

The New Cosmopolitan Monolingualism: On Linguistic Citizenship in Twenty-First Century Germany

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Introduction

Following two turbulent centuries of ethnic nationhood, civic discourse in twenty-first century Germany has sought to liberalize and transform what it means to be, or become, German. Premiering in simulcast on almost all domestic television stations on September 26, 2005, the Bertelsmann-funded “Du bist Deutschland” campaign presented viewers with a multicultural collage of spokespersons who both embodied and advocated an inclusive civic vision of the Berlin Republic (Jessen). In the original television spot, spokespersons of African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Southern European descent extemporized on this open-ended vision—that anyone who answers the call to active civic participation on a neighborhood and national level embodies Germanness itself. It was no longer ethnic culture or historical communitarianism that arbitrated belonging, but rather how one pitched in to the emergent project of pan-ethnic German public life. Despite the cascade of Internet parodies that followed, the campaign held fast to its proposition that Germanness was no longer a shared ethnic heritage, but rather the sum of the vitality and diversity of an interculturally oriented citizenry in an era of global mass migration and European integration.

The fact that went unthematized in the upbeat television spot and on the ubiquitous subway placards that accompanied it throughout 2005 and 2006 was that the inclusive address “Du bist Deutschland” both performed and prescribed a doctrine of public monolingualism. In this article, I propose that an ideal of cosmopolitan linguistic unity has superseded the multiculturalism debates of 1990s Germany, leading to various forms of performative monolingualism in social policy and

everyday life. The threshold of belonging—indeed of civic presence or “being here” in Germany—had implicitly shifted from ethnic heritage to linguistic practice, a shift that now places corresponding conceptual demands on teaching professionals and language studies researchers.

Here, I have chosen the term “performative monolingualism” to describe the symbolic practice of speaking German (as opposed to one’s other heritage languages), in post-multicultural Germany (Yurchak 19–21). By speaking German exclusively in the public sphere, multilingual speakers of migration backgrounds comply *de facto* with a set of civic ideals that have become codified in German law and statutory discourse since the late 1990s. It is the performative nature and discursive context of this kind of speech practice to which the following sections will be devoted. Though this analysis shares some points of convergence with work on minority language rights in multicultural societies (Kymlicka “Multicultural,” “Politics”), I am primarily concerned with showing how speaking German in pan-ethnic settings has been affirmatively revalued and broadly resignified in the wake of major citizenship reforms.

Prelude in the Parliament: The Immigration Compromise of 2004

Der Kollege kann kein Deutsch mehr, da er
jetzt den deutschen Pass hat.
—Kebab stand employee,
Schlesisches Tor, Berlin, July 2007

A sea change in citizenship statutes at the end of the 1990s announced Germany’s peripatetic departure from its Imperial “right of blood,” *ius*

sanguinis, toward a French-inspired “right of territory,” *ius soli*, (Göktürk et al. 1–20). The rather abrupt policy change, unveiled by the ruling Red-Green coalition government in 1998, signaled a milestone in transnational residents’ quest for civic recognition, one that had been forged in fits and starts in the Federal Republic over most of the preceding thirty years. Turkish newspapers from the Kemalist weekly *Cumhuriyet* “The Republic” to the tabloid *Sabah* “Morning”—each known for hawk-eyed criticisms of German naturalization policy—quickly recognized the import of the Federal Republic’s retreat from ethnic communitarianism with headlines like “Bravo Almanya!” and “Yeni Vatandaşlar Hoşgeldiniz” ‘Welcome, New Citizens!’ (Gottschlich 168).

Yet in the nine years since the policy’s implementation, a paradigm quite removed from territorial citizenship (*ius soli*) has taken hold—one that I will outline in the following pages as a *ius linguarum*, or “right of languages.” In contrast to its predecessor models that explicitly assigned a singular and distinct “blood” or “soil” to a given citizenry, the newly evolving linguistic model of civic belonging was not designed to engineer or maintain a uniform civic essence *per se*. Rather, a *ius linguarum* implicitly acknowledges the plurality of languages spoken among a given populace, but resorts to segregative strategies—as will be discussed in detail below—in order to minimize the effect of multilingualism on public life. Upholding cultural diversity while discouraging the public use of multiple heritage languages, the *ius linguarum*, or cosmopolitan monolingualism, is reactive in nature as a public policy strategy—rooted, paradoxically, in the recognition that multilingualism has become a societal norm.¹

Indeed, the public use of multiple languages among Germany’s labor immigrants and post-immigrants had been a cause for parliamentary discord since the mid-1970s, but national immigration politics did not undergo a coherent “linguistic turn” until century’s end. Aiming to bolster former labor migrants’ “readiness-to-return,” *Rückkehrbereitschaft*, to their countries of ancestry, the Kohl government (1983–1999) had funded heritage

language-learning programs on the basis that “Everyone has a right to live in *his own homeland*.”² The *ad hoc* institutional multiculturalism of the 1980s was thus fueled in part by political visions of an eventual exodus of recruited guest workers and the families they had formed in Germany. When the Soviet Union’s collapse and the war in Bosnia gave immigration a more broadly humanitarian mandate in reunified Germany, a series of multi-party commissions convened to decide what it would mean for Germany to “come out” internationally as an immigration country. Five years later, the Independent Commission on Migration, headed by former Bundestag President Rita Süßmuth, delivered its findings:

The tendency to seek naturalization is not great among migrants who came to Germany before the 1973 recruitment ban. Apparently the requirements for naturalization were unattainable for them. In recognition of the far-reaching integration efforts of these people, the Commission feels a more generous position on multiple citizenship is appropriate for this group of people. *These immigrants, as well as German society, have neglected the acquisition of the German language, because they were expected to have a limited period of residency.* During naturalization procedures, the blame for this situation should not be ascribed to these law-abiding immigrants who have worked hard since their arrival in Germany and who have raised their children here. (Süßmuth 184, emphasis mine)

The linguistic subjectivity of veteran labor migrants—and particularly of Turks—was thus recast as a symbolic failure of the guest worker system. But despite the Commission’s push for magnanimity in the realm of linguistic assimilation, a broad Center-Right legislative alliance had already begun to resignify the German language not as an inherited ethnic possession but as a pan-ethnic *lingua franca*. From this post-ethnic standpoint, the twenty-first century German language took on the political valence of a syncretic “guiding language,” whose centripetal power would render the specters of classic multicultural doctrine—parallel societies,

¹ Pieter Judson’s painstaking monograph *Guardians of the Nation* (2006) rigorously documents this form of strategic monolingualism (among both German and Czech policy-makers) in multilingual 19th century Bohemia.

² Helmut Kohl. “Coalition of the Center.” Göktürk et al. 2007. 46, emphasis mine. The demographic

target of this strategy of “readiness-to-return” was the second and third generation children of guest workers living in the Federal Republic, who had not been eligible for German citizenship at birth and therefore automatically bore the citizenship of their parents. See also Irina Ludat. “A Question of the Greater Fear.” Göktürk et al. 2007. 46–51.

mutual indifference, and cultural relativism—obsolete.³

In concert with this shift from “guiding culture,” *Leitkultur*, to what might be called a “guiding language,” *Leitsprache*, the country’s first Immigration Law, *Zuwanderungsgesetz*, in 2005 stipulated German language competency as a probationary condition of legal residence:

Integration efforts on the part of foreigners will be supported by an offering of integration courses. Integration courses include instruction in the language, the legal order, the culture, and the history of Germany. Consequently, foreigners should become accustomed to the living conditions in federal territory to the extent that they will possess the necessary self-sufficiency to handle all aspects of everyday life without assistance from a third party. (“Act to Control and Restrict Immigration” 190–91)

This new legal discourse about how to monitor and assess immigrants’ familiarity with German linguistic culture departed starkly from the salutary neglect of the Kohl years, when the federal government had emphasized heritage culture maintenance in an aggressive manner, befitting the ethno-national logic of the *ius sanguinis*. The early 2000s saw a rapid proliferation of laws and protocols that made social assistance and visa renewals directly dependent on an immigrant’s progress in German language courses. In-take and assessment procedures that had previously been agnostic about an applicant’s language competence were re-written to gauge longitudinal progress and demonstrable effort in learning German.

Meanwhile, political defendants of federal and provincial “integration” curricula insisted that German-language proficiency was not a compulsory state directive, but rather a civil right, ensuring gender parity and economic opportunity for poor and middle-class transnational residents alike. A 235-million-Euro language package for non-EU nationals, for instance, was framed as a social welfare initiative that might redress a heretofore unjust and ethnicized system of immigrant enfranchisement, whereby heritage-German resettlers from the former Soviet Union had been granted no-cost integration courses, while Turks and Arabs were

forced to go it alone. Through this rhetoric of redress, speaking German “without the assistance of a third party” was resignified as a social-justice imperative and civil right.

Relieved in this way of its dubious countenance as a state mandate, the right to speak German acquired the political aura of a win-win solution for migrants, post-migrants, and non-migrants alike. Indeed, considering how the early guest worker program (1955–1973) had systematically depended on non-German workers’ lack of language proficiency when wage and workplace disputes arose, the advent of a federal *ius linguarum* in the early twenty-first century was no less than a watershed civic-political moment. Fifty years after foreign nationals had been invited en masse to work in West (and East) Germany, their descendants and latter-day counterparts were now being encouraged to partake of the symbolic capital that the German language offered. The old rumblings of ethnic nationhood—juridically untenable in this New Europe—were being translated into a unitary language politics that might correct the injustices of the past.

When asked to clarify how the various generations of immigrants already living in Germany, as well as their family members abroad, might best ready themselves for the federal government’s language policy reforms, Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble responded:

Ich bin noch am Anfang, darüber nachzudenken. Aber wir sehen, dass es keinen Sinn hat, dass die Kinder ohne Deutschkenntnisse in die Grundschule kommen. Also müssen sie vorher Deutsch lernen. Und in dem konkreten Fall habe ich gleich gefragt: Wie wollt ihr denn Sprachkurse in Anatolien machen? Aber da gibt es audiovisuelle Möglichkeiten, den Test kann man sogar telefonisch machen. Wir prüfen das jetzt hier im Innenministerium. (Carstens and Wehner)

Inspired by a vision of a multicultural society unified by one public language, Schäuble did not however acknowledge the adverse web of circumstances a given speaker may experience amid the mutual imbrications of state power, transnational identity, multilingual subjectivity, and non-native speaking practices—not to mention ethnic discrim-

³ During the 1998–2001 “guiding culture” debate (*Leitkulturdebatte*), the proposal that “German culture” should be foremost in a multicultural society set off alarm on the political Center-Left. See

Friedrich Merz. “Immigration and Identity. On the Freedom-Based German Guiding Culture.” Gök-türk et al. 2007, 313–14.

ination on non-linguistic grounds. In his upbeat, impromptu gloss above, the Interior Minister described his agency's linguistic endeavor with a mix of procedural experimentalism and conceptual vagary.

German consulates around the world were instructed by the Bundesverwaltungsamt to advise visa petitioners that spouses and children of legal residents could not join their next-of-kin in Germany without achieving the following level of language competence:

“Grundkenntnisse” der deutschen Sprache liegen nur dann vor, wenn die deutsche Sprache in ihren Grundzügen in Wort und Schrift so beherrscht wird, dass vertraute, alltägliche Ausdrücke und ganz einfache Sätze, die auf die Befriedigung konkreter Bedürfnisse zielen, verstanden und verwendet werden. Die einzubeziehende Person muss auch in der Lage sein, sich und andere vorzustellen sowie anderen Leuten Fragen zu ihrer Person zu stellen, beispielsweise wo sie wohnen, welche Leute sie kennen oder welche Dinge sie besitzen, und muss Fragen dieser Art beantworten können. Sie muss sich auf einfache Art verständigen können, wenn die Gesprächspartner langsam und deutlich sprechen und bereit sind zu helfen. Sie muss ferner in der Lage sein, in kurzen Mitteilungen Informationen aus dem alltäglichen Leben zu erfragen oder weiterzugeben (beispielsweise in Formularen, kurzen persönlichen Briefen oder einfachen Notizen). (Bundesverwaltungsamt)

The scenarios of address envisioned and codified here also dovetailed with post-9/11 security imperatives and federal law enforcement's strategic deradicalization programming, for which linguistic difference presented both a procedural impasse and a symbol of cultural resistance. Thus, while thousands of consular officials beyond Germany's borders were suiting up for complex language-assessment responsibilities for which they were generally undertrained, the political imperative at home remained uncannily simple: *learn German if you want to stay here*. Interior Minister Schäuble formulated his expectations to this effect in a March 2006 interview:

Was können wir von Ausländern erwarten, die dauerhaft hier leben? Wir können erwarten, dass sie mit uns hier leben wollen. Sie sollten Deutsch lernen und am zivilgesellschaftlichen Leben in seiner Vielfalt teilnehmen. Sie sollten nicht so leben wollen, als wären sie nicht hier. (Carstens and Wehner 2006, emphasis mine)

Speaking German was thus resignified as an escape route out of unilateral heritage-cultural bonds—figured in deictic terms as “not being here”—toward civic diversity and “being here.” This rhetorical superimposition of place deixis, linguistic territoriality, and civic communitarianism indicated how the ideal of a monolingual (though multicultural) German polis was acquiring a panacean valence in policy-making spheres. One year after Germany had passed its first ever Immigration Law and declared itself an immigration country, language(s) had begun to *mean* in a new and politically binding way. (Göktürk et al 173–93).

Prelude on the Playground: Berlin-Wedding, 2006

No institution without a space of legitimation.
—René Lourau (141)

It was standing room only. The international press corps—from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* to *Al Jazeera*—turned to face the front of the room, where the teenage *Klassensprecher* were taking their seats. An immigration activist in the crowd called out to Class Spokesman Asad Suleman, pressing him to describe what it felt like to be “a victim.” Amicably poised, the 16-year-old answered back: “Ich verstehe die Frage nicht. Können Sie bitte präzisieren?” The room broke out in laughter (Lau “Selbstachtung”).

Ninety percent of the students at Herbert Hoover High School in Berlin's northern Wedding district grew up speaking multiple languages—switching mid-sentence and mid-experience from Urdu, Polish, or Turkish into German, and back, as a matter of course. In early 2005, the school administration had made a splashy debut in national immigration politics by implementing a German-only language policy on its campus. The policy's jurisdiction extended well beyond the classroom—into lunchtime, recess, class-trips, and all interactions on school grounds.

Over the next nine months, as monolingual school policy and the multilingual habitus of its students collided with one another, the school became a high-profile mirror-space for twenty-first century Germany's civic self-image. Advocates of cultural integration and scholastic achievement for youth with migration backgrounds quickly elevated Class Speaker Suleman to an almost oracular status, as a maverick defender of the

Deutsch-Pflicht policy. In a measured tone that nonplussed feuilletonists of all political persuasions, the teenager spoke plainly of the practical benefits of the monolingualist policy: “Unser Deutsch hat sich im letzten Jahr verbessert, und auch die Aggressionen gehen zurück, seitdem sich alle in einer Sprache zu verständigen versuchen” (Lau “Deutschstunden”).

Suleman’s schoolyard realpolitik inflamed the Turkish daily newspaper *Hürriyet*, whose editors dubbed the school a *Zwangsgermanisierungsanstalt*. Class Speaker Suleman is of Pakistani descent, and some conjectured that his advocacy for German as the school’s *lingua franca* had arisen out of experiences of social exclusion at the hands of the Turkish-speaking plurality of the school’s student body (Lau “Deutschstunden”). Seconding *Hürriyet*’s vivid condemnation was the prominent Berlin Green Party legislator Özcan Mutlu, who rebuked the Hoover language compact as part of a tide of integrationist policies unfit for a self-professed cosmopolitan city like Berlin. Mutlu took stock of the affair as follows: “Es ist kein Zufall, dass es nach dem gegen Muslime gerichteten Gewissenstest und dem Wunsch, das Zuwanderungsrecht zu verschärfen, jetzt im Bundesland Berlin ein Verbot gibt, in der Schule die Muttersprache zu sprechen” (Lau “Deutschstunden”). Mutlu’s inductive gesture—projecting the school’s strategic monolingualism upon Berlin as a whole and, by easy extension, the Federal Republic itself—indicated the Hoover debate’s underlying political mood—one that, for some, added up to a “new German patriotism” in the Berlin Republic (Lau “Selbstachtung”).

Within weeks of its implementation, Herbert Hoover’s German-only plan had become a political test case, not for the wholesale suppression, but rather for the spatial partitioning of lived languages in an aspiring cosmopolitan society. Though classes and conversations went on as regularly scheduled, the school had become an emblematic space for surveilling national immigration policy at work—a “crisis heterotopia” (Foucault) where law, language choice, and nationhood would converge at lockers, bicycle racks, and soccer scrimmages. Christian Democrat parliamentarian Robert Hei-

nemann went so far as to suggest that “Those who defy the rule should be made to sweep up the schoolyard” (Öymen).

Herbert Hoover’s students were, however, among the least concerned about the arrival of performative monolingualism to campus. When the Federal Commissioner for Integration Maria Böhmer arranged a visit to interview students about the pledge they had been asked to take, the young people took the opportunity to push beyond the piquant topicality of the international press battle, calling Böhmer’s attention instead to less politicized institutional needs: reducing class sizes to 25 students, increasing the minimum application quota for foreign-born teachers, providing extra help and tutoring in German, guaranteeing post-secondary traineeships for graduating students, and facilitating students’ advancement to college-preparatory courses at *Gymnasium*. (Varlı).

None of these concerns that the students raised had played a consequential role in the unfolding press debate, because these issues appeared tangential to the prototypical claim that multilingual students should only speak German when at school. Some students concluded that the Hoover monolingual contract amounted to little more than window-dressing. A group of Turkish-speaking students assured the *Hürriyet* newspaper: “There has been this decision to prohibit other languages at school. But it is not enforced. In the schoolyard and in other places we still speak Turkish among ourselves. In fact, we often even speak Turkish in class. The prohibition doesn’t work.”⁴ Consider also the stoic insistence with which Herbert Hoover Class Vice-Speaker Halime Nurin dismissed the charges of linguistic hegemony that were being leveled against her school: “Wir wurden nicht gezwungen. Wir wollen selber gerne Deutsch sprechen. Es gibt auch keine Strafen, wenn wir doch einmal in unsere Muttersprachen überwechseln” (Lau “Deutschstunden”). Here, Nurin champions the spirit of the German-only pledge, on the basis that it only coincided with her own preferred language practices. In the same breath, however, she asserted her and her friends’ ultimate autonomy from the policy.

⁴ Varlı. Translation mine. “Okulda böyle bir yasak kararı var. Fakat bu uygulanmıyor. Okulun bahçesinde ve diğer yerlerde biz kendi aramızda yine de Türkçe konuşuyoruz. Hatta bazen sınıfta bile Türkçe

konuştığımız oluyor. Yasak işlemiyor.” The students interviewed were Ayşegül Albayrak, Cansu Başaran and Tuğba Duman.

A New Cosmopolitan Monolingualism?

Leoparden brechen in den Tempel ein
und saufen die Opferkrüge leer; das
wiederholt sich immer wieder; schließlich
kann man es vorausberechnen, und es
wird ein Teil der Zeremonie.
—Franz Kafka (1992, 117)

Given these students' testimonies, it would be somewhat heavy-handed to diagnose the Hoover policy and the new statutory role of language use in German society as a draconian curtailment of personal freedoms guaranteed in Article 3 of the Basic Law. Nor would it suffice, however, to view the state's recourse to linguistic unity in civic policy-making as a loose collection of ad hoc initiatives, or a reflexive retrenchment into parochialism in the course of Europeanization. Kafka's parable of the Leopard above offers a vivid illustration of the intimate yet adverse relationship between multilingual practices and monolingual policy visions in a hybrid social space, a relationship which I will term cosmopolitan monolingualism.

In 1994 the intercultural pedagogy researcher Ingrid Gogolin had described the ritual misrecognition (yet incorporation) of multiple-language subjectivity as "the monolingual habitus of the multilingual school," highlighting how even the most interculturally inclined domains of the German educational system tended to preempt the use of Turkish, Arabic, and other language as bearers of knowledge, while continuing to valorize English and French in their stead. The events discussed in the preceding sections demonstrate how Gogolin's discovery—of the superimposition of monolingual ideology upon the patently multilingual social space of the German school—was expanded in the 2000s to a national policy doctrine.

The Hoover school's German-only policy resonated profoundly in public discourse, galvanizing the preconception that migrants' and post-migrants' demonstrated proficiency in the German language is the primary bellwether of their "will to integrate," *Integrationswille* into German (or Western) society. The crowning indication of this broad national investiture in linguistic unification came six months after Asad Suleman's press conference, when the embattled Herbert Hoover school community was honored with the annual 75,000 Euro Prize of the German National Foundation, *Deutsche Nationalstiftung*. On its Website in 2008, the prize selection committee commended the Hoover project in the following terms:

Zur Verbesserung eines gemeinsamen, niemand ausschließenden Schullebens ... haben sich Schüler, Eltern und Lehrer nach intensiver Diskussion und ohne behördliches Zutun auf die Schulsprache Deutsch geeinigt. Diese Eigeninitiative der Schule unterstreicht die Bedeutung der Sprache als Integrationsvoraussetzung, ohne die kulturellen Wurzeln der beteiligten Menschen anzutasten. Das Vorgehen ist weit über Berlins Grenzen hinaus zu einem Beispiel eigener Interessenwahrnehmung im Rahmen einer aktiven Zivilgesellschaft geworden. (Deutsche Nationalstiftung "Nationalpreis 2006")

Officiating the prize-conferral ceremony, Bundestag President Norbert Lammert praised the school's students and faculty—along with Germany's 2006 National Soccer Team—as standard-bearers of successful integration. He assured the skeptical audience that

Sie werden keinen finden, der sich gegen Dialoge ausspricht, und schon gar niemanden, der gegen Toleranz wäre. Die Frage, unter welchen Voraussetzungen beides zustande kommt, wird schon sehr viel seltener gestellt und noch seltener beantwortet. [...] Jede Gesellschaft [braucht] einen Mindestbestand an gemeinsamen Überzeugungen und Orientierungen... Kein politisches System kann ohne ein kulturelles Fundament gemeinsam getragener Überzeugungen seine innere Legitimation aufrechterhalten. (Deutsche Nationalstiftung "Laudatio")

For Lammert, the Hoover school's commitment to multicultural monolingualism exemplified a kind of integration *avant-garde*, leading the republic back toward its "inner legitimacy." Speaking exclusively German in the schoolyard would, according to this model, nourish a shared minimum inventory of national values and core commitments, including civic diversity, gender equality, and religious tolerance. It is worth noting that, in his 2500 word congratulatory speech, President Lammert explicitly mentioned language just three times. Foregrounding "shared convictions and orientations" instead as the ultimate signified behind language choice, Lammert subsumed linguistic practice under civic communitarianism. The resulting policy doctrine—a strategic monolingualism—was presumed to carry out the symbolic labor of civic unification that a multicultural politics of recognition had been unable to broker since the 1970s.

In his speech, Lammert echoed Jürgen Habermas' reluctant defense of monolingualism as

the key to a pragmatics of cosmo-nationalism:

If the manifold forms of communication are not to spread out centrifugally and be lost in global villages, but rather foster a focused process of shaping will and opinion, a public sphere must be created. Participants must be able simultaneously to exchange contributions on the same subjects of the same relevance. It was through this kind of communication—at that time conducted by literary means—that the nation-state knitted together a new network of solidarity, which enabled it to some extent to head off modernism’s drive to abstraction and to re-embed a population torn out of traditional life-relationships in the contexts of expanded and rationalized life-worlds. (Habermas “Berlin Republic” 177)

The philosophical tradition Lammert invoked in defense of the *Deutsch-Pflicht*, however, was not communicative reason (Habermas “Philosophical”), but rather Hans-Georg Gadamer’s maxim that “[E]rst mit der Sprache geht die Welt auf” (105). For Lammert, it was no longer tenable, in the age of migration and Europeanization, to consider German as a cultural bequest, *Kulturbesitz*, that should be promoted for its own sake. Rather, German would serve a social function as a *de facto* common language of the multiethnic student body, uniquely capable among the other languages of de-escalating conflict and aggression. Lammert’s stake in the centripetal social power of speaking German reiterated the 2005 Immigration Law, in which proficiency in the German language was codified as a prerequisite of civic subjectivity. Speaking German meant that one would be finally in a position to cross over from subcultural “parallel societies,” *Parallelgesellschaften*, into both “the world” and “the national community.”

Lammert’s honorific citation of Gadamer merits further attention, because this axiom about language as a threshold between subject and world was extracted from one of Gadamer’s extended commentaries on Heidegger. What the maxim in its proper context recognizes about language is not the need for civic unity, social pragmatism, institutional efficiency and mutual transparency, but rather language’s humbling and endless differentiation, its difficult and abundant givenness. In the passage from which Lammert cites, Gadamer is thinking through Heideggerian being-in-language in a way that has no truck with civic pragmatism, and indeed turns cosmopolitan monolingualism on its head:

1920 hatte er als junger Dozent vom Katheder aus zu sagen gewagt: “Es weltet.” Er meinte damit: “Sein” geht auf (wie die Sonne am Morgen). Als der Denker seiner Reife hätte er ähnlich sagen können: “Es wortet.” Denn erst mit der Sprache geht die Welt auf, geht uns die Welt auf, in der unbegrenzten Differenziertheit und Differenzierung ihres Sichzeigens. Die Virtualität des Wortes ist zugleich das “Da” des Seins. Sprachlichkeit ist das Element, in dem wir leben, und daher ist Sprache nicht so sehr Gegenstand—von welcher natürlichen oder wissenschaftlichen Bewandnis immer—als vielmehr der Vollzug unseres Da, des “Da” das wir sind. (Gadamer 105, emphasis mine)

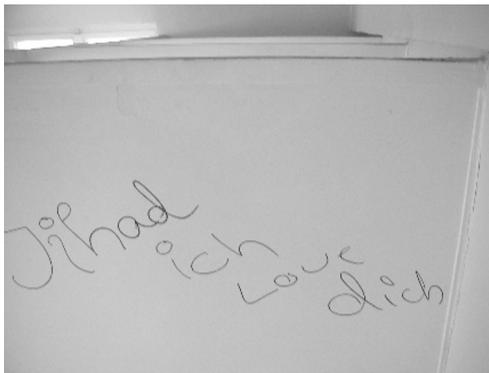
In extracting the one italicized sentence from Gadamer’s commentary above, Lammert radically resignifies that “here”-making, subject-making quality of language practice which so fascinated the philosophical hermeneuticist from whom he cites. Gadamer’s characterization of the power of language—any language or combination of languages—to convoke a rich and consequential deictic presence, a sense for “being here,” was reserved for the German language alone in Lammert’s interpretation.

Pledged to a unitary language on paper but simultaneously violating it in practice, the students at Herbert Hoover High School stand in a long line of German code-switchers who have been raised in a necessarily adverse position vis-à-vis monolingual doctrine. Having grown up negotiating with both a state-sanctioned, territorial language and one or more “minor” heritage languages (Deleuze and Guattari), the students at Herbert Hoover are the heirs to a longstanding tradition of adverse multilingualism in German-speaking lands. For millions of such multiple-language users far less renowned than Franz Kafka, Primo Levi, Karl Kraus, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Elias Canetti, Feridun Zaimoglu, and Orhan Pamuk (Gramling), speaking (or not speaking) German is an act for which the concepts “choice” and “obligation” offer little insight. Unlike voluntary polyglots studying foreign languages in educational settings, speakers of Turkish in post-War and post-Wall Berlin, or Yiddish in Imperial Prague, have routinely clashed with the policies and preemptory exclusions of monolingualism.

Notwithstanding the panlingual experimentation of Joyce, Schnitzler, and Pound, twentieth-century European literary studies was an awkward and acute bottleneck in the historical cohabitation between single-language text and multiple-

language world-space (Knauth). Considering how most West European national philologies arose, over the course of the 19th century, conditioned upon linguistic unification and its corresponding exclusions, it is understandable that curricula that have been painstakingly developed to maintain and disseminate those traditions remain hard pressed to come to terms with linguistic “contact zones” (“Arts” 33). Even (and sometimes especially) the literary works of multilingual migrants therefore become conscripts in the project of contemporary national monolingualism (Ackermann and Weinrich). But as migration and cyber-traffic continue to render disparate languages mobile and co-present in a broad repertoire of transnational pathways, the contract that literary studies maintains with monolingualism cannot but fray at its methodological edges.

Conclusions and Implications for Practitioners



“Jihad, ich love dich: The Life-Worlds of Trilingualism.” Photograph taken at Ernst-Reuter High School, Berlin-Wedding, January 2007.

The transformations that this article has speculated upon, though of interest to a cultural or social historian, have an even greater impact on practitioners and researchers in language studies. Technology, civic reform, and rapidly proliferating lived experiences of migration are upending such trans-historical concepts as the native speaker, bilingualism, and communicative competence, not to mention German-American relations. The first decade of this century has born a concurrently evolving conflict of interest between multiculturalism and multilingualism in German society, as state institutions recalibrate their understanding of Germanness according to post-ethnic, language-based models.

In the United States, textbook producers, curriculum developers, and teachers have a range of choices about how and whether to acknowledge this shift from ethnicity to language. The Chomskyian taboo on code-switching, which persists in didacticized form in some L2-only classrooms, may tend to exacerbate the invisibility of everyday, normal translingual practices in today’s Germany. In a multiculturally-oriented curricular context, the image of a Greek-German child of former guest workers who behaves monolingually in the “culture sections” of an introductory language workbook, or of a Russian-Jewish contingency refugee speaking only standard German in a third- or fourth-semester textbook, will now obscure more than it reveals about today’s Germany. English-speaking learners of German, meanwhile, will share limited yet important positional affinities with precisely these kinds of transnational speakers throughout their lives as second- or multiple-language users of German (Kramsch “Multilingual Subject” “Multilingual Experience”).

Moreover, college-aged learners are now increasingly subject to an inclusionist discourse about belonging in Germany. The “Du bist Deutschland” campaign discussed in the introductory section above, for instance, is of deliberately ambiguous and prospective address, when considered in the context of a competitive global labor market. A plurality of American undergraduates who complete a degree in German now perceive themselves as invited to pursue a life-long relationship with Germany, often beginning with a post-graduate internship or overseas employment to supplement their course of study. This means that we might well consider abandoning the notion that our students are essentially non-migrants with intercultural interests. At least a portion of our students may perceive themselves, if only experimentally, as addressed by the civic ideals of the German Federal Republic, and we may do well to thematize something along the lines of trans-civic desire in our curricula. Particularly among international students, for whom multiple civic participation is already a norm, the emergence of what might be considered the “social marketing” of immigration in Schengen-era Germany makes language learners worldwide directly subject to the broad mode of address inherent in the “Du bist Deutschland” campaign.

Given the marked shift from ethnicity to language in German civic discourse, language studies professionals may also be led to ask: how is the ideal of the native speaker, as a modern historical

construct, changing? The work of Vivian Cook and Claire Kramsch (“Privilege”) has stimulated an ongoing conversation about the use, necessity, and drawbacks of nativism in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching. In the meantime, the historical vignettes in the preceding portion of this article demonstrate both a legal and a social reorientation toward the ideal of speaking natively in contemporary Europe. The *ius linguarum* embedded in the 2005 German Citizenship Law and its accompanying statutes explicitly codifies the ideal German speaker as an *intercultural* speaker, one for whom a diachronic tradition of linguistic heritage is of lesser import than one’s synchronic capacity to communicate across cultures in a European and global context. Inherent in this ideal of an *intercultural* native speaker of German, however, is the potential for an aggressively normative euphemization of those German cultural signifieds that are resistant to a cosmopolitan traffic in meaning (Pratt “Traffic”; Bourdieu 142). A national-linguistic habitus that seeks to be essentially *intercultural* poses serious dilemmas for teachers who seek to honor the historical specificity of German words, expressions, and discourse practices that are not readily translatable, even in advanced language learning settings. As teachers and researchers, we are therefore in a position to inquire how the distinction between glossodiversity (the diversity of codes) and semiodiversity (the diversity of meanings born by those codes) (Halliday; Kramsch “Traffic”; Pennycook) may become operable in our classrooms and collegial conversations over the coming years.

A further aspect of what might be thought of as the technological evolution of the native-speaker is the intensifying commercial production of native-like utterances for global Internet distribution, via such platforms as Facebook and Google. Within the span of two decades, high-traffic Internet venues and the corporate translation industry have begun to accelerate and alter the very nature and exchange-value of speaking natively. A private industry sector referred to in shorthand as GILT (Globalization, Internationalization, Localization, and Translation) has, over the past twenty years, taken on the task of distributing simultaneous native-speaker equivalencies for rapidly changing interactive prompts on Internet platforms (Pym). To cite but one example now ubiquitous among global student populations, facebook.com’s standard user status-update prompt “What’s on your mind?” is rendered in German as “*Was machst du gerade?*” in Spanish as “*¿Qué estás pensando?*” in French as

“*Exprimez-vous,*” in Canadian French as “*À quoi pensez-vous?*” in Turkish as “*Ne düşünüyorsun?*” and in the ever-loved Pirate English as “What be troublin’ ye?” This quietly burgeoning industry of native-like stylization is now the primary catalyst for an unprecedented flow of transnational literate content, particularly among speakers under 30 years of age. The parodic, user-generated *lingua franca* of Pirate English seems precisely to spoof the arbitrary selection of native-linguistic equivalences in an aggressively translingual free-marketplace. Such translingual domains of communication and self-fashioning online indicate not a shift, but a break, in the concept of the native speaker as a technology over the past twenty years. What had once been formed and reformed by social, legal, and institutional forces is now being rapidly recreated through cyber-technological channels.

How can German teachers and researchers, then, become accountable for language-diverse cultures in the Federal Republic—and why does this fall within their purview? One reasonable approach would be to simply underwrite the cosmopolitan monolingualism of the 2005 Immigration Law, to liberalize “German culture” as that culture which takes place in the German language. Attractive as this formula may be, it is increasingly dissonant with the culture actually being produced and consumed in Berlin and the Ruhrgebiet alike, by speakers born in and beyond Germany. Though such strategies of recognition as the Adalbert von Chamisso Prize had spearheaded a magnanimous campaign on behalf of multicultural writers as early as the mid-1980s (Ackermann and Weinrich), it also institutionalized a monolingual line of cultural demarcation that passes today in some civic and academic spheres as common sense. Consequently, the other-language literary works of such latter-day canonical German writers as Aras Ören, Güney Dal, and Zafer Şenocak remain philological orphans, as they occupy an oblique position both to the *ius linguarum* logic of civic life and the German Studies profession’s advanced language-teaching portfolio. Yet it is precisely this oblique situation that can help stimulate advanced (and even advanced-beginning) students’ intellectual curiosity about translation as an historical phenomenon and a lived experience, as well as their willingness to feel and think beyond the diplomatic, bi-cultural model of German-American relations.

Remaining devoted to a single-language aperture upon German culture may provide a provisionally reassuring coherence for students and teachers alike, but few European students of Amer-

ican Studies have been able to labor under a similar pragmatic illusion about their object of study, as Spanish and African American English have demanded complex methodological and pedagogical affordances for more than half a century. A correspondingly multilingual line of thinking about German Studies would not entail that teachers and students learn yet another language beyond German, but rather that they take the multilinguality of the target culture as a foundation for, rather than an exception to, a course of study about Germany. From medieval travelogues to early Romanticism to Holocaust Studies and New German Literature, an embarrassment of scholarly riches still awaits beneath the unturned stones of monolingualism.

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