German as an Endangered Language?

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Zusammenfassung

Über den Zustand des Deutschen wird in den vergangenen Jahren mehr und lauter geklagt. Auch scheint die Zahl der Stimmen, die das Klagelied anstimmen, zuzunehmen. Immer gibt es Sprachkritiker, die von Verfall und Bedrohtheit sprechen, aber inzwischen sehen fast sechzig Prozent der Deutschen die Entwicklung ihrer Sprache als bedenklich oder sogar als beunruhigend an. Wissenschaftler befürchten einen Verlust der universellen Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten, Politiker erinnern bei ihrer Meinung nach passender Gelegenheit an die marginale Rolle des Deutschen in internationalen Organisationen und einige Sprachwissenschaftler halten die Kraft des Deutschen zur Assimilation oder Integration fremden Sprachmaterials für nur noch gering. Meist wird dabei dem Englischen eine besondere Rolle zugeschrieben, und zwar sowohl was seine internationale Stellung als auch was seinen Einfluß auf das Deutsche betrifft.

Was aber kann genau gemeint sein, wenn wir in einem solchen Zusammenhang von unserer Sprache selbst reden wollen und nicht einfach ein kulturkritisches Lamento auf die Sprache übertragen? Der Beitrag möchte diese Frage ernst nehmen. Er spricht eine Reihe von Möglichkeiten an und wendet sich dann ein wenig genauer einem der Paradefälle für den Einfluß des Englischen auf das Deutsche zu, nämlich der Flexionsmorphologie. Wie geht das Deutsche mit den fremden Wörtern um? Kann es sie assimilieren oder gar integrieren? In welchem Sinn oder welcher Richtung verändert es sich dabei? Könnte eine Bedrohung entstehen?

1. Endangeredness

By conversational maxim the title of the New York conference – "The Fate of European Languages in the Age of Globalization: The Future of German" – has to be read as a request. We should be concerned about the future of the German language in the age of globalization. We should work out an honest diagnosis and think about possible remedies. Perhaps one can take comfort from the fact that the future of German is closely related to the fate of European languages in general, but this might be some kind of cold comfort. It seems evident and therefore to be presupposed that there are indeed prob-

lems for the future of German. More radical formulations can be heard at many places and in many contexts, calling German a dying, a threatened, or at least an endangered language.

Linguists and modern linguistics as their academic discipline, are blamed again and again for not being really interested in their subject matter. This is all the more the case as in the German tradition there has never been a simple division between academic work on language on the one hand and popular or even populistic language criticism on the other. At all times we find professionals who were concerned about the state and the development of the language, such as Joachim Heinrich Campe, whose attempts to translate foreign words into German are now labelled as some kind of 'enlightened purism' (Campe 1813; Schiewe 1998: 125–150; Haß-Zumkehr 2001: 111–118). Jacob Grimm – who is still considered the founder of the discipline now called *Germanistik* – was worried about the German language during the greater part of his working life. This tradition has never been interrupted and is still alive (see Schiewe 1998 for an overview touching on today's situation and Schrodt 1995 for an elucidating report on the intricate relationship between German philology and language criticism in the 19th and 20th centuries). Walter Krämer's *Verein deutsche Sprache* (VdS), which was only founded in 1992 and which is the most influential private organisation fighting the influence of English on German, had no problem in constituting a highly reputable academic advisory board. It is from this side that we hear the reproach: "Die Sprachwissenschaft und die sprachpflegenden Institutionen haben diese Entwicklung ignoriert und sich so aus ihrer Verantwortung für unsere Sprache gestohlen" (Glück and Krämer 2000: 90; see also Glück 2000).

German philology cannot simply ignore the public language debate, if only because a large majority of the Germans consider the development of their mother tongue to be alarming or disquieting ("beunruhigend oder bedenklich", Stickel 1998: 42). We have to be involved, but of course we have to insist on retaining the most important achievement of modern linguistics, that is its status as an empirical discipline. Descriptive linguistics can contribute in an essential way to the language debate by clarifying what could be meant if one talks and worries about "endangeredness" with respect to a language such as German.

Within linguistics the term is used for such, and only such, languages which are in danger of becoming extinct by the loss of native speakers. Some years ago the Society of Endangered Languages (*Gesellschaft für bedrohte Sprachen*) was founded. The main goals of the society are the collection and distribution of information about the language situation world wide, and

raising funds for the documentation of at least some of the about fifty languages dying every year (for further information see http://www.uni-koeln.de/GbS/). When talking about a language with nearly 100 million speakers and more than 20 million learners one should carefully avoid even the slightest associative links in this direction.

A more specific aspect of endangeredness applies to what has been called the universal character of a language. The group of languages fulfilling the conditions is not very large. They are standardized as spoken and as written languages but nevertheless include numerous dialects and technical terminologies, all kinds of registers for special purposes, an extensive literature and a subtle social stratification. What has been deplored during recent years is first of all the decreasing importance of German as a language for international scientific communication. And even worse, certain scientific terminologies have not been transferred, or not completely, to German regardless of whether this would be easily possible or useful (Pörksen 1994; Ammon 1998; 2002). But even if it is true that the Germans are less active and more opportunistic in this respect than for instance the French, this aspect of language globalization has nothing whatsoever to do with German. Differences between German and languages comparable in size and status are gradual in nature. This again is not to state that we should stay inactive. Yet it seems of some importance not to give the impression that there is anything special here with respect to German.

The kind of language threat which constitutes the long and ongoing history of German purism is completely different in nature. Motivations have been manifold in this heterogeneous movement, even if one only takes into consideration the attempts to purify or protect the language from foreign words. If arguments or at least something like reasons can be found for the claim that the language is threatened, they are in most cases neither linguistic nor can they be directly related to linguistic argumentations. If purity is a value in itself, if etymological facts are sufficient to mark a word as 'strange', 'alien' or 'nonnative' and therefore replaceable by a 'domestic' or 'native' word, then there is not very much left for linguistic reasoning. Furthermore Peter von Polenz in his overview (Polenz 1999: 264–293) makes it quite clear that at several points in its history purism was not even able to identify the areas of influence from other languages on German. For the period of a rapidly developing language movement as part of the nationalistic euphoria after 1871 he states: "Über der *Fremd*wort-Jagd an der Oberfläche der Sprache (Ausdrucksseite) wurde der viel größere innere Lehneinfluß auf den ‚Geist' der deutschen Sprache völlig ignoriert" (Polenz 1999: 270). And as far as the foreign vocabulary is concerned he identifies a lack of differen-

tiation as the main problem: "Trotz häufiger Erklärungen und Dementis über maßvolles, differenziertes Vorgehen wurde der Unterschied zwischen zu ersetzendem *Fremd*wort und unentbehrlichem *Lehn*wort zwar postuliert, aber niemals definitorisch geklärt […]" (Polenz 1999: 270).

The distinction between 'Fremdwort' and 'Lehnwort' is by no means uniform and uncontroversial in the literature, but most authors make use of 'integration' when explicating it. We will use the following section 2 to go a bit further into terminological questions. At the moment it will suffice to remember that at least one reading of 'integration' is 'adapted to the core grammar' of the borrowing language, where 'grammar' in turn can simply be understood as a description of the phonological, morphological and syntactic systems, possibly augmented by a description of the graphemic system. By this step one gains access to the tools designed for the systematic exploration of language contact as it has been developed and applied e.g. in the epochal work of Uriel Weinreich (Weinreich 1967). Nonnative words can then be described with respect to their structural properties as integrated or not integrated, and these properties can eventually be related to the respective ones in other languages. As we will see, this simple and seemingly evident kind of analysis has not become dominant or even influential in the discussion of the status of loan words in German.

To agree upon a satisfying terminology we will now briefly review some of the literature proposing a classification of nonnative words and especially anglicisms (section 2). We will then attempt to identify some of the relevant properties of German anglicisms on one level of grammatical description, namely the level of inflection (section 3). Section 4 draws some conclusions by returning to the question of what can be said about endangeredness.

2. Alien anglicisms

Academic as well as public interest in loan words was awakened to new life so to speak in Germany after World War II by Peter von Polenz' article "Fremdwort und Lehnwort sprachwissenschaftlich betrachtet". The article was first published in 1967 in the journal *Muttersprache* (Polenz 1979). It was the same year in which Polenz edited the second German edition of Saussure's "Cour", and the article appeared in the same journal as many chauvinistic and racist language articles before 1945. *Muttersprache* had been the official organ of the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Sprachverein*. These and some other circumstances clearly signalized that fundamental changes were taking place in the field.

For the questions we are discussing the most important issue was Polenz' appeal to synchronic linguistic analysis. Two main points can be made. First Polenz argued that a purely etymological perspective can end up in all kinds of racist reasonings about the status of words in general and above all of loan words. What he criticizes is "Der methodologische Irrtum eines Philologen, man brauche zur Beurteilung des gegenwärtigen Zustands einer Sprache nur die Etymologie anzuwenden […]" (Polenz 1979: 13). Instead he suggests considering words with respect to their sociological and structural properties. The fundamental question is formulated as "Wie verhalten sich Wörter fremdsprachiger Herkunft im Systemzusammenhang des Wortschatzes zu den sinnbenachbarten Wörtern aus heimischem Sprachmaterial?" (Polenz 1979: 17).

The second point is of equal significance. Polenz (1979: 26–29) gives many examples and describes some basic regularities of productive word formation with foreign stems and affixes. He analyses the morphological processes involved as part of the German language system, i.e. explicitly not as part of the Greek or Latin system, though most of the morphs in question are borrowed from these languages. So it becomes evident that most foreign words do not even exist in the languages from which they are supposed to originate. Instead they are elements of the German, and possibly only of the German, vocabulary, but they are nevertheless foreign words. It seems to have been largely unthinkable or at least not realized in the German tradition that it could be of some interest to consider such words not exclusively from an etymological perspective.

Despite the reliance on synchronic linguistics Polenz left the range of words to be treated as foreign words or loan words as it was. Of course he discussed in some detail the necessity to differentiate 'Lehnwörter' (as integrated) from 'Fremdwörter' (as not integrated), where the criteria could be either sociolinguistic or structural in nature. The basis for the whole discussion was nevertheless the origin of the units to be analyzed from languages other than German. Within this domain of 'foreign' elements in the literal sense of the word any question may be asked, all kinds of properties can be explored. But first of all the foreign origin has to be assured. Polenz takes it that one is considering "Wörter fremdsprachiger Herkunft" (1979: 17), "Wörter und Wortstämme aus anderen Sprachen" (1979: 26) or, citing Hans Marchand, one is in general occupied with "Wörtern mit aus Fremdsprachen stammenden Bestandteilen" (1979: 27). We do not want to suppose that there is anything wrong with this approach. But we do want to bring to attention the fact that etymological considerations still play a basic role in that they define the domain of the vocabulary in question. And it has to be added that

this is also the case in most of the later attempts to define notions such as, for instance, 'anglicism in German'.

The term is defined, for example, as "Oberbegriff von Entlehnungen aus dem britischen Englisch, dem amerikanischen Englisch, sowie den übrigen englischsprachigen Ländern […]" (Yang 1990: 1) or somewhat more abstract as for use in the Anglizismen-Wörterbuch (Carstensen and Busse 1993) as "[…] jede Erscheinung der deutschen Sprache […], die auf Transferenz der englischen Sprache zurückgeht" (Busse 2001: 134). Under such headings we then find elaborate classifications of linguistic units starting with morphemes and ending up with phrases, which are used in German and whose form or meaning or whose form *and* meaning can be said to originate in English. One tries hard to detect these units no matter whether identifiable by their properties as anglicisms or not. If it can be shown that words such as *starten, streiken, killen, kicken, tanken, Killer, Kicker, Tanker* were first used in English and only later on in German, then they are seen as anglicisms despite the fact that they are fully integrated into German and behave in every respect like German words from the core vocabulary. The same holds for so called loan translations (*Eierkopf, Arbeitsessen, Umeltschutz,* 'Lehnprägung'), for loan creations (*Klimaanlage ← air conditioner, Helligkeitsregler ← dimmer, Stoßzeit ← rush hour,* 'Lehnschöpfung') and for semantic loans (*heiß ← hot, realisieren ← to realize, feuern ← to fire,* 'Lehnbedeutung'). Each class may be further differentiated since for some of the words the meaning in German seems to be very close to the English meaning, whereas for others this is not the case. They all are anglicisms for genetic, not structural reasons. They are considered to be loan words and "borrowed from English" (Jorgensen and Moraco 1984: 104) though they were generated in German.

Again it should be stressed that we do not want to question in any way the research on language contact which is trying to understand the circumstances under which linguistic forms or meanings are taken over by a language. However it is anything but compelling to talk about the influence of one language on another language and about the consequences of this influence if one does not even know what exactly this influence consists of. The 'hidden' influence of English on German is extensively discussed in the literature, one of the results being "Anglizismen dieser Art nachzuweisen ist schwierig und bedarf intensiver Recherchen […]" (Busse 2001: 137), and "[…] often it can not be established beyond doubt that the equivalence is really based on translation" (Busse/Görlach 2002: 26). To pursue this idea might even appear a bit like looking for the threat. However interesting such research may be, it will not help us to answer the question of whether German is threatened

by the influence of English. We just do not know what it could mean for a language to be threatened this way.

As a consequence of this reasoning, semantic loans such as *realisieren* ('to understand'), *kontrollieren* ('to intentionally influence') or *Philosophie* ('rules for behavior') are not to be taken as anglicisms at all but as latinisms or greekisms. The same is true for all other words which come into German (probably) via English but do not have any specific English grammatical properties in German, as for instance *Taifun, Waggon, Wigwam, Dschungel, Bumerang, Känguru*. For the native speaker of German they are nonnative for different reasons, but without an appropriate world knowledge he can not perceive them as originating from English. So it might well be the case that the speaker classifies a word as nonnative without being able to relate it to a specific language. On the other hand we do not see any problem in classifying words such as *computerisieren, Air-Bus, Anti-Dumping* and *Beatmusik* as anglicisms which are latinisms or greekisms at the same time.

The opposite stance is taken here with respect to words or other units which are not borrowed from English but contain anglicisms as parts or have grammatical properties specific for English. The main group of such words consists of the so called pseudoanglicisms. For the native speaker of German the famous *Handy* is an anglicism as well as *Baby, City, Body,* and *Showmaster* as well as *Cocktailparty* or *Bodyguard.* We have to even go one step further by including words which do not embody any English morpheme. In a normal English dictionary as well as in the "Anglizismen-Wörterbuch" one finds words or constituents of words such as *Smarty* and *Nuts,* but not of words such as *Snickers* and *Twix*. Even if the latter exist somewhere in English, this would be of no importance for their status as anglicisms in German. They are anglicisms by structure, not by origin.

The influence of English on German, in the sense that German is affected, changed, threatened or endangered by this influence, can be more clearly defined if one talks about the language systems. I would not in principle deny the possibility of talking also about what Polenz quotes as the 'Geist' ['spirit'] of a language, though this seems difficult particularly if one compares closely related languages. It would, for example, undoubtedly be of interest to know whether German is changing in the way it constructs its metaphors. It would also be interesting to know what it means that German now uses a verb such as *denken* more like a transitive verb (*Sie denkt dies; Sie denkt, daß …*). Is it an important change if one takes into account that (1) the older argument pattern of *denken* is still alive (*denken an etwas*) and (2) German has for a long time had similar verbs with the argument structure in question (*Sie glaubt, daß …; Sie vermutet, daß …*). And what does it

mean that the Germans now tend to say *in 2002* instead of the traditional *im Jahr 2002*? What does it mean if one takes into account that for a long time they have said *vor/seit/nach 2002*? Perhaps somebody will come up with something interesting on such issues. The goal of the present paper is more moderate and concrete. It should make sense ('Es sollte Sinn machen') to talk about language by talking about language systems, and this all the more so as it is at least imaginable that a language can be destroyed by the destruction of its system. Hence, we use the term 'anglicism in German' for language units of German exhibiting grammatical properties which for the average native speaker are properties of English and at the same time not properties of units describable within the core grammar of German. In the German literature such units are often called 'fremd' (Wurzel 1981: 908–910). This does not exactly match 'alien' found in the English literature, but of the terms available this seems by far the most suitable. So in what follows we will talk about 'alien anglicisms'.

3. Anglicisms in German inflection

Though closely related in many respects, English and German are still fundamentally different as far as inflection is concerned. It should therefore be interesting to consider how German inflects its anglicisms. Is there any serious influence of English? Is the German system even on the way to becoming more and more similar to the English system? We will discuss these questions briefly with examples from the three open inflecting word classes, i.e. the adjectives, the verbs and the nouns.

3.1 Adjectives

The inflectional behavior of anglicistic adjectives is rather heterogeneous, yet anything but chaotic. Most importantly, it seems possible to order the adjectives along a scale of integratedness, taking the inflectional behavior of the prototypical native adjective as the point of reference. As a first step we distinguish the following classes (1).

(1)
a. *clean, cool, soft, fair, smart, safe, tough*
b. *clever, proper, gentle, open*
c. *fit, hot, hip, top*

d. *light, live, pur*
e. *pink*
f. *easy, dirty, fancy, groggy, happy, trendy, tricky, sexy*
g. *relaxed, recycled, gelabelled, gepuzzled, airconditioned*
h. *big, full, second, electronic, essential*

The adjectives of the first class are inflectionally integrated. They are marked as anglicisms by their spelling or by some phonological peculiarities. So *soft* is pronounced as [sɔft]. The voiceless [s] is not found in initial position before a vowel in the core vocabulary. An interesting point can be made for an adjective like *cool*, which is normally, or at least by many speakers, pronounced as [kuːʟ] with a velarised [ʟ]. When inflected as in attributive position, this alien phonological feature disappears. The inflected forms are then fully integrated morphologically and phonologically (*coole* – [kuːlə], *cooles* – [kuːləs] a.s.o.). It is a widespread phenomenon that certain integrational steps can trigger others which might or might not be directly related to them. For most adjectives the first step is the occurrence in predicative or adverbial position, where it is uninflected and therefore most similar to the English form. To inflect is a significant step away from the one-form English to the multi-form German word paradigm.

Similar considerations seem to be in place for the second group (1b). In the core vocabulary the same three classes of bisyllabic adjectival stems with a sonorant forming the coda of a reduced syllable can be found: *heiter, edel, offen*. They differ with respect to possible reductions of schwa (Raffelsiefen 1995; Eisenberg 1998: 174–175). The anglicisms follow them as soon as they are integrated phonologically, e.g. *heiteres – properes* as well as *heitres – propres*. Neither *gentle* nor *open* has made this step.

As anglicistic adjectives *light, live* (and perhaps *pur*) are used in postnominal position (*Linguistik light, Fußball live, Whisky pur*). The construction seems to be gaining importance in German and is realized with adjectives of all types (*Eishockey brutal, Urlaub total, Kartoffeln satt;* Dürscheid 2002: 62–70). So *live* and *light* can be said to be not inflected for syntactic reasons and partially integrated.

The adjectives of the fourth group (1d) are confined to predicative and adverbial position for purely orthographic reasons. They are taken over with their English spelling, but this spelling could not be preserved in inflected forms. A single consonant letter marking the position between a stressed lax vowel and schwa has to be geminated. Since integration of spelling is in general difficult to achieve, this gemination does at least not appear immediately. So we have *hip* besides *hipp*, but we often hear phrases like *ein*

fittes Team while hesitating to write them. Furthermore a gemination in attributive but not predicative position would lead to different spellings for the stem form of such a word paradigm. In German this is – unlike in English – only possible under special conditions which are not met here.

The behavior of *pink* (1e) appears to be somewhat special if not seen in the semantic field of color terms. The form is fully integrated phonologically, since German has adjectives like *krank, schlank, flink* as well as many verbal and nominal stems of this structure. *Pink* is nevertheless hardly inflected in written language. This is probably one of the cases where speakers are simply aware of the fact that the word is borrowed. Therefore they treat it in analogy to the numerous alien color terms which hardly ever inflect, such as *beige, oliv, azur, türkis, orange*. So *pink* is integrated into this group, not (yet) into the core vocabulary. But being integrated at all stabilizes the behavior. Normative grammar offers *türkisenes* and *türkisfarbenes* as ways out of the difficulties, which both also work for *pink*.

Simple stems with a second unstressed open full syllable in German generally avoid a naked reduced syllable following them. This is the reason why the adjectives of 1f cannot be inflected. They might become further integrated one day by being used in attributive position without inflection as is the case for the longstanding color terms *lila* and *rosa* (*eine lila/rosa Latzhose*). At present they simply seem to be 'too anglicistic' for this kind of usage.

The adjectives of 4g have the form of participles, though some of them are not directly derived from verb stems. We do not need to discuss the complex question of how such forms could be derived. For the context given it is of importance that they are restricted to uninflected use as long as the English *-ed* is preserved in the written form. In some of them this ending can easily be replaced by the German *-t*, which then also leads to a different position of schwa. We get *recycelt, recyceltes Papier* and the infinitive *recyceln* instead of the less integrated *recyclen*. The verb *recyceln* now inflects exactly like *segeln, handeln, regeln* from the core vocabulary. It is inflectionally fully integrated. A process of this kind can not be expected for *airconditioned*. Since the infinitive ends with an *-n,* the respective verbs build it as in *verregnen* with the participle *verregnet*. This would mean *airconditionet* for our candidate, which now looks more like an abortive than an integrated anglicism. The alternative *airconditiont* is problematic in the way some mechanically built participles in the core vocabulary are. On water-bottles we find the form *enteisent* ('deironed') which nobody uses in every day language.

With the last group (1h) we would like to demonstrate what it means to be not integrated. These adjectives are English words and not anglicisms of

German. They are mostly found in phrases which are at least interpretable as purely English phrases such as *Wir sind Ihr electronic partner* or *eine CD von Essential Classics.*

3.2 Verbs

The integration processes for verb stems are even simpler and more uniform than for adjective stems. At least the following classes can be distinguished:

(2)
a. *boomen, bowlen, surfen, catchen, coachen, dealen, strippen, stylen, tunen, jobben, joggen*
b. *covern, lasern, powern, doubeln, labeln, puzzeln, setteln*
c. *mixen, stressen, jazzen, beaten, flirten, hotten, splitten, jetten*
d. *antörnen, anklicken, aufpoppen, aufsplitten, ausflippen, ausknocken*
e. *babysitten, websurfen, downloaden, upgraden*

All verbs follow the weak declension, which is without doubt the unmarked pattern in present-day German. Most of the simple monosyllabic stems (2a) immediately include all finite and infinite forms of the verbal paradigm and select the auxiliary for the perfect according to the general rules (*Er hat gedealt; Sie ist zum Brandenburger Tor gejoggt*). Furthermore, verb stems adopt immediately the orthographic gemination of consonant letters in final position. The English *to pin, to job, to dip* produce the German *pinnen, jobben, dippen*. Gemination is then preserved in all forms. The weak verb follows what Wurzel (1984) calls stem inflection, i.e. there are no forms which consist of the pure stem without any suffix. As a consequence the verb stem and the respective noun stem often differ in that the former exposes gemination whereas the latter does not (*pinnen – der Pin, jobben – der Job*). Such spelling difference is not permitted in the core vocabulary, it marks a stem as alien.

Bisyllabic stems with final *-er* and *-el* (2b) can also be fully integrated in following the pattern of verbs such as *rudern* and *segeln.* Some of them may have to make several steps, as has been demonstrated above for *recyclen → recyceln.* There are no formal obstacles to taking these steps. This is different for the verbs with final *-en* (e.g. the English *fasten*). As far as I can see at the moment they do not integrate.

Monosyllabic anglicistic verbs even adopt the pecularities of the German system (2c). A verb like *stressen* does not differentiate the 2nd and 3rd person

singular in present tense (*du stresst, er stresst*) exactly as in *du hasst, er hasst*. A verb like *beaten* on the other hand has at this point bisyllabic forms (*du beatest, er beatet*) again like the core verbs of this type (*du bietest, er bietet*).

The most productive word formation pattern for simplex verb stems of the core vocabulary is their combination with verbal particles. Since the mono- and bisyllabic anglicistic verb stems do not show serious formal differences here, they follow this pattern without problems. 2d gives just some examples of this kind. Even more impressive are the examples of 2e. German has several types of verbs for which it is not clear if or to what degree a unit is grammaticalized as a verbal particle (Eschenlohr 1999). It seems that these types also occur as anglicisms. So *babysitten* behaves like *bausparen*. We can use the infinitive and all finite forms as long as the first constituent is not separated (*Er will babysitten/bausparen; ob er babysittet/ bauspart*). One runs into the same problems with both verbs when trying to separate the first constituent syntactically (*?Er sittet baby; ?Er spart bau*) or morphologically (*?Er hat babygesittet; ?Er hat baugespart*). So there are structural problems with certain anglicisms, but they are not specific ones. We find them as well in the core grammar.

3.3 Nouns

The first and most important step English noun stems have to perform for becoming usable in German is the choice of gender.

(3)
a.   *Job, Trend, Fight, Check, Shop, Boom, Boy, Chip, Claim, Clinch, Coach, Cup, Deal, Drink, Drive*
b. *Show, Couch, Site, Cream, Band, Beach, Crew, Drum, Soap, Gang, Mail, Line, Rate, Farm*
c. *Lunch, Girl, Brain, Face, Dope, Steak, Bike, Camp, Cash, Coil, Crime, Date, Foul, Goal, Home, Kid*

As can be seen from the examples in 3, simplex nouns and especially monosyllabics obtain their gender from the German noun which is most similar in meaning. Where it is difficult to find such a noun, in most cases the masculine is chosen as the unmarked gender (e.g. *der Check, Claim, Chip;* Carstensen 1980; Gregor 1983).

It is widely agreed in the literature that within core grammar the declension type of nouns corresponds to the gender (Bittner 1999; Thieroff 2001). For anglicisms like the ones in 3 this does not hold. Instead they stick to the *s*-inflection, which is independent of gender. It marks the plural forms of all nouns as well as the genitive singular of the masculines and neuters by a nonsyllabic -*s*. So the *s*-inflection is not just a borrowing from English. If at all this could be stated for the plural marker, but not for the declension type as a whole.

For the masculines and neuters of the core vocabulary, -*s* is the unmarked suffix in the genitive singular. Here it can normally be syllabic (*des Stuhls/Stuhles*), whereas for the anglicisms it has to be nonsyllabic (*des Fights/*Fightes*). Choosing the *s*-inflection may therefore be understood as an integrational step, though one leading to partial integration only. Full integration is in most cases bound to special phonological conditions (*der Boss – die Bosse, der Stress – des Stresses*), otherwise it remains marginal (*die Couch – die Couchen, das Dope – des Dopes*). Again, orthographic facts seem to play an important role here (Wegener 1999; Eisenberg 2001: 205), but we are far from a real understanding of these processes. One also has to state that anglicisms can preserve the *s*-inflection for a long time and by this avoid full integration. Nouns like *der Schal, Streik, Start* are completely integrated with respect to their phonological properties and their spelling, but they still follow the *s*-inflection. All we can say is that there are no formal properties which could force a monosyllabic simplex to give up this choice.

The status of the *s*-inflection and in particular the *s*-plural is controversial in the literature. In his popular book on the relation between rule-based and analogy-based linguistic structures, Pinker (1999), following Wiese and Clahsen, takes the *s*-plural as unmarked in the overall system, though only a small minority of nouns adhere to it (Wiese 1996; Clahsen 1999). We have argued elsewhere that this position is untenable for systematic reasons (Eisenberg 2002). An alternative is the more traditional position, which takes the *s*-plural as marked, but unmarked in use for special purposes. This position is strengthened by the functional interpretation Wegener (2002) proposes for this plural marker. According to her approach, the *s*-plural is chosen when the stem should be unaffected by inflection as far as possible. As an example take the noun *Bach* from the core vocabulary with its plural *Bäche*. The plural stem form has only one sound in common with the base form. Moreover the plural has two syllables with the boundary separating the final consonant of the stem. In contrast the family name of the Leipzig composer has the plural *die Bachs*, where the stem does not change at all.

Names are linguistically sacrosanct and for this reason they mark the plural by the heavy consonant *s* instead of the syllabic suffixes from the rest of the core system. Besides proper names the *s*-plural goes with abbreviations, with short terms, with plurisyllabic words ending in an open unstressed syllable with a full vowel (*der Uhu, die Oma, das Auto*) and with some related classes of nouns. For anglicisms it would be 'functional' to preserve the *s*-plural as long as the word is not well known and accepted in German and should therefore be used with one and only one stem form. It might not be completely unrealistic to look for a motivation of this kind when considering the inflectional behavior of alien words. For the data given this seems to be difficult, and we have to conclude: Either Pinker's view is correct. The anglicisms in question are then fully integrated in that the *s*-plural would be part of the core grammar. The core grammar would have already changed at this point. Or Pinker's view is not correct. The anglicisms are then only partially integrated. The core system would not have changed since the *s*-plural would be marked. It is a real challenge to think about methods for answering this kind of question empirically.

Things are much easier for most polysyllabic and morphologically complex nouns. We will just mention two examples. (1) As German anglicisms, nouns such as *der Jockey, Hippie; die City, Disco; das Baby, Dummy* are expected to take the *s*-plural for reasons based on regularities of German – and indeed this is the case. (2) German anglicisms ending in -*er* and selecting the masculine for whatever reason are expected to take the so called zero plural (*der Raver – die Raver, der Browser – die Browser*). These words are fully integrated in that they behave like the respective nouns from the core vocabulary (*der Eimer – die Eimer, der Denker – die Denker*).

4. Conclusion

German anglicisms are not always smoothly integrated into the core inflectional system. There are some frictions, and the anglicistic nouns might even help to induce a more serious systematic change. How can this situation be evaluated? Görlach compares the influence of Romance languages on English in the 14th century with the present situation and concludes: "The parallels to present-day anglicisms in European languages are obvious" (Görlach 1999: 124). With respect to the German inflectional system this view seems at least to be exaggerated. The influence of English is still marginal compared to the deep changes of the derivational and inflectional system caused by Latin and French. At the moment we can not even be sure

which changes are in fact taking place and – if there are serious ones – which of them go back to English. Only if these questions are answered could it be possible to reflect about threats and destruction. And not later than at this point will it become evident that it is hardly imaginable to separate 'normal changes' from threats and destruction.

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