

IT-RELATED ANGLICISMS IN *DIE WELT* AND *DER SPIEGEL*: A QUANTITATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF NOUNS, VERBS, AND ADJECTIVES

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Abstract

The main aim of the study is to quantitatively scrutinize the borrowability of IT-related English words in Die Welt and Der Spiegel, as far as the proportion of nouns, verbs, and adjectives is concerned. The purpose of this study is to establish the most and the least frequently borrowed parts of speech and arrive at certain general tendencies governing the transfer of the most popular word class within the field of IT. The study covers an excerpt from authors' research on IT-related anglicisms carried out in 2016, and may serve as a basis for further investigation, since the development of ICT will always necessitate new names for concepts. Therefore, it is by all means prudent and instructive to delve into the rationale behind the way anglicisms permeate into the German language. The study also constitutes a synchronic look at a given stage of the evolution of the German language.

Keywords: Anglicism, German, English, der Spiegel, die Welt, IT, Technology.

Introduction

Language evolves hand in hand with the society. The impact of other cultures, media, and technological novelties on the German language is getting increasingly conspicuous, and opens the window for the acquisition of new vocabulary. Thomason (2001) maintains that every language developed to some extent dependently on other languages.

Yang (1990: 166) claims that English does not cease to overtly influence German, therefore the number of anglicisms present in newspapers and magazines increases

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substantially. Carstensen (1975) as quoted in Czech-Rogoyska and Krawiec (2018: 13) postulates that ‘Der Spiegel [...] acts as the chief window through which anglicisms influence the German language’.

Specialist fields, rather than general everyday language, are the main source of anglicisms in any language. In 1975, Carstensen attempted to narrow them down to economy and social life, technology, politics, sport, groceries, tourism, and music. Research outcomes by Jabłoński (1990), and Glahn (2000: 174) add cultural life, science, beauty and fashion, and food. Moreover, studies carried out by Burmasova (2010: 59), point out to advertising and sport as specialist fields particularly rich in anglicisms.

Nowadays, IT, new technologies, data processing, and hardware- and software-related disciplines are strongly connected to the borrowability of words. Mękarska and Kamasa (2015: 48–50) extracted over a hundred of anglicisms and divided them into 10 semantic fields, and over 50% covered thematically Information Technology and new technologies. Visibly enough, this subject area is still worth scrutinizing.

As affirmed by Haugen (1950: 224), already in 1881 nouns were deemed to be the most frequently borrowed parts of speech, followed by verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Structurally speaking, noun-anglicisms are given primacy in foreign languages on the grounds that, as maintained by Czech-Rogoyska and Krawiec (2018: 13), ‘a language does not necessitate a considerable amount of other lexical units between the core elements in a sentence’.

The corpus

The corpus data encompass a total of 20 randomly chosen IT-related articles from German popular online magazines *Der Spiegel* and *Die Welt*. The article covers a quantitative analysis of the most frequently borrowed parts of speech, i.e. nouns, verbs and adjectives in the two magazines. Other (if any), rarely encountered parts of speech were classified as ‘others’.

As hinted by Czech-Rogoyska and Zboch (2016: 27), ‘Die Welt [...] is the Axel Springer press group’s flagship national German newspaper published daily with a circulation of 263,000 copies [...] and focuses strongly on the most recent news. [...] Der Spiegel, [...] is a German news magazine occurring weekly with a circulation of 976,00 therefore constitutes the second oldest magazine in the corpus, next to Die Welt. Interestingly enough, compared to other European countries, it is one of the biggest and most influential papers of this kind’.

Data description and methodology

The aim of the pages that follow is to analyse the borrowability of English parts of speech in 20 IT-oriented articles from *Die Welt* and *Der Spiegel* and classify them quantitatively. The data presented in this article are excerpted from a comprehensive study on anglicisms, conducted by the authors in 2016, covering a corpus of 90 articles categorized into three thematic sections, i.e. Beauty, Politics, and IT.

1. IT-related anglicisms were extracted from 20 articles in *Die Welt* and *Der Spiegel*.
2. English words were scrutinized based on definitions provided by reliable online dictionaries such as *Oxford Dictionary* (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>), *Collins Dictionary* (<http://collinsdictionary.com/>), the German Index of Anglicisms, i.e. *Anglicizmenindex* by *Verein Deutsche Sprache* and *Duden* (<http://duden.de>).
3. The anglicisms in both magazines were grouped into nouns, verbs, and adjectives³.

It also needs to be noted that hybrid anglicisms are incorporated into the research, for they are indicators of lexical productivity in the receptor language. The study does not

3 No other speech parts were encountered.

cover proper nouns, unless they were grammaticalized to common nouns and applied as such. Example sentences from German articles were quoted to illustrate the use of English borrowings in real-life contexts. Last but not least, thanks to the native material that the corpus is based on, arriving at semantic reliability was largely facilitated.

Most importantly, in order to point out to the actual number of anglicisms in the corpus articles, it was necessary to duly examine their etymology, because even those seemingly stemming from English, might have had different origin. Therefore, the selection of anglicisms constituted the biggest challenge. What is more, the findings are based on a relatively small repertoire of articles, which may not entirely capture the presence of anglicisms in IT-related anglicisms.

Quantitative analysis

Table 1. The overall quantitative distribution of nouns, verbs, and adjectives in *Die Welt* and *Der Spiegel*.

	Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives
Die Welt	300	10	7
Der Spiegel	320	3	0
Total	620	13	7

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on research findings.

As portrayed, nouns constitute a vast majority of all parts of speech in the corpus texts and amount almost to 99,9% of all instances, which confirms Onysko's (2007: 192) statement that 'lexical productivity is particularly prevalent with nominal bases'. During the last couple of years, the language, used by many IT professionals and journalists in the field in question, has been considerably enriched with many noun-anglicisms.

The reason for giving primacy to foreign rather than native nomenclature is quite obvious, since most progress in the domain of IT has been done in the English-speaking world, therefore the books, studies and articles presenting the developments in the field have been published in English. Consequently, already those preparing for the career in IT have adopted and sometimes even adapted to English words.

It is worth pointing out that there is a notorious tendency in German to build compounds which, among other types of word formation, seem to be the most productive in the case of noun-anglicisms. Onysko (2007: 192) quotes the longest construction in *Der Spiegel* (2000, 7/54) i.e. *Portfolio-Management-Vermögensverwaltungsvertrag* as the most complex hybrid compound and maintains that hybrids usually work out at 75% of all nominal anglicisms. Corpus examples include e.g.:

Bei seiner neuen Reihe "Killerspiele" dürfte ZDFinfo den Begriff nun sehr bewusst eingesetzt haben.

Der Radiojournalist gibt das Magazin "WASD" heraus, in dem Spiele ganz selbstverständlich ein Kulturgut sind, es gibt Hefttitel wie "Freiheit und Computerspiele" und "Die Zukunft der Games-Kultur".

Google verzichtet ab 2017 auf Flash-Werbebanner.

Google stellt seine Systeme für Onlinewerbung auf HTML5 um: Ab Januar 2017 will das Unternehmen keine Flash-Anzeigen mehr in Umlauf bringen - mit einer Ausnahme.

In Flash gebaute Werbeclips werden wohl die einzigen Flash-Anzeigen sein, die Google im kommenden Jahr noch verbreitet.

Twitter sortiert die Timeline seiner Nutzer künftig anders: Der neueste Tweet steht nicht mehr automatisch oben.

Viele User sind empört - dabei kann man recht einfach zum alten System zurückkeh-

ren.

Nouns are prioritized in lexical borrowing for numerous reasons. When the issue of word borrowability is tackled, also part-of-speech membership related factors that do not deal with the grammatical structure of words appear. Those may include certain semantically- and cognitively-motivated dissimilarities between word classes and differences in their discourse frequencies. Analysed as such, in many instances clear reference to Weinreich's (1953: 37) writing is provided:

'Why is it, then, that in the usual lists of loanwords, nouns figure so predominantly? The reason is probably of a lexical-semantic, rather than a grammatical and structural nature. In the languages in which borrowing has been studied, and under the type of language and culture contact that has existed, the items for which new designations were needed [...] have been, to an overwhelming degree, such as are indicated by nouns'. (Weinreich 1953: 37)

As hinted in the quotation, Weinreich (1953: 37) maintains that it is the semantics that may be the most important here. Pragmatically, verbs and adjectives are less important than nouns as far as typical situations of cultural and linguistic contact are concerned. That seems to find confirmation in the words of van Hout and Muysken (1994: 42), who deem that

'A very important factor involves one of the primary motivations for lexical borrowing, that is, to extend the referential potential of a language. Since reference is established primarily through nouns, these are the elements borrowed most easily'. (van Hout and Muysken 1994: 42)

Harris and Campbell (1995: 135) elaborate on the subject in a similar way:

'Since nouns name things, prototypically refer to visible, concrete objects, and are first to be acquired in language acquisition [...], it is unsurprising that nouns would typically be the first acquired also in language contact. Nouns also tend to have fewer morphosyntactic markings than verbs, making loans easier to assimilate in this category'.

The use of words 'easy' and 'easily' in the two quotations captures a slightly different perception. van Hout and Muysken (1994: 42) point out to different frequencies of borrowed nouns as compared to borrowed verbs, whereas for Harris and Campbell (1995: 135) it is more associated with integrational effort, meaning that some parts of speech accommodate with less difficulty than others.

The use of noun-anglicisms is germane to the fact that nouns denote concepts or ideas which other languages lack. Giving primacy to English words over native choices shows that often one may only replace a donor language word by cumbersome or long paraphrases, which would deprive a magazine article of its brevity and sometimes even comprehension. The truth is that, sometimes the use of one word in English – instead of five or six in German – may be enough to faithfully reflect the reality. For Yang (1990: 28),

'[d]ies ist nicht verwunderlich, weil sich die meisten übernommenen englischen Wörter auf neue Techniken, neue Erfindungen und neue Begriffe beziehen, die zuerst in den englischsprachigen Ländern, vor allem in Amerika, entstanden sind, und für die es innerhalb des deutschen Sprachraums oft keinen entsprechenden Ausdruck gibt'.⁴

Myers-Scotton (2002: 240) claims that nouns are favoured over other word classes 'because they receive, not assign, thematic roles', hence 'their insertion in another language [...] is less disruptive of predicate-argument structure'. Based on the research conducted on various languages, also Haugen (1950: 224) claims that nouns constitute 70%

4 Translation ours: It is hardly surprising on the grounds that the majority of borrowed English words designate new technology, innovations, and new terminologies that were invented in English-speaking countries, especially the US. For these terms frequently there is no equivalent expression in German.

of all borrowed words, and are followed by verbs (18-23%), adjectives (3-4%) and others.

What is more, Weinreich (1970), postulates that the reason behind borrowing nouns rather than other parts of speech lies in semantics. Languages in which borrowings are analyzed, lack names for new designates, processes, and phenomena etc. For Czech-Rogoyska and Krawiec (2018: 13) '[t]hat vantage point seems to concur with the needs of contemporary world to name new concepts appearing on a daily basis in the specialist field of IT and technologies'. In consonance with that, all new processes, devices, and technologies usually enter other languages as nominal structures and names for new things, rather than verbs or adjectives.

What is also worth noting is that both young people and specialists in the field of IT, ICT, and advanced technologies in general are well familiarized with specialist vocabulary, therefore they comprehend English nomenclature to a great extent. It is thus either a matter of applying professional nomenclature in one's working environment, or following a fashion of using English words and phrases.

Furthermore, whereas those people are frequently the main users of IT-oriented anglicisms, the communication between them opens the window through which anglicisms permeate into the language.

Concluding remarks

The study focuses on analyzing IT-related anglicisms in two contemporary German newspapers, i.e. *Die Welt* and *Der Spiegel*. The discussion revolving around the borrowability of nouns, verbs, adjectives and their quantitative distribution revealed that nominal anglicisms represent the vast majority of parts of speech borrowed in the corpus magazines.

German journalists' penchant for the application of English nouns in *Der Spiegel* and *Die Welt* confirms a view already established e.g. by Fink (1970), Viereck (1986), Yang (1990), and Zürn (2001) that English verbs, adjectives and other parts of speech are given less priority and are less lexically productive in the recipient language than nouns.

Pointing out to the actual number of anglicisms in the corpus articles required an in-depth examination of their etymology, because even those seemingly stemming from English, might have had different origin. Most certainly, the use of wider corpora could be deemed the right solution in this case, yet the biggest research challenge lay in proving that the words are seen as anglicisms in the first place, which was problematic in some cases. The study also constitutes a synchronic look at a given stage of the evolution of the German language (February 2016), thus some words may not seem as having English origin at first glance, on the grounds that over time, unnoticeably, they might have already become part of the English language, therefore are treated as native lexical items.

The study may serve as a basis for further research on the influx of anglicisms both in the language of IT and other branches. It is also by all means necessary to take a closer look at further (e.g. non-linguistic) tendencies governing the prioritization of certain word classes over others.

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