Are native English words different from neoclassical English words for German speakers?

Benjamin Weiss
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1 Introduction

- Language Systems influence each other on several linguistic levels.
- Eg. The use of loan-words and foreign names.
- These are often not assimilated, they keep at least remains of their original language properties.
- Foreign words seem to be handled special.
- It is claimed that they build up their own structure(s).
• But what about neoclassical words?
• Are they special?
• There is a discussion about these words being grammatical special.
• I will provide an experimental idea to test the behavior of neoclassical words as borrowings to get further insight into this topic.
2 Neoclassical word formation

- Neoclassical words are derived from Greek or Latin but built up after the classic age.
- They are used in daily speech and have proven productive (in German).
- However, they differ from native words in several aspects.
  - A neoclassical compound may consist of two bound forms. (hydro, graph)
  - Affixes can influence stress. (Instrument, instrumen’tal)
  - There are also special inflexions used with neoclassicals. (Examen, Examina)
• There seems to be an agreement of neoclassical words being in general different from native words.  
• The ability to identify neoclassical words is explained by differences in phonology.  
• Etymological knowledge can not account for this. Origin becomes less important than the word properties itself.
There are different cues that can be used to recognize a word as neoclassical.

- Special graphemes (ph, th, rh: Rhetorik)
- non-native sounds ([ʒ], [ã]: Garage, Pendant)
- phonotactics (ui, ps, [ç]V: Linguist, Psyche, Chemie)
- pluralization patterns

But even a combination of these features can fail (eg. also arabic words are identified as neoclassical like Alkohol).
2.1 Neoclassical loan-words

- What about neoclassical words borrowed from foreign languages?
- Is the feature of being neoclassical recognized by Germans?
- This can be tested by their behavior in German:
  - What kind of inflexions are used?
  - How are the words pronounced?
  - How do they participate in word formation?
  - Is their phonological structure changed?

Loan-words from English seem to be the obvious choice as they build up a great number of active borrowings today (eg. Video vs. Computer).
3 Xenophones

- Phonetic production of foreign words varies from 'Swedish' to 'English' pronunciation due to several factors (age & educational level being most prominent).
- Eg. about half of the participants produced the name \textit{Thatcher} with [\theta].
- This sound is not part of the Swedish phoneme-system
- But it is part of the phone-system of lots of speakers $\rightarrow$ xenophone.
• The use of such *xenophones* depends on:
  • the foreign language competence of the speaker
  • the speaker’s expectation of the foreign language competence of the listener
  • the relative status of the speaker and listener
  • the social situation of the talk
  • how well-known the word is, when it first occurred
  • the relative distance of the two languages in socio-cultural and linguistic terms
Experiment:
19 sounds that are not included in the Swedish phoneme-system and quite different from corresponding Swedish sounds were used in foreign words/names to build 12 Swedish sentences.

(1) *Många har Roger Moore som favorit i rollen som James Bond.*
A lot of people prefer Roger Moore’s interpretation of James Bond.
• These sentences were read out aloud and recorded.

• The possible pronunciations of the two names range in a continuum from total Swedish to best English possible to the speaker.

(2)  \textbf{Roger}: target: [ɾ] (0 \%), [r] (96.1 \%), [ζ] (1.5 \%),

\textbf{Roger}: target: [ɾ], Ø (0 \%), [r] (96.8 \%), [ζ] (1.1 \%),

\textbf{Roger}: target: [dʒ] (32.5 \%), [g] (67.3 \%)
• Only some speakers used no xenophones at all.
• Most used non-native sounds as an approximation to the target sounds mostly without reaching it (/tɛ/ instead of /tʃ/).
• The degree of approximation depends on the target sound.
• however, the participants were very much inconsistent, as the use of xenophones also varied with the word (/dʒ/: [roːɡəɾ] vs. [dʒeɪms]).
The realizations were divided into three groups (example: *james* /dʒeɪms/):

1. /dʒeɪms/
   
   maximal approximation with the use of non-native sounds

2. /dʒɛms/
   
   realization of foreignness with the use of proper Swedish sounds (with can lead to non-native phonotactics)

3. /dʒams/
   
   read out aloud as a Swedish word
• So foreign words are mostly marked with different degrees of approaching target sounds.

• Results depend on
  • Age: Older and younger participants used significantly more a Swedish pronunciation, while the group of 26–35-year-old speaker used these less often.
  • Gender is unimportant.
  • Regional differences are not easy to explain.
  • Educational level is significant, as the speaker with higher educational level reached a closer approximation to the targets.
4 Experiment

- Corresponding results are expected for German.
- If German speakers try to mark an English word with non-native pronunciation, will they make exceptions with neoclassicals?
- Now I will present an experimental idea to test this possible differences in the pronunciation of native and neoclassical English words by Germans.
4.1 Material

- One abstract from a scientific journal (High Energy Physics – Theory)
- Title: Penrose Limits of RG Fixed Points and PP-Waves with Background Fluxes
We consider a family of pp-wave solutions of IIB supergravity. This family has a non-trivial, constant 5-form flux, and non-trivial, (light-cone) time-dependent RR and NS-NS 3-form fluxes. The solutions have either 16 or 20 supersymmetries depending upon the time dependence. One member of this family of solutions is the Penrose limit of the solution obtained by Pilch and Warner as the dual of a Leigh-Strassler fixed point. The family of solutions also provides indirect evidence in support of a recent conjecture concerning a large $N$ duality group that acts on RG flows of $N=2$ supersymmetric, quiver gauge theories.
4.2 Procedure

- Participants were instructed to read the abstract (5 min. time) and summarize it in German.
- The short speech samples were recorded with a SHURE 565SD microphone directly on PC via ESS ES1938S Solo-1 soundsystem.
4.3 Results

- All three speakers (2 f, 1 m) pronounced many words with xenophones or translated them (\textit{pp-waves, fluxes, Penrose limit, Pilch and Warner})

- However, some words were spoken in a ’German’ way (\textit{dual, trivial, konstant, Symmetrien})

- One notable exception: \textit{supersymmetric} (1 participant)
References


