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REVIEWS

Deutsch und seine Nachbarn. Edited by Michael Elmentaler. (*Kieler Forschungen zur Sprachwissenschaft* 1.) Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. 2009. Pp. ix, 262. Hardcover. €48.

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The present volume consists of sixteen chapters on various aspects of contact between German and neighboring languages: "Sprachen in ihrer Nachbarschaft" (p. vii). This phrase refers to languages spoken in areas which border on the German-speaking area, such as Dutch in Belgium, or other languages spoken within the German-speaking area: "binnenländische Varietäten," such as Sorbian. There is also a chapter (by Hundt) on "contact" between Standard German and the Central and Upper German dialects. I have put the term "contact" in inverted commas since this chapter actually says little about contact between these varieties. Instead, it deals with the geographical and situational distribution of German dialects and contains a substantial amount of information on the relatively new field of perceptual dialectology. In my opinion, this chapter would have been better placed at the beginning of the book to explain what is meant by *Deutsch* in *Deutsch und seine Nachbarn*, followed by the chapters on the individual neighboring languages. English is also included as a neighboring language on the basis of its omnipresence in modern German society. However, two omissions struck me, one of them more surprising than the other: Romani (Austria and Germany included Romani when they signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages) and Turkish. Turkish is not the language of a geographically adjacent state, but it is surely as present as English in modern German society. There exists a substantial amount of research on multilingualism and language contact, looking, for example, at the influence of German on Turkish and vice versa.

Nine chapters in this volume are based on a series of lectures given at the Christian Albrechts University, Kiel, in 2008 by members of the Research Center *Arealität und Sozialität in der Sprache*. Seven experts were invited to provide more comprehensive coverage of the neighboring languages. The authors include not only Germanists but also experts in

Romance and Slavonic languages as well as scholars of Frisian and English. They were clearly not required to adhere to a standardized format but decided for themselves what aspects of the relationship between German and language X or German-speakers and X-speakers to emphasize (for example, diachronic/synchronic, social/individual linguistic contact). To a very large extent, this authorial freedom constitutes a strength of the volume with the reader benefitting from the range of perspectives and approaches.

Each chapter has a small map with some useful basic data on speaker numbers and geographical distribution of the language. The first chapter on Danish and German (Winge) sketches the historical relationship between the two or—more accurately—three languages: Up to the sixteenth century, borrowings from "German" were usually borrowings from Low German. Multilingualism (German, Low German, Scandinavian languages, French, etc.) was for many years common at court and in trading centers, such as Copenhagen. Purism and military conflict led eventually to a distancing from German, but even today some borrowing occurs.

The first sentence of Walker's chapter on Frisian reminds us how mistaken the widespread perception is that so-called nation states such as Germany are monolingual. In parts of Schleswig-Holstein, people may speak or understand up to five languages or varieties (not counting any languages imported by recent immigrants). In this chapter, Walker presents linguistic biographies in order to illustrate some factors that can influence language change and/or maintenance in multilingual situations.

Elmentaler's chapter on Low German throws interesting light on more general problems associated with standardization, such as the importance of speaker attitudes, or the fact (quite common in minority language communities) that many lay people do not share the attitudes of experts and activists toward the minority language. Furthermore, it is essential to bear in mind that attitudes are historically contingent and context bound. In particular, attitudes toward Low German are inexorably bound up with its development into a variety mostly used in the family and other informal situations, as well as with attitudes towards German, since all speakers of the former also speak the latter.

Grahl describes the situation of Sorbian in eastern Germany, concentrating on an educational project that aims to increase Sorbian competence amongst children. At the microlevel, she suggests some ways in which the Sorbian language might develop as a result of

interference from the children's German. As many of their teachers are not native speakers of Sorbian, many of these features are also present in the Sorbian used in class.

In central Europe, as many of the following contributions show, German influence often came (and in some cases still comes) from two sources: contact with German-speaking enclaves in the countries, where a non-standard form of German was often spoken, and via political, economic, and cultural contacts with Germany. Mikołajcyk gives a historical account of contact between German and Polish in the Polish city of Posen. Posen had a large German-speaking population even when it was not ruled by Prussia, and the local urban vernacular was heavily influenced by German on all linguistic levels. Nübler's chapter shows that Czech, too, was strongly influenced by German although, as in the case of Polish and German, the two languages are not genetically related. Furthermore, it is probable that some developments occurred independently in each language. Only the morphology shows resistance to German influence. Papsonová's chapter deals with German influence on the vocabulary of modern standard and non-standard Slovakian. Many of the originally German words have become so deep-rooted that purists' attempts to replace them with more "Slovakian" ones are often unsuccessful

Földes's treatment of the situation in Hungary concerns two aspects: historical contacts between the two speech communities, and the use of German and Hungarian by bilinguals today. He shows that they draw on their whole repertoire, making frequent and creative use of both languages, often in the same sentence. The fact that the two languages are not only genetically unrelated but also typologically different (for example, Hungarian is non-inflecting) makes these data especially interesting for (socio-)linguists. In Kärnten, Austria, contact is again between German and a Slavonic language, in this case Slovenian. Pohl shows how the influence is mutual even if German has almost always had the upper hand.

The next four chapters describe contact between German and various Romance languages. Liver evaluates the influence of German on Romansch, one of the national languages of Switzerland. German has greatly influenced this variety on every linguistic level but, according to Liver, this does not mean that Romansch is in danger of becoming so germanized that it is no longer recognizable as a separate variety.

However, the influence of German is unlikely to decrease. Some argue that it might be better to accept a diglossic situation without trying to compete with German as the language of all official and public domains. However, other Romansch speakers are unlikely to accept this solution.

Müller & Schmitz's chapter on German-Italian contact is the only one that concentrates on linguistic contact in the individual. It presents the findings of a study that investigates language acquisition by bilingual children; there is nothing on German-Italian contact at the societal level. The main finding is that, contrary to what one may assume, the dominance of one language does not explain why bilingual children have problems acquiring certain constructions in their non-dominant language, for example the dative case.

Contact between French and German in the eighteenth century is the subject of Hoinkes's chapter. He highlights the roles of the German nobility and the French Huguenots who fled to Germany because of religious persecution at home. His detailed account makes it clear that the influence of French during this period, while indisputably important, nevertheless varied from class to class and from situation to situation. Moreover, even amongst the nobility, who, like their peers across Europe, used French as a lingua franca, the amount of French used varied from court to court.

Gilles's chapter on Luxembourg gives a clear overview of the complexities of this officially trilingual country (in practice, even more languages are, of course, spoken). He touches on many issues that are of interest beyond the borders of Luxembourg: When should a variety be considered a language and not a dialect, or how does the education system cope with official multilingualism? Although there is a fairly clear domain distribution of the three main languages, the influence of Luxembourgish on French and German is still significant. Yet, certain genres (for example, the press) seem to make more of an effort than others to keep German and Luxembourgish apart by following Standard German norms.

However, the complexity of the situation in Luxembourg pales in comparison with the situation in Belgium. This country is also officially trilingual, and it is divided into three official linguistic regions and three communities. Those divisions are not necessarily coterminous: For example, the Walloon region includes the French-speaking and the German-speaking communities. The chapter concentrates on the situation

in the north east of Belgium, where German, Flemish, and French meet. Language is very much a symbol of group identity and the actions of the Germans and their Flemish supporters during the Second World War contributed to the spread of French at the expense of the Germanic languages. In some places, however, the local (Germanic) dialect has benefited as the standard French and Flemish varieties are too "politically loaded" to be used as a lingua franca by communities that are split in their loyalties between Walloon and Flemish Belgium.

Meyer's chapter on English influence on German completes the volume. On the whole, it is a differentiated account of the extent to which English influences modern German. Interestingly, Meyer includes a section on the influence of German on English, a topic that has spawned far fewer studies over the years. In his summary of recent studies of anglicisms in German we find some surprising facts. For example, the use of anglicisms in newspapers is not appropriate for the level of English we can assume on the part of the readers. Anglicisms also seem to be used in a more differentiated fashion than is sometimes claimed (for example, fewer anglicisms appear in advertising aimed at older people). However, what I find distracting in Meyer's analysis is his tendency to pass judgment rather than to describe developments, as in "Auch *Zentrum* wird vielerorts unter dem Einfluss des Englischen wieder zu *Centrum*; gelegentlich wird sogar *Zirkus* relatinisiert zu Cirkus. Nachahmenswert ist dies nicht."[1] The final comment is surely out of place in an academic work of this nature.

To sum up: this is a fascinating volume that brings together a wealth of material in one place. We learn not only facts about the contacts between German speakers and speakers of neighboring languages past and present, but we are also given an invaluable insight into a range of different linguistic and sociolinguistic issues.

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[1] '*Zentrum*, too, is often changed back to *Centrum* under the influence of English; occasionally even *Zirkus* is re-Latinized as *Cirkus*. This is not to be imitated.'