departure point of the final chapter is the question of possible responses to the perceived threat posed by globalization. The contributions reflect the complexity of these relations by placing emphasis on productive and innovative responses to the challenge to the future of German as a world language. There are areas of knowledge and experience, these essays suggest, that continue to make German attractive. They must be identified and actively pursued in promoting the language. Also, new hybrid forms of German resulting from close contact between German and the languages of immigrants, primarily from Turkey, could well lead to a revitalization of the productive power of the spoken and written language. There is hope, it seems, that an endangered love of language could be revitalized through a newly open and self-confident attitude.

Many were involved in the preparation of this volume. We would like to acknowledge, in particular, contributions by Kathrin DiPaola (NYU), Katharina Schaumann (Universität Kassel), Peter Bews (Universität Heidelberg) and Dr. Ursula Kleinhenz, Dr. Anke Beck, and Frank Benno Junghanns. We are grateful for support from the *Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache* that covered the cost of the simultaneous translation of the papers presented at the conference. Without the financial support from the *Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst*, the *Alexander-von-Humboldt-Stiftung*, the *Austrian Cultural Forum*, the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, and the *Robert Bosch Stiftung* the conference would not have been possible.

Andreas Gardt, Kassel

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# Introduction



# Globalization – Threats and Opportunities

*Bernd Hüppauf*

## **Zusammenfassung**

Die unaufhörlich wachsende Bedeutung von Englisch als der Kommunikations- und Geschäftssprache der EU sowie als Sprache des Tourismus, der Wissenschaft, der Unterhaltungsindustrie und vieler weiterer Bereiche auf der Welt hat in den letzten Jahren zu intensiven Diskussionen in der Öffentlichkeit sowie in akademischen Disziplinen, vor allem der Linguistik, geführt. Der Sammelband knüpft an diese Diskussionen an, definiert jedoch den Rahmen der Betrachtung auf andere Weise; er führt in die vorwiegend durch die Bedingungen der EU und die Perspektive der Nationalstaaten bestimmte Debatte den Begriff der *Globalisierung* ein. Die Beiträge diskutieren die Frage, wie sich die Folgen der Hegemonie des Englischen als der Sprache der Globalisierung für die Stellung der Sprachen Europas in der Gegenwart und voraussehbaren Zukunft verstehen lassen, am Beispiel von Deutsch im Alltag und in Institutionen der Ausbildung Europas und Amerikas. Es besteht weitgehende Übereinstimmung, dass sich die Stellung von Deutsch, und nicht allein von Deutsch, in der Gegenwart grundlegend ändert. Diese Veränderung wird in einigen Beiträgen kritisch bewertet, während andere es für unfruchtbar halten, sie lediglich als einen Verlust zu verstehen. Vielmehr bieten sich Möglichkeiten zu einem eigenbestimmten und innovativen Verhältnis zur Sprache an, die erkannt werden müssen, um praktiziert werden zu können. An die Stelle eines Denkens in Kategorien von Ausschluss und Verdrängung kann, so argumentieren einige der Beiträge, eine Identifikation und wiederbelebte Liebe zur eigenen Sprache treten.

## **1.**

Without doubt, the importance of English as a language of international communication has increased significantly during recent decades. It has become the undisputed international language in many areas including tourism, business and trade, the sciences, popular culture and diplomacy. The statistical data are unequivocal. Equally obvious is that we do not know how to interpret such data. We are witnessing a rapid change of the world's linguistic map without really understanding what we are witnessing. Inter-



pretations are highly controversial; furthermore, assessments of these tendencies are often emotionally charged. There is a fear among many European (and non-European) nations of losing the power of language itself, and with this the capacity for self determination and the development of cultural identity. This anxiety is particularly strong in France and Germany, but can also be observed, albeit to a lesser degree, within other nations with major languages. The principle of parity for the languages of all EU member states, initially six, now eleven and soon, as the result of the eastward expansion, many more has not been practiced in real communication for many years. What is new, however, is an emerging mono-linguasm; and the dominance of English as both a language of institutions of the European Union as well as of general communication is perceived as a threat that may reduce all other languages to insignificance.

The historical experience of colonization provides many observers with a preeminent model for interpreting the growing hegemony of English in the contemporary world as a whole as well as in the EU. The only situations in the past comparable to the current conflict over language, also designated a 'language war',<sup>1</sup> was, they believe, the political domination of colonizing powers which uncompromisingly suppressed indigenous languages: English and French in Africa, America and Asia, Spanish and Portuguese in South America. This is a new experience for European nations that is particularly wounding to their self esteem, since they have enough experience with imperialism to know that it contains "the notion of a purposeful project": the intentional spread of a political system, combined with cultural values and a life style, from one center of power that creates victims pushed to the margins, reducing their significance. This new variant of imperialism, they argue, is now spreading across the globe.<sup>2</sup> While it is increasingly difficult to locate *purpose* in an identifiable power center, imperialism reshaped as a political program based on anonymous channels of electronic communication and language is all the more threatening. Powerful nations feel they are being pushed to the periphery of world affairs by English and Anglo-American culture for which language is the main vehicle. The current phase of creating a new monetary, economic and political unity in Europe has created conditions that have had an obvious impact on the perception of language, in particular, the relationship between English – the language of a nation that not only joined the EU late, but by continuing to be reluctant to give up national sovereignty is suspected of maintaining a mentality of imperialistic arrogance – and other major European languages. German can serve as an example for the *submergence* of European languages as a consequence of the emergence of English as the foremost foreign language in



Europe. While Germany has the strongest economy in the EU and German is spoken by nearly 100 millions Europeans, the language is “progressively marginalized in scholarship, commerce, youth culture and in the global linguistic market place, in similar ways to a reduction in the power of French internationally.”<sup>3</sup> In public debates and academic publications the question has often been raised whether German may be among the dying languages, its future reduced to the private sphere and folklore. The preparation of the conference on “Globalization and the future of European languages” in 2002, that provided the basis for most of the essays collected in this volume, made this obvious: the controversy polarizes opinions and touches emotions so deeply, that irrational responses are not uncommon. A controversy over the conference language nearly led to the abortion of the project.

Issues related to the current situation of European languages and their prospective futures have been debated extensively at conferences and in publications, both scholarly and popular. This volume makes an attempt to reconstitute the debate by developing a new conceptual framework. It is our contention that the future of European languages, in terms of their relation to English, needs to be addressed in the context of *globalization*. In contrast to political interpretations that posit the situation in terms of a clash between English and other European languages, the observed polarization can more appropriately be interpreted within the frame of reference provided by one of the main tendencies of the present. With globalization as an analytical term, the rise of English and the complementary fall of European languages can then be perceived as a struggle between *globalization* and *identity*.

Globalization is not a clearly defined term. Rather, it is “beset with vagueness and inconsistencies” and therefore often used with a mixture of uneasiness and fascination.<sup>4</sup> Yet, considering the complex reality that needs to be conceptualized it has a great analytical potential and, as long as it is used as a semantic tool for *sensitizing* the observer, its explanatory range proves remarkably powerful. Globalization has been defined in two mutually exclusive ways: either as an extension of familiar tendencies in modernity towards internationalism and its imperialist heritage, or, alternatively, as the symptom of a deep caesura and the powerful and dominant tendency in a post-colonial world in which the nation state and with it stable identities, are losing the power once gained in the process of (occidental) modernization.

Regardless whether globalization is constructed as a term of continuation or rupture, it denotes fundamental changes that are leading to unifying the world as a whole. The impact of new communication technologies and the global circulation of capital and consumer goods, as well as a new type of mass migration result in the disappearance of differences. “Monocultures

are gaining ascendancy and [are] overwhelming the globe. Wherever we look, fewer kinds in ever fewer variants of corn and rice and wheat; Chinese, Russian and English; and sheep and cattle and pigs look back at us.”<sup>5</sup> Pörksen observes a disquieting homogenization of modern languages which he calls a “disabling of the vernacular”. He warns that this part of a continued reduction of diversity threatens to turn the globe into one large and uniform space. Supporters of globalization tend to argue that, on the contrary, the reduction of cultural diversity is the inevitable implication of the desirable objective of globalization. Local cultures and a sense of place may well be losing ground, but this loss, they argue, is well justified by the gains achieved through the creation of a world liberated from inherited restrictions for communication and movement. One such loss, it needs to be added, is the loss in importance of languages other than English. They may be reduced to local idioms. This too, supporters of globalization argue, is a price worth paying. Other observers place less emphasis on loss and sacrifice and do not see the beginning of the final end for diversity, but rather the realization of a discourse initiated around 1800 when Kant, Goethe and other thinkers of the late Enlightenment phantasized about world citizenship, world literature and a world society, and wrote about humankind (*die Menschheit*) with enthusiasm. This *society* had no grammatical plural and served as the linguistic sign for an ideal of a world in harmony and eternal peace. In the process of its realization, it can be argued, this ideal lost much of its fascination, but is still worthy to be pursued. There is no need, it is the contention of this volume, to perceive the situation in terms of this exclusive opposition. Furthermore, this perspective could well be a crass distortion.

The tension between these two mutually exclusive concepts of globalization provides the framework within which the arguments of the contributions to this volume are elaborated. They make an attempt to define language as either a major force or as the victim in this debate on globalization. It may not be a surprise to note that contributions based on the American experience have an inclination towards the more open and post-colonial concept of globalization and, as Robert Reimer argues in his essay, can even conceive of loss as a ‘self-inflicted’ wound, whereas the German and, in general, European experience seems to embrace a concept of language connected with the stable identities of separate cultures and are consequently much more concerned with the pain of the wound.



## 2.1.

The first interpretation links the language question closely to a concept of power vested in nation states and a system of international power relations. The conflict is, then, seen as an example of one political power seeking domination over other nations. Rome and the Roman Empire have been suggested as the model for this power game.<sup>6</sup> A clash of civilizations, to use Samuel Huntington's popular phrase, and dominance of one over all other civilizations presupposes the continuation of the system of nations as it has existed from the beginning of the modern period. It takes for granted the continued existence of the nation state as the basis of the organization of a reality that had not existed previously, namely, *the world*. This world wide system, from its inception on, has always been one of conflict and competition. What is at present changing, according to this view, is the scale of the struggle. There is no place on the globe unaffected by it since the European-American model – which is rapidly changing to the American-only model – became the only guiding force world wide. Also, this change is accompanied by a shift in the source of power from military and political domination to competing civilizations and their systems of economic and cultural production. Its absence from the political and sociological debate notwithstanding, language has to be considered a fundamental dimension of this change.

This image of globalization is indebted to the critical analysis of mass culture pioneered in the 1940s by Horkheimer and Adorno. Based on observations gathered during their exile in America, they argued that the emergence of a homogenized mass culture would lead to a fundamental change in Western civilization. It was leading, they contended, to the lowest quality level of cultural production. The domination of American pop culture and the triumph of mass entertainment would, they feared, inevitably result in the eradication of diversity and the leveling of quality. What was missing from their analysis and, given recent experience, needs to be strongly emphasized is the weight of commercial interests of large corporations. Their agenda increasingly dictates the agenda of national governments and makes questions of linguistic diversity pale. The subjugation of cultural objectives and in particular linguistic and cultural self-determination to economic interests is simultaneous with the protection of producers and, American business strategy suggests, the bigger the producer the more protection it deserves.

From this perspective, globalization is interpreted as a deceiving term concealing the imperialist struggle for domination. Power results from a civilization's success in promoting industrial goods and other products of national production and in the present it is particularly ideas, values and

entire systems of thought and perception mediated by language that will lead to domination. It is this analytical framework, critical of American capitalism as the anatomy of globalization, that leads to the perception of the growing domination of English as a threatening colonizing act of the Americanization of the world. The apparent arrogance of the political and economic elite in relation to the rest of the world provides further support for this critical analysis. America's power, Zbigniew Brzezinski recently wrote, "is unprecedented in its global military reach, in the centrality of America's economic vitality for the well-being of the world economy..." It is no surprise that he adds to this benevolent view of America's role in the process of globalization "the worldwide appeal of the multi-faceted and often crass American mass culture."<sup>7</sup> For critical theory that interprets globalization as a camouflaged Americanization of the world, the triumph of American pop culture is ill-understood in terms of its "appeal". This distortion has to be corrected, they argue, and what is referred to by the innocent term "appeal" needs to be seen in terms of a continued international power struggle. Language as inextricably intertwined with this struggle for the domination of one nation over others makes it mandatory for anti-colonial and anti-imperialist theories of liberation to include it in their critical analysis. As Phillipson argues in this volume, it can be interpreted as a major agent of domination not only among the members of the EU but in the emerging world market in the age of information and knowledge.

Within this framework, European languages are being interpreted as centers of authentic culture.<sup>8</sup> Through language a system of values and beliefs, knowledge and life style is being covertly imposed on other cultures.<sup>9</sup> By putting them in a position of dependence comparable to colonies during their struggle for decolonization, they need to be protected. "Leaving language policy to market forces, nationally and in the supranational institutions, is a recipe for more English and less of the other languages."<sup>10</sup> What can be observed in relation to the power of English in politics and economics can also be said about the arts, literature and the entertainment industry which all are up against the menace of the subjugating power and need organized support in their struggle against the threat of their identity melting into global pulp. According to George Kennan – who no one will accuse of ideological bias – America exports "the cheapest, silliest, and most disreputable manifestations of our 'culture.' No wonder that these effusions become the laughingstock of intelligent and sensitive people the world over. But so long as we find it proper to let millions of our living rooms be filled with this trash every evening... I can see that we would cut a poor figure trying to deny it to others beyond our borders..."<sup>11</sup>



## 2.2.

The critical theory of the American culture industry undoubtedly captures the mood of many who feel directly affected by globalization. Globalization's power of dissolution creates feelings of exposure and extreme uncertainty. These feelings of threat are not to be underestimated and have led to active responses ranging from violent protests to subtle forms of resistance. Aggression and violence, as the ultimate expression of a desire for identification, create the desperate alternative to the abdication of self. Language, as several essays in this volume argue, is a key factor in this conflict. The power to litter public language with often ill-understood phrases and fragments of American English can appear as mere folly.<sup>12</sup> Yet, it is more commonly associated by many with the power of anonymous corporations and huge institutions to rule over, and shape the lives of, individuals. The loss of language is not perceived in isolation, but as embedded in a wider context made up of the destruction of jobs, the erosion of the welfare state and the imposition of a new geographical mobility.<sup>13</sup> Marketing slogans designed by multi-national corporations are declarations of their success in pulling down all boundaries and borders and creating a consumer paradise without limits. This achievement cannot be understood as an act of liberation so long as this opening is perceived as a damaging loss.

Globalization, in a common assessment, is creating casualties who are helplessly exposed to a bizarre combination of internationalism and a new parochialism expressed through unfamiliar words and phrases and American sounds. For many this new language is difficult to comprehend, but, on the other hand, is associated with innovation, the power of the modern and dynamic as well as the distant other, not necessarily identical with America, but perceived as the anonymous power of a financial-industrial empire whose language is English. As long as changes in the language are perceived as loss and threat, the liberating opportunities for creativity and openness cannot be realized and the world becomes a space of alienation in which local and regional identities need to be protected from the danger of extinction. Petitions to parliaments of European countries, the creation of associations for the protection of one's own language and resistance to an increasing number of English words and phrases penetrating into German, French and other continental languages, are consequences of a growing attitude of defense against a perceived menace.<sup>14</sup> They often demonstrate a high degree of frustration and anger. In Germany, the language of corporations, advertising, the media and increasingly also of education provide appalling examples of servility, lack of pride and, it has been suggested, contempt for one's own

language. The president of the Federal Republic of Germany, has given expression to this serious concern about a *lack of love* for the mother tongue, identifying it as the prime source for linguistic deterioration. Collections of ridiculous examples of linguistic pollution have been put together. The *verhunzte Sprache*, to paraphrase Thomas Mann's word for the perversion of genuine German traditions for detested political purposes, has led to popular outcries of resistance to this unwelcome penetration and transformation of the common language by a foreign idiom.

The effects that 'Americanization' has had on the German language are often exaggerated out of all proportion and responses occasionally border on the hysterical. The claim has been made that the German language is suffering "irreparable damage from an excessive influx of words and phrases from the Anglo-American sphere" that has "destructive effects for the creation of the individual's self."<sup>15</sup> Rather than the imminent death of authentic German or ruin of language as the precondition for the creation of self, it is the linguistic and mental framework of culture wars, it can be argued, that has lead to the perception of language as a unit fixed in time, a *Gegenwartssprache* that is threatened by extinction. From the distant and disengaged perspective of a socio-linguist, this defensive position may well be an entirely misconceived perception. Yet, it needs to be acknowledged that these anxieties are *real*. For those who are directly affected, globalization is easily identified with an act of expropriation and dispossession and the feared destruction of one's own language is experienced as a particularly painful loss. These feelings of loss and destruction, subjective as they may be, need to be taken seriously. They are indicators of the perceived threat and growing insecurity felt by many, for whom globalization is identical with exposure and loss as well as a frightening loss of identity.

### 3.1.

In contrast, post-colonial globalization theories offer a different interpretation by suggesting a radically different model that no longer focuses on the expansion of the power of one, single nation within a system of nations, but attempts to address recent changes in terms of a transformation of time and space. Well known is Anthony Giddens's sociological definition of globalization that makes space shrink and links distanced places with each other, making them, thus, interdependent.<sup>16</sup> While this is an attempt to overcome the inherited and restrictive framework of the nation state and related international systems based upon it, it maintains a way of framing globalization



as the extension of the process of modernization, that has a long history going back to the early modern period, the time of explorers who made the world shrink through their voyages, and the period in which the transportation revolution brought distant places within the reach of all. Recent changes are interpreted as an *intensification* and *acceleration* of these processes, and this interpretation remains within a framework of continuity. It links the present to the emergence of modernity and globalization to the spirit of early explorers, adventurers and experimental scientists. While this is an attempt to overcome the restrictive framework of the nation state and related international systems based upon the nation state, it is also a way of conceiving globalization in terms of historical continuity. These sociological definitions interpret globalization, often in spite of their stated intention, as a further step in the continuous evolution of the modern.

Focusing on language suggests a very different account. The new importance of language as a defining quality and the new position of English among all other languages are indicative of the emergence of a new world, comparable to the rearrangement of the world by the Roman Empire with the concomitant spread of Latin as an inter-ethnic means of communication. The linguistic map of the globe has never been stable. Yet changes we are currently witnessing go far beyond ordinary changes of influence and popularity, or domination. The rapid emergence of English as the world language and the simultaneous decline of linguistic variety make the observer aware of a different scenario, one characterized by radical discontinuity.

More radical definitions, less concerned with the future of the nation state and production of goods and services than with the world as a product of the imagination and symbolic exchange, make an attempt to frame the issue by focusing on movement and instability rather than stable concepts and reality in flux. Their perception is often denoted by the term “*flow*”, which is conceived as an element of relationships and networks. These flows do not have a specific place of origin and do not follow a defined course of movement, clearly not the direction from a center to a periphery. Their relationships are highly complex and resist analysis through a cause-and-effect schema. Originators and recipients vary and change roles. “Globalization as an aggregation of cultural flows or networks is a less coherent and unitary process than cultural imperialism and one in which cultural influences move in many different directions.”<sup>17</sup> They do not construct the world as a container holding separate cultures each centered on its own essential character, but rather the point of departure is the proposition that neither boundaries nor their definitions remain unaffected by globalization. In contradistinction to the assumption that societies, cultures and nation

states exist as “bounded, separate, discrete and/or autonomous ...units,” these globalization theories argue “that there are no absolute political, social or cultural boundaries un-breached by global flows. Comparison, generalization, or any other mode of social theorizing... must then address not separate examples or discrete cases.” Instead, what they define as real are the most fleeting and instable qualities of modern life, movements, relationships and systems of signs, such as language. They are defined as “phenomena that are densely and dynamically interconnected.”<sup>18</sup> Globalization is then a term denoting not a process of acceleration and intensification but of a rupture, identical with the vanishing of the economic and political autonomy of nation states and the simultaneous emergence of a new space that absorbs all limiting boundaries. It defines the present as the presence of one society only, a society of multiple presences. This presence in one space will make one language indispensable, a global language.

### 3.2.

Nations, regions and place, not dissimilar to identity and ethnicity, have never been fixed, but always imagined. They are, by definition, the *unreal* products of cultural imagery and construction. From this point of view, globalization is a concept for the emerging world society. Concerns in relation to the political implications of English as the dominant language world-wide notwithstanding, globalization cannot be comprehended as a system of independent nations or civilizations engaged in international exchanges or conflicts.<sup>19</sup> Globalization cannot be conceptualized as intercultural exchange or described in terms of its potential for enriching autonomous cultures, or, alternatively, destroying their authenticity. Rather, what is needed is an understanding of movements and relationships, are “conceptions of social realities that are supple enough to handle this flowing and flowed-at mode of being.”<sup>20</sup> So far, this debate has all but ignored languages. It is the objective of this volume to make a contribution to the debate by focusing on the role of language, arguing that changes in the global linguistic map can only be appropriately interpreted if they are perceived as an element of the process of globalization, understood in terms of movements and flows.

One effect of globalization is that the traditional privileging of national languages in the production of knowledge is eroded. This is not the result of the traditional competition between nations, but of the unifying and universalizing power of one language in the production and distribution of scientific knowledge around the globe.<sup>21</sup> English as the “*Tyrannosaurus Rex*” (John



Swales) of scientific language is in its early years and will not be threatened by extinction for a long time. Knowledge no longer has a *natural* home in any one, national language. On the contrary, localization creates the danger of undercutting a discourse's claim to the status of theory. For example, psychoanalysis loses something of its theoretical power as soon as it is perceived as the product of bourgeois Vienna at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The same seems to apply to the relationship between knowledge and language. Linguistic globalization has reached a point where theories couched in local, regional or national languages face difficulties of being perceived and integrated into international scientific discourse. The question as to how theories travel from one nation to another, from one place to another and from one metropolis to others has been asked,<sup>22</sup> and the concept of *traveling theory* is emerging. An appropriate answer requires a shift of perspective. The underlying image of travel needs to be reconstructed under the conditions in which travel can no longer be defined as a movement from a place of origin to a destination, but is predicated upon a global network of traveling routes without a center, a place of origin and a final destination. Within this network of theory and information flows, English is used as the vehicle. We no longer perceive an individual theory that is translated from one language into the language of a host society and that subsequently travels from one place to another, but a constant exchange of knowledge and information in a pre-existing pattern of exchange. We do not know the answer to Clifford's question: "How do theories travel among the unequal spaces of postcolonial confusion and contestation?"<sup>23</sup> It is obvious, however, that an attempt to answer it on the basis of the traditional pattern of a transfer of ideas and theories between national languages and fixed places has become insufficient and inappropriate.

If we ask what the new knowledge gained by using globalization as a sensitizing analytical tool might be, the answer is paradoxical. Globalization is the result of a claim made by modern western societies, increasingly represented by America, to be exceptional and to hold a superior position and dignity through the universality of ideas and values. Globalization's effects, however, are the demonstration of the contrary. The emerging world society, characterized by the radically diminished importance of borders and various lines of separation, requires close contact between western and non-western societies and this contact makes it obvious that the universality claim cannot be justified. It is, as the examples of Turks in Germany and migrants in America, who do not wish to abandon their identity, or conflicts between the West and modern Islam demonstrate, nothing but an illusion. Many of these, allegedly, universal ideas and values are not shared or are

even aggressively rejected by large parts of the globe's population. As yet, globalization and migration have led neither to an integrated world culture nor to the eradication of cultural difference and national languages. On the other hand, expectations of progress, equality, freedom and self-determination derived from the concept of a rational society that dominated political and social discourse from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on are not met by the emerging global society. It seems not to lead to the horror vision of complete homogeneity, but does not support the creation of stable identities either. Globalization forces us to realize that the unifying realities of the past, such as the nation state or a national language, were always dependent on the production of an imaginary shared world. At present, conditions for this production are undergoing fundamental changes. In the world of global flows and migration, it may be precisely the maintenance of the tension that must be understood as paradigmatic for the world society that is no longer the product of the 18<sup>th</sup> century imagination, but rather of electronic communication and flows with multiple directions. Skepticism in relation to unity and continuity could be seen as the imperative of the present. Negativity, difference and distinction in the face of the absence of cohesion, harmony and smooth adaptation to existing structures could well be defined as constitutive elements of the mental pattern referred to as globalization and world society.

#### 4.

In recent years, ethnologists and cultural analysts have made contrasting observations.<sup>24</sup> The region, the village or home town and local landscapes have all been deconstructed in recent theory as constructions of the imagination. Critical analysis has done a lot towards debunking as a myth any naïve notion of the local, the regional and the national as ontologies. They have never been empirically given, but always – before globalization or internationalism had their impact on local idylls – been the product of imagination and cognitive construction. They are under imminent threat by globalization's dissolving power. However, whereas globalization seems to know no borders and creates an infinite and homogenizing flow of everything and anything around the globe, it also seems to be giving rise to a new awareness of specificity, the particular and the difference of regions. Local cultures are demonstrating a remarkable power of resistance and capacity to absorb and transform goods and ideas spread through international trade. It can be argued that it is precisely the intensified awareness of the imaginary quality of identity and identification that is imperative for maintaining feelings of



belonging and security at a time when globalization is threatening to destroy them. Obvious homogenizing changes are, paradoxically, linked to a growing sense of self and local identity. Globalization, it has been observed, gives rise not only to often violent resistance movements, but also to an imaginative creativity that is less spectacular, but could lead to more lasting effects as the rediscovery and maintenance of regional cultural identity demonstrates. It is a surprising observation that the blurred images of self and indeterminate lines of separation are being clarified and gaining a new meaning and importance as a result of the perceived threat through globalization.<sup>25</sup>

Experience in ethnology, social psychology and related disciplines suggests the deep emotional attachment of people to place and a language which they are familiar with and have experienced as their own from childhood on. Boundaries and exclusion are experienced as *natural* and constitutive for the construction of identity. Old boundaries are being rediscovered and cultivated, leading to a considerable degree of identification. This includes the rediscovery of regional traditions and languages, believed for a long time to be dying out such as Frisian, Basque, Welsh or aboriginal languages of Australia and America.

Local identities have always been fleeting constructs of the imagination and the linguistic diversity of Europe has never been a stable system of independent idioms. Languages have always been on the move, continuously changed and interfered with each other. Any *Gegenwartssprache* that can be analyzed as a system is an artificial construction. Attempts to stop changes or reverse them are fraught with oversimplification and inevitably enmeshed in the politics of identity and therefore an illusory reaction. Maintaining a focus on both at the same time is the difficult, but necessary task for those who observe or are affected by globalization. What Fabian suggested for the ethnology of foreign and local 'own' cultures needs to be translated into the realm of language analysis: he suggests making culture liquid or *liquidating* culture by replacing static forms with indeterminacy, and clearly defined concepts with fuzziness, so that learning and unlearning, constructing and deconstructing can be accommodated within the framework of analytical description.<sup>26</sup> Understanding the situation of languages in the age of globalization requires developing sensitivity to shifting relationships and unstable constellations. In this world of global flows the increasing importance of English will remain an extension of the age old struggle for political power only to the degree to which the nation state itself maintains the position it acquired four hundred years ago; with the decline of the nation state and the complementary rise of trans-national forms of organization, the national power struggle becomes insignificant and increasingly anachronistic.

Equally, the image of globalization as a free flow of ideas facilitated by English as the lingua franca of the world is obviously a distorting over-simplification. The significance of the expansion of English cannot be grasped by postulating a benevolent invisible hand that leads to the ideal of a global village based upon free communication of equals.<sup>27</sup> Violent protests against globalization have made it obvious that this ideal is a naïve deception. It seems equally deceptive to assume that globalization can be reversed and the linguistic diversity of previous centuries regained. Particularly interesting in this context are the observations about the current situation of the language and culture of the Pennsylvania Dutch in America. To some observers, this language is experiencing a phase of contraction and may be threatened with extinction. The essay by Donner and Valuska provides an outline of its deplorable vanishing resulting from processes of adaptation and homogenization. It is obvious that there is no identifiable agent behind this process and it may have to be accepted as an inevitable consequence of changing life styles. Empathy expressed in their essay demonstrates that they consider this a sad loss owed to modernization and its drive toward reducing diversity. For other observers, however, this language is well and alive and has a future, possibly reduced in scope and exclusiveness, but, as the experience with education outside the school curriculum seems to indicate, as a viable hybrid between the cultures that retains its status as a distinctive language. In her paper presented at the conference, Renate Losoncy offered strong empirical evidence that *the Delaware valley* where Pennsylvania German is spoken has potential to become the site where, under these new circumstances, the cultural framework for a complex identity with a two-sided orientation could emerge.<sup>28</sup> A blending of the local German/Dutch tradition and American main culture could be interpreted as a model for the future of languages in the age of American hegemony word wide.

## 5.

The question arises whether the network of openness and directionless flows creates a condition without rules and is leading to the final dissolution of order, that only veils cultural monotony, or will this new openness create conditions for defining specific niches where national languages can thrive and even gain new significance? Will globalization leave room for interfering and planning by national governments and cultural organizations? Does the conflict between globalization and identity exclude interference by interested organizations, or is it an invitation for interference, negotiation



and steering? National organizations such as the German *Goethe Institute* or the *DAAD* are faced with this open question and, despite the indeterminacy of the situation, need to make decisions that inevitably have political and financial implications. Contributions to this volume by representatives of the *Goethe Institute* and others, in particular John Lalande, Helene Zimmer-Loew and Petra Braselmann, can see sufficient space for language policies by governments and other organizations and advocate developing strategies for taking a proactive position in support of languages. They are confident that the adverse effects of globalization can be overcome and furthermore see globalization as opening up new perspectives. Following this model, there is no need to perceive the current situation of languages as being threatened. On the contrary, fear is bound to lead to defensive strategies that are weak and may well turn into self-fulfilling prophecy. In any event, the chance to stop or reverse powerful global tendencies is remote. In the age of virtualization and digitalization, English is the global language, and it serves no purpose to engage in a struggle against this position.

This global language is highly attractive and successful in seducing people the world over. No power or political agent is needed to make the language of the internet the language of desire for people all around the globe. It is the idiom of hopes and promises, of emancipation from feudal and autocratic powers, of liberating women, of consumption and unrestricted movement. Prisca Augustyn's essay addresses the seductive power of this language. If the death of a language, as Meyer's contribution argues, can be attributed to a lack of love, Augustyn's essay offers an explanation as to why the love may have been lost. Its loss results from a flight from languages that are no longer attractive, since they have little to offer and pose no challenge. Success and prestige are being searched for where they are offered. English – not as the language of Great Britain and possibly not even as the language of the USA, but as an artificial idiom of a dynamic, innovative world society – is attractive in the way tax havens attract capital – they offer higher revenues. The promise of success and productivity is irresistible both for capital and the restless mind. The decline of German as a language for the sciences, the social sciences and increasingly even the humanities is a point in case. There are two possible responses: closing the paths of flight by decree or regaining attraction. The history of capital moving around the globe makes it obvious that only the latter can have success. It is the simultaneity of threat and seduction, anxiety and pleasure that needs to be reflected on and that finally shapes the gaze of the observer. Many fine arguments can and have been made why German as a language of the sciences is worth to be maintained. They will convince no-one to opt in favor of the endangered language and

contrary to his or her personal interests and expectations. There is ample space for supporting the language. Attempts to make the language attractive and returning to it a seductive power is certainly, but not exclusively, a question of finances but also of innovative and imaginative approaches and projects.

Focusing on the struggle over language as a conflict of power among nations and civilizations misses the challenge of the reality of the age of virtual realities. But neglecting the desire for place, identity and stability misses an equally strong current of the present. The desire to maintain a diversity of languages and, through language, identity, is misunderstood as long as it is read in terms of reactionary politics and anti-modern sentiment. It needs to be conceived in terms of a legitimate desire and a real dimension of the highly complex processes labeled globalization. Globalization is not only a tendency of the political and sociological reality of the present, it is also a mental pattern. Its connection with lived experience is not simply given, but needs to be defined. The question needs to be raised as to whether globalization's threat is a construction on the part of the observer and, consequently, what is required is a reconstitution of the ways of perceiving and describing the situation.

The questions need to be addressed as to whether an active and aggressive approach to the indisputable loss in importance of national languages would be able to turn loss into gain. As several of the contributions to this volume suggest, languages cannot be understood as static systems defined by dictionaries and books of grammar. They, too, are in constant flux. For centuries, German has been subjected to the impact of several other European languages, primarily Latin, French and English and the concept of a language as a fixed system that can and deserves to be protected from change is an illusion. The struggle for preservation is predicated upon a concept of the history of languages as a series of artificially fixed moments in history, and of a purposeful construction of *Gegenwartssprachen* which, however, at any given moment in time, are in the process of mutation and reconstruction. The emerging German-Turkish literature can be read as a convincing example of this fluid and undefined relationship between globalization as a mental and emotion pattern and globalization as lived experience. Turkish-German author Feridun Zaimoglu's books and, in particular, his provocative short text entitled *Kanak Sprak* (1995) are a case in point.<sup>29</sup> Its language is obscene, aggressive and violent, using dirty imagery and slang, and is deliberately non-literary and non-German. In spite of its tough and provocative appearance, the self expressed in this aggressive language is affectionate and constructed in a new idiom capable of nestling up to equally instable identities.



In her essay Yazemin Yildiz refers to an emerging linguistic variety and diversity and, moreover, interprets this new and hybrid language as an encouraging sign of a growing sense of difference.<sup>30</sup> The linguistic and literary foundations of the creation of a new reality is, she contends, triggered by one of the major characteristics of globalization namely migration. In her description, the merger of two languages and cultural traditions as practiced in Zaimoglu's language, results from the every-day life practices of a migrant. The question of identity is of small importance and is subordinated to the needs of creating a symbolic space for a self-determined life in-between separate nations and cultures, German and Turkish. The invention of a new language is a decisive moment for creating a new reality in a period of migration flows and destabilized identifications. Undefined spaces on borders, beyond political definitions of dependence and obligations, and spaces outside national cultures and languages provide fertile ground for innovative experiments with life, triggered and encouraged precisely by the challenges of impersonal tendencies in globalization. This creative approach to language is not hampered by the fear and anxiety of loss. It creates a potential for the creation of self as fluid, diffuse and permeable, and that does not feel obliged, it seems, to have or own a single indistinguishable identity that gives stability, but, once threatened or lost, shatters the whole. This emerging hybrid language carries the stigma of the unwelcome outsider. However, this is clearly the problem of the insiders. Their immobility and inability to acknowledge a reality which they have not produced and have no control over results in attitudes of fearful exclusion. Attempts to salvage dissolving identities by demarcating spaces and arresting time need to be identified as a politics of illusion.

Rather than looking at loss with melancholia or nostalgia, the situation of European languages seems to call for a balancing act. What seems to be required is the imagination and flexibility to develop a two-sided attitude that is capable of upholding both identification with one's own language and also respect, curiosity and openness in relation to other languages, practiced, not as an abstract ideal of tolerance, but as a concrete attitude towards the one or two *foreign* languages that each individual is surrounded by. Only in as far as the mental pattern *globalization* makes it visible, are we exposed to this ambivalence and perceive the situation as that of an emerging word society based upon mutual dependence and a complementarity of languages. They enter into a relationship of difference only in as much as the pattern of globalization makes it possible to perceive them in conjunction and as elements of a network, but not as separate and competing units. The difference between the global language and one's own language

is constituted neither by an absence of contact nor by warlike competition. It works the other way around; perceived differences are the necessary and constitutive precondition for the creation of a mental pattern that gives contours to the global society of which languages other than English will remain an integral part. This mental pattern has the potential to enable us to perceive and practice our own language without inhibition as the other of the global language, but not as its enemy, suffering its aggressive competition, and not its casualty. Attitudes of aggression or self-pity are anachronistic. A balancing act that maintains one's own language in the mode of continuous flux, English as the language of globalization and a mental pattern that creates the space for contact among the two will make it possible to realize that the argument which declares the world society a thinly veiled version of colonialism and English as the symbolic army of imperialism is little else than the certification of the new global society's existence turned upside down.

Under the circumstances of globalization and the seductive power of its global language, the vanishing love for one's own language will not return as a result of competition and purification through exclusion, nor be found in the quest for absolute identification with a language that can be *owned* or *possessed*. The search for a uni-linear relationship to one language as the object of attention will undoubtedly fail. Love's reciprocity needs openness and a language that is not protected by well-meaning guardians. The most promising support that can be offered to one's own language are imaginative approaches and affection. Openness, free of fear and competition, will lead to confidence in European languages and prepare the only way to nurture their power to generate innovation and invite identification.

## Notes

1. A less bellicose but equally fatal image has gained some prominence in recent years: the death of nature as a result of dying species and the general loss of bio-diversity. (See Hermann Dieter's essay in this volume.)
2. John Tomlinson, *Cultural imperialism. A Critical Introduction*. Baltimore 1991, p. 175; Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic imperialism*, Oxford 1992; Phillipson, *English-only Europe? Language policy challenges*. London 2003.
3. Robert Phillipson, *English for emerging or submerging multiple European identities?* Paper presented to the Third Language and Politics Symposium, Queen's University Belfast, 18–10 September 2002.



4. Birgit Meyer and Peter Geschiere, Introduction to: Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure. Oxford 1999, p. 1.
5. Uwe Pörksen, Plastic words. The tyranny of modular language. University Park, PA 1995, p. 3.
6. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire, Cambridge and London 2000. Language and the media are conspicuously absent from their analysis of *Empire*. Yet, it seems to me that their central importance for the process they reconstruct is obvious. It is regrettable that Michael Hardt, who gave the opening address to the conference that led to this volume, did not have the time to prepare his lecture for publication.
7. Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, quoted from The New York Review of Books, 8 April 2004, p. 26.
8. Andreas Gardt, (ed.), Nation und Sprache. Die Diskussion ihres Verhältnisses in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Berlin, New York, 2000.
9. M. B. Salwen, Cultural Imperialism: A Media Effects Approach, in: Critical Studies in Mass Communication 8, 1991, p. 29–38; Dieter E. Zimmer, Abschied von Illusionen. Über den internationalen Status der deutschen Sprache. In: Zimmer, Deutsch und anderes – die Sprache im Modernisierungsfieber. Reinbek 1998.
10. Robert Phillipson, English for emerging or submerging multiple European identities? (Footnote 3).
11. George Kennan interviewed by Richard Ullman, The New York Review of Books, 12 August 1999.
12. The literature on this issue is vast; see e.g. Gerhard Stickel (ed.), Neues und Fremdes im deutschen Wortschatz. Aktueller lexikalischer Wandel. Berlin, New York, 2001; Andreas Gardt, Das Fremde und das Eigene. Versuch einer Systematik des Fremdwortbegriffs in der deutschen Sprachgeschichte. S. 30–58. Ulrich Busse, Typen von Anglizismen: von der heilago geist bis Extremsparing – aufgezeigt anhand ausgewählter lexikographischer Kategorisierungen, S. 131–155. Bernhard Kettemann, Anglizismen allgemein und konkret: Zahlen und Fakten. In: Rudolf Muhr and Bernhard Kettemann (eds.), Eurospeak – Der Einfluss des Englischen auf die europäischen Sprachen zur Jahrtausendwende, Frankfurt 2002, S. 53–83.
13. Conservative critics of modern culture observed an excessive influx of American words in the German language after 1945 and associated this, they thought, undesirable tendency with the collapsed identity following military and political defeat. Herbert Drube, Zum deutschen Wortschatz, München 1968, esp. pp. 125ff.
14. Eckart Werthebach, Die deutsche Sprache braucht gesetzlichen Schutz!, in: Berliner Morgenpost, 31.12.2000, p. 6. In 2001, the “Institut für Deutsche Sprache” (Mannheim) proposed the creation of a German Language Council (‘Sprachrat’) and stated as reasons the increasing number of English words and other related changes of the language that have led to suggesting a law for the protection of the German language and the creation of an academy following

the French example. The "Verein deutsche Sprache" (Wiesbaden) is the most prominent example of a recent foundation of a language association. It claims 13000 active members and has branches in several German and European cities. The equivalent among a few similar organizations in France is an association called "Défense de la langue française".

15. Verein deutsche Sprache: Leitlinien, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, June 2000: [www.vds-ev.de/ueberuns/leitlinien.htm](http://www.vds-ev.de/ueberuns/leitlinien.htm). In 2001, the Verein created a "Berliner Sprachbündnis" with the aim to stem the flood of foreign words and expressions.
16. The sociological literature on the subject is vast. It seems to me that a representative approach is still: Anthony Giddens, *Consequences of Modernity*, 1995; Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right*, 1995.
17. Diana Crane, *Culture and Globalization*, in: *Global Culture. Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization*, ed. Diana Crane et al, New York and London 2002, p. 3.
18. John D. Kelly, *Time and the Global*, in: *Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure*, Oxford 1999, p. 240.
19. Pioneering work was done by Arjun Appadurai, *Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value*, in: *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural perspectives*. 1986, S. 3–63; Appadurai, *Disjuncture and difference in the Global Cultural Economy*, in: *Public Culture* 2, 1990, p. 1–24, and Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis 1996; Christian F. Feest, *Ethnologie und materielle Kultur*, in: *Das Ding. Die Ethnologie und ihr Gegenstand*. *Archiv für Völkerkunde* 51, 2000, S. 147–155.
20. John D. Kelly, *Time and the Global*, p. 241.
21. Among numerous publications, Ulrich Ammon, *Die internationale Stellung der deutschen Sprache*, Berlin, New York 1991; Ammon, *Ist Deutsch noch internationale Wissenschaftssprache? Englisch auch für die Lehre an den deutschsprachigen Hochschulen*. Berlin, New York 1998; Ammon (ed.) *The dominance of English as a language of science. Effects on other languages and language communities*. Berlin, New York, 2002; Friedhelm Debus, Franz Gustav Kollmann and Uwe Pörksen (eds.), *Deutsch als Wissenschaftssprache im 20. Jahrhundert. Vorträge des Internationalen Symposiums vom 18./19. Januar 2000*. Stuttgart 2000: Jürgen Schiewe, *Von Latein zu Deutsch, von Deutsch zu Englisch. Gründe und Folgen des Wechsels von Wissenschaftssprachen*, S. 81–104.
22. Edward Said, *Traveling Theory*, in: E. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Cambridge 1983, S. 226–247; also: Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Displacement*, 1996.
23. James Clifford, *Notes on Theory and Travel*, in: *Inscriptions 5: Traveling Theories; Traveling Theorists*, 1989, S. 177–188; S. 178.
24. Karl-Heinz Kohl, *Das exotische Europa*. In: *Merkur* 610, 2000. Kohl and Nikolaus Schaffhausen (eds), *New Heimat*, Exhibition Catalogue, New York, 2001; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton, 2000.

25. Maiken Umbach and Bernd Huppauf (ed.), *Vernacular Modernism*, Stanford 2004.
26. J. Fabian, *Time and the Work of Anthropology*. Critical essays 1971-1991. Chur 1991, chapter 10.
27. Paradigmatic is David Crystal's interpretation of the envisaged future of English as the language of uninhibited global communication. David Crystal, *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge 1997; Crystal, *Language Death*. Cambridge 2000.
28. It is regrettable that lack of time prevented the inclusion of a revised version of her presentation in this anthology.
29. Feridun Zaimoglu, *Kanak Sprak: 24 Mißtöne vom Rande der Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt 1995.
30. This interpretation of the potential of contact between languages stands in opposition to Pörksen's observation of an increasing "unification", "reduction of diversity" and "disabling" of the language of the everyday-life. Footnote 5, p. 1–8.

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# **Globalization and Language**



# **The Past, Present, and Future of World English**

*David Crystal*

## **Zusammenfassung**

Englisch ist heute die Sprache der Welt. Wie ist es dazu gekommen? Und was sind die Konsequenzen dieses neuen Status für die künftige Entwicklung der Sprache? Der Aufsatz untersucht zehn historische Gründe für die gegenwärtige Stellung des Englischen in den Bereichen von Politik, Ökonomie, Presse, Reklame, Radio, Film, Unterhaltungsmusik, Reise und Sicherheit, Kommunikationssysteme und Ausbildung. Drei Konsequenzen der Globalisierung der Sprache werden angesprochen: Die Tendenzen, die das Englische bereits weltweit beeinflussen – in der Form von neuen ‘Englischs’; die Wirkung von Englisch auf gefährdete Sprachen; und der Einfluss des Englischen auf den linguistischen Charakter anderer Sprachen durch die Einführung von Lehn- und Fremdwörtern.

## **1. Introduction**

Any conference dealing with the theme of globalization must at some point address the question of language; and these days, the language which must be chiefly considered is English. I say ‘these days’, because only a relatively short time ago the prospect of English becoming a genuinely global language was uncertain. I never gave talks on English as a world language in the 1960s or 1970s. Indeed, it is only in the 1990s that the issue has come to the fore, with surveys, books, and conferences trying to explain how it is that a language can become truly global, what the consequences are when it happens, and why English has become the prime candidate (Crystal 1997, McArthur 1998, Graddol 1998). But, in order to speculate about the future of English – or, as I shall say later, Englishes – we must first understand what has happened in the past.