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in the German Context**

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## **Globalization and its Impact on Higher Education in the German Context**

### **Introduction**

There are several political and cultural phenomena currently changing the face of Europe. Most noted is the elusive trend of globalization, a multi-dimensional, highly-complex process with contradictory forms and a complex mix of effects everywhere it has influence, a process that has been called "... multi-faceted in its operations, ... massive in its reach and implications and... elusive as a concept" (Dale and Robertson 2003: 4). The social scientist Roland Robertson (1995) has shown that globalization is appropriated differently by the various societies it affects; therefore, it is important to consider each individual place with its specific history, culture and politics in order to evaluate different outcomes of the process. This is why Shome and Hedge (2002: 253) call for research which "geopoliticiz[es] the national and locat[es] it in large (and unequal) histories and geographies of global power and structure." Following such advice, this analysis explores the process of globalization and its effects on one particular context: the German university. Such research is undertaken to help fully understand the process of globalization and how it is affecting institutions of higher learning.

One significant side effect of globalization has been the spread of the English language. The position of English in the world today has been considered "both a consequence of and a contributor to globalization" (Fishman 1998-99: 27), or "the linguistic-communicative correlate of globalization" (Gnutzmann 1999: 159). Intensified contact between international communities has required that more people communicate across more borders. This trend can be acutely seen in Europe, where English has stepped in to fill the role of lingua franca in light of several significant developments: the end of the Cold War, the reunification of Germany, the establishment of the European Union (EU), and the advance of globalization. English is now being used alongside native languages in every European country, and several studies have shown that its domains of use have increased significantly (e.g. Coulmas 1991; Hartmann 1996). A recent survey shows that English is the language most widely spoken in the EU, with over 180 million speakers, but it is the mother tongue of only a third of that number (de Lotbinière 2001: 158). When asked what language they find the most useful besides their mother tongue, 75% of Europe's population replied that it was English (Eurobarometer Report 2001: 1). In all EU member states, English is generally the first foreign language learned, and all together 91% of pupils learn English (European Commission 2001). Labrie and Quell report in 1997 that nearly one third of the citizens of the 'non English-speaking' countries in the EU at the time were able

to speak English well enough to take part in a conversation. In other studies, it has been noted that “people in countries such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands, and to some degree Germany, have acquired English so successfully through school or media that they can slip into English with great ease” (McArthur in Graddol 1999a: 7-8). Consequently, English has evolved into the default language of communication between EU member states (cf. Cenoz and Jessner 2000), and its extensive use can be observed in several domains, such as business, media and academia. As Phillipson (2001) notes, “[i]n reality English is no longer a foreign language in several member states... It is a fact of working and social life for many EU citizens.”

## **Higher Education and the German Context**

Germany is one of the countries in the EU where the impact of English in the last decades has been strongly felt. The influence of English has been documented in a range of domains, including politics, business, advertising, law, the media, and science and research (Hilgendorf 2001). Also in higher education the impact of English has been great, as policy efforts to globalize the curriculum simultaneously have entailed new functions for the language. No longer restricted to being a subject of study in Germany, English now also is being used as a means of communication in teaching students other subjects. This new function of English as an additional or second language (L2) of instruction is understandable, given the instrumental motivations inherent with economic globalization and the supranational structure of the EU. Within the German context, policy initiatives on both the European and national level have provided impetus for the function of English as an L2 to emerge.

## **European Policy Initiatives**

Following economic and political unification in 1992 within the framework of the EU, officials responsible for education policy in numerous European countries sought to establish a more uniform system of higher education throughout the continent. Preliminary meetings in Lisbon and Paris (1998) led to the signing in Italy in 1999 of the Bologna Declaration. Endorsed by education ministers and officials from 29 European countries, the measure outlines specific objectives to be achieved by 2010 for establishing what has been termed a “European area of higher education.”<sup>1</sup> Overall the goal is to ensure greater compatibility among educational institutions across Europe, which in turn it is hoped will enhance the international attractiveness of higher education on the continent. To this end, the Declaration outlines the following concrete aims:

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1 In anticipation of the expansion of the EU, signatories were not limited to the 16 European Union member states at the time. Instead, they included nations from a broad geographic understanding of Europe, extending from Iceland in the west to Bulgaria in the east, and from the Baltic States in the north to Malta in the Mediterranean.

- a. “easily readable and comparable degrees,” to be facilitated by an explanatory Diploma Supplement,
- b. a system of two main education cycles: undergraduate (bachelor degree) and graduate (master degree and/or doctorate),
- c. a system of credits,
- d. promotion of academic mobility for students, researchers, and educators, and
- e. cooperation in quality assurance.

Subsequent meetings to assess progress towards these goals were held in Prague in 2001 and Berlin in 2003.

### **German Policy Initiatives**

Within the German context, these European policy measures have given impetus to significant reforms in higher education. First and foremost is a general priority to attract more foreign students, scholars, and researchers to the country. In the year 2000, Germany’s Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF 28 Feb) announced that “*Germany must become internationally more attractive as a place for academic study.*”<sup>2</sup> Concrete goals to this end include increasing foreign student enrolment from ca. 5% to 10% while similarly increasing the number of Germans studying abroad from ca. 10% to 20% (DAAD 2001; BMBF 28 Feb. 2000). Aside from the European initiative of promoting mobility between nations on the continent, further reasoning behind this mandate is one of broader basic national interest. Through educational exchange and cooperation, the government aims to promote further interpersonal contact beyond European borders, which in turn it hopes will lay the foundation for future global relations in politics and business. Moreover, as there is a growing lack of technologically skilled labor in Germany, “[t]he necessity to make German universities more accessible to foreign students... is considered important for the country’s economic and political future” (Ammon 2001b: 357). Courses now are being offered in English because

they would otherwise be unable to attract foreign students or foreign scholars and scientists, since these individuals usually know English but are reluctant to learn still another foreign language for their studies or work at a university abroad. They are even less inclined towards such foreign language studies given the fact that universities in the non-Anglo-Saxon world usually suffer from less prestige than those of the major Anglo-Saxon countries (Ammon and McConnell 2002: 7).

In an article in a university newspaper about courses now offered in English, some foreign students revealed that they would not have come to Germany if they did not have the

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2 This and all subsequent citations in italics are the authors’ translations of quotes originally in German.

opportunity to study in English, as it is difficult to acquire a third language during their studies (Pietschmann 2001: 6).

The collective reasons for the use of English at German universities are well summed up by the message of greeting from Germany's Minister for Education and Research, which she delivered at the European Year of Languages Conference at the Freie Universität (FU) Berlin (Buhlmann 2001: 41):

We want to make German students fit for the international labour market and to bind foreign students to Germany as a study location through attractive courses of study. Germany as a location for education must be liberal-minded and tolerant in its dealings with foreigners. We must more intensively recruit young foreign scientists, students and skilled personnel. Germany needs highly qualified scientists from abroad. We want to enrich the global talent pool as well as make maximum use of it. It is only in this way that we can advance Germany's position as a centre of science.

This emphasis on enhancing the international standing of its higher education system serves not only the purpose of attracting more foreign students and scholars to the country, but it also is considered an equally important factor in dissuading highly educated Germans from going overseas, where many seek better professional and academic opportunities. In an interesting example of English use on the governmental level, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has coined the motto "*Brain Gain statt Brain Drain*", or "Brain gain instead of brain drain", to articulate its primary objective in internationalizing higher education (BMBF 27 Feb. 2001; 9 Nov. 2000). A study for the Federal Ministry explains the cause for concern (Center for Research on Innovation & Society 2000): "*In some industrialized countries... there is growing criticism recently over the increasing 'export' to the USA of highly qualified young scholars and technology experts as well as specialists in the natural sciences.*"

In the case of Germany, the number of highly qualified scholars and researchers in the US, especially in technological fields and the natural sciences, is significant. According to one government-sponsored study, ca. 14% of all young scholars with a doctorate go to the United States, ranking Germany third in numbers after China and Japan. With respect to foreign professors teaching at US universities, Germany ranks fifth following China, India, Taiwan, and Great Britain (Center for Research on Innovation & Society 2000). In effect, Germany has not been capitalizing on the international market of higher learning, whereas in contrast higher education is now the number one export product of the US (Boxer 2002: 194).

In order to reverse this development and achieve instead the aforementioned "brain gain", the government has begun implementing the European policies outlined earlier, giving particular emphasis to the concept of internationalization. In the German context, however, this internationalization and the effort towards greater compatibility with other European institutions simultaneously entail significant new functions for the English

language. In other words, in the German context, internationalization signifies an Englishization, or an adaptation towards English, both for the domain of education and the German language. As defined in the Oxford Companion to the English Language, edited by McArthur (1992: 335), Englishization means "...to adapt towards English..." and may occur on a number of linguistic levels: "phonology, grammar, lexis, discourse, registers, styles, and genres..." This process is occurring primarily in three areas:

- a) the modification of current programs of study,
- b) the creation of new degree programs specifically designated as "auslandsorientiert" or internationally-oriented, and
- c) the recruitment of international faculty, researchers, and scholars.

With respect to the internationalization of existing degree programs, the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) in cooperation with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions in Germany (HRK - Hochschulrektorenkonferenz) have introduced several measures, some of which reflect a simultaneous Englishization (BMBF, DAAD, and HRK 17 Apr. 2000):

- a. the introduction of both a Bachelor and Master degree, in addition to the standard domestic degrees of Diplom, Magister, and Staatsexamen,<sup>3</sup>
- b. the offering of a "Diploma supplement", written in English, to explain the German degree,
- c. the introduction of integrated semesters/years of study abroad as part of degree programs, and
- d. the offering of advanced language courses in conjunction with fields of study, i.e. courses in Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), or, as one bulletin specifically notes as an example, "Fachenglisch" ("English for specific purposes") (DAAD 2001).

The second aspect of this reform, the creation of new, internationally-oriented degree programs, has been inaugurated through annual government-sponsored grant competitions over a five-year period, from 1997 to 2002. According to a joint press release from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the German Academic Exchange Service, and the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions in Germany, "*the(targeted) participants of the supported programs of study are approximately half Germans and half foreigners.*" Furthermore, language barriers are to be addressed "*in the*

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3 Although a representative from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF 29 May 2000) explicitly denies that the new degrees are "*a simple copy of the Anglo-Saxon system*", they obviously were introduced in order to compete with the tremendous success of U.S. academic programs in attracting foreign students and scholars. Other similarities, at least to the American system, are the introduction of a course credit system and a timeframe outline for degree completion, both of which did not previously exist in German higher education.

*first semesters... with courses in English,*” the assumption being that foreign students eventually would transition to coursework in German. In addition, supplementary language courses for both English and German were to be offered (BMBF, DAAD, HRK 17 Apr. 2000).

During this initial five-year period, the government awarded funding for creating 60 such internationally-oriented degree programs offering the new Bachelor and/or Master degrees.<sup>4</sup> Funds for the 60 selected programs were granted to 49 institutions of higher education in 15 of the 16 federal states. The details of curricular design and program implementation were left to the individual academic departments and/or faculty, and as a consequence the government-suggested program guidelines have not or could not always be implemented. For example, although equal numbers of foreigners and Germans are targeted for enrolment, this goal has not always been reached. Language policy also varies depending on the program and the students enrolled; while some programs do offer only initial coursework in English before transitioning to instruction in German, other degree programs are taught completely in English. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to assess the language use in these 60 government-funded degree programs, an examination of the degree program titles suggests a significant role for English: 55 of the 60 are in that language.

## **Local Impact**

Although German remains the majority language in almost every domain of language use in Germany, the importance of English is rising, especially within academia. In the past, European universities were essentially national institutions and therefore German was the undisputed language of study in Germany for the last century.<sup>5</sup> In general, the language of the German university is still German, but the domains for English are expanding so rapidly that it is fair to ask how long it will remain so. Until recently, only individual courses with guest professors or lectures within English departments were conducted in English. Now functions of the language are spreading to more and more disciplines. This is due, in part, to the global dominance of English as the language of academia. Ammon’s (2001a) edited volume illustrates that English serves as the lingua franca of science internationally; it is the leading language of academic publications and conferences. Further research by Coulmas (1985) highlights that in almost every discipline the most important publications appear in English. As part of a survey of English use which was undertaken at the Freie Universität in Berlin, one PhD student of musicology noted, *“I started to write in English, because the market for German articles is not very big. Furthermore, in Germany only one journal of*

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4 Three of these degree programs offer in addition the traditional German *Diplom*.

5 Latin was the first language of study beginning with the founding of academic institutions in Germany in the late Middle Ages. Until the nineteenth century many academic institutions continued to use Latin to varying degrees as the language of academic study.

*music education exists, which has an edition of 3500 exemplars a month. This is not enough. English journals are more widespread.*” English is also spreading as a language of spoken academic communication, as an increasing number of conferences in Germany are conducted in English (Hilgendorf 2001). In fact, Ammon (2001b: 349) maintains that “German is now probably used less than English, even within the German-speaking countries, for international communication; from some international conferences and journals of the natural sciences it has even come to be totally excluded.” In a recent study, Ammon and McConnell (2002) assert that teaching in institutes of higher learning is yet another domain in which English is on its way to becoming the EU’s dominant lingua franca.

## **FU**

The following section will present an analysis of the role of English in a particular German university, the Freie Universität Berlin (FU), to illustrate the effects of globalization and Europeanization. The FU is a major university with approximately 43,500 students, where a qualitative analysis of students’ use of English has been carried out over the last five years. This analysis shows that the use of English is increasing, not only for international but also for European and national academic communication. This empirical study contains data collected during interviews with students of several disciplines who required a certificate of English proficiency. It also takes into account the results of a statistical analysis of 101 questionnaires from students of English in the departments of North American Studies and English Philology<sup>6</sup>.

### Courses with outlined prerequisites for English

At the FU, as probably is the case at other universities in Germany, there are two types of policies on the role of English and its use: the explicit policy outlining the degree of proficiency needed for specific academic programs, and the unstated or invisible policy where proficiency is simply assumed for other fields of study. As for the former, at the present time there are only three programs listed as Master programs conducted in English on the FU’s website (Freie Universität Berlin 2003b): East European Studies, Polymer Science, and Veterinary Public Health. This number is expected to rise with the introduction of the European Bachelors/Masters system. English is necessary for admission to these programs for several reasons: much of the reading is in English, they are open to foreign as well as to German students, they are sometimes taught by professors from other countries, and they are designed to prepare students to work internationally.

Yet it is not the quantity of degree programs that are offered in English that is surprising; it is the number of disciplines in which English is regularly used. Students at the FU report that for most courses of study, at least a passive knowledge of English is

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6 For more on English in the German university classroom, see Erling (forthcoming).

mandatory. In a new listing of FU degree programs (which has also been published in English), 40 out of 76 degrees list proficiency in English as an entry requirement (Freie Universität Berlin 2003a). These programs include Art History, German Linguistics, Mass Communication Studies and Psychology. Even language-based courses such as Dutch Language and Literature, Iranian Studies and Japanese Studies require English, as it is the principal language of the required secondary literature. Among the students surveyed at the FU, one respondent noted, “*(u)nderstanding English is almost a requirement for studying at a university no matter what subject you study because a lot of scientific essays and some lectures are written or held in English.*” The results of the FU student questionnaire show that an average of 59% of students’ required university reading is in English, with responses ranging between 20% and 90%. In the disciplines of Psychology and Social Anthropology at least half of the required literature is in English. The need for English is slightly higher for students in advanced levels of study, but even students in their first three years of study are required to do much academic reading in English.

#### Courses assuming English proficiency without explicit requirements

As mentioned above, in 40 of the 76 degree programs offered at the FU English proficiency is a requirement. Some of the programs where English is not explicitly required are Biology, Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science, Business Administration, Economics and Political Science. However, these are fields in which students have noted the most obvious presence of English. The dominance of English in the pure and natural sciences in Germany is well documented (Ammon 1998; 2001b; Hilgendorf 2001; Viereck 1996), so it would be expected that courses in these areas would also require English proficiency. One FU student of biology even noted that “*without knowledge of English it is very difficult to survive in the scientific world.*” But perhaps the need for English is so obvious that it is not perceived as necessary to outline this in a stated policy.

Skudlik (1992: 503) noted an advance of English in the social sciences in Germany. Fields such as Economics and Political Science have been notably affected by Anglo-American academia and therefore also demand at least the passive knowledge of English, as much of the most current reading material is only available in English. Comments by FU students support this finding. One student notes, “*I need English for my studies in Political Science. It is very interesting to read what people from America or England think about political decisions of German politicians.*” Another FU student comments, “*Many brilliant books on economics are written in English and without reading them I cannot finish my studies successfully.*”

At the FU, one can also see the effects of globalized academia in the number of guest professors from around the world who hold their lectures and require students to write papers in English. Several departments regularly invite English-speaking professors from abroad. A student who has taken such courses notes the following: “*When there are guest professors for media studies, many times they speak in English although they are not native*

*speakers themselves.*” An example of one such course offered by the Institute for Social Anthropology is ‘Anthropological Issues in West Africa,’ which was taught by a visiting professor from Nigeria who gave lectures and expected students to write papers in English. Additionally, a student of Economics noted that one (German) professor only teaches in English; however, students still have the option to take courses in German with other professors.

It is important to note that although some professors and students show a preference for English at times, the language is not yet a necessity in all fields. One business student notes that “*while it is definitely easier to get along if you know English, it is possible to do without.*” At the same time, the use of English does not prevent students from attending courses taught in the language; on the contrary, they are usually popular since students enjoy the opportunity to hear the views of non-German experts.

The impact of globalization can also be seen in the amount of students who have the opportunity to study or work abroad as part of their education. In fact, a year abroad acquiring international practical experience is becoming a necessity for joining the German labor market. Among the students questioned, there was an extremely wide variety of exchange program plans: studying political science at a private university in St. Petersburg, participation in a theatre festival in Toronto, an internship at a Rhino Park Veterinary Clinic in Namibia and volunteer work at an NGO in the Philippines. Regardless of the location, proficiency in English was a necessity.

### Erasmus students at the FU

European mobility and exchange of ideas that is promoted by the European Commission have been carried out in university programs such as the European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus). The Erasmus program is designed to enable students to study at a university in another EU country usually for six months to a year. With the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), any courses or exams completed at foreign institutions are recognized by the home university. Although these European programs were designed to encourage language learning, they are also supporting the use of English in Europe. “[M]ore and more universities are beginning to offer programs in English because mobile students are often unable to follow courses in the language of the host institution” (Mackiewicz 2001: 1). German students who go on an Erasmus exchange in Finland, for example, do not necessarily need to learn Finnish for their studies, as the language of instruction is English. FU students regularly apply for European exchanges that require proof of English skills, such as working on a medical research project in Malta, reading Scottish Law in Edinburgh, or studying chemistry in Stockholm. Additionally, students not only go on exchanges to native-English-speaking countries to improve their language competence, they also go to universities where English use is more widespread than in their home institutions. At the FU, there is a constant stream of students from French and Spanish universities who come to Berlin to study English. Many note that

Germany was not their first choice of a place to study, but because of the popularity of programs in Europe's English-speaking countries, Germany is an attractive alternative.

## **Pedagogical and Policy Concerns**

This final section points out several educational issues that need to be discussed as a result of the spread of English in higher education.

Currently in Europe a general fear of American cultural and linguistic dominance can be sensed, however, several linguists have shown that English and other national languages can and do co-exist. Therefore, the spread of English cannot be equated necessarily with the neglect of other languages. Brutt-Griffler (2002) argues that in the global context English performs important functions without usurping the domain of national languages and that a feature of World English is stabilized bilingualism. Wright (2000: 214) maintains that in Europe, English is learnt only as a lingua franca for access to knowledge, and it does not appear likely that English will replace any learner's mother tongues. Additionally, House (2002) argues that English as a lingua franca does not pose a threat to individual European languages or multilingualism. She cites findings that show that the impact of English on discourse norms in the genre of scientific texts rarely exceeds the import of lexical items. Graddol (1999b: 66) acknowledges that a higher proportion of the populations of European countries use English than in the past, but argues that this reflects increased bi- and multilingualism rather than abandonment of other languages. He also notes that English is functioning more like a second rather than foreign language in Europe, so this may mean that the foreign language learning space will be freed up for other languages. Moreover, students remarked that since competence in English is practically considered a given in Europe, knowledge of a third or fourth language gives them a competitive edge. In fact, several students applying for exchanges to places where English is a lingua franca intend to learn the national language as well, e.g. one student planning to study in Holland was actively learning Dutch, and another applying for an internship in Tanzania was planning to learn Kiswahili. Finally, the growing number of foreign students in Germany could also result in an upsurge of German learning, as they will inevitably acquire at least basic skills in the language. In fact, the empirical analysis at the FU shows that 16% of the students surveyed in the language learning centre were non-German and all of them were either fluent in German or learning the language, even those Erasmus students who were in Berlin for one semester to study English.

## **Pedagogical Issues**

Given the social reality of English use in Germany, as well as in Europe and abroad in general, it is important to consider potential responses in the educational domain to the wider functional range of English. As de Swaan (2001: 187) notes, we need "expertise and advice on how to cope with the precarious coexistence of peripheral or central languages

with an increasingly dominant hypercentral language.” It may be true that many students find it difficult to communicate in English at the high level of proficiency required in academic settings, especially in theoretical and discipline-specific discussions. Efforts should be made to ensure that students are provided with the means to both comprehend and contribute to academic discourse in English.

An obvious way to help students achieve a higher-level, academic proficiency in both receptive (listening comprehension and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing) is to offer advanced coursework that targets such skill development. At the moment, however, few such courses are offered; in fact, skills in reading and writing academic English are seldom taught. As one student reported, “[i]t would be great if we had English courses at our institutes in which we could learn the specialized terminology of our field” (in Pietschmann 2001: 6). This lack of preparatory courses may be due to shortages in funding and resources at German universities. However, it also seems as if the need to teach academic English has yet to be recognized by many departments; instead, the impression is that students are responsible for making sure that their language skills are good enough for completing their studies in English.

Clearly there are many advantages for introducing courses in academic English that would prepare students better to interact with the international community. De Swaan (2001:189) points out that students who are proficient in English also share the advantage that native speakers have, “acquir(ing) access to many more people than any other language could ever afford them.” Such students profit from the ‘cultural capital’ of English (Bourdieu 1991).

Beneficial courses on developing proficiency in academic English could focus, for example, on reading strategies, academic writing, and rhetoric. For developing advanced reading skills, strategies instruction based on second language acquisition research has been shown to provide students with the means to comprehend a text in spite of linguistic or lexical deficiencies. Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes’ (1991) procedural model for integrative reading illustrates how top-down processing, with its emphasis on macro-level text features, combined with traditional bottom-up processing focusing on grammatical structure and vocabulary, can enable students to successfully read authentic texts already at the beginning of their language study. Attention to macro-level text features such as genre (a review, essay, journal article), extra-linguistic information (pictures, charts, etc.), and discourse structure (titles, subtitles, topic sentences) provides students with meaningful information that is significant for interpreting a text. Activating students’ background knowledge on a subject as well as drawing on their general world knowledge further aid in text interpretation while compensating for lacking linguistic proficiency. Not only language learners, but also non-native speakers and native speakers can benefit from such approaches.

In addition, courses in academic writing should be offered for advanced students and researchers. However, the traditional focus on acquiring grammar and lexis has to change.

As Mauranen (1993) notes, while knowing lexis and grammar is important, it is not everything. It is also necessary to heighten student awareness to the fact that different varieties of English exist and that communication is about “negotiation of meaning”, irrespective of the variety you speak. All speakers, both native and non-native, adjust to one another in order to communicate. In foreign language pedagogy, teaching skills to communicate (paraphrasing, negotiation of meaning, strategy instruction in listening, reading, speaking, etc.) using the medium of English is equally important, if not more so, than teaching a particular form of English.

Moreover, students need to learn how to manipulate the resources of English to their advantage. They must be made aware of the differing organizational techniques and styles of argumentation found in English writing. Mauranen (1993: 1) notes that when writing in English subtle differences in academic conventions put nonnative academics “at a rhetorical disadvantage in the eyes of Anglo-American readers, and others who have acquired Anglo-American rhetorical preferences in academic writing.” She shows that problems involving a lack of cohesion, the use of the English article system in an inappropriate way, or divergence in thematic progression strikes readers as a lack of coherent writing or thinking. To this list Flowerdew (2001) adds the difficulties in trying to win over audience with a different language. He found that while editors were tolerant of surface errors, they reported several major problems in nonnative English academic writing: a) the failure to show the relevance of the study to the international community, b) failure to carve out a niche in the introduction, and c) the absence of authorial voice. However, Flowerdew also found that most journal editors and referees were sensitive to the problems that nonnative speakers have in writing in another language and even went out of their way to help them, as they welcome different perspectives and want to live up to their claim of being international.

Once students are informed, they can then make the choice to either follow native-speaker norms or purposely flout them. As Fairclough (1992: 54) argues, students’ linguistic practice “should be informed by estimates of the possibilities, risks and costs of going against dominant judgment of appropriate [academic] usage.” Students need to be aware of the consequences involved in their decision to use English as an academic language and should be offered other options in academic writing: they could, for example, follow the traditional Anglo-American writing norms, stand by their nonnative idiosyncrasies, or decide to write in their native language. This way they can retain “the possibility of making an informed choice either to follow or not the cultural preferences or norms of the other culture” (Mauranen 1993: 262).

Yet, even if this awareness is created, it doesn’t necessarily imply that students of other languages will not be discriminated against in English.

Dominant cultures usually indicate the norms of good writing... [I]n order to get published, it is necessary to adopt the language and rhetorical practices of the English-speaking culture. This may not [sic] a desirable state of affairs for the academic world. Not only does it disadvantage academics in minority cultures,

but it may also lead to reduced variability in academic writing more generally. If the rule of Anglo-American writing norms leads to excessive standardisation of research reporting, it may also have consequences which limit variation and innovation in the research itself. The coexistence of several rhetorical traditions in the international academic community is probably healthy for research. Appreciation of the existence of different rhetorical traditions can hopefully be enhanced by describing their features, and searching for their underlying principles” (Mauranen 1993: 263).

Or as de Swaan (2001: 192-93) remarks:

If English is now widely adopted as the language of transnational communication, it should all the more be used in a critical vein, with a keen ear and an alert eye for the hegemonic message that the hegemonic language seems to convey so naturally. But as the language of global communication, English also allows dissident voices to make themselves heard all over the world. If English is the language of the powers that be, it is also the language of empowerment.

## **Conclusion**

In acknowledging the advantages that English offers, de Swaan (2001: 193) notes that the language “allows (students) to attend university, seek the most rewarding jobs at home or abroad, choose from the full supply of global media culture, and keep abreast of advanced science and technology: it opens the world to them” (de Swaan 2001: 193).

Robertson (2003: 264-65) argues in his enlightening book on globalization that we need effective strategies to handle the reality of human diversity. These strategies can be cultivated through education.

Education must reflect the diversity of the world and prepare children with the co-operative skills that they will require later in life. It must promote a dialogue that brings together people from different national cultures and religious backgrounds... It must enable them to examine their own societies and traditions critically. It should prepare them to regard themselves as human before all other identifications. It should enable them to understand what it is like to be someone different from themselves. To that end, education must provide students with knowledge of other cultures; it should enable them to learn other languages, to understand the histories of minorities in their countries, and be familiar with issues concerning gender and sexuality.

The task of the applied linguist is to try to understand these processes and try to ensure that globalization remains a democratizing force and not one that causes great loss.

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