

Sabine Fiedler
*Gläserne Decke und Elefant im Raum –
Phraseologische Anglizismen im Deutschen*
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The fact that nowadays English influences other languages, especially their lexicons, is indisputable. Its impact is noticeable – even for those language users who are not linguists – in many fields of lexis, for instance, in those of business and technology. English functions as a modern *lingua franca*, being the language of international contacts, collaboration and exchange in the world of science, politics, media and many other spheres of human activity. Lexical borrowings from English have often been the object of studies and multiaspectual analyses of loan words have been conducted for many languages. However, far less attention has been paid to the way, in which English enriches phrasicons of other languages with fixed expressions of various kinds. Therefore, the book titled *Gläserne Decke und Elefant im Raum – Phraseologische Anglizismen im Deutschen*, written by Sabine Fiedler¹, is a valuable scientific contribution to the studies on phraseological borrowings, discussed on the example of phraseological loans of English origins in the modern German language².

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² The author of the book has published several papers on English borrowings in the German language, such as: “Willkommen zurück!” – Zum Einfluss des Englischen auf die Phraseologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache, [in:] *Phraseology in Motion I*, eds A. Häcki Buhofer, H. Burger, Baltmannsweiler 2006, pp. 451–465; eadem, “Am Ende des Tages zählt die Performance.” – Der Einfluss des Englischen auf die Phraseologie der deutschen Gegen-

The reviewed book consists of seven chapters, followed by a bibliography two and appendices. Chapter One, titled *Einleitung*, is of introductory character. It contains the presentation of the structure of the book and the aims of the research study. In a theoretical perspective, the main objective to document the phenomena, i.e. to describe the actual use of language. In this chapter the author also presents of the method adopted for the research study, which was conducted. She bases on the method which is described as a *consultation paradigm* by Kathrin Steyer³. The method relies on conducting research on borrowings by means of consulting corpora: potential loan phrases were collected and then identified in Korpus des Instituts für Deutsche Sprache (IDS) in Mannheim (COSMAS 2⁴).

Chapter Two, titled *Phraseologie*, contains preliminary remarks on specific character of phraseology. First, the area of phraseology is defined, and then the characteristic features of a phraseological unit are described. The first of them is compositionality: a fixed expression is composed of at least two constituents. With reference to the examples of phraseological borrowings analysed in the book, it is emphasised that the original form of the unit, e.g. the one of the English phrase, determined whether or not it was included in the research material.

Therefore, among analysed borrowings there is a compound noun, *Daumenregel* – its presence is justified by the fact that it is a German equivalent of the English expression *a rule of the thumb*, which meets the criteria for a phraseological unit (p. 17). The second important characteristic of the expressions in question is stability, the third – lexicalisation. The

wartssprache, [in:] *Phraseologie global – areal – regional*, eds J. Korhonen et al., Tübingen 2010, pp. 163–172; *The sky is the limit – The influence of English on German phraseology*, [in:] *Intercontinental Dialogue on Phraseology 1: Focal Issues of Phraseological Studies*, eds J. Szerszunowicz et al., Białystok 2011, pp. 247–268; *Der Elefant im Raum ...The influence of English on German Phraseology*, [in:] *The Anglicization of European Lexis*, eds C. Furiassi et al., Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2012, pp. 239–259; *“Lassen Sie mich noch diesen Punkt machen” – The influence of English on German phraseology*, [in:] *Phraseology in Interlingual and Intercultural Contact*, eds M. Fabčić et al., Bielsko-Biała 2013, pp. 207–222.

³ The German term is *Konsultationsparadigma*. K. Steyer, *Kookurenz. Korpusmethodik, linguistisches Modell, lexikographische Perspektiven*, [in:] *Wortverbindungen – mehr oder weniger fest*, Hrsg. K. Steyer, Berlin–New York 2004, pp. 87–116. See also M. Sailer, *Corpus linguistic approaches with German corpora*, [in:] *Phraseologie. Phraseology. Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung. An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*, vol. 2, eds H. Burger et al., Berlin–New York 2007, pp. 1064–1065.

⁴ The abbreviated name of the corpus, COSMAS, stands for *Corpus Search Management and Analysis System*.

two others are: idiomaticity, which is considered to be typical, but not obligatory, and connotative potential. Chapter Two also contains a brief presentation of the main kinds of phraseological units, which comprises the following ones: phraseological nominations, binomials, stereotypical comparisons, collocations, routine formulae, proverbs, winged words. Moreover, the subchapter is devoted to the cultural character of stable word combinations.

The focal issue of Chapter Three, *Untersuchungen zu englischen Einflüssen auf das Deutsche*, is the research on English influence on the German language. It begins with a review of research studies on this issue, followed by a presentation kinds of borrowings in a diagram, with the headwords of loanwords, loanshifts, loanblends, also called *hybrids* (p. 33). The phenomenon called *pseudoanglicism* is defined as the units which do not exist in the giving language or they exist, but are used in a different meaning. To illustrate this issue (p. 34), the author gives example of lexical pseudoanglicisms (*handy*, *Oldtimer*), commenting on the existence of phraseological units which can be classified as pseudoanglicism, such as *Gin-Tonic* (Eng. *gin and tonic*) and *happy end* (Eng. *happy ending*).

The causes of borrowing are discussed in Chapter Four, the title of which is *Einflüsse des Englischen auf die deutsche Gegenwartssprache*. The author draws attention to the role, which the English language plays nowadays thanks to the leadership of the USA in many disciplines. The influence manifests itself in many ways, one of which is observed in borrowing phraseological units. Moreover, the differentiation between necessary and luxury loans is signalled. The chapter contains a presentation of the typology of phraseological borrowings, comprising direct loan phrases, hybrid borrowings, calques (pp. 41–49). The problem of loan identification is also tackled and the following criteria for the determination of phraseological loans are proposed: the use of a given phraseological unit (a candidate for a loan phrase) in the Anglo-American context, its metacommunicative markedness, creation of variants, the existence of equivalents in other languages. Furthermore, the question of the acceptability of phraseological units is raised.

Chapter Five, *Einzeldarstellungen ausgewählter Neophraseologismen*, contains case studies of selected German phraseological borrowings from the English language, which have been incorporated into the phrasicon within the last twenty years. The following fifteen units of English origins, comprising thirteenth fixed expressions and two compound nouns, are

analysed: *Daumenregel, die Extrameile gehen, (ein) Tropfen im Ozean, etwas ist keine Raketenwissenschaft, (der) Elefant im Raum, Rattenrennen, einen / den Unterschied machen, Wem es in der Küche zu heiß ist, der sollte nicht Koch werden, einen Punkt machen, den Kuchen essen und (gleichzeitig) behalten, netter Versuch / nice try, die Welt ... ein besserer Ort / Platz, Das gesagt (habend) / Nachdem ich das gesagt habe, Solange die dicke Frau noch singt, ist die Oper nicht zu Ende, jemandem den Tag retten / you made my day.* The units are discussed and special attention is paid to their occurrences in the German corpus.

Moreover, in this chapter further fifteen potential neophraseologisms of English origins are presented. Among them there are such units as: *Da muss irgendwas im Wasser sein* (cf. *there must be something in the water*), *ein Problem adressieren* (cf. *to address a problem*), *Ein guter Punkt* (cf. *Good point!*), *Ich dachte, du würdest nie fragen* (cf. *I thought you'd never ask*), (...) *mein Held / Mein Held ist ...* (cf. *You are my hero / my hero is ...*), *Und Schweine können fliegen* (*Pigs might fly*), *goldener Fallschirm* (*golden parachute*), *eine Marke setzen* (*to set a mark; to make your / a mark*), *Das Grass ist immer grüner auf der anderen Seite des Zauns* (*The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence*), *There is no such thing as a free lunch / There is no free lunch*, *Einmal-im-Leben Ereignis* (*once-in-a-lifetime event*), *Fühl dich / fühlen Sie sich frei* (*etwas zu tun*), *sehr eng sein* (*to be [very] close*), *der / die / das beste / (the) best* (or another superlative form) ... *ever*. The explanation of the meaning of each unit is followed by corpus examples, which provides a good illustration on their use.

Chapter Six, *Auswertung und Schlussfolgerungen*, is meant to sum up the discussion. It contains remarks on the extent of the process of borrowing phraseological units. In order to determine it, one needs to apply certain criteria to prove that the loan phrase comes from English. Firstly, the presence of given units in the Anglo-American context is important: the fact that there are so many loan phrases can be partially due to the influence of translations from English as well as their presence in bilingual speakers' communication. Such units are often accompanied by metacommunicative phrases *so gennante* or *wie die Amerikaner sagen*. Many units have variants, like *die gläserne Decke* and *Glasdecke*, which are German counterparts of the English phrase *the glass ceiling*. They co-occur until one of them remains as the dominant form. Moreover, attention should be paid to the presence of parallel borrowings in other languages (p. 151).

Cultural aspects of the process of borrowing are also discussed. In the German language, there are areas especially rich in English loans, such as, for instance, the business activity, stock exchange etc. Another sphere, where many units of English origin function, is television. The new kind of politeness developed under the influence of American culture, which is corroborated by the widespread use of the expression *Haben Sie noch einen schönen Tag* (p. 154), a German translation of the English pragmatic idiom *Have a nice day*.

The author draws attention to the fact that the vast majority of loan phrases tends to undergo some adjustments to the system, as it is the case with German phraseological borrowings. The direct and hybrid ones have to adjust to the phonological system. Moreover, the orthographic modifications can be found. An interesting observation regards semantic changes which occur in the process of borrowing. As an example, the expression *There is no such thing as a free lunch / There is no free lunch (in the world)* is discussed (p. 158–159). Furthermore, structural differences appear, for instance, shortened forms of constituents or a change of order of components. Some units, which are only used in the negative form in English, can also be found with no negation in German.

Two more problems, i.e. the normative aspects of phraseological borrowings and their widespreadness, are also considered in this chapter. The analysis shows that media play an important role in determining the status of loan phrases, since talk show hosts and moderators tend to react when foreign words or phrases of terminological character appear. They do so in order to avoid communication problems. However, they do not react in case fixed expressions are used. To sum up, the influence of English on other languages is briefly commented on⁵.

The book contains two appendices, the first of which is titled *Bild- und Textbelege*. It contains readers' letters regarding anglicisms from "Leipziger Volkszeitung" (pp. 181–182). Moreover, there are authentic uses of phraseological borrowings from English taken from a variety of sources. Potential borrowings of Anglo-American origins are included in the second appendix – *Register phraseologischer Anglizismen*. They are listed in alphabetical order according to the key constituent given in bold.

⁵ See for example *A Dictionary of European Anglicisms*, ed. M. Görlach, Oxford 2001; *Słownik zapożyczeń angielskich w polszczyźnie*, red. nauk. i merytoryczny tomu E. Mańczak-Wohlfeld, Warszawa 2010.

The appendices are followed by the index (*Sachregister*) and the bibliography.

The structure of the book is well thought-out and clear. As already mentioned, the book is a valuable source of information regarding phraseological borrowings, a phenomenon which has not been given as much attention as it deserves in research studies so far. Generally speaking, communication relies heavily on prefabricated language and the units at issue are attractive expressions for language users. The expressions which are recent loan phrases from English have certain stylistic properties, as they are marked with novelty and foreignness. Moreover, some of them filled in a gap in phraseology of the German language, so they are useful language chunks in terms of conversation potential.

Therefore, findings of the present study not only document how the language develops and contribute to discourse studies, but also have a practical implementation. The first area, in which they can be used, is mono- and bilingual phraseography. The other spheres are teaching German, both as a mother tongue and as a foreign language, and translation. As for the former, it gives an insight into the phenomenon viewed from a linguistic point of view and provides a solid base for its presentation in the classroom environment. The case studies, which offer an analysis of the properties and status of the units, can be treated as an inspiration for an individual or team project work and many other activities. Translators could also benefit from the monograph in terms of developing their language awareness and sensitivity to new phrases as well as enhancing their ability to evaluate such innovations.

It is worth adding that discussing loan phrases is very important also from a normative point of view. This aspect is also commented on in the monograph. The adoption of a broad perspective allows for presenting a comprehensive description of the phenomena, illustrated with many examples of authentic uses of the German language, which is another strong point of the work. It should be stressed that the illustrative material is well chosen, varied and interesting: most of it comes from the corpus, which includes the uses in such modern media as the Internet. Moreover, one of appendices contains some advertisements and other original texts accompanied by visual elements, which adds to the attractiveness of the material.

The reviewed work is of great value for linguists, especially those interested in phraseology, intercultural aspects, discourse analysis and

linguo-cultural studies. It contains the findings of the studies on German material and contributes to theoretical studies on the phenomena. Moreover, the analysis of phraseological borrowings can be a model for loan phrases in other languages. It gives a clear direction of how the research on expressions belonging to this group can be done, which makes it an important book not only for well-established scholars, but also for those who are about to start doing research, students and young linguists, who would like to focus on phraseological borrowings.

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