Language as gate-keeper of quality? Exploring Austria’s English-only policy for national research funding
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Introduction
Over the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, English has increasingly secured its position as the international lingua franca in a range of domains from medicine, commerce and communications in a manner which can appear to those outside the world of sociolinguistics and language policy as a ‘natural’, unstoppable and irreversible process. In contrast, within that linguistic world, this stance is much contested, even as contrasting ideological positions lead inevitably to differing interpretations of the phenomenon. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), for example, views increasing language dominance broadly in terms of human rights abuse leading to linguistic genocide. Robert Phillipson (1992 and 2003) equally argues that the process, most clearly in relation to English, is far from natural, but - through multi-layered language policy – is driven rather by a conscious intent to extend the reach and influence of English-language powers such as the United States of America and to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom. For his part, Joshua Fishman sees little evidence of such an imperialist approach, yet acknowledges that the consequences may prove the same, even in seemingly more enlightened times: ‘Language decline, language shift, and language death are no longer objects of politically correct language planning, but these deleterious consequences are every bit as alive and as destructive today as they have ever been throughout the long history of language planning’ (2006: 324-5).

Within the European Union, such consequences are particularly important to identify and explore, given that the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, first proclaimed in 2000 and made legally binding in 2009 under the Lisbon Treaty, commits the EU to respecting academic freedom and linguistic diversity and lists language as one of the unacceptable grounds for discrimination against citizens or communities (Charter 2012). Linguistic diversity is designed to be promoted primarily through the 2002 ‘Barcelona Objective’, which calls upon member states to support individual plurilingualism in equipping everyone with competences in their first language plus two more. This was reaffirmed in 2011 when the Council of the European Union adopted a series of conclusions, not least that ‘a good command of foreign languages is a key competence essential to make
one’s way in the modern world and labour market. Multilingualism is not only part of the European heritage but also a chance to develop a society which is open, respectful of cultural diversity and ready for cooperation’ (Council of the European Union 2011: 4). Increasingly, however, such declarations appear more aspirational for some member states than others, not least because, as Phillipson reminds us, ‘the EU Charter of Rights is a political declaration that does not have the force of law’ (2003: 5).

Instead, language learning within the European Union has become marked by two growing trends: a decrease in the percentage of native speakers of English with foreign language competence and an increase in the dominance of English as the first foreign language in many countries where English is not the main first language. The first trend can be evidenced in the difficulties experienced by the institutions of the European Union itself to recruit native speakers of English with multilingual skills; the second is clear from reports on European language competence (such as the Eurobarometer 2012) and the ongoing debate around the potential threat posed by English to non-anglophone countries (House 2003; Phillipson 2007). This has had particular consequences for domains such as higher education (HE), where, as part of the Bologna Process, efforts have been made to establish an ever stronger European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA) through increased emphasis on international educational mobility, standardisation of programme structures and qualifications, and quality assurance. Those involved as students, lecturers, researchers, administrators, leaders and strategists have certainly experienced the growing impact of English as an academic language within the European higher education community, and a number of studies already exist which explore open manifestations of language switch within learning, teaching and research activities: the growth in numbers of international students, particularly in the United Kingdom (Bushe et al 2016), the introduction of English-medium degree programmes outside the UK and Ireland (Ammon and McConnell 2002, Coleman 2006, Maiworm and Wächter 2014, Earls 2016), and the increased use of English as a medium for presenting and publishing research findings (Hamel 2007, Ammon 2012).

In fact, such policy-driven language shifts, whether at individual or programmatic level, contribute to, and arise from, conscious behaviours of higher education institutions and government bodies, as they increasingly seek to traverse, and perhaps even aspire to transcend, national boundaries in pursuit of strategic goals such as internationalization and quality assurance (Kehm and de Wit 2006, Gnutzmann 2008). These language shifts are thus openly promulgated at national and institutional level as advantageous to increased
internationalization both within the EU and beyond, whether through the attraction of a greater number of non-European students, enhanced participation in international research communities or the broader dissemination of research to a global audience. Both within the realms of teaching (not least as a result of national responses to various PISA results) and of research, language issues are also framed in terms of quality assurance and enhancement. Here, the preferencing of English within academic domains remains more contested, with mounting concerns not only regarding linguistic inequality (Ammon 2012) and domain loss, but also changes in discourse patterns within academic English (Pérez-Llantada 2015). While some national academic communities (e.g. France) have traditionally resisted the growing dominance of English, others (e.g. Sweden) have attempted to counter their initial enthusiasm for its adoption with national and institutional policies redressing, in part at least, the acknowledged imbalance with national languages (Bolton and Kuteeva 2012).

Against the shifting linguistic landscape of educational practice and research dissemination, at least one significant area remains as yet under-researched: the language of national research funding. This central driver of HE research activity, increasingly linked to metrics of quality and internationalization, yet overlooked to date in linguistic research terms, came under the spotlight, however, when, in 2015, word spread amongst the German-speaking academic community of a petition against the decision by one of Austria’s main national funding bodies, the Fond zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung\(^1\) (FWF) to extend its exclusive acceptance of English-only funding applications within the natural sciences to include the Social Sciences and the Humanities. This almost complete ousting of the national language in favour of the perceived language of globalization provides, as will be shown, a fascinating exemplar which challenges the concepts of “internationalization” and “quality” not just within Austria, but also within the broader network of German-speaking countries within Europe. It also lays bare some of the cultural influences which shape national decision-making and power dynamics within the domain of higher education funding.

As a first step to exploring the penetration of English into the infrastructural realms of national research funding, it is, therefore, essential to consider in more depth some of the potential inter-connections which might exist between language, culture and power. Against this background, the current chapter discusses the changing status of the German language within Europe since the nineteenth century and the impact of this on traditional academic

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cultures across the Sciences and Humanities. A brief outline of the diverse language policies shaping the research-funding application processes in Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland subsequently reveals the existences of three culturally specific models of practice within the German-speaking countries of Europe against which the policy adopted by the FWF might be better understood. The chapter concludes by exploring in what ways the academic community and other vested interests in Austria have attempted to resist the FWF’s policy decisions and questions the extent to which ensuing debates reveal genuine concerns for issues of research quality and internationalization or point rather to not just underlying tensions in the language ideology driving national research policy and practice but also long-standing cultural discourses within the country.

The politics of language

In his volume *Langage et le pouvoir symbolique*, Pierre Bourdieu argues that one cannot begin to understand the politics of language without addressing issues of power. Drawing on the eighteenth-century philosopher Condillac’s exploration of the unification of the French language through its association first with monarchy and then revolution, he concludes that:

> Le conflit entre le français de l’intelligentsia révolutionnaire et les idiomes ou les patois est un conflit pour le pouvoir symbolique qui a pour enjeu la formation et la ré-formation des structures mentales. Bref, il ne s’agit pas seulement de communiquer mais de faire reconnaître un nouveau discours d’autorité, avec son nouveau vocabulaire politique, ses termes d’adresse et de référence, ses metaphores, ses euphémismes et la représentation du monde social qu’il véhicule et qui, parce qu’elle est liée aux intérêts nouveaux de groupes nouveaux, est indicible dans les parlers locaux façonnés par des usages liés aux intérêts spécifiques des groupes paysans. ² (Bourdieu, 2001: 74)

Thus, for Bourdieu, the ‘conflit pour le pouvoir symbolique’, the struggle for symbolic power, stretches far beyond the form and use of language to questions of authority and legitimacy, as the different sides in any linguistic conflict seek to assert their right to be the recognised decision-makers in terms of language choice at micro- and macro-levels. Interestingly, Bourdieu’s argument seems also to rest on a strong connection between language and thought reminiscent of Sapir and Whorf’s theories of linguistic determinism which propose that language and thought are inextricably bound up, with thought restricted

²The conflict between the French of the revolutionary intelligentsia and the dialects or patois was a struggle for symbolic power in which what was at stake was the formation and re-formation of mental structures. In short, it was not only a question of communicating but of gaining recognition for a new language of authority, with its new political vocabulary, its terms of address and reference, its metaphors, its euphemisms and the representation of the social world which it conveys, and which, because it is linked to the new interests of new groups, is inexpressible in the local idioms shaped by usages linked to the specific interests of peasant groups’ (Bourdieu 1991: 48).
by the availability of specific structures within any language. While subsequent discussions of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis make more modest claims, arguing rather for a ‘linguistic relativism’ which acknowledges an inter-causal link between language and thought, Bourdieu places this process of language development within a strong societal and political context. Of particular importance for Bourdieu is, therefore, his understanding of ‘une économie des échanges symboliques’\(^3\) (2001: 60) in which linguistic habitus\(^4\) and linguistic market\(^5\) interact. Within this framework, the social and cultural elements which shape individual and community practices and forms of expression have become so normalised as to be rendered invisible, thus ensuring that the ensuing power dynamics remain intact:

> ‘le pouvoir symbolique … se définit dans et par une relation déterminée entre ceux qui exercent le pouvoir et ceux qui le subissent, c'est-à-dire dans la structure même du champ où se produit et se reproduit la croyance. Ce qui fait le pouvoir des mots … pouvoir de maintenir l'ordre ou de le subvertir, c'est la croyance dans la légitimité des mots et de celui qui les prononce, croyance qu'il n'appartient pas aux mots de produire’ (2001: 210).\(^6\)

Thus when language itself is challenged, so too are the power structures which collectively determine who “has the say” and whose “habitus” emerges as the dominant influence.

**The German language in Europe: Geopolitics and academic traditions**

Despite English being the most widely spoken language within Europe, German holds the distinction of being the language with the greatest number of native speakers within the EU. The Federal Republic of Germany’s population increased at the stroke of a pen following the incorporation of the German Democratic Republic into a unified Germany on 3 October, 1990. The national language of Germany and Austria is, of course, German, although both countries recognise a number of regional and minority languages within their borders. The German-speaking communities from Luxembourg where German is one of three official languages, and from other countries such as Belgium, Denmark and France, combine with

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\(^3\) ‘an economy of symbolic exchanges’ (Bourdieu 1991: 37)

\(^4\) Part of the more general habitus developed in the individual through their interaction with the social context which shapes them; the linguistic habitus involves amongst other features guiding linguistic patterns, modes of expression and norms of communication which in turn shape the individual’s reactions to, and interactions with, other social contexts.

\(^5\) Linguistic markets are most evident in multilingual environments where different languages compete for the largest ‘share’ in terms of visibility and use, but within single language environments the same competition can also be seen between language variations seeking to assert their dominance.

\(^6\) ‘symbolic power … is defined in and through a given relation between those who exercise power and those who submit to it, i.e. in the very structure of the field in which belief is produced and reproduced. What creates the power of words …, a power capable of maintaining or subverting the social order, is the belief in the legitimacy of words and those who utter them. And words alone cannot create this belief’ (1991: 170).
non-EU countries such as Liechtenstein and Switzerland (where German is one of four official languages) to make an estimated native-speaker population for German of over 90 million.

German is also one of the three official languages in the European Union and has become increasingly important since the accession of a number of Eastern European countries in 2004. Despite the economic dominance of Germany within Europe and the significant wealth of many of the countries most closely associated with it, German has never fully regained the linguistic status it enjoyed before the First World War. German was, of course, an acknowledged and respected language of science particularly within the Natural Sciences throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century (Ammon 1998: 2). The decision taken by nearly all the main international science organizations at the end of the First World War to exclude the use of German from their conferences and publication outlets essentially marked the end of that tradition (Earls 2016: 12). This coupled with the growth of English, boosted undoubtedly by the increasing economic dominance of the United States in the second half of the twentieth century, has contributed to the need for scientists – not just in German-speaking countries – to communicate with this American scientific hub through its language. This situation remains, however, to some extent discipline-specific. Ammon (2012) reveals that where the switch to English within the Natural Sciences is almost complete within international research output, the move within the Social Sciences and, in particular, the Humanities has been rather less pronounced. Here a much stronger tradition of publishing within the national language continues, perhaps as the focus of study has often tended to be more national or regional. According to Ammon, ‘it seems that especially the French-, German-, Russian- and Spanish-speaking social scientists still publish to a considerable extent in their own languages … and in the humanities, publishing in one’s own language is still more en vogue than in the social sciences’ (2012: 339).

On a broader societal level, the growing impact of English has begun to meet resistance. Germany’s recent debates about the possible declaration in its Basic Law (Grundgesetz) of the German language’s status as national language (Landessprache) reflects both concerns about the increasing impact of English and a perception that other strong language communities beyond those officially recognised might also threaten the status of
Concerted moves in both 2010 and 2011 to enshrine German in the Basic Law were rejected – officially at least – on the basis that this would discriminate against immigrant and minority communities. Earls argues convincingly, however, that, against the background of twentieth-century history, underlying political concerns regarding international perceptions of growing German nationalism were central to these decisions and will in all likelihood stymy any such legal amendments in the foreseeable future (2016: 97).

Language policies in national research funding applications in Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland

Even a cursory examination of policy in relation to the language of application within national research funding bodies across the German-speaking countries of Europe highlights a diversity in language practices which would attest to variable language shifts and which thus offers a valuable heuristic to explore the debate within Austria in more detail. Within this section, three models emerge, represented by national funding regulations in Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland. An analysis of models highlights the broader cultural and language policy concerns which inform their development.

Germany

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) describes itself as ‘the largest independent research funding organization in Germany’ which ‘promotes the advancement of science and the humanities by funding research projects, research centres and networks, and facilitating cooperation among researchers’ (DFG, English language homepage). Applications in any field can be submitted in either German or English, although under certain programmes and within certain disciplines specific elements of any application submitted in English must also be provided in German (DFG 2014: 2). The evaluation of applications, considered ‘das

7 The strongest proponents of the insertion into Germany’s Basic Law of a new article – ‘Die Sprache der Bundesrepublik Deutschland ist Deutsch’ [The language of the Federal Republic of Germany is German] – are the conservative associations, the Verein Deutsche Sprache (VDS) and the Verein für deutsche Kulturbeziehungen im Ausland (VDA). The use of the term “Landessprache” (language of the country) suggests, however, a deliberate avoidance of the more common “Nationalsprache”.

8 Unlike its larger counterparts, Liechtenstein, with a population of just under 38,000 and one state-funded university, does not currently have a national funding body, although some discussions in the past at parliamentary level point to developments in this direction (‘Postulatsbeantwortung’). Funding is, however, available directly from governmental sources and an additional funding grant is provided to the University of Liechtenstein for distribution on the basis of agreed guidelines. Within this scheme, applications for small projects can be submitted in German and are adjudicated internally. Applications for larger projects in all disciplines are subject to international review by recognised experts worldwide; to facilitate this, the language of application for larger projects is, therefore, English. (Email correspondence with Dr. Dieter Gunz, University of Liechtenstein, 9 May 2016.)
Herzstück der Förderpraxis der DFG’ is undertaken by reviewers from inside and outside Germany: ‘Sie werden von der Geschäftsstelle nach ihrer fachlichen Expertise ausgewählt und bewerten die Anträge ehrenamtlich nach wissenschaftlicher Exzellenz, Relevanz und Originalität’ (DFG, ‘Hinweise für Gutachtende’).9

An extensive study of this evaluation strategy, first introduced in 2004, was conducted two years later by the Institut für Forschungsinformation und Qualitätssicherung10. The findings were based on an extensive online survey of all 577 academics who had been elected from the scientific community in 2003 to serve as review board members (Fachkollegiaten) for a four-year term (Hornbostel and Olbrecht 2007: 9); nearly 80% of those approached completed the survey (n=457) indicating a strong engagement with the new process. While over 99% responded that familiarity with the discipline was ‘rather important’ or ‘important’, only 18% considered employment in a research institution abroad and less than half (48%) deemed experience of international review processes of equal value (Hornbostel and Olbrecht 2007: 30). Drawing on the DFG’s 2006 Annual Report, the study indicates that, in the period from 2002-2004, over 65,000 reviews took place in relation to over 24,000 applications by nearly 11,000 reviewers. 88% of reviews related to individual projects. Only 13% of reviewers were employed by an institution abroad and most of the 1,407 foreign reviews came from Switzerland and Austria, with the USA in third place; more reviews by foreign academics were supplied for projects in the Life Sciences and Natural Sciences than for the Humanities, Social Sciences or Engineering (Hornbostel and Olbrecht 2007: 19). If one contrasts that with the funding position ten years later, nearly 30,000 new and ongoing projects were funded by the DFG to the tune of €2.7 billion in 2014 alone, with ‘the coordinated programmes … account[ing] for the greatest proportion of the DFG’s funding portfolio during the 2014 reporting period’ (DFG 2015: no page). Within the same reporting period, ‘approximately 22,000 written reviews were received from over 13,500 reviewers … More than a fifth of the reviews were submitted by international reviewers’ (ibid: no page). In both real and relative terms, therefore, the number of international reviewers has increased, although it is not possible to ascertain from the 2014 annual report whether Swiss and Austrian-based reviewers have retained their leading position in this process.

9 ‘an integral part of the DFG’s review process’; ‘They are selected by the Head Office on the basis of their expertise and volunteer to evaluate proposals according to scientific excellence, relevance and originality’ (translations from the English version of DFG website).
10 Institute for Research Information and Quality Assurance – translation from the English version of http://www.research-information.de/
In relation to language preferencing for national research applications, the DFG’s processes present a balanced bilingual model where German and English are equally recognised and equally supported in the application process. Application forms and guidelines are available in both languages and no further mention is given of any specific language requirements in relation to any element of the application. While there is no explicit reference to language preference in relation to the dissemination of project findings, it is worth noting that the DFG’s bilingual website is not a mirror, but rather a localised, site: the German version contains considerable additional material aimed at the public dissemination of research. Nonetheless, this model suggests that the German government wishes to promote its domestic research community as equally national and international, equally at home in their national language, German, and the global language, English. In not making this explicit, this model both promotes German to rank alongside English whilst also ceding linguistic, cultural and academic space to a language enjoying, in Abram de Swaan’s terms, a greater Q-value.11

Although apparently a non-problematic stance to adopt, the DFG’s position arguably glosses over any differences between the cultural nuances of German-language and English-language academic traditions. While, perhaps understandably, studies of students in the early stages of their academic careers highlight the difficulties of endeavouring to integrate different languages and traditions (Earls 2014: 131–44), even experienced linguists can find themselves faced with difficulties. In his 2012 article on linguistic inequality and its effects on participation in scientific discourse, Ammon vividly describes the challenges of writing in English even for German-native-speaker academics, who would frequently be considered highly competent users of English. Drawing on Kachru’s 1986 concentric model of language status and reach, Ammon expands on his own initial understanding of a ‘Rangordnung der Sprachen’ (1991: 245) in his later discussion in English of the analogous term ‘language hierarchies’, in categorising German as a second rank international language still ‘also to a limited extent used as [an] asymmetric lingua franca’ (2012: 336) which overlaps, to some extent, with its function as a national language of science. Where Kachru’s model draws attention to the core and peripheral influence of language, Ammon’s strongly vertical model foregrounds the power relation between languages. Ammon goes on to make an important point which is particularly pertinent to the position of English and German within the European context, as he argues that ‘the economic hierarchy of countries does not coincide

11 De Swaan defines his term as follows: ‘The communication value or ‘Q-value’ of a language is the product of its prevalence and its centrality’. (de Swaan 2001: 31)
with their ease of access to global communication’ (ibid: 336). Thus both Germany’s economic dominance within the European Union and the position of German as the language most spoken as a first language within the EU are superceded by English as ‘the global language, also of science … which functions as the predominant (asymmetric) global lingua franca by far’ (ibid: 336).

**Luxembourg**

Given its central geographical location between Belgium, France and Germany, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has countered a history of external political and cultural influence and changing national borders with a commitment to neutrality since 1839. Linguistic positioning, too, has been central to the development of Luxembourg across the centuries, and the changing status of the country’s three effective working languages has only been legally defined since 1984: the national language is *Lëtzebuergesch*, French is the legislative language and both, plus German, are designated as administrative and judiciary languages. Thus, although no language is designated as an official language *per se, Lëtzebuergesch* could, for the first time, be used to contact public bodies, and gradually it has become the standard language of spoken communication in many domains. *Lëtzebuergesch* is, therefore, essentially also the *de facto* working language of the parliament, although French remains the only language to have binding status in the formulation of laws. German is present at local administrative levels rather than at national level, but is the first language to be taught in primary school after *Lëtzebuergesch* and maintains a strong role throughout the education system alongside the other languages; it has also traditionally been the dominant language in the national press.12

The University of Luxembourg, established in 2003 as the only public university in the Grand Duchy, describes itself as ‘multilingual, international and research-oriented’; its multilingualism and international identity are defined further in terms of the university’s academic staff, student mobility, range of programmes and multilingual offerings where ‘programmes [are] generally taught in two languages French/English or French/German, some in three and some entirely taught in English’ (Université de Luxembourg, ‘About the University’). The website adopts a strong, unstated language policy by existing only in English, although reference is made to the fact that media enquiries can be made in French,

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German or English and the list of press releases provides examples in each of these languages 
(although English and French predominate).

This use of English as the default language in a strongly multilingual educational 
environment is an interesting one, not least because this model is replicated within 
Luxembourg’s national research funding body, the *Fonds national de la recherche 
Luxembourg (FNR)*. The FNR website ([www.fnr.lu](http://www.fnr.lu)) has an English-only interface, although 
individual projects and events are occasionally presented in German and French. With regard 
to funding proposals, the FNR has, for some time, had an “English-only” policy in almost all 
areas, a position not explicitly set out in a strategy document but included in all guidelines for 
funding applications regardless of discipline. The rationale for this is described as not simply 
for pragmatic reasons (which, by the contrast established, are arguably connoted slightly negatively), ‘sondern auch um Wissenschaftler bestmöglich in der eigenen Karriere zu 
unterstützen, da der wissenschaftliche Austausch international nun einmal auf Englisch 
stattfindet’¹³. The only exception to this adoption of what might be termed a “Q-value model” 
(whereby preference is given to a language of greater prevalence and centrality than those 
available as national languages) is a specific funding programme designed to make science 
more accessible to society; here applications are explicitly allowed in German, French and 
English and all application documentation is available in the three languages. It is important 
to note that, as the 2014 Annual Report and the website demonstrate, considerable emphasis 
is given to the funding of disciplines which are most readily perceived as fulfilling the FNR’s 
mission to ‘set up a sustainable world-class research system in Luxembourg that will generate 
societal and economic impact in key strategic areas’ (FNR 2014: 3). As Meyer (2008) 
stresses in his study of Luxembourg’s scientific landscape, small countries often struggle to 
find a balance between diversification and focus, with more pressure being placed on them to 
specialise. Meyer alludes to particular issues facing the country at the time of writing: ‘The 
lack of co-operation between research actors seems to be a major problem in Luxembourg. 
While official discourses repeatedly stress the need to construct a critical mass of researchers, 
geographical and cultural distances between researchers are still substantial’ (2008: 367). It 
would seem likely that many of the FNR’s efforts within subsequent strategic planning cycles 
are designed to address such issues. The extent to which the “English-only” policy in the area 
of research-funding applications, which represents both a “linguistic neutrality” – essentially

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¹³ ‘but to support scientists and academics in the best possible way in their careers, as scientific exchange at an 
international level takes place after all in English’ (my translation). Email correspondence with Dr Ulrike Kohl, 
*Fonds national de la recherche Luxembourg*, 4 May 2016.
mirroring the country’s political neutrality – in favouring no one of Luxembourg’s three national languages over others and a drive towards forging international links which might provide cohesion at a national level deserves further exploration. Certainly, as Meyer suggests, ‘research has been institutionalised and professionalised and … more efforts have been put into evaluation, and into improving the image and visibility of science’ (2008: 370). This, too, accounts for the FNR’s language policy of paralleling the use of English for communication with, and amongst, the academic community with the use of French and German, although not explicitly Lëtzebuergeresch, for the dissemination of research findings to the broader public.

**Switzerland**

The Swiss National Science Foundation, *Der Schweizerische Nationalfonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung* (SNF), appears to provide a mirror website in German, French, Italian and English, reflecting both the country’s multilingual identity and position within the global academic community. It is perhaps significant, however, that not all elements of the Italian site are yet complete, and there is no site for Romansch, the fourth national language of Switzerland. The SNF was established in 1952 as a private foundation to guarantee its independence and it seeks to support high quality research through awarding public research monies on a competitive basis. It considers its main function to be the evaluation of research proposals and, in 2014, allocated CHF 849 million (circa €770 million) in research funding. The SNF’s mission statement promotes a combination of the national and the international: ‘Wir verfolgen eine langfristige Strategie für die Entwicklung der Forschung in der Schweiz und fördern deren weltweite Vernetzung. Damit festigen wir die internationale Spitzenposition der Schweizer Forschung’ (*Leitbild*: 6).14 The SNF emphasises that applications are judged on the basis of international evaluation, but, not insignificantly, the single question listed under the FAQs for project funding in all disciplines relates to the language in which any funding proposal should be written. In its response, the SNF makes a clear distinction between the Natural Sciences and the Social Sciences/Humanities, justifying its guidelines in a strong subject discipline approach:

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14 ‘We pursue a long-term strategy for promoting research in Switzerland and are dedicated to advancing its international integration. This consolidates the leading position of Swiss research in the global arena’ (SNSF Mission Statement: 6)
Bis auf die meisten Disziplinen innerhalb der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften müssen die Gesuche in der Projektförderung in englischer Sprache verfasst sein. In den Disziplinen, in denen Englisch nicht Pflicht ist, können die Gesuchstellenden zwischen Deutsch, Französisch, Italienisch und Englisch wählen. Die gewählte Sprache sollte sich in diesen Disziplinen daran orientieren, in welchen Sprachen zum jeweiligen Forschungsthema häufig veröffentlicht wird; dies erleichtert die Suche nach externen Gutachtenden. Die Eingaben in mySNF und die Begleitschreiben sollten in der gleichen Sprache wie der Forschungsplan verfasst sein. (SNF FAQs)

This more linguistically diverse model is important in presenting discipline traditions as being the significant factor in determining language choice at the application stage. In so doing, it challenges the emphasis on expediency and international visibility prevalent in the arguably more top-down approach to language policy pursued by the funding bodies discussed so far. An approach which respects discipline expertise as a marker of quality acknowledges that responsibility for finding suitable international reviewers lies with the SNF and rejects the pursuit of more inflexible policies into which individual researchers must fit. In generating a more bottom-up “democratic-inclusion” model, this approach also appears to reflect Switzerland’s long tradition of integration through direct democracy, although this in itself has been seen to challenge cohesion and cooperation within the multilingual and multicultural environment that Switzerland represents (Stojanović 2006).

Language policy models in research funding application processes

Within each of the representatives of German-speaking countries in Europe discussed so far, a different language policy model can be identified. In each case, these models point to broader linguistic, cultural and academic concerns, yet each system seeks to combine increased internationalization through greater collaboration at home or abroad and improved visibility of research beyond their national boundaries with stronger quality assurance and enhancement through stronger scrutiny of application processes and expert peer review. The balanced bilingual model adopted by Germany, on first analysis a neutral, pragmatic response to the increasing dominance of English in international academia, speaks to an unspoken consciousness of German’s lost position as the traditional language of science (while nonetheless risking the loss of domain-specific academic traditions) and to an appreciation of the growing economic and political power of Germany within the European Union, which is arguably not yet matched by

15 'Apart from most disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, all applications in project funding must be submitted in English. In the disciplines where English is not compulsory, the applicants can choose between German, French, Italian and English. In these disciplines the language of the majority of publications on the research topic should be chosen as the language of the application. This will make it easier to find suitable external reviewers. The data entered in mySNF and the covering letters should be written in the same language as the research plan’ (English mirror site: http://www.snf.ch/en/funding/projects/projects-in-all-disciplines/Pages/default.aspx#FAQ accessed 10 May 2016).
the status of German in the everyday workings of the EU institutions. Perhaps bolstered by the sheer size of the country, a certain confidence is shown in the quality and integrity of research work within the academic community by any lack of concern regarding the need for the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft to seek extensive validation from outside the German-speaking countries of Europe. The different models adopted by Luxembourg and Switzerland represent different approaches to managing high-stake national funding within multilingual environments. Both the Q-value model evident in Luxembourg and the democratic-inclusion model of Switzerland actively seek to avoid preferencing any one national language.

Luxembourg’s stronger focus on research in the Natural Sciences and in new technologies, coupled with its smaller size, goes some way to explaining the FNR’s wholesale adoption of English as the language of research funding application, while the SNF seeks to sustain Switzerland’s commitment to linguistic and cultural diversity while acknowledging the desirability of English, not least in the Natural Sciences, in achieving its goal of positioning Switzerland’s research activity on the global arena.

The identification of diverse language policy models in the different German-speaking countries of Europe does not, of course, presume that their introduction into practice has been unproblematic and uncontested. That said, no German-speaking country has generated more interest in its national research funding application processes than Austria.

The geopolitics of Austria
Austria has a population of circa 8.5 million, of whom around 90% are native speakers of German. Its official language and lingua franca is German, the most widely spoken and (co-) official language in a number of other European countries and regions which border Austria: Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and South Tyrol (Italy). Austria as we know it today has, of course, emerged from centuries of changing geo-political fortunes, most notably from the debates regarding its potential inclusion in a so-called Großdeutschland, the broader German project of the nineteenth century. Its exclusion from the German Reich of 1871, a position strongly supported by Reichskanzler Otto von Bismarck, led the Austrian monarchy to seek political allies further east and saw the development of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a powerful rival to the Wilhelmine Empire. When both empires collapsed at the end of the

16 That the approach adopted by a monolingual country such as Liechtenstein is identical, even in the absence of a national funding body and the presence of a strong national language, suggests that population size and a market-driven research focus are particularly significant in setting priorities. This, as Meyer (2008: 367) suggests, can lead to its own problems: ‘Small countries often focus on applied research and try to foster research that contributes to economic wealth. Yet in doing so, they often overemphasise short-term problems’. For more, see also Thorsteinsdóttir (2000).
First World War, Austria emerged as an independent state, only to be annexed by Hitler in 1938, a move which many at the time saw as the country’s opportunity to take its rightful place within a *Großdeutschland* configuration. Austria was only to consolidate in its current form in the aftermath of the Second World War. The country and its identity have, therefore, long been constructed in relation to its neighbours, not least to the north and west, but the reconfigurations of both Germany and the Balkan states in the post-1989 have once again repositioned Austria within the geo-political map of Europe. This changing status means that Austria arguably continues to perceive itself in terms of its long tradition of European and international political influence while also simultaneously striving to position itself as both part of a broader German-language and cultural community and as clearly distinct from Germany. The extent to which these centuries-old tensions come to the fore within specific debates on higher education generally and language use in the academic research community more specifically deserves further attention.

**Changing higher education landscape in Austria**

As discussed earlier, perhaps the most major transformations currently visible within higher education in Europe have resulted from the unfolding, in the first decades of the 21st century, of the Bologna Process. In tracing its implementation in Austria and Hungary, Wodak and Fairclough (2010: 29–30) criticise strongly the impact of the University Act 2002 on Austrian higher education:

> A top-down structure has … replaced the previous more democratic structure; “autonomy” serves as a kind of euphemism for decisive political influence … “Autonomy” becomes a *euphemism* for an autocratic hierarchical structure where politics remain inherently involved. Participation and democratic structures have been abolished, legitimized by the *topos of necessity* to create quality assurance and to implement the required standardization of teaching and mobility schemes. (ibid: 31)

They go on to argue that broader developments at European level have been exploited to meet domestic political goals:

> as stated in the University Act 2002, the autocratic university structure is defined as a necessary precondition to be able to implement the BD [Bologna Declaration], a constructed causal relation which was opposed by university staff, students, opposition parties and some media… through linking the “reform” of the university structure fallaciously with the Bologna Process, the government has been able to legitimize all its drastic changes in terms of European demands. (ibid: 31)

The strong negativity directed at the government of the time becomes clearer when one recalls that, from 1999, political power in Austria was held by a coalition formed after
months of negotiations between the Christian-democratic Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP) and the right-wing populist Freiheitspartei Österreichs (FPÖ), leaving the social-democratic Sozialdemocratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ) in opposition. The rapid rise in popularity of the FPÖ under the charismatic leadership of Jörg Haider caused unrest both within Austria and abroad, with the European Union initially threatening sanctions on the country for allowing Haider’s party to enter government. These political tensions can be seen to have had a profound impact on stances adopted in relation to language-policy decisions on research-funding applications.

**Language policies in national research funding applications in Austria**

Austria has two main national bodies which allocate research funding: the Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft (FFG) which supports applied research and the Fond zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung (FWF) which supports basic research. Both bodies were established in their current form in 2004 in response to the 2002 University Act and set their own language policy regulations for funding applications.

The FFG describes itself as ‘die nationale Förderstelle für wirtschaftsnahe Forschung in Österreich’ representing ‘österreichische Interessen auf europäischer und internationaler Ebene’. The FFG has no standardised policy but decides on the language of application at programme level, taking into consideration the needs of both applicants and reviewers and the international nature of project applications. In programmes which require international collaboration and/or where non-German-speaking reviewers are used, applications are requested in English. Programmes are not discipline-specific and applications are otherwise, for the most part, made in German; ‘englischsprachige Anträge sind möglich (aber eher selten)’. This pragmatic, open approach stands in sharp contrast to the language policy pursued by its counterpart, the Fond zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung.

The FWF sees its mission as serving ‘der Weiterentwicklung der Wissenschaften auf hohem internationalem Niveau. Er leistet einen Beitrag zur kulturellen Entwicklung, zum Ausbau der wissensbasierten Gesellschaft und damit zur Steigerung von Wertschöpfung und

17 ÖVP = Austrian People’s Party; FPÖ = Freedom Party of Austria; SPÖ = Social Democratic Party of Austria
18 ‘the national funding agency for industrial research and development in Austria [representing ‘Austrian interests at European and international level’]. The FFG hosts a localised bilingual website (https://www.ffg.at/) with the German version focused primarily at potential applicants; the English version is arguably designed more to promote the activities of the FFG to an international audience.
19 ‘Applications in English are possible, but actually rare’. Email correspondence with Dr Sabine Meyer, FFG, 5 May 2016, who also provided the broader information on the FFG’s language policies.
In 2008, the FWF extended its exclusive acceptance of English-only funding applications within the Natural Sciences to include the Social Sciences and the Humanities. The rationale for this is set out in a contribution via ORF, the Austrian public broadcaster, by Christoph Kratky, President of the FWF from 2005 to 2013, and his colleague, Falk Reckling, then departmental head responsible for the Humanities and Social Sciences (‘Die Wissenschaft’ 2008). Together they provide a narrative on the relative importance of English and German within national and international academia which presents multilingualism as an anachronistic remnant of a past educational elite, irrelevant in the face of the unstoppable growth of English. In so doing, they consciously echo the types of uninformed assumptions outlined in the opening sentences of this chapter. English is portrayed as the common denominator across the multitude of emerging disciplines, and the moral integrity of the German language is called into question in relation to the forced exile of scientists to English-speaking countries in the 1930s. The emotive language used throughout presents English as the only option to drag Austria out of its past; other languages are seen as a hindrance ‘realistischerweise kann ein Forscher unter den heutigen Bedingungen noch nicht einmal annähernd die Mehrsprachigkeit erreichen, die notwendig wäre, um nur einen Bruchteil auch nur der großen Sprachen abdecken zu können’. While acknowledging tangentially that some opposition may come from sections of the Humanities, they appear rather to castigate themselves for not making the move to English sooner, as the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries have done. The switch from German to English in these countries is constructed as a significant reason for their enormous international success and Austria is seen, if rather belatedly, to be at the forefront of a ‘für den deutschen Sprachraum revolutionäre Umstellung’. While brief acknowledgement is given to academics’ arguments that, within the Humanities and some of the Social Sciences, national studies are common and multilingualism often a methodological necessity, Kratky and Reckling argue that the most important results should be made available through English; German is effectively reduced to a language of national dissemination, suitable only for the “translation” into simpler language of the complex ideas developed in English:

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20 ‘the ongoing development of Austrian science and basic research at a high international level. In this way, the FWF makes a significant contribution to cultural development, to the advancement of our knowledge-based society, and thus to the creation of value and wealth in Austria’. The FWF hosts a mirror bilingual website (https://www.fwf.ac.at/).

21 ‘Realistically, under today’s conditions, a researcher cannot even get close to achieving the multilingualism that would be required to cover a fraction of even the large languages’ (my translation).

22 ‘a reorientation revolutionary for the German-speaking realm’ (my translation).
Wissenschaftler können sich heute nicht mehr ausschließlich auf den reinen Erkenntnisgewinn beschränken, sie müssen ihre Forschung auch gegenüber der (auch kritischen) Gesellschaft, der Politik oder der Wirtschaft rechtfertigen und dabei hochkomplexe Erkenntnisse in eine allgemein verständliche Sprache übersetzen. Dieser Diskussionsprozess vollzieht sich notwendigerweise in der Nationalsprache, der damit auch weiterhin für wissenschaftliche Kommunikation eine bedeutende Rolle zukommt.23 (‘Die Wissenschaft’, 2008)

The FWF alludes to this contribution again on receiving an open letter in January 2012 from academics calling for changes in its policies. The petition, with 138 signatories, focuses primarily on the funding body’s insistence on using evidence of publications in English-language peer-reviewed journals as a prerequisite for funding and the need to acknowledge non-traditional career paths in funding decisions. It also calls for a choice between German and English to be permitted in funding applications. While addressing some of the concerns around the first two issues, the FWF stands its ground on its exclusive use of English as a language of application, citing, in discourse strikingly similar to that denounced earlier by Wodak and Fairclough, its efforts to attract international reviewers from around the world, the increasing importance of English as a language of science, the growing internationalization of scientific cooperation and research funding (including through the European Commission), the promotion of intellectual exchange and interdisciplinary cooperation and the greater visibility of Austrian research. Following a subsequent meeting of the two parties in February 2012, the issue of English remains unresolved (Petition und Antwortsschreiben 2012).

In 2015, this specific language debate was taken up again in much more direct language, and with significantly greater support and media attention, as, on 10 April 2015, a further petition calling for support ‘Für deutschsprachige Anträge beim FWF’24 was initiated on openPetition Deutschland. Over the next three months, this petition, instigated by historians, Oliver Jens Schmitt and Thomas Corsten, who had joined the University of Vienna from the University of Oxford some four years previously, collected close to three thousand signatures. Ensuing discussions centred on the particular role that language, and indeed multilingualism was seen to play in humanities research in generating diversity in thinking and opening up new worlds of ideas. Parallel to this academic debate, a parliamentary question (4730/J, 23 April 2015) was introduced by a group of

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23 ‘Today, scientists can no longer confine themselves exclusively to the pursuit of pure knowledge, but must also justify their research to a critical public, politicians and business and translate highly complex findings into a language comprehensible to a general public. This process of discussion is by necessity conducted in the national language, which thereby earns an important role in scientific communication’ (my translation).

24 ‘German-language applications for the FWF’ (my translation).
parliamentarians led by Erwin Angerer and Dr Andreas Karlsböck of the FPÖ. The FWF responded directly to the Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy (BMWFFW) and the question was later addressed in parliament (23 June 2015). While the introduction of a parliamentary question undoubtedly raised the profile of the issue beyond the realms of academia, its credibility was questioned by its supporters’ affiliations with the right-wing populist FPÖ, which had regained popularity under the leadership of Heinz-Christian Strache as the main opposition party to the 2013 grand coalition of the SPÖ and the VPÖ. As leader, Strache promoted a strongly pan-German ideology combined with an emphasis on *Heimat* and anti-immigration; the success of this political approach brought success, too, for the FPÖ in the 2016 presidential campaign.

Within a year of the online petition, the FWF issued further guidelines, reiterating that for small projects (running up to 48 months to the value of €400K), the capacity to undertake successful research was to be evidenced through international publications. Following quantity, independent research and peer review, the fourth key performance indicator was internationalization interpreted primarily as publication through English: applications in the natural, life and social sciences must be supported by a majority of English-language publications, whereas in the Humanities the majority must demonstrate an international reach.25 Failure to meet such criteria can only be circumvented by specific application to the FWF Presidency. The position that all project applications must be submitted through English, ‘um eine internationale Begutachtung zu gewährleisten’, 26 is upheld, and clearly the position against which the original petitioners acted in 2008, has been strengthened. The top-down approach appears to support Wodak and Fairclough’s arguments in relation to developments in Austria.

English is clearly positioned as the primary language of science and academia within nationally funded research frameworks and German, the official national language of Austria, relegated to a subsidiary role equating it essentially with foreign languages. Within the parameters of the application itself, the relevant status and function of the two languages is made even clearer. English alone is to be used for the scientific abstract for reviewers (actively sought from outside Austria), while an abstract for public dissemination must be provided in both English in German. This clearly reinforces the status of English as the

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26 ‘to facilitate international reviewing’ (my translation).
language of science both nationally and internationally, while differentiating between the dissemination of research findings for national and international audiences. While disseminating results through German allows access to national research to the entire German-speaking world, it also arguably masks to the general public the extent of the radical shift towards English in the academic world.

A further significant aspect emerges in relation to the criteria for the selection of international reviewers of project applications when the assumption is made that international candidates, deemed suitable on all other criteria, will *de facto* have a sufficient command of English to carry out the review of applications satisfactorily. No mention is made of the need to evidence competence in English: more importantly, reviewers must come from abroad or at least have been working outside Austria for at least the previous five years, and must be active, internationally renowned academics at least of the standing of the applicants. This begs the question to what extent English is genuinely being used as a gatekeeper of quality rather than a cultural barrier to participation in the funding and reviewing process. In an article written for the Swiss newspaper, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Oliver Jens Schmitt, one of the instigators of the 2015 petition pushes this point further, as he reminds Swiss readers of the FWF’s rejection of what represents standard thinking for them: ‘Dabei führt sich das vom FWF vorgebrachte Argument höherer Qualität von Gutachten bei nur englischer Antragssprache selbst ad absurdum: Wer in einer vielsprachigen Fachwelt nur englische Literatur bewältigt, sollte lieber keine Gutachten schreiben’ (Schmitt 2015).27 Significantly, it is also stated within the 2015 guidelines that – on average – not more than 15% of reviewers each year should come from Germany or Switzerland, although it is accepted that this figure can rise to 25% in the Humanities. Likewise, too strong a concentration from any one country or region is to be avoided.28 That Germany and Switzerland are alluded to explicitly might suggest a tradition of such choices of referees; equally, however, it might reveal FWF concerns that existing disciplinary links with academics in neighbouring countries might constitute difficult-to-monitor professional networks and might provide evidence for a top-down desire to generate that more competitive research culture within the German-speaking countries, to which Kratky and Reckling allude in their ORF-contribution, when they conjure up images of Austria leading a revolution in the science world.

27 ‘Thus the argument forwarded by the FWF for higher quality in reviews in an English-only application system is reduced to absurdity: Anyone who only has command of English in a multilingual professional world would do better not to write reviews’ (my translation).

Conclusion

Exploring the ways in which the language-policy decisions made by national research funding organizations in relation to the language of application proves a rich route into a deeper understanding of the interplay between language and power within the German-speaking countries of Europe. Bourdieu demonstrates that in the ‘conflit pour le pouvoir symbolique’, language conflict in reality, of course, masks a more fundamental battle for authority and legitimacy. Each of the initial three models developed – whether the balanced bilingual model of Germany, the Q-value model of Luxembourg or the democratic-inclusion model of Switzerland – has emerged from the particular geopolitical and cultural influences shaping a sense of national habitus. Perhaps as a result, and despite undoubted tensions within each higher education system, as it finds a route through the ongoing implementation of the Bologna Process, the legitimacy of the individual national funding bodies to determine the ‘discours d’autorité, avec son nouveau vocabulaire politique, ses termes d’adresse et de référence’, and thereby to determine access to national research funding via a context-specific language policy appears largely uncontested. Each country, on the surface at least, has negotiated common understanding of terms such as “internationalization” and “quality assurance”, at least in relation to research funding and publication, if not necessarily in relation to teaching and curriculum development.

The simmering dispute in Austria around the FWF’s determination to maintain their “English-only” policy across all disciplines with only a few exceptions which must be sanctioned at the highest level reveals a struggle for authority and legitimacy which no side has yet managed to resolve. Indeed, it appears that three competing forms of “habitus” are at play: firstly, that mirrored in the FWF’s belief that Austria must break out from the German-language environment and align itself instead with non-German-speaking countries in embracing English as the language of a systematised and measurable form of externally driven top-down internationalization best imported from the outside through language and expertise to ensure quality in terms of visibility and impact. English, as we see in the contribution from Kratky and Reckling, is positively connotated as forward-thinking and entrepreneurial, German negatively as backward and reactionary. The second habitus is that present within the body of academics and researchers who have been most vocal in resisting the FWF’s new policies. It is characterised by a belief in the value of multilingualism,

29 ‘language of authority, with its new political vocabulary, its terms of address and reference’ (Bourdieu 1991: 48).
multiculturalism and interdisciplinarity as a basis for independent, critical discourse and thought, perceiving internationalization to be a positive, mutually beneficial behaviour built into the normal practices of individual discipline traditions. This habitus exudes a confidence that expertise is already held within academia and consequently lays great value on the principles of academic freedom and democratic decision-making, reinforcing commitments made within the 2012 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. It might be argued that this confidence emerges from a deeply rooted habitus shaped by Austria’s long understanding of itself as a Vielvölkerstaat (multi-ethnic state) and from Vienna’s long tradition as an international metropolis supporting radical thought within the Arts and Sciences. In reality, each of the earlier three language-policy models has developed from some kind of negotiated compromise between these two habitus within the linguistic space within which they operate. What closer analysis of the context of the FWF’s language policy reveals are the complexities which arise when a third habitus develops a strong influence within the national space. This third habitus is expressed within Austria in the strong support for the populist FPÖ with its defence of national identity, Heimat and the German language.

At once calling upon Großdeutschland traditions, it also appears to challenge Austria to become a defender of German in the face of the balanced bilingual approach adopted by Germany. The effective highjacking by the FPÖ (through its laying down of the parliamentary question in 2012) of the legitimate discipline concerns expressed by Austrian-based academics within the Humanities and Social Sciences through their 2015 open petition has left neither of the first two groups, FWF or academic body, much room for manoeuvre. A move away from its “English-only” policy on the part of the FWF leaves it open to charges of having retreated under FPÖ pressure; increasing expressions of support for even the bilingual model proposed by the academics leaves this group open to accusations of holding nationalist views and supporting the FPÖ. Thus, the existence of two ideologically opposed positions in the face of the FWF’s monolingual policy means that no genuine discussion can take place and it is highly likely that the particularly unusual situation of a national funding body insisting that national academics desist from using their own national language except as a language in which to disseminate research findings to the “local” public is set to continue, to the detriment of the very academic quality the FWF regards as its remit to promote.

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