

Neologisms in the German Language - New Words from a Semantic Point of View -



Linguistics

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Abstract

Every change in the political, social, economic and cultural life of a country is directly reflected in its language and especially its vocabulary, where its vitality is expressed clearly. The fast political developments and new economic and social circumstances present a language with new lexical expectations that are fulfilled through changes in general vocabulary, but also in specific social and political vocabularies. The innovations here are diverse and different. Scope and extension of vocabulary depend upon the communicative needs of the language community. Thus new words are constantly formed, others die out, their meanings change or words from other languages are borrowed. More than any other component of language, its vocabulary is subject to changes; after all, the need for names changes all the time, and grows from the everyday life of a language community, from economics and technology. How and why new words are formed and in which way this is dependent on individual areas of the German language such as technical language, language of youths or newspaper language are the goals of this paper.

1. Introduction

Every day we encounter new words. Innovations in vocabulary often give rise to the lament that they might contaminate a language – from the perspective of language maintenance. Since society is subject to constant changes, however, language, like people, cannot stand still in its development. Words come and go, and it would be a dangerous sign of stagnation if there were no more new words.⁵

Every change in the political, social, economic and cultural life of a country is directly reflected in its language and especially its vocabulary, where its vitality is expressed clearly. The fast political developments and new economic and social circumstances present a language with new lexical expectations that are fulfilled through changes in general vocabulary, but also in specific social and political vocabularies. The innovations here are diverse and different.

Scope and extension of vocabulary depend upon the communicative needs of the language community. Thus new words are constantly formed, others die out, their meanings change or words from other languages are borrowed. More than any other component of language, its vocabulary is subject to changes; after all, the need for names changes all the time, and grows from the everyday life of a language community, from economics and technology.

Neologisms, which appear constantly, play an important role in this process of conversion.⁶

2. Definition of a neologism

The neologism as an innovation dependent on time and space

The word *Neologismus* (neologism) was borrowed in the mid 1900s from French to German. In France *néologisme* was a coinage from the first half of the 18th century. This was a neoclassical loanword (no Greek counterpart exists), made up of the components (*néos*) 'new' and (*Logos*) 'word, teaching'.

The emergence of *néologisme* in France was set from the beginning in a linguistic-lexicographic setting, more precisely in the area of strong scientific and public discussions focused on the pros and cons of new words and their incorporation into the dictionary.⁷

⁵ Elsen, Hilke (2004) *Neologismen*, Tübingen, p. 11.

⁶ Xuefu, Dou (1987) *Neologismen im heutigen Deutsch*, in: *Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 59, p. 98.

Contextually comparable, though less violently discussed, was the word *Neologismus* upon its borrowing into German. Still, the word had negative connotations: neologism is an unsightly and superfluous new word, contaminating the noble German language.⁸

The term *neologism* as a linguistic, unbiased term was not established until comparatively late, in the middle of the 20th century, and even today definitions of a neologism exhibit a noticeable vagueness and lack of conformity.⁹

With neologisms the necessity for new names in a communication community is satisfied. Since new names are bound to lexical units, the construed lexical unit, made up of a bilateral sign incorporating the expression and content sides, that is of form and meaning, forms the natural starting point for a definition of the neologism. A neologism differs from established, long-used vocabulary units in 1. either its form and meaning or 2. that only the meaning of the unit concerned is perceived as new by a majority of speakers of a certain communication community over a certain time. Thus two types of neologism can be differentiated: 1. new lexemes and 2. new meanings (also: *Neosemantisms*).¹⁰

With respect to German it can thus be said: new lexemes are one-word and more-word lexemes that have not appeared in their unity of form and meaning in the German vocabulary so far or did not exist until a more or less defined point in time. Here one does not differentiate in principle between a new lexeme formed in German and a lexeme borrowed as a whole unit from another language. A new meaning exists if the existing sense of an established German monosemior polysemic lexeme at a certain point in time is expanded by a further sense.¹¹

In general neologisms are viewed as the expression of new appearances in all areas of life in a society: “The neologism is an expression which names new natural and social appearances, just entering into awareness.”¹² However one cannot simplistically call all newly arisen terms neologisms,¹³ but only a “new coinage, which has gone over into general usage (new lexeme or new meaning)”¹⁴ counts as a neologism. Especially through industrialization and the rise of technology (such as through the rise of new media) many technical terms have gone over into everyday language: *Telex*, *satellite transmission* were originally technical terms, today however are commonplace. The main marks of a neologism are thus the naming of new facts or new concepts, as well as the frequency of its use and its belonging to everyday language.¹⁵

There are, however, no general linguistically binding criteria to determine if a word is ‘new’ or not. The term ‘neologism’ only ever has a relative validity, referring to the time and space *for which the neologism is new*. The term neologism is understood to be dependent on time and space.¹⁶

Neologisms always originate in a certain time and a certain space and they lose the index of newness in this space after some time.¹⁷

“A neologism is a lexical unit or a meaning, which arises in a certain phase of the language development of a communication community, spreads, is generally accepted as linguistic norm and during this developmental stadium is perceived as new by the majority of language users.”¹⁸

⁷Herberg Dieter/ Kinne, Michael (1998) *Neologismen*, Studienbibliographien Sprachwissenschaft 23, Heidelberg, p. 1.

⁸ibid, p. 1.

⁹ Herberg, Dieter (2001) *Neologismen der Neunzigerjahre*, in: Stöckel, Gerhard (Hg.) *Neues und Fremdes im deutschen Wortschatz. Aktueller lexikalischer Wandel*. Berlin/New York (Jahrbücher des Institut für Deutsche Sprache 2000) p. 92.

¹⁰ibid, p. 92.

¹¹Herberg, Dieter (2001) *Neologismen der Neunzigerjahre*, in: Stöckel, Gerhard (Hg.) *Neues und Fremdes im deutschen Wortschatz. Aktueller lexikalischer Wandel*. Berlin/New York (Jahrbücher des Institut für Deutsche Sprache 2000) p. 92-93.

¹²Krahl, S., Kurs, J., (1975) *Kleines Wörterbuch der Stilkunde*, Leipzig, p. 17

¹³Xuefu, Dou. (1987) *Neologismen im heutigen Deutsch*, in: Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, 59, p. 99.

¹⁴Duden - Deutsches Universalwörterbuch, 6. Aufl. Mannheim 2006.

[Neolo]gismus, der; -, ...men (frz. néologisme, zu griech. Néos = neu u. lógos = Wort)in den allgemeinen Gebrauch übergegangene sprachliche Neuprägung (2) (Neuwort od. Neubedeutung)

¹⁵Xuefu, Dou. (1987) *Neologismen im heutigen Deutsch*, in: Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, 59, p. 99.

¹⁶ibid, p. 99

¹⁷ibid, p. 99.

A criteria that is important especially for lexicographers is the use of a new word in general, everyday language, through which its integration can be judged complete. New words no longer count as neologisms when they are established in core or everyday vocabulary; that means they are integrated into standard dictionaries. In literature unique neologisms are often separated from somewhat common ones. Occasionalisms (neologisms that are one-time formations, formations of the moment or occasion and Ad-hoc formations) are often only understandable in context and often have a textually relevant function. They serve the purpose of language economizing or have different stylistic functions and fill lexical gaps. They can develop to actual neologisms and then to established vocabulary units, or else disappear beforehand.¹⁹ The condition for a neologism is the necessity for a name that can be limited to a certain time and society. So that the neologism spreads, there must be collective agreement in regards to the necessity for a name and the realization of this necessity through the neologism.

Today a word is unanimously referred to as a neologism with regard to its newness relative to the existing lexicon of a language. Neologisms serve to expand or renovate the vocabulary. A necessity for new words occurs following new naming necessities, but also with the purpose of compression of information, precision and originality. To push through, each neologism must have the acceptance, that is the approval and reception, of the language community. The aspect of acceptance by the language community is so important because “new objects ... for their naming (require) new words and (assert) themselves as acceptable forms before norm instances can bring them up for discussion.”²⁰

In the following definition proposal all of the points discussed so far are combined:²¹

A neologism is an entirely new lexical unit in its entirety of form and meaning (new lexeme) or an entirely new meaning (added to the existing one) of an established lexical unit (new meaning)²²

- which is at first not found in any dictionary
- which arises in a specific period of language development in a communication community, especially (but not only) because of communicative needs, and then spreads
- which is adopted into the general vocabulary of the standard language (usualization)
- is generally accepted as linguistic norm (acceptance)
- is then recorded lexicographically (lexicalization)
- and which – sometime during this developmental process – is perceived by the majority of language users as new for a certain time.²³

Every neologism goes through the following phases: Emergence → Usualization → Acceptance → Lexicalization/Integration (recording as a part of the general vocabulary). Thus the term neologism is not static but describes a process and is and dynamic in nature.²⁴

Usualization, lexicalization and thus integration are the most important criteria for differentiating the neologism from other lexical innovations, such as occasionalisms (ad-hoc, one-time, individual formations).²⁵

Schippan requires that “one-time formations, occasional units are not counted to the neologisms, unless they enter into general language use.”²⁶ At first appearance however, this is impossible to foresee. In addition, the rate of lexicalization cannot be determined.²⁷

¹⁸Herberg, Dieter et al. (2004) *Neuer Wortschatz. Neologismen der 90er Jahre im Deutschen*.

Neologismenwörterbuch des Instituts für deutsche Sprache. Berlin.

¹⁹Elsen, Hilke. (2004) *Neologismen*, Tübingen, p. 21.

²⁰Helfrich, Uta (1993) *Neologismen auf dem Prüfstand*. Wilhelmsfeld, pp. 20-21.

²¹Kinne, Michael (1990) Der lange Weg zum deutschen Neologismenwörterbuch in: Teubert, Wolfgang (Hg.) *Neologie und Korpus*, Tübingen (Studien zur deutschen Sprache 11) p. 85.

²²ibid, p.85.

²³ibid, pp.85-86.

²⁴ibid, p.86.

²⁵Herberg, Dieter (2001) *Neologismen der Neunzigerjahre*, in: Stickel, Gerhard (Hg.) *Neues und Fremdes im deutschen Wortschatz. Aktueller lexikalischer Wandel*. Berlin/New York (Jahrbücher des Institut für Deutsche Sprache 2000) pp. 92-93.

Dou Xuefu takes the term neologism even further; he includes new borrowings: “Newly borrowed words make up an important part of the neologisms and generally stand out. According to my structure, words that were borrowed after 1945 from foreign languages or were newly formed with borrowed components are new borrowings”.²⁸

3. The process of lexicalization

Most new creations are first tentative and very uncertain in regards to:²⁹

- Spelling. Do we write, in German, *Spinoff*, *spin-off* or *Spin-Off*? *eLearning*, *E-Learning* or *Elearning*?
- Pronunciation. This is especially complicated with borrowed words and is often, but not always, adapted to fit the phoneme system of the borrowing language.
How are German *Bundesbanker* and *mabbern* pronounced?
- Genus. Is it German *der Blog* or *das Blog*, *der Engine* or *die Engine*? *Der/die/das E-Commerce*, *Action-Anime*?
- Inflection. Is it German *des Piercing* or *des Piercings*?
- What is the plural of German *Flyer*: *die Flyer* or *die Flyers*? *die PC* or *die PCs*?
- What part of speech are German *Pay-per-Song*, *Value-at-Risk*?

3.1. On the Spelling Variations

Neologisms often appear with different spellings. Especially neologisms from English can appear in a conspicuously large number of spelling variations, which have a different grade of integration into German spelling norms, for example Carsharing (the use of a car by different people on an organized, usually commercial basis) with the variations Car-Sharing, CarSharing, Car-sharing, carsharing, car-sharing.³⁰

3.2 Variations of Genus

The problem of genus determination occurs again with neologisms from English. It is known that genus determination follows certain principles, such as that of lexical similarity (*der Shareholdervalue* – *der Wert/der Profit*), that of the natural sex (*der Anchorman*), that of morphological analogz (e.g. nouns with the suffix *-ness* feminine: *die Political Correctness*, *die Wellness*).

Often the result is not definite, and one is instead confronted with two (e.g. Event, Mail), sometimes even three Genera (e.g. Couchpotato) for one and the same neologism.³¹

3.3 Variations of Genitive Singular

Variations for the genitive singular occur for the numerous neologisms from English with the Genus neutral, which are, from the perspective of English morphology, verbal nouns with the suffix *-ing*. Usage varies between the form without an ending (des Carsharing), analogue to English inflection, and the form with the ending *-s* (des Carsharings), analogue to German inflection.³²

²⁶Schippan, Thea (1992) *Lexikologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*, Tübingen, p. 244.

²⁷Elsen, Hilke. (2004) *Neologismen*, Tübingen, p. 21.

²⁸Xuefu, Dou (1989) Neologismus und Neologismenwörterbuch. In Wörterbücher in der Diskussion. Vorträge aus dem Heidelberger Lexikographischen Kolloquium, editor: Von H.E. Wiegand, p.53.

²⁹Lemnitzer, Lothar (21.4.2007) *Neue Wörter – täglich frisch serviert!* www.wortwarte.de

³⁰Herberg, Dieter (2002) *Neologismen in der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Probleme ihrer Erfassung und Beschreibung. In: Deutsch als Fremdsprache 4/2002 Leipzig, p. 198.

³¹Herberg, Dieter (2002) *Neologismen in der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Probleme ihrer Erfassung und Beschreibung. In: Deutsch als Fremdsprache 4/2002 Leipzig, p. 198.

³²Ibid., p.199.

3.4 Variations of Nominative Plural

What was said on the juxtaposition of genitive singular forms is also true for the juxtaposition of nominative plural forms. In cases such as *Callcenter*, *Flyer*, *Netizen* one encounters both the form without an ending (*die Flyer*) and forms with the ending –s (*die Flyers*). Generally the nominative plural, analogue to most German masculine with the ending –er, has no ending and only rarely the English plural formation with the ending –s is used.³³

4. Structure of Neologisms

Xuefu, Dou classifies neologisms in formal regard into new words, new derivations, abbreviations and short words, new coinages and neosemantisms.³⁴

4.1 New words

According to the systemization by Xuefu only words that were borrowed from foreign languages or newly made from components of a foreign language are new words, e.g. *Midlife-Crisis* (English), *Datsche* or *Datscha* (Russian), *Au-Pair Mädchen* (French), *Autostada* (Italian). Most of the new borrowings are from English, especially American English, such as *Allrounder*, *Babysitter*, *Comeback*, *Drive in*, *Leasing*, *Know-How* and many others.

New words are mostly taken over directly from the foreign language. Many newly borrowed words are not direct adoptions, however, but borrowed translations, characterized by usual German rules of morphology with foreign morphological elements. These include so-called hybrid (mixed) formations. These new compositions are made up of foreign and German components, e.g. *Musikdownload*, *Au-pair Mädchen*, *Lohnstopp*, *Livesendung*, *Internetadresse*, *Internetseite*, *Outdoorjacke*, *Outdoorsport*, etc.³⁵. A further form of new word are formations that because of their formal structure seem to be borrowings, but do not exist or are not usual in the foreign language.

These words are generally compositions made of an Anglicism and an English word, e.g. *Service-Point*³⁶: *Service* is an Anglicism that is part of German vocabulary, the second component *point* remains English. The Deutsche Bahn created this word to demonstrate cosmopolitanism and modernity.³⁷

4.2 New Derivations

A further aspect is the formation of new words through language internal change of part of speech. The German noun *Frust* and the verb *frustrieren*, for example are derived from the German new word *Frustration*. Further examples for this tendency are *Computer* – *computerisieren*, *Job* – *jobben*, *Kontakt* – *kontakten* (*kontaktieren*), *Alarmist* – *alarmistisch*, *Blade* – *blade*, *Brenner* – *brennen* or *Fax* – *faxen*, further extended with *rüberfaxen*, etc. or *faxbar* in “die Vorlageistnicht *faxbar*” (The submission cannot be faxed)³⁸. Neologisms can also be derived from existing German words using morphological tools such as prefixes and suffixes. In this way the part of speech changes also, e.g. *hämis* (adjective) – *Häme* (noun), *anmachen*(Verb) – *Anmache* (noun), *Kind* (noun) – *abkindern* (verb).³⁹

4.3 New Abbreviations

A further morphological tool is the cutting of words (*Tech* for *Technologie*) or abbreviations. Initial and short words are differentiated. In initial words initials can be pronounced individually (*Azubi*: *Auszubildender*) or in

³³ Ibid., p.199.

³⁴ Xuefu, Dou. (1987) *Neologismen im heutigen Deutsch*, in: Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, 59, p. 101.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 102.

³⁶ Steffens, Doris (2003) Nicht nur Anglizismen... Neue Wörter und Wendungen in unserem Wortschatz. IDS-Sprachforum, 21.Mai 2003. In Sprachreport 4/2003. Mannheim, p.6.

³⁷ Ibid., p.6.

³⁸ Herberg, Dieter et al. (2004) *Neuer Wortschatz. Neologismen der 90er Jahre im Deutschen*. Neologismenwörterbuch des Instituts für deutsche Sprache. Berlin.

³⁹ Xuefu, Dou. (1987) *Neologismen im heutigen Deutsch*, in: Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, 59, p. 102.

combination. In short words the head words (beginning words), tail words (end words), words at the beginning of a syllable (*Moped* from *Motor* and *Pedale*, *Juso* from *Jugsozialist*) and bracket words (*Motel* from *Motor* and *Hotel*, *Botel* from *Boot* and *Hotel*). Of course abbreviations are not principal neologisms; however, they are formed and used much more often than they used to be. They fulfill the language economizing principles.⁴⁰ A short, clear, factual mode of expression is defining for certain areas of communication. The abbreviations function to make communication easier.

Proof: *IT* stands for Informations-Technologie (information technology) and encompasses nearly everything to do with computers, network technology, software development, modern means of communication and internet. (Berliner Morgenpost 12.05.1999)

4.4 New coinages

“Words and idioms that are created from already existing words are usually referred to with the term *new coinage*”.⁴¹

New coinages account for most of the neologisms. One of the most common tools for the coinage of new words is composition.⁴² The mass of possible compositions is infinite in German since all possible open classes can be combined to make new words (*ehundertachtzigfacher Betrug*, etc.). In this area it is the hardest to differentiate opportunity formations from formations that are stable and slowly becoming established in the lexicon of a language community. Expressions that are relevant and refer to aspects of life that outlast the time (internet law) or that are spread as funny and fitting formulations (*Waschbrettbauch*, *Beliebigkeitskanzler*) have the greatest chance of surviving.

When building compositions there are two formal methods:

- The integration of components that, sometimes with a joining element, are directly put together (*Börsenrebell*, *Deutungshorizont*)
- The combination of word components with the help of hyphens.⁴³

Among new coinages prefixoids and suffixoids are very productive. Using the prefixoid *Bilderbuch* for example following neologisms were formed *Bilderbuchcountdown*, *-ehe*, *-ehemann*, *-ethik*, *-flug*, *-held*, *-insel*, *-kapitalist*, *-karriere*, *-katholisch*, *-landung*, *-star*, *-tor*, *-vorstellung* and *-wetter*. As a prefixoid *Bilderbuch* has the general meaning “ideal” or “unrealistic”; it loses the original meaning of a book with pictures for small children.⁴⁴

Formations with German components form the largest group of words formed in German. Examples are *Blitzeis*, *Erlebnisgesellschaft*, *scheinselbständig*, *schönrechnen*. Such formations are found also in specialized fields, for example in the area “computer/internet”: *anklicken*, *Klammeraffe*; in the area “sports”: *gelbgesperret* and *Schiedsrichterassistent*; in the area “society” *Dosenpfand*, *Homoehe*, *prollig*, *Schwangerenkonfliktberatung*, *Vereinigungskriminalität*. German components also include old borrowings from different languages such as *Chirurgie* in *Knopflochchirurgie/Schlüssellochchirurgie*, *Mini* and *Job* in *Minijob*, *Baby* in *Babyklappe*, *Boulevard* in *Boulevardisierung*.⁴⁵

4.5 Neosemantisms (New meaning)

This expression refers to pre-existing words that gain new meanings. A new meaning exists when, during the time of reference, an already existing word gains a new meaning or if a new word with its new meaning gains a

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.102.

⁴¹ Wörterbuch der deutschen Gegenwartssprache, p. 14.

⁴² Xuefu, Dou. (1987) *Neologismen im heutigen Deutsch*, in: Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, 59, p. 103.

⁴³ Lemnitzer, Lothar (2007) *Neue Wörter – Die Wortwarte – auf der Suche nach den Neuwörtern von morgen!* www.wortwarte.de

⁴⁴ Xuefu, Dou. (1987) *Neologismen im heutigen Deutsch*, in: Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, 59, p. 103.

⁴⁵ Steffens, Doris (2003) Nicht nur Anglizismen... Neue Wörter und Wendungen in unserem Wortschatz. IDS-Sprachforum, 21.Mai 2003. In Sprachreport 4/2003. Mannheim, p.6.

further meaning. The change or broadening of the meaning of a word is an important aspect of lexical development. There are different reasons for meaning to change in existing words⁴⁶: Development and change in material production, the progress of human knowledge, the character of production conditions and continued existence after expression strengthening or expression weakening. Especially in the past decades a large number of neosemantisms has appeared.⁴⁷ For example German *Optik* used to be defined only as the science of light. Today this word is used in everyday language: einen bestimmten optischen Eindruck (“a certain visual impression”), eine optische Wirkung vermitteln des äußeres Erscheinungsbild (“an appearance conveying a certain optical effect”).⁴⁸

The German word *alternativ* has also experienced semantic change. Originally *alternativ* meant: “Switching between two possibilities, things, etc., optional, reciprocal.”⁴⁹ In the seventies a new meaning entered the field: “representing an attitude that attempts by rejecting certain social methods and behavior to realize a form of cohabitating that is felt to be better for humans and their environment.”⁵⁰

Since approx. 1970 many German *Alternativ*-words have appeared with this new meaning, such as *Alternativbewegung*, *-szene*, *alternative Gruppe*, *alternative Wahlliste*, *Alternativler*. New syntactical or grammatical uses can also reveal the formation of new meanings.

Originally in German one could only motivate something (*etwas motivieren*), nowadays one can motivate someone (*jemanden motivieren*). Originally the phrase *etwas anmachen* (to turn something on) existed, nowadays there is also *jemanden anmachen* (to bother someone).

Next to these entirely indigenous meanings changes there are also words that gained new meanings because of the influence of a foreign language (so-called borrowed meanings).⁵¹ The German verb *realisieren* used to mean only *actualize*, *fulfill*. Today it can be used analogue to English *to realize*.

The German verb *feuern* used to mean only: *to make fire in an oven* or (in military usage) *Feuergeben* (that is: to shoot). Today it can also mean to fire someone (end their employment), after English *to fire*. The German verb *buchen* has become very widespread with the meaning *to book* (after its English counterpart). These few examples show that the influence of foreign languages is one of the most important factors leading to meaning change in existing words.⁵²

In comparison to the new lexemes the quantity of new meanings is, as expected, relatively small. A new meaning is harder to identify than a new lexeme because its phonological realization exists already and only thus far unusual context partners signal a change.

Neologisms are not only newly formed or newly borrowed words, but also newly formed fixed word combinations and new meanings, on which a few comments follow.

5. On the grouping of neologisms by specialized area

New words and phrases appear especially in these areas⁵³:

- Computer/internet (e.g. Datenautobahn, Internet-Mart, der elektronische Markt, Digitalwährung, Internet-Sparbuch, online-Consumer, doppelklicken, E-mail)

⁴⁶ Steffens, Doris (2003) Nicht nur Anglizismen... Neue Wörter und Wendungen in unserem Wortschatz. IDS-Sprachforum, 21.Mai 2003. In Sprachreport 4/2003. Mannheim, p.2.

⁴⁷ Xuefu, Dou. (1987) *Neologismen im heutigen Deutsch*, in: Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, 59, p. 104.

⁴⁸ Duden - Deutsches Universalwörterbuch, 6. Aufl. Mannheim 2006.

⁴⁹ Fleischer, Wolfgang (1983) *Kleine Enzyklopädie- Deutsche Sprache*, Leipzig, p.288.

⁵⁰ Duden - Deutsches Universalwörterbuch, 6. Aufl. Mannheim 2006.

⁵¹ Xuefu, Dou. (1987) *Neologismen im heutigen Deutsch*, in: Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, 59, p. 104.

⁵² Ibid., p.104.

⁵³ Herberg, Dieter (2002) *Neologismen in der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Probleme ihrer Erfassung und Beschreibung. In: Deutsch als Fremdsprache 4/2002 Leipzig, p. 196f.

- Media (e.g. Bezahlfernseher, Multiplexkino, Late night show)
- Society (e.g. Bürgergeld, Erlebnisgesellschaft, Mobbing, Babyklappe, Minijob, Ostalgie)
- Sports (e.g. Bungeespringen, Inlineskating, walken, Gelbsperre)
- Economics (e.g. E-Commerce, Globalplayer, Outsourcing, Scheinselbständigkeit)
- Banking/finance (e.g. Direktbanking, electronic Cash, Eurogeld, Gewinnwarnung, Onlinebanking)
- Leisure/entertainment: (e.g. Konsolenspiel, Infotainment)
- Work/education (e.g. Assessmentcenter, Mobilzeit, Telelearning, E-learning, Computer-Based-Öearning, internetbasierteBildung, digitalesLernen, webedukation, virtuelleUniversität)
- Fashion: (e.g. Basecap, Outdoorjacke, piercen)
- Traffic/cars (e.g. Elchtest, Jobticket, Wegfahrsperr)
- Telephone/telecommunication (e.g. Call-by-call, Handy, Mobilnetz, Festnetz)

Fewer neologisms are found in these areas:

- Health (e.g. Knopflochchirurgie, Wellness)
- Music (e.g. Kuschelrock, Techno, unplugged)
- Food/Drugs (e.g. Energydrink, Gentomate, Partydroge)

6. On Anglicisms

Among the examples listed in the frame of specialized areas there is a large number of new borrowings from British and American English, which can be referred to as angloneologisms.⁵⁴ They arise from different areas, as well as from more technological areas such as “computer/internet” and those that fall in the realm of our so-called fun-society such as “media”, “sports”, “fashion” and “music”.

The German language has in its historical development and until today been exposed to the reciprocal influence of different cultures, and thus different languages.

One important component of today’s German is formed by the Anglicisms and Americanisms which flooded the language after 1945.

It is a fact that German is the European language that shows the largest growth. The reasons for this growth can only be touched upon here. Since the Second World War extralingual influences have been the economic support by the USA in form of the Marshall plan, Germany’s western-oriented alliance politics as well as the dominant position of the USA in branches like science and technology, which have lead English to dominate in international communication and become, word-wide, people’s first foreign language. The American lifestyle will also have played a role in its role-model function.⁵⁵

One of the intralingual reasons for the relatively large number of anglo-american borrowings is that when a certain innovation is taken over from the English or American language area its name is often taken over also. Further reasons are language economizing – Anglicisms are usually short and pithy, the close genetic relationship between English and German that often makes interchanging between the two languages as unremarkable as crossing the border, and the circumstance that Anglicisms are often apportioned a higher stylistic or communicative value. Speakers want to demonstrate education, modernity, cosmopolitanisms or their allegiance to a certain group of speakers.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Steffens, Doris (2003) Nicht nur Anglizismen... Neue Wörter und Wendungen in unserem Wortschatz. IDS-Sprachforum, 21.Mai 2003. In Sprachreport 4/2003. Mannheim, p.5.

⁵⁵ Steffens, Doris (2003) Nicht nur Anglizismen... Neue Wörter und Wendungen in unserem Wortschatz. IDS-Sprachforum, 21.Mai 2003. In Sprachreport 4/2003. Mannheim, p.5.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 5

Another reason is that, especially in technical discourse, translations of Anglicisms would create more confusion than borrowing them. There is also a lot that is based on puns and a lot that is superfluous. The superfluous will soon vanish from language use, the rest is part of the expansion of a vocabulary that must keep up with the racing changes of our world.⁵⁷

7. Reasons for the Formation of Neologisms

A large number of neologisms has arisen in all areas of the German language. How can we explain their origin and how can we judge them?

Wolfgang Müller comments in response to this question:

“Changes in politics and society as well as the development of science and technology are the reason for the formation of new words, with very different underlying occasions.”

Reasons for the formation of neologisms are:

- New things and facts make new meanings necessary
- Often many concurring names originate first, of which one pushes through as the name. Other names disappear
- Semantic differentiation/demarcation after the fact
- Stylistic differentiation after the fact
- Some things and facts disappear quickly and with them their names.

The most important reason that leads to the coinage of new expressions is: new things or facts must be named. A further important reason is the coinage of a new expression for what is already known and named with the goal of giving the name a new stylistic note: German *Banker* (banker) sounds better than *Bankangestellter*, German *Low-cost* as a lexical component has fewer negative connotations than *Billig* (cheap). Thirdly, multiple names for one referent can lead to extremely fine differentiations in usage context. The German word pair *Computer*, *Rechner* can be differentiated in that *der Rechner* is more likely to be used in technical discourse, and *der Computer* finds its use in everyday language.⁵⁸

There are, however, also counter votes expressing the fear that too many neologisms (especially new words from foreign languages) could have negative consequences.⁵⁹ From many sides the complaint is heard that the German language will fall into decay due to this too much foreign influence.⁶⁰

8. Conclusion

Some words disappear with the objects that they refer to, such as German *die Wahlscheibe* (rotary phone dial). Youths who grew up with mobile phones do not know the word. Other words die of old age or are replaced by new words. Old words like German *knorke* and *dufte* (nifty, great) have almost died out, today we find things *cool*. Words like *Mitgift* (dowry), *Kranzgeld* (duty to an illegitimate child) or *Verlobung* (engagement) no longer play a role today. Using such observations we can learn a lot about how our morals and our everyday lives change.⁶¹ How and why new words are formed and in which way this is dependent on individual areas of the German language such as technical language, language of youths or newspaper language were the original goals of this paper. One notices that in the time of the marriage of internet and techno parties new words are not only borrowings from English. More than

⁵⁷ www.wortwarte.de

⁵⁸ Müller, Wolfgang (1980) Wörter im Wandel oder Goethe noch ohne “Erlebnis“ in: Bücherkommuntare 3 / 4, p. 59f.

⁵⁹ Lemnitzer, Lothar (2007) *Neue Wörter – Die Wortwarte- auf der Suche nach den Neuwörter von morgen!* www.wortwarte.de

⁶⁰ Xuefu, Dou. (1987) *Neologismen im heutigen Deutsch*, in: Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, 59, p. 105.

⁶¹ Mrotzek, Bodo, *Bedrohte Kleinode der deutschen Sprache*. In: Müncher Merkur von 12.06.2007, Rubrik: Im Blickpunkt, p.3.

half of all neologisms were formed in German. It is still foreseeable that the number of Anglicisms will grow. Yet the German language is not in danger of too much foreign influence, since Anglicisms are integrated into the German language system with respect to pronunciation, spelling and grammar.⁶²

In addition, German would be much poorer without foreign influence. Language looks for its own path and is not to be controlled by laws. Only a sensitive and conscious handling of mother tongue is of concern today.

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⁶² Steffens, Doris (2003) Nicht nur Anglizismen... Neue Wörter und Wendungen in unserem Wortschatz. IDS-Sprachforum, 21.Mai 2003. In Sprachreport 4/2003. Mannheim, p.9.