

# LANGUAGE, DISCOURSE AND IDENTITY IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Centre for Transnational Studies (Southampton)

## Organisers:

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Date: July 6-8, 2007.

Location: Centre for Transnational Studies, Modern Languages, School of Humanities, University of Southampton, Southampton SO17 1BJ, U.K.

Deadline: February 1, 2007.

Abstracts (maximum 200 words) should be sent by email to Dr. Jenny Carl at: [glipp@soton.ac.uk](mailto:glipp@soton.ac.uk). Abstracts should be included in the body of the email, NOT as an attachment.

## Keynote speaker:s

Thomas Diez, Birmingham,  
Matthias Makowski, Prague,  
Ulrike Hanna Meinhof,  
Southampton,  
Ruth Wodak, Lancaster/Vienna.

## Context and rationale

In 2004 Andreas Gardt and Bernd Hüppauf published a collection of papers with the ominous title *Globalization and the Future of German* (Mouton de Gruyter). This wide-ranging volume presents a critical assessment of the present position and future prospects of the German language as a ›paradigmatic example‹ of the future of European languages in general in the face of global forces apparently favouring the growing domination of ›global Englishes‹ and militating against linguistic diversity.

In the same year, the Southampton *Centre for Transnational Studies* organised a conference on *Language and the Future of Europe*, from which selected papers have now been published in Clare Mar-Molinero and Patrick Stevenson (eds.) *Language Ideologies, Policies and Practices* (Palgrave, 2006). In her keynote paper, Susan Gal explores the complex relations between migration, minorities and multilingualism in Europe in terms of shifting language ideologies, challenging ›the tight Herderian weave of culture, language and state in Europe‹ which, she argues, ›is being stretched and frayed in subtle ways.

In July 2007, the Centre will host a conference with the aim of developing these two themes in a particular way. It will investigate Gal's assertion further by focusing on the context of what she refers to as the ›fractal geography‹ of central Europe. Specifically, it will form part of a research programme, funded by the UK *Arts and Humanities Research Council*, on the role of the German language in the formation and contestation of national and regional identities in Germany, Austria and neighbouring states in the centre of Europe.

The main focus of the conference will therefore be not on ›the future of the German language‹ but rather on the position and uses of German in relation to other languages in the current reshaping of central European space – whether as the dominant, officially legitimated language of Germany or Austria, as the minority language of historical migrations, or as a (potential) regional *lingua franca* occupying the middle ground between global English and ›national‹ languages.

Papers are invited that address the roles of language, experiences of and with language, and discourses about language. As with the previous conference, preference will be given to papers that integrate consideration of ideologies, policies and practices.

It is envisaged that selected papers from the conference will be published in book-form in English, and papers should therefore be given in English.

Questions that could be addressed:

- What impact has social, political, economic and cultural transformation had on patterns of multilingualism in central Europe?
- How has migration into and within this region affected linguistic practices?
- How far and in what ways is linguistic difference ›heard‹ and ›seen‹ in these multilingual settings?
- Are new language ideologies emerging?
- Who engages in language policy-making and to what ends?
- How far and in what ways are identities imposed, assumed or negotiated linguistically or through reference to language?
- How do individuals use the linguistic resources available to them to position themselves and others in multilingual space?
- What role do narratives about language play in individual biographies and memories of the pre-1989 past?

Topics could include:

- Language ideologies
- Identity narratives

- Negotiations of identity
- Language biographies
- Visual manifestations of multilingualism
- Globalisation and its discontents
- Media discourses (film, TV, music, print media, advertising)
- Linguistic practices in popular and youth culture
- Linguistic counter-cultures
- Linguistic practices and new technologies
- Language policy and language management
- The role of language and culture agencies (British Council, Goethe Institut etc.)
- Language and migration (into and within CE)
- Language and tourism
- Language and history/ memory
- Discursive representations of time and place
- Language and belonging
- Language and social inclusion/exclusion
- Language and citizenship
- *Sprachkultur* and language loyalty
- Language in multinational businesses
- Language and the knowledge economy
- Standardisation and linguistic ›legitimacy‹
- Language and cosmopolitanism
- The national and the transnational
- Language and territory / de-territorialisation of language
- Urban spaces and linguistic neighbourhoods
- Speech communities and language communities
- Paradoxes of discourses on cultural and linguistic diversity
- Language and social / cultural elites
- Political discourses

