"An ambivalent phenomenon": The role of English within the discipline of geography in Germany

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Abstract English as an Academic Language has attained global stature on the research as well as on the teaching level in many academic fields. As an international scholarly language, English is the cornerstone by which to judge academic achievement and to advance the Bologna Process's internationalization programs. Given these functions, language policies within many disciplines at German universities have evolved significantly over the last years, culminating in the relatively recent implementation of Master's programs in English. However, the process of the Anglo-Americanization of German academic life and university programs has met with criticism and, thus, has elicited diverse and ambivalent responses. A sample study of the role of English as an academic language within the Department of Geography at the University of Marburg/Germany has shown the development of Academic English and the ambivalence accompanying it. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to illustrate and analyse how the challenge of using English within the department, and, in particular, of publishing in English, has been handled. At the moment, English within the geographical discipline in Germany seems to be indeed "an ambivalent phenomenon" that, on the one hand, offers promising opportunities for students and scholars alike, while being simultaneously perceived as a hindrance and a constraint.

Keywords language policy, publication strategies, geography, internationalization, English as Academic Language, multilingual education, academic discourse

1 Introduction

On 28 January 2009, an official announcement of the Council of German Culture was published saying that the German language "is on its deathbed". The German language, which is said to have had worldwide recognition as a significant scholarly language within the natural sciences, engineering and the humanities, has today lost almost all importance for the natural sciences. Only one percent of all publications within the natural sciences are published in German.

This development has to be seen within a larger context. Most generally, "globalization [as such] has clearly chosen English as its language of communication," as Keith Harding (2007: 7) writes in his book *English for Specific Purposes*. In more specific terms, English has become not only "the accepted language of technology and commerce" (Hutchinson 2006: 6), which has led to a growing "demand […] for English courses tailored to specific needs" (Hutchinson 2006: 7), but English also has expanded into "the major language of higher education" (Flowerdew/ Peacock 2001b: xiii). Not surprisingly, today the supremacy of English as the language for academic and scholarly communication and publication is visible in many academic disciplines in non-English speaking countries.

The internationalization, and therefore Anglo-Americanization, of European/German academic discourse in the form of publishing, presenting and networking at international conferences, research cooperation, book projects, etc., has reached such proportions that some scholars and academics have started to take a critical look at the situation and to call for a more

differentiated handling of the issue, as will be shown later. As Claus Gnutzmann and Miriam Bruns from the University of Braunschweig have convincingly shown in their article "English in Academia – Catalyst or Barrier?", English has developed into "the dominant language in world-wide academic communication", a situation that is "the subject of controversial discussion" (Gnutzmann/Bruns 2008: 9).[1] This development seems to have two important consequences: the spread of English carries the risk of Anglo-American dominance in cultural and scientific areas which, consequently, may disadvantage non-native speakers. However, English as a *lingua franca* may also serve as a catalyst for international cooperation, the internationalization of departments and the Bologna Process as such. Notwithstanding, English for Academic Purposes and English classes catering for the special English needs of the individual disciplines in non-native English countries have gained recognition and attention within higher education, as more and more study programs are being offered in English. The recent emphasis on CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) within tertiary education provides additional evidence towards this development (Wilkinson 2004: 2008).

Indeed, by analyzing the research, publications and conferences of German geographers, it becomes apparent that scholarly German is being largely replaced by subject-specific English, a development that geographers such as Chauncy D. Harris have identified in international geography as well: "English has increasingly become the medium of communication, both in international congresses and in geographical periodicals and serials published in many countries and distributed over all continents" (Harris 2001: 674). For most of the natural sciences, the phenomenon is wide-spread and recognized; especially smaller countries, such as the Czech Republic or Denmark, are being forced to use English as an academic language. Mark Wise, who sees a "geolinguistic battle" at work within the European community, also attests that "the majority of scientific research publications in the EU and beyond are published in English with the proportion published in the economic and social sciences substantial" (Wise 2006: 209). For the natural sciences this is certainly true enough. To add to the German Council of Culture's statistics from January 2009, already older other studies have hinted at this phenomenon: In the natural sciences over 90 percent of all publications are in English (Ammon 1998: 152); and 85 percent of all scientific and technological information is written in English (Kaplan 2001: 12).

However, in other disciplines such as law, some of the social sciences, and the humanities, the situation is different because these disciplines are strongly associated with language and culture (Gnutzmann 2008b: 73). Geography serves as a perfect borderline discipline, being regarded as somewhere in between a social and economic science on the one hand and the natural sciences on the other. The main division between Physical Geography and Human Geography then influences the respective academic discourse. Whether English is a catalyst or a barrier depends on two different sets of academic conventions, mind-sets, and research traditions, and turns out to be different for the two main fields within geography.

With reference to the aforementioned statement, this study proposes that the dominance of English within the academic discourse in German geography has not only changed the discipline in general, but has brought about distinct changes for both Physical and Human Geography. In the following, this study will demonstrate how the usage of English within the discipline of geography in Marburg has substantially changed over the last decades, how this subject-specific English has transformed the contents and the teaching of the discipline itself, and how Physical and Human Geography react toward these changes in different ways.

This claim marks the beginning of this contribution. Subsequently, we will introduce the methodological approach and the Department of Geography at the University of Marburg, which serves as the case study setting. Next follows the presentation of selected results. Based on these results, we will debate the main points of discussion before drawing a conclusion on the relationship between language policy and innovation processes within the discipline of geography.

2 Case study and methods

In order to analyze the relevant problems, we have chosen to use a case study as a research strategy. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin 1994: 23). This definition indicates, firstly, that case study work is particularly valuable for new and open questions, and for identifying and illustrating research theses with practical examples. Secondly, it becomes evident that methodological pluralism has a distinct position within the framework of this research strategy.

The case study was conducted in the Department of Geography at the University of Marburg. The department was founded in 1876. Since the end of the 19th century, the department has developed into one of the institutes that offer the full range of geographical subjects (Physical and Human Geography). Today it has eight full professorships and in the winter semester of 2008/2009, 756 students were enrolled. The scholars are engaged in international cooperation with 80 research institutions in 38 countries. In 2007, ten international scholars worked in the department.

The study programs include a Bachelor of Science in Geography, a Master of Science in Geo-Archaeology, a Master of Science in Environmental Geography, a Master of Science in Human Geography and a Master of Education in Geography. Research areas in Physical Geography focus on climate change, tsunami research, desertification, geo-archaeology, and high-mountain ecology. Within Human Geography the special fields are comprised of globalisation processes, regional innovation systems, innovation and information processes in global change, and urban development.

Referring to the methodological approach, we have opted for two different methods which build upon another. One of the methods used was a quantitative survey of the annual research bibliography from 1986 to 2007. This bibliography lists the individual publications of the eight professors of the Department of Geography for every single year. We have analyzed the lists according to how languages used for publication have changed over the years. Besides looking at the departmental publication trends, we have also considered the changes within the publication strategies of the individual professors. This quantitative method enabled us to identify emerging patterns, which we validated by means of the results of the second method applied.

The second method was a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. The interviewees included three professors (one of Physical Geography, two of Human Geography), two research assistants (one from Physical and one from Human Geography) and the Academic Dean (Human Geography).[2] The one-hour interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed by Fabienne Quennet in February and March of 2008 (transcript available).

The interviews were conducted according to a set of questions that ranged from language skills needed for studying (e.g. reading skills), teaching seminars and giving lectures in English

to the role of English for Ph.D. candidates. Yet, the interviews' focus proved to be on the issue of publishing in English and publication strategies.[3] The questionnaire was sent to the participants via e-mail. The interviews took place in a friendly atmosphere in the offices of the interviewees. The chronology of the questions was handled flexibly, which enabled the interviewees to put emphasis on individual interests. The semi-open interviews elicited complex and telling responses which are the subjects of discussion in the following sections.

3 Results of the case study

3.1 Quantitative analysis of the publication trends

According to the annual research bibliography of the department, which lists the activities of its individual members in terms of research (and teaching), a quantitative analysis of the numbers of publications in English reveals the following development:

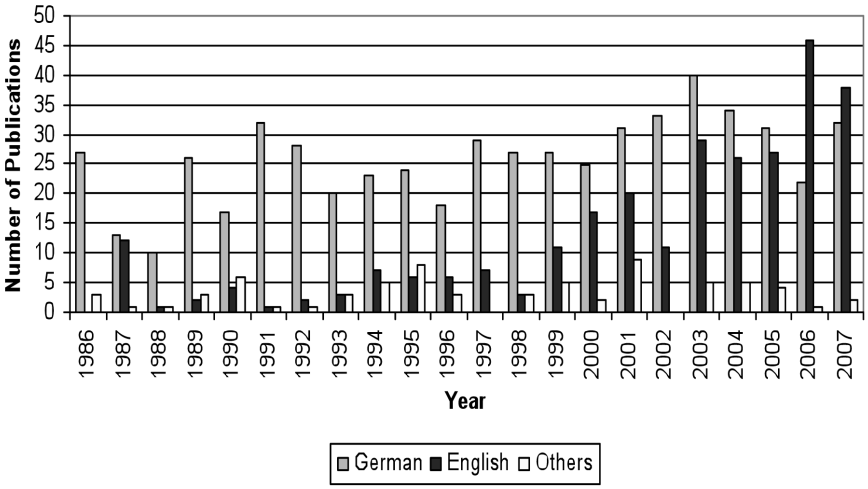

Figure 1: Number of publications written in German, English and other languages by the Professors of the Department of Geography of the University of Marburg from 1986 to 2007

The graph in Figure 1 shows the absolute numbers of publications by the professors of the department written in German, English and other languages from 1986 to 2007. This documentation demonstrates the development towards English as an academic language. While in the 1980s, members of the department only occasionally published in English, the numbers of publications in English increased during the 1990s. In the last few years, these English publications have outnumbered the German ones. Within the department, we see an obvious trend towards publications in English. However, it has to be noted that this trend is particularly evident within Physical Geography, whose four representatives have published on average 61.2 percent of their publications in English since the year 2000.

Based on the analysis of the individual publication strategies, it becomes apparent that the younger professors in Physical Geography (under 50 years of age) publish continuously in English. One older Physical Geography professor (over 50 years of age) has adapted his publi-

cation behavior in the last two decades. While 70 percent of his publications were written in German during the 1990s, nowadays he almost exclusively writes in English.

This tendency cannot be observed within Human Geography. In the last years, older or retired professors have not shown a trend to publish in English. Only now the younger and recently appointed professors of Human Geography publish the majority of their research in English.

3.2 Qualitative interviews on publication trends

The quantitative analysis demonstrates the development towards English as the dominant academic language in geography which is furthermore accentuated by the interviewees' statements. "If you write your articles in German, you write it for the waste bin," one Economic Geography professor in Marburg quoted his doctoral supervisor. In fact, the research assistants' and professors' statements clearly supported this attitude, even if they were more differentiated. They pointed out that it appears as if publications in German and in German or Austrian journals have little value in terms of international recognition, state-of-the-art research and career criteria. All the interviewees drew attention to the fact that the main criteria for the "publish or perish" careers in geography are the Science Citation Index or Social Science Citation Index, and the resulting Journal Impact Factor. Hardly any German journals have made it on the list of Journal Impact Factor publications. As the Physical Geography professor suggests, these German journals tend not to keep to deadlines, are published too late to be included in the yearly citation index, and are often lacking in quality as well (which, of course, is an individual opinion). If publications in German and in German journals do not qualify as indicators of one's academic standing, then many scholars will decide not to publish in German. One young professor of Human Geography completely refuses to publish in German; the other Human Geography professor only does it when explicitly commissioned to do so.

Older colleagues may have a language problem or a problem with English, not because they do not know any other languages, but because they may have decided not to go along with the trend 15 years ago, a point in time that one of the interviewees sees as the beginning of the "inter-nationalization" or "Anglicization" of German geography, which the analysis of the publications confirms. What is happening to the older colleagues now is that they feel their research achievements, and even life achievements, are being ignored because they were not written and published in English, according to one professor's observation. As indicated, the division on the language policy issue within the discipline of geography is often grounded in a generational shift. If the scholars decided to follow the trend in publishing in English in the 1990s, they seemed to have succeeded also internationally within their academic field (cf. Section 3.1).

On the other hand, the generational shift is not the only explanation of different approaches; it also depends on the respective field within geography. Human geographers tend to bemoan the fact that English is state-of-the-art more than their counterparts from the Physical Geography branch. The two representatives of Physical Geography at the department see no difficulties in publishing in Anglo-American journals, as the Physical Geography professor explains: "Every physical geographer, no matter what language he or she speaks, knows what C14 means, and what we have to put together is mainly data, numbers and statistics. Those things are easy to translate."

At the same time, as one Human Geography professor pointed out, the rejection of articles by international journals and editors might not be caused by a lack of language proficiency, but

by not meeting the high standards in the quality of research that Anglo-American publications apparently demand. So he pointed out: "It is not a matter of language policy, but keeping up with current research trends and research achievements."

Similarly, the other professor of Human Geography argued that countries such as the Scandinavian and Benelux states are at the forefront of research, whereas others, such as France, do not play such an important role only because they do not publish enough in Anglo-American journals. He predicted that the discussion about these language issues will continue, and, in turn, points towards the larger issues involved in the hegemony of Anglo-American theory and knowledge transfer.

Despite all differences we find agreement among the two groups too. In terms of teaching and learning EAP (English for Academic Purposes), all of the interviewed admitted that they learned English as an academic language while studying, researching, and presenting at conferences: learning by doing. None ever took an EAP class. Still, the department of Geography has just started to assess language skills in job interviews. For example, when students or research assistants apply, the professors conduct parts of the job interview in English to evaluate their English skills. This is not yet part of interviews for professorship positions since, as speculation has it, it is assumed that the applicant speaks and writes very good English.[4]

However, academic discourse does not include the research and publication level alone. As a result of the Bologna process, new study programs had to be developed at the department and a new culture of teaching implemented. Students' language skills need to be assessed as well (the requirement to enter the B.Sc. program in geography is B2). The department has recognized the importance of English for studying geography and offers a 20-hour obligatory Academic English class for all B.Sc. students.

Already some professors teach their undergraduate classes in English and, needless to say, all academic staff stresses the significance of secondary and tertiary literature which, depending on the topic, makes up more than 50 percent of the literature which students are required to read and work with. For example, the climatologists in the department work with nothing but English studies, surveys, sources, and literature and write and publish only in English. Not surprisingly, younger academic staff has acknowledged their own need to improve their language skills, leading them to take classes such as "Academic Writing in English" and "Conference English".

4 Discussion

As a rule, young scholars develop within their discipline acknowledging and accepting the dominance of the English language within German and international geography. The observation that "geographical knowledge is place specific, and most of it is possessed by people who live in […] numerous linguistic communities [and] write geographical studies for the most part in their own languages" (Harris 2001: 674) is outdated, a development that Chauncy D. Harris pinpoints to the 1960s. Since then, Harris has seen a change from six principle languages to only two, and he attests that many geographers can read or use only a few of these languages, if any at all. The idea of a multilingual community or language pluralism may be worthwhile to pursue but reality looks different, as all the statements in the interviews made clear.

Dominance of the English language is most pronounced in the field of publication strategies. Indeed, publication seems be an issue of contention on many levels, not only on the generational level. If "the growing hegemony of English as a global language privileges the geographical discourse of the Anglophone world" (Garcia-Ramon 2003: 1), then the division

runs along the lines of national academic traditions (and German as *the* academic language) versus international communication and exchange. In an editorial in the newsletter *Geography* published in October 2008, Laux, Professor of Geosciences at the University of Bonn, also speaks of the English hegemony in language and culture governing international publications which ignore and expulse national and regional traditions of science and thinking. He gives the example of the publications *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers/ and the / Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (ranked number 1 and 5 in the Journal Impact Factor). In the year 2007, only one co-author happens to be from a non-English speaking country. Another example Laux cites is that from 2,514 bibliographical entries in 41 articles and essays, only 5.7 percent were from non-English works. The dominance of English is a crucial point because, as we all know, language has a central role in constructing reality: "language not only reflects the external world, it also embodies it" (Garcia-Ramon 2003: 2). Therefore, language can never be separated from the content of a paper or presentation. The situation of English as a *lingua franca* is then a form of linguistic hegemony "that empowers some while disempowering others" (Short et al. 2001: 1).

In the epilogue to their study *Development in English for Special Purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach,* Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St. John voice a similar concern when they state that "the increasing use of English in international business and publication, and the privileging of the Anglo-American rhetorical style in these discourses may disadvantage those who use other rhetorical styles" (Dudley-Evans/St. John 2007: 230). Anglo-American dominance in academic discourse carries the risk of imposing one valid worldview and one way of thinking only on the users that is not only foreign to many using this specific English language but also endows the discourse with an authority that seems to be uncalled for and inappropriate for many parts of the globalized world. In addition, it may eradicate other thinking and multiple perspectives: The result is that the academic and intellectual exchange may suffer. However, none of the interviewees admitted that their research and scholarship "suffers" academically and intellectually from the usage of English, or becomes biased in any way. In fact, they believe that "science is not language-bound" (Gauger 2005: 71) because science moves beyond traditions of thought expressed in language and limitations thereof. Generally, all regarded English publications as a chance to be recognized outside an otherwise rather small community of German geographers (especially compared to the much larger group of Anglo-American scientists and the emerging community of Chinese geographers).

The notion of discourse community is, of course, a valid category since it speaks of the inclusion and exclusion of subjects who share the same language and same discourse conventions. This community is seen as an undifferentiated social grouping in which the members are fundamentally in agreement as to the group's activities and the standards shared by its members (Starfield 2001: 133). Anglo-Americanization in academia, and in the social sciences in particular, proposes then that, in the near future, there will be only one discourse community. The pressure to use only one rhetorical (and ultimately foreign) style in order to belong to this one discourse community may destroy national academic traditions and strongly influence the way of thinking, as previously stated.

The debate on the "increasing international hegemonic position that Anglo-American countries, and most notably the US and UK, have acquired in Human Geography" (Aalbers/ Rossi 2006: 137) is a development shared by other social sciences and cause for heated debates. Manuel B. Aalbers from the Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies has been particularly involved in the issue of Anglo-American hegemony within

academic discourse. His observation is that, due to the referee system, a "creative destruction" takes place because many scholars feel the need to write or re-write their papers according to criteria that are imposed on them from the outside and from an "alien" academic culture and tradition (Aalbers 2004: 320). Thus, language is seen not only as a means to represent one's ideas, but as a strong influence on the way how and what kind of research is being done. Many international geographers, among them Aalbers, Garcia-Ramon, John Rennie Short et al. and Guitérrez and López-Nieva, have commented in detail on the power relations that are caused by a system which presumably favors Anglo-American papers, authors, and discourse. These critical scholars think that their fear of losing one's independence in thinking and researching should not be ignored or belittled. What they propose is to reform the referee system and have other scholars besides Anglo-Americans peer-review proposals and articles, to strive for a multilingual academic community in which not only one language dominates the others, and to look for truly international journals "where 'Other' voices could be heard" (Garcia-Ramon 2003: 4).

Whether one agrees with these critical geographers or not, in many natural and life sciences, English is not used as "a carrier of cultural information and expression" but "as a means to an end – namely, the facilitation of global communication" (Gnutzmann 2008b: 83). The super-cultural or transnational quality of the natural sciences makes it comparatively easy for those who work in these disciplines to share their ideas and discuss their research results, a fact that the Physical Geography professor pointed out again and again. Examples he gave included archaeological excavations in foreign countries which are internationally staffed and whose success depends much on the exchange of information in English.

In turn, human geographers are in a far more difficult position because their discipline is more or less culture-specific, as one of the interviewees working within the field of German education stated. As a social science, Human Geography depends more on interpretation, and thus on style, rhetoric, and language, than its counterpart. Another factor is that human geographers have less of an international scientific community which they are part of. This results in fewer international journals and in an existence of more national and regional (linguistic) communities (Gutiérrez/López-Nieva 2001: 53). The pressure to publish in these journals may then be even higher, as is their fear of being discriminated against and articles being rejected because of their "poorer" English, lack in an appropriate academic register in the foreign language or their stylistic deficiencies. Apparently, many non-native scholars have the feeling that they do not meet the linguistic standards of Anglo-American publications.

The statements of the interviewees display a division between Human and Physical Geography, which is due to their respective categorization. While Physical Geography is considered a subject of the natural sciences, Human Geography is predominately seen as a social science. Criteria such as the Science Citation Index and the impact factor are crucial in determining one's career in Physical Geography and in this sense they belong to the natural sciences. The surveys by Ammon, Kaplan and the Council of German Culture showed primarily this: the dominance of English publications in the natural sciences in Germany, but also internationally, is overwhelming. As a consequence of the rise of the hegemony of the Anglo-American discourse, this development leads to necessary discussions about the language policy within the individual disciplines as well as on the higher academic and political level.

Both, representatives of Physical and Human Geography, acknowledged that the social sciences tend to take a more critical view of this dominance and caution their discipline not to follow this development too willingly and uncritically. Despite this critical stance, the "esca-

lating use of English as academic lingua franca" (Duszak 1994: 291) leads to a growing number of non-native speakers of English who *have* to communicate in academic English in written form and orally. They often use discursive patterns typical for their native language, but unfamiliar in English. Of course, in most cases this proves to be a disadvantage for the scholars. A larger group of human geographers may belong to those "non-natives [who] have to invest more time, energy and money in extra learning in order to handle discourse in English" (Gnutzmann 2008b: 84) in order to avoid sending off sub-standard contributions which will not be considered for publication, and will thus not be discussed within the international community of (human) geographers.

In contrast to Laux (2008: 4), who holds the opinion that in order to translate an idea or thought into a foreign language, one requires a veritable confidence in one's own foreign language ability, which he thinks most colleagues do not have, and should not be expected to have, others distinctly demand this of German geographers. Geography of Economics Professor Rolf Sternberg from the University of Hanover, who actively participates in international academic research, analyzed data from journals dedicated to economic geography which had been published between 1990 and 1999. He draws the conclusion that "the presence of German authors in English-language economic geography journals in absolute terms (only 35 of a total of 1357 articles) is therefore certainly low, but not bad when compared with other countries" (Sternberg 2000: 33). Nevertheless, Sternberg and others have called for greater efforts to publish in English and partake in the state-of-the-art academic discourse: "German economic geographers must publish more abroad in order to draw attention to themselves and German economic geography" (Sternberg 2000: 33).[5]

However, as already pointed out, academic discourse does include the research and publication level alone. As a result of the Bologna process, a general internationalization of European universities took place. Language was and is a key factor in this. Therefore, English as the academic language in geography has consequences for teaching and studying geography in general. In Germany (which is somewhat behind in the process), master programs are being developed with the purpose of attracting international students (among other goals), and thus need to be taught in English.

If departments in German universities implement Master's programs completely in English or English on demand, as the department of Geography at the University of Marburg has just done, then several questions arise: who is teaching the seminars, how is this specialised English taught, and what language skills do these teachers (mainly professors and research assistants) possess? This development can be observed at other German universities as well, for example, at the University of Gießen, which offers a module class "English for Young Geographers," which encompasses 30 hours of in-class teaching and 40 hours of autonomous learning. What needs to be taught is subject-specific English – in seminars and EAP classes – which is "the language needed for a particular academic subject, […] together with its disciplinary culture. It includes the language structure, the vocabulary, the particular skills needed for the subject, and the appropriate academic conventions" (Jordan 1997: 5). In order for students to finish their studies and to consequently succeed in academia, they have to recognize conventional formats, genres, and generally "the collective mind-set for communication of the members they aspire to" (Basturkmen 2006: 4). Even more fundamental is the question of what kind of job or profession (and where?) a Master's program in English trains the students for? If they learn geography in English, will they be qualified for a job in the German job market? Or, in other terms, how useful is it to know the English term *peneplain* but not the German

translation (*Rumpffläche*) if one wants to work as a geographer in a German-speaking country? Or, another example from Human Geography: would all students know the German word for *regional development agency* (*Amt für Wirtschaftsförderung*) after studying for a Master's degree? Implementing study programs without English has far-reaching consequences for the department, the teachers, the students, and the university itself.

5 Conclusion

The case study and discussion have shown that English as the medium of academic discourse remains an "ambivalent phenomenon" (Gnutzmann 2008b: 75) which challenges the disciplines in researching, teaching and learning. However, new opportunities open up as well. English as an academic language affects all areas mentioned in the introduction: publication policies, academic careers, teaching and learning through content-based seminars and lectures, scholarly exchange and international cooperation as well as the internationalization of departments and the discipline as such. The strengthening of Academic English is a goal that is strongly linked to a European university language policy. With the beginning of the Bologna process, many universities across Europe offer more and more classes wholly or partly taught in English (see Wise 2006: 210), a development that is certainly welcomed by the many agents of the Bologna process. Even if multilingualism is the political and educational aim of Europe, the internationalization of European university structures will have to start with English first.

In many ways, English serves indeed as a catalyst for international cooperation, the acquisition of grants and funds for research projects, and international publications. Or, in other words, it facilitates international academic and intellectual movement because it brings together different scholarly traditions and standards, moving beyond national patterns towards a more flexible language usage. However, it may also be "perceived by others as a threat to a national or regional language" or a threat to specific patterns of discourse organization and expectations as well as the general national subject-specific academic discourse (Wise 2006: 210). For all involved, it has major consequences. Individual members of the academic community may feel that English is an obstacle and a constraint. Academic staff has to teach seminars and lectures in English, whether they have the needed language skills or not. Students have to make a greater effort to learn English as an academic language because it is absolutely necessary for studying successfully. Internationalization takes place within the department because English teaching and learning is stressed as well as study-abroad programs and the exchange with international scholars. Professors are called upon to publish in English as their careers and reputation depend on it. As a whole discipline, German geography needs to partake in the international discourse and communication which is carried out in English (although foreign language learning should not end with English). One way to accomplish this is to pay careful attention to university language policies and to strengthen foreign-language learning within the department and university by: offering English for Academic Purposes classes for students, implementing Master's programs in English, and encouraging academic staff to improve their language skills and to learn other foreign languages.

The repercussions of this development enter secondary schools as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) becomes more and more popular and may have an effect on future students of geography. Given this background, English as the language for academic discourse within the discipline of geography invites further research, either of a more general nature, e.g. the influence of English on research strategies, or in the form of an empirical study as-

sessing the outcome of CLIL in secondary schools in connection to EAP learning (English for Geography Students) in tertiary education. Issues pertaining to curriculum and pedagogy still need to be addressed as well, and of course, the teaching of EAP itself. As John M. Swales has put it, "the training of people to process and produce academic and research English remains a major international endeavour" (Swales 1990: 1), an endeavour that is especially necessary for all disciplines in non-English speaking countries that have to participate in this ambivalent development, and understand and use English as an academic language. ◆

Notes

[1] All passages cited from German texts (Gnutzmann 2008a; Gnutzmann/Bruns 2008; Laux 2008) are the authors' own translations.

[2] For more biographical details see Appendix 1.

[3] For more details on the interview questions see Appendix 2.

[4] However, more and more German universities start to publicize open professorship positions in English in the leading German papers. For example, the University of Münster announced a position for a professor of geochemistry in English and not in German (*Die Zeit,* September 17, 2009).

[5] In *Science speaks English?* Uwe Pörksen (2005b: 10) concludes: "Wer Deutsch schreibt, hat als Wissenschaftler kaum eine Chance, international wahrgenommen und rezipiert zu werden." [If you write in German, you have almost no chance to be internationally read and recognized as a scientist.]

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Appendix 1

	Status	Sex	Age	Interest of study	Knowledge of foreign languages
Interviewee 1	Professor	male	over 50	Physical Geometry	English Italian French
Interviewee 2	Professor	male	under 40	Human Geography	English French
Interviewee 3	Professor	male	under 40	Human Geography	English French
Interviewee 4	Academic Dean	male	over 40	Human Geography	English French
Interviewee 5	Research Assistant (Ph.D.)	male	under 40	Human Geography	English
Interviewee 6	Research Assistant (Ph.D.)	female	under 40	Human Geography	English

Appendix 2

Questionnaire of the Interview

- Where did you learn English and where did you learn English for Special Purposes, e.g. English for geographers?
- How important is English for studying geography in Germany?
- How important is English for writing a dissertation in geography in Germany?
- Have you observed any changes within publication traditions and strategies within German geography?
- Has there been a noticeable change from German to English within the discipline of geography in Germany?
- How important are publications in English today and for academic careers?
- In how far do Anglo-American publications determine one's academic standing and position?
- Which role do international academic cooperation and research projects abroad play?
- Do English publications make German geography generally more international?
- Does the usage of English for research and publications change the academic focus and scholarly interest within the discipline of geography?

- Which English language skills are needed for studying geography and/or for writing one's dissertation and/or pursuing an academic career?
  - Reading skills (secondary literature)
  - Writing skills (publications)
  - Oral skills (presentations, conversation skills, conferences, excursions)
  - Listening skills (presentations, conferences)
- The department of Geography starts to offer Master programs in English (English on Demand). Which are the consequences for the academic staff and the students in terms of language requirements?
- Which other languages are important for German geographers?
- How do research assistants learn and/or improve their English skills?
- What can universities do (e.g. through Modern Language Centers at universities) in order to improve the foreign language skills of its academic staff?
- In how far do self-studying and autonomous learning (e.g. online learning resources) play a role for language learning for academic staff?
- What is your opinion on content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in secondary schools?

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