

# Language and Language Awareness

## Preface & Contents of this volume

This volume emerged from a conference on “Language and language awareness in the history of linguistics”, which took place from 8th-11th June 2022 at the Europa Universität-Flensburg (Germany). As can be seen from this collection of contributions, a broad spectrum of topics is covered, ranging from studies on the linguistic heritage of antiquity to those dealing with current issues, focusing primarily on the European language area and to a smaller extent the non-European language area. Among the variety of topics observed, linguistic apologetics of various epochs in the context of linguistic discourse as well as the impact of foreign language teaching on language awareness or the use of certain linguistic forms in relation to linguistic awareness will be taken into consideration.

Since antiquity, there has been a lively debate on questions dealing with language and language awareness. One only needs to think of Plato’s reflections on the role of language as an instrument of knowledge and of Truth Seeking in his *Cratylus* or on the factional dispute between the Anomalists and Analogists.

Over the centuries, the Renaissance especially turned out not merely to be an age of discovery, but also an age of an arising language awareness, as evidenced by the whole range of apologetic texts which spread all over Europe at that time. In this context, the following authors were exemplary with their apologetic writings: Sperone Speroni, *Dialogo della lingua* (1542), Joachim Du Bellay, *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise* (1549), Richard Carew, *On the Excellency of the English Tongue* or Martin Opitz, *De contemptu linguae teutonicae* (1617) and Schottelius and his *Lob der Teutschen Haubtsprache* (1663).

During the 17th century, especially in France, tendencies of linguistic standardisation come to the fore which are reflected in the purism of the *Académie française*. Apologetic texts on the French language and its alleged clarity are expressed in a large number of treatises published in France during the 17th and 18th centuries such as Dominique Bouhours' *Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique* or Rivarol's *Discours sur l'universalité de la langue française*.

Such apologetic manner of discourse is echoed even today in French linguistic discussions as well as in France's language policy. On the one hand, an increasing demand for an appropriate appreciation of regional and minority languages together with their social and political acceptance has to be noticed. On the other hand, due to globalisation, there is the worldwide usage of English as an indispensable and universal lingua franca.

Over the centuries, language in Europe turned out to be an essential component of cultural identity. Thus, the development of a European linguistic awareness has been closely linked to the formation of European nations and nation states. The emergence of nation states in Europe in the 19th century facilitated the evolution of social and cultural mentalities as well as the manifestation of individual and collective language awareness.

As our thematic overview of the present contributions shows, the main interest of this volume lies in the expression of language awareness in different European countries in past and present times. The contributions discuss comments and opinions about specific European and non-European languages, language assessment, language criticism as a manifestation of language awareness, key terms which serve as expressions of language awareness as well as the evaluation of specific language usage. This usage can be expressed as the acceptance or rejection of particular linguistic forms.