

Linguistic Hybridization, *Sprachverfall*, and German “Denglish”: A Reflection of Culture

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Abstract

To elucidate the stark influence of hybridization¹ on speech, itself the most pliable aspect of language and therefore the most affected by hybridization, this piece uses anecdotal evidence to serve as the introductory elements to show the more general effect of the current state of linguistic hybridization as it relates to the historical trend of globalization. This anecdotal evidence, as well as other observations and interpretations are grounded in the five months where I studied the German language and culture in Germany. Continuing from this evidence, this paper proceeds to a comparative analysis of research regarding the role of *Sprachverfall* in the German cultural and linguistic milieu in order to lay the foundation for the ideas of language and identity. While there are many specifics to the German case study, there is much overlap between the events and circumstances of the German *Sprachraum* and other language communities. The paper discusses interpretation of this phenomena undertaken by scholars of sociolinguistics and culture (with an emphasis on German culture and history). This work highlights the measures being taken by youth communities around the world to preserve their culture while creating a new hybrid thereof that reflects their current social milieu. The final section of the work seeks to present potential solutions and remedies to mitigate the issues with identity and language change that result from perceived *Sprachverfall*.

Keywords: hybridization, *Sprachverfall*, language decay, *Sprachraum*, globalization

Linguistic Hybridization: The German “Denglish” Case Study:

¹ hybridization is defined as a process whereby separate and disparate entities or processes generate another entity or process (the hybrid), which shares certain features with each of its sources but which is not purely compositional. See doi/10.1007/978-3-642-21846-0_9

In order to elucidate the effects of globalization and English on German, two cases will be looked at that I experienced firsthand. Additionally, a comparison of two scholars with opposing positions on the effects of English on German will be used to showcase two competing perspectives on the goodness of this form of linguistic hybridization. These cases showcase the influence and use of English words, or words that are English in origin but have been adapted to German grammar structure, so that the reader can better understand the day-to-day influence of English on German. The first case will look at the influence of English on sport, itself a reflection of cultural trends - and oftentimes precursors to, or instigators of, societal shifts.² The sport under discussion is Ultimate Frisbee. The importance thereof lies in the history of Ultimate (the common term for the sport) which was founded in 1968 by counter-culturists in the USA and thus consists of terminology solely derived from English. It currently is played in over 80 countries by approximately 7 million people.³ Ultimate is therefore a perfect example of an invention by Anglophones being transmitted throughout the world.

*Werfer: “Foul! Wenn du mich **markst**, schlägst du meinen Arm!*

***Marker:** Aber Nein, beim **Pivot** kann ich dort stehen.*

*Werfer: Du musst mir genug **Disc-Space** lassen, wenn ich eine **Backhand** mache!*

This interaction is not atypical when playing a game of Ultimate in Germany, but, as the bolded words indicate, this interaction is heavily influenced, and more potently, strongly circumscribed by, its English qualities. Take this rather pessimistic, yet not baseless claim by Hermann H. Dieter, a German biochemist who, in his work, has discussed linguistic diversity in

² . Look at professional sports in America which included African Americans years before the Civil Rights Movement and the Civil Rights Act, or at the French National Football Team which is reflected the multicultural and ethnic diversity of France long before this was acknowledged in common public discourse.

³ Usultimate.org

comparison to biodiversity and each's importance to maintaining a balanced and healthy "environment", holds that "... in Germany, the fields of music, sport, fashion, everyday computing and many others have been witness to the extensive progression of the deformation of the German 'language of culture' into Denglish" (Dieter 2001). This critique does not pose any linguistic fault or issue with the hybridization of German, but a cultural and social one – a point that is critical to the understanding of the debate on this current wave of linguistic hybridization (as will be shown throughout this work). This case and the critique thereof establishes two extremes: the extreme of English influence on the German language on the one hand, and the extremely negative reaction to Denglish⁴ (thus a purists take on Denglish) on the other hand.

To view things from an example that better reflects the amount of English influence that one is likely to hear in Germany, the next case shows a family going shopping in a city center which is an activity less influenced by the Anglophone world than Ultimate Frisbee⁵

*Das Kind: Mama! Kann ich ein **Videogame** kaufen?*

Die Mutter: Nein! Du hast genug Videospiele!

Das Kind: Aber das Videospiel sieht gut aus!

This is merely one example of the degree of English usage that one would hear when living within Germany. Unlike the first case, the environment of this usage is less influenced by English (as opposed to a sport created in America with solely English terminology). This case also emphasizes the code-switching which occurs when Anglicisms are inserted into dialogue. Additionally, one sees the generational differences in word choice. The mother understood her child and could have used the same Anglicism "Videogame;" however, a conscious choice was made to use the "more German" word of *Videospiele*. The more hopeful perspective derived

⁴ A combination of the words "*Deutsch*" and "English".

⁵ This case was witnessed during the time spent in Germany.

from this practice of code-switching is articulated by a David Crystal a British professor of Linguistics who studied the effects and acquisition of English: “[Loanwords] always add semantic value to a language, providing people with the opportunity to express their thoughts in a more nuanced way” (Crystal 2001). This perspective takes a more middle ground perspective because it neither supports nor rejects this current wave of linguistic hybridization, but merely states a position supported by the above-scenario: linguistic hybridization always adds something, and while it does sometimes take things away, it oftentimes merely accentuates what already exists by allowing for even greater clarity and, more importantly to human activity, greater creativity. This creative application, as will be shown at the end of the work, is the foundation for the most progressive and successful attempts to maintain linguistic diversity in this globalized world. Humans, being the creator species, thrive when given more tools for creativity.⁶ One of the defining features of the German language is its expansive vocabulary which includes a large number of French and Latin-based words. Therefore this acquisition of foreign loanwords is by no means a new phenomenon in Germany. Ultimately, this perspective in it of itself highlights what will be necessary to deal with this language hybridization and, as the next section will show, the crisis of linguistic and culture identity and that has been brought about by the rapid and rampant spread of English globally.

***Sprachverfall* and Language Death: Causation and Differentiation**

Perspectives on the current form of linguistic hybridization brought about by globalization, particularly the globalization of English, lie on a wide spectrum and include countless intricacies inherent with such an intersectional topic. However, one historical and

⁶Look no further than Shakespeare’s usage of French-derived terms which didn’t exist in English only a few centuries beforehand

cultural uniqueness to the German language is the idea of *Sprachverfall* which is best translated as “language or linguistic decay”.⁷ A vivid image, *Sprachverfall* carries its connotations within itself. I contend that the word carries the view that a language, the German language in its most oft-used meaning, is decaying, and as with all things that decay, it will eventually “die”. Or so it would seem.

When this word is utilized, I contend that there lacks a future implicit in its meaning. That is to say that the change is viewed as negative, a decay no less, yet there is no real plausible indication as to what the language is becoming. What I mean by this is simple; I hold that German is the language of the German-speaking people and thus whatever language these Germanic people speak is German. Thus, if these peoples speak “Denglish”, Denglish is not the actual language of speech but merely a value judgement on the current state and form of the German language. German political scientist, Egbert Jahn describes Denglish as “...the term used to describe, certainly with some exaggeration, a far-reaching, often only superficial penetration of the German language by Anglicisms and pseudo-Anglicisms” (Jahn 132). This emphasis on the superficiality of the usage and designation highlights the issue with the usage of the word decay (*Verfall*), particularly in socio-linguistic scholarship as there is a value-judgement inherent in a word as potent as “decay”. This change is merely a hybridization when defined in linguistic terms (and thus in terms devoid of an implicit or explicit value judgement). I hold that the usage of the word by any party to describe the phenomenon at hand are discussing German as a monolithic and singular entity which is a flawed notion of the language

⁷ Despite a large amount of research into the topic, I was unable to find a true etymology of the word in sociolinguistic circles. A history could exist, however I was simply unable to find it myself. This would point to the collective cultural history and function of the word as occurring naturally and not being “coined” per se by any one scholar or person.

(*Hochdeutsch* or “High German” is the German discussed most often in the literature and thus I contend that the German that is implied is “High German”).

One must also keep in mind that there exists many variants of German: *Schweizer Deutsch* or Swiss German, *Platt* or “Low German” which lacks mutual intelligibility with High German and thus could be considered another language *Österreichisch* or Austrian German which is barely understandable to most German speakers from outside of Austria and *Lëtzebuergesch* or the German of Luxembourg which is, once again, lacking in mutual intelligibility with other German variants. Thus, to speak of the future of German and of German being in a state of decay, there oftentimes is no designation as to which German is decaying as well as the different ways in which these languages are hybridizing. (Dieter, 2001). Thus, by the expression of a lack of a plausible future I merely mean that German, along with all languages, is always in constant shift and thus designating German as a singular, non-shifting entity is a practical impossibility. This implies an aspect of any language having a “pure” form which is unchanging or correct.⁸ Given the historical lack of unification of the German-speaking peoples, the different Germans which had at one point been very similar languages (as they did indeed all share a common ancestor), have diverged considerably (look at the abovementioned different “dialects” or “varieties” found in different German-speaking countries and areas) (Tenbrock, 1968).

As the theory of linguistic hybridization would indicate, German is and has been a language in constant flux. It has never not been changing, constantly influenced by individual and in-group shifts as well as by linguistic outsiders. As German cultural historian Bernd

⁸ There exists a large corpus of work on the belief of a pure German language and pure people race which does indeed have ties to National Socialism, but also existed long beforehand. However, this is not critical to the work and thus will not be covered here.

Hüppauf aptly puts it in his review of the effects of globalization on language, particularly the German language, “for centuries, German has been subjected to the impact of several 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” (2001). Since this “new” language will not be English or any other language, it will not be a different language. Therefore, the fear of German changing speaks more of the views of the observer, rather than that of the observed. Thus as Hüppauf states “...what is required is a reconstitution of the ways of perceiving and describing the situation” (Hüppauf 2001). In order to facilitate this adjustment, it will be poignant to dissect what *Sprachverfall*, itself just a negative attribution to linguistic hybridization, is often mistaken for: language death.

Language death is a sociolinguistic phenomenon where there no longer remain native speakers of a language. This is a pressing issue today given the amount of cultural and human history that is lost with the death of a language. Many surveys have been conducted to determine the vitality and number of languages worldwide; “The surveys which have taken place since the 1970s have shown us that, of the 6000 or so languages in the world, at least half are likely to become extinct in the next 100 years” (Crystal 2001). As previously stated, language death would be the logical progression of *Sprachverfall* if it was truly “decay”. What differentiates linguistic hybridization and language death is the degree of societal and political change by which they are affected. Linguistic death occurs when a group of people lose political power and social influence and necessity⁹. Taking a look at dying or endangered languages within Germany will provide a potent example. Germany has historically not been a unified state as it was not unified until the late 1800s. As a result, many regional dialects existed – in fact there are still

⁹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages>

roughly 250 dialects today¹⁰. As Petra Braselamm, a German professor who has studied language policy and language vitality throughout her career notes, “The dissolution of the little languages takes place under the pressure of assimilation to dominant languages other than English: among them are Russian, Chinese, Portuguese in Brazil, and Spanish in Latin America. Where English is responsible for languages dying as in the United States or Australia, not the globalizing function of the language but the pressures of assimilation in everyday life are the cause” (Braselmann 2001). This has also been the case with High German endangering languages and dialects such as *Platt*, *Friesisch* (Frisian), *Sorbisch* (Sorbian).¹¹ However, what is occurring with English and German today is much different as High German is not being replaced in education and most mediums of communication still take place solely in High German. Language death typically requires that the speakers stop being taught their mother’s tongue either through purposeful exclusion from public and educational life,¹² from a lack of education in the medium (as well as a lack of adequate learning resources), and from the avoidance of use within the home. This is not the case with the current hybridization of German. There is no sign that German will stop being instructed in schools or spoken in the home or in public sphere. There is merely a shift in the form of the German from the past modes of expression because of the introduction of English into the language. The perception that these two things are the same by some in the German case points to a need for further analysis on the sociological causes of this shift as well as the influence of language to a culture’s and individual’s identity.

Language and Identity

¹⁰ <https://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/articles/newspapers/news/dialect.html>

¹¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages>

¹² Such was the case of minority languages in much of Spain under the Franco regime as well as in Australia, Canada, and the United States in the case of Indigenous peoples.

Self-identity, particularly the ability to self-identify serves as a foundation for a sense of mental, emotional, and psychological security. (Medeiros et. al., 2017, Shvagrjukova et. al., 2016). Research has shown that intergroup perceptions are affected by perceptions of linguistic vitality (Medeiros et. al., 2017). Upon the “realization” that one’s sense of security is under threat, In-group/Out-group factors become hypersensitized as one feels as though one’s “group” and thus one’s own identity is being threatened. I hold that a fundamental error subsequently arises: This hypersensitization is not conducive to the development of productive means to addressing the perceived affronts upon linguistic security and vitality. Before delving further into the means of preserving linguistic diversity it is necessary to understand the roots for this claim in an international context which requires the comprehension of the relationship between nation, culture and language.

Intrinsically tied to the notion of a nation is the language(s) of that nation, particularly those endemic to the people of that nation. The notion and relationship between language and nation is discussed thoroughly by Andreas Gardt, professor of German studies at the University of Kassel. He states that, “...a concept of *nation* which is based on assumed ethnic and cultural uniformity is prone to generalizations and mystifications of various kinds: the *nation* is often seen as rooted in the - allegedly - ancient history of its people, which provides it with an almost “natural” origin. The building of the nation seems less the result of deliberate decisions of human agents than as the necessary, natural and self-evident consequence of given historical and ethnic (i.e. biological) ‘facts’” (2001). I second that therein lies the problem with the notion of a “pure” form of language - it implies a permanence of that language, itself an impossibility given the fact that all languages were created and have not always existed even within a certain cultural and

ethnic milieu;¹³ “Texts which bring together language and nation often present an ahistorical view of language: language as something monolithic and beyond time, not exposed to quick change and superficial fashions (such as foreign words). The ahistoricity follows from the logic of the argument: where language has the function of expressing and furthering national identity, it must appear firm and stable, reliably codified and easily identifiable by all its speakers” (Gardt 2001). I second that this ahistoricity has been present in the discussion of the state of the German language for many centuries. Gardt then continues “... in Germany, more than in other countries, language is used as a symbol of unity of the nation, as a symbol of being German: What makes us German - so the argument runs - is not political unity (which does not fully exist), but a common culture, common traditions, and common character traits” (2001). However, this is ahistorical in many regards.

First and foremost, as has been mentioned above, there is not one German language and while it is true that High German has attempted to alleviate this, the fact that the spoken languages collectively known as “German” vary greatly indicates the issues with any potential presumptions about a singular and non-changing German. Additionally, while there are some character traits which appear to be quite similar in Austria and Germany, those character traits are not uniform throughout the German *Sprachraum*. The argument is therefore one that is more sociopolitical than linguistic as the changes to, needs of as well as historical reality of the different German-speaking nations are quite different in many cases. Thus, this claim of a shared history may hold true intranationally, such as within the borders of Germany (although this claim has its flaws as well, given the lack of a historically unified Germany), I hold that it does not hold true for the language itself. Additionally, according to Gardt, “It is a commonplace in

¹³ Which are arbitrarily designated and demarcated themselves.

puristic statements that the frequent use of foreign words threatens not only the language in its lexical substance but also the identity of the community of speakers” (2001). I second that this view, once again, is lacking in substance as it claims an unchanging continuity within the speakers of the language. What I mean by this is simple, the speakers of German have undergone and continue to undergo the effects of globalization and thus this is likely to be reflected in the language - that is to say an increased use of Anglicisms. The Germans of the 18th century, for example, lived, in many ways, within a starkly different cultural and linguistic milieu as was reflected in the language of the time. The increased use of Anglicisms is a reflection of the current culture of the German-speaking peoples. Even though arguments against the current form of linguistic hybridization in German are lacking, I hold that that does not require the dismissal of the notion that this wave of globalization and hybridization doesn't pose concerns. Therefore the question of how to deal with these concerns shows itself.

My answer, backed by the scholarship, is two-fold. First, an understanding of the mental (Note: not physical in the sense of tangibility) fallacies affecting the creation of a productive response to this globalization. The first change needs to be one of self-awareness, meaning the perception of one's nation as unchanging, concrete, or tangible instead of as an artificial and arbitrary construction of humans: As Hüppauf, building upon his work as a German cultural historian, puts it, “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” (Hüppauf, 2001). This can even be viewed on a literal level, because, through erosion, changing sea levels, etc. no landmass ever stays the same. Thus it is through a changing of self-perception that attitudes, particularly those which are not constructive or adept at responding to linguistic globalization, can be changed. This is done through education, whether

that be in a traditional educational setting or through other means such as books, articles, documentaries, etc. I fully acknowledged that this is no easy feat and could take years to effectively implement and even longer to see results, but that does not mean that the effort should not be made. The second change which is of equal importance is the changing of the dialogue and language used to discuss the globalization of English (and, to a lesser extent, other major languages such as Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, etc.) and its effects on other languages. To return to David Crystal and his work on languages and the importance and influence of English, he describes the needed change to mentality perfectly by stating that “While recognizing the importance of world languages as a means of fostering international intelligibility, we must not forget the importance of indigenous languages as a means of fostering community identity. We need both” (2001). This understanding of the need for both a global language - one for international communication - and a *strong* presence and use of indigenous language is key to understanding both the root cause of linguistic backlash and what needs to be done to address it in an inclusive, meaningful, and lasting fashion. I second that a full integration of both a global language, a *lingua franca*, (regardless of which language that is, though English does seem to be the most likely candidate) and the indigenous language(s) is critical not just for its linguistic merits, but also as a reflection of the general trend of globalization within its social, cultural, religious, etc. contexts. However, there is a historically based fear that this melting together will not occur, and instead there will be a new form of imperialism, which, as in the cases of past imperialism, would contain a linguistic component.

Imperialism and Linguistic Hybridization: History’s Effect on the Present

These ideas about globalization and linguistic hybridization have historical foundations in the time of imperialism and the Second World War. The current wave of linguistic hybridization has been often labeled linguistic imperialism, ironically from those in countries with some of the most violent imperialist pasts such as France and Germany. However, in the case of German there is one other major period which has had a strong and lasting impact on the international standing and usage of German: the Nazi regime. As German sociolinguist Rudolf Hoberg states, one must “understand what has caused this fall of German in the first place, namely: Nazism. It was German hands which struck the first and, possibly, fatal blow to the international position of the German language” (Hoberg 2001). The fall in the international standing of German in education began during the German academic diaspora before, and during the Nazi regime. As a result of the brutality of the war and of the Nazi regime, within many countries, particularly those with the greatest international strength and standing (Russia, the USA, France, and the United Kingdom) German was a stark reminder of the war period and thus its use in publications, particularly scientific publications in which it once held high esteem, media, and advertising was severely curtailed and limited. After World War II, German became a taboo language in many countries such as England and France and it had already been a taboo language in the United States during the First World War (Hoberg 2001, Jahn 2015). Having spent time in France, I have found that German still holds many negative connotations and is a stigmatized language to this day, especially to those of the older generation. Adding another component to this fall of German is, Hoberg states that “it is not the bizarre mixture of German and English into so-called ‘Denglish’ which really threatens the future of German. It is the wide-spread contempt for our own mother tongue...” (2001). This theory of self-hatred, (a contempt for one’s own culture and, in this case, language) is not new within German society, however it evolved to

include a self-hatred that involved a factor of guilt.¹⁴ Even today, it is quite uncommon to see many German flags and showing pride in one's nation is quite less common in German than most other countries around the world¹⁵. Building upon this theory of self-hatred (Tenbrock 1968, Hoberg 2001, Jahn 2015), however, is the sense that Germans are willing to have their culture and language displaced and thus it would seem to be a willing acceptance of this "imperialism". Anecdotal evidence easily disclaims this notion as it lacks the nuance of reality. I have found that Germans do indeed feel a sense of shared guilt, but they have simply placed interest and cultural pride in areas other than the German state (to discuss the German flag again, one is more likely to see the region or city flag and colors in Germany). Thus, simply because the Germans are showing pride in other things than the collective German state, some misinterpret this as a hatred for being German.¹⁶ However, a more plausible theory for the replacement of national pride with regional and local pride is one that is also purely historical. For much its history, the area that now makes up Germany was not unified and thus pride and self-love came from the regional and local sphere and not from a nation (Tenbrock 1968).¹⁷¹⁸ This notion of regional and cultural pride is, as will be discussed in the last section of this paper, crucial to addressing the genuine concerns for language and identity loss in an area of globalization.

¹⁴ Some scholars of German history draw a line from the history of self-hatred to the post National Socialist guilt, viewing the latter as a morphed version of the former. This requires much more scholarship, which goes beyond the premises of this work, however I found it important to note the perceived line between the two.

¹⁵ However, there has been a very recent increase in nationalism in Germany as evidenced by the recent elections which saw the AFD party (who ran on a nationalist platform) gain around 10% of the seats in the Bundestag.

¹⁶ This discussion of German pride and self-guilt would require additional scholarship that goes beyond the scope and intent of this work. The introduction of these ideas in this paper is meant to highlight that this issue of German history and guilt does play a role in thought regarding Germany, but the issue is incredibly dense and nuanced and thus will not be covered fully in this work.

¹⁷ This is highlighted through the collection of regional stories, which the Brother's Grimm undertook.

¹⁸ Tenbrock's history is merely one history of German culture and its use was for pre-unified Germany and not contemporary Germany and thus any well-researched history of Germany would function for its purposes.

The current hybridizing influence of English today is quite different that the imperialism of yesteryear in a critical way: the capacity of self-determination and self-rule. With the French and English imperialism of Africa, Asia, and the Americas, indigenous groups were disenfranchised and experienced a loss of autonomy¹⁹. However, no Anglophone country is physically occupying Germany (anymore). The German people have the capacity of self-rule and self-determination and thus are physically capable of creating legislation and cultural practices to preserve their language²⁰: such was not the case for Indigenous peoples of Australia, for example (Shutnabb et. al. 1994).

This does not mean that the claims of imperialism are completely unfounded however. As Hüppauf indicates in his overview of the influence of imperialism on current linguistic debate, “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” (Hüppauf 2001). With the historical colonization and imperialism in mind, one can see that, in many ways, globalization has similarities with the aforementioned historical realities. Firstly, I hold that the role of capitalism, the importance of money implicit within in combination with the rapid advancements in technology have caused a need for countries to attract and work with the international community (itself another term, in many cases, for America and their allies). Therefore, countries are forced to use international languages, typically one of the ten most common world languages in order to achieve economic stability and growth.²¹

Additionally, imperialism and colonialism required an important hierarchy: the conqueror and

¹⁹ This is evidenced by Apartheid South Africa, the colonization of the Western Hemisphere, and Japanese Imperialism of the 20th century

²⁰ <https://www.bundestag.de/en/>

²¹ For example, many countries now have their road signs in English and their indigenous language.

the conquered.²² This hierarchy exists in a linguistic manner as English has become a prestige symbol and thus those who are native speakers of English are given a higher social ranking through their greater ability for social and economic mobility. While this is not the same as the conqueror and conquered, those with native status are given greater social mobility and prestige. Additionally Robert Phillipson, professor of English who has written much about the perceived Imperialism of English, states that “...the designations ‘native/non-native’ take some users of the language as being authentic and infallible, and stigmatize others as not being the real thing” (Phillipson, 2001). Thus, even though the form of hierarchy is less traditional, the usage of prestige languages is not (one can look as far back to the role and prestige of French during the Norman control of England as well as the role of French in Africa and Spanish in Latin America).

Despite the similarities detailed above, there remain two important and, I argue, preeminent reasons that the claim of imperialism is not necessarily a false one, but simply not the most apt. Firstly, the aforementioned differences of space and power leave too large of a difference in meaning - that is to say what one typically means by imperialism is too different from the realities of globalization for the term to be the most apt. Hüppauf holds that “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” (Hüppauf, 2001). Building upon this point, there lacks the use and centrality of force, given the ability for self-rule and self-determination. In fact, I have found that most cases of imperialism today take on their traditional form, such as in Tibet where the native Tibetan population has been removed from power and occupied by force and in Palestine where a very

²² Look no further than the treatment of Africans during European imperialism and the Indigenous peoples in the United States.

similar process has occurred²³. This imperialism is quite different in form and result than that of globalization and thus it would be remiss to use the same terminology for these very different phenomena. The second reason is one of a linguistic nature, but still important nonetheless. Languages circumscribe their speakers through a variety of different ways, but one of which is through their vocabulary. When humans don't have terminology to describe a stimuli or idea, it is created, usually. However, sometimes, when the terminology is not created, there are a number of issues that can result. For example, the use of the term "drug" or "drugs" to describe a wide variety of different substances which oftentimes have very little in common has caused issues with creating legislation and the infrastructure to deal with substance abuse²⁴. This idea is quite simple, the needs of someone addicted to heroin are not the same of someone addicted to alcohol, or opioids. It is with this problem of language that I oppose the use of the term "imperialism" to describe some of the potentially negative effects of globalization. I contend that there are specific problems with globalization that were either not present or took on a different form under imperialism.

The position that globalization is a new form of imperialism causes one more critical problem, particularly in regards to the perceptions and designations of "others". German linguist Peter Eisenberg, when discussing the racist history of linguistic purism, cites Peter von Polenz, another German linguist, who "argued that a purely etymological perspective can end up in all kinds of racist reasonings about the status of words in general and above all of [loanwords]... instead he [Polenz] suggests considering words with respect to their sociological and structural properties" (Eisenberg 2001). That is to say that by designating certain usages of language as

²³ However, these examples are merely present to highlight an important difference and not to give an in-depth review of the intricacies of those particular situations. These topics would require many papers on their own which cannot be covered here in this paper.

²⁴ Note the current opioid and crack-cocaine epidemic in the United States.

valid, or proper German (in this case), one must then define those who do not fit in with those expectations as others and improper speakers of the language. This designation is typically, as Eisenberg argues, resigned for migrants, and ethnic and linguistic minorities and thus can and often does easily devolve into issues of xenophobia, classism, and racism. While these responses are atypical, whenever one supports a certain mode of speech or language as correct, there is implicitly a designation of prestige and thus it is easy to have this same thinking devolve into critiquing and dehumanizing others who do not fit to the perceived “correct” standards of the society (once again look no further than the United States’ continual treatment of minorities and immigrants throughout its history). With all of these potentialities for issue, there are a number of steps being taken throughout the world to use globalization as a platform to both celebrate heritage and the changing cultural and social contexts of peoples throughout the world.

A Response to This Linguistic Hybridization

Linguistic hybridization, particularly the inclusion of loan words adds much value to a language. To quote Crystal’s take on the influence of hybridization on language vitality and use, “Loan words always add semantic value to a language, providing people with the opportunity to express their thoughts in a more nuanced way” (Crystal 2001). It is in this way that globalization can be used to create a richer and more diverse humanity, while also allowing for communication and interaction between all peoples. I contend that understanding the realities of the acquisition of loan words and what is typically done with them once they have been included in the language is critical to developing progressive and powerful policies to both preserve and enrich existing languages. Crystal elaborates on this point, stating that “instead of attacking loan words...it makes much more sense to develop creative strategies to foster their integration, in literature,

school, and society at large... Loanwords are the invisible exports of a world where people talk to each other” (2001) Additionally, when one looks at the history of loanwords for a given language, one sees just how important loanwords are to cultural enrichment as they provide new ways for people to express themselves within their particular cultural context. Crystal elaborates stating that “It usually takes a generation for loanwords to become integrated, though the Internet seems to be speeding up this time-frame. Looking back on previous generations’ loan-words, we value them, because we see the way that authors and others have made good use of them. It is only the current generation of borrowings that attracts criticism” (2001) I second his belief given that the argument about loan-words is no longer about the influence of French loanwords (as in the past), but about the current wave of loan-words: Anglicisms. However, with a creative and progressive approach to loan-words (as they will never stop existing), a new cultural identity can be formed based upon the new cultural milieu which has been created as a result of globalization. It is in this way that hybridization has also helped enhanced creativity and cultural expression.

There exist many instances of how communities around the world are responding to the globalizing forces in creative and empowering ways, however I will focus on one. Hoberg states that “Language provides a potential for creativity which combines linguistic competence with intellectual as well as emotional capacities. Any development of language is embedded in a definite cultural context and contributes to a definite culture. Therefore languages embody cultural history, particularly in their semantics, which may be regarded as the core of any language. It is for this very reason that the success of communication often depends very much on the art of negotiating meaning” (Hoberg 2001). One such example of this is seen in Korea through the inclusion of English in K-Pop (Korean Pop); “K-Pop is a sociolinguistic breathing space for young South Koreans to construct identity and socially connect with others. The

findings of the study show that K-Pop provides discursive space for South Korean youth to assert their self-identity, to create new meanings, to challenge dominant representations of authority, to resist mainstream norms and values, and to reject older generations' conservatism. English is used as discourse of resistance. Young South Korean artists are empowered by tactical English switches into Korean” (Lee 429). Therefore, as is typical with linguistic hybridization and globalization, the youth have found innovative ways to incorporate their cultural milieu - that of a group that has experienced both their own traditional culture while also being connected to the international community through technology, globalization, and English.²⁵

This situation exemplifies progressive and non-reactionary measures taken by a community that is very different than Germany. Acknowledging the reality of the changing and globalizing world, they have acted in a manner which actually strengthens their culture and language without treating it as a relic of a past which is meant to remain unchanged *ad infinitum*. Hüppauf contends that “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” (Hüppauf 2001). This reality of globalization is critical to creating policy and action which will serve to both enrich and preserve the cultural and linguistic traditions and diversity which are essential to developing an innovative and diverse global community.

²⁵ Another such example has been seen in Nigeria through the synthesis of hip-hop with the traditional music and themes of Nigeria to create a new and distinct Nigerian music and identity. In this hybridization of music, “...its practitioners have successfully formulated a sub-genre dubbed 'Afro hip hop' through hybridization whereby African identity is portrayed and maintained by asserting linguistic independence with the use of Nigerian languages as medium of delivery through code-switching. This is also followed by appropriating indigenous popular music style especially fuji and highlife to create a fusion that appeals to home-grown sensibilities while still subscribing to the global hip hop community” (Adedeji, 2014).

Proposed Solutions

With the abovementioned solutions to the fear of identity and language loss, there are a number of steps, outside of the proposals that I have laid out earlier in the paper, which all countries can take, as well as a number which are more specific to the German case. Many of the methods of preserving minority languages, including within Germany, can be used as models for preserving and enriching language. The first step that can and should be taken is one that is more specific to the German case as it involves using the existing local and regional pride. Youth, who are the greatest users and proponents of English, are inherently innovative in regards to language. Thus, allowing for a greater quantity of words and linguistic tools is critical and this rests upon revitalization of local dialects and customs - measures already being undertaken in accordance with the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. An understanding of the historical division in Germany provides an understanding that Germany is, along with countries like Italy, Spain, and many African nations, endowed with wide variation already extant within their cultural and linguistic history and context. This measure should be one of innovation alongside of preservation for, as was mentioned above, youth are always innovative with language and thus these languages and dialects should be revitalized through innovative means - such as encouraging their use in music, art, literature, and other cultural events. Investment in these fields will allow youth to innovate with their language and develop a distinct and innovative culture alongside of their use of English. The reasoning behind this thinking is that while English should still be taught as a means of economic importance, youth look to develop and innovate their own cultures and thus, given the fact that each region and locality has its own history and language which is endemic only to that region will allow a mixing of these languages with High German (or the other majority language(s) in order to develop a desire to innovate

with language within the youth cultures. The second approach that should be taken is one which is based on a connection with the global culture, as opposed to simply a local or regional one.

Denglish is a new language in the sense of it being different from the German of the past. However, in opposition to the negative postulations of those who oppose this current trend of hybridization, Hüppauf argues that “The invention of a new language is a decisive moment for creating a new reality in a period of migration flows and destabilized identification. Which provide fertile ground for innovative experiments with life, triggered and encouraged precisely by the challenges of impersonal tendencies in globalization” (2001). Thus it is in connecting with the global human community by way of their shared experiences of globalization, that new and creative linguistic features and cultural expressions can be formed. He goes further saying, “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... “ for “...Attempts to salvage dissolving identities by demarcating spaces and arresting time need to be identified as a politics of illusion” (Hüppauf 2001). This innovate and progressive response to globalization is also a way to foster feelings of stability in an age in which instability and insecurity seems to be a global *Zeitgeist*. Through the understanding of communities as unique and equal parts of a global human community, measures can be taken in Germany and throughout the world which both foster cultural pride, preservation, and innovation while including the shared experience of globalization, particularly the globalization of English and Anglo-American culture. Instead of opposing or attempting to limit or ban the inclusion of Anglicisms into German (an impossibility given the usage of English on the internet amongst youth) or acknowledging to futility of stopping Anglicisms,

Germany (and all German-speaking nations) should invest in and support initiatives which use “Denglish” to express the current cultural and social milieu that young Germans find themselves in. Instead of discouraging Denglish, given it the space to grow and flourish will enrich the German culture and better reflect the Germany of today. If one was to spend a day in any German city, the makeup of the populous is no longer one that is purely “German” (especially given the influx of immigrants and refugees in recent years). The language reflects this – look no further than the two cases at the beginning of the paper which highlight this new linguistic territory and reality. This situation, coupled with the increased influence of American and Anglophone culture has created a different culture and society within Germany. “Denglish” merely reflects that reality and thus, it would be wiser to use this new “Denglish” to help substantiate and create a distinctly German (or perhaps one could call it Neo-German) language and culture. Funding and investing in radio, music, art, literature, festivals, programs, etc. which push for an innovative use of Denglish would allow for greater linguistic and cultural expression which is purely German and can be found nowhere else but in Germany. While this culture will be quite different than the Germany of the past, it is an honest reflection of the Germany of the present and the near future, which is, after all, the most important Germany.

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