Book Review

Sebastian Knospe


The publication by Sebastian Knospe is a contribution to studies on the influence of English on other major languages, and it fits in well with similar contact linguistic investigations that can be classified by the umbrella term of anglicism research (e.g. Carstensen and Busse, 1993, 1994, 1996; Stanlaw, 2004; Görlach, 2002; Furiassi et al., 2012). The book is based on Knospe’s Ph.D. thesis defended at the University of Greifswald (Germany) and presents a detailed and carefully conducted study of English language influence on German. The author takes an inclusive view on the notion of anglicism, which, in line with earlier research (Onysko, 2007), integrates borrowings from English with codeswitching and the creative use of English elements in German as evident, for example, in hybrid formations of English and German terms.

The empirical database of his investigation consists of 52 consecutive issues of the German newsmagazine Der Spiegel, ranging from issue 27 in 2006 to issue 26 in 2007. Also in this sense, Knospe’s study continues a line of research on anglicisms in German which has relied on that particular newsmagazine (see Yang, 1990; Onysko, 2007). This makes a comparison to earlier results possible.

At the beginning, chapters 2 and 3 establish a firm grounding of his research in major contact linguistic discourse, among others drawing on the work of Thomason and Kaufman (1988), van Coetsem (2000), Matras (2009), Thomason (2001), Winford (2003), and Clyne (1972). His discussion of the notion of loanword reaches back to Betz’s (1936, 1949) classification of direct and indirect (i.e. calquing) loan influences, which is compared to Haugen’s (1950) tripartite division of loanwords, loanblends, and loanshifts. Furthermore, Knospe covers other major types of loans including hybrid creations, semantic changes, and so-called pseudo loans, always cogently citing from the vast previous literature on these phenomena. He also includes a section on the formal integration of
English loanwords which relies on previous and recent advances in this area (e.g. Winter-Froemel, 2011). At the end of an overall concise but comprehensive mapping of theoretical approaches to English loanwords, Knospe lays out how he uses the notion of anglicism. His definition builds on concerns voiced in Görlach (2003) and Glahn (2002), who do not consider any types of calques as empirically relevant for corpus studies that try to elicit the presence of English in a recipient language. Knospe also stresses the practical side of his decision in order to facilitate a comparison to previous research on anglicisms in the German newsmagazine Der Spiegel.

Before presenting the results of his empirical analysis, Knospe expands the theoretical discussion in chapter 4 as he discusses the role of codeswitching compared to other loan influences. He highlights the fact that written codeswitching can play an important part in contact situations even though the majority of codeswitching research has focused on oral codeswitching. While there has been some previous research on written codeswitching between Spanish and English (see Callahan, 2004; Montes-Alcalá, 2001), in some literary contexts (e.g. Māori codeswitching in the English prose of Māori writers, see Degani, 2012), and, most recently, in chat communication (see Androutsopulos, 2013; contributions in Dorleijn, 2016), Knospe adds that written codeswitching can also happen in remote contact situations such as the influence of English on many major languages. He takes the reader on a brief but comprehensive journey through the main developments in codeswitching theory, lingering on the nonce loan debate, on flagged vs. unflagged codeswitches, on the differentiation of codeswitching in inter- and intrasentential switches, on Myers-Scotton’s Matrix Language Frame Model (1993), and, finally, on Muysken’s (2000) tripartite division of codemixing types (insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization). Most of the space in chapter 4 is devoted to the presentation of Muysken’s model since the author adopts that approach for his empirical analysis. In his discussion of insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization, Knospe points out a few difficulties in differentiating between the three categories. To him hybrid compounds that involve diamorphs (i.e. near homophones/homographs in German and English as in German Haus and English house), fall in between insertions and congruent lexicalizations when the German diamorph forms hybrid compounds with other English units (e.g. Beachhaus).

At this point, however, it would have been important to differentiate more clearly between established loans in a recipient language and nonce loans since the former can regularly enter into productive processes of word formation in German such as compounding. This differentiation is crucial as the mere occurrences of English loans in German with German-English cognates or shared
internationalisms does not per se epitomize congruent lexicalizations. Similar examples of English-German mixed compounds given in Muysken (2000: 150–151, based on data from Clyne, 1967) are rated as congruent lexicalization in lexical borrowing (e.g. Guesthäuser ‘guest houses’, Grüngrocer ‘green grocer’, and Gumbaum ‘gum tree’). However, these hybrid compounds emerge in a sociolinguistic context of everyday communication involving English-German bilinguals living in Australia, which is very different from the situation of monitored journalistic prose written in Germany for an L1 German target audience. According to this particular contact setting, hybrid compounds appear as products of German compounding schemas that can combine English loans with other German lexical units, and it becomes difficult to argue for the existence of hybrid compounds as congruent lexicalizations in the context of Der Spiegel.

At the end of the theoretical discussion in chapter 4, Knospe provides a handy tabular overview of the types of loan phenomena that he considers as insertions, alternations, and congruent lexicalizations. In a nutshell, insertions comprise single lexical switches, established loanwords, and phraseological, lexicalised items. Alternations cater for switches that contain longer stretches of the source language (English), and, as mentioned above, congruent lexicalisations are particularly evident in diamorphic lexical items as in bilingual puns.

In general, throughout the theoretically inspired part of the book, Knospe is very capable of providing the reader with cogent syntheses and overview tables that summarize and frequently compare the main claims of particular models or show how some of the different postulates relate to each other. The theoretical discussion culminates in the author’s adaptation of Muysken’s model. This evokes a sense of expectation in the interested reader for the following empirical analysis; after all, it is not self-evident that Muysken’s model is particularly suited for describing a remote and mediated contact situation as given in the German newsmagazine.

The empirical part of the book (chapters 5 to 8) starts out with a brief description of the methodology followed by an overview of the frequency of anglicisms in the 52 Spiegel issues of 2006 and 2007. Different to earlier studies on Der Spiegel (Yang, 1990; Onysko, 2007), Knospe used the online archive of the newsmagazine to automatically search for anglicisms (issue per issue) taking Görlach’s (2001) Dictionary of European Anglicisms as a reference tool. Since searching for already established anglicisms does not cover any new loans or uses of English in German which have not found entrance in the dictionary, Knospe also read through all of the 52 print versions of the newsmagazine. This allowed him to manually ascertain the types and frequency of anglicisms.
Compared to Onysko (2007) who used the electronic files of the Der Spiegel issues in the year 2000 in order to find anglicisms via wordlists and concordances using Wordsmith Tools (Scott, 1996–), the manual detection of all anglicisms in 52 issues of the newsmagazine is an extraordinary feat. While the error rate of manual detection by reading might be higher than by going through wordlists, the actual frequency counts that Knospe provides are fairly similar to Onysko’s (2007) study, which had about the same scope (53 Der Spiegel issues of the year 2000). Overall, Knospe finds 1.27% of anglicisms among all the tokens in his corpus (at an estimated number of words of 4,383,624). This is very similar to Onysko’s finding of 1.11% of anglicisms among his total number of tokens (5,202,583). Thus, the amount of English loans and codeswitches in German texts of Der Spiegel remained virtually the same from the year 2000 to 2006/07 in these comparable studies. Further similarities in the frequency counts appear among anglicisms per word class (providing yet further evidence for the predominance of nominal borrowings, stated as early as Whitney, 1881) and among the rate of hybrid constructions (mostly compounds of German and English material). Knospe counts as many as 74.2% of hybrid constructions among all anglicisms classified as insertions in his study, compared to 76% of all types of anglicisms in Onysko’s (2007) study. The dominant rate of hybrids is a token of the fact that many English loans are used productively in German, entering into manifold combinations with German lexical units.

When looking at the number of anglicisms in Knospe’s study that he classifies as insertions, alternations, and congruent lexicalizations (p. 121), a potential limitation of applying Muysken’s model of codemixing to a remote language contact scenario such as the English influence on German becomes evident on purely numerical grounds. In total, 99.37% of all anglicisms turn out as insertions while alternations occurs at the mere rate of 0.6% (94 instances) followed by 4 examples of congruent lexicalisations 0.03% (consisting of bilingual puns). According to the author, the category of insertions comprises all instances of established loans (following Myers-Scotton’s frequency threshold of 3 occurrences in a data collection, cf. 1993) and all types of hybrid compounds and constructions. Any hybrids that occur less than 3 times in different issues of the newsmagazine are regarded as true insertional codemixes.

However, to consider all rarely occurring hybrid compounds as instances of insertional codemixes leads to a misleading image of the influence of English on German as represented in the newsmagazine Der Spiegel. In fact, as also shown in Onysko (2007), established English loans (e.g. manager, team, show, and so on) combine with a variety of different German free morphemes to create new compounds in line with productive German processes of word formation. Thus, a great number of these hybrids are not ephemeral insertions...
of English lexical units but are well-established borrowings in German, which are used productively in one-off, or rarely occurring compound constructions in a particular corpus. This type of word formation productivity can also be enhanced in the genre of journalistic prose.

In line with the numerical predominance of insertions, the main empirical part of the book is devoted to discussing these types of anglicisms found in Der Spiegel. In separate sections, chapter 6, which runs over 120 pages, lays out the structural types and the morphological integration of insertions, patterns of word formation, and the functions of these anglicisms in the German newsmagazine. The question of how nominal, verbal, and adjectival anglicisms are integrated into German cogently relies on a discussion of already established patterns and does not push the theoretical limits any further in this respect. To underline the various claims, the author provides new examples from his corpus. The discussion of these phenomena draws to a large extent on earlier investigations of anglicisms in the German newsmagazine, and, by comparison, it is interesting to note that the usage and integration of certain types of anglicisms seem to have remained quite constant throughout the recent years of Der Spiegel. Among others, this is evident in the continued use of interjections and expletives to emphasize an Anglo-American discourse context (e.g. hello, well, hey, wow, sorry, see you and so on). Similarly, Knospe’s examples of phrasal insertions underline the fact that there are certain staple expressions that have become lexicalized as fixed English units in German journalistic prose flagging Anglo-American cultural concepts such as First Lady, Political Correctness, American Way of Life, Five o’Clock Tea, gentlemen’s agreement, point of no return, survival of the fittest, not amused and a few others.

The classification of English insertions according to word classes and their morphological integration into German is followed by a section on patterns of word formation. In line with previous research on anglicisms in German, Knospe highlights different types of hybrid compounds consisting of English and German lexical material, citing a range of examples from his data. A few tables summarize verbal and adjectival derivations, in which English loans are subject to affixation with German morphemes, leading to the formation of prefix and particle verbs as well as denominal and deverbal adjectives of English lexical bases. A separate subchapter discusses a total of 29 pseudo loans, most of which involve morphological changes of English lexical units in German such as composition (e.g. Showmaster ‘compere’, Dressman ‘male model’, and Service-Point ‘information desk’), shortenings (e.g. Aircondition ‘airconditioning’, Basecap ‘baseball cap’, and Gin Tonic ‘gin and tonic’), and semantic changes (e.g. Flirt ‘flirtation’, Slip ‘underpants’, and City ‘downtown / city centre’). Knospe’s analysis of the pseudo loans chimes in with earlier remarks in the
research literature, which hold that such types of anglicisms are a testimony to the creative use of English in German (or other recipient languages), and that a differentiation between ‘pseudo’ and ‘real’ loans can become potentially artificial if mere semantic changes are involved such as meaning specification or metonymic meaning extensions (cf. Viereck, 1996).

The functions of insertions are discussed in a separate section of chapter 6. Knospe teases apart different motivations of why English lexical units are used in German starting with the naming of new concepts rooted in the source culture, which can also bear different denotative nuances when compared to similar potential translation equivalents in German. He states that particular usage domains of such borrowings exist in discourse on economy and business, computer and Internet technology, telecommunications, popular and youth culture, as well as sport. Among the connotative functions of insertions are what he calls “social or local colour” (following the terminology proposed in Pfitzner, 1978), which relates to the fact that English elements are frequently used in journalistic texts to resonate either the original Anglo-American voices or to establish a contextual relation to the Anglo-American setting of the topic. Further functions which spawn off from the main effect of rendering “local color” are the use of English as euphemisms and for fulfilling ludic functions. Knospe puts particular emphasis on the latter by differentiating creative compounds, combinations based on alliteration and rhyme, creative changes of English lexemes, reinterpretations of idiomatic expressions, and the use of a Germanized type of English to mock the misuse of English by certain public figures (i.e. “Filser” – English). With this detailed classification, his research goes clearly beyond previous analyses that only spuriously dealt with humorous effects of English loanwords in German. In general, the section on the various functions of English lexical units (i.e. insertions) in German is characterized by lucid descriptions of a great number of cogently selected examples from his data. For a large part, his findings reflect many of the results of earlier studies on English loanwords in German, which is a token of the fact that the influence of English on German journalistic writing has remained rather stable in its major functions over the last few decades.

Reading Knospe’s discussion of alternations (i.e. inter- and intrasentential codeswitches), this impression is confirmed as he finds that switches into English of a phrasal quality fulfill three primary functions: a) to characterize people and situations by providing their authentic voice (typically relating to Anglo-American personae and contexts), b) to use well-known English phrases (often with intertextual references) as mottos or slogans, and c) to use English as a specific textual attractor, frequently with ludic aims in mind.
As in the previous chapter, the author is particularly capable of describing with great accuracy how English is used for different stylistic effects in the German texts.

The last and very short chapter of the book discusses some of the few instances in the data that the author classifies as congruent lexicalizations. In general, Knospe considers lexical similarities between English and German that can relate to cognates or to shared internationalisms (mostly of Latin and Greek origin) as potential sites of congruent lexicalizations. As critically discussed above, examples of such congruent lexicalizations involve the use of German-English cognates or internationalisms together with English loans in hybrid compounds (e.g. p. 289). In addition, bilingual puns based on homophonous and homographic relationships between English and German terms are also discussed as non-prototypical instances of congruent lexicalizations. In fact, the four instances of congruent lexicalizations found in his data actually represent bilingual puns.

In conclusion, Knospe's book provides the reader interested in research on the influence of English on German with a detailed and lucid study that makes a strong contribution to the field of anglicism research. He covers an enormous range of language data in great descriptive detail, which renders his findings highly insightful and relevant for the field. From a comparative point of view, his results tie in well with previous corpus-based research on anglicisms in German, confirming the tenor that English plays a marginal quantitative role in Standard written German as represented in the newsmagazine Der Spiegel. On the theoretical plane, Knospe ventures into new descriptive territory by applying Muysken's types of bilingual codemixing to a remote and mediated contact scenario. This shows some of the limits of applying Muysken's codemixing types in contact settings that do not involve fluent bilingual language use.

Alexander Onysko
Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt
Alexander.Onysko@aau.at

References


Degani, Marta. 2012. *Languages and Cultures in Contact: Maoridom in the Short Fiction of Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace*. Verona: QuiEdit.


