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Morphological Integration of (Neological) Verbs from English

Contrastive Comparison of the German and French Language Systems

English is currently the most widely spoken language in the world and exerts great lexical influence on other language systems (cf. Eisenberg 2018, p. 46). Numerous expressions originating in English are borrowed into other languages and morphologically adapted to the rules of their own language system in the meanwhile. In both German and French, this process can be realised in such a way that an English root of a lexical item is taken over without any modification and the implementation into the respective language system is then made possible by the addition of indigenous inflectional suffixes. The German lexicon in particular is enriched with English lexical material and integrates a large number of embedded English roots this way (cf. Fleischer/Barz 2012, p. 102). English also has a relatively large influence on the French language system, which is significantly more hostile to the borrowing of exogenous expressions (cf. Neusius 2021, p. 409). The preservation of a vocabulary that is as indigenous as possible is striven for much more strongly here than is the case in German, so that translations rather than morphological embedding are predominantly used for the integration of foreign-language units; only a few English stems find their way into French dictionaries.

Looking from a morphological perspective, especially verbs borrowed from English represent an interesting object of study between the two languages, so that the focus of this talk will be on the investigation of this word class. As an example, the integration of a total of 21 English-derived verbs will be examined, which became established after 1990 and emerged from the fields of technology and electronic interaction (*to add, to chat, to download, to email, to ghost, to host, to leak, to like, to mail, to photoshop, to podcast, to post, to retweet, to roam, to scroll, to stream, to upgrade, to upload, to vlog*) (cf. OWID-Neologismenwörterbuch 2006 ff.).

With regard to the integration into the German language system, it can be observed that the verbal roots of the English expressions studied have been adopted and indigenous inflectional affixes have been added (e.g. *add-en, download-en, lik-en*). Today, 19 of the 21 verbs are recognised as standard language[1] (cf. Duden online). The integration process is not without idiosyncrasies: For the past tense as well as for the past participle, fluctuations of norms

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[1] The term *standard language* is used here to refer to the forms of language identified as standard in the pertinent dictionaries. The terms *natural language* or *real language* in contrast refer to data from natural language evidence taken from the corpora used.

can be detected in large German-language corpora (DeReKo 2022 and GermanWeb2020). These often result in German-English hybrid forms (e.g. *leakte/leakete; gechattet/gechatted, gelikt/geliket/geliked; geupgradet/upgegradet*).

(1) *«Ihr wurde vermutlich vom Palast gesagt, dass sie den Kontakt mit befreundeten Presseleuten beenden soll. Ich wurde buchstäblich von ihr **geghosted***», erklärt Lizzie den Bruch.

(https://www.20min.ch/story/meghan-wollte-einen-beruehmten-briten-daten-908140072771, detected via GermanWeb2020)

While in German the implemented verb stems of almost all the verbs examined are classified as standard language, in French dictionaries only a small proportion of such verbs are found where the English root has been adopted (e.g. *retweet-er, scroll-er*) (cf. LeRobert dico en ligne). In the majority of cases, purely French equivalents are created in order to cover the meaning of the English expression linguistically in their own system (e.g. *télécharger* for engl. *to download*); consequently, from the prescriptive side, only 6 of the 21 English verb stems are integrated morphologically. In contrast, the situation appears different in natural language use: In the examination of a French-language web corpus (FrenchWeb2020), affixed forms of all 21 English verb stems are also found for French. The prescriptive rejection of non-standard language forms does not lead to uncertainties in inflection: In the French study corpus, no variation of norms can be identified within the respective inflection paradigms.

(2) *Au départ, j'étais bien déterminé à lui parler de son problème, de pourquoi elle nous **ghostait** tous depuis presque un mois.*

(https://plumedargent.fr/chapitre/episode-7-partie-4-elliot, detected via FrenchWeb2020)

This talk will focus on the possibilities of linguistic realisation in terms of morphologically integrated English word stems (normative vs. natural inflection). It will also illuminate the standard and usage-based language acceptance of the corresponding verb forms of both language systems.

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