

Linguistic as Cultural Encounters: Hugo Schuchardt Revisited— Conclusions for Intercultural Studies

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Intercultural Communication and Globalisation: Preliminary Remarks

Intercultural communications has over the past decade turned into a ubiquitous academic buzzword. If globalisation has indeed become a denominator of our time both describing and characterizing our present as, for instance, the sociologist Martin Albrow¹ claims, then intercultural communication follows hot on its trail. Intercultural communication is called for, prescribed, described as a result of globalisation and at times concurrently ruled out as impossible. Intrinsically linked to globalisation intercultural communication shares the concept's urgency and persuasiveness as well as its very ambiguity of meaning. As an academic discipline, however, intercultural communications has its distinct history: the discipline evolved concomitantly with the ascent of the United States of America as a dominant world power. Faced with the emerging bi-polar world order at the end of the Second World War, strengthening political, economic and cultural ties with allies around the world took on a new urgency. These new (geo-) political realities of the bi-polar world order and the growing need to successfully across cultural borders were mirrored by academic developments and fed directly into the emerging field of intercultural communication.

1 *The Global Age: State and Society Beyond Modernity* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1996).

The relatively new discipline of intercultural communications draws on different fields of study; the most important among these are anthropology, psychology, sociology, communications and linguistics. Intercultural communications as an academic discipline today has taken firm roots within the business schools and departments across the world. After all, international business and trade are important drivers of globalisation and are in need of people specifically trained for today's globalised business world. But also other disciplines respond to the challenges of a world experienced as ever tighter interconnected with the integration of questions and approaches pertaining to what can be loosely subsumed within the field of intercultural communications. Many of these academic traditions, like postcolonial studies, cultural studies and area studies, though quite distinct and diverging in their specific approaches are however united by their suspicion *vis-à-vis* economic globalisation and its promises.

Language as well as culture change, mixing and hybridisation are central to disciplines both in the humanities and the social sciences grappling with the perceived acceleration of these phenomena.

It seems timely to revisit the *œuvre* of a scholar who pioneered and elaborated many of these questions featuring so prominently on the contemporary research agenda. Hugo Schuchardt today is mostly remembered as the founding father of Creole Studies; this view, however, constitutes a very limited understanding of an *œuvre* spanning from antiquity up to his present and drawing on an almost global frame of linguistic reference. After all, Schuchardt himself took his own advice very seriously when he urged his fellow linguists and philologists to »follow the example of natural scientists and, for the sake of any phenomenon or group of phenomena, more frequently take a stroll about the world.«² In the following, I propose to join Schuchardt's ramblings into the realm of Malay and Malayo-Portuguese and to explore his thinking in the light of current concerns in intercultural communication.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a veritable Schuchardt Renaissance within the re-emerging field of Creole Studies. His writings, especially those on Atlantic Creoles, were translated into English and thus made available to a new generation of Creolists. A major obstacle to the reception of Schuchardt's *œuvre* by modern linguists remained his methodological approach rooted in the comparative historical tradition of humanist enquiry.³ Modern standards of

2 Hugo Schuchardt, *Über die Lautgesetze. Gegen die Junggrammatiker* (Berlin: Oppenheim, 1885), 38.

3 Iris Bachmann, »Colonial Exchange: Creole Languages between Missionary Linguistics and Romance Philology«, *Papia. Revista Brasileira de Estudos Crioulos e Similares* 16 (2006), 81–95, here 81–82.

linguistic field research, the disciplinization of Creole studies and the accompanying effect of narrowing the perspective impede the appreciation of Schuchardt's contribution. It is in this context that Pieter Muysken, one of the pioneers reclaiming Schuchardt's *œuvre* for Creole studies from the 1970s onwards, called on his fellow Creolists to go back to viewing Creole languages »from the wider perspective of language contact in the same way that Schuchardt did at the very beginning of our field, as a systematic domain of scholarly enterprise«. ⁴ This dilemma is illustrated by the Swiss Creolist Philippe Maurer's book on the Portuguese Creole of Batavia and Tugu. ⁵ Based upon Schuchardt's *Über das Malaioportugiesische von Batavia und Tugu* Maurer systematizes and translates the linguistic evidence presented by Schuchardt. What he gains through the presentation of the linguistic data by modern standards he more than loses by cutting out any reference to Schuchardt's wide linguistic horizon of comparison, his detailed accounts of Malay influences as well as the historical and cultural dimension shaping Creole language development. The author's only cultural historical citation is thus a reference to Wikipedia.

The Schuchardt Archive in Graz promotes scholarly engagement with Hugo Schuchardt's *œuvre*. A focus of the archive lies on the edition of Schuchardt's correspondence with noted linguists. An on-going project entitled »Netzwerk des Wissens« (Network of Knowledge) led by the archive's director, Bernhard Hurch, analyses Schuchardt's correspondence and reviews within the wider framework of linguistic's professionalization as an academic discipline.

Hugo Schuchardt: Moonlighting Orientalist

Hugo Schuchardt (1842–1927) was born in Gotha as the son of a ducal notary and his wife, a former court lady, who hailed from the French-speaking part of Switzerland. He studied philology in Jena and Bonn and received his *habilitation* from the University of Leipzig. Exasperated with the neogrammarian dominance at the University of Halle, where he held his first professorship, Schuchardt relocated to Graz in 1876. There he became the first incumbent of the newly established chair in Romance languages. His early retirement from the Univer-

4 Pieter Muysken, »Creole Studies and Multilingualism«, in *Handbook of Pidgin and Creole Studies* ed. by Silvia Kouwenberg and John Victor Singer (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 287–308, here 304.

5 Philippe Maurer, *The Former Portuguese Creole of Batavia and Tugu (Indonesia)* (London: Battlebridge, 2011).

sity of Graz in 1900 freed Schuchardt from his much-dreaded teaching obligations and allowed him to henceforth exclusively concentrate on his research.

Schuchardt presents an odd paradox: he certainly was not an orientalist in the disciplinary sense; but throughout his career he maintained an eager interest in a wide variety of Asian and African languages. These interests he pursued with a striking lack of *Orientalism*, especially when compared to his contemporaries, both Orientalists and non-Orientalists. Schuchardt, this most unlikely Orientalist, had arrived via Latin and the Romance languages to Creole languages; and, appreciating the influence of African and Asian languages on these Creoles, he embraced them in his research.⁶ Notwithstanding Schuchardt's lack of *Orientalism* in the treatment of African and Oriental languages, in other respects he represents a perfect example of the quintessential German armchair scholar: Schuchardt was extremely well read in an amazing range of languages, a cognoscente of the literature and the sources, even though he had very likely never heard a Creole language spoken. He even ridiculed the very idea of his traveling for field research in Creole languages. Especially this last fact constitutes a severe challenge to today's linguists' reception of his work. »Several years ago«, Schuchardt wrote in a self-review of his Creole studies, »a friend of mine expressed his wonder about the fact that I had the courage to work on dialects which I myself had never heard spoken, in all seriousness he recommended to me overseas trips for the benefit of my Creole investigations. The matter is not desperate enough however to warrant such desperate measures.«⁷

From the beginning of his career Schuchardt pushed the limits of his field, the Romance languages. Thus, before the field was firmly established, Schuchardt had already transcended the very discipline he had helped to shape and left the disciplinary boundaries in favour of pursuing general linguistic questions in a truly global manner.

6 Creole languages however do not form Schuchardt's only path into African and Asian languages: Already in his dissertation he explored North African influences on Vulgar Latin. Later he published, among others, on Romance/Latin influences on Berber languages and Georgian.

7 Hugo Schuchardt, »Selbstanzeige von *Kreolische Studien IX*«, *Literaturblatt für germanische und romanische Philologie* 12 (1891), 199. Translation adapted from from Guus Meijer, Pieter Muysken, »On the Beginnings of Pidgin and Creole Studies: Schuchardt and Hesselings«, in *Pidgin and Creole Linguistics*, ed. by Albert Valdman (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1977), 21–45, here 26.

From Vulgar Latin to Creole

From the beginning of his career Hugo Schuchardt's interest revolved around language evolution and change. In his dissertation Schuchardt traced the sound changes from Latin to the Romance languages:

»Potissimum ad Romanicas hoc pertinent linguas, quippe quae ducant originem a lingua latina vel, ut accuratius loquar, a lingua Romana rustica«,⁸ Schuchardt states in his dissertation. The subject matter of his dissertation was thus not Latin but the language of the common people from which the Romance languages evolved.

An interesting twist to his passionate plea for the importance of studying the *lingua Romana rustica* or *plebeia* in his dissertation presents the fact that, according to the German tradition of his times, his thesis *De sermonis Romani plebei vocabulis* itself was written in elegant Classical Latin. The three volume study presenting the results of his research on the sound changes from Vulgar Latin to the Romance languages was published however in German (*Der Vokalismus des Vulgärlateins*, 1866–68). Though he would in the course of his spanning over six decades career write an occasional paper in another language, all his major contributions were written as well as most of his correspondence was conducted in German. A focus on Vulgar Latin and the evolution of the Romance languages was by no means an obvious choice for a promising young scholar. The research on Latin, Schuchardt cautioned in the introduction to the first volume of 'Vokalismus des Vulgärlatein' had hitherto focused on the context of the graecised Romandom (*gräzisirten Römerthum*) and he continued to argue for the need to open the classical canon.

The development of language is what occupies the linguist. 'Good' Latin that in consequence of literary evolutions has been detached from the stream of language development and ossified is therefore of less interest to the linguist than 'bad' Latin, which relates to the former as multeity does to unity and the moving to the stagnant. Classic Latin is connected via Vulgar Latin on the one side with the ancient Italic languages and on the other side with the Romance languages, so that we can trace the development of the idiom, which originates from within the walls of Rome, without interruption for a period of more than two millennia.⁹

In opposition to the classical tradition still dominating German academia, Schuchardt chose the *lingua plebeia* or *rustica* as his calling. His preoccupation

8 Hugo Schuchardt, *De sermonis Romani plebei vocabulis* (Bonn: Formis Carthausianis, 1864), 10.

9 Schuchardt, *Der Vokalismus des Vulgärlateins*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1866–68), 1: vii.

with the language of the common people and linguistic varieties that are dismissed by the classical tradition as ‘bad’ or ‘corrupted’ pervades his *œuvre*. Thus, despite Schuchardt’s broad linguistic and cultural interest, a *leitmotif* can be identified: Questions pertaining to language change, and especially the influence of demotic languages on linguistic change and mixing remained central to Schuchardt’s thinking throughout his career. In the choice of his subject we can detect the ripples of the Romantic *Volktradition* as well as the impact of the German nationalist tradition. But unlike the vast majority of his contemporaries Schuchardt did not follow the path into the subsequent narrowing of the field of linguistics and the establishment of strict disciplinary boundaries. With the rise of *Indogermanistik* as the most influential sub-discipline, Latin and Greek were substituted for Sanskrit and the search for the Indogerman *Ursprache*, *Urvolk* and *Urheimat*. This move entailed the hierarchical ordering of languages. August Schleicher’s (1821–1868) genealogical tree model spurred this process and furthermore introduced the biological concept of race into linguistics. In contrast to this development, Hugo Schuchardt remained interested in non-classical, so-called vulgar languages and the influence of these languages on the formation of new languages and language change throughout his career— independent of hierarchical systems and the language’s origin.

Viewed against the backdrop of Schuchardt’s continuous interest in language change and mixing, his interest in the phenomenon of Creole languages is easily comprehensible. That he should be drawn to languages his contemporaries did not recognize as such and viewed as ‘bad’ and ‘corrupted’ patois or jargons is not surprising, given his intellectual biography. Already in his first discussion of Creole languages, a review from 1881, Schuchardt emphasised the link between his interest in the emergence of the Romance languages and the Creole languages. »Already a decade ago I had started to apply myself to the study of these exotic products, which, through the contrast, seemed to shed light on the development of the Romance languages«,¹⁰ he underlined. These new languages owed their very existence to specific historical processes (and not genealogical affiliation to a language family), namely the European expansion and the ensuing globe-spanning slave trade.

Schuchardt first penned his programmatic outline for his study of Creole languages that would occupy him for a decade in the aforementioned review and announced his ongoing work on all extra-European ‘Jargons or mixed languages’

10 Hugo Schuchardt, »Anzeige von Charles Baissac, *Étude sur le patois créole mauricien* (1880) und F. Adolpho Coelho, *Os dialectos românicos ou neo-latinos na Africa, Asia e America* (1881)«, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 5 (1881), 580–581.

based upon Romance and Germanic languages. The necessary material for this endeavour he procured with the help of his globe-spanning network of correspondence. Referring to the noted Venetian philologist and translator, Emilio Tèza (1831–1912) who in 1863 had deemed it impossible to write a comprehensive study on Creole languages in Europe,¹¹ Schuchardt countered self-assuredly: »I believe it is only possible to write in Europe.«¹² Just as the development of Creole languages were a direct result of the European expansion and the global slave trade, his ability to study these languages from the comfort of his desk in picturesque Graz owes to the intensified globalisation during the decennia leading to World War I. This period was characterised by extensive globalisation on many levels: not least the academic one. His vast and worldwide correspondence¹³ provided Schuchardt with the necessary material for his studies. From 1881 to 1891 and in 1914 Schuchardt published his studies of Creole languages.¹⁴

What characterised Schuchardt's approach is his radical social take on language. Very early he elaborated his ideas in the context of Creole studies and in a review of literature on African languages where he pointedly refuted racist ideas.¹⁵ Schuchardt did not reject race as a category *per se* but he was adamant in his contention that race and biology were useless concepts for the understanding of language. Language to him was not 'an autonomous organism' or indeed a

11 Emilio Tèza, »Il dialetto curassese«, *Il Politecnico. Repertorio mensile dei studi applicati alla prosperità e cultura sociale* 21 (1863), 442–452.

12 Schuchardt, »Anzeige Baissac und Coelho«, 581.

13 Michaela Wolf, *Hugo Schuchardt Nachlaß. Schlüssel zum Nachlaß des Linguisten und Romanisten Hugo Schuchardt* (1842–1927) (Graz: Leykam, 1993. Arbeiten aus der Abteilung »Vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft« Graz; 6). The university library of Graz holds approximately 13,000 letters and other writings addressed to Schuchardt.

14 *Kreolische Studien* I–IX appeared between 1881 and 1890 in the series *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. »Beiträge zur Kenntnis des kreolischen Romanisch« I–VI were published in *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* from 1888 to 1889, and »Beiträge zur Kenntnis des englischen Kreolisch« I–III appeared in *Englische Studien* between 1888 and 1891. In 1914, Schuchardt finally published two studies on Dutch-based Creoles, »Zum Negerholländischen von St. Thomas«, *Tijdschrift voor Ned. Taal- en Letterkunde* 33 (1914), 123–135; »Die Sprache der Saramakkaneger in Surinam«, *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen. Afdeling Letterkunde. Nieuwe Reeks* 14,6 (1914), iii–xxxv, 1–121. Schuchardt's writings can be accessed electronically via the Schuchardt Archive <www.schuchardt.uni-graz.at>.

15 Hugo Schuchardt, »Zur afrikanischen Sprachmischung«, *Das Ausland* 55 (1882), 867–869.

'subject whereas it is only the product of a subject'. Linguistic mixing or hybridization he did not view as biological phenomena: »The causes for linguistic mixing are always of a social, not a physiological matter«, Schuchardt underlined. »Two languages do not mix like dissimilar liquids, but as different activities of one and the same individual. One may not go so far as to wholly identify the language with its subject«,¹⁶ Schuchardt cautioned. He concluded with a rhetorical question that unmasked the scientifically untenable position of using racial arguments for linguistic indexing: »Would one then not have to attribute the Spanish from the lips of a gypsy in Sevilla to gypsy, the French from the lips of the president of the Republic of Haiti to negro origins?«¹⁷

Though due to the concentration on Atlantic Creoles and the African influence thereupon in his earliest thematic publications, Schuchardt nevertheless briefly touched upon Asian Creoles. He characterised Pidgin English as a Creole and described it as »thoroughly permeated by the Chinese *Sprachgeist*.«¹⁸ His outlook on the Creole languages was thus a global one from the very beginning.

Malay—Latin of the Pacific

Schuchardt devoted the last contribution in his series *Kreolische Studien* published within the proceedings of the Imperial Academy of Science to the Creole of Java.¹⁹ This study constituted in many respects the sophisticated culmination of his research endeavour: both in its theoretical breadth and its empirical wealth. The title, *Über das Malaioportugiesische von Batavia und Tugu*, is thus rather misleading. This work is as much devoted to Creole as to Malay language(s). Schuchardt used the Creole as a point of crystallisation, which allowed him to touch upon his wider concerns with language change and mixing through language contact. Schuchardt analysed the Creole that is at this point of time already on the brink of extinction, in the context of the complex language situation in maritime Southeast Asia.

16 Schuchardt, *Sprachmischung*, 868.

17 Schuchardt, *Sprachmischung*, 869.

18 Schuchardt, »Anzeige...«, 581.

19 Hugo Schuchardt, *Kreolische Studien IX. Über das Malaioportugiesische von Batavia und Tugu* (Wien: F. Tempsky, 1890. Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften; 122).

Schuchardt reviewed his complex work himself and explained this unusual move with the need of providing an instruction manual for his readers. »There is reason for concern«, Schuchardt stressed, »that the Romance scholar will lay it aside because of its exhibiting too much Malay as quickly as the Malay scholars because of its exhibiting too much Portuguese and that linguists of other groups will not take it up at all.«²⁰

In a veritable *tour-de-force* Schuchardt visited three hundred years of debate in order to establish the linguistic varieties of Malay. Subsequently he identified the low Malays that had most impacted the formation of the local Creole. Thereby Schuchardt invalidated central positions of his contemporaries. »The Dutch scholars«, Schuchardt noted critically, »may forgive me for disagreeing in respect to labelling« different versions of low Malay. Whereas his information stemmed solely from published sources, they, though well equipped to clarifying open questions by being onsite, »have at present failed to do so«, he added sternly.²¹ The language situation he described shares indeed palpable similarities with the starting point of his dissertation. Both on the factual level, i.e. the impact of a demotic language on the formation of new languages, and the scholarly position *vis-à-vis* these languages. Also the wealth of material Schuchardt consulted bears similarities to his efforts in the dissertation: His sources vary from 17th century translations, Dutch East India Company records, to contemporary newspapers and literary publications. Maritime Southeast Asia provided Schuchardt with a historical laboratory that mirrored the language situation in Europe from the fall of the Roman Empire to the transition into the Middle Ages while concurrently resting »on the solid ground of witnessed history«.²²

[...] if we want to gain a definitive understanding of the Malay language situation, then we have to dismantle every preconceived opinion about the purity and the corruption of the Malay language and keep to the historical circumstances. According to these, every influence of one language upon the other is always of a double nature: it relies either on *substratification* [»Unterschichtung«] or *superstratification* [»Überschichtung«]. A people expands over another language speaking one either through military or peaceful conquests and forces their language upon the other, or it experiences itself the invasion and the temporary rule of another language speaking people without on the whole taking over their language.

20 Schuchardt, »Selbstanzeige von Kreolische Studien IX«, *Literaturblatt für germanische und romanische Philologie* 12 (1891), 199–206, here 199.

21 Ibid., 199.

22 Ibid., 206.

In this relationship stand the Romans-romance speakers to the Italic, Etruscan, Iberians, in that the Germans, Slavs, Arabs. [...]. History shows us also the Malays in such a double role, a passive one and an active one, which have found a stable expression within the language: foreign peoples have been lead by religious zeal, the lust for power (domination), the desire for gain to the Malays, therefore the Sanskrit, Arab, Chinese, Portuguese elements of Malay; the Malays crossed the comparatively narrow limits of their tribal area and spread throughout the coastlines of the archipelago, came into contact with peoples speaking palpably related languages, therefore more comprehensive changes of Malay.²³

In opposition to the leading Dutch scholars of his time Schuchardt, not surprisingly, was more interested in the so-called low varieties of the language than the supposedly pure and ancient ones. What his contemporaries had dismissively characterised as *brabbeltaal* ('babble language') or Basar Malay, the *lingua franca* of the region, and the low Malay spoken by the ethnic heterogeneous population of Batavia caught his interest. Especially as the Batavian version of low Malay, today it is referred to as *Betawi*, exercised a decisive influence on the local Creole in Batavia and Tugu.

He argued that the Creole under scrutiny was a Portuguese with a Malayan inner form and not Malay with Portuguese words. Schuchardt explained his fascination for this Creole by pointing out that whereas the mixing of two similar languages is rather easily understood, it is intriguing 'that even two unrelated and in their essence so diverse languages like Malay and Portuguese meet through mixing on a middle, doubtful ground.'²⁴ The Malayo-Portuguese of Java proved to Schuchardt the usefulness of the wave model that Schuchardt and his colleague Johannes Schmidt (1843–1901) had proposed against their former teacher, August Schleicher's genealogical tree-model. According to the wave model, innovation spreads from a centre in continuously weakening concentric circles, similar to the waves created when a stone is thrown into a body of water. Whereas the genealogical tree-model emphasises notions of origin, purity and authenticity, the wave model aims at explaining language change through language contact, independent of genealogical relationships between the languages involved.

It is at this point that Schuchardt once again forcefully rejected biological concepts inherent in the tree-model. »Where two factors are joined as closely as body and soul«, as Malay and Portuguese are in the case of the Creole of Java, Schuchardt underlined, the question as to which is more important will be

23 Schuchardt, *Kreolische Studien IX*, 169–170.

24 Schuchardt, »Selbstanzeige...«, 204.

answered by the common man »in favour of the body, just as he distinguishes between the European, the Negro and the Malay according to the body«. Language to Schuchardt however is a function of humans, not a racial characteristic. »The linguist«, Schuchardt chided, »tends not to avoid this commonplace notion«, of viewing language in racial terms.²⁵

Following Wilhelm von Humboldt's (1767–1835) terminology, Schuchardt described as his main task to detect the influence of Malay on the inner form of the Creole, both on the level of the lexicon and 'joint phrases'. Another important point Schuchardt raised in this context is the problem inherent in taking Indo-European languages as the norm. If we were to take grammar of the Indo-European variety as the reference point for indexing languages, Schuchardt pointed out to his readers, we are in the case of the Malay language and the local Creole, that follows Malay closely, left empty handed. Many features characterising Indo-European grammar simply do not exist in Malay.²⁶ An interesting strategy Schuchardt used throughout his *œuvre* to counter his contemporaries' tendency to deal with linguistic difference by building hierarchical systems, is that of de-exoticising non Indo-European languages. This de-exoticising Schuchardt accomplishes by comparison and pointing to the structure of a language, Wilhelm von Humboldt's inner form. To give one example: Schuchardt explained that in Malay as well as

in the different Creole vernaculars one says: »I anxiety«, »I hunger«, and even in the heart of Europe the foreigner might express himself more grammatically but by no means more precisely. 'Hunger' and 'to be hungry' do not differ logically, but only formally [...]. He who is entirely entrapped in our artificial systems might assume that »I am hunger« had to mean something different than »I am hungry«; but this would be an error. It might well mean something different, but only if the meaning of the word hunger itself changes, by being used in the sense of a person as does Ovid. This then has to be expressed with the word itself, which is impossible in Latin (*ego sum Fames*), in German inadequately only with the help of the definite article (*Ich bin der Hunger.*), in Malay accurately with the personifying *sī* (*sabāja sī lāpar*).²⁷

With the help of the canon of Western civilisation, and no lesser a witness than the poet Ovid (43 BCE–17 CE), Schuchardt turns around the notion of the inherent superiority of Indo-European languages. Malay can be more expressive than the more prestigious European languages, precisely because of its structure.

25 Schuchardt, »Selbstanzeige...«, 204.

26 Ibid.

27 Schuchardt, *Kreolische Studien IX*, 203

Human languages differ: but this difference in Schuchardt's view most certainly does not constitute a hierarchy.

An interesting example characterising the complex web of linguistic borrowing and the often overlooked Portuguese heritage in the region, Schuchardt provided with the help of the words 'nonja' denoting an unmarried female, a spinster. In Schuchardt's time, *njonja(b)* denoted a woman, *nona(b)* an unmarried female of European, Chinese or other non-Malay descent in Malay as well as in the contemporary remnants of Creole in Java. The word *njonja(b)* was classified as Chinese by contemporary dictionaries. Schuchardt however pointed out that *njonja(b)*, though recently imported by Chinese migrants from Macao, could just as *nona(b)* be traced to Portuguese *senhora*. The Portuguese *senhora* had developed into *nbonba*, Schuchardt explained, pointing to a similar process in Cape Verde *nhânba*. *Nbonba* or *nonja* meant 'spinster' in 17th century Malaioportuguese and could be found until the late 18th century in this meaning. Through the process of assimilation, this word then turned into *nona*. The primary form of *njonja* in the meaning of 'woman' was reimported by Chinese migrants: Schuchardt observed that there was indication to assume that the word was in the process of going through yet the same sound changes as a century previously.²⁸ Etymology was a recurrent concern in Schuchardt oeuvre. With the help of the borrowing of words and their history he could demonstrate the interdependence of cultural history with linguistic change.

Conclusions: Diversity

A central concern of intercultural communications both in its applied as well as in its more theoretical orientation is the dealing with cultural diversity. Every culture is characterised by ethno-centrist tendencies. After all, to most people the known is the normal and thus ultimately the norm. Whether we evaluate these differences positively or negatively is of no further consequence here. Curiosity and openness *vis-à-vis* the other as well as the ability to resist the urge to exoticise, were identified as key traits for successful intercultural communication.

Even though Hugo Schuchardt is today mostly remembered as the founding father of Creole studies, it is well worth to follow his lines of inquiry pertaining to language change and mixing within the wider context of his work. This

28 Schuchardt, *Kreolische Studien* IX, 250. In Bahasa Indonesia today *nyonya* stands for married woman and *nona* for an unmarried woman, without indicating a specific ethnic background.

approach not only adds a new perspective to his Creole studies but also re-opens the path to apply the results of Creole studies to other fields. It was Schuchardt who had enjoined his fellow linguists and philologists to pursue their interests more frequently ‘by taking a stroll about the world’. Schuchardt, the linguistic *flâneur*, certainly adhered to his own advice and, in the course of these pursuits, left behind the narrow and often self-constricting boundaries that the approaches of his time exercised on linguistic research. The rediscovery of his work by linguists during the late 20th century revealed his thinking’s usefulness and fruitfulness for contemporary research.

Throughout his writings Schuchardt systematically de-exoticises non-European languages: he called to witness within the proceedings of the mighty Imperial Academy of Sciences none other than the poet Ovid to demonstrate Malay’s a superior capability to express certain aspects over both classical Latin and German. His wide, almost global horizon of comparisons enabled Schuchardt to place the Malay languages within a web of references and thus urged his European, non-specialist readers to appreciate the particular features of the language; Linguistic difference in Schuchardt’s view does not lead to a hierarchical ordering of languages. Poignantly he reformulated this point in his last publication on a Creole language from 1914, the Creole from the Dutch colony of Surinam:

Unconsciously, we regard our languages as being exemplary and perfect. We have no feeling for the fusions and vagaries, inconsistencies and perverseness, in which they are far ahead of all others. We see the mote in the foreign eye not the beam in our own.²⁹

Even though racist biological explanations have lost most of their persuasiveness in academic discourse since Schuchardt’s times the ascent of essentialist cultural reasoning that is currently staking its claims within both the public arena and academia raises strikingly similar issues. Viewing the world as divided by cultural entities or civilisations unable to interact differently than by clashing does lead to yet another search for the *Ursprung*, the ever-elusive core of what defines us against the others. This process ultimately leads to the reduction of cultural and linguistic diversity. Today, the small language groups and cultures at the periphery of civilizational blocks are in danger of extinction. Schuchardt’s historically specific approach to language and culture as well as his emphasis on change

29 Hugo Schuchardt, »Die Sprache der Saramakkaneger in Surinam«, iv; translation taken from »The Language of Saramacca Negroes in Surinam«, in *Pidgin and Creole Languages: Selected Essays by Hugo Schuchardt*, ed. by G. T. Gilbert (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 89–126, here 92.

and transformations through contact over linguistic and ultimately cultural borders opens up a different perspective to thinking about cultural diversity. When people do come into contact new linguistic and cultural forms emerge. . In Schuchardt's view, the outcome of a clash of civilisations is not a winning and a loosing side but ultimately the creation of something new: as a result of 'the amalgamation of several national elements,' he underlined in the context of his research on Slavo-German language mixing, 'we should have before us an entirely new people'.³⁰

Schuchardt was a member and a product of the German academic system that during his lifetime shifted from analysing linguistic difference to introducing racist hierarchies into the study of language. Schuchardt, a German nationalist in many respects, did not only not follow this path so irresistible to his contemporaries but used his considerable acumen and almost global linguistic horizon to counter this *zeitgeist*. Contemporaneous to his Creole studies, Schuchardt analysed language-mixing closer to home. He researched Slavo-German and Slavo-Italian language-mixing as well as,³¹ for instance, Romance borrowings into Hungarian, affirming that he used the same approach in his Creole Studies as in his studies of European languages.

Though many of Schuchardt's insights today form part of the taken-for-granted of linguistics, his questions are relevant and, if anything, have only gained in importance, both in his chosen field of linguistics and many other disciplines within the social sciences and humanities. By conceptualising language as a social phenomenon, Schuchardt took into account historical, social and psychological factors shaping the object of his study and thus making his studies relevant to neighbouring fields.

Schuchardt's endeavours are situated at a certain point in time, a period characterised by the hitherto unprecedented acceleration of globalisation during the final decennia of the long nineteenth century. In his writings, Schuchardt

30 Hugo Schuchardt, »The Slavs and the Germans«, *The Academy* no 685 (June 20, 1885), 441-442, here 441. Schuchardt replies to William Richard Morfill's review of his »Slavo-German and Slavo-Italian« in the same journal from April 11. Morfill had accused Schuchardt of trying to reconcile the Slavs in the Habsburg Empire to their gradual absorption into German.

31 Especially with his research on Slavo-German language mixing Schuchardt entered into the quagmire that constituted late Habsburg national politics and in the face of the nationalistically charged atmosphere of his time emphatically argued his cause. Hugo Schuchardt, *Dem Herrn Franz von Miklosich zum 20. Nov. 1883, Slawo-deutsches und Slawo-italienisches* (Graz: Leuschner & Lubensky, 1884).

took up the challenges of his time both in a historical and globally comparative frame, without falling prey to the theoretical fads and fashions of his day. His approach demonstrates emphatically the merit of looking beyond the neat boxes of disciplinary boundaries, without losing sight of a rigorous methodology, painstaking empirical basis and theoretical stringency. Rereading Hugo Schuchardt's *œuvre* today is undoubtedly a challenge, but a most inspirational and timely one.

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