

## CHAPTER I

*English in the German-Speaking World: The  
Nature and Scale of Language Influence**Raymond Hickey***1.1 Introduction**

English is a presence which cannot be denied in so many countries of today's world (Schneider 2017, 2020) and hence it is not a matter of whether it has an influence on non-English speaking countries but what the scale and nature of this influence is (Hilgendorf 2007). In the German-speaking world there is an asymmetrical relationship between English and German despite the undisputed status of German as a major European language.<sup>1</sup> With many languages there is often a resistance in society to the overwhelming influence of English, and in Germany there have been, and still are, ideological debates surrounding the many borrowings from English into German (see Mair, this volume, for instance). The extent of the influence exercised by English varies across different social domains, it being particularly strong in areas such as advertising, technology and science, though for different reasons. While in advertising the use of English is supposed to index sophistication and urbanity, for technology and science (Ammon 2004) its use derives from source research and innovation which is already embedded in an English-language context. In wider social areas, in the domestic and familiar domains, the occurrence of English is less obvious as it is confined to lexical items transferred to German. However, it is these larger domains which determine whether English material used in a German context will actually become established as permanent borrowings. Here language attitudes and comprehension issues in the initial appearance of English lexis shape the reality of language use.

<sup>1</sup> See Eisenberg (2004), Hoberg (2004) for the concerns of German scholars about their language. For a view of the lingua franca English as a threat to multilingualism, see House (2003) and Phillipson (2004, 2008).

*1.1.1 English as a Lingua Franca*

When considering English in the German-speaking world, certain distinctions need to be made. An essential one is that between code-mixing and borrowing (see Onysko, this volume) on the one hand and switching to or the entire use of English in specific contexts on the other. The latter situation has to do with the status of English as a lingua franca employed either in contexts in which discourse partners do not have a knowledge of German and do not share a further common language or in situations in which there has been a decision, conscious or unconscious, to use English as the preferred medium of communication.<sup>2</sup> Typical situations in which a discourse is carried on entirely in English can be found in commercial and educational contexts, especially where the participants and/or the framework for such discourse is per se international and is conducted in the lingua franca of such communication, English. This role of English has been investigated for many languages, see Booij (2001) or Berteloot (2009) for a Dutch perspective.

The position of English on the level of supranational organisations has also been the subject of investigation, for example, in Berns (1995) and Gerritsen (2017) on English in the European Union. This European perspective has also been pursued by Cogo and Dewey (2012) and Cogo (2016), as well as Gnutzmann and Intemann (eds, 2005) and Gnutzmann, Jakisch and Rabe (2014). Comparisons of the use of English in just two countries, often geographically adjoining, are found as well, see Dailey-O'Cain (2013) who looked at the pragmatics of English among Dutch and German youths. The concern with English in both the Netherlands and Germany is the subject of a dedicated chapter by Edwards and Fuchs in the current volume, see also Edwards (2014, 2016).

The role of English among young people striving to construct their linguistic identity (Gardt 2004) has been the topic of the studies by Fuller (2012, 2013) which scrutinise the construction of identity of young people in the context of bilingualism. In the current volume, Fuller looks at the role of English in the process of integrating recent immigrants to Germany.

<sup>2</sup> For representative literature, see Seidlhofer (2001); Knapp and Meierkord (eds, 2002); Jenkins (2007); Mauranen and Ranta (eds, 2009); Swan (2012).

*1.1.2 English in Europe and Beyond: The Relationship to World Englishes*

The globalisation of English is seen, by scholars like Jan Blommaert (2010) and Edgar Schneider (2012) and earlier by McArthur (1996) and Meyer (2004), to be the contemporary equivalent of colonialisation in previous centuries in that there is an uneven relationship between English and all other languages in favour of English.

Through this globalisation new varieties of English are arising in different domains of many industrialised societies and the manifestation of this phenomenon in German-speaking countries is centre-stage for many chapters in the current volume (Heyd and Schneider; Fuller).<sup>3</sup> The question of whether there is an intermediary stage between English in European countries, sometimes labelled 'Euro-English' (Mollin 2006), and World Englishes is also a theme (see the chapter by Mollin). In addition, the question of whether a focused variety exists which one could label as 'German English' (Mollin; Hickey) is addressed, similar to the label found in other scholarly discussions, cf. the use of 'Russian English' in Proshina and Eddy (2016).

*1.1.3 German-English Contacts in History and at Present*

The nature of contact between English and German and the manifestation it has had, and continues to have, in the lexis and phraseology of German has also been analysed (Onysko 2007, 2009 and Onysko, this volume).<sup>4</sup> Questions concerning the integration of English borrowings into German, to be seen in the occurrence of hybrid English-German forms, for instance, are also of concern. The entry points for English loans, typically the spheres of science and technology as well as the economic area, media and fashion, are the focus of appropriate discussions.

A special case in the realm of English influence on German is presented by the former German Democratic Republic where English (see Wolf) was beyond the seemingly impenetrable barrier of the Iron Curtain but which nonetheless exercised an influence greater than one would have

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Stålhammar (2010) for English influence on Swedish and Linn (2016) for the Nordic countries as a whole. Kasztalska (2014) and Reichelt (2005) examine the role of English in Poland; Luján-García (2012) considers English in Spain; Petzold and Berns (2000) discuss English in Hungary; Pulcini (1997) the English language in Italy; and Preisler (2003) the situation in Denmark.

<sup>4</sup> The complex of English lexical transfer to European languages, especially during the twentieth century, has been the subject of a number of publications by Manfred Görlach (2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c).

expected from a language spoken on the other side of a strict ideological divide.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the very much greater influence of English on German, there are and have been lexical borrowings from German into English (Pfeffer and Cannon 1994; Stanforth 2009; Schultz 2016); these are considered in the chapter by Schultz.

## 1.2 Domains of English

### 1.2.1 *English in education*

English education in Germany has enjoyed a relatively long history (Hüllen 2005, 2007), reaching back about 400 years in the German-speaking regions, a subject traced in detail in the chapter by Klippel. Two further chapters also concern themselves with educational issues, one by Doff, looking at how teacher education has developed since World War II, and one by Göpferich, Machura and Murphy which examines the use of English as a medium of instruction in third-level education in Germany.

A discussion which has been taking place is that concerning what model of English is to function as an exonormative guide for language learners; see Erling (2002), Hilgendorf (2005), Grau (2009) and Kautzsch (2014) on the situation in Germany, especially in the context of secondary and tertiary education. On a more general level, similar studies (for Europe and beyond) also exist; see Verspoor, de Bot and van Rein (2011), Van den Doel and Quené (2013) and Edwards and Laporte (2015).

### 1.2.2 *The Linguistics of English in Germany*

The use of English in Germany, and to a large extent in Austria and German-speaking Switzerland, shows common features across large numbers of speakers. The reasons for this probably lie, on the one hand, in the structure of German, both phonological and morphosyntactic,<sup>6</sup> and, on the other hand, in the manner in which the language was, and still is, taught in schools with typical non-native-like features being passed

<sup>5</sup> Some contributions on English in Germany, published before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, are by their nature restricted to influences in West Germany, e.g. Berns (1988).

<sup>6</sup> A common linguistic issue to be discussed in this context is that of gender assignment with English loans into German, see Yeandle (2009) and Hickey (1999).

*The Nature and Scale of Language Influence*

5

on from generation to generation. See the chapter by Hickey which considers such features in second-language English in Germany and examines their origins and the reasons for their continued existence. The chapter by Jansen and Langstrof is similar in orientation and examines the English of German language learners with a focus on key issues in pronunciation.

*1.2.3 English in Advertising and Public Spaces*

The presence of English in public spaces in Germany forms the core of the chapter by Fuller which scrutinises the occurrence of English words and phrases in signage, especially those from speakers and communities for whom German is a second language.<sup>7</sup> The investigation of anglophone communities in Berlin by Heyd and Schneider also takes as data material found in public spaces (posters announcing events), a typical feature of linguistic landscapes (Gorter 2013).<sup>8</sup>

*1.2.4 English-Speaking Communities in Present-Day Germany*

While the greatest volume of English in Germany stems from second-language use there are nonetheless small communities of English speakers which exist in German-speaking surroundings. During the decades after World War II, a large number of these communities consisted of military personnel stationed in Germany by the allied forces (Britain and the United States), along with their families. Nowadays, these communities have almost disappeared as the troops have been withdrawn from Germany, but other anglophone communities, especially those formed by people who have emigrated to Germany for a better life and more professional opportunities, have arisen instead. The nature of these anglophone communities and the manner in which they interact within the Berlin context in which they are embedded (Erling and Walton 2007) is examined by Heyd and Schneider.

<sup>7</sup> A cross-linguistic and cross-national investigation of this subject, with reference to advertising, is available in Gerritsen, Nickerson, van Hoof, van Meurs, Nederstigt, Starren and Crijns (2007); see also Piller (2003).

<sup>8</sup> See Wiese (2012, 2020) for more information on language contact and the formation of new varieties in Berlin.

### 1.3 English and German beyond Germany

Over 80 per cent of all German speakers are to be found in Germany. Nonetheless, it is necessary to consider the remaining speakers of the language to be found in countries with different historical backgrounds and present-day sociolinguistic configurations. The two geographically closest countries are Austria (Muhr 2009) and Switzerland (Rash 2009).<sup>9</sup> For both of these, the consideration of the use and status of English is fruitful. Here the chapters by Smit and Schwarz (for Austria) and by Pfenninger and Watts (for Switzerland) provide relevant information and analyses.

As a consequence of the colonial presence of Germany in former South West Africa, the German language has retained a presence and status as a national language, but not an official language, in modern Namibia. Given the widespread presence of English in this country, there is obvious interaction between German and English in Namibia, a subject treated in detail in the chapter by Buschfeld and Schröder.

The position of German as a heritage language in the United States is given due recognition in the final two chapters of the volume. The first is by Joseph Salmons and Miranda Wilkerson which deals with the interaction of English and German in the US state of Wisconsin (Wagener 2004), which has traditionally had high levels of German immigration. The second, by Mark Loudon, considers language contact between English and Pennsylvanian German and looks specifically at the infiltration of English lexical elements into the varieties of German referred to by this label.

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<sup>9</sup> Luxemburg would also fall into this category. But German as used there is a Mosel-Franconian dialect which is not classified as German but as Luxembourgish. See Newton (2009) for English influence on this variety. Further, see contributions in Pfalzgraf (ed., 2009) for the influence of English on diverse varieties of German.

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*The Nature and Scale of Language Influence*

9

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