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Reading reference

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The “*Online Handbook of Language Criticism – A European Perspective*” (HESO) provides a comparative perspective of language criticism in European language cultures. The concept of language criticism as a special form of language reflection (which, for the European comparison, will be defined as the “practice of subjective metalinguistic reflection”) is explained in the introduction to the first volume.¹

The handbook is a periodical and multilingual online publication. The volumes published to date have already been downloaded more than 8,500 times. For readers who prefer the tactile pleasures of reading, a print version is available. Encyclopaedic articles are published successively on selected topics that highlight key issues in language criticism and that are of cultural relevance for the European perspective. The handbook is aimed at presenting a conceptual history of European language criticism. The handbook not only provides insight into the specific language cultures, but also compares and contrasts them. The handbook thus contains articles that focus on individual languages as well as articles that compare them, written by individual authors or teams of authors. All articles are published in German. The articles that individually elucidate the practice of subjective metalinguistic reflection in English, French, Italian, and Croatian may additionally be read in the language that is the focus of the article (i. e. in German/English, German/French, German/Italian, or German/Croatian). We are aware that additional translations are still urgently needed. Unfortunately, at the moment, we have no labour resources available to accomplish this. However, this is planned to be accomplished over the next few years. In this context, the great advantage of online publication is the opportunity to subsequently publish additional translations and articles.

1 Introduction. In: HESO 1/2017, p. 13–15. <https://dx.doi.org/10.17885/heiup.heso.2017.0.23712>

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Whenever the handbook mentions the practice of subjective meta-linguistic reflection in German, English, French, Italian or Croatian, the analysis focuses on the respective historically and geographically rooted language (for instance, German spoken in Germany). However, the transnational perspective is not neglected (e. g. regarding German as spoken in Austria, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, and Switzerland). The regional scope is thus expanded depending on the type of question, approach, and relevance of cultural relations.

The title "*Online Handbook of Language Criticism - A European Perspective*" may at first be considered pretentious, because only five European languages (German, English, French, Italian and Croatian) are in focus. Although, understandably, due to a lack of labour resources, not every European language culture can be represented, the title is nevertheless intended to emphasise, despite the excerpted character, the programmatic claim of a transcultural conceptual history. Two considerations went into the selection of these languages : On the one hand, an attempt was made to select language cultures that either allow for striking points of comparison or that initially seem to be mutually opposed. On the other hand, care was taken to ensure that all three major European language families were included: Germanic languages (German, English), Romance languages (French, Italian) and a Slavic language (Croatian). By including English and French, two major cultural and world languages are included. German and Italian represent two national languages primarily limited to Europe. Of the Slavic languages, Croatian is the only one that has seen significant German linguistic interference (for over a millennium), Italian linguistic interference (since the late medieval period), and French linguistic interference (from the beginning of the 19th until the 20th century). This allows for an additional perspective in European comparison. The selection was further consolidated by the cooperation of scholars that promote this publishing project in Heidelberg and Mannheim.

The handbook is published in different volumes that focus on specific topics of language criticism in Europe. The structure of the individual volumes always follows the same pattern: Following the introduction, which is available in German, English, French, Italian, and Croatian, the second chapter is a comparative article that addresses each individual concept within a European comparative perspective and is translated into all five languages. Here, core topics, which are examined in detail

in the individual articles, are summarised and compared from a meta-perspective point of view. In general, the comparative article does not contain any bibliographical references, as these are listed in the individual articles. The only references listed are those that are newly introduced in the comparative article. The articles that follow examine the topics in relation to the individual languages, applying the pattern (i) general, (ii) historical, and (iii) contemporary to the peculiarities of each specific language or language culture: The third chapter focuses on the concept in relation to the German language culture. This chapter is also available in translation in all of the five object languages. The fourth chapter presents the concept in relation to the English language, and is available in both German and English. Similarly, the fifth chapter looks at the concept from the French perspective, the sixth for Italian, and the seventh for Croatian. The bibliographies of the individual articles are always included in their translations, so that readers of the individual translations may be able to understand the full article without being forced to reference the original German article. All translations have been adapted to the notational conventions of the respective languages.

The "*Online Handbook of Language Criticism – A European Perspective*" is a publication of the project group "*European Language Criticism Online*" (Europäische Sprachkritik Online, ESO). The project is based in the "*European Center for Linguistics*" (Europäisches Zentrum für Sprachwissenschaften, EZS), which is a cooperation between the Faculty for Modern Languages of Heidelberg University and the "*Leibniz Institute for the German Language*" (Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache, IDS) in Mannheim. Project participants include numerous professors, researchers, postgraduate members, national and international cooperation partners as well as scholarship holders in the PhD programme *Sprachkritik als Gesellschaftskritik im europäischen Vergleich* (Language criticism as social criticism in a European perspective), which was financed by the federal state of Baden-Württemberg from 2012 to 2017. The project group publishes their articles in the online handbook. A multilingual and multimodal online platform enables a reader-oriented access to the online handbook via abstracts, further information, and a blog that examines the connection between language criticism and social criticism (<http://europsprachkritik.com/en/home-eso/>). The online handbook and the online platform provide further interlinks with many other linguistic topics and are addressed

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to researchers, young academics, and students of the various philologies in Germany and abroad. They are also addressed to persons from other disciplines, especially those with a background in social and cultural studies.