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Linguistic Purism in the History of the German Language

Falco Pfalzgraf

Introduction

The phenomenon of linguistic purism is particularly fascinating because it reveals long-held and ever recurring beliefs about language by laypersons. As recently as July 2007, the well-respected paper *Die Zeit* ran a series of articles about the perceived decline of the German language.¹ The aim of this chapter is to give a brief overview of linguistic purism in the history of German. According to Jones (1995:4), written purist statements were made as early as in the thirteenth century. For the purpose of this chapter, however, we will examine purism from the time of the Baroque in the seventeenth century up to the beginning of the twenty-first century, almost two decades after German unification. Purism is a phenomenon that not only appears in connection with the German language but also occurs in so many languages that it can indeed be regarded as an almost universal phenomenon; it can even “come up in societies where literacy is heavily restricted and institutions which would organise purist movements are largely missing.”² We will therefore first define the term in a general sense, then look at discourses which manifest themselves especially with regard to German *Fremdwortpurismus*, i.e. we will mainly focus on lexical purism. Next, the question of how linguistics should deal with foreign lexical influences will be discussed. After that, a brief overview of six phases of linguistic purism in the history of German will be given, and we will suggest possible reasons for the emergence of linguistic purism during those six phases, with particular attention to current purist activities in Germany.

Definitions

What is purism? Linguists have examined the phenomenon in detail at least since the 1960s, but nevertheless hardly any definition of it which would satisfy professional requirements can be found in the relevant literature. As George Thomas (1991:10) correctly points out, “purism has simply not been terminologised.” Nils Langer and Winifred Davies (2005:4), after discussing three definitions, provide a good summary of “what purism is: an (influential) part of the speech community voices objections to the presence of particular linguistic features and aims to remove them from their language.” Among those discussed by Langer and Davies is a definition by David Crystal (2006:381) who describes purism in a rather general way as “a school of thought which sees a language as needing preservation from external processes which might infiltrate it and thus make it change [...]”. For the purpose of this chapter, however, we will draw on George Thomas (1991:12) who gives an overview of various available definitions, points out their strengths and weaknesses, and eventually delivers what he calls a “working definition”:

Purism is the manifestation of a desire on the part of a speech community (or some section of it) to preserve a language from, or rid it of, putative foreign elements or other elements held to be undesirable (including those originating in dialects, sociolects and styles of the same language). It may be directed at all linguistic levels but primarily the lexicon. Above all, purism is an aspect of the codification, cultivation and planning of standard languages.

This is probably the best general definition of linguistic purism currently available, as it “does not restrict itself to foreign influences but includes varieties such as dialects and particular styles of a language.”³ In this chapter, however, we will mainly focus on the *Fremdwortfrage*, on metalinguistic reactions to exogenous elements in German lexis.

Despite the fact that Thomas’s definition of purism is most useful, a more practical approach is required if one needs to analyse a text with the intention of establishing whether or not its content

¹ Jessen (2007).

² Boeder et al, 2003:viii.

³ Langer & Davies, 2005:3.

can be considered to be of a puristic nature. As the theoretical basis for such an approach, the research of Andreas Gardt on attitudes to foreign words in German has proven most valuable. Gardt (2001a) has analysed an open corpus of texts ranging from the sixteenth century to World War II and provides an overview of what German authors thought of and wrote about foreign words, how the latter were defined or characterised, and what was regarded to be their nature for different authors at different times. For the four hundred years in question, Gardt discovered four major discourses about attitudes towards foreign words:

Firstly, a discourse about foreign words relating to the structure of the language (*sprachstruktureller Fremdwortdiskurs*), which is mainly concerned with questions relating to grammar, syntax and lexis. It is characteristic for that discourse that there is no understanding of the fact that a 'pure' language is merely a hypothetical construct, and that language contact has always influenced the vocabulary; the inevitability of this is not acknowledged. When foreign words are discussed, they are hardly ever defined, and not even a systematic nomenclature or concept exists. Therefore, language protectors often hold opposing views to the question which words can be regarded as being German and which should be rejected as foreign. Concerning the latter, those of Greek or Latin origin are usually accepted, whereas others, often those of French or English origin, are not. The problem is similar when technical terms of foreign origin are discussed. However, those are more easily accepted than foreign words in everyday German, which are regarded as superfluous, as having a damaging effect on German grammar, and as having a negative impact on lexis (*Bastardwort*, *Mischmasch*). Consequently, demands for the substitution⁴ of foreign words are made. To do so, it is believed best to reinstate archaisms, to adopt dialectalisms, and to form new words on the basis of German or Germanic words.

Secondly, an ideological discourse about foreign words (*sprachideologischer Fremdwortdiskurs*), which is connected to nationalist or cultural-patriotic purism. Characteristic of this discourse is an emphatic praise of one's own language and the assumption that it is characterised by age and a genetic/genealogical purity. Therefore, foreign words are not regarded as being an enrichment of the language, but as a danger to it. Also, language is often perceived as being part of one's own culture, and foreign words are consequently seen as a threat to one's own identity. There is often a tendency to attach value to one's own language in a naively defiant way and, at the same time, to degrade other languages. Sometimes, the predominant tenor of argumentation can be blatantly nationalistic.

Thirdly, a pedagogical/sociological discourse about foreign words (*sprachpädagogisch-sprachsoziologischer Fremdwortdiskurs*) which assumes a correlation between cognition and the ability to deal with foreign words, i.e. the speakers' education and their ability to use and process foreign words. It is assumed that when foreign words are used, less educated people are excluded from political and social life, which is seen as a danger for democracy, as a language which contains foreign words might hinder the process of enlightenment of the people and therefore slow down or even stop processes of democratisation. Consequently, the substitution of foreign words is seen as a means to break down language barriers. Regarding lexical substitution, language protectors often express completely opposing positions: some people assume that the use of foreign words enriches the language, while others are of the opinion that foreign words impoverish the language. Some perceive certain foreign words as more comprehensible than the German equivalent, whereas others are of the opposite opinion. Individual taste plays an important role here.

Fourthly, a discourse about foreign words relating to language criticism for stylistic or rhetoric reasons (*sprachkritischer Fremdwortdiskurs*) which shows the following three main characteristics: when the use of foreign words is criticised, this is often an expression of the language protectors' individual taste where questions of style and aesthetics constitute the centre of argumentation. The use of foreign words is judged as a superficial, as merely fashionable participation in current social trends, as an expression of pseudo-intellectual behaviour, as an

⁴ For the German verbs *eindeutschen* or *verdeutschen* we will not use 'to germanise' but 'to substitute' as the latter is a more precise and well-established linguistic term which covers: loan coinage (*Lehnprägung*), loan meaning (*Lehnbedeutung*), loan formation (*Lehnformung*), loan creation (*Lehnschöpfung*), loan translation (*Lehnübersetzung*), and loan rendering (*Lehnübertragung*), see Duckworth (1977).

attempt to impress people, an effort to gain social prestige, or simply as thoughtlessness. The language of previous ages, in contrast, is always considered to be the better language: language and literature of medieval times is named as being exemplary. Also, it is assumed that the use of foreign words leads to a divergence between the word and the world (*mehr Schein als Sein*). A perversion of “actual reality” is perceived and the use of foreign words is regarded as absurd and offensive.

Purism and Linguistics

Language matters are not only discussed and commented on by professionally trained linguists but also by laypeople who have no deeper insight into the subject. In fact, it is notable that language matters which in our case questions related to linguistic purism, are often discussed on the mass media, alas most often without the participation of professional linguists, but rather within a circle of politicians, journalists, writers, singers, editors, or the like.⁵ As Langer & Davies (2005:1) point out, “language is distinguished from other academic disciplines such as astronomy, Roman mythology, or physics because all speakers consider themselves to be experts in the field of language.”

It is also noteworthy that self-appointed guardians of the German language often complain about linguists’ attitudes to current foreign lexical influences. The *Verein Deutsche Sprache* (VDS), for example, criticises the alleged somnolence of many linguists in the face of anglicisation and accuses linguists of failure and ineptitude to meet their responsibilities.⁶ Dieter E. Zimmer (1997:7-8), journalist, translator and one of Germany’s best-known language protectors, complains in a similar vein:

Die Sprachwissenschaften haben ohnehin längst allem 'Normativen' abgeschworen und die bloße Beschreibung des Vorgefundenen zum Programm erhoben: Das Volk spricht, die Wissenschaft beobachtet es beim Sprechen und erklärt dann, wie es spricht. Wie es sprechen sollte, will sie unter keinen Umständen mehr sagen.

It is the view of Zimmer and other language protectors that the function of linguistics should be to give advice to people concerning the proper use of the German language: *Sprachkritik*. The role of linguists is best explained by Hans-Martin Gauger (1999:88), Emeritus Professor of Romance Linguistics at Freiburg University, who states the following about the different branches of linguistics:

In *einem* aber sind sie alle sich einig: alle wollen nur beschreiben, wollen nur wissen, was in der Sprache *ist* oder in ihr *war*. [...] Alle diese Richtungen betrachten *dies* als eine der unabdingbaren – nicht hinreichenden, aber notwendigen – Voraussetzungen ihrer Wissenschaftlichkeit: keine Wertung, Verzicht auf Orientierung; keine dieser Richtungen will Orientierungen vermitteln im Blick auf sogenannten 'guten' Sprachgebrauch. [...] 'Wissenschaftlich' stellt sich also dem 'Präskriptiven' entgegen.

At the same time, Gauger (1999:98-99) does not deny that norms are necessary. He does not claim, however, that it is the role of linguists to advise of ‘good’ usage:

Die Sprechenden selbst unterscheiden, bewerten und bemühen sich, unter bestimmten Umständen 'richtig' oder 'gut' oder 'schön' zu sprechen. Und die Sprachwissenschaft [...] *kann* [...] die Bewertungen verzeichnen. [...] Nochmals: der Sprachwissenschaftler wertet nicht, aber er verzeichnet Bewertungen, die er – gänzlich unabhängig von ihm selbst – schon vorfindet, und die in der Sprachgemeinschaft und also in der Sprache

⁵ To name one of many possible examples: in *Sabine Christiansen*, a German talk show (ARD, 29.07.2001), the subject “Man spricht deutsch – aber wie?” was discussed by politician and theologist Annette Schavan, writer Walter Jens, politician and lawyer Klaus von Dohnanyi, singer Wolfgang Niedecken, journalist and editor Florian Langenscheidt, journalist and writer Feridun Zaimoglu, and Gerd Schrammen, Professor of Romance Literature and vice chair of the Verein Deutsche Sprache (VDS). For a most recent example, see Jessen (2007).

⁶ The VDS calls this the “Dämmereschlaf vieler Sprachwissenschaftler angesichts der öffentlichen Anglisierung”, Verein Deutsche Sprache, “Argumente zur deutschen Sprache” (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/denglich/>>.

selbst sind.

To sum up, one can say that linguistics as such does not provide a basis to judge what might or might not be regarded as 'good' usage. Such judgements must be made elsewhere.

One example for the discussion of 'good' usage is the current – rather emotional – debate about Anglicisms in German, and most speakers of the language have a view on the subject. Linguists may take the opportunity to analyse and describe this discussion, and to draw conclusions. This of course also applies to purism and its history: linguists will follow a descriptive approach, they do not judge the movement as 'good' or 'bad' in itself. This is particularly true because – and as will be seen in the following – the purist movements have differed over the centuries with respect to why they came into existence and what their declared aims were.

The Six Phases of Purism in the History of the German Language

I The Baroque Era

In the early seventeenth century, religious discord and a weak empire led to the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), resulting in the devastation of the German countries and culture. At this time, German was heavily influenced by Latin and French, the languages of national and international communication for scholars / the clergy and nobility respectively. German "lacked the traditional (if not unquestioned) status of Hebrew, Greek and Latin; and it was functionally inferior of French, Italian, and Spanish."⁷ With the Bible as an accurate historical source for academic writing in Europe at the time, it was generally agreed that Hebrew was the language closest to the one spoken by Adam and Eve (and maybe even by the snake) in paradise; all other languages were younger. Among German scholars, German was increasingly regarded as an ancient and dignified language which supposedly had not changed much since the Biblical incident known as the Confusion of Languages – it was seen as a sister of Hebrew and as not necessarily junior to the so-called Biblical languages Latin and Greek. Italian, Spanish and French, in contrast, were regarded as no more than adulterated versions of Latin and therefore inferior to the German "*Ur- und Hauptsprache*".⁸ It was consequently thought to be important to cultivate the German language and keep it pure and unadulterated from foreign influences. The concept of purity, however, not only referred to foreign lexical influences; it also applied to the correctness of syntax and word formation, as well as a usage which abstained from offensive and ambiguous words and expressions.⁹ This was the first step towards the development of an autonomous German literature, borne by a standardised, supra-regional language, to fend off the cultural dominance of French and Latin. As the latter were still the languages of the court and the scientific world respectively, the use of German was to be encouraged. This, among other activities such as the translation of Italian and French literature into German which was to serve as an example of good style for German authors, was the main aim of the so-called *Sprachgesellschaften*, and it was during the Baroque era that they first appeared in Germany.

The most important and most influential of these language associations was the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* which was founded in 1617 by Prince Ludwig von Anhalt-Köthen (1579-1650) and which lasted until the end of the century. It was understood as the German equivalent of the Italian Language Academy *Accademia della Crusca*, established in 1582, of which Prince Ludwig was a member. Even though membership in the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* was not restricted to nobility, the latter constituted 75% of the members, the remaining quarter being the educated bourgeoisie who contributed by far the most to the achievements of the association. All members were male and mostly Protestants, but religious denomination and nationality were regarded as secondary to a strong, genuine interest in the German language. The symbol of the association was the palm tree, and each member was given an emblem and an emblematic name: Prince Ludwig

⁷ Jones, 1999:vii.

⁸ Jones, 1999:1-24.

⁹ Leweling, 2005.

was called *Der Nährende* (The Nurturer) and used a loaf of baked wheat bread as an emblem. Caspar von Teutleben (1576-1629), who suggested the foundation of the association to Ludwig, was called *Der Mehltreiche* (Rich in Flour), his emblem being freshly-milled wheat flour falling out of a sack, with the words *hierin find sichs* (here, you'll find it). Both the names and the emblems of members relate to the name of the Italian academy, with *crusca* meaning 'bran' or 'chaff'. This metaphor expresses the idea that there are both desirable and undesirable words, phrases, grammatical constructions, etc., in every language, the former being worth taken care of, whereas the latter should be abolished. Hence the reference to the concept of separating the wheat from the chaff.

Other *Sprachgesellschaften* of the Baroque were the *Aufrichtige Gesellschaft von der Tannen* (founded in 1633), the *Deutschgesinnte Genossenschaft* (founded in 1643), the *Elbschwanenorden* (founded in 1656), and the *Pegnesischer Blumenorden* which was founded in 1644 and has existed without interruption to the present day.¹⁰

The most influential members of Baroque *Sprachgesellschaften* in terms of puristic activity were Andreas Gryphius (1616-1664), Georg Philipp Harsdörffer (1607-1658), Martin Opitz (1597-1639), Justus Georg Schottelius (1612-1676) and Philipp von Zesen (1619-1689). It was their love of the fatherland and of the heroic German language which motivated them:

Die Deutschen hätten [...] sich selbst dadurch geschändet und entehrt, daß sie ihre Sprache vernachlässigt und verachtet hätten. Sie müßten sich aber jetzt eines besseren besinnen und sich der Pflege der Muttersprache befleißigen. Zuallererst müßten sie dazu gebracht werden, ihre [sic] übermäßige Fremdwörtersucht abzuschwören.¹¹

The fashionable, so-called *Einflicken* (spatchcocking) of foreign words, especially by fawning courtiers and bourgeois fops, was perceived as superficial and pseudo-cultured and consequently criticised, for example in satirical verse by Sigmund von Birken (1645:86), a member of *Deutschgesinnte Genossenschaft*, *Pegnesischer Blumenorden* and *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*:

Ich bin nun *deschargirt* von dem *maladen* Leben. / Mir hat der Maur *facon* genug *disgousto* gegeben. / Wo Einfalt *avanciert*, und Vnschuld mit *raison*, / Die *retrogarde* hat, da ist die Sache *bon*. [...]

The replacement of French and Latin terms was the main means used to rid German of unwanted lexical items. Gryphius successfully replaced many words, among them *Port* with *Ufer*, *Parlament* with *Herrenhaus*, *Ade* with *Fahrt wohl*. Harsdörffer replaced *Akt* with *Aufzug*, *observieren* with *beobachten*, *Korrespondenz* with *Briefwechsel*, *Gusto* with *Geschmack*, *Chronographicon* with *Zeitschrift*. Harsdörffer was not fiercely opposed to all foreign words but mainly to the *Alamodewesen* which led to a fashionable intermingling of French and German words. Schottelius was probably the most outstanding and influential language researcher of the Baroque. In 1641, he published his *Teutsche Sprachkunst*, and 1663 he wrote the influential *Ausführliche Arbeit von der Teutschen Haupt-Sprache*. For him, as for others, language cultivation was a moral and patriotic issue:

Eine reine natürliche Sprache deute auf ein gesundes kräftiges Volk hin. [Schottelius] verwirft die Sprachmengerei nicht nur aus sprachlichen Gründen, sondern auch aus patriotischen, sittlichen und religiösen. Hinzu kommt auch noch sogar das politische Moment [...].¹²

Schottelius successfully replaced a great number of foreign words, such as *Kolon* with *Doppelpunkt*, *signum interrogationis* with *Fragezeichen*, *Säkulum* with *Jahrhundert*.

The above-mentioned Philipp von Zesen was a translator, writer and poet of great reputation, and he also coined a great number of replacements for foreign words such as *Glaubensbekenntnis* for

¹⁰ Pegnesischer Blumenorden (ed.), "Pegnesischer Blumenorden" (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.irrhain.de/>>.

¹¹ Kirkness 1975:18.

¹² Kirkness 1975:38.

Konfession, *Bücherei* for *Bibliothek*, *Lehrling* for *Disciple*, *Oberfläche* for *superficies*, *Vertrag* for *conventio*, *Vollmacht* for *Plenipotenz*. Zesen has often been subject to ridicule, even during his own time, because some of the replacements he suggested were deemed ridiculous, the most infamous being *Jungfernzwinger* for *Frauenkloster*, *Tagleuchter* for *Fenster*, *Sattelpuffer* or *Reitpuffer* for *Revolver* and *Löschhorn* or *Gesichtserker* for *Nase*. One should, however, not forget that Zesen's successful terms which sound perfectly normal to us today were at his time probably not much less unusual than all his other coinages. As far as the Baroque is concerned, Kirkness (1975:44) states that the concept of a 'pure' language was rather broad; not only foreign words were targeted, but also obsolete or dialectal words and ungrammatical expressions:

Der Begriff 'Sprachreinheit' wurde weit aufgefasst: Die Sprachreinigung im mittleren 17. Jahrhundert zielte auf ausländische, veraltete, mundartliche und im besonderen grammatisch unrichtige Ausdrücke in der Hochsprache. Trotz vieler Mißgriffe und Übertreibungen haben die barocken Sprachreiner ganz wesentlich dazu beigetragen, den deutschen Wortschatz zu reinigen und zu bereichern, eine hochsprachliche Norm herauszubilden und der Vorherrschaft des Lateinischen und des Französischen entgegenzuwirken.

Gardt shows that all of his four purist discourses appear in the Baroque Age – though quite different in their intensity. The cultural patriotic discourse was the most widespread; however the chief criticism was not of foreign languages and cultures as such, but of the uncritical adoption of those languages and cultures. In fact, the great number of works translated from French rather proves that this language and culture was in fact admired and regarded as a model or even an ideal.

II The early eighteenth century / the Age of Enlightenment

The main concern of the eighteenth century was to establish German as a language of science to replace the widely-used Latin language. Concerning standardisation and puristic tendencies in the German language during the Age of Enlightenment, four names must be mentioned: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766), Johann Christoph Adelung (1732-1806) and Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724-1803).

Leibniz argued that a language which was based on the principles of referential exactness (i.e. similar to mathematics where every signifier refers to only one concept signified) would enable all reasonable beings to understand the world intellectually, and that this would serve the development of the human community as a whole. He assumed that German was threatened by decay or even extinction, since the intellectual elite much preferred French and Latin to German. Where German was used, Leibniz was in favour of a moderate cleansing of the language from foreign elements but he did not condemn all foreign influences *per se*, foreign words should be avoided, but so should rude, obscene, indecent and vernacular expressions. Common everyday German should, if possible, contain no foreign words at all, whereas writings of especially the government and the intellectual elite could contain them.

Gottsched and Adelung were both grammarians and contributed considerably to the establishment of the High German standard variety. Naturalness, rationality, the search for a middle course, and the avoidance of extremes are characteristic of Gottsched's enlightened language concept. In his German grammar, he insisted that one ought to abstain from the use of archaisms, provincialisms, and rude, obscene or indecent expressions. Gardt (1999:174) points out that the qualities of the German language which Gottsched mentioned are very much in tradition with classical rhetoric: "Reichtum bzw. Überfluß und Ausdrucksmitteln, Deutlichkeit und Kürze bzw. Nachdruck [...]" (*copia*, *perspicuitas*, *brevitas*)." Concerning Gottsched's attitude towards foreign lexical influences, Kirkness (1975:57) states:

Gottsched [nimmt] eine gemäßigte Stellung ein und wendet sich gegen die schlimmsten Auswüchse der barocken Sprachreinigung sowie zugleich gegen die affektierte und geschmacklose, daher unvernünftige Sprachmischung des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts.

Gottsched tolerated foreign influences, as he understood the communicative function of language. He did not think that German was in a bad condition and he disagreed with the traditional allegation that an excessive use of foreign words would lead to the demise of the language. As Gardt (1999:175) puts it:

Auch der traditionelle Vorwurf, nach dem exzessiver Fremdwortgebrauch zum Untergang einer Sprache [...] führt, kann Gottsched nicht vom negativen Zustand des Deutschen überzeugen. [...] Die extremen fremdwortpuristischen Forderungen der Fruchtbringenden Gesellschaft sind für ihn 'Grillen'.

Johann Christoph Adelung, in contrast, was very much opposed to the use of foreign words, a fact which must be understood as part of his aim to develop a linguistic norm. He tried to distinguish between necessary and objectionable foreign influences – and, as with many purists, fell into the definition trap. For him, like for Gottsched, a pure language meant an absence of archaisms and provincialisms, as well as rude, obscene or indecent expressions. For his famous dictionary, Adelung rejected these as well as substitutes which, in his opinion, expressed ideas either in a wrong or in an incomplete way. He assumed a correlation between language and intellect and categorised languages according to their complexity and believed that only grammatically complex languages were capable of expressing complex concepts, therefore he concluded that Chinese, which he regarded as ‘stiffly monosyllabic’ was a hindrance to the development of cultured thought. Gardt (1999:187) points out that it is dangerous to assume that language determines the cognitive processing of reality, as this would lead to the wrong interpretation that certain lexical or grammatical features of a language are a barrier for the development of a speech community. He furthermore emphasises that this assumption of a correlation between language and cognition is a vital part of the *sprachstruktureller Fremdwortdiskurs* and common among linguistic purists.

Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock was, according to Kirkness (1998:409), the most extreme language protector of the Enlightenment, his resolute opposition to foreign linguistic influences is grounded in his lifelong love of Germany and everything German. Klopstock’s language work can be regarded as very much in the tradition of the purists of the Baroque, it had nationalistic aims and pursued primarily the ‘patriotic pride in the mother tongue’ (*vaterländischer Stolz auf die Muttersprache*).¹³ He endorsed an extreme, nationalistic fight against foreign words and hoped to activate a German national pride and to make the German *Volk* aware of its strength and honour (*Kraft und Ehre*).

III From the French Revolution to the Carlsbad Decrees (1789-1819)

Kirkness (1998:409-410) refers to the time between the French Revolution to the Carlsbad Decrees (*Karlsbader Beschlüsse*) as a transitional phase in which Standard High German was not only established to the greatest possible extent as the language of writing, but also mastered as a spoken variety all over the German-speaking countries. It was the basis for a feeling of cultural and philosophical unity of a nation with no political unity. Von Polenz (1999:266) highlights that German established itself completely as a language of prestige in place of French and Latin and considers that the problem of a written norm was solved and that the existence of German was no longer in any danger. The French Revolution in 1789, the end of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation in 1806 and the victory over the French in the Napoleonic Wars led to the Foundation of the German Confederation *Deutscher Bund* in 1814/15, and according to Kirkness (1998:410) it was now considered to be necessary for Germany to disassociate and distinguish itself from France:

Diese Entwicklungen spiegelten sich zwangsläufig in der puristischen Bewegung wider, deren Motivation und Zielsetzung zunehmend eine (national-)politische wurde, deren Hauptinteresse fortan eindeutig den nichtdeutschen Wörtern aus der Fremde, den Fremdwörtern galt.

¹³ Kirkness 1975:54.

Linguistic purism, however, was limited to educated, academic circles. The most prominent names of the time to be mentioned are Joachim Heinrich Campe (1746-1818), Karl Wilhelm Kolbe der Ältere (1757-1835), Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781-1832) and Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852).

J.H. Campe was one of the most influential supporters of the Enlightenment, who, after the French Revolution, worked nearly exclusively on the German language. He was of the opinion that only a pure German language, comprehensible to every citizen, would lead to the general enlightenment of the German people. He compiled the five volumes of his *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache* and the *Wörterbuch zur Erklärung und Verdeutschung der unserer Sprache aufgedrungenen fremden Ausdrücke*. Gardt (1999:206) points out that Campe's work, although puristic in nature, was clearly motivated by the Enlightenment. According to Kirkness (1975:148-159), Campe coined almost 3,500 himself, of which only 10% are still used today. That Campe's suggestions were not very successful might be connected to the fact that his knowledge of linguistic matters was not particularly deep, and that his methods were superficial. He was aware of that the distribution and circulation of his suggestions were very much dependent on the style of the recognised writers of his time and consequently tried to correct the style of some contemporary classical writers, but his exaggerations made him the subject of their ridicule. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), for example, wrote in his *Xenie* Nr. 25 "An des Eridanus Ufer umgeht mir die furchtbare Waschfrau / Welche die Sprache des Teut säubert mit Lauge und Sand", and in *Xenie* Nr. 39 he writes "Sinnreich bist du, die Sprache von fremden Wörtern zu säubern / Nun, so sage doch, Freund, wie man Pedant uns verdeutscht"¹⁴; both refer to Campe and his purist efforts. Many other famous eighteenth-century writers too, such as Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), Christoph Martin Wieland (1733-1813), Jean Paul (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, 1763-1825) and Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) were familiar with Campe's work.

According to Kirkness (1998: 411), the Berlin artist Karl Wilhelm Kolbe had an aesthetic approach to language and regarded language as a complete unity. He was of the opinion that foreign lexical influences on German could potentially lead to a change in its structure, to the abandonment of its singularity, and finally to its extinction. He assumed a strong connection between language and nation, and his books *Über den Wortreichthum der deutschen und französischen Sprache* and *Über Wortmengerei* are characterised by an extreme tone and frequent exaggerations which were common during the time he was writing. They must be understood as a patriotic act against the fear of French domination in general, which is a very common manifestation of Gardt's *sprachideologischer Fremdwortdiskurs*, where the purist does not criticize a foreign language but a foreign culture.¹⁵

The philosopher Christian Friedrich Krause, according to Kirkness (1975:236) an extremist among linguistic purists, aimed to develop a new, rational language which was systematically constructed of supposedly Germanic forms only. He regarded it as a patriotic duty to conserve the German language and to eliminate all foreign elements, as in his view the German people would damage itself through random borrowing. According to Kirkness (1975:230-236), Krause tried to achieve greater clarity of expression and translated "dieser Mensch ist Gottes Sohn" as "dieses orendliche [sic!] Geistleibinvereinswesen ist durch Wesen als gleichwesentliches Nebenausserwesen miteigenlebensverursacht".

Friedrich Ludwig Jahn was probably the most extreme purist of his time. His love of everything German and his hatred of everything foreign – especially French – strongly influenced his views on language. He rejected the use of almost all foreign words in German and was of the opinion that contact with foreign countries could only be destructive for the German language and culture. In his view, the influence of foreign countries on Germany had a demoralising effect on the Germans, and should therefore be eradicated. Von Polenz (1999:265) points out that the term *Fremdwort* was first used by Jahn:

Nachdem im älteren Sprachreinigungsdiskurs bis ins frühe 19. Jh. nur von *fremdes* /

¹⁴ Goethe 1948:211-213. For a more detailed account of Goethe's attitude towards purism, see Kirkness 1975:267-282.

¹⁵ Pfalzgraf 2006:158 (see also pp. 222, 239, 280, 310).

ausländisches / undeutsches Wort, Welschwort usw. die Rede war, finden sich die beiden frühesten Belege für die Zusammensetzung *Fremdwort* 1816 und 1819 bei einem der Ideologen des frühen deutschen Nationalismus in der Napoleonzeit, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn [...]. In beiden Erstbelegen wird *Fremdwort* bereits als Kampfwort kontextuell definiert; mit biologischer und rechtsgeschichtlicher Metaphorik wird bereits 'Ausgestoßensein' und 'Vertilgung' thematisiert, was für den (ebenfalls durch Jahn angeregten) rassistischen Diskurs in Deutschland typisch ist.

Renowned as the German *Turnvater*,¹⁶ Jahn naturally introduced numerous new terms within the area of gymnastics. However, he was also engaged in the coining of military and other terminology. His wish for purity often led to exaggerations and an incomprehensible style. Jahn often went too far when it came to the replacement of foreign words, and he was often ridiculed by his opponents. Kirkness (1998:412) holds the view that for Jahn, purism was a means with a cultural-political end: foreign words were seen as symptoms of a ruinous foreign – especially French – influence on Germany, an evil which needed to be removed.

As far as the period from the French Revolution to the Carlsbad Decrees is concerned, Kirkness (1998:411) distinguishes four different movements: the educative-enlightening approach of Campe (*volksaufklärerisch-bildungspolitisch*), the language structural approach of Kolbe (*sprachstrukturell*), a radically rational approach of Krause (*radikal-vernünftelnd*), and the political-nationalistic approach of Jahn (*politisch-nationalistisch*). It is remarkable that three of these four movements identified by Kirkness are almost identical with three of the four *Fremdwortdiskurse* which Gardt distinguishes for the period between the Baroque age and the Second World War. In the nineteenth century, the structurally-orientated purists assumed that foreign words could endanger the structure of the German language – which they assumed would result in a collapse of the entire language. Purists who were influenced by the Enlightenment regarded the use of foreign words as a barrier between the educated and uneducated classes, a barrier that would have to be overcome in order to enable the people to participate in democratic processes. Other purists had nationalistic motives and assumed that language was a part of the German culture which was at least equivalent – if not superior – to foreign cultures, especially that of France. For them, language criticism was cultural criticism.

IV The early nineteenth century

The nationalistically motivated purist movement outlined in the previous section came to a sudden end with the Carlsbad Decrees in 1819, but re-emerged when the urge for national unity became stronger in the mid-nineteenth century. It was now members of the academic community who criticised the use of foreign words and who, as Kirkness (1975:417-418) points out, did not act as linguists but as conscious German patriots: for them, an unadulterated standard German was seen as an indication of German national unity and emancipation.

Kirkness (1975:342) points out that the efforts of Josef Dominicus Carl/Karl Brugger (1796-1865) must be understood within this context. Brugger was involved in the foundation of the short-lived and unsuccessful *Verein der Deutschen Reinsprache* in 1848, and from 1850 edited *Die Eiche*, a fortnightly publication dealing with issues related to the German language, literature, art, and culture. Both the association and the publication shared the same fate: after an enthusiastic beginning, practically nothing was achieved. Brugger suggested to the 1848 *Nationalversammlung* that all words of foreign origin should be translated, and that only German words should be used: he aimed to thoroughly cleanse the German language from everything foreign, mainly by replacing lexical items with coinages supposedly based on Germanic roots. But although Brugger tried to address the public authorities, government institutions, teachers, writers, journalists and editors, his work was known almost exclusively to academics. Brugger was regarded as overeager, even in his time, and was not at all qualified for either linguistic research or language cultivation, as his knowledge of linguistic structures were at most superficial.

¹⁶ Jahn is known as the *Turnvater* because he initiated many gymnastics associations. His aim was to restore the spirits of the Germans by the development of their physical and moral powers through the practice of gymnastics.

Many other language protection organisations were founded during around the same time, but all of them published little or nothing, had no impact on the German language at all, and ceased to exist soon after they came into existence. Two of those were the *Potsdamer Verein für Deutsche Sprache*, founded by Friedrich Karl Keil (1807-1888) in 1848, and the *Allgemeine Germanische Gesellschaft*, founded in 1858 by F. Krüger, according to Kirkness (1975:471) probably one of the pseudonyms of Albert Peter Johann Krüger (1810-1883).

Georg Heinrich Otto Volger (1822-1897) was one of the founders of the *Freies Deutsches Hochstift* which still exists today.¹⁷ The purpose of the *Hochstift* was to unite all sciences, arts, and general educational institutions, and the purification of the German language was mentioned as one of its aims. Volger was, however, alone in his interest in linguistic purism and sometimes criticized by other leading figures of the *Hochstift*, and for Kirkness (1975:357), it comes as no surprise that its purist activities ceased when Volger left for Lüneburg in 1866.

To sum up one can say that the *Fremdwortpurismus* of the early nineteenth century was an academic movement which failed to convince or even attract the public and which, despite the foundation of various *Sprachschutzvereine* and publications, had no perceivable success. The movement was exclusively patriotic and, according to Gardt, both the ideological discourse about foreign words and the discourse concerning stylistics and rhetoric prevailed. Despite differences from earlier phases of purism, language criticism was once again used as a means of cultural criticism.

V From 1871 to World War II

The establishment of the German Empire in 1871 can be seen as the beginning of the institutionalisation of linguistic purism. During the re-organisation of the state administration, many officials with a critical approach towards foreign words came to office, and this led to a great number of substitutions of foreign – and especially French – words. The General Postmaster Heinrich von Stephan, for example, issued a decree which replaced some 800 French words with German equivalents, such as *Couvert* with *Briefumschlag*, *poste restante* with *postlagernd* and *recommandiert* with *per Einschreiben*. Also, the Senior Building Officer (*Oberbaurat*) Otto Sarrazin successfully translated around 1,300 technical terms from the areas of civil engineering and the railways, including *Barriere* with *Schranke*, *Perron* with *Bahnsteig* and *Retourbillet* with *Rückfahrkarte*. Such efforts were supported with the Prussian King Wilhelm IV, for example, regarding the language of the army where *Charge* was substituted by *Dienstgrad*, *Avancement* with *Beförderung* and *Anciennität* with *Dienstalter*.

Simultaneously with this official support, the hunt for foreign words became a widely-spread movement among the common people. Of great importance in this respect is the foundation of the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Sprachverein* (ADSV) which was founded in 1885 by Hermann Riegel (1834-1900), Director of the Brunswick Museum and Professor of Art History at Brunswick Polytechnic, in cooperation with Hermann Dunger (1843-1912), a grammar school teacher in Dresden.¹⁸ In the first issue of the periodical of the ADSV (1886:1), Riegel stated the society's three aims: to encourage the purification of the German language from unnecessary foreign elements; to cultivate the preservation and restoration of the true spirit and the genuine character of the German language; and to thus strengthen the national awareness of the German people:

Der 'allgemeine deutsche Sprachverein' ist ins Leben getreten, um 1) die Reinigung der deutschen Sprache von unnöthigen fremden Bestandtheilen zu fördern, – 2) die Erhaltung und Wiederherstellung des echten Geistes und eigenthümlichen Wesens der deutschen Sprache zu pflegen – und 3) auf diese Weise das allgemeine Bewußtsein im Deutschen Volke zu kräftigen.

¹⁷ Freies Deutsches Hochstift (ed.), "Freies Deutsches Hochstift" (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.goethehaus-frankfurt.de/hochstift/>>.

¹⁸ Dunger was not, as often claimed, Professor of German at Dresden University but teacher at two Dresden grammar schools, see: Viereck 1989:3*.

Obviously, the notion of the beauty and purity of the German language was highly valued by the ADSV, and it is important to point out that the aims of the association were not primarily concerned with language, but with issues related to culture and nation. This is also apparent in the ADSV slogan “Gedenke auch, wenn du die deutsche Sprache sprichst, daß du ein Deutscher bist!”¹⁹ Commenting on the first of the main aims of the ADSV, Bernsmeier notes that it was the ADSV’s main aim to eliminate foreign words from German.²⁰ This was mainly aimed at French influences; however, English words were also targeted.²¹ In theory, the ADSV distinguished between useful or good and unnecessary or bad foreign words, and the latter were to be replaced by German equivalents. The terms ‘good’ and ‘equivalent’, however, were interpreted quite differently within the ADSV as no criteria had been developed for distinguishing between, for example, ‘good’ and ‘equivalent’.²² According to Kirkness (1983:20), one’s knowledge of the German language was not important; it was more important to speak German, to think in a German way, and to be German – not to put forward good linguistic arguments:

Beim Fremdwortpurismus kam es also nicht auf Wissen über Sprache, [...] sondern darauf an, deutsch zu sprechen, deutsch zu denken und deutsch zu sein. [...] Es ging] dem Sprachverein nicht darum, sprachwissenschaftlich zu argumentieren.

In practice, the ADSV did not follow its theoretical approach to combat only those foreign words which were regarded as superfluous and to exclude those which had long been fully integrated into German. The names of the months and their Latin origin, for example, were always a matter of concern for the association – consequently, old terms such as *Hornung* for *Februar* or *Scheidling* for *September* were used in ADSV publications.

The German language was regarded as a ‘House of Treasures’ (*Schatzhaus*), a monument (*Denkmal*), a sanctuary (*Heiligtum*), a national symbol (*Nationalsymbol*) and a cultural heritage (*kulturelles Erbe*),²³ and in order to protect these, the ADSV expected people to fight for them, and this *Kampf* was seen as an act of national education (*nationalerzieherisches Werk*).²⁴ Foreign words were metaphorically described as a flood (*Fremdwortflut*) and as a cancerous wound on the body of German traditions (“krebssige Wunde am Leibe deutschen Volkstums”), while their use was regarded as spiritual treason (“geistiger Landesverrat”) or as a sign of national lethargy and leading to a ‘linguistic swamp’ (“Zeichen nationaler Stumpfheit und sprachlicher Versumpfung”). In addition to these metaphors of water, flood and mud, metaphors of illness and disease, of moral decline (*Sittenverfall*), crime (*Verbrechen*), or decay (*Verfall*) of the sick German language (“kranke deutsche Sprache”), characterize ADSV discourse.²⁵

The prevailing topic of language decay shows that the ADSV believed in the former existence of a perfect language which has always been subject to decay. Some members of the ADSV praised the medieval language of the *Nibelungenlied* or of Walther von der Vogelweide, others point to Old High German (750-1050). But no matter what was recommended, all ADSV members believed in a formerly unadulterated, healthy and strong, perfect language which had been degenerating and would continue to do so. The language was likened to a plant or flower, which grows and develops, then comes into full bloom and eventually decays and dies; thus the normal phenomenon of language change is understood as language decay.

Concerning supposedly superfluous and unnecessary foreign words, the ADSV claimed that they had a negative influence on the beauty and originality of German, that they would prevent German from fully developing its means of word formation, and this would lead to an impoverishment of the lexis; furthermore that they were often unclear, ambiguous and incomprehensible and that this would lead to a communication barrier between members of the language community:

¹⁹ See e.g. Lohmeyer 1917:198.

²⁰ Bernsmeier 1980:117.

²¹ Dunger 1909.

²² Kirkness 1983:19.

²³ Polenz 1999:271.

²⁴ Kirkness 1983:20.

²⁵ Polenz 1999:276.

[...] dass sie die Schönheit und Ursprünglichkeit des Deutschen beeinträchtigten [...], daß sie das Deutsche daran hinderten, die eigenen, vom Germanischen stammenden Wortbildungsmittel [...] voll einzusetzen, und somit eine Verarmung des Wortschatzes darstellten; daß sie häufig unklar, mehrdeutig oder unverständlich wären und deshalb Verwirrung stifteten und eine Bildungsbarriere quer durch die Sprachgemeinschaft errichteten [...].²⁶

To remedy this, the ADSV published so-called 'language corners' (*Sprachecken*) in its journal, the aim of which was to sharpen the readers' feel for language, their *Sprachgefühl*. They also issued numerous *Verdeutschungsbücher* which offered German 'equivalents' in order to substitute the vocabulary in different areas of language such as schooling, sports, or restaurant menus. As mentioned above, some substitutions by ADSV members were so successful that these words are still used today, as is the case in the areas of the postal service and the railways. On the other hand, some unfortunate suggestions were made, such as *Kahlkopfverlegenheitsabshelfer* for *Perücke* or *Starkschwachfingerschlagtonkasten* for *Klavier*.

As far as the use of foreign words was concerned, the ADSV ascribed foreign words to negative character attributes such as slothfulness, laziness of thought, vanity, arrogance and snobbery. Furthermore, it believed that users of foreign words suffered from an exaggerated respect for everything foreign and a concurrent self-disregard. Language matters repeatedly subordinated to non-linguistic political objectives. The latter gained in importance especially during the First World War. "The war cleanses the language" (*Der Krieg reinigt die Sprache*), rejoiced the ADSV (1914:305) when the First World War broke out. Later, when Hitler came to power, the ADSV (1934:146) expressed itself in increasingly political terms: as the 'SA of the mother tongue', violently protesting against the disfigurement and mutilation of the 'holy blood heritage' by 'vermin of the nation'. Initially, the ADSV regarded the outbreak of German fascism as an opportunity to gain support from the highest governmental authorities to do away with all foreign words in German. It soon turned out, however, that the leading Nazis did not share the association's interests: Goebbels expressed a great disapproval for the ADSV's work during a meeting of the Cultural Chamber of the Reich, *Reichskulturkammer*, in 1937, and two years later the ADSV periodical was taken from the association and put under different editorship; the ADSV was henceforth only allowed to publish a report about its work. Eventually, in an edict of 1940, Hitler personally turned against the translation and substitution of foreign words. This was de facto the end of the association, and with it the end of the hounding of foreign words as a widespread movement among the common people.

VI After the Second World War

It is generally agreed that no significant purist activity took place between the abolition of the ADSV in the 1940s and German unification in 1990. Kirkness (1998:414-415) points out that the foreign words in German were still an issue, but all in all, they were better tolerated, and nationalist linguistic purism appeared only infrequently. Von Polenz (1999:287) emphasises that public criticism of foreign words was mostly ignored, while more extreme ideas were simply ridiculed:

Die durchaus geäußerte öffentliche Kritik am Überhandnehmen von Anglizismen [...] im westlichen Nachkriegsdeutschland wurde ohne erkennbare Wirkung registriert: extreme Verdeutschungsvorschläge wurden als Randerscheinungen belächelt oder verspottet.

Since the early 1990s, however, the debate about the use of foreign words in German has increased in intensity. While only a few German politicians commented on the subject between the Second World War and the 1990s, numerous high-profile politicians from all parties have criticised the alleged overuse of Anglicisms since 2001, e.g. the then Federal President Johannes Rau (SPD), the Speaker of the German Parliament Wolfgang Thierse (SPD), the leader of the FDP Wolfgang Gerhard, the Bavarian Interior Minister Hans Zehetmair (CSU), and the Governing Mayor of Berlin

²⁶ Kirkness 1983:19.

Eberhard Diepgen (CDU). For the first time since the 1930s there have been demands for laws to protect the German language.

Closely related to this is the fact that, since the early 1990s, an increasing number of organisations for the protection of the language have emerged in Germany. Some have a remarkably large number of members and regularly voice their opinions in the media, while others are much smaller and less influential, although their aims are similar. The most influential associations are the *Verein Deutsche Sprache* (VDS),²⁷ the *Verein für deutsche Rechtschreibung und Sprachpflege* (VRS),²⁸ the *Verein für Sprachpflege* (VfS) with its publication *Deutsche Sprachwelt* (DSW),²⁹ and the *Bund für deutsche Schrift und Sprache* (BfdS).³⁰ Pfalzgraf (2003a,b) has shown that both the VfS and the BfdS have contacts with political right-wing organisations and individuals, the others have more or less successfully eliminated such connections in recent years. However, one must be aware of the fact that the issue of foreign words in general and Anglicisms in particular is sometimes consciously used to support right-wing propaganda.³¹

The largest and best-known language protection organisation, the *Verein Deutsche Sprache* (VDS), which was founded under the name *Verein zur Wahrung der deutschen Sprache* (VWdS) in Dortmund in 1997 by the mathematician and statistician Prof. Walter Krämer. According to its website, the VDS currently has 30,000 members in almost 100 countries. Using similar metaphors to the puristically-inclined. As mentioned in the previous section, the VDS claims that there is currently an ugly flood of unnecessary Anglicisms. The VDS criticises a perceived mixture of languages (*Sprachgemisch*) which it refers to as “Denglisch” and “Imponiergefasel” (drivel which aims to impress). They oppose to the superfluous English bits and pieces (*die überflüssigen englischen Brocken*) and perceive a disdainful treatment of German (*verächtliche Behandlung der deutschen Sprache*). Language is regarded by the VDS as an entity that deserves respect. The aim of the VDS is to oppose the anglicisation of the German language and to remind the Germans of the value and the beauty of their mother tongue.³²

The academic advisory board (*Wissenschaftlicher Beirat*) of the VDS consists almost entirely of university professors – hardly any of them an expert linguist – who state its aim to defend the German language in the face of acute danger:

Der für alle Völker selbstverständliche Sprachpatriotismus ist in Deutschland und Österreich angesichts ihrer jüngsten Geschichte belastet. Trotzdem macht es die aktuelle Gefährdung der deutschen Sprache als Kulturgut notwendig, jetzt für ihre Verteidigung einzutreten.³³

The similarities of the views of VDS and ADSV are striking: language is regarded as a cultural heritage (*kulturelles Erbe*) and an essential part of the cultural wealth to be preserved at all costs (*unverzichtbares Kulturgut*), it is seen as the primary resource for literary art (*Rohstoff für sprachliche Kunstwerke*), and it is endangered (*in Gefahr*) and on the verge of being unusable (*droht unbrauchbar zu werden*). Anglicisms are judged as a development which came into existence because of bad taste and linguistic, cultural, and political indifference. The advisory board further holds the view that the language has been severely damaged and that German will become sick because of overfeeding (*Überfütterung*) with Anglicisms. The advisory board claims that the perceived Anglicisation of German is caused by the political and cultural dominance of the USA,

²⁷ Verein Deutsche Sprache, "Verein Deutsche Sprache" (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/>>.

²⁸ Verein für deutsche Rechtschreibung und Sprachpflege, "Startseite" (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vrs-ev.de/>>.

²⁹ Verein für Sprachpflege, "Deutsche Sprachwelt" (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.deutsche-sprachwelt.de/>>.

³⁰ Bund für deutsche Schrift und Sprache, "Bund für deutsche Schrift und Sprache" (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.bfds.de/>>.

³¹ Pfalzgraf & Leuschner 2006.

³² Verein Deutsche Sprache, "VDS vorgestellt" (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/verein/>>.

³³ Verein Deutsche Sprache, "Gründungserklärung des Wissenschaftlichen Beirats des Vereins Deutsche Sprache (VDS)" (accessed February 2007), <http://vds-ev.de/verein/wissenschaftlicher_beirat_grundsatz.php>.

together with a lack of loyalty to the German language and the willingness of Germany to adopt US values.³⁴

To fight English influence on German, the VDS publishes its quarterly *Sprachnachrichten*³⁵ and various books;³⁶ it also organises a number of activities, such as the *Tag der deutschen Sprache*, which is intended to promote German linguistic consciousness and prevent the crazy use of “Denglisch”:

Der Tag der deutschen Sprache soll ein Sprachbewußtsein schaffen und festigen, das den unkritischen Gebrauch von Fremdwörtern, insbesondere die Sucht, überflüssige englische Ausdrücke zu benutzen, den Englisch- und Denglischwahn, eindämmt bzw. verhindert.³⁷

Together with the Eberhard-Schöck Foundation, the VDS awards the annual *Kulturpreis Deutsche Sprache* to people who work to preserve the German language and help its development. The award was, among others, given to writer Rolf Hochhuth and humorist Vico von Bühlow alias “Loriot”.³⁸ In addition, the VDS regularly launches campaigns such as *Deutsche Sprache ins Grundgesetz* or *Sprachlicher Verbraucherschutz* in order to fight supposedly harmful Anglicisms.³⁹ Like other purist organisations, the VDS also calls for the translation and substitution of Anglicisms with what is believed to be their German equivalent. Their *Anglizismen-Index* is a words list which offers alternatives for the use of Anglicisms:

Der Anglizismen-Index ist ein aktuelles Nachschlagewerk für Anglizismen mit einer Auswahl deutscher Entsprechungen, die eine Alternative für solche Anglizismen sein können, die deutsche Wörter verdrängen und vornehmlich Bedeutungserklärung für solche, die als ergänzend oder differenzierend gelten dürfen.⁴⁰

This index offers evaluations of whether an Anglicism is regarded as being additional (*ergänzend*), differentiating (*differenzierend*), suppressive (*verdrängend*) or a proper noun (*Eigenname*). Like other purist organisations, the VDS has no criteria for these distinctions – it is a matter of taste. Like the ADSV, the VDS is trying to substitute long-established words such as *T-Shirt* with *T-Hemd* or with the Gallicism *Trikothemd*.⁴¹ On their website, *T-Shirt* is translated as *Leichthemd*, a word which few German would understand.⁴² The VDS states that they would accept certain Anglicisms: “Gegen fair, Interview, Trainer, Doping, Slang haben wir nichts einzuwenden.”⁴³ However, all these words are on its substitution list, and *Training* is regarded as being *verdrängend*. The difference between puristic theory and practice is evident.

Conclusion

If we compare the purist movement after German unification in 1990 with the purists before 1990, there are apparent similarities. However, a thorough analysis has shown major differences

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Verein Deutsche Sprache, “Sprachnachrichten” (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/verein/sprachnachrichten/>>.

³⁶ Verein Deutsche Sprache, “VDS-Buchversand” (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/buchversand/>>.

³⁷ Verein Deutsche Sprache, “Tag der deutschen Sprache” (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/verein/aktionen/tag-der-deutschen-sprache/>>.

³⁸ Verein Deutsche Sprache, “Kulturpreis Deutsche Sprache” (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/verein/aktionen/kulturpreis.php>>, and <<http://www.kulturpreis-deutsche-sprache.de>> (accessed February 2007).

³⁹ Verein Deutsche Sprache, “Arbeitsgruppen im Verein Deutsche Sprache” (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/verein/aktive/arbeitsgruppen.php>>

⁴⁰ Verein Deutsche Sprache, “Der Anglizismen-Index” (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/anglizismenindex/>>.

⁴¹ Verein Deutsche Sprache, “Wörterliste: T-Shirt” (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/anglizismenindex/suche2.php?str=t-shirt>>.

⁴² Verein Deutsche Sprache, “VDS- Buchversand” (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/buchversand/>>.

⁴³ Verein Deutsche Sprache, “VDS vorgestellt” (accessed February 2007), <<http://www.vds-ev.de/verein/>>.

concerning the constitution of the four discourses which are typical of linguistic purism:⁴⁴ the almost complete absence of the pedagogical/sociological discourse about foreign words (*sprachpädagogisch-sprachsoziologischer Fremdwortdiskurs*) and the concurrent strength of ideological discourse (*sprachideologischer Fremdwortdiskurs*). The strong presence of the latter shows that the motivation for the criticism of Anglicisms – other foreign words are often less criticised or even accepted, especially if these stem from classical Greek or Latin – is of an ideological nature. This discourse essentially expresses the fear of a linguistic and cultural ‘colonisation’ by the USA, a fear which in extreme cases can manifest itself as a right-wing political position. Language criticism is a substitute for cultural criticism and instead of the USA, Anglicisms – and sometimes people who use them – are criticised, insulted, harassed, or attacked vicariously. This also explains the almost absent pedagogical/sociological discourse: while the motives of education or enlightenment were of great importance for Campe, as it was his principal aim to improve the democratisation of Germany, such motives no longer prevail. Whether Gardt’s four discourses are present or not can be explained by cultural criticism aimed against the USA. Because of this particular form of purism with its distinct constitution of puristic discourses, Pfalzgraf (2006) has suggested the use of the term *Neopurismus* (neo-purism) to describe it.

The phenomenon of anti-Americanism must be understood within the socio-economical context of Germany since its unification. Soon after the *Wende* it became clear that the German government would not be able to solve the problems which came with it. The economic situation in Germany worsened, with an increase in unemployment resulting in the deterioration of the social security system and a new economic and emotional division between East and West Germany. Furthermore, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the resulting fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of the separation of the world into East and West forced the Germans – once more – to define what it means to be German, especially with regard to its relationship with the USA. “Now, are we Germans or just bad copies of Americans”⁴⁵ is the core question repeatedly asked by purists.

The neo-puristic tendencies which have occurred since German unification could consequently be understood as the result of a German identity crisis similar to the one after the Thirty Years War, after the Napoleonic War, and during the establishment of the *Kleindeutsches Reich*. Despite such similarities, however, the situation is different today. Certainly, many linguists believe that German purism has always coincided with nationalism and/or war. Polenz describes purism as a development which is strongly related to the history of German national emotions and nationalism. He points out that linguistic purism in Germany has always been connected to peaks of political activation of nationalist feelings. As examples, Polenz (1967:79-80) names the historical events mentioned above and the outbreak of the First World War, as does Keller (1978:611-612), who adds “the time of the Nazi take-over of power.” This is at least true as far as the development of purist movements in the German past is concerned. However, the strongly related issue of language and identity seems to be underrated. As Claudia Law (2002:82-83) states, one can today hardly speak of German nationalism – and even less of the danger of a war, as Germany presents itself as a stable, democratic nation with an exemplary social system. She agrees that current purism is not based on a crisis of the German state or the nation, but is related to a deeply-rooted crisis of a psychological nature: Germany, the second largest language area in Europe is currently trying to define itself and its position in Europe, and the world in terms of culture and politics.

⁴⁴ Pfalzgraf 2006:303-312.

⁴⁵ See e.g. Geisberger, Michael. "Das Ärgernis" (accessed April 2003). <<http://www.denglisch.com/aergerniss.htm>>.

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