

The 18th century as a turning-point of language thought in Germany

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In 18th century Germany, there were two important ideological currents, *Aufklärung* and Romanticism. The representative language philosopher of *Aufklärung*, Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1768), like the grammarians in the 17th century, insisted on *Obersaechsisch* as the normative German language. Furthermore, Gottsched believed that thought has priority over language, as according to the Rationalist tradition. Johann Christoph Adelung (1732–1806) considered *Obersaechsisch* to belong to high-society as well as being the normative German language, however, he did not stubbornly insist on this standpoint as a normative grammarian, and he believed that a grammarian should describe a language as it is. He was influenced by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), the father of Romanticism, and inherited Herder's schema of “nation = language community”. For this reason, Adelung did not believe in the priority of thought over language, but believed that language and thought influence each other. Additionally, Herder's concept of “nation” strongly influenced the nationalism of Central and Eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th century.