"Refugees Welcome"
Analysing Transgressive Stickers along Münster's Harbour

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A recent study by the Shell Corporation revealed that students are becoming increasingly interested in political matters. The study makes a connection between this development and a growing disposition towards political actions ("Die Shell Jugendstudie"). This development has also become noticeable in Münster. It is not surprising that in Münster, an international university town, many young people are interested in politics and show action in this domain. This often goes hand in hand with the university environment, where students become more aware of the issues relevant in their local and national contexts, as well as in a globalised world.

Along Münster's harbour, there are many bars and clubs. It is one of the city's designated party-scenes and many of the publicly visible objects are covered in stickers with a multitude of messages ranging from advertisements to political or moral themes. Therefore, we conducted a study to analyse the potential connection between the number of stickers found in that area and the increasing political interest among young people.

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN GERMANY

The English language has been playing an important role in Germany, especially since World War II (Hilgendorf, "English" 135). In the last two decades, the influence of English on the German language has become even more noticeable; this has been advanced further by globalisation (143).

Education is the realm where the importance of English is most significant: it is the most studied foreign language. Since 2004, it has been compulsory to teach a foreign language in primary school. In the majority of cases, this is English (Grau 161). However, it is studied most profoundly in secondary education: more than 90 percent of pupils in secondary education study it for nine and up to eleven years (Hilgendorf, "Brain Gain" 54). In the school year of 2015/2016, more than 99 percent of all students enrolled in a secondary school received instructions in the English language ("Bildung und Kultur"). Nowadays, English is no longer restricted to a subject but also used as a medium of instruction (MOI) in other disciplines (Hilgendorf, "Brain Gain" 53–54). In 2017, a search on the website "www.study-in.de" by the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) revealed that 1,239 out of a total of 18,817 degree programs at German universities are being taught exclusively in English (Kautzsch 210).

Because of its role as a primary language in international business, this is the domain where English is used most frequently. The use of English in this sphere is no longer restricted to communication with international business partners but has become increasingly important for correspondence within German firms as well (Hilgendorf, "English" 137). Since World War II, English has also become the primary language of publication in science and research (138). Additionally, the language has become increasingly important in tourism and private social interactions with people from other countries (Berns 41–42). Young people in particular engage with English in their spare time on a regular basis, for example in the realm of popular music, through computer games and television shows (Hilgendorf, "English" 139; Grau 166). This leads to the incorporation of Anglicisms into youth culture which then spread through the entire language. Advertisements are also influential in this development, with various brands including English words to make them more appealing to a larger audience (Grau 162). The abovementioned

developments have resulted in a complicated and ambivalent relationship towards English in Germany. This is especially noticeable in young people, who also have conflicting views towards education and are therefore suspicious of content taught in school. When words are introduced to their speech, it is often through popular culture instead of the traditional education system (163). Positive attitudes concerning the English language are prevalent in the general population. Negative views are mostly confined to groups who have a special interest in the "purification of the German language", for example National Socialists (Berns 39). Another group that shares the ambivalent relationship towards the increasing influence of English in Germany are scholars of German Linguistics (Hilgendorf, "English" 143).

WHAT IS LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPING?

In their 1997 work Landry and Bourhis (25) propose the following definition of what a linguistic landscape is:

> The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration.

Linguistic landscaping (LL) as a field of study can thus be defined as the study of language use on publicly visible signs and how these languages construct public spaces (Androutsopoulos 82).

Taking a step back, it is advisable to define the term "sign" before concentrating on what exactly LL aims to observe. Despite using different terms, authors generally agree that there are two main types of signs, namely public or top-down and private or bottom-up signs (Thurlow and Jaworski 10; Androutsopoulos 85). The former include all signs that are issued by public authorities, including road signs and official inscriptions on public buildings. The latter are commercial signs which are produced by businesses, shop owners or advertising companies and are often found in the form of billboards or writings on storefronts. Transgressive signs, such as graffiti or stickers, are also considered to be part of bottom-up signs (Androutsopoulos 85). Private signs are considered to be generally more diverse than the ones produced by authorities, since they commonly mirror "the multilingual reality of a particular area or location" (Thurlow and Jaworski 10).

This article focuses on transgressive signs and stickers in particular. So far, the medium of stickers has not been researched extensively in the area of linguistic landscaping. This might be the case because stickers are transgressive signs. According to Pennycook, transgressive signs convey artistic, social and spiritual messages (307). Additionally, Blommaert claims transgressive signs to be "out of place" (39) because they can be unexpected in certain places and might not fit in with the surrounding space. In connection to Pennycook's thoughts, Blommaert also describes transgressive signs as significantly different from other kinds of social signs, which makes them hard to understand and interpret (39).

One study on stickers has been conducted by Hagar Salamon and deals with the implications of bumper stickers in Israel. During the study, Salamon discovered that in Israel, bumper stickers take a special role in everyday communication as they are used by drivers to convey political messages and their beliefs to others. This facilitates a dynamic and far-reaching discourse about political issues and makes developments on the social and political level visible (Salamon 277).

Figure 1: Map of research area

METHODOLOGY, APPROACH AND RESULTS

This study examines whether a contemporary medium like stickers can be used to transmit one's own beliefs, orientations and ideologies. In order to structure our study, we formulated research questions we want to answer with our analysis:
1. What role does English play in the transgressive linguistic landscape of Münster's harbour?
2. Is there a relation between the language and the content?
3. Is there a political orientation to be found in the researched area? Can this be connected to the use of language?

DATA AND METHOD

The data collected for this study consists of 444 publicly visible and accessible stickers that were photographed along a section of the Hansaring and the Hafenpromenade. Because of the rich linguistic landscape we found along Münster's harbour, we randomly picked the stickers and thus created a sample. When there were several stickers of the same kind on one object, we only coded one of these stickers. However, if identical stickers were found on different objects, we added all of them to our sample. Figure 1 shows the area the data collection took place in.

In preparation for the study, we designed a code book which we used to quantitatively analyse our data. Our code book consists of several variables on contextual information like the coder or the street where the sticker was collected as well as other variables specific to our research. One of these variables is the producer. As we were interested in who creates and puts up stickers, we coded different variants of producers: political party, private business, artist/band, NGO, student group, sports club and supporters and other. If the producers were displayed on the sticker, we categorised them along these variants. If this was not the case, we coded it as not identifiable. Other important variables are the language used on the sticker and the category

of content which we coded according to the following variants: advertisement for products, advertisements for events (commercial), announcements, political messages, moral issues, religious issues, sports, other and not identifiable. As we were mainly interested in political and moral issues, we further split these categories into sub variables so that we could see which orientation or belief exactly is conveyed by the sticker.

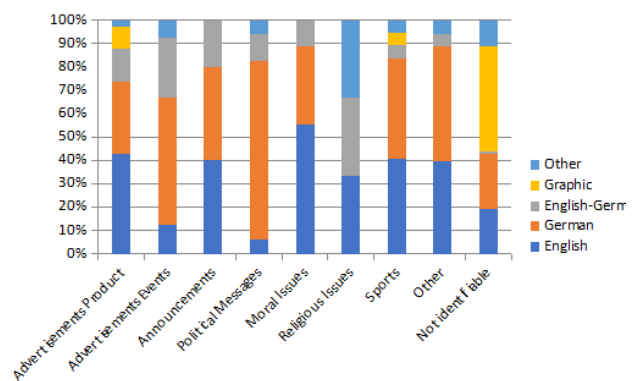DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Language distribution on stickers

A total of 444 stickers were analysed in regard to the producer, content and the languages used. Table 1 shows the language distribution on the stickers: most are either in English (29 percent), German (40 percent) or a combination of the two languages (12 percent) throughout all categories.

Language	Number	Percent
English	127	28.60 percent
German	176	39.64 percent
English-German	55	12.39 percent
Graphic	57	12.84 percent
Other	29	6.53 percent
Sum	444	100.00 percent

Figure 2: Relation between categories and language used on stickers

A high number of the stickers are produced by private businesses (187 tokens), therefore, it comes as no surprise that advertisements for products (26 percent) and events (24 percent) make up a large amount of the total number of stickers. Contrary to the expectation prior to the study, an exceedingly large number of stickers, 330, include no political message at all. Of the stickers with a political message, most were oriented towards the left (83 percent), with 60 percent of them in German and 24 percent in English. Artists or bands of a certain genre might have a political orientation that is also shared with most of their supporters, however, this is not detectable from the stickers alone. Therefore, the political message in these instances was categorised as not identifiable. Sports clubs and their supporters make up 8 percent of the producers and 22 percent are not identifiable, either because they are entirely graphic or because the producer is not deductible from the content of the sticker alone.

Regarding the relationship between the languages and the categories, as shown in Figure 2, advertisements for products are predominantly in English (43 percent). Advertisements for events are, for the most part, in German (54 percent). The majority of the political messages on the stickers are in German (76 percent) and six percent are in English. Moral issues is the only category where English is in the majority (56 percent). Only 33 percent of the tokens are in German. Since most stickers containing moral issues are created by NGO's, this is also the producer group where most of the stickers are in English (45 percent). 28 percent of the tokens in this category are in German. Regarding sports clubs and their supporters, there is an almost equal distribution between the two languages with 41 percent of the stickers in English and 44 percent in German. Less than one percent of the stickers are produced by student groups. Of those, one is in English and two are in German. Regarding artists and bands, there are a significant number of stickers produced in English (43 percent) with a minority of the stickers produced in German (29 percent). A considerable amount of the stickers in the category "other", 59 percent, are in German, only 18 percent in English.

Figure 3: Example Sticker

DISCUSSION

English does play a significant role in in the harbour's linguistic landscape. However, German remains the leading language when it comes to communicating certain messages, as it was used either in part or as the sole language on 231 stickers. Nevertheless, the findings still strongly support previous research concerning the role of English in Germany, especially regarding the relation between content and language use. Observing the findings concerning language distribution within the content categories of the stickers and combining it with previous knowledge about the English language in Germany, a relation between the language and the content can be confirmed. Without going into too much detail, it can be said that the level of locality of the content in particular does play a role in which language is used to convey meaning.

Out of more than 400 stickers only 30 are clearly defined as being political. Still, there is a trend that shows that political views expressed on these signs are predominantly leftist (83 percent). Moreover, stickers by political parties and those promoting a political message are mostly produced in German. The moral issues addressed on stickers are diverse, ranging from environmental to human

Figure 4: Example Sticker

rights and gender issues. These internationally relevant messages are predominantly spread in English.

Going beyond the research questions, there are a few categories that need to be discussed in further detail: The first content category with more English than German stickers is product advertisements. 43 percent of the stickers are in English. English seems to be the primary language in advertising. The use of English in product advertisement can thus be seen as a sign of linguistic change towards a more globalised world and language use.

More than half of the stickers advocating and informing about moral issues are produced in English which is a stark contrast to those stickers promoting political messages. The third category where English is used more often than German is stickers produced by NGOs. The last set of stickers that are mostly English are those produced by artists and bands. Over 40 percent of the stickers are English and less than 30 percent are German. Rather surprising is the distribution of language when it comes to stickers produced by sports clubs and their supporters. Despite the producers being mostly German football teams and fan clubs, the amount of English and German stickers is close to equal. This shows that it is not only the origin of the producer that decides which language is used.

German is extremely dominant in this category of political stickers. Not only are all stickers produced by political parties written in German, 76 percent of these signs also do not contain any other language. Another category where German is predominant is that of event advertisement with more than half of the stickers being produced in this language.

These results show that the language on stickers is influenced by the locality and internationality of the producer and the message. This can be seen most clearly when it comes to political

Figure 5: Example Sticker

stickers, those including the ones by political parties and the ones by other producers containing political messages. As part of a local – in this case, the German – government, parties aim to appeal to German citizens of legal voting age.

The language distribution of stickers with political messages is not as easy to explain, as we would have expected there to be a variety of politically motivated stickers dealing with international issues and thus using English as a universal language. Going against our expectations, there are only 30 stickers that can clearly be identified as political. Most of these 30 stickers are advertisements for events taking place in Germany, explaining the predominant use of the German language. These events, e.g. festivals, were arranged by organisers with distinctly leftist political views as political statements.

Our study shows that a mixture of English and German stickers can be found when topics related to popular culture and sports are addressed, despite their producers being mostly German bands

and football clubs. Another reason for this mixed language distribution could be the producers' effort to achieve international relevance or to be part of an international movement, such as the hooligan scene in sports, while still remaining true and sticking to their roots.

Stickers focusing on moral issues such as climate change and human rights are mostly produced in English. This can be explained by the fact that the topics discussed and promoted on these stickers are of global relevance. Migration flows, for example, can be felt and witnessed by most in the world, explaining and giving reason to numerous stickers saying "refugees welcome". Topics such as this require English as a universal language in order to emphasize the global scale of these issues and reach as many people as possible. The discussed findings show that the distribution of language, the producer and the content of a sticker are not arbitrary but related. This relation can be explained by language changes that are a result of a more globalised world and differences in local and international relevance of certain topics and producers.

CONCLUSION

Going into the study we expected to find a large amount of stickers produced out of political motivation. This expectation was not met however, showing that, while a political interest might exist, stickers are not used in order to share this interest as extensively as anticipated. Another remarkable aspect that was noticed was the relation between the content of stickers and the language in which this content is expressed. Due to large numbers of international students enrolled in Münster's university and the steadily increasing importance of English in Germany, we expected to find various stickers using English in order to convey information. The language distribution suggests that a topic's level of locality widely influences the choice of language.

This study sets the premise for further research by providing an extensive data base oc-cupied with content and language distribution on stickers. It also offers explanations for the findings. In order to verify these findings, the next step should be to take a more ethnographic approach by including producers of stickers and residents of the examined site and interviewing them about their choice of language.

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