

Saying Hello: The Anglo-Saxon Way

Quotations

“Hello doesn’t happen as often in reality as it does in a textbook.” (Ben Feddersen)

“I am never really sure ... when we’ve reached the level of formality or informality where you can [...] move from ‘Sehr geehrter’ to ‘Lieber.’ I don’t really know when that happens and so [...] I leave it out [...] There isn’t really one right way to do it. You just have to pick a good one and cross your fingers and hope they don’t take it the wrong way.” (Ben Feddersen)

“Communication has become less,... let’s say, flowery. On previous visits, I encountered significantly more terms like ‘sweetheart’ and ‘dear’ and ‘button’ and ‘honey’ and so on. With the *Me-too movement* much of this has been eliminated, and men have dropped the ‘babe’ and the ‘sweetie’ and the ‘honey’ and so on. But in the past, I heard these terms of endearment a lot more from the elderly, but even the elderly seem to have dropped using these terms.” (Dr. J)

“Language is always evolving, and as expats, we no longer influence the development of the language spoken in our hometowns. We have our books, we know the grammar, we remember how things used to be said. Tiny developments in the language begin to escape us, and this is a disturbing thing to notice when it concerns a language you call your own.” (Dr. J)

“We all contribute to the development of a language, native and non-native speakers alike.” (Dr. J)

“Eine Sprache muss gesprochen werden!” (Dr. J)

Vocabulary

Source: Merriam Webster online dictionary www.merriam-webster.com

General Vocabulary

expatriate: to leave one’s native country to live elsewhere; banish; exile

going down: to take place: HAPPEN (slang)

enclose: to hold in: CONFINE; to include along with something else in a parcel or envelope

Intricate: having many complexly interrelating parts or elements : COMPLICATED; difficult to resolve or analyze

Intricacies: the quality or state of being intricate

barking: to utter in a curt loud usually angry tone

contemporary: MODERN, CURRENT; happening, existing, living, or coming into being during the same period of time

hit the nail on the head: to be exactly right

slang: an informal nonstandard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrarily changed words, and extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech

to strive: to devote serious effort or energy: ENDEAVOR; to struggle in opposition: CONTEND

Discussion Questions

- 1) Since culture influences our way of saying hello, does that mean that if we consciously change the way we greet each other, we could also change our culture? Think about and relate this to recent events like the *Me-too movement* and the still very present Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2) What is language identity and how do we develop it? Since language is always evolving, does that mean that our language identity is also evolving?
- 3) Saying hello is not just a verbal interaction. What nonverbal ways of saying hello do you know?
- 4) Since greetings are influenced by our culture and they are very important when meeting someone new, do you know of any greetings that would be considered impolite in other cultures? Can you think of things one shouldn't do when saying hello?
- 5) How did digitalization influence our way of greeting someone and our interaction with the people around us? (Younger people have a huge online network of friends and random interactions with strangers, but tend to be rather reserved when meeting strangers face to face.)