

Practice Unit 14

1. Consult the *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* database (at <http://www.ethnologue.com>) and use it to draw up linguistic profiles of the United Kingdom, Canada and Nigeria. What is the role of English in each country? How many linguistic minorities are there, and which measures are necessary to safeguard their rights?
2. Consult the catalogue of your university library and the MLA bibliography for published linguistic work on the Eipomek language mentioned above. Be careful to use both "Eipo" and "Eipomek" as search terms to get complete coverage. Do you notice any obvious gaps in our knowledge of this language? How does what we know about Eipo(mek) compare to what we know about English or German?

3. Anglicisms

Below you find a selection from the *Verein für deutsche Sprache's* list of anglicisms. All words and expressions marked "3" are considered to be pushing out their proper German equivalents and therefore proscribed. Those marked "2" are considered "differenzierend," while "0" stands for proper names and "1" (not attested in the present selection) for "ergänzend."

air bag:	2	Prallkissen (air bag ist eine irreführende Bezeichnung, da beim Aufprall in den bag nicht Luft, sondern Explosionsgas einschießt)
air base:	3	Fliegerhorst, Militärflugplatz
air brake (1):	3	Bremsklappe (am Flugzeug)
air brake (2):	3	Luftdruckbremse
airbrush:	2	Luftpinsel, sprühmalen; Spritzpistole, Spritztechnik
Airbus:	0	(EN) Airbus
air-condition:	3	Klimaanlage, auch in
air-conditioned:	3	(voll-)klimatisiert
air-conditioning:	3	Klimatechnik, Klimatisierung
aircraft:	3	Flugzeug, siehe auch airplane

air crane:	3	Luftschiffkran, siehe cargo lifter
aircrew:	3	Flugzeugbesatzung
airfield:	3	Kleinflugplatz, Sportflugplatz
airflow:	3	Luftströmung
air force:	3	Luftwaffe/Luftstreitkräfte
airframe:	3	Flugzeugzelle
air hole:	3	Luftloch
airless (1):	3	atemlos, stickig (in geschlossenen Räumen), windstill
airless (2):	2	Vollgummireifen/Vollwandreifen
airline:	3	Fluggesellschaft, Fluglinie
airliner:	2	(großes) Passagierflugzeug
airmail:	3	Luftpost, Luftpostbrief
air place:	3	Sendeplatz
airplane:	3	Flugzeug, siehe auch aircraft
airplay:	3	Radio-, Fernsehausstrahlung
airport:	3	Flughafen
air safety:	3	Flugsicherheit
airship:	3	(Starr-)Luftschiff, Zeppelin, siehe auch blimp
air show:	3	Flugschau
airsick:	3	flugkrank, luftkrank
air terminal:	3	Abfertigungshalle, Terminal
air ticket:	3	Flugschein
airtime:	3	Gesprächsdauer, Sprechzeit (z.B. Telefon)

How current are the incriminated anglicisms? What evidence can you provide to back up your view? How do you assess the usefulness of the suggested German alternatives?

5. Consult digitised text bases for the study of German, for example the corpora held at the Institut für deutsche Sprach (IdS) in Mannheim (www.ids-mannheim.de/kl/corpora.html) or electronic newspapers for uses of *einkaufen* and *shoppen*. Are the two verbs used interchangeably or is there a clear semantic differentiation? Look for forms such as *shoppt*, *shopt*, *geshoppt* etc. to find out whether the English verb is orthographically and morphologically integrated into the German language.

6. This is a much-quoted statement by Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, in which he justifies his use of English as a medium of literary expression.

"The real question is not whether Africans *could* write in English but whether they *ought* to. Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling.

But for me there is no other choice. I have been given this language and I intend to use it. I hope, though, that there always will be men, like the late Chief Fagunwa, who will choose to write in their native tongue and insure that our ethnic literature will flourish side by side with the national ones. For those of us who opt for English, there is much work ahead and much excitement.

Writing in the London *Observer* recently, James Baldwin said: 'My quarrel with the English language has been that the language reflected none of my experience. But now I began to see the matter another way. ... Perhaps the language was not my own because I had never attempted to use it, had only learned to imitate it. If this were so, then it might be made to bear the burden of my experience if I could find the stamina to challenge it, and me, to such a test.'

I recognize, of course, that Baldwin's problem is not exactly mine, but I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings." (Chinua Achebe. "The African Writer and the English Language." In Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. New York: Doubleday, 1975 [1965]: 103)

Consult works by Achebe, such as his first novel *Things Fall Apart* or the later *Anthills of the Savannah*, to find out more about the ways in which he has altered English to suit its African surroundings.

7. In Canada, a sizable French-speaking minority population has long felt itself to be marginalised culturally and economically by an Anglophone majority. Recently, since the 1960s, it has asserted its linguistic rights forcefully, to the point of separatism. The following passage from Canadian writer Margaret Atwood's novel *Surfacing* encapsulates within the space of a few paragraphs several faultlines of this conflict:

What the writers say

The woman looks at me, inquisitive but not smiling, and the two men still in Elvis Presley haircuts, duck's ass at the back and greased pompadours curving out over their foreheads, stop talking and look at me; they keep their elbows on the counter. I hesitate: maybe the tradition has changed, maybe they no longer speak English.

"Avez-vous du viande haché?" I ask her, blushing because of my accent. She grins and then the two men grin also, not at me but at each other. I see I've made a mistake, I should have pretended to be an American.

"Amburger, oh yes we have lots. *How much?*" she asks, adding the final H carelessly to show she can if she feels like it. This is border country.

"A pound, no two pounds," I say, blushing even more because I've been so easily discovered, they're making fun of me and I have no way of letting them know I share the joke. Also I agree with them, if you live in a place you should speak the language. But this isn't where I lived.

She hacks with a cleaver at a cube of frozen meat, weighs it. "Doo leevers," she says, mimicking my school accent.

(Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* (1972); Paperjacks ed., p. 27/ 28)

The liberal Anglo-Canadian narrator is caught in a double bind. In full sympathy with French Canadians' quest for linguistic and cultural rights, she wants to accommodate, by speaking her – atrocious – French. The French-speaking shop assistant proves to be better qualified in practical linguistic battles. Explain her tactics, using the explanatory concepts provided by sociolinguistics.