

Communication across Borders – Teaching, Learning and Speaking the Languages of the World

(27-29 October 2021)

Communication today may be more borderless than in any other era of human history. Whether via apps such as Skype, WhatsApp, WeChat or LINE, whether via blogs and Instagram – interconnectedness on a linguistic level is more diverse today than ever before, and this development has sped up since the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the one hand, this development has favoured a tendency towards English – not only as a worldwide *lingua franca*, but oftentimes as the only language in which people of different mother tongues communicate with each other. This development may be due to linguistic economy, which should not be underestimated, and which is perfectly understandable.

At the same time, however, a feeling seems to gain ground according to which mastering a single foreign language will lead to a certain cultural impoverishment, which cannot be reversed once it has gone too far.

Not surprisingly, this trend towards English has been opposed by an inclination towards supporting and promoting languages that are perceived as important – not instead of English, but rather in addition to it.

In addition, there are conditions of international communication in which both interlocutors are not native speakers or where only one of several communication partners has learned the respective language from an early age. The concessions to be made in such situations oftentimes pose considerable challenges for mutual understanding.

On top of that, the mutual (inter)cultural expectations of international interlocutors and their behaviour need to be considered. In this context, an interesting question is whether we have recently seen a phase of cultural convergence in which the different cultures are getting increasingly closer and even levelled out; or whether the different cultures manage to keep their own peculiarities and their own charm despite the huge impact of worldwide communication.

Another point is whether (and how) foreign language teaching can promote borderless communication in classroom contexts, or whether languages can best be learned through interaction with native speakers. This – certainly challenging – problem needs to be faced by today's foreign language teaching.

The aspects described above and many others that are closely related to them are of central interest for the 6th Saarbrücken Conference on Foreign Language Teaching. They can be listed as follows:

- Linguistic aspects of (international) communication
- Developing the ability to communicate internationally in and through foreign language teaching
- Communication-enhancing teacher-and-learner interaction
- Communicative change – yesterday and today
- Borderlessness and communicative change in times of the pandemic

- Going virtual as a new form of borderlessness
- Borderless multilingualism
- Borderless orality and writing
- Bilingual Lessons and CLIL
- Communication by means of language mediation
- Contrastive approaches for teaching and learning foreign languages
- The role of (digital) media in international communication
- Student and adult mobility
- Intercultural aspects of cross-border communication
- International aspects of languages for specific-purposes (research)
- Autonomous forms of learning (e.g. blended learning, learning using apps) for the acquisition of foreign languages outside the classroom
- Language policy and borderlessness
- Borderlessness with respect to migration
- Language philosophy and “borderless” thinking
- Approaches to the conference topic in different countries and their educational institutions

The above list being an open one, these and other fields are of potential interest in this context, and talks about all these aspects are welcome.

Due to the uncertainty arising from the pandemic, the [*Sixth International Saarbrüchen Conference on Foreign Language Teaching*](#) will be held online. The traditional elements of our conferences (keynotes, section talks and panel discussion) will, however, be kept. Keynotes which will be 45 minutes long (+ 15 minutes of Q&A), and section talks, which will have a length of 20 minutes (+ 10 minutes of Q&A).

Our book exhibition will also be included so that participants will be able to get in touch with the partaking publishing houses and their representatives.

We will even do our best to simulate our traditional entertainment evening so as to offer our participants a platform for networking.

Participation in the conference is free of charge. To register for the conference, please use our online form (<https://sites.google.com/view/6scflt-6sft-2021/registration>).

A publication of selected talks given at the conference in the form of a peer-reviewed, edited book is planned. ([For more information, please click here](#))