

Analysis of the presence of English neologisms in German as a foreign language (DaF) textbooks

Padrón Brito, Laura; de Armas Guerra, Néstor

Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

The historical relationship between English and German cultures is evident in the profound mutual influence of their languages, as they both enjoy a great amount of expressions and words which have been borrowed from the other. Borrowing is a common linguistic phenomenon that takes place when languages adopt words from a source language into their own, often to compensate for gaps in the lexicon of the target language. However, with globalisation and digitalisation being more prominent than ever, this linguistic exchange has been accelerated, leading to an exponential introduction of neologisms, mostly from English, into other languages, and the German language is not an exception in this regard. Moreover, the growing influence of English in the scientific field, as well as others like business or entertainment has contributed to this trend. As a consequence, the presence of these terms can be found across a wide range of textual genres, from newspaper articles to academic essays, and even foreign language learning textbooks, which reflects the increasing permeability of language boundaries, reshaping linguistic norms and communication patterns worldwide. Drawing from the assumption that German as a Foreign Language (DaF) textbooks will also be affected by this trend, this study revolves around the analysis of the use of English neologisms in intermediate-level (B1-B2) DaF textbooks. The main aims of this study will thus be to identify which neologisms are present across said textbooks, as well as their frequency of use. Once the quantitative data are obtained, a thorough evaluation of some of the terms will be carried out, in order to analyse whether the present neologisms have been subject to normalisation within the German language, according to morphological norms, or if they retain their original English spelling. To achieve these aims, a corpus linguistics approach will be adopted by analysing a corpus of more than 40,000 words extracted from reading exercises in B1 and B2-level DaF textbooks. The selection of books incorporates textbooks that were published between 2019 and 2024 by several publishing houses, thus ensuring that the analysed sample represents current and varied trends of the use of English neologisms in DaF textbooks. By examining authentic learning materials through both a quantitative and qualitative lens, this study will seek to not only determine the extent to which English neologisms appear in DaF textbooks, but also to ascertain in which contexts they are being used, which will provide valuable information about the impact of globalisation and digitalisation in foreign language learning. Given the growing influence of the English language on other languages, this research intends to highlight the importance of examining linguistic borrowing and its effects on language acquisition and language teaching. Results may offer practical implications for educators on how to approach vocabulary learning and how the use of neologisms impact reading comprehension. Furthermore, they may guide textbook authors in creating learning materials that, while acknowledging linguistic trends and fostering cross-linguistic influence, also provide a balanced approach to language learning and vocabulary acquisition, ensuring that learners at intermediate proficiency levels develop appropriate communicative skills.
