

Today I am going to speak about my research project “Verbal acts of paradoxical recognition in territorial matters during the German colonialism”. Colonialism is for me a new research area, and I have just started gathering information and material about it. Today I will only present a few thoughts on the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized people in a linguistic perspective.

My project is about texts, proposition, sentences, adjectives, substantives/ nouns, and morphemes which indicate a tension between the colonizer’s recognition and non-recognition of the colonized people at the same time.

I would like to mention some example on it.

(1a) *Die Eingeborenen sind der wertvollste Besitz in den deutschen Kolonien.*

[*The natives are the most valuable property within the German colonies.*]

Dernburg, as qtd. in Meinhof, Carl (1913): *Das Evangelium und die primitiven Rassen*. In: *Biblische Zeit- und Streitfragen*, VIII. Serie, 9. Heft, 327–342.

(1b) *geistige Halbkultur* [der Kolonisierten]

[*intellectual/mental semi-culture* [of the colonized people]]

Hartmann, Georg (1912): *Die Arbeiterfrage in den Kolonien*. In: *Der Tropenpflanzer* 16, 283–308.

(1c) *Halbwilde*

[*semi-savages*]

Moldenhauer, Franz Heinrich (1878): Erörterungen über Colonial- und Auswanderungswesen sowie Vorschläge zu einer erweiterten Wirksamkeit der Geographischen Gesellschaft. Frankfurt/M, S. 6.

Interesting in (1a) is the native's estimating but only in the colonial economic perspective of property.

In (1b) and (1c) you see the quite productive morpheme {halb} that shows in these words: The colonizers assess a culture and assess a kind of overcoming ‚savage’—however they insist of the incompleteness of these processes.

I would like to present you my thoughts about this by asking and answering two questions:

- 1) What is recognition?
- 2) What is a paradox again?

These questions lead to the (II) part: Verbal acts of paradoxical recognition in colonialism

In the third part I am going to present you a few examples of (III) Verbal acts of paradoxical recognition in territorial matters

And finally a short (IV) conclusion

## **I. Basic assumptions**

### **1) What is recognition?**

Recognition is a through socialization acquired experience. It is a base of interpersonal relations but also, for instance, of international relations (cf. Reinhard Wolf 2011). The perception of recognition is bound to their expressive, in interpersonal relations especially to the verbal forms of communication.

It might be helpful to imagine a kind of recognition steps, that means in a face-to-face-situation, for example eye-contact as a first registration of each other, than greeting and so on. I think that is what Tzvetan Todorov (1996: 110) called the *existential*

*recognition* of each other. Judith Butler point out in *Excitable Speech*: “One "exists" not only by virtue of being recognized, but, in a prior sense, by being recognizable.”

This heuristically idea of recognition with a base seems to be a sequence of steps. As in other steps we can find utterances like confirmations, compliments et cetera.

But we know there are illocutionary acts like insulting that make a theory of recognition much more difficult.

Axel Honneth claims three kinds of recognition as interpersonal relations: recognition

- through love (caused by sympathy)
- through law (because of the reciprocal legal status of people)
- through solidarity (because of shared values).

Law and shared values become important in the colonial context.

## **2) What is a paradox again?**

There are different kinds of paradoxes. I will start with a classic logical paradox:

(2) *The barber is a man in town who shaves all those, and only those, men in town who do not shave themselves. Who shaves the barber?*

The barber has to shave himself (that means he has to go to the barber); but at the same time this is impossible because only those men go to the barber who do not shave themselves. The second paradox belongs to the category of performative contradiction and is closer to linguistics:

(3a) *I claim that there are no true statements.*

(3b) *There are no true statements.*

Konrad Otto Apel said this utterance has an unverifiable proposition. Simultaneous the speaker's utterance raises a claim of validity (*Geltungsanspruch*) that is—following Jürgen Habermas—part of this kind of verbal interaction. Therefore this utterance is paradox because it contradicts the proposition and the implied condition. In contrast to the first paradox, the

performative contradiction's background is, as we all know, pragmatic. As we can see at the second paradox language enabled us to express paradoxes simply by using language in a certain way.

## **II. Verbal acts of paradoxical recognition in colonialism**

I assume in colonial thinking we find logical and performative paradoxes. Language enabled us to provide the verbal recognition and non-recognition at the same time:

(4) Die Kolonisierten sollen eine *gewisse Freiheit* erhalten. Merensky, Alexander (1887): Zur Frage der Negererziehung. In: Deutsche Kolonialzeitung 4, 325–326.

[*The colonized people should have freedom to a certain extent.*]

It is possible to express the recognition of a person as a human being with the capacity to be subject to rights and obligations on the one hand and to deny this on the other hand. The contradiction of the concept of 'human subject' (that implied the pursuit of freedom) and 'not human subject' (limiting the pursuit of freedom) carries to the conclusion of recognition and non-recognition—that is what I call the *verbal act of paradoxical recognition*.

Why do I call this *verbal act*? According to pragmatics the verbal acts of paradoxical recognition create a specific relationship between colonizers and colonized people. Moreover in linguistic discourse analysis these verbal acts of paradoxical recognition are patterns of colonial thinking.

Is this a unique characteristic of colonialism? My hypothesis is that the paradox recognition in colonialism is more than marginal. I suppose the paradox recognition is a key concept of colonial thinking: It pushed the colonial discourses from the very early debated problem of slavery, for example, in Greek (as David Davison's *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* showed in 1966), paradox recognition played a role in social

contract theories (who belongs to the group of reasonable persons, who do not?), and paradox recognition was a subject of legal debates since the 18th century (for example which states or territories have full or partly control over themselves).

As Susan Buck-Morss detected there is a link between colonialism and the modern theory of recognition as well. In *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* from 2009 she shows that Hegel's metaphor of *Herr and Knecht* (Master and Slave) is a direct result of his dealing with the slave revolution in Haiti in 1791. That means: Hegel's idea of battle for recognition is the battle of the slaves against the treatment through the colonizers. The begin of the modern European theory of recognition, the theory of reciprocal recognition (cf. Marx and today Axel Honneth), is a part of the global rule of colonialism; and the paradox of Hegel's dialectic (how to become a free person) is a philosophical and political problem that is emerged by the contrast within the through colonialism divided world.

In 1878 the German colonialism claims the ‚civilization‘ of African people (so called *Cultur-Mission*, Fabri 1879: 111). That presupposes the condition that the colonized people are able to become human beings like the Europeans—but exactly the opposite is the main assumption of colonialism: The colonial rule must deny the recognition of Africans as equal human beings in the end because otherwise the colonial rule lost their self-legitimated entitlement. In short: Colonialism is based basically on the idea of inequality of human and evokes verbal acts of paradoxical recognition. Moreover, colonialism as an asymmetrical relationship of rule generates these verbal acts of paradoxical recognition. As Sartre according to Franz Fanon puts it: Colonialism is ‚demanding the status of a man and denying it at the same time‘ [“den Status eines Menschen verlangen und gleichzeitig verleugnen”, cf. Sartre 1969: 17]

I summarize: If there is a fundamentally connection between paradoxical recognition and colonialism, in addition if recognition as well paradoxical recognition is created by language in use within the European colonial discourse—than we are able to describe the emergence, forms, function, and effects of the verbal acts of paradoxical recognition through linguistically methods.

In the next part I am going to present some...

### **III. Verbal acts of paradoxical recognition in territorial matters**

...from colonial thinking from the late 18th century and especially from the German colonialism.

#### **1) citizenship**

Verbal acts of paradoxical recognition/non-recognition are reflected in the expressions of colonized people against the background of territory: The legal question whether the colonized Africans belong to the Deutsche Reich leads to the complex federal structure of Germany.

(1a) *mittelbarer Reichsangehöriger*  
[indirect citizen of the Reich]

(1b) *unmittelbarer Reichsangehöriger*  
[immediate citizen of the Reich]

(1c) *Reichzugehöriger*  
[member of the Reich]

The controversial term *unmittelbarer Reichsangehöriger* (as qtd. in Nagl 2007: 108-114) to express colonized people, shows that the recognizing usual term *mittelbarer Reichsangehöriger* is reserved for Germans in Europe only: A citizen belongs to the member state (for instance Preußen) immediately and indirect to the Reich. The definition *unmittelbarer Reichsangehöriger* for the colonized people means immediately belonging to the Reich without the legal status of a citizen (for instance a citizen of Preußen). *Reichszugehöriger* in contrast to the common

*Reichsangehöriger* is another expression of the tension: *reichszugehörig* merely means *to be related to* the Deutsche Reich.

## 2) war

There are political and legal discussions about the meaning of war especially since the 18th century. The war-discussion and the dominant definitions of *war* had several effects on the warfare, on the definition of *regular troops*, on the treatment of the civilians within the colonies, where the war took place. The definition of law and the prerogative of interpretation (Deutungshoheit) of *war* were an international, especially European power and an absolute advantage for the colonizers (cf. Kleinschmidt 2013: 34-35).

### (2a) primitive warfare

Davie, Maurice R. (1929): *The Evolution of War*. New Haven.

The relation of so called *savages* to war and peace has a long tradition in the history of ideas (for example Rousseau's *noble savage*). We find the idea of 'primitive warfare' according to war in colonies in *A Study of War*, 1942, by Quincy Wright and in *Primitive War*, 1949, by Harry Turner-High, cf. Keeley, Lawrence H. (1996): *War Before Civilization. The Myth of the Peaceful Savage*. Oxford.

In a very simple understanding 'war' presupposes the recognition of at least two war parties. If someone is at war it is necessary to recognize someone else as an enemy, at during the war the parties have to recognize each other as enemies. *Primitive warfare* in a colonial thinking does not mean a warfare that is performed by two parties. *Primitive warfare* is the assessment that the colonized states, territories, and people are not in the condition to make war in an 'organized way'. *Primitive*

*warfare* means to be at war with an enemy who has not the same status (because he lacks the ability to perform an ‚organized war‘), on the other hand the enemy has the same status as a war party and, therefore, will be fought as an enemy.

(2b) *small war*

Callwell, Charles Edward (1896): *Small Wars. Their Principles and Practices*. London.

*Kleiner Krieg*

The term *small war* in colonial text was not used in the sense ‚short war‘ but in the sense of the lack of European understanding of war that is a face-to-face war at the battlefield. Sure, a ‚small war‘ is limited to the colonial territory. But *small war* indicates also a perspective: In colonial thinking *small war* means a facing of two unequal war parties, the colonizer as big party and the colonized people— in this colonial perspective— as the small party. Obviously in European texts dealing with colonies they avoid using absolute categories and words like *war*, *Krieg*, *gueree* in the political and legal debates (cf. Kleinschmidt 2013: 31).

The reason for building *small war* lays in international law discussions about the question ‚who is a subject of international law and therefore legitimated to make a regular war?‘. If the colonies (Protektorate, Schutzgebiete, Kolonien) are subjects of international law, it is possible to conclude contracts with them—and to be on war with them. As we know the colonizers are interested in contracts. So the colonizers have to create a term of paradoxical recognition such as *small war* and

*Volkskrieg*

(2c) *Volkskrieg*

Jomini, Antoine-Henri (1885): *Abriss der Kriegskunst*. Dresden, Art. 8.

[*people's war*]

The neologism *Volkskrieg* is the definition for a war with at least one party who do not have the sovereignty to make war on sovereign states. (The idea of *Volkskrieg* leads to a cruel warfare without almost any rules.)

My next example is the just mentioned *sovereignty*:

### **3) sovereignty**

(3a) *Halbsouveränität*

[*semi-sovereignty*]

Moser, Johann Jakob (1778): *Versuch des neuesten europäischen Völker-Rechts in Friedens- und Kriegszeiten*. Teil I. Frankfurt/Main, §11, S. 26-31.

(3b) *halbsouveräne Protektorate*

Heffter, August Wilhelm (1844): *Das europäische Völkerrecht der Gegenwart*. Berlin, §113.

[*semi-sovereign protectorates*]

As we have seen the clarification of sovereignty is important for the relation between colonies and colonizers. The definitions *Halbsouveränität* and *halbsouveräne Protektorate* for some of the territories under colonial rule are the attempts to cure and to fix the paradoxical recognition. Moreover *halbsouveräne*

*Protektorate* is a pleonasm—the use of this rhetorical device indicates the significance of the paradoxical.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The goal of this paper was to show verbal acts of recognition as a linguistic pattern in colonialism. I tried to present you the tension between recognition of some aspects on the one hand and simultaneously non-recognition of other aspects on the other hand.

Especially the German colonialism is a mixture of the European tradition of paradoxical recognition (for instance the problem of slavery) and the difficulty to integrate suddenly, starting 1884, the colonies into the existing knowledge for instance of citizenship.

The colonial thinking, the colonial discourse has its own order of knowledge, especially of classifying people, activities, territories, history and development and what is normal. Today, this colonial classifying looks very strange to us. But it has its own fuzzy, paradoxical logic.

#### Selected References

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