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"We would have to invent the language we are supposed to teach": The issue of English as *lingua franca* in language education in Germany

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The focus of English language teaching is changing from a concern with English-speaking countries, especially Britain and the United States, to the role of English as *lingua franca*. The impact of this change on understanding of teachers of English concerning the nature and aims of their subject in the school curriculum was explored through interviews with teachers in German schools. Teachers with strong academic qualifications teaching in a selective school (*Gymnasium*) rely more heavily on a focus on specific countries and cultures than those in a non-selective school (*Gesamtschule*), who have no specific academic qualifications in English. The latter are more at ease for themselves and their learners with the concept of English as a *lingua franca* than the former, although they share some of the doubts about standards and models of language competence to guide their teaching. If English is indeed to be taught as an international language, however, there are implications for teacher education and the need to re-consider the traditional Humboldtian view of the relationship between language and culture.

The Role of English in German Schools

In the course of the last fifteen years or so, English, already firmly established before as the most prominent foreign language in education by far, has gained additional ground in the curricula in Germany. English is now taught in most primary schools, has become compulsory in vocational training, has taken the place of most Russian classes in former East Germany, and has become the most important language in the increasing field of teaching other subjects through the medium of a foreign language, a field that used to be dominated by French until the late 1980s. Although English is broadly accepted and its increase usually welcomed with enthusiasm, there are some reservations with regard to its increasing dominance. Sceptics fear its effect as "killer language" on other established school languages such as French and Latin as well as on languages of migrant communities such as Turkish, Italian, Polish and Russian whose delicate hold in primary education is

endangered while English flourishes. According to them, early English and English as a first foreign language threaten multilingualism, and they suggest that English should be left until a later stage, well after another foreign or second language is introduced.

Whereas the spread of English in education during the 1960s was motivated by the Cold War and the economy of the Western Alliance, its recent further rise must be seen in the context of globalization in general and European Unification in particular.¹ As far as the latter is concerned, its official policy favours linguistic diversity, but its inner logic and economy counteract the official programme. The balance between a common language and multilingualism has become a matter of rising concern which I have discussed elsewhere (cf. Decke-Cornill 1999, 2001; see also Breidbach, this issue). The "European Year of Languages" in 2001 indicated an awareness of that tension: it supported initiatives against an impending reduction of national, local and migrant languages to home languages without, however, questioning the need of a *lingua franca*.

Because of its history, English has had a headstart on other European language to serve as that *lingua*, and today - despite many critics, including native speakers of English - its function as a link medium between speakers of different languages seems established. It is this potential that has fostered English since the mid-1980s and given it its prominence in German language policy. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder voiced a widely shared view in education policy when he asked for English to become a compulsory second language from the first years of primary school (see "Stellungnahmen: Englisch ab der 1. Klasse", *Die Woche* 17, April 21, 2000).

Thus, the shift towards English as *lingua franca* (ELF) has affected the spread of English in education. But has it also affected the substance and the objectives of English language teaching? The post-war focus of the English classroom in Germany was Britain, whose language, culture, life and institutions were at the centre of teaching and learning. From the 1960s onwards, the USA was added - albeit reluctantly by those who considered the New World unworthy of educational attention. Later on, one or two units on Australia were also included into the textbooks. With the present move towards internationalization, however, this national perspective needs to be reconsidered. "Eine *lingua franca* muß als *lingua franca* gelehrt werden" ["A *lingua franca* must be taught as *lingua franca*"], Werner Huellen pointed out fifteen years ago (1987: 58).

Two or three years ago, I started asking newcomers to my seminars about their experience with ELF. As far as their English lessons at school were concerned, none of them

remembered the lingua franca function playing any significant part. The same applied to their university studies as future English teachers. English teacher education in Germany continues very much in a national tradition. Its core subjects are English or American studies, sprinkled with the occasional post-colonial and immigrant writing.² The language is British or - to a lesser extent - American English, with a glimpse at other Englishes here and there. Near-nativeness remains the aim, and nativeness in that context relies heavily on the idea of a standard, the overall implication being that English teaching ought to prepare for communication with native speakers of standard English.

Thus, it appears that at this point in time, the case of English both as a school subject and as a subject of teacher education is rather contradictory. Its expansion is officially justified because of its international scope while its teaching remains locked into a nationalist, culture-specific tradition. English in German education is torn between the local and the global, the territorial and the non-territorial.

Teachers' Perspective on ELF: Findings from Two Staff Interviews

In the spring of 2001, I investigated this issue with the English staff of two schools in Germany to find out what teachers think about it. I decided to have problem-centred, semi-structured group interviews (Flick, 1995: 94-114) with the staff as a group, and not with the individual staff members, for two reasons. First, it is the group of teachers as a whole that gives a subject its profile in a school. Second, I had discovered previously that group interviews can be much more productive than individual ones because of the mutual inspiration between the participants.

The two schools where the interviews took place were rather dissimilar. One is a *Gesamtschule* (Comprehensive School) in Hamburg with multicultural and multilingual classes - a dozen or more different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in one class is no exception. The pupils enter at the age of 10, after primary school, and leave at the age of 16, at the end of compulsory schooling. The English staff consists of 10 teachers. Half of them do not hold a university degree in English. This is not unusual. When required, quite a few teachers in *Gesamtschulen* or *Hauptschulen* in Germany teach subjects they did not study at university. - The other school is a *Gymnasium* (Grammar School) in Potsdam, formerly East Germany, with pupils aged between 11 and 19. These pupils take the *Abitur*, the examination for university entry, at the end of upper secondary schooling. Only a tiny

minority come from immigrant families. The English staff I interviewed comprised six teachers, all with a university degree in English.

Gesamtschulen and *Gymnasien* have a very different history. The latter has a long tradition which goes far back into the 19th century when Greek and Latin were its core languages. It was only at the end of the 19th century that modern languages were reluctantly integrated into this type of élite school for the upper classes, on condition that they were taught in the manner of the classical languages, with a strong focus on grammar and translation. *Gesamtschulen*, on the other hand, are non-selective. They originate from the educational reform of the 1960s which aimed at a more democratic school system that offered all children the opportunity of higher education, no matter what their social background.

Both interviews lasted about an hour and a half. The participants each filled in a short questionnaire about their university background and their subjects. After a brief introduction to the topic, I conducted the interviews along the following questions:

- What do you think about the impending shift from a culture-specific to a global focus of English language teaching?
- In what manner does/would this shift affect the language classroom?
- Do you feel you already include lingua-franca-specific elements in your teaching?
- Does/would an ELF focus influence your identity and motivation as English teachers?
- With a view to ELF, in what way should English teacher education change?

Views expressed by both the Gesamtschule and the Gymnasium staff

All the teachers, without exception, emphasised their wish to open up the minds of their students for the diversity of people and cultures and expressed their hope to instil interest in different ways of living and thinking. Respect for heterogeneity featured prominently in their professional self-concept.

For me, the value of language teaching is to make the children aware that people do not only speak differently, they also think differently. And that one ought to respect people who think differently and speak differently. And that one can gain something on the way. (*Gymnasium* teacher)

What is important is that there is some development, that one becomes more open and aware of risks. That communication means taking risks: Watch out, misunderstanding ahead! (*Gesamtschule* teacher)

Considering the significance of ELF in curricula and public statements, it was surprising to learn that none of the teachers in either groups had ever explicitly reflected on this issue.

This a new idea for me. (*Gesamtschule*)

I don't think I can see yet what it really means. (*Gymnasium*)

Those teachers in both groups who had a university degree in English, had originally chosen that subject because of their anglophilia or americophilia. For them, a lingua franca focus posed a threat of losing solid linguistic ground:

Despite everything, I think we cannot completely do without accuracy. We must at least keep accuracy in mind as an objective. (*Gesamtschule*)

I have a thoroughly multicultural class. And I have some Africans there. And, I mean, English is their language. But I maintain that "other" should be pronounced with a [ð], not a [d]. (*Gesamtschule*)

These teachers were also afraid that ELF might imply the loss of meaningful and complex communication, that teaching and learning could turn trivial and superficial.

I think there is some danger that communication becomes extremely simplified and that something gets lost which one thought important. And if we want to teach English as a main subject, we must allow our teaching to reach some depth below the level of pure communication. To be honest, I have no idea how to tackle that. (*Gesamtschule*)

Opening their minds to a lingua franca approach also means that you want to open their minds to encounters with a variety of cultures. But if you have a little bit of Chinese here and a little bit of Indian there, I feel the danger of superficiality. (*Gymnasium*)

All this might turn out to be rather too wishy-washy. (*Gymnasium*)

Views from the Gymnasium staff

Although the above statements show that the two staff groups shared some basic common ground, the *Gymnasium* staff relied much more heavily on the maintenance of a cultural focus than the *Gesamtschule* teachers. They argued that there was no need to sacrifice Britain and the USA as main target cultures for the sake of lingua franca. In the long run, lingua franca competence would take care of itself. It would emerge as a by-product of a culture-specific approach, as long as that approach was sensitive to the inner plurality of the culture in question. They argued for a continuity between traditional English teaching and the teaching of ELF and were convinced that the awareness of cultural relativity obtained in a culture-specific English language classroom would result in a general attitude of intercultural sensitivity useful in lingua franca situations. The second and third of the following comments broadened this argument by emphasizing the fact that different target cultures were already inherent in English teaching.

Language, literature and culture somehow belong together. When I learn a language, I begin by focusing on the cultural heritage that goes with that country, including modern developments. What I believe to be especially important is not so much that you integrate all cultures, but that you teach your students what we regard as cultural awareness, i.e. that we are open for everything else. But for me, a language is always interlinked with a culture. When I learn Russian, I deal with Russian culture. And when I learn French, I deal with French culture.

You need not limit yourself to Great Britain and Australia. Our textbooks also give us some ideas on how to include Indian or African cultures and the post-colonial period. (...) If you put too much stress on the lingua franca thing, everything becomes the same. Yes, I feel that nowadays so many things are already the same everywhere, through globalization. And now the same applies to cultures. You would have to generalize, and in order to generalize, you must give up the typical, the unique. I must admit that would make me feel sorry.

The special thing about English is that we already have to open up our perspective from England to the USA, to Australia, and so on. So we know that conventions in England may be unacceptable even in the USA.

One member of the staff regarded the interplay between culture-specific English language teaching inside the classroom and ELF outside the classroom as a promising road to the complex English competence required today.

I wouldn't go so far as to make a concept of lingua franca. Because what you really have is two different objectives that fit together excellently. Our students often gain their motivation for English from their experience outside school, and they know that what they learn is also a lingua franca. What they expect from us, at school, is cultural knowledge. They want information about the specific countries. Everything else must be left to real life.

These teachers felt that a good command of standard British English was far from being an impediment in a lingua franca situation as long as the speakers were aware of the difficulties of negotiating meaning with speakers from other backgrounds. The students in their *Gymnasium* were given the chance of developing that awareness in an exchange programme with a Swedish partner school in which English served as a means of communication and in occasional multinational projects with English as the link language.

There was one area, however, in which that staff felt more had to be done - pronunciation. Although their textbooks were accompanied by cassettes with different speakers of English - Indian, Pakistani, Geordie, Nigerian etc. - the students found it hard to tolerate non-standard pronunciation in real life: "Whenever our French exchange students visit", the teachers explained to me, "they join our English classes, too. Their pronunciation has a lot of entertainment value for our students, so much so that they do not pay attention to *what* the French students say because they are too amused about *how* they say it."

To sum up the findings from this school:

- ELF was regarded as basically a by-product of an Anglo-American focus in English teaching, on condition that the approach was not overly monocultural.
- The teachers considered ELF as a less interesting approach as compared to traditional English teaching because they assumed it to be cultureless and somehow neutral, empty and abstract.
- Linguistically, the BrE or, to a lesser degree, AmE standards were maintained.
- In the realm of accent, teachers planned to broaden their pupils' experience in dealing with different types of pronunciation.

Views from the Gesamtschule staff

For some of the *Gesamtschule* teachers, the impending loss of a national-native culture in the English language classroom was regarded as a potential gain for their students. During in-service training, these teachers had been advised to create an English atmosphere for their lessons, but had been reluctant to take up the advice because they knew that it was beside the point for their pupils who would probably never travel to England. They had, however, established an exchange programme with US-American partners in which successful students took part. But the majority, these teachers felt, would rarely get in touch with the 'inner circle' of native speakers of English.

Our students are not likely to travel to England. Some travel to America, but that is a privilege. Turkey or Italy or maybe Mallorca are much more likely places for most of them and these are the places for which they may need some English.

Right at the beginning of the interview, one of the teachers admitted that the idea of a lingua franca, though rather new to her, took a burden off her shoulders. She was relieved, because the fact that she had not offered her classes the full British and American cultural programme had always made her feel guilty. ELF held the promise of more relevance and accessibility for her.

If we start from the reality that we have here, if we start from the clientèle we have here, then the lingua franca approach seems to me much more realistic. That is what the students will do with English... And as for myself, you know, this thought comes as a kind of relief to me, because in some of the forms some students really have a hard time struggling with what we want them to swallow. And - yes, I find this thought a relief.

This pragmatic and hopeful view was shared by one of her colleagues who was also troubled by the gap between English textbook topics and the world of his students.

Whenever I take a student's perspective I simply cannot understand why he should study a text about the British Museum when he has never even seen a museum or a library in Hamburg from inside. This is totally beyond his sphere of interest.

While the grammar school teachers had maintained the need to keep up a native linguistic standard, these teachers - though also worried about the unknown - were on the whole more ready to discover new communicative ground. This did not keep them from seeking some kind of standard, but they approached the problem in an exploratory rather than a

normative manner, with the issue of successful practical communication uppermost on their minds.

You know, it occurs to me that we would have to invent the language that we are supposed to teach.

How does a lingua franca function?

For me it's the following aspect that worries me: How can a lingua franca remain a lingua franca? There must be some common ground or it drifts apart just as the British and the American English has drifted apart and has reached a point where you communicate without understanding each other. How can a lingua franca contribute to mutual understanding?

To sum up the findings from the comprehensive school:

- Everything considered, most of these teachers were more at ease with the idea of a shift away from traditional school English, both linguistically and culturally.
- They were, however, also convinced that some form of common ground, some lingua franca standard, was necessary in order to allow for communicative interaction with speakers of other languages.

Although varying in degree, both discussions revealed some reservations about a loss of linguistic, territorial or cultural reference for their English teaching. The teachers were in search of a convincing answer to the question: What are we to teach? Whose English? Whose culture? These are fundamental questions at the heart of the overall lingua franca debate where they feature as the contentious issue of ownership. I shall discuss this issue within the wider framework of that debate before returning to the language classroom.

The Issue of Ownership in the Lingua Franca Debate

There is an interesting distinction that can be found in definitions of a lingua franca. For some, it is a means of communication between speakers of different mother tongues, including native speakers of the language used as lingua franca. Others are clearly restrictive and describe it as "a medium of communication between people of different mother tongues for whom it is a second language" (Samarin 1987, quoted in Gnutzmann, 2000: 26). In this radical opinion, native speakers are excluded from the lingua franca

community. There is also, of course, a third position, that includes native speakers while making them newcomers to the lingua franca world in a different way:

Here, native speakers are seen as needing to adjust linguistically, socially, and culturally in international situations just as much as anyone else: speaking with care, avoiding unnecessary idioms and slang, and toning down their regionalisms (...) (McArthur, 1998: 24)

It may seem a little surprising that the role of native speakers should play such an important part in the lingua franca debate and that there should be views that go so far as to exclude them from the lingua franca community. The position becomes clear, however, if one considers that the dream of a common language has always been accompanied and sustained by visions of world democracy and universal equality. Such visions were infused with the conviction that no living national language could fulfil the demands of a truly democratic language for all. A national language as lingua franca would inevitably mean an unhealthy imbalance in favour of native speakers of that language and their economic, cultural and social practices. It would be imposed upon the world by means of money, guns and ideologies of supremacy. The whole idea of a lingua franca continues to be permeated by fears of economic and cultural domination and loss of language and identity. This deep-rooted anxiety explains the distrust of native speakers in lingua franca contexts. In the history of post-colonialism and post-communism it has given rise to frequent struggles and has sparked off many a separatist and liberation movement in places where *linguae francae* like Russian, Spanish, French, Hindi, English, but also more regional languages dominate the public sphere at the expense of native languages, reducing these to home languages.

The case of English is affected by that difficult background. The circumstances of its rise from a small western European island to a global means of communication seems to confirm the suspicions of thinkers like Comenius, Descartes, Leibniz and many others before and after them who were interested in a neutral world language.

The desire for neutrality has meant that powerful 'natural' languages cannot serve (in the eyes of the language makers) for they are tinged, as it were, by history and 'imperial prestige'. Thus the way has been seen as theoretically clear for a constructed language to fill a yawning and bothersome gap. (Edwards, 1994: 44)

For a variety of reasons, however, constructed languages never stood a chance (cf. Edwards 1994: 43-47). For better, for worse - English has taken the place accorded to them. But the question of participation continues to be asked, now transformed into the question: Whose English?

Answers to that question again reveal two controversial positions. On the one hand, there are the supporters of standard British English as the educational norm, prominent amongst them John Honey. In *Language is Power* (1997) he pleads for standard British English as the model for a lingua franca, because it stands for an impressive tradition and history and is "the vehicle of great literature and the exponent of admired values" (Honey, 1997: 246). He denies that it is a class dialect and argues that no society – whether national nor international – can function without an agreed linguistic standard.

On the other hand, there are educators like Marko Modiano who take up a more open view. In an article entitled "Standard English(es) and educational practices for the world's lingua franca" (1999) he examines the future of language instruction and states that

(t)raditionally, for European educational purposes, standard English has been considered by many to be standard British English (BrE) with RP pronunciation, and the goal of instruction has been the achievement of near-native proficiency based on this variety. (...) Leading language experts in the UK, however, view standard English as being represented in two varieties, BrE and standard American English (AmE). If one perceives the language from an international point of view, it is apparent that these as well as other commonly held notions of language beg to be refuted. (Modiano, 1999: 3)

He regrets that definitions of standard are more often exclusive than inclusive and that they do not take non-native speakers into account. [Incidentally, the combination of Modiano's view in the lingua franca controversy and his Italian name led Tom McArthur to suspect him of "the frustration of a competent non-native language professional" (1999: 4) before he found out that Modiano was an American born and bred.]

Like Honey, Modiano does not approve of an abolition of standard, but he rejects "a prescriptive model which is possessed by privileged native speakers of a 'prestige' variety." (Modiano, 1999: 4) Instead he believes that

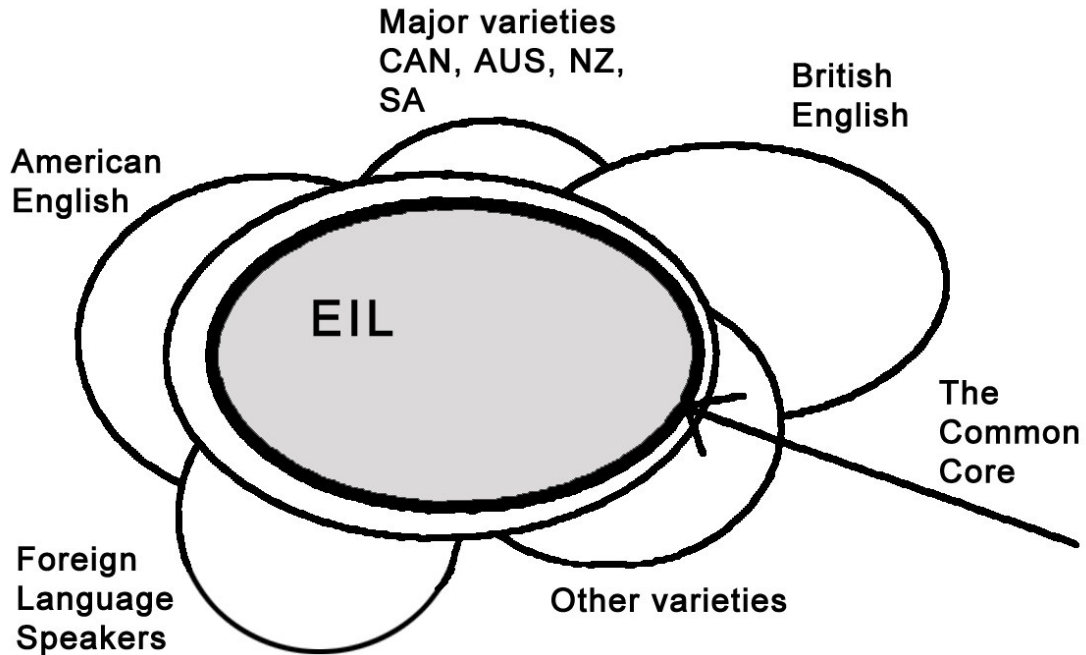
from a global perspective, it is not apparent that British 'tradition' (...) is something admirable. (...) A linguistic chauvinism, or if you will, ethnocentricity, is so deeply rooted, not only in British culture, but also in the minds and hearts of a large number of

language teachers working abroad, that many of the people who embrace such bias find it difficult to accept that other varieties of English, for some learners, are better choices for the educational model in the teaching of English as a foreign or second language. (Modiano, 1999: 6f)

In his search for a standard, Modiano does not look to some linguistic authority, but to "the speech communities which currently claim the English language as their own." He finds a discrepancy between written and spoken English, the former being relatively standardized internationally, the latter increasingly diversified around the world. It is the spoken English that he finds in need of standardization.

Standard English, as a spoken standard, must by definition only include forms of the language which are comprehensible to competent speakers of the language worldwide. Native speakers who speak with strong regional accents (and certainly dialects) are not, in my definition, speakers of Standard English. (...). The designation 'standard English' should be rooted in the communicative value of language (...) (Modiano, 1999: 7).

He illustrates his view as follows:



English as an international language (EIL) illustrated as those features of English which are common to all native and non-native varieties (Modiano, 1999: 10)

This is, of course, an abstract concept but it shows that a simple reference to a national concept of language and culture is insufficient. A lingua and cultura franca come into being if some common ground is created between speakers who are prepared to step out of their more monocultural or 'national' homes.

Looking back at the staff interviews, one could say with some simplification that the *Gymnasium* teachers shared some of Honey's views (though not his chauvinist stance). They felt that the communicative needs of their students were best served in encounters with the language of standard native speakers. In addition, school ought to provide occasions for listening to the voices of non-native speakers of English and to heighten the esteem for their unfamiliar pronunciation. Apart from that, the traditional target cultures at the centre of English language education were seen as too valuable to be given up.

The general attitude of the *Gesamtschule* staff, on the other hand, seemed to be closer to Modiano's. Most of these teachers took their students' future communicative needs as the point of departure for their teaching, and the idea of lingua franca seemed to allow for more of that. Encounters with standard speakers were not high on the agenda. Despite some uneasiness expressed about the uncertain linguistic foundation of ELF, it seemed to allow for a less normative, more process-oriented view of communication. The shift from sophistication towards successful negotiation of meaning promised to favour simplification. It seemed to give space for less instruction on the teachers' part and more exploring on the students' part.

Most of the staff would probably have agreed wholeheartedly with what Byram describes as John G. Christensen's view of less privileged learners:

(...) their own cultural capital, even if not dominant in their own society, should be valued in any interaction, as is the cultural capital of their interlocutors. This is particularly important for those learners who do not have access to the dominant culture in their own or another society and who are therefore not attracted by the worlds which FLT offers them. (Byram, 2000: 14).

In comparison, the more socially ambitious context of the *Gesamtschule* as well as its multi-cultural and multi-lingual everyday reality seemed to be more compatible with the project of ELF than the more academically ambitious and linguistically homogeneous context of the grammar school.

Some Implications for Language Teaching and Teacher Education

What are the conclusions to be drawn for language teaching and teacher education? Does it follow from the aforesaid that English studies are an impediment to ELF; that the objective of near-nativeness blocks the way to ELF much as nativeness excludes speakers from the lingua franca community in Samarin's view (see above); does it follow that ELF is a pidgin for the educationally less privileged? These conclusions would certainly be naïve and wrong. It must be borne in mind that the interviews centred around the *future* of English teaching. So far both groups still felt very much compelled to teach their classes 'proper English'; the difference between them lay in their assessment of that focus and their readiness to embrace it or to embark upon a modified approach. Whether the demands of an ELF approach are more or less difficult remains to be seen, and the question of student success depends on too many factors to be included here. At this point in time, all we can say is that ELF would mean a change of perspective. David Crystal writes:

(...) teachers need to prepare their students for a world of staggering linguistic diversity. Somehow, they need to expose them to as many varieties of English as possible, especially those which they are most likely to encounter in their own locale. And above all teachers need to develop a truly flexible attitude towards principles of usage. (Crystal, 1999: 17).

A vast and hybrid field opens up before teachers and students of English. In Crystal's words,

the chief task facing English language teaching is how to devise pedagogical policies and practices in which the need to maintain an international standard of intelligibility, in both speech and writing, can be made to comfortably exist alongside the need to recognize the importance of international diversity, as a reflection of identity, chiefly in speech and eventually perhaps also in writing." (Crystal, 1999: 20)

English teacher education in Germany needs to take up this challenge. At present, that education remains very much embedded in the philological realm of British and American studies, both culturally and linguistically, with a literary canon that mirrors the 'Great Tradition'. It continues in the vein of "the Herder-Humboldt notion that languages must be seen as expressions of cultures so that one's own language means the acculturation to one's own culture and foreign language learning the acculturation to a foreign culture. As far as languages are concerned, all pedagogical programmes since the mid 19th c. have been

based on that conviction." (Hüllen, 1998: 288, my translation). For the dream of a common language to come true, this notion must be reconsidered.

Such a reconsideration is not limited to the subject of English. A while ago, a colleague of mine spoke about something he had observed during a visit to a primary school. He was waiting outside the staff room (which is firmly barred against outsiders, especially pupils, in most German schools), watching a little girl obviously waiting like him, but much more impatiently. Finally a teacher turned up and she flew towards him, eagerly crying in German: "I've been waiting for you with four eyes." Now, "waiting with four eyes" is not a German metaphor. The child had evidently transferred it from her first language into her second. The question is what to make of it. Is such an instance an intrusion into the German language, leading to an intolerable language mix? Is the child guilty of usurpation? Or does the vivid new image conjure the situation of waiting so that it comes alive in an unexpected and forceful manner, drawing attention to the power of words, very much like poetry?

In Modiano's illustration of English as an international language he describes that language as a common core. The question of ownership has been resolved: It belongs to nobody, or rather to everyone who - using and sharing it - creates it. From this point of view, Peter Bichsel's (1997) dictum: "There is just One Language", and his approval of Jean Paul's: "Learning language is superior to learning languages", begin to make sense.

Notes:

1. As a random example see *Lehrplan des Ministeriums für Bildung, Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur des Landes Schleswig-Holstein, Sekundarstufe I*: "Englisch als wichtigste Weltsprache trägt in mittelnder Funktion dazu bei, in jungen Menschen Offenheit für kulturelle Vielfalt zu fördern, Verständnis für andere Völker zu entwickeln und Kenntnisse über historische, geographische, wirtschaftliche und politische Zusammenhänge zu erwerben. Damit fördert das Fach die Entfaltung der Persönlichkeit und hilft den Schülerinnen und Schülern, sich in der Welt zu orientieren. (...) Die Öffnung des europäischen Binnenmarktes führt zu größerer Mobilität der Menschen und noch stärkerer Zusammenarbeit von Institutionen. Der Kenntnis des Englischen kommt angesichts dieser veränderten politischen Strukturen fundamentale Bedeutung für den einzelnen zu, indem es ihm die Übernahme von Verantwortung sowie den Aufbau internationaler Kontakt im öffentlichen Leben über Landesgrenzen hinweg eröffnet. Angesichts der Realität grenzüberschreitender Informationsmedien und Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten ermöglichen englische Sprachkenntnisse die direkte Nutzung von Informationen in englischer Sprache. Damit wird ein Beitrag geleistet zur Vorbereitung der Schülerinnen und Schüler auf ihre Stellung als Bürgerinnen und Bürger in Europa" (16f)

In a recent report commissioned by the Kultusministerkonferenz on the future of upper secondary schooling in Mathematics, German and English, the experts agreed on the view,

"dass das Fach Englisch in der gymnasialen Oberstufe auf Grund der lingua-franca-Funktion des Englischen einen anderen Status hat als die anderen (neuen und alten) Fremdsprachen. (...) Aus dieser Perspektive wird vor allem die neuphilologische, an Literatur und Landeskunde orientierte Tradition des Englischunterrichts kritisiert. Sie ist für ein zeitgemäßes Kerncurriculum nicht mehr zu legitimieren." (Tenorth 2001: 156, 157)

2. The guidelines for English studies at Hamburg University support the students' statements: "Die Gegenstände des Faches umfassen die englische Sprache und ihre Varietäten, die Literaturen Großbritanniens und Nordamerikas, selektiv auch die des früheren Commonwealth sowie allgemein die Kulturen dieser verschiedenen englischsprachig-geographischen Bereiche. Das Fach Englisch kann in seiner Gesamtheit für das Studium der verschiedenen Lehrämter gewählt werden, mit der Möglichkeit der Schwerpunktbildung im britischen, amerikanischen oder linguistischen Bereich." (<http://www.sign-lang.uni-hamburg.de/fb07/Stuplan/EnglSprache.html>)

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