„Denglish" The Fusion of German and English

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Abstract: The development of language is a fascinating study. The linguistic phenomenon known as "Denglish" represents a unique blend of German and English, reflecting the cultural and linguistic interplay in our globalized world. As English continues to assert itself as the lingua franca of international communication, Denglish has emerged as a testament to the interconnectedness of languages and cultures. In my article explains how Denglish has become increasingly prevalent in today's globalized world and explores its historical origins.

Key words: Anglicisms and pseudo-anglicisms, Adaptation, Adoption, Linguistic evolution, Integration, Language influence, Hybrid tongue, Internationalization and Globalization.

One of the defining features of Denglish is the integration of English words and phrases seamlessly into German sentences. This linguistic fusion often occurs in professional settings, where the adoption of English terms is perceived as modern and cosmopolitan. For example, expressions like "Ich habe das Meeting gecancelt" (I canceled

the meeting) or "Kannst du bitte das File auf meinem USB Stick checken?" (Can you please check the file on my USB stick?) illustrate how English seamlessly interweaves with German in everyday speech.

Denglish is not merely a linguistic quirk; it reflects the adaptability of languages to meet the evolving needs of a globalized society. In business and technology, where English terminology is prevalent, Denglish serves as a bridge between languages, enabling effective communication in international contexts. It also mirrors the fluidity of language, showcasing how speakers creatively incorporate foreign elements into their linguistic repertoire.

Despite its practicality, Denglish has faced criticism from language purists who argue that it dilutes the purity of both languages. Some fear the erosion of German linguistic identity in the face of increasing English influence. However, proponents of Denglish view it as a dynamic linguistic evolution, reflecting the interconnected and multicultural nature of our contemporary world.

The concept of "Denglish" — a hybrid of German and English which makes use of anglicisms and pseudo-anglicisms — is so ingrained in the German culture that the term was actually coined in the language as early as 1965. In fact, Denglish even has its own Wikipedia entry in 11 languages, including Korean, Russian and Japanese, so clearly the existence of this peculiar linguistic phenomenon has made its way around the world. But wait, there's a twist. Not only does Denglish include words borrowed from English — like "Show," "Lifestyle" or "Download" — you'll also find a series of unique pseudo-anglicisms, or words that *sound* English, but actually aren't — including "Beamer" (projector), "Handy" (mobile phone) or "Dressman" (male model). Language is the key to communication. Whilst boarders can and do change, this often takes a lot of time. Languages, on the other hand, are constantly changing – they adapt and update. Their fluidity transcends the boundaries of the countries they 'belong' to. Whilst we often speak of 'official languages',

this does not take into account the hybrid and eclectic nature of language acquisition. It is impossible to say that any language is pure and unadulterated. This essay will focus on the evolution and potential of a 'new language' – *Denglish*, a macaronic mix of German (*Deutsch*) and English, the use of which is on the rise in German speaking countries. Looking at the history of language in Germany and the use of *Denglish* in modern Germany, using examples taken from the everyday usage, this essay will analyse *Denglish's* possible use and introduction in translation.

Macaronic blends of languages are not new concepts; arguably, however, *Denglish* is one of the most recent 'blended languages' in Europe. To provide a context and later comparison to the use of *Denglish*, it is also useful to look at the hybrid languages *Spanglish* and *Franglais*.[1]

Denglish is a much younger language; whilst loan words and literal translation from English to German can be dated back as far as the 18th century, not to mention that English and German are both Germanic rooted languages, the current sustained use of anglicisms is generally attributed to marketing and business markets of the 1990s and early 2000s. Perhaps due to their similar linguistic heritage, *Denglish* has far reaching use in German. These have been condensed into three main definitions:

1) Adaptation – Germanifying English words – the past tense in English of 'to google' is 'googled'. In German, the convention is to add the prefix *ge–* and a *–t* to the end of a verb to form the perfect past tense. In German 'googled' becomes '*gegooglt'*.

2) Adaption– Needless use of English words or phrases – the use of laptop instead of *Klapprechner*, or the insertion of English words into German grammatical structures – '*ich freue mich darauf'* (I'm happy about it) has now become '*ich bin so* happy *darauf'*.

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[1] Kavilova, Tamara. "Speech Culture and Communication Effectiveness."

3) Misappropriating English words with a new meaning or creating fake English words – '*peeling*' in German is an exfoliator or the invention of '*showmaster*' to mean a TV show host.[2]

Word or language borrowing is not a new concept. Until the invention of the internet, migration has been the biggest source of language adaptation. In recent times, translation studies have focused on 'translational cities and the influences of migration on language use, multilingualism and the effect of these language acquisition changes in translation. In comparison to *Spanglish* which has arisen from a country's forced language adoption, *Denglish* has been influenced by the constant 24/7 migration of information that has been enabled by the internet and the access to 24-hour news. Translation scholar Sherry Simon has looked at the influence of immigration of 'translational cities and the complexity of the cultural, social and economic implications. Whilst Simon's work focuses on the 'transnational' concerns of cultural and economic influence, due to its technology-based beginnings, *Denglish* has the potential to transcend social class, ethnicity, and religion, although it still has the possibility to exclude groups of the population. Unlike the migration of people influencing language, this language change has been influenced by people inside Germany – mostly by younger generations and the media – and their constant access to the outside world. Language influence is nothing new, language influences come and go – but since the internet will not be stopping anytime soon, does the rise of English pose a real and immediate threat to other languages, and will *Denglish* become a force to be used in its own right in translation? During particularly nationalist periods in Germany's history, the German language has been seen as vitally important to the retaining the culture of Germany. In the 1930s the Nazis sought to forcefully 'cleanse' the German language of all foreign words and made attempts to exchange them for alternatives that were of 'pure German origin'. Also, around this time, ardent nationalists attempted to publish

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[2] Xamzayev, A. (2024). Semantic, structural and expressive-stylistic classification of phraseological units.

'Germanizing' dictionaries, in an attempt to rid the German language of words that originated from French. Despite these attempts, Germany does not give an equivalent to the French *Académie Française* – the French authority on matters of the usage, vocabulary, and grammar of the French language.[3]

In recent times, after the increased use of English in media and marketing campaigns, German politicians and academics have made further attempts to 'protect' the German language from further English influence; even going as far as to say that the German language should be enshrined in the constitution. The *Verein Deutsche Sprache (VDS)* or the German Language Foundation has aimed to be the German equivalent of the *Académie Française*. Founded in 1997, the VDS has attempted to launch campaigns to rid the German culture of the pollution of *Denglish*. The VDS also want German radio stations to play a higher percentage of German language music and have tried to force the government to implement laws that would force manufacturers to include German information of products. German studies specialist and the director of the *Verein Deutsche Sprache*, Holger Klatte firmly believes that language is an expression of German culture, and together with the VDS launched 'German Language Day' in September 2001.

It should, however, be noted that only one to three percent of German vocabulary is made up specifically of anglicisms – like English, French and Latin have also had strong influences on the German language due to migration and historic invasion. As German and English stem from the same linguistic family – words such as *kindergarten*, *Zeitgeist* and *doppelganger(e)* have become understood and are commonly used to English native speakers.[4] Germany's culture minister Julian Nida-Rümelin has rightly pointed out that language fluidity and change is a process to which every living language is subject, and has argued that it is not something in which the state should intervene.

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[3] Kavilova Laura-Aquilina. "The lexical characteristics of Canadian French influenced by language interference"
[4] Safina Farida. "Distinguishing business communication language from everyday language"

In conclusion, Denglish is a fascinating linguistic phenomenon that highlights the adaptability and dynamism of languages in our interconnected world. It is not merely a linguistic fusion but a reflection of the evolving cultural and economic landscape. As languages continue to influence and borrow from one another, Denglish stands as a testament to the richness and complexity of linguistic interplay in our global society.

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