

# Multilingualism in the Production of Academic Discourse:

## a Work in Progress Report

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# Sustainability & Multilingualism

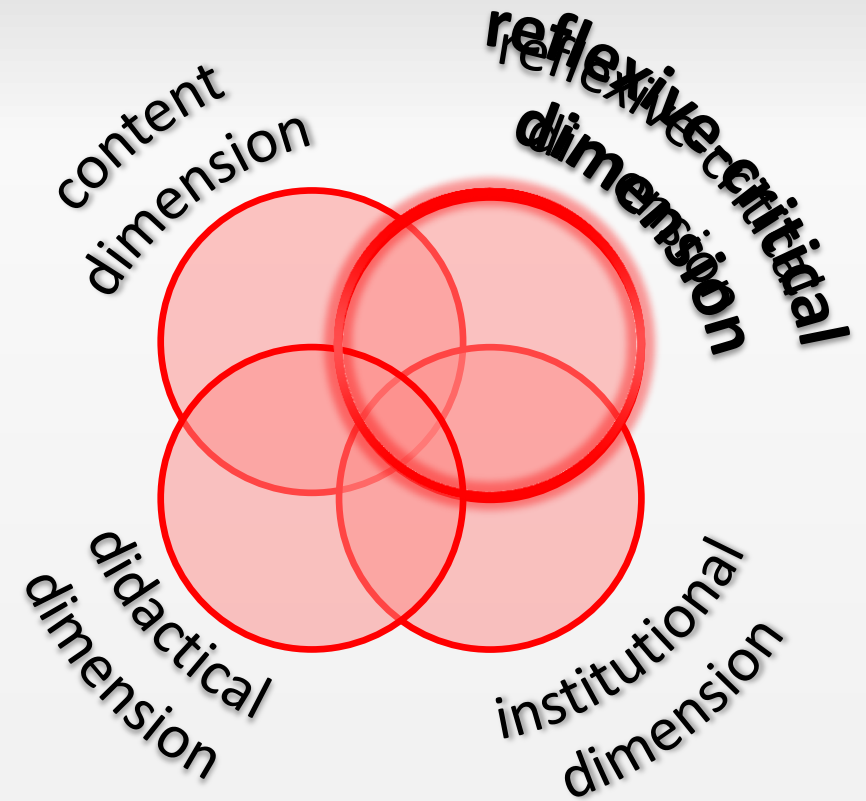
## Position Paper for Sustainability (2013):

### Sustainable university development

- “*weakened* by the increasing industrialization of the academic system”
- could be “*revitalized* by decoding the foundations of one’s own discipline”



- *transcending* “the current mental conditions of one’s ‘Lebensvollzug’ [routinary life practices]”



# Core Questions

**Linguistic orientations of participants:** In which languages do academics at Hamburg University write, teach and interact professionally?

**Metalinguistic reflections about their linguistic orientations:** How do they conceptualise „*multilingualism in science*“ and how do they reflect about their language choices and about the *conditions and consequences* of their language uses?

- How do their scientific language preferences vary in relation to status group, disciplinary background and professional mobility?
- Coping strategies: How do scholars deal with the challenge of having to write in their second or third language?

# Outline

- Economization/ industrialization of science
- Impact on contemporary academic settings/academic language use
- Current debates about English as academic Lingua Franca
- Language policy and planning/ Language practices and ideologies
- Methodological considerations
- First results

# Economization & Industrialization of Science

## Economization

“[...] a transformation process whereby a logic of actions or a logic of system, a discourse, a practice or a knowledge are increasingly [..] dominated by economic principles.” (Bellmann 2001: 387)

## Industrialization

“Science has lost her freedom. Science has become a productive force. She has become rich but she has become enslaved and part of her is veiled in secrecy.” (Kapitsa 1938 in Ravetz 1971)

# Impacts on Contemporary Academic Settings/Language Use

- Metrics: Bibliometrical Recording Instruments/ Science Citation Indices (SCI)/ Impact Factors
- ‘International’ = ‘Anglo-american’ (cf. Seidelhofer 2012:394)  
-> conventional SCIs accept only English-language as international
- Increasing replication of these policies in publishing guidelines of national & international journals and in research proposal specifications

# Internationalization & Mobility

“As the student population becomes more ‘international’ as a result of increased transnational mobility, and as the latent linguistic diversity increases in consequence, the number of languages which the students can be expected to have in common, as a group, decreases [...] Often the solution is [...] to switch to English as default language.”

(Fabricius/ Mortensen/ Haberland 2016)

# English as Academic Lingua Franca (EALF)

- good or bad (Coulmas 2008)
- plights and blessings (Carli/Ammon 2008)
- catalyst or barrier (Gnutzmann 2008)
- advantages and disadvantages (Gnutzmann/ Lipski-Buchholz 2008)
- losses and gains (Grin/ Gazzola 2013)



# Pros and Cons of EALF

## proponents

- neutral (House 2001, 2005)
- universalizing (van Parijs 2013)
- functional (Brutt-Griffler 2008)
- transparent (Kachru 1986)

## sceptics

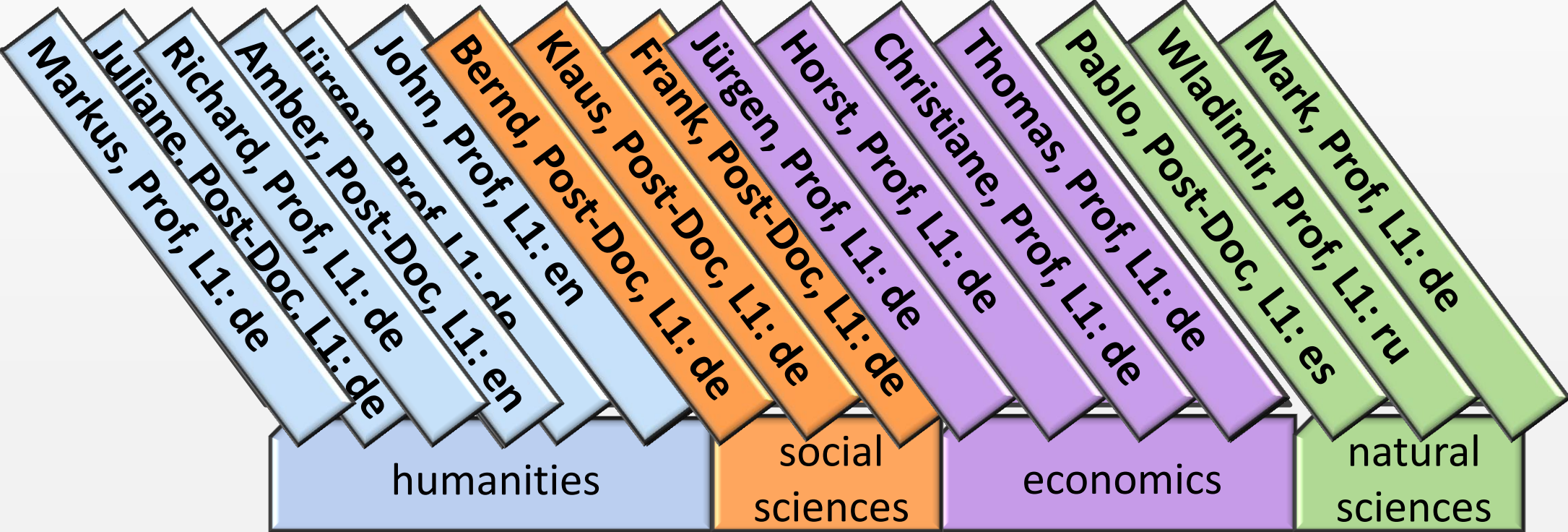
- killer language (Price 2000)
- exclusive (Ammon 2001, Flowerdew 2007)
- ressource-consuming (Grin/ Gazzola 2013)
- diminishing cultural diversity (Skutsnabb-Kangas 2001)

# Pitfalls of Normative Debate

- It puts people off because of its nationalist/ globalist undertone
- It implies choice where this is sometimes not the case anymore
- It often neglects the disciplinary specificities through totalizing accounts of ‚science‘ as a unified field
- It is inherently normative through its focus on language policy and planning
- It does not take into account the discourse practices and beliefs of individual scholars

# Research Design

semi-structured narrative interviews



### Liste der Codes

- Codesystem 265
  - deontic modality 3
  - epistemic modality 4
  - quantifier 5
  - coping strategies 0
    - ressources 6
    - struggles 7
  - urge to write/ speak English 50
    - general assertions 11
    - conferences 5
    - publication 11
  - benefits and disadvantages 1
    - English as a currency 3
    - English as wild card 3
    - benefits GER 9
    - disadvantages GER 8
    - benefits ENG 27
    - disadvantages ENG 12
  - self-portrayal 16
    - incompetent 32
    - competent 40
    - new speaker 12

### Partitur

00:00:00/00:00:00

337 [07:35.0]	338 [07:36.5]
s)) And/ and I've • benefitted from that. •	333 [07:31.3] em
42 343 [07:39.7]	344 345 [07:40.8]
07:39.2] [07:40.5]	7:36.5]
• I've also benef/ •	benefitted from the
8] 340 [07:37.6]	341 [07:38.5]
342 [07:39.2]	344 [07:40.5]
345 [07:40.8]	
y have. ((1,0s)) Em • •	I've also benef/ • benefitted from the

# Methodological Challenges

- Researching the researchers: involvement
- Professional face
- Contested topic: polemic treatment of EALF in science and public

“Ideologies about language as linguistic ideology are a set of beliefs about language articulated by users as a **rationalization** or **justification** of perceived structure and use.” (Silverstein 1979: 193)



method of discursive interviewing (Ullrich 1999)

[EX1]

*“As a scholar, I encounter **multilingualism** actually • • mostly in the sense that • • • obviously • many **international** conferences are in **English.**”*

*(Juliane, Post-Doc, Humanities, L1 German)*

[EX2]

*“The University of Hamburg ((1,1s)) over the last ten years has increasingly emphasized the ((1,1s)) importance of **multilingualism**. And I recognized the advantage of **English** because • • • of its status. ((1,0s)) If I had Russian or Portuguese as a mother tongue • • • it wouldn't nearly • • be the same • • • So its just a superb privilege having English • • as a mother tongue • • • **It's not just that that's a multilingual environment, it's an environment • • that encourages the use of English • • more than any other second language.**”*

*(John, Professor, Humanities, L1 English)*

[EX3]

*“I really didn’t know that • • • ehm • • • in science/ • • that **multilingualism** is indeed a/a/a category, because in my discipline • • • one has to • if you • • want • to walk the career path successfully you really have to • • follow the **anglosaxon discourses** in every respect.”*

*(Christiane, Professor, Economics, L1 German)*



# Preliminary results

1. **Multilingualism** typically signifies **English** in the academic context of our interviewees
- 2.
- 3.

[EX5]

“[In the economics community] • **everybody knows** somehow **you have to** • • • **publish in English, and if you can't do that, then you really are a total outsider somehow.**”

(Horst, Economics, Professor, L1 German)



deontic modality



epistemic modality

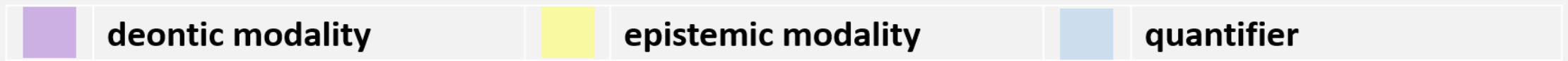


quantifier

[EX6]

*“One publishes in English • • • ehm ((1,0s)) one presents in English, one writes applications in English • • • well, English is requested everywhere. We both know how science works: the English Journals are highly ranked/ highly ranked and the German journals are not. If it’s worth publishing in German? I don’t think so.”*

*(Amber, Humanities, Post-Doc, L1 English)*



[EX7]

*“In the area where I try to advance myself the impact of a Spanish article is zero. A paper in a peer reviewed journal article counts 10 or 20 times more.”*

*(Pablo, Natural Sciences, Post-Doc, L1 Spanish)*



deontic modality



epistemic modality



quantifier

# Preliminary results

1. **Multilingualism** typically signifies **English** in the academic context of our interviewees
2. Participants express orientation towards English in terms of **obligation** and **ubiquity**, frequently via the use of **evidentiality (deontic/ epistemic modality)** and totalizing **quantifiers**
- 3.

# Participants Rationalizations: Policies and Practices

- participation in new academic formats such as the „initiative of excellence”
- establishment of new models of knowledge representation ( e.g. cumulative dissertations)
- Devaluation of national research outlets
- English-only policies in journals/proposal specifications
- local institutional practices ( e.g. appointment procedures in English)
- peer pressure
- advice by reputed scholars/ supervisors

[EX8]

*“Everything I publish is in English, and here at our institute it is very extreme that is not only English, that is English Peer Review, eh Journal Internatio/International. Th/ That is the only/ only currency here, indeed. That is very hard. And these are the criteria by those institutions, they only notice what has been written in this currency [...] That is our bread here.”*

*(Pablo, Natural Sciences, Post Doc, L1 Spanish)*

# Preliminary results

1. **Multilingualism** typically signifies **English** in the academic context of our interviewees
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3. **Glossings** and **concealments**:
  - *Pains of writing notoriously* downplayed (e.g. narrated hesitantly, framed as overcome past events, ascribed to „other“ colleagues)
  - Resources afforded for brokering (proofreading, translators, translation budgets, reviewing by colleagues) only admitted upon repeated enquiry



# Professionalism/ professionalization

- fueled by industrialization (Hughes 1971)
- Professionalization = “attempt to translate one order of scarce resources – special knowledge and skills – into another – social and economic rewards” (Larson 1977 in Pfadenhauer 2014)
- Scarcity maintained through the delivery of “esoteric knowledge” (Hughes 1971) i.e. knowledge to which professionals are privy by virtue of long study and initiation

Academic writing = “an institutional practice of mystery [...] working against those least familiar with its conventions [...] and limiting their participation in Higher Education.” (Lillis 1999:127)

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*(Pablo, Natural Sciences, Post Doc, L1 Spanish)*

# 'Sociology of Professions' as Avenue for further Research?

Allows us to




- reconsider the notion of academic English as imperative, imposed through abstract forces of internationalization
- see ourselves as performers/executors of new orders of professional practice in which we choose to participate in specific ways, competing for status upgrade and assumed global readerships

Thank you!

[EX4]

*“There are also German Journals, but really important for career advancement is publishing in English. That simply has to do with the fact that the • • prestigious • • • Journals are al/ all • • published in English. • • • That means one is eventually forced to at least publish in English ((3,2s)) Yes, well, even in the German-Ranking, if you take a look at this list of relevant journals you’ll find that 99.5 % are in English.”*

*(Thomas, Economics, Post-Doc, L1 German)*

 deontic modality	 epistemic modality	 quantifier
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- *[EX] It is • a bit of a problem. I remember ((sighs 0,6s)) eh/ eh/ o/ okay different • experiences. Eh the one • • • where people think their English is very good • and I've corrected it/ I correct very lightly • • • (and so then) • • I/ I don't • • • if the/ if it is grammatically correct • • even though it is • in a style that wouldn't be typically written by an English mother tongue • • I don't • correct that but/ So I'm • relatively modest with corrections • • • but there are one or two colleagues who'd been SHOcked by seeing so much red in their text • eh • • • and • • they really (have) ehm/ ((1,6s)) eh/ eh they feel embarrassed or much humiliated by being so • • corrected. (Richard, Humanities, Professor L1 English)*

- *And when you teach in German that is something that is also rumored through the lecture halls. So when you don't do your lectures and everything else in English here, you are considered/ „Well what kind of a guy are you supposed to be?“ ((1,5s))*
- *And • ehm • we recently had this issue/ and it is simply the fact/ that was even stipulated by the judges this is all well known/ • the president • cannot force anybody to teach in English • if that person doesn't want to. ((1,1s)) Well only in case I tell that person/well I/ I appoint you and I tell you on appointment: Okay, you have to do everything in English but when I appoint you and tell you: Here then in the lecture hall I can/ then he can strictly speaking not force me. Mh, mh. ((1,2s)) And... Yes, well this is the one side, if you can...but we have.../ the peer pressure is strong, you see?*