

Wissenschaftssprache Deutsch: international, interdisziplinär, interkulturell

edited by Michael Szurawitzki, Ines Busch-Lauer, Paul Rössler & Reinhard Krapp

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German as an Academic Language has a proud tradition, but, as is the case with other traditional international academic languages such as French or Spanish, it has lost vast domains of academic publishing (and in some cases even teaching) to English as an Academic Lingua Franca, above all in scientific and technological disciplines. An intense discussion about the role of German as an Academic Language has been going on for decades. The conference „Wissenschaftssprache Deutsch“, held at the University of Regensburg in 2014 and the eponymous edited volume resulting from it are situated in the middle of this debate. It is a bit sad that this discussion with its many interesting arguments about advantages and disadvantages of an Anglophone linguistic monoculture in some academic disciplines, of possibilities and limits of communication in an academic lingua franca such as English etc., is typically restricted to German speakers. On the other hand, there are many studies on English as an Academic Lingua Franca published in languages other than English. While a review like this tries to do what it can to help, English abstracts alongside the exclusively German papers in the volume would have gone a long way to open this discussion up beyond the German-speaking academia. Unfortunately there are none.

The volume assembles a selection from the 30 papers given at the conference – a quite large selection obviously, given that the book contains 27 papers. The preface does not discuss the criteria for selection (which is fair enough), but neither does it explain why only two of the three plenary papers at the conference it mentions (both considerably

more substantial in volume than any of the other contributions) made it into the volume. For the reviewer, the number of chapters makes it impossible to do all of them justice, and so this review will only be able to give a very short description of each of the papers.

Along the line of the volume's subtitle, it is divided into three sections covering international, inter-disciplinary and intercultural aspects of German as an Academic Language. The first section, dealing with the international aspect, contains one of the plenary papers (by Konrad Ehlich), dealing with the marginalisation of language in academia and academic languages, as well as shorter specific papers on German as an Academic Language in Burkina Faso (Jean-Claude Bationo), Latvia (Agnese Dubova), China (Han Guo) and Finland (Sabine Ylönen) respectively. Ralph Mocikat reports on the „Arbeitskreis Deutsch als Wissenschaftssprache“ (Working Group for German as an Academic Language) lobbying for a greater role of German in an academic culture of plurilingualism. Danuta Olszewska discusses the teaching of academic writing, Roswitha Reinbothe the decline of the international importance of German as an Academic Language in the 20th century. Thorsten Roelcke compares the situations during the Enlightenment and at present, both epochs seeing German and other European Academic Languages in conflict with a powerful tendency to an academic lingua franca (Latin then, English now). Klaus Wolf describes the earliest stages of the development towards German as an Academic Language in the Late Middle Ages.

The second, inter-disciplinary section deals with German as an Academic Language in domains as varied as popular books on meteorology (Eva Ciešlarová), the field of renewable energies (Federico Collaoni), archaeology (Karl Gerhard Hempel), Orthodox theology (Eva Maria Hrdinová), and German Studies in Germany and Turkey (Canan Şenöz-Ayata). Two papers deal with aspects of media: Arne Krause discusses media use in university lectures in Mechanical Engineering and German Studies, Matthias Meiler the challenges of digital media in academic communication. Gerhard Katschnig looks back to the beginnings of German language use at universities, Karin Luttermann at the present use of German as an Academic Language and as a working language of the European Union, and Christopher Hall turns his glance to the future, describing prospects of German as an Academic Language in the 21st century and outlining concrete steps to strengthen the role of languages other than English in academic communication on a national and international level. The last section with an intercultural focus con-

tains the second of the plenary papers published in the volume, Ernest Hess-Lüttich's *tour d'horizon* of a history of academic rhetoric in medical expert-layperson communication. The same situation of experts communicating with laypersons is studied synchronically by Rogier Crijns in his paper on how facts are represented and arguments put forward in popular publications on the debate about the Euro currency over the last few years. Two papers deal with German as an Academic Language for tertiary students: Silvia Demmig discusses changes in academic text types and media, and the consequences they have for academic language tests and curricula, while Mikaela Petkova-Kessanlis describes strategies of teaching text patterns typical for German academic communication. Such patterns in introductions to linguistic journal articles in German are analysed and compared in a corpus of articles by German and Czech germanists by Martin Mostýn. The papers by Claus Gnutzmann and Frank Rabe describe different aspects of a research project on perceptions of German and English as languages of academic publication held by German academics.

The division of the volume into three parts makes sense, the association of some papers with the sections they appear in appears somewhat tenuous at times (it is not clear to me, for example, why Klaus Wolf's paper on academic communication in Early High German belongs in the „international“ section). On the other hand, chapters that deal with very similar topics are separated into different sections. Thus, for example, we find one or more diachronic studies (such as the ones by Reinbothe, Roelcke, Wolf, Katschnig and Hess-Lüttich respectively) in each of the sections, and papers with an emphasis on didactic aspects also appear in all three sections. This might be an unavoidable problem for what is effectively a volume of conference proceedings. However, a subject index might have been helpful in pointing out thematic parallels between papers within and across sections – alas, no such thing was compiled for the volume.

Also not untypical for a proceedings volume is the impression of a certain randomness of topics, approaches and purposes between the 27 chapters of the volume that a reader might get when perusing all of them. Selective reading, a necessary technique for readers who look for specific information rather than trying to review the volume, could also have been supported by a comprehensive subject index. On the other hand, the wide scope of contributions to the volume provides a good insight into the many aspects that the discussion of German as an Academic Language has, as well as the varied methodological approaches and schools of thought that this debate has attracted over the

last decades. Failing the publication of a long desired handbook of German as an Academic Language, the edited volume reviewed provides an overview over the vivid and varied discussion in the field. And the list of contributors and their affiliations shows that while the medium of the discussion is almost exclusively German, the discussion itself is certainly not restricted to the German-speaking countries.

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