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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 online publication issued in five languages. The volumes published to date have already been downloaded tens of thousands of times.² For readers who prefer the haptic 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 linguistic and 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 contains an introduction, a cross-language comparative article and articles on each of the individual languages. Beginning with the 4th volume of the Handbook, a reading reference has been inserted between the introduction and the comparative article, and, as of the 5th edition, a foundational article has also been included, entitled *Language Ideologies and Language Criticism: Definitions and Research Perspectives*. In the first four volumes, the introduction and comparative article, and, beginning with the 4th edition, the reading reference, are published in each of the languages included (German, English, French, Italian and Croatian).

1 Cf. Felder, Ekkehard/Schwinn, Horst/Busse, Beatrix/Eichinger, Ludwig M./Große, Sybille/Gvozdanović, Jadranka/Jacob, Katharina/Radtke, Edgar (2017): Introduction. In: HESO 1/2017, p. 13. <https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.heso.2017.0.23712>.

2 Cf. <https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/journals/heso/statistics/alldownloads> (last accessed on 30/05/2025).

The articles published in each of these languages, which illuminate language criticism in English, French, Italian and Croatian, are published both in German and in the language being discussed (i.e. German/English, German/French, German/Italian and German/Croatian). In the 5th edition of the Handbook, all of the articles can be read in each of the languages included.

In the newly introduced foundational article, the various terms, concepts and models addressed in the Handbook are outlined and, based on the specific content presented in the volume, theoretically and methodologically positioned. Additionally, references will be made to the various research traditions within the philological disciplines. The foundational article thereby serves as a common starting point for examination of the topic of each Handbook, which will be discussed in detail in the comparative article and the articles on the individual languages. In the comparative article, key aspects that will be examined in detail in the individual articles are summarised and compared from a meta-perspective. The comparative article normally does not contain any references, as these are already listed in the individual language articles. The only references provided are those that are newly introduced in the comparative article. The articles that follow examine the given topic in relation to the individual languages, organising the peculiarities of each specific language or language culture within the structure; (i) General, (ii) Historical and (iii) Present. In Chapter 5, the concept will be presented in relation to the German language and in Chapter 6, in relation to English. In similar fashion, Chapter 7 will relate the concept to French, Chapter 8 to Italian and Chapter 9 to 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 entire article without being forced to reference the original German-language article. All translations have been adapted to the notational conventions of the respective languages.

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 trans-national perspective is not neglected (e.g. regarding German as spoken in Austria, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg 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, as 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 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 co-operation of scholars that promote this publishing project in Heidelberg, Mannheim, Cologne and Mainz.

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 at Heidelberg University and the Leibniz Institute for the German Language (*Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache*, IDS) in Mannheim. Project participants include numerous professors, researchers and postgraduate students, as well as the members of the project's Advisory Board, whose expertise in the double-blind peer review process ensures the high quality of the publication.³ The project group publishes their articles in the online Handbook. An online platform enables reader-oriented access

3 Cf. https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/journals/heso/advisory_board (last accessed on 30/05/2025).

to the online Handbook via abstracts, supplementary information and a blog that examines the connection between language criticism and social criticism.⁴ The online Handbook and the online platform provide further interlinks useful for (junior) academics and researchers as well as for students of the various philologies in Germany and abroad. However, the target audience also includes additional disciplines with a background in social and cultural studies.

4 Cf. www.europsprachkritik.com (last accessed on 30/05/2025).