

German global soft power, 1700-1920

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Abstract:

This article provides the first overview of the reach and ‘soft power’ of German language and culture in Europe and beyond, from 1700 to 1920, shortly after the end of the First World War. Besides the role of the state (weak, until deliberate policies began to be formulated from the late nineteenth century), the article shows the role of language societies, religious, educational and scientific institutions, and other sociocultural and political factors, including migration and colonization, in promoting German ‘soft power’ in other parts of Europe, in the Americas, Africa and China. The changing status of German language and culture in these parts of the world and the extent of local and ‘home’ support, through explicit policy or otherwise, for German as a first, foreign or additional language abroad is also considered.

Keywords: German as a foreign language (GFL), German colonialism, German migration, Philanthropists, language societies, Togo, Namibia, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Jiaozhou Bay concession (Kiautschou).

In 2013, Monocle magazine ranked Germany top in its global soft-power index, beating the USA (2nd) and the UK (3rd).¹ With about 100 million native speakers (sixth behind Chinese, English, Hindustani, Spanish, and Russian), German also has some claim to be a world language. Its advocates point to its global reach; a map titled *Weltsprache Deutsch* ‘World Language German’ in a recent textbook for English learners of German suggests that German is spoken in Europe, Africa, Australia, North and South America, and Asia². A series of high-profile publications reflect concern about German’s status on the world stage: Thierfelder’s *Die Deutsche Sprache im Ausland* (‘The German language abroad’, 1957), Ammon’s comprehensive *Die Stellung der deutschen Sprache in der Welt* (‘The status of the German language in the World’, 2014, updating his earlier *Die internationale Stellung de*

¹ Germany lost the top spot to the USA in 2014, however. See <http://www.thelocal.de/20131121/germany-number-one-for-soft-power> and <http://monocle.com/film/Affairs/soft-power-survey-2014-15/> (accessed June 2015). On the notion of soft power, see Nye (2004), and for a critique of it as an analytical category, see Hall, ‘An unclear attraction’.

² McNeill et al., *Neue Aussichten – Etappen*, 6.

deutschen Sprache), and Gardt & Hüppauf's more anxiously titled *Globalization and the Future of German* (2004); a historical perspective is provided in two recent monographs by Glück.³ Germany is today assiduous in promoting German cultural and scientific endeavour internationally,⁴ as well as its linguistic study (*Institut für Deutsche Sprache* since 1964) and/or 'preservation' or 'protection' (e.g. *Verein Deutsche Sprache*, since 1997). But for most of the period 1700-1920 there were no such official or semi-official bodies to promote German language and culture nationally or internationally, and a German *empire immatériel de la langue* was carried, unintentionally, by civic institutions: churches, schools, universities and societies.⁵ In this article I consider the ways in which the German language and culture attained, whether by accident or design, recognition and status in the world beyond the borders of the German-speaking countries, through trade (Section 2.), religious and educational institutions (3.), migration, including political exile (4.), literary and scientific endeavours (5.), and, finally explicit cultural diplomacy and linguistic policies in German colonies in Africa and China (6.).⁶ We shall see that the history of the global soft power or 'immaterial empire' of the German language is paradoxical. It is a history of expanding influence in the absence of deliberate policy, followed, from the late nineteenth century onwards, by deliberate policies that ended abruptly after World War I, in a loss of ground in all areas.

Early beginnings – German and international trade

The earliest interest in German abroad was prompted by commercial interests. A school in Venice for merchants to learn German is attested in 1424.⁷ German merchants also traded, with England, Scandinavia and the states around the Baltic Sea under the control of the Teutonic Order. In England, German merchants trained their own interpreters to trade with the English, rather than encouraging knowledge of German, but in the Baltic, under the Teutonic Order, at least some Latvians and Estonians could speak German in the thirteenth

³ Glück, *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (up to 1700) and *Die Fremdsprache Deutsch* (ca. 1700-1800).

⁴ See for example the cultural and scientific institutions listed by Böhm, *Deutsch in Afrika*, 36-44; Ammon, *Die Stellung*, 1069-1146.

⁵ On the notion of the 'empire immatériel' see the introduction to Cabanel, *Une France en Méditerranée*.

⁶ I shall not deal with the policies of Switzerland or the Austro-Hungarian Empire; but see Wiesinger, 'Nation und Sprache in Österreich' and Kolle, 'Nation und Sprache in der Schweiz'.

⁷ See Pausch, *Das älteste italienisch-deutsche Sprachbuch*, and Glück & Morcinek, *Ein Franke in Venedig*.

and fourteenth centuries. In Scandinavia, the use of Low German in Hanseatic trade had a lasting influence on the Swedish vocabulary and structures.⁸

Migration and political exile

In the absence of conscious policy, the migration of German speakers to other parts of the world was one of the main ways in which the influence of German language and culture was unwittingly spread. The first grammar of German for English speakers was published in 1680 by a German who, before leaving Germany, had been on the cusp of admission to the Fruitbearing Society (*Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*), the largest of the seventeenth-century societies seeking to promote the cultivation of the German language (founded 1617). Printed in England, Martin Aedler's grammar still reflects the Society's commitment to promoting German – it begins with a collection of *Testimonia*, well-worn assertions of the antiquity, purity and excellence of the German language.⁹ Two centuries after Aedler, when the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Sprachverein* or 'General German Language Society' was established in Germany in 1885, branches were soon set up by German migrants abroad too. Among the seventeen set up outside Germany, including six in the USA, one in Windhoek (Namibia) and one in Dar Es Salaam (Tanzania), and even one in Hobart, Tasmania,¹⁰ was the London branch set up in 1898 by Prof. Aloys Weiss. Members included German emigrants but also prominent teachers of German in schools and universities keen to improve language teaching in Britain: Walter Rippmann (born in England, to German parents, who had taught at Cambridge and in women's schools), Louis Camille von Glehn (teaching at a school in Cambridge) and Karl Breul (lecturer and later Professor of German at Cambridge). The *Allgemeiner Deutscher Sprachverein* was one of just a number of German interest societies established at the start of the twentieth century in London that, to quote Flood, 'still await their historians', including the *Deutscher Verein für Kunst und Wissenschaft* 'German Society for Art and Science', and the *Verband deutscher Barbier- und Friseur-Gehilfen Londons* 'Association of German London barbers' and hairdressers' assistants'. A German theatre was

⁸ Glück, *Deutsch als Fremdsprache*, 325, 265; Naumann, 'Das Deutsche im Sprachkontakt'.

⁹ These may well all have come from the leading study of the German language of the time, Schottelius's *Ausführliche Arbeit* (1663), or its earlier incarnation, the *Sprachkunst* (1641, 1651) (see McLelland, *Schottelius's Ausführliche Arbeit*). Aedler's use of an idiosyncratic but, to his mind, theoretically grounded spelling system also attests to his desire to contribute to the cultivation of correct German.

¹⁰ Flood, 'The London branch of the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Sprachverein*', 231.

in existence 1900-1908, and there were at least two local German newspapers.¹¹ The English Goethe Society had already been founded in 1886 – it still exists, with a journal appearing three times a year.

Another key figure in the teaching of German in late nineteenth-century Britain was Otto Siepmann, who had come to England in 1885 ‘finding his liberal outlook unwelcome in Germany’.¹² He was not the only political emigrant to play a significant role in the championing of German abroad. A generation earlier and across the Atlantic in the USA, Charles (Karl) Follen (1796–1840), a German political radical who left Germany in 1819 after a group he was associated with a conservative diplomat, became Harvard professor of German. He published a practical grammar in 1828, and a reader in 1836.

These individual migrants could have significant roles in promoting German language and culture abroad in their new homes, but mass migration also had considerable influence on the host culture. Kloss claimed that migration had made German ‘the only language spoken by immigrant groups in almost all parts of the New World, from Canada to Southern Chile’;¹³ Australia, too, had German migrants, most notably concentrated in the wine-growing Barossa Valley of South Australia from the 1840s.¹⁴ A total of 4.8 million people migrated from Germany to the USA between 1700 and 1917.¹⁵ In Wisconsin, the US state with the highest proportion of migrants in the nineteenth century, 14% of its population in 1880 had been born in Germany, and 33% were ‘of German stock’ (a census term for those with at least one parent born in Germany; these figures were still 10% and 34% in 1910.¹⁶ Wisconsin had a ‘strong and vociferous’ German press – the first German newspaper was founded in 1844, and by 1900, the high-point, there were about 100 German newspapers, of which four appeared daily. In 1884 the three German newspapers of Milwaukee had roughly twice the

¹¹ On the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Sprachverein*, see Flood, ‘The London branch’, 252, n. 7.

¹² Whitehead, ‘Siepmann, Otto’.

¹³ Kloss, ‘German’, 110.

¹⁴ See Harmstorf & Cigler, ‘The Germans in Australia’, Harmstorf, ‘Insights’, and further bibliography at <http://www.germanaustralia.com/e/bibliography.htm> (accessed June 2015).

¹⁵ Not all had German as their mother tongue – in 1910, 10% spoke Polish – but equally, another half-million from outside Germany had German as their mother tongue. See Kloss, ‘German’, 107.

¹⁶ Eichhoff, ‘German in Wisconsin’, 49

circulation of the three English newspapers in that city.¹⁷ In Pennsylvania, ethnically based societies such as the Pennsylvania German Society, founded 1891) celebrated members' German ancestry and the achievements of great Pennsylvania Germans.¹⁸

Not surprisingly, perhaps, German was, until 1917, 'the most widely studied language at universities and colleges' in the USA; in 1915, a quarter of all high-school pupils learnt German: 284,000 compared to 103,000 French and only 32,000 Spanish. Kloss asserts that 'Up to 1917, German in the United States enjoyed unequalled prestige as *the* language of education and learning [...] the ability to read German was indispensable to many disciplines', from natural sciences and technology to sociology, philosophy and linguistics.¹⁹ We shall return to this under 5. below.

Education

Religion and the Reformation

In the absence of state external cultural policy, one important means of asserting German language and culture abroad was via educational and religious institutions (overlapping categories for most of their history). The Reformation was largely carried to Scandinavia by men who had studied in Wittenberg – around 1600, 80% of Swedish students studied abroad, the majority of them at Dutch or German universities. As a result, German was the most important foreign language in Denmark, Norway and Sweden (while in England, Italy and the Netherlands, French was most in demand).²⁰ From the sixteenth century to the twentieth century, many foreign German schools were run either by Protestant or Catholic Church authorities. A key concern of Lutheranism was education in reading and writing in their own language so that people could read God's word for themselves. The influence of these Reformist educational ideas led to the establishment or re-dedication of German schools in Protestant northern Europe, including Stockholm and Gothenburg (ca. 1570), Copenhagen (1575), where the St. Petri Schule remains a bilingual German-Danish school to this day

¹⁷ Eichhoff, *German in Wisconsin*, 47, 49. For the history of the German-American press, see Arndt & Olson, *German-American newspapers*.

¹⁸ Yoder, 'Pennsylvania German Folklore research'.

¹⁹ Kloss, 'German', 118-119.

²⁰ Glück, *Deutsch als Fremdsprache*, 128-129, 133.

(Danish only gained equal recognition with German in the school in 1814),²¹ Moscow (1626), St. Petersburg (1710, 1736), Bucharest (around 1740), London (1769) and Warsaw (1780).²² German Catholic missionaries also played a role further afield, including South America and India.²³ I shall return to German missionary schools in Africa and China below.

German language and cultural influence in Russia

There is evidence of German parish schools in the German quarter of Moscow and other towns from the sixteenth century, where Baltic Germans had been forcibly re-settled by Ivan the Terrible (1533-1583).²⁴ But from the seventeenth century onwards, German expertise was welcomed in all spheres of life. In the eighteenth century, German was used in many domains as Russia rapidly modernized, in part because there was as yet no strong tradition of a written Russian language. German was used at court, in diplomacy (where French began to take over only from about 1750), in administration (where Germans or Baltic Germans were systematically appointed to key positions, yielding many borrowings in administration and almost 1000 legal terms;).²⁵ Important decrees were published in both German and Russian. 68 of the 111 members of the Academy of Sciences (founded in St. Petersburg in 1725) in the eighteenth century were native German speakers and the German language dominated in the academy. German expertise was also crucial in medicine, mining, trade, building and in many crafts, yielding many borrowings from German into Russian. German military experts were particularly numerous, and were even responsible for the training of Russian soldiers, leading to borrowings of common military commands into Russian. German dominance was aided by Peter the Great's interest, through his personal doctor, in the work of the Pietists (an offshoot of German Lutheranism) under the leadership of August Hermann Francke. Pietists founded the University of Halle in 1694, and Halle went on to supply large numbers of German

²¹ German was the language of instruction in the Danish academy for the nobility which operated in Sorø between 1623 and 1665; Danish was forbidden. See Glück, *Deutsch als Fremdsprache*, 136.

²² Werner, *Deutsche Schulen im Ausland*, 21.

²³ There were 414 German-speaking Jesuit missionaries (out of 3189) in South America and New Spain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but they cannot be said to have made any key contribution to the spread of German language and culture there; one, José Domingo Mayr (born 1680 in Sigmaringen) even noted that he was never able to use his German. See Zwartjes, 'Toward a history', 147, 152.

²⁴ On the history of Russian-Germans, see Mertens, *Handbuch Russland-Deutsche*.

²⁵ Here and in the remainder of this paragraph, I follow Koch, *Deutsch als Fremdsprache in Russland*, 51-58, 60-65, 41-42, 173, 87, 97.

Pietists to be preachers and tutors in Russian noble houses, as well as to establish and teach in German-language schools in Russia.²⁶ Textbooks between 1700 and 1750 were almost always in German, and German was probably Russia's most learnt foreign language in the eighteenth century. At the St Petersburg Cadet Corps for nobles in 1732, 89% of the Russian cadets and 100% of the non-Russian cadets for whom figures are available learnt German; in 1764, nearly all Russian cadets took Russian-to-German translation,²⁷ although German began to yield to French in prestige in the second half of the eighteenth century. Over half of translations published in Russia between 1756 and 1775 were from French originals; German titles made up only 22.9% of the whole.

German schools abroad

When large numbers of Germans emigrated to other parts of the world in the nineteenth century, including South America, schools were generally first established along confessional lines. In the USA, there were 254 Lutheran or Reformed schools by around 1800, though the first Catholic school did not follow until 1836, in Cincinnati. The first German schools in Chile run by school associations, rather than by religious groups, were established from the 1850s onwards – eight were still operating when Werner wrote in 1988.²⁸ After German unification in 1871, among the 'boom' of around 600 new German schools founded abroad between 1871 and 1914 were those in São Paulo (1878), Santiago de Chile (1891), Asunción (1893), Mexico City and Caracas (1910), Puebla (1911), Barranquilla and San José de Costa Rica (1912).²⁹ In 1914, the German Foreign Office estimated that the total number of German schools abroad, strictly defined, was around 900: 100 in Europe, 38 in Asia, 21 in Africa, 734 in America and 14 in Australia, though Werner estimated that in practice more than 5000 schools attended by about 360,000 pupils could have described themselves as German schools. The rapid expansion of German schools world-wide was supported by the establishment of a dedicated fund from 1878. In one sense this was a purely administrative

²⁶ On Pietism, see the introduction in Brecht, *Geschichte des Pietismus*.

²⁷ Rjéoutski, 'Native tongues and foreign languages'.

²⁸ Werner, *Deutsche Schulen im Ausland*.

²⁹ Werner, *Deutsche Schulen im Ausland*, 32. Others noted by Werner are Helsinki 1881, Madrid and Thessaloniki 1886, Rotterdam 1888, Barcelona 1894, Madrid and Athens 1896, Porto 1901, Valencia 1909; in Africa the *Deutsche Evangelische Oberschule* in Cairo 1873, Johannesburg 1890, Windhoek 1909, in Asia Tokyo 1904, Kobe 1909. Schools run by school associations had already been set up in Brussels (1803), Antwerp (1840), Rome (1851), Genua (1867) and Constantinople (1868).

change, as the same monies had previously flowed from the Prussian King to the schools via the budget of the Lutheran church (*Evangelische Kirche*), of which the King was patron; but bringing the budget into the Foreign Office made German schools abroad an explicit part of German foreign policy and also allowed for the growing number of non-denominational schools. The budget in 1878 stood at 75,000 Marks; by 1913, 513 schools were supported (including schools of further education from 1898). In 1906 a new Schools section was established within the Foreign Office, with responsibility not just for financial support, but also for staffing and inspection. Between 1906 and the outbreak of World War I, some 700 German teachers were sent to various schools, especially to the Ottoman Empire. In addition, a *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (VDA, Association for German Abroad³⁰) was set up in 1881, growing out of the earlier Berlin section of the Vienna German School Association; in the year 1916, it supported schools with almost half a million marks. Germany also followed the example of other European countries in setting up so-called ‘propaganda schools’, aimed specifically at non-Germans rather than for Germans abroad, initially in the Middle East (Aleppo, Baghdad)³⁰ – for such schools in China, see 6. below.

German in literature, science and academia, eighteenth to early twentieth centuries

The numberless *Archivs, Jahrbücher, Zeitschriften, Zentralblätter*, and so on, which have been yearly increasing in number and volume, have gradually monopolized the whole of the scientific production of the world by gathering widely, and even demanding, the collaboration of learned men of all countries. Thus were apparently built up international scientific organizations, but in reality German instruments of control and monopoly of science.

Letter to the Editor in *Nature* 98 (25 January 1917, p. 408-9), by Eugenio Rignano (editor of the international journal *Scientia*)³¹).

German literature and thought began to gain prestige in Europe in the eighteenth century. In England, the number of German textbooks published for English speaking learners increased from two in the seventeenth century to over a dozen in the eighteenth

³⁰ Werner, *Deutsche Schulen im Ausland*, 37, 32-36.

³¹ Cited by Reinbothe, *Deutsch als internationale Wissenschaftssprache*, 177

century.³² The fact that the House of Hanover held the throne from 1714 helped raise German prestige, but there was new interest in German literature from the 1770s onwards, with recommendations for reading from the 1770s and the first literary anthology for an English readership in 1800 (by George Crabb). Rander recommended hundreds of German authors to his English readers of his 1800 German grammar, especially in theology, philosophy, science, law and medicine. German became the de facto ‘second’ foreign language, the only other modern language beside French offered when the first public school examinations were established in 1858.³³

In the nineteenth century, the emerging international scientific associations typically adopted one or all of French, English and German as their operating languages, although others (Spanish and Italian, mainly) were sometimes also permitted. Reinbothe speaks of the *Vorherrschaft der Dreisprachigkeit* (‘predominance of trilingualism’).³⁴ When from 1896, the Royal Society in Britain sought international help in compiling its International Catalogue of Scientific Literature (established 1867), the Berlin branch was very well-resourced with ten employees and an annual budget of 40,000 marks from the German Empire’s budget, and sent huge quantities of German references. By the end of 1902, nearly 79,000 out a total of 136,139 items sent to the central office were German, and since they were listed in their original language, this made German very visible indeed. The German bibliographical entries were also published in a separate German publication, the *Bibliographie der Deutschen Naturwissenschaftlichen Literatur*, which, appearing earlier than the International Catalogue, also promoted German publications ahead of others in the scientific world. In the American *Chemical Abstracts* of 1909, 45% of all items were German (compared to 20% USA, 13% British).

When World War I broke out, German publishers were initially prevented from exporting their journals for fear that German scientific advances could fall into the hands of the enemy; from 1916, the export ban was largely replaced by strengthened censorship via a *Fachwissenschaftliche Zensurberatungsstelle* (FZB), though authors and publishers were

³² Van der Lubbe, ‘One hundred years of German teaching’.

³³ On the literary recommendations of Crabb, Rander and others, see Guthke, ‘Deutsche Literatur’; and on growing interest in German in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see McLelland, ‘German as a Foreign Language in Britain’.

³⁴ Here and in the remainder of this paragraph, I follow Reinbothe, *Deutsch als internationale Wissenschaftssprache*, 23, 25, 33, 36. Citation 25.

expected to self-censor, and to turn to the FZB only when in doubt. Similar measures were not taken by the French until April 1918. As an example of cultural policy via the law of unintended consequences, Reinbothe summarizes that ‘the restrictive interventions and prohibitions of the *Kaiserreich*’s military authorities damaged the reputation of German academic literature and thus also the standing of the German language abroad’.³⁵ After the war, the damage to the international standing of German continued, thanks to more or less explicit boycotts of German in newly founded international scientific organizations, which often replaced the principle of trilingualism with French-English bilingualism. Just as the languages of the Versailles Treaty itself were French and English only, the International Research Council, founded by the victorious powers in 1918, also adopted French and English only. (German and Austrian scientists were initially excluded anyway.) To take another example, before the war, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry had recognized English, German, French and Italian as official conference languages. German was simply removed from the list at the General Meeting of the union in 1920.³⁶ Even before the war, but more so after it, English-speaking scientists began to object to the fact that science was too much ‘dominated by German knowledge and German science’, criticising ‘the habit of most of our English and American scientists, as well as those in other countries, to publish their discoveries first in German’, and ‘how persistently the representatives of the German scientific societies endeavoured [...] to dominate the discussions, especially on the subject of the rules of nomenclature’.³⁷ After the war, deliberate efforts were made by the allied powers to found new journals to supplant the German ones³⁸ Though such measures to boycott German were not without countermeasures, Germany’s standing in international science was certainly weakened. The proportion of major scientific organizations with their main office in Germany, and of major congresses held in Germany, dropped. By 1932, only 2.5% of 359 organizations did *not* list French as an official language, and only 16.5% did not list English, but 39.5% excluded German. German never recovered this lost ground – indeed, Reinbothe considers that the French-English bilingual principle was itself only a phase, ultimately yielding to the dominance of English.

³⁵ Reinbothe, *Deutsch als internationale Wissenschaftssprache*, 122-127, 127 (my translation).

³⁶ (Reinbothe, *Deutsch als internationale Wissenschaftssprache*, 158-159).

³⁷ Examples from Reinbothe, *Deutsch als internationale Wissenschaftssprache*, 166-168; see also 47, 53.

³⁸ Reinbothe, *Deutsch als internationale Wissenschaftssprache*, 181. The remainder of this paragraph follows Reinbothe, 245-343, 403, 410-11, 447.

6. German colonial language and cultural policies in Africa and China

Noch ist die Welt nicht ganz verteilt	The world is not yet quite divided up
Noch manche Flur auf Erden	Still many a field on earth
Harret gleich der Braut. Die Hochzeit eilt;	Waits like the bride; the wedding fast approaches;
Des Starken will sie werden.	She wants to become (the bride) of the strong.
[...]	[...]
Plant auf dies rauschende Panier	Plant this waving banner
In jedes Neulands Brache;	In the fallow ground of each new land.
Wohin wir wandern, tragen wir	Wherever we go, we take
Mit uns die deutsche Sprache.	With us the German language.

(Felix Dahn, 'Aufruf', 1911).³⁹

Germany has a history of early successful colonization. In the Middle Ages it expanded eastwards into Slavic territories. The Teutonic Order colonized much of today's Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; from the sixteenth century, the territories were variously fought over by Germany, Sweden, Russia and Poland control, but German speakers remained in these areas (see 4.2 above). There were various experiments in short-lived colonies in the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century too, in the Caribbean and on the west coast of Africa. But none of these were lasting, and Germany came famously late to the nineteenth-century European colonial 'race for Africa'. From 1884 until World War I, Germany had control over German South-West Africa (present-day Namibia), Togo, Cameroon and German East-Africa (present-day mainland Tanzania and parts of Burundi and Rwanda).⁴⁰ As late as 1898, Germany obtained a concession in Jiaozhou Bay in China. In Africa, we see German colonial language policy at work; in China, we see the first attempts at an explicit cultural and linguistic policies whose explicit aim was to exercise soft power *avant la lettre*.

German language policy - and pipe dreams - in Africa

³⁹ Cited by Mühleisen, 'Zwischen Sprachideologie und Sprachplanung', 98.

⁴⁰ See Warnke, *Deutsche Sprache und Kolonialismus*, 17.

By the time Germany found a foothold in Africa, the much more established presence of other European powers limited the scope for German cultural and linguistic influence, but its colonies there do provide examples of explicit German external linguistic policies for the first time. The shaping of linguistic policy in Togo is a useful case study because, Sokolowsky argues, the decisions made there were viewed at the time as setting a precedent for other German colonies.⁴¹ In Togo, English had already been widely adopted as a lingua franca, since there was no single native language across the whole area, nor any autochthonous lingua franca (like Swahili in East Africa). Even after Germany made Togo a protectorate in 1884, demand for English remained so strong that the Catholic Steyler mission, which originally planned to teach only German, offered English from 1892, contrary to the wishes of the government. A decade later, in October 1903, a report of the German colonial office noted that Togo still had ‘more the character of an English than of a German colony’.⁴² A *Verordnung des Gouvernements von Togo über die Erteilung deutschen Unterrichts* (‘Togo Government Regulation on the teaching of German’) stipulated that from 1906 onwards, schools must teach no living language except German, a regulation directed not only against English, but also against teaching in the local vernaculars. Missionary societies pleaded in 1904 for education in the local vernacular as the best means of assuring a good general education, but Governor Zech feared teaching in vernaculars would encourage native nationalist sympathies, instead of creating loyalty to the German empire. By 1909 Zech had accepted the missionaries’ argument that general education was more important than a *Halbbildung*, ‘half-education’, in German.⁴³ Only a small and carefully chosen minority should be offered education in German in post-elementary education; now, the authorities were nervous that those exposed to wider cultural horizons through German language and literature could become restless. It seems there was no truly ‘safe’ linguistic policy for Togo.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Sokolowsky, *Sprachenpolitik des deutschen Kolonialismus*, 58.

⁴² Sokolowsky, *Sprachenpolitik des deutschen Kolonialismus*, 47, my translation.

⁴³ Cited by Sokolowsky, *Sprachenpolitik des deutschen Kolonialismus*, 68.

⁴⁴ In Namibia, by contrast, the Catholic missionary schools for the native population taught all subjects through German, in line with the aspiration of the government for a German colony with German culture and language; in the Rhine mission schools, German was taught as a foreign language only (Böhm, *Deutsch in Afrika*, 526). See also Wahba, ‘Erziehung und Sprache’.

In Cameroon the situation was not dissimilar, where the missions had a number of reasons to promote German. First, promoting German as a lingua franca might combat the influence of Fulbe, the virtual lingua franca of north Cameroon, seen as the carrier of a process of islamification of the region. Second, German was sought after by some locals. The Catholic and Baptist missions had taught through German from the outset, whereas the Basle mission initially only offered German as a foreign language; after its vain attempts to establish the native language or Duala as the language of instruction, it too switched to German in order not to lose out to the ‘Catholic competition’ (*katholische Konkurrenz*), in the words of a contemporary Protestant missionary memorandum cited by Boulleys.⁴⁵ Third, following a regulation established in 1896, any missions receiving state support were required to teach German. As in Togo, this policy was driven by the desire to weaken the position of English. From 1909 teaching in local vernaculars, including Duala, was permitted, but besides these ‘no other living language’ apart from German was permitted (*keine andere lebende Sprache*, in a draft regulation cited by Boulleys) – in other words, not English! A regulation of the Governor in 1913 required administrative and military officials to avoid using *Neger-Englisch* with the local population – eradicating it would not be possible overnight, so ‘perseverance and constancy’ would be required (*Ausdauer und Stetigkeit*).⁴⁶

The ideal of a single language for the German colonies was tackled in a speech at the 1910 German Colonial Congress (*Deutscher Kolonialkongress*) by the linguist Carl Meinhof, who reported that he had been asked by some to advocate the use of Esperanto in the colonies, as a readily learnable language. In 1916, similar considerations prompted Emil Schwörer to propose an artificial *Kolonial-Deutsch* ‘Colonial German’ that, imitating simplification processes of natural contact varieties, would be learnable within weeks. Schwörer called *Kolonial-Deutsch* ‘a modern linguistic weapon in the coming economic war of the peoples’,⁴⁷ in particular against English, which had already become the de facto language of communication in many parts of Africa. Schwörer had been inspired by Adalbert Baumann’s *neue, leichte Weltdeutsch* (‘new, easy World German’), which Baumann intended to help German compete against English on the world stage:

⁴⁵ Boulleys, *Deutsch in Kamerun*, 54-56, citation, 56.

⁴⁶ Boulleys, *Deutsch in Kamerun*, 62.

⁴⁷ Schwörer, *Kolonial-Deutsch*, 6, cited by Mühleisen, ‘Zwischen Sprachideologie und Sprachplanung’, 105, my translation.

in diesem Kampfe hat England einen ungeheuren Vorteil [...] die Notwendigkeit der Verbreitung der deutschen Sprache als Grundlage jedes dauernden wirtschaftlichen und politischen Erfolges ist in Deutschland in seiner Bedeutung stets zu niedriger Würdigung worden

In this battle England has a huge advantage [...] the necessity of spreading the German language as the foundation of any lasting economic and political success has always been rated too low in importance in Germany' (cited by Mühlhauser 2009: 106; note the somewhat simplified orthography).

Kolonial-Deutsch was intended to have a very reduced vocabulary, at most 800 words; verbs would be used in their infinitive form with auxiliaries; definite articles were *de* (singular) and *die* (plural) only, without case or gender distinctions; there was just one plural ending, *-en*, only one adjective ending, *-e*, and case markings were replaced by prepositions. In one of Schwörer's model dialogues an African speaker tells his white boss that he learnt the language in four weeks: *De neue Sprache ist gut für die Eingeborenen; de ist leicht für uns, weil de hat nit viele Worten*. 'the new language is good for the natives; it is easy for us because it has not many words'.⁴⁸ There is, however, no evidence that *Kolonial-Deutsch*, developed when World War I was already underway, was ever trialled.

German soft power *avant la lettre* – the case of the Jiaozhou concession

The clearest case of deliberate German state foreign linguistic and cultural policy before 1920 concerns Germany's intended 'model colony' of Jiaozhou Bay (then Kiao-Chau, or in German Kiautschou) in Shandong province, with its port capital Qingdao, between Beijing and Shanghai.⁴⁹ Despite the fact that China had effectively been coerced into conceding a 99-year lease in 1898, the colony came to be viewed by Germany as an example of enlightened imperial policy suitable for positive propaganda, particularly from about 1905.⁵⁰ The goal was a *deutsches Kulturzentrum* 'German cultural centre' in the words of a 1907 document⁵¹ that would demonstrate Germany's cultural and scientific achievements and so present a positive image of Germany to China and the world. Kim has analysed the

⁴⁸ Schwörer, *Kolonial-Deutsch*, 56, cited by Mühleisen, 'Zwischen Sprachideologie und Sprachplanung', 111, my translation.

⁴⁹ Warnke, *Deutsche Sprache und Kolonialismus*, 21. See the sources and analysis in Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, and Reinbothe, *Kulturexport und Wirtschaftsmacht*.

⁵⁰ Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 36, 48.

⁵¹ Cited by Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 45.

different ways in which, and reasons why, the various German missionary societies aligned their aims with those of the German government.⁵² The Catholic missionary society *Societas Verbi Divini* (S.V.D.) had been established during the years of the so-called *Kulturkampf*, the time of Prussian efforts to limit the power and influence of the Catholic Church (1871-1878). It was also known as the Steyler Mission, after the Dutch town where it has been founded, deliberately just beyond the German border and so beyond the reach of Prussian control. The society's involvement with the German colonial concession can thus be interpreted as a calculated rapprochement between the Catholic Church and Prussia after the *Kulturkampf*. The Lutheran Berlin Mission's goals were 'from the outset worldly as well as spiritual',⁵³ perhaps not surprisingly, given its base in Berlin, the seat of the Prussian government, it sought not just to Christianize, but in so doing also to prepare the ground for German trade links, spreading German culture and lifestyle. The more liberal *Allgemeiner Evangelisch-Protestantischer Mission* (General Evangelical-Protestant Mission, or A.E.P.M.) always considered its mission less to convert and baptise than to open up new cultures to Christian, Western values and ways of thinking, which meant that it too was relatively open to activities that encouraged secular cultural transfer.⁵⁴

Altogether, in the 17 years of German rule in Jiaozhou, one government school for German children was set up, 27 elementary schools (teaching Chinese pupils according to the Chinese curriculum), ten mission schools, four *Berufsschulen* (vocational colleges), and one *Fachhochschule* (senior technical college), a library (made available to Chinese inhabitants too), as well as a hospital.⁵⁵ Initially, educational policy was pragmatic, aiming to train workers for German companies and institutions. For example, a school in the shipyard taught Chinese, German and the sciences to apprentices in classes fitted in around their work at the shipyard;⁵⁶ about 1200 apprentices were schooled there in ten years, though only about half completed their training. But from about 1905 such pragmatic provision was replaced by a more deliberate cultural policy, which was intended to form the third pillar alongside diplomacy and economic policy in relations with China. Alongside the mission schools, a secular education policy sought to create pro-German feeling in Chinese elementary schools,

⁵² Kim, *Deutscher Kulturimperialismus*.

⁵³ Kim, *Deutscher Kulturimperialismus*, 103; citation, 114, my translation.

⁵⁴ Kim, *Deutscher Kulturimperialismus*, 118-119.

⁵⁵ Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 431, n.1, 432.

⁵⁶ Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 433.

especially among the future elites, including the children of the many former high functionaries who came to Qingdao after the 1911 revolution, who welcomed the specialist knowledge and discipline that the German schools promised.⁵⁷ A German-Chinese girls' school, founded in 1911, was likewise intended to achieve long-lasting influence by educating women, where hitherto, it was argued, crippling foot-binding had gone hand-in-hand with intellectual crippling too⁵⁸ – American and English educators had made more progress in girls' education in China than Germany, and Germany could not afford to be left behind. Germany also established schools outside its own concession: a German-Chinese school in Jinan (1911), a medical school in Shanghai (1907), later incorporated into an engineering school (today's Tongji University), where teaching was generally in German.⁵⁹ A 'Committee for the Promotion of German cultural work in China' (*Ausschuß zur Förderung der deutschen Kultur in China*), founded in Berlin in 1906, supported the Shanghai medical school.⁶⁰

A key source for German cultural policy in Jiaozhou after 1905 is a 1905 memorandum written by the acting Governor Jacobson to the Imperial Marine Office.⁶¹ In it, Jacobson set out the rationale for a German-run secular Chinese elementary school, which would operate in Chinese but according to modern German education principles – for example, *Das Memorieren der Klassiker fällt weg* 'memorizing the classics is dropped'. The German language was *not* to be taught. The chief goal was to make the children literate and numerate in their own language, but teaching materials for geography and other subjects would provide opportunities to expose the children to the *Deutschtum* that surrounded them and to give an insight into the *expansives Europa* ('expansive Europe') in contrast to *dem starren Chinesentum*, the 'rigid' Chinese world.⁶² Teaching would be rooted in Chinese culture, but it would be *mit deutschem Ideengehalt und deutscher Methode durchsetzte*

⁵⁷ Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 440.

⁵⁸ *Gründungsbericht* in Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 468.

⁵⁹ Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 436.

⁶⁰ Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 437.

⁶¹ Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 444-453. Governor Oskar von Truppel was on furlough at the time.

⁶² Jacobson's words, cited by Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 446, my translation. The assumption that Germany could bring civilization and enlightenment to a China that had been left behind in its development compared to Europe pervades the sources in both Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou* and Reinbothe, *Kulturexport und Wirtschaftsmacht*.

Bildung ‘education permeated by German ideas and German method’.⁶³ German missionaries had been in China since 1860 when the freedom to proselytize in China had been granted, initially under French protection, then under German protection from 1890,⁶⁴ and the German Government was fully aware of their potential importance as bearers of German culture given that they had permission to establish schools in China’s interior, not just on the coast.⁶⁵ However, Jacobson was dismissive of the modest influence of the German mission schools compared to the influence achieved by other nations. But no other nation had succeeded in training the Chinese in educational methods. This, then – the area of pedagogy, including training elementary teachers – was where Jacobson felt Germany could make its unique contribution. He wrote:

In unserer Kolonie dürfen wir uns nicht wie in Hongkong darauf beschränken, solche Chinesen heranzuziehen, die in der Schulbildung nur das Rüstzeug zu einem leichteren Lebensunterhalte finden, wir sollen vielmehr in umfassender Weise auf Geist und Charakter einwirken und das Mittel sein zu einer Durchtränkung der ganzen Provinz, des von Qingdao abhängigen Hinterlandes mit deutschem Wissen und deutschem Geiste.

‘In our colony we cannot limit ourselves, like in Hong Kong, to educating Chinese whose schooling merely equips them to earn their living more comfortably, but we should rather have an influence in a comprehensive way on spirit and character, and be the means of saturating the whole province, the hinterland dependent on Qingdao, with German knowledge and German spirit’ (cited by Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 449, my translation; see also 450).

In this way, Germany could win the sympathy of millions of Chinese and, so, in turn, material success (*materielle Erfolge*),⁶⁶ ‘der Handel muß hier der Kulturflagge folgen (‘Trade

⁶³ Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 450, my translation.

⁶⁴ Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 39, 41.

⁶⁵ Reinbothe, *Kulturexport und Wirtschaftsmacht*, 90. In the mid-1920s there were still about 1000 schools for Chinese children run by Evangelical or Catholic congregations from Germany, catering to some 25,000 pupils (Werner, *Deutsche Schulen im Ausland*, 15). In African colonies, too, the missions were crucial in providing education to the natives – in Namibia, where the *Rheinische* and Catholic Missions had both been active since the 1840s, they were still responsible for educating the native population; the German administration was concerned only with education for whites (Böhm, *Deutsch in Afrika*, 519, 524).

⁶⁶ Jacobson writing in 1905, cited by Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 450.

must follow the flag of culture here', wrote a certain Paul von Salvisberg in *Hochschul-Nachrichten* in 1913.⁶⁷ Similarly the *Fachhochschule*, opened in 1908, with sections for law, medicine, engineering and forestry/agriculture,⁶⁸ had a German principal, but teaching took place in Chinese and was subject to a Chinese inspector. These concessions meant that, significantly, it was the only such foreign-run institution whose qualifications were recognized by the Chinese.

The soft power that could accrue to Germany from such expertise-sharing in education were patently clear to Alfred von Tirpitz, State Secretary of the Imperial Navy, but should be minimized in public. Setting out plans for German educational investment in China, he advised the Foreign Office in 1907:

So sehr ich auch meinerseits den politischen Zweck des ganzen Unternehmens für maßgeblich erachte, scheint es mir doch angezeigt, nach außen hin, nicht nur den Chinesen und dritten Mächten gegenüber, sondern auch bei der Vertretung der Forderungen im Reichstage jenes Moment tunlichst ganz zurücktreten zu lassen und lediglich die kulturellen Ziele der geplanten Maßnahmen in den Vordergrund zu stellen.

However important I myself consider the political purpose of the whole undertaking, it nevertheless seems to me appropriate to keep this aspect in the background as much as possible in our external communications, not just towards the Chinese and third powers, but also when making the case for these demands in the Reichstag, and to foreground only the cultural goals of the planned measures (Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 454, my translation).

Conclusion: After 1918

For most of its history up to 1920 Germany had no explicit policy to cultivate soft power. The export of expertise, migration and religiously-motivated education were the main avenues through which German language and culture spread globally, more by accident than by design. That changed after German unification in 1871. Generous support of German academic activities helped ensure that German scientific achievements were duly recognized in the international scientific community and publishing world. German culture was also promoted internationally through German schools abroad, with state support from 1878. But only from the turn of the century can we speak of explicit external linguistic policy, in the

⁶⁷ Reinboth, *Kulturexport und Wirtschaftsmacht*, 63.

⁶⁸ Leutner, *Musterkolonie Kiautschou*, 436.

embryonic German colonies of Africa. The clearest articulation of a German policy of building soft power came only from about 1905, when a softly-softly approach to educating the Chinese population in the Jiaozhou concession was intended to create positive attitudes to German culture among key target groups – among future elites, educators, and girls who would in turn, as mothers, influence their children. That all this was intended to bring material benefits to Germany was well understood, but was deliberately played down.

After World War I, these achievements in German soft power, intentional or otherwise, were largely undone. As we saw above, international scientific organizations were now only too sensitive to Germany's earlier vigour in self-promotion and adopted various strategies to reduce the status of the German language and of German publications in their fields. German as a Foreign Language lost ground too. In the USA, 28% of all high school pupils learned German in 1915, but by 1922 the number had dropped to a tiny 0.7%.⁶⁹ Many German schools abroad were lost, and Germany had to start again with its foreign cultural policy, in which, however, *die Grundlage jeder Kulturpolitik im allgemeinen die deutsche Schule sein muß*, 'the foundation of any cultural policy in general must be the German school (Foreign Minister Gustave Stresemann in 1928)⁷⁰ – this remains true in the twenty-first century, where a third of the entire budget for foreign cultural policy supports German schools abroad.⁷¹

Germany was forced to give up its colonies too. Its brief colonial presence in Africa 'left barely any lasting cultural or linguistic traces',⁷² though there is evidence of German pidgins elsewhere (e.g. in New Guinea and Jiaozhou);⁷³ in East Africa, the position of German is perhaps weakest of all – in Tanzania, the German colony left 'no linguistic traces'.⁷⁴ In Cameroon, the long-lasting links between the Duala elite and Germany are reflected in the fact that members of the Cameroon elite, who had been encouraged under German colonization to send their offspring to Germany for education,⁷⁵ continued to do so.

⁶⁹ Thierfelder, *Die Deutsche Sprache im Ausland*, II, 369.

⁷⁰ Cited by Werner, *Deutsche Schulen im Ausland*, 39.

⁷¹ Böhm, *Deutsch in Afrika*, 45.

⁷² Böhm, *Deutsch in Afrika*, 61, my translation.

⁷³ See Mühlhäusler, 'Die deutsche Sprache in Kiautschou' and studies cited by Deumert, 'Namibian Kiche Duits', 350.

⁷⁴ Böhm, *Deutsch in Afrika*, 410. 443, my translation.

⁷⁵ Bouley, *Deutsch in Kamerun*, 70.

Prince Alexandre Kum'a Ndumbe III, until recently professor for political science in Berlin (born 1946), is a prominent example, who writes in both German and French. The most obvious lasting influence in Africa is Namibia, the only colony with a substantial number of German settlers – nearly 3000 in 1903, of a total of 4640 white population.⁷⁶ After World War I, teaching in German was initially banned in state schools, was permitted again after 1922, but lost its place again after World War II.⁷⁷ In 1984 Germany was recognized there as ‘the third official language within the administration for whites’, though it lost that status after Namibia declared independence from South Africa in 1990 and English was made the official and national language.⁷⁸ Still, a non-matrilectal German did outlast colonization. Deumert’s oldest informants, born in the 1920s and 1930s, spoke a non-standard but often fluent German in 2000, and it is significant that they had typically been taught German by older members of their family. This suggests that even though German was, until independence, chiefly taught only to native speakers,⁷⁹ it was still considered prestigious and useful enough for non-matrilectal speakers to pass it on through families in the 1920s and 1930s.

From 1920 onwards, as Germany sought to rebuild its reputation internationally, politicians now fully understood the role of cultural policy to create soft power in order to do hard politics; the case of Jiaozhou Bay was an early example. The German Academic Exchange Service was established in 1925; the *Verband deutscher Auslandslehrer* supporting German schools abroad was established in 1927; the *Goethe-Institut* to promote the learning of German as a Foreign Language was established in 1952. As Theodor Heuss said gnominically in 1920 *Mit Politik kann man keine Kultur machen; vielleicht kann man mit Kultur Politik machen* ‘You can’t do culture through politics; perhaps you can do politics through culture’.⁸⁰

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⁷⁶ Mühleisen, ‘Zwischen Sprachideologie und Sprachplanung’, 102.

⁷⁷ Böhm, *Deutsch in Afrika*, 538.

⁷⁸ Deumert, ‘Namibian Kiche Duits’, 357.

⁷⁹ Böhm, *Deutsch in Afrika*, 545.

⁸⁰ Theodor Heuss, 1920, cited, e.g., in Markovits & Reich, *Das deutsche Dilemma*, 302.

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