Common Ground and Missing Links
German *Volkskunde* and Language

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Abstract

Language and its relation to culture has been a topic of research in German *Volkskunde* [folklore studies] from the beginning of the discipline. While dialectological studies, linguistic specificities of local cultures and language in everyday life have been integral parts of *Volkskunde* for much of the first part of the twentieth century, the discipline saw a shift away from its philological elements towards a social science orientation in post-Second World War developments. During the last decades, the analysis of linguistic dimensions of everyday culture has been on the margin of scholarly activities in *Volkskunde*. Starting with a historic perspective on the role of language in the beginnings of the discipline, this article discusses the development and decrease of the study of linguistic aspects. It analyses the role of language in contemporary German *Volkskunde* both in theory and methodology, and offers perspectives on how the discipline could benefit from a renewed focus on linguistic dimensions of everyday culture.

Keywords

dialectology, European ethnology, folklore studies, language, linguistic anthropology, narratology, science studies, *Volkskunde*

Within the German university system, the discipline of *Volkskunde* – an umbrella term used for the fields of European ethnology, empirical cultural research and cultural anthropology – analyses everyday culture in Germany and Europe (Bendix 2012: 364f.). This is in contrast to *Völkerkunde* (sociocultural anthropology), which focuses on extra-European cultures (Bausinger 1971; Cocchiara 1981; Gingrich 2005; Scharfe 1979). Historically, the study of *Volkskunde* has had strong ties with German philology and other areas of linguistic analysis. Indeed, language and its relation to culture has been a prominent field of inquiry for early German *Volkskunde* and its precursors. There are multiple examples, including Herderian studies on the origin of language and the linguistic dimensions of a 'national character', Jakob Grimm's work on German grammar, or W.H. Riehl's reflection on the dynamics of language use. While dialectological studies, linguistic specificities

of local cultures and language in everyday life were integral parts of *Volkskunde* for much of the first part of the twentieth century, the discipline saw a shift away from its philological elements towards a social science orientation after the Second World War. During recent decades, linguistic analysis – despite research efforts in narratology and dialectology – has been on the margin of scholarly activities in *Volkskunde*. Especially pragmatic and performative aspects of language, which have been integral parts of the research programmes of linguistic anthropology and folklore studies in the U.S. since the 1960s, have only received marginal attention in German scholarly debates.

Starting with a historic perspective on the role of language in German *Volkskunde*, this article discusses the development of linguistic aspects within the discipline. It sheds light on how language featured in early developments of *Volkskunde* and traces the transformations and stages through which language or linguistic aspects have become marginal in the discipline. Similar works on the interdisciplinary entanglements of anthropology with linguistics (Rumsey 2013) or on the relation between linguistics and cultural analysis (Günthner und Linke 2006) have focussed both on institutional and individual connections; here, I will focus mostly on conceptual issues.

The Role of Language in Early *Volkskunde*

The central scholars frequently named as precursors or forerunners to *Volkskunde* as a discipline had a strong interest in the study of language. Along with their constitutive role for German philology, they featured in efforts to legitimise territorial identity (See Gardt 1999 and Wildgen 2010). '[W]ith scholars such as Johann Gottfried Herder and the Brothers Grimm contributing to the linking of folksong and tales with a common language and territory' (Bendix 2012: 365), the research objects of later *Volkskunde* were linked to inquiries into the role of language for the constitution of collective identity (Stukenbrock 2005; also Bunzl 1996). Linguistic nationalism, the idea of a *Volksgeist* (folk spirit) finding its expression in poetry or language, and of a 'natural' connection between language and nation, were prominent ideas in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy in Germany (Bauman and Briggs 2003). While early works on the role of language were mostly speculative and driven by the romantic notions of authentic language and poetry (Wildgen 2010: 11), for example in the works on the origin of language by Herder (1772), later scholarship by Jakob Grimm or Wil-

helm von Humboldt was more empirically grounded. The main paradigm of linguistics in the nineteenth century was historic philology, trying to trace the original forms of language as well as its development and diffusion (Cocchiara 1981). Synchronic and diachronic perspectives, empirical work on datable manuscripts as well as systematic work on grammar and phonetic changes were some of the research areas. Despite an increase in scientific methods, the inclusion of historic, mythical and political aspects guided by the romantic movement remained a feature of the trajectory shared by linguistics (Wildgen 2010: 12) and the predecessors of *Volkskunde* (Bausinger 1999).

Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, often considered to have contributed significantly to establishing *Volkskunde* as a discipline, included language as one of the 'four S's' (Kaschuba 2003: 43; Sievers 2001: 35) in the study of the *Volk*. In his 1858 speech *Die Volkskunde als Wissenschaft* (*Volkskunde* as Science), he argued that alongside *Stamm* (tribe), *Sitte* (custom) and *Siedlung* (settlement), *Sprache* (language) is one of the central domains that constitute the *Volk* as a 'natural unit in the great organism of mankind' (Riehl 1858); in his later *Die deutsche Arbeit* (German Labour), he posits that 'if a *Volk* is conscious about the natural foundation of its existence, in tribe, language, custom and settlement, this consciousness blossoms and permeates all its thought, feeling and action' (Riehl 1862: 57). Riehl's work marked – to some extent – the turning away from earlier romantic assumptions and the beginnings of a methodology of collecting (Weber-Kellermann et al. 2003: 49f.). He perceived *Volkskunde* as an auxiliary science for political science and public administration, with the potential for political advocacy, coupled with a conservative impetus (Kaschuba 2013) in which the peasantry was understood as the persisting core of the German nation. Despite the centrality of language in his concept of *Volkskunde* as science or his reflections on language change, and on the 'communicative aspirations and needs' of participants in linguistic communities (Theobald 2012: 43) in his *Volksrede* (Public Speech) (1848) and other writings, Riehl's works show only little, and especially no systematic, focus on linguistic dimensions of folk life. While Riehl's role as a foundational figure for *Volkskunde* has been widely disputed (see for example Moser 1978), his conceptual inclusion of language as one of the central aspects in the study of folk life persisted throughout further developments.

It was carried forward by Karl Weinhold, founder of the *Verein für Berliner Volkskunde* (Association for *Volkskunde* in Berlin, 1890) and editor of the *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* (Journal of the Association

for *Volkskunde*) (from 1891). In the journal's conceptual outline, published in the first issue, Weinhold sketched the role of language (*Die Sprache*) as one of five 'inner states' alongside customs (*Lebenssitte*), law (*Recht*), religion (*Religion*), and poetics (*Poesie*): 'We will leave grammar as a whole to linguistics. But we will welcome observations about phonology, semantics and syntax which are based on specific psychic processes. We will also seek to advance dialectological studies based on the history of tribes and landscapes and the life of the *Volk*' (Weinhold 1891: 7). Both the wording of language with a definitive article and the assumed connection between language and *Volk* illustrate to what extent this conception of language is still based on the romantic notions introduced by Herder and others. In this context of early *Volkskunde*, systematic linguistic analysis took a back seat to ideas of language as a vehicle for identity. This, together with customs, religion, law and poetics, had been linked by Riehl to the conception of a national unit also prominent in his work. The journal, successor to the *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* (Journal of Ethnopsychology and Linguistics; see Weber-Kellermann et al. 2003: 80), featured a range of articles on dialectology, proverbs, narratology, idioms and etymology and drew from Weinhold's assumption of the *Leben der Volksseele im Sprachlichen* (life of the folk-soul in language) (Weinhold 1891: 7, see also the *Zeitschrift* online repository). This follows the Herderian perception not only of the connection between *Volksgeist* and language but also of the search for the origin or original form of language. Weinhold was instrumental in establishing the groundwork for the discipline of *Volkskunde* at German universities, and with his publications managed to link it to neighbouring subjects like philology or history (Sievers 2001: 43).

Besides the intellectual ties to romantic philology, which are prominent in Weinhold's conceptual framing, the institutional links to German philology were a major aspect in early *Volkskunde*. One example of this is Moriz Heyne, a Germanist in the late nineteenth century, who held the view that philology should take into consideration aspects of folk life in the study of language (Bausinger 1986: 8). Bausinger argued (ibid.) that this 'holistic' and wide-reaching approach was difficult to implement, partly because of institutional constraints. What resulted was a differentiation, or a 'division of labour' within the frameworks of universities, between German philology and *Volkskunde*, where the latter was for the most part an 'attachment' of the former, until well into the early twentieth century.

Dialectology between *Volkskunde* and Philology

One of the intersections between the two disciplines was dialectology. The study of dialects and idioms can be understood as influenced by inquiries into the origin of language, by political science efforts to gain an understanding of the population, as well as by institutional ties with philology. Early examples for this range from the lexical and morphological development of words like *Allmend* (commons) (Schoof 1916) to John Meier's twelve-page essay on the language of soldiers (Meier 1917), a 'Swabian dictionary' (Fischer 1904) to complete overviews of Cymbrian dialect variation (Schweizer 2008). Dialectological works with ethnological foci especially scrutinised the dimensions of everyday language and gave insights into language use in everyday life. A wide range of topics were covered, from work life (Müller 1951 on the language of butchers in the Breisgau region) and historical surveys (Wanner 1951 on dogs' names at the beginning of the sixteenth century) to regional vernacular (Kilian 1951 on Eberbach am Neckar). The efforts in dialectology also materialised in a number of *Sprachatlanten* (language atlases), mapping dialect borders and linguistic enclaves. One of the major surveys was the *Deutsches Spracharchiv* (German archive of language), brought into life by Eberhard Zwirner in 1932. Zwirner, a physician with an interest in phonology, recruited German philologists, linguists and *Volkskunde* scholars for the work on the archive, including large-scale sound recordings in the 1960s (Schrambke 2009). While Hermann Bausinger's and Arno Ruoff's involvement in the project conceptually envisioned the inclusion of sociolinguistic aspects (Keller-Drescher and Tschofen 2009: 37ff.), the focus was largely on questions of lexical, phonetic and morphological differences and shifts (Ruoff 2004). The aims were to analyse 'grammar, syntax, stylistics of everyday language spoken in our region using the example of singular speech occurrences (such as word classes, tenses, moods) and their interplay in form and function, as well as to find out the dependency of speech on extra-linguistic geographic, social and situation-related determinants' (Ruoff 1997: 283).

The study of dialects was carried out in close institutional and personal overlaps between philology and *Volkskunde* and, while persisting throughout the twentieth century, was never at the disciplinary or topical core of German *Volkskunde*. Even at institutes where dialectology was a consistent part of research and teaching, such as the Ludwig-Uhland-Institute for empirical cultural sciences in Tübingen, the study of dialect and everyday language remained on the sidelines of the spec-

trum of issues in the cultural sciences (Tschofen and Keller-Drescher 2009: 11).

For the most part, close institutional and disciplinary ties with German philology were constitutive for this strand of research; it was furthered mostly by individual scholars both from philology and *Volkskunde*, and did not constitute a systematic focus of scholarly activity. However, sporadic inquiries into dialectology on the part of *Volkskunde* incorporated the analysis of social status and communicative contexts, and of their influence on language (Bausinger et al. 2006: 114), something that has also been taken up by a project on everyday language based in Tübingen, which started in 2009 (Bühler et al. 2014; Bürkle and Leonhardt 2013). Besides work on a language atlas for northern Baden-Württemberg, the project takes into account social and economic factors of dialect usage, illustrating the inclusion of sociolinguistic issues in contemporary *Volkskunde*. Again, these inquiries were mostly fostered by institutional arrangements and driven by individuals, most prominently in Tübingen by Hermann Bausinger, who published extensively on linguistic aspects of *Volkskunde* as well as on interdisciplinary connections with German philology. Examples are his essays on subculture and language (Bausinger 1971), language trends (Bausinger 1974), honorifics (Bausinger 1979) or ideologies of standard language (Bausinger 2003).

'Simple Forms' and Narratology

Another field of inquiry situated between philology and *Volkskunde* concerns itself broadly with what Andre Jolles later subsumed under the label of 'simple forms' (Jolles 1930): *Volkspoesie* [folk poetics] in the form of folk songs, myths, rhymes, proverbs, idioms or jokes. Studies on 'simple forms' have been published widely in the various regional and national *Volkskunde* journals from very early on. The focus of these early studies was mostly on the narrative contents and not on the practices of narrating (Gerndt 1997: 102). Analogous to studies of language itself, the origins and original forms of simple forms as well as their geographical distribution and diffusion constituted central research interests, for example as part of the geographic-historic approach. While these methods partly constituted a turn away from the speculative theories prominent in romanticist scholarship (Röhrich 2001: 517), the study of folk literature and – more broadly – narratology remained tied to the research programmes of Herder, Riehl and Weinhold inso-

far as it followed a 'primacy of the national' (Weber-Kellermann et al. 2003: 81). Neither the ethnographic inquiry nor the interpretation of varieties was foregrounded, but the search for national identity as expressed in simple forms. In this respect, the understanding of scholarship emanating from the Brothers Grimm and focussing on original form and diffusion was still prominent in this research area (ibid.). While these literary forms are only loosely connected to the study of language and more tied to literary and folklore studies, the normative and performative dimensions of language use in context are contact points that have been tangentially explored in this realm. *Volkskunde* during the Nazi regime emphasised a natural and racial image of an organic Volk (Bendix 2012: 365), including the conception of one language, materialising in efforts to map *Sprachinseln* (language islands) of German minorities in eastern and south-eastern Europe (Weber-Kellermann et al. 2003: 126).

The shift from ideas of origin and unity towards performative aspects, including the modalities of narrating in everyday life, the social functions of myths or the embeddedness of narrators (Gerndt 1997: 105ff.), came to full fruition only after the Second World War. *Volkskunde* scholarship on the dynamics of narrating in local settings, myths as 'communicative means with practical value in everyday settings' (Gerndt 1986: 399), studies on the realisation of genre in narration or the pragmatic dimensions of narrating constituted a vivid field, including work on the relation between written texts and oral communication with regard to its methodological as well as theoretical dimensions (Röhrich 2001: 518ff.). The connections between 'simple forms' and social developments in Germany played a crucial role in this area of research, framing the narration of myths as a form of regression and as a reaction to technological progress (Bausinger 1961; cf. Gerndt 1986: 407), or conceptualising the linkages between the structure of narrating and life (Lehmann 1983). While *Volkskunde* scholars probed the functions of linguistic forms and analysed processes of narrating or the contents of individual narration instead of focussing only on form and origin, the linguistic and philological parameters as well as interdisciplinary connections to linguistics, sociolinguistics or the then growing field of linguistic anthropology in the U.S. remained on the margins of *Volkskunde* scholarship. More systematic work on linguistic registers, the indexicality of utterances or rhetoric has not been carried out. Work on 'simple forms' and narratology remains important in German *Volkskunde,* yet it is not a central facet of the discipline (Bendix 2012: 373), and links to neighbouring disciplines in Germany and abroad are rare.

Disciplinary Shifts in *Volkskunde* and the Language–culture Nexus

Dialectology, 'simple forms' as well as narratology share a common disciplinary trajectory that helps to understand the specific relation between *Volkskunde* and language. Starting from romantic notions of language origins and original forms to political projects constructing the connections between language and the *Volk*, the conceptual and institutional beginnings of *Volkskunde* brought together three significant aspects in relation to the study of language. As Bausinger argues, the first of these aspects is the regional differentiation of the analysed phenomena: in contrast to the focus on unity and origin, more attention was paid to local specifics of dialect or simple forms (Bausinger 1986: 9). Second, research was for the most part carried out on folk culture and language of groups with lower social status instead of 'high culture' (ibid.). Third, elements of tradition and continuity were guiding principles in research, not innovative and progressive elements of society (ibid.). These three aspects were constitutive for the intersections with philology, and paradigmatic for early *Volkskunde*. They signified a turn away from the speculative and broad conception of 'life of the folk-soul in language' (Weinhold 1891: 7), towards a more specific and methodologically grounded study of language in relation to cultural and social settings. Thus, from early on *Volkskunde* did not only pursue 'pure' philological interests with regard to language. Neither the intellectual predecessors of *Volkskunde* nor early scholars of *Volkskunde* limited their inquiries to philological issues, but – albeit in different framings and guided by the discipline's research paradigms – took factors such as social and regional differentiation, the links between language and identity, authority as well as language change into account. The ties between language and culture were in this sense established by both the link to Germanic philology and the discipline's early research agenda.

The development of *Volkskunde* after the Second World War changed this configuration. In 1970, an *Abschied vom Volksleben* (farewell to folk life; Geiger et al. 1986) was proclaimed, challenging significant aspects that constituted the defining relation between the discipline and language. The so-called Falkenstein formula, drafted at a working conference in 1970, affirmed the role of *Volkskunde* in analysing 'the transmission of cultural values (including their causes and the processes which accompany them) in their objective and subjective form. The goal is to con-tribute to solving sociocultural problems' (Dow

and Lixfeld 1986: 2). This formula sums up the discipline's turn towards the social sciences and away from a historic research focus and canon (Bendix 2012: 372). The shift was also illustrated by the change of the title of a popular introductory volume on *Volkskunde* from 'German *Volkskunde* between German Studies and the Social Sciences' of the first two editions to the third edition titled 'Introduction to *Volkskunde*/European Ethnology'. With this shift, research on folk narrative and dialectology remained in their marginal position (ibid.: 373) and the links to philology were significantly weakened. This was related to the institutional restructuring at German universities that enabled the opening of *Volkskunde* institutes independent from German philology (Weber-Kellermann et al. 2003: 138). The disciplinary shift towards the social sciences did not only constitute a move away from the aspects linking *Volkskunde* and philology, but also marked a more general shift away from linguistic inquiries. With the move away from the idea of a folk soul and the deconstruction of the link between language and natural identity, towards social processes and fragmented identities as the objects of research, the 'farewell to folk life' was also a farewell to most language-related aspects of *Volkskunde*. This is odd insofar as many of the issues of everyday culture gaining centre stage in post-War *Volkskunde* (see Bendix 2012: 373ff. for an overview) offered connections to the then upcoming scholarship in sociolinguistics or the ethnography of communication.

Some of the factors facilitating this development can be found in the conceptual frameworks of the discipline. The romantic foundations of scholarship by Herder, the Brothers Grimm and others linked language to the *Volk* as a natural unit. The study of the *Volk* and folk culture was accordingly partly dependent on a study of language. Herder's essay on the origin of language (1772) was a paradigmatic example for this relationship and was later taken up by Edward Sapir (1907) to illustrate the 'nexus of form and feeling' (Bauman and Briggs 2003: 191). In Herder's work on language, the 'sociopolitical aspects' are a strong feature: 'the populist celebration of vernacular language and poetry, the relativist insistence on the distinctiveness of national languages, their indexical grounding in time and place, their linkage to the worldview and ways of thinking and feeling of a people, and their essential role in maintaining national identity and cohesion' (ibid.). These aspects constitute a link to a conservative doctrine that was central in early *Volkskunde* (Kaschuba 2013: 5). It was, however, unlike in anthropological contexts in the U.S. (Holzer 2005), not expanded into systematic theoretical and ethnographically grounded

inquiries – something that was also remarked on by Sapir who contributed significantly to what Duranti calls the first paradigm of anthropological linguistics (Duranti 2003) – but remained either speculative or fragmented. After the Second World War, the links to dialectology and everyday language, including efforts in documenting linguistic borders and tangentially also sociolinguistic aspects, remained weak, and with the turn towards the social sciences and away from philology, they were weakened further. Newer areas of research largely neglected systematic linguistic analyses. This was by no means an inevitable development, as the sociocultural problems outlined by the Falkenstein workshop and the 'farewell to folk life', with a heavy emphasis on the ideology and works by the Frankfurt School in the Falkenstein protocols (Brückner 1971), were also mediated or caused by language (Hogh 2014). The rise of qualitative methods and the focus on subjective aspects of narrating are just two factors illustrating how the linguistic constitution of data relevant for the research areas of *Volkskunde* plays a crucial role. Often referred to as the 'linguistic turn', the focus on 'the power of language for the bearing and production of reality' (Günthner and Linke 2006: 3) was, however, relatively insignificant and did not result in the adoption and development of new linguistic methods and theories in *Volkskunde*. While structuralist approaches and their Saussurean emphasis on language were of marginal import for the discipline (Röhrich 2001: 515; Weber-Kellermann et al. 2003: 161), the structural analysis of myths and fairytales, and their grounding in linguistic analogy, was nonetheless an additional contact point between *Volkskunde* and linguistic inquiry. This all impacted on the relationship between language and anthropology. Rumsey 2013 argues that the way in which Saussure 'excluded the actual use of language (speech or parôle) as a relevant object of study' minimised the 'potential overlap' between linguistics and anthropology. Further, he argues that the popularity of Chomsky's treatment of language 'from a purely formal point of view' lead to an intensification of this 'stricture' (Rumsey 2013: 273).

Points of Contact: Linguistic Potentials in Contemporary *Volkskunde*

Among the ample potential points of contact provided by German sociolinguistics (Hartig and Kurz 1971) or works from the ethnography of communication (Gumperz and Hymes 1972; Hymes 1962), *Volk-*

skunde can benefit from an emphasis on language-related aspects by drawing from two central clusters.

The first is related to the 'linguistic dimension of everyday culture' (Bausinger 1986: 11ff.). Linguistic anthropology in the U.S.A. has, over the last decades, contributed significantly to the analysis of language in everyday life. Central dimensions in the study of the relation between language and culture are participation, indexicality and performativity (Duranti 1997: 14ff.), and these dimensions feature a strong interrelation between linguistic performance or speech acts and social action. These are all issues that *Volkskunde* is concerned with as well: the notion of participation relates to questions of who is allowed to talk in social interaction, how social differentiation and fragmentation are mirrored in performance, which kinds of competence are important in social settings, and what the presuppositions for participating in social events are. Added to the dimensions that *Volkskunde* has paid attention to, the ways in which these aspects are mediated by language give deeper insight into and provide an additional layer to the analysis of everyday life. How do, for example, specific linguistic registers influence the modalities of participation in leisure or professional activities where the knowledge of jargon and refined vocabulary are central means of distinction and criteria for inclusion (Bourdieu 1993)? Concepts like code switching, footing, speech community, register, or a focus on shared norms of interpretation and interaction (Hymes 1962) of linguistic performance bear a big potential to include linguistic aspects, and to shed light on the cultural contexts of speech events. The emergence of linguistic patterns and conventions in digital communication technology – such as texting or chatting – is a prime example for a field studied in *Volkskunde* where the linguistic dimension of everyday culture can contribute to the analysis of practices. The huge body of literature on language ideologies is a further significant contribution to the study of the relation between dialect and 'standard' language (Rumsey 2013: 276) that demands further inquiry from the perspective of *Volkskunde*. The works by Bausinger on dialect as well as a number of recent publications (Bürkle and Leonhardt 2013; Bühler et al. 2014) illustrate how identity and social relations are mediated by the use of dialect. Furthermore, the contemporary sociopolitical developments and processes that have entered the focus of *Volkskunde* in the last couple of decades are rife with symbolic orders and latent codes mediated by language. Here, notions of indexicality and thus the social functions of language, and the ways in which linguistic utterances point to social status, ideologies or political stance, are vital con-

cepts in making sense of ambiguous and encoded language and register. Especially in policy contexts (Groth 2012), but also in everyday political discourse in fields like migration, medical contexts or digital fields, intentions and interests are not directly accessible by looking at linguistic utterances. The ambivalent and encoded character of language and the connection between language and power constitutes a challenge to the study of the linguistic dimension of everyday culture. Determined by context, the implicit or indirect dimensions of language as well as ambiguities of use and interpretation play a key role in all fields studied by contemporary *Volkskunde*. The ethnographic detail to context provided by *Volkskunde* can, in this sense, both benefit from the analysis of speech acts which are dependent on their context of use (Fetzer and Oishi 2011), and contribute to the analysis of these very contexts.

Related is the second cluster, which concerns the methodology and the role that language plays in the methods of German *Volkskunde*. While Bausinger pointed to 'language as a problem for fieldwork' as early as 1986 (Bausinger 1986: 22), both recent (Bischoff et al. 2014; Hess et al. 2013) and older (Göttsch and Lehmann 2001) introductory volumes on methods as well as one historic study on methods in *Volkskunde* (Deißner 1997) make little reference to language or linguistic analysis. An exception is the reception of works from linguistic anthropology on interviewing (for example Briggs 2007), a central aspect of methodology in *Volkskunde* (Schmidt-Lauber 2007), also discussed regarding the relation between oral and written forms (Oldörp 2013). Discourse analysis in German *Volkskunde* is for the most part constricted to Foucauldian theory (Eggmann 2009, 2013; Kiefl 2014) and does not make use of more linguistics-based approaches grounded in sociolinguistics (Jäger 1999) or critical discourse analysis (Wodak 2007). Yet, there are clear benefits to a greater emphasis on stylistics, moods, active or passive voice, choice of modal verbs, the direct or indirect expression of opinions or the context of metaphors which have been illustrated in numerous studies (Wodak and Meyer 2009). There have been inquiries into the field of intercultural communication (Roth 1996; Roth and Roth 2001) or the role that language plays for cultural contact. Research on multilingual speech communities from the perspective of linguistic anthropology shows how issues of identity, personal prestige or distinction are linked to the use of 'syncretic languages' (Hill and Hill 1986). The relation of language mixing and notions of linguistic purism can be a fruitful extension to the study of fields in contemporary *Volkskunde* where different languages or soci-

olects play a constitutive role. The ethnography of communication provides a very useful heuristic for the inclusion of linguistic aspects in anthropological fields, especially as it is conceptualised to be an added focus to ethnographies rather than a distinct linguistic approach (Gumperz and Hymes 1972; Hymes 1979). It has only received scarce attention in Germany (Schmitz 1975) and even less so in German *Volkskunde* (Bendix 2003); yet this micro-perspective on communication or conversational patterns has proved to be very productive in conjunction with the ethnographic format, for example regarding the relation between speaking and eating, from 'table talk to speech making' (Bendix 2004: 238).

Conclusion

This article has shown that the study of dialect and everyday language is and remains on the side-lines of the spectrum of issues of the cultural sciences (Tschofen and Keller-Drescher 2009: 11). This is a puzzle insofar as there are many historic links to the study of language in *Volkskunde* and as there have been many institutional and personal connections between philology, linguistics and *Volkskunde* (Warneken 2006: 9). Further, many neighbouring disciplines in Germany and abroad have taken linguistic aspects into account. While the inclusion of language was paradigmatic for the beginnings of the discipline, developments in the twentieth century have led to a turn away from the study of language as a research topic. In part, this is due to disciplinary differentiations in German university settings, but the conceptual link to language remains strong and should, especially in light of promising approaches from neighbouring disciplines, be strengthened again.

This is to be understood neither as a general plea for the adoption of sociolinguistics or linguistic anthropology by German *Volkskunde* nor as a call to make language a singular issue among others. Rather, following the programme of the ethnography of communication, the attention to linguistic aspects should not be a separate discipline or research programme, but they should be integrated into the research areas of *Volkskunde*, both in theory and methodology. This argument for a strengthened attention to language is in more general terms not aimed at the inclusion of linguistic aspects as an isolated method. Rather, it is a call for the inclusion of communicative factors and the reception of theories and methods developed over the last decades in linguistic anthropology, conversational analysis or ethnomethodology

in cultural scientific research, and specifically into the canon of *Volkskunde*. There are numerous areas in which a renewed focus on linguistic dimensions in *Volkskunde* carries potential to gain a deeper understanding of social practices and of the ways in which language mediates everyday culture.

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