

'KIDS' AND GERMAN LEXICOGRAPHY

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Attitudes towards Anglicisms

Even though German has been in contact with English for centuries, the impact of English on German and other European languages became stronger in the second half of the 20th century. With the advent of new media such as the Internet and with the dominance of English in domains such as advertising and computing this influence has become especially pervasive since the 1990s. Nowadays some social groups, such as youngsters and advertising agencies, quite purposefully draw on Anglicisms or on code-mixing and -switching to distance themselves from others or to capture the attention of potential customers.¹

In consequence many language users feel rather disconcerted about the use of Anglicisms in the media, because they have difficulty in understanding them, feel excluded from discourse in certain domains, or may have objections on principle to cultural and linguistic "Americanisation".

The increasing use of Anglicisms is often negatively labelled as *Denglisch*, *Germang*, *Engleutsch*, *Neudeutsch*, *McGermish*, or *BSE*. According to my observations, *Denglisch* seems to be the term used most often. The term is modelled on the precedent of *Français* used by René Étiemble as early as 1964. The blending of etymologically heterogeneous word material is to suggest the pending danger of a 'pidginisation' of German. The term *McGermish* implies a linguistic 'McDonaldisation' of German, and *BSE* is a transferred use of the acronym *bovine spongiform encephalopathy*, commonly known as *mad-cow disease*, in the sense of Bad Simple English as in the following example:

Save the Denglish-Engleutsch! Kennen Sie BSE? Nämlich Bad Simple English? Ein Rindvieh freilich, wer's im Deutschen spricht – und dabei so manchen Anglizismus wiederkaut: Wir *talken*, *shoppen*, nehmen's *easy* ... (Jokers Restseller [sic] catalogue 35/2003: 88).

By contrast, in his study, Bär is of the opinion that words such as *Kids* can be used deliberately to express a particular attitude towards life as in the following concocted example:

'Ich muss nur eben noch schnell die Kids ins Bett bringen und mein Handy catchen, dann sind wir weg, okay?' Wer so redet, möchte jugendlich, dynamisch, zeitgemäß (*trendy*) und weltläufig wirken (Bär 2001: 128).

Negative attitudes towards the use or abuse of individual words are often voiced in letters to the editor (see Stickel 1984; Hoberg 2002) or in special columns of newspapers and journals.

In order to scrutinise the prevailing attitudes of Germans towards their mother tongue, the *Institut für deutsche Sprache* in Mannheim carried out a representative opinion poll (see Stickel and Volz 1999). One question asked was whether present-day German had undergone a great number of lexical changes over the last five to ten years or not. Almost 60 % of the participants were of the opinion that (very) many changes had taken place (see Table 1).

Table 1
The extent of lexical change

Very many changes	12.7 %
Many changes	44.8 %
Some changes	37.7 %
Few changes	4.8 %

(adapted from Stickel and Volz 1999: 19)

Among the many changes, words borrowed from English feature prominently. All in all, Anglicisms were mentioned 182 times (75 times in West Germany and 107 times in East Germany). Out of the 29 items criticised individually, there are no less than 20 Anglicisms. In order of declining frequency these were: *cool*, *Kids* (instead of *Kinder*), *okay/o.k.*, *Team*, *in*, *out*, *Internet*, *Shopping/shoppen*, *mega-(gut, in/out...)*, *Handy*, *hallo* (as a greeting), *relaxen/relaxed*, *Elchtest*, *managen/Manager/Management*, *Mobbing*, *Peanuts*, *Shop* (instead of *Geschäft*, *Laden*), *City*, *Job* (instead of *Arbeit*) and *Power*. In addition, several other words of English origin were mentioned, but occurred only once.

Given this background of diverging and even disquieting attitudes towards the impact of English on present-day German word stock it seems all the more interesting to investigate how lexicographers deal with this problem at the level of the individual word. Since the word *Kids* was high on the agenda of reprehensible Anglicisms, its treatment in selected German dictionaries will be highlighted by taking a look at how dictionaries of Anglicisms, foreign word dictionaries, learners' dictionaries and general dictionaries handle the case.

The historical development of *kid(s)* in English

Before we can outline the development of the borrowed term in German and its treatment in selected German dictionaries, it seems advisable to sketch the semantic and pragmatic history of the English word first. For this reason an outline based on the *Oxford English Dictionary* [OED] (1992) will be provided next. The OED-entry shows that the English term is etymologically related to German *Kitz* and that it came into the English language in the Middle Ages (c. 1200) in the sense of 1.a. The sense divisions are given below; the time range of the illustrative citations is added in brackets:

1. a. The young of a goat [c 1200-1887]
 - † b. A young roe-deer during its first year. *Obs[olete]* [1486-1891].
 - c. A young antelope [1884].
 2. The flesh of a young goat [c 1430-1888].
 3. a. The skin of a kid.
 - b. Leather made from kid-skins, or from lamb-skins, or other substitutes; chiefly used in the manufacture of gloves and shoes; *pl.* gloves (or boots) made of this leather [1677-1891].
 4. *sing. or pl.* (Rendering L. *hædus* or *hædi*.) A pair of small stars in the constellation *Auriga*, represented as kids held in the hand of the charioteer. Cf. *kid-star* below [1609, 1615].
 5. *slang.*
 - a. A child, esp. a young child. (Originally low slang, but by the 19th c. frequent in familiar speech.) [1599-1894].
 - b. In low sporting or criminal circles: A term of admiration for an expert young thief, pugilist, etc. [1812-1834].
 - † c. In American Colonies (see quotes.) *Obs.* (Cf. *kidnap.*) [1724-1895].
 - d. A young man or woman. *colloq.* (orig. U.S.) [1884-1974].
 6. *attrib.* and *Comb.*, as (sense 1) *kid-fell, -flesh, -leather* (also *attrib.*), *-milk*; *kid-like* adj.;
- (Oxford English Dictionary on Compact Disc 1992).**

The senses 5.a. and d. are of particular relevance for the origin of the modern borrowing into German. They show that the English word had undergone amelioration from a low slang term to one used in familiar speech by the 19th century and that the meaning of 'youth, adolescent' was first recorded in the United States in the late 19th century. As regards its style level, this usage is considered as colloquial.

The treatment of *Kids* in selected German dictionaries

The *Anglizismen-Wörterbuch* [AWb] (1993-1996) is a dictionary especially devoted to the description of Anglicisms in present-day German. It is based on a corpus consisting mostly of newspapers and periodicals. The entry for *Kids* (1994: 767-768) reads as follows. The meaning is glossed by the two “synonyms” ‘Kinder, Jugendliche’. This is the only sense given and it is documented with twelve citations ranging from 1973 until 1990. As the dictionary focuses on the lexical impact of English after the Second World War, the older senses ‘goat skin’ and ‘gloves made of goat skin’, both borrowed at the beginning of the 20th century, are not attested. According to the AWb, these older borrowings were first recorded in Tesch (1915).

The AWb does not make extensive use of usage labels for the reason that stylistic and other evaluations cannot immediately be drawn from the written corpus material but have to be attributed to the linguistic competence of the compilers (see Vol. 1, 1993: 91*). Nonetheless, a commentary regarding the usage of *Kids* is given, which says that the term is currently replacing older Anglicisms such as *Teen(ager)*, *Teener*, *Teeny* and *Teenybopper*.

Interestingly enough, the documentation of the headword by citations reveals that the term has been in use in German from the early 1970s onwards. However, its first attestation in a German dictionary took almost twenty years.²

The first two citations come from journals about pop music. This shows that the term was associated with pop culture:

Wir wollen die Kids nicht betrügen (Pop 17/1973: 20).

Wenn die Kids lachen, flippen und herumspringen ... (Musik Express 5/1974: 48).

Most of the other quotations, however, stem from the periodical *Der Spiegel*, which must be considered as a special case regarding its stylistic conventions in general and the use of Anglicisms in particular.

Similar to the documentation of the English word in the OED (sense 6), the AWb also proves that the word quite often occurs in compounds. The most frequent combination listed is *Computer-Kids*. The compound section of the dictionary entry raises the issue of where linguistic borrowing ends and native word-formation with borrowed words begins. That is to say, compounds such as *City-Kids*, *Disco-Kids*, *Kidnapper-Kids*, *Muskel-Kids*, *Slum-Kids*, *Stadt-Kids* and *Straßen-Kids* (again, mostly from *Der Spiegel*) are, in all likelihood, German nonce-formations coined by journalists to serve a specific stylistic function in a given context. *Whizz-Kids*, on the other hand, is more likely to have been borrowed wholesale. The OED documents *whiz(z)-kid* in the sense of 'an exceptionally successful or brilliant young person, esp. in politics or business' from 1960 onwards.

The Dictionary of European Anglicisms [DEA] is comparative in scope, giving evidence on the usage of Anglicisms in sixteen European languages (including German). It covers the time-span from 1945 into the mid-1990s with a cut-off date for the data in 1995, thus laying special emphasis on the more recent loans. Whereas the AWb categorises its entries according to formal criteria, the DEA classifies them according to the categories of acceptability and currency paired with elements of morphological and phonological integration. The Anglicisms are arranged on a cline of increasing integration ranging from 0 to 5 (see DEA 2001: xxiv):

0 or Ø: indicate that the respective word is only known to bilinguals, such as *weekend* in German, or counts as a foreignism, referring exclusively to Anglo-American contexts, such as *earl* or *county*.

- 1 : The word is restricted in use: the nature of the restriction (age, style, technical, regional distribution, etc.) is indicated by diachronic, diastatic, diatechnical, diatopic or other markers, e.g.: *Ballyhoo* (journal-ese), *Event* (youth language, journalese), *Kids* (slang, modern), *Scoop* (journalese, rare).
- 2 : The word is fully accepted and found in many styles and registers, but still marked as English in its spelling, pronunciation or morphology, e.g.: *Jeans* or *Thriller*.
- 3 : The word is not (no longer) recognized as English; the fact can only be established etymologically, e.g.: *Frack*, *Humor*, *Keks*, *Pudding*, *Rum*, *Sport*.
- 4 : The word is identical with an indigenous item in the receptor language, so that the contact resulted only in a semantic loan, e.g.: *Maus* for computers.
- 5 : The word, as far as an individual language is concerned, comes from another source than English. This category covers items of neo-classical provenance (in particular Latin or Greek) whose English origin is impossible to determine from a morphological or phonological point of view.

For the entry *kid* two senses are given and the following information regarding its usage is provided:

kid *n.* 2 'leather from a young goat', 3 'a child or young person'.

The colloquial word *kids* (mainly in the pl.) is replacing the older loan ↑*teenager* in German. The currency of *kid(s)* in Europe makes it impossible to say whether this is a general trend (supported by the short and less complicated form).

Ge ... beg 20 C, 2(1 tech[nology/technical]); *kids* pl. 1970s, 3 (2 sla[ng], mod[ish]).

(**Dictionary of European Anglicisms 2001**).

The numbers for the sense divisions (beginning with 2) correspond to those given in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1995) in order to make a comparison easier and to find out which senses were borrowed and which ones developed independently in any of the recipient languages (see Busse and Görlach 2002: 26-28). The older technical sense is rated as 1 = restricted in use, and the more recent borrowing in the sense of 'children' as 2 = fully accepted and found in many styles and registers but still recognised as English.

Apart from German the word is only attested for three other European languages, namely for Dutch and French in the newer sense of 'a child or young person'. The usage label characterises the item as *colloquial* (Dutch) or *youth language* (French). The older sense, which apart from German is to be found in Dutch, Norwegian, and French is unanimously labelled as *technology/technical*. In all cases the usage rating is (level) 1.

The *Wörterbuch überflüssiger Anglizismen* [Dictionary of superfluous Anglicisms] (2000) was compiled on behalf of the *Verein Deutsche Sprache* (www.vds.de). The objectives of this society are clearly purist, and their activities are manifold, ranging from the publication of this dictionary (for a review article see Busse 2002), to public media events in which the worst linguistic performance of the year (*Sprachpanscher*) is awarded a prize.

Spitzmüller analyses their activities in the framework of the public debate on the state of the German language. He concludes that the controversial discussion about Anglicisms in Germany is part of a larger discourse on the topics of nation, identity and alterity, which expresses the uncertainty brought about by a change in values, attitudes, and mentalities (2002: 247). In his opinion, the problems that many speakers seem to have with Anglicisms are not primarily of a linguistic nature; a point which I also emphasised (Busse 1999).

In the dictionary the term *Kids* is treated as follows:

Kids: Kinder, Jugendliche, *nicht im Singular benutzt, zweite Bedeutung*
Denglisch
(Wörterbuch überflüssiger Anglizismen 2000, 2nd edition).

It is interesting to note that only the second sense ‘Jugendliche’ is regarded as “Denglisch”. According to its own definition given in the introduction (p. 13), however, the label does not really fit, since “Denglisch” is meant to describe German pseudo-loans such as *Handy* and *Wellness* or hybrids such as *abtörnen* and *bankable*.

When we turn our attention to foreign-word dictionaries, the picture looks like this:

The *Duden-Fremdwörterbuch* provides three senses, but without any stylistic or field labels, thus treating the entry as stylistically unmarked.³

Kid [*engl.*] *das*; -s, -s: 1. feines Kalb-, Ziegen-, Schafleder. 2. (Plural) Handschuhe aus Kid (1). 3. (meist Plural) Kind, Jugendlicher
(Duden Fremdwörterbuch 1990; 1997; 2001 [= 5th, 6th and 7th edition]).

The *Fremdwörterbuch* published by the Bibliographisches Institut in Leipzig (1990) gives basically the same information, but regards the sense of ‘child, teenager’ as colloquial:

Kid ... 3. umg Kind, junger Teenager <*engl.*, ‘Kitz’>
(Fremdwörterbuch 1990).

The *Wahrig Fremdwörterlexikon* (2001) of the Bertelsmann publishing house characterises this sense as belonging to youth language and treats it as a synonym of *Computerkid*:

Kid <n.; -s, -s> 1 das Fell einer jungen Ziege 2 <Jugendspr.> Kind, *neue Mode für -s*; → a. *Computerkid* [engl., »Zicklein«, auch umg. für »Kind, Bengel«] (Wahrig Fremdwörterlexikon 2001, 4th edition).

In comparison to the previous dictionaries, the *Duden. Das große Fremdwörterbuch* goes about the lemmatisation somewhat differently in that here the senses are separated into two different entries and that, in addition, singular and plural are also treated separately:

¹**Kid** *das*; -s, -s <aus gleichbed. engl. kid, eigtl. "Kitz, Zicklein">: feines Kalb-, Ziegen-, Schafleder; vgl. ²Kids.

²**Kid** *das*; -s, -s (meist Plur.) <aus engl.-amerik. kid "Jugendlicher">: (Jargon) Kind, Jugendlicher (im Alter von 10 bis 13 Jahren)

¹**Kids** Plur. von ^{1,2}Kid.

²**Kids** *die* (Plur): Handschuhe aus ¹Kid.

(Duden. Das große Fremdwörterbuch 1994; 2000; 2003 [= 1st, 2nd and 3rd edition]).

The separation into two different entries obscures the fact that both senses go back to the same etymon (see OED 2002). However, viewed from a synchronic perspective, the senses seem to be so far apart that the link is no longer apparent. Regarding the etymology, ²*Kid* is further specified as going back to American English rather than British English. This information is confirmed by the OED (sense 5.d.). The label *Jargon* categorises the entry as lying below the average style level. In contrast to the label *colloquial*, *Jargon* is used for words with a marked deviation from common core vocabulary. In the introduction to the dictionary *abgefuckt* is given as an example for this category. The meaning gloss specifies that the term relates only to older children aged ten to thirteen.

As an additional feature this dictionary contains a "reverse dictionary", that is to say a wordlist with indigenous German words for which suitable foreign words (from the main part of the dictionary) are suggested as

synonyms for the purpose of stylistic variation. So if users look up *Kind*, ‘child’ 1. *Baby*, 2. *Greenager*, ²*Kid*, and *Subteen* are given. The numbers refer to the corresponding sense numbers of the respective entry in the main part. For *Jugendlicher* ‘adolescent’ *Adoleszent*, ²*Kid*, *Teenager*, *Teenie*, *Youngster* are provided. However, it is strongly recommended that the meaning glosses of the entries be checked first in order to find out whether the word is a suitable synonym in a given context.

As far as German learners’ dictionaries are concerned, it is conspicuous that most of them do not include the word *Kids*. Out of the seven dictionaries consulted⁴ only the *Langenscheidt. Großwörterbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (2003) and the *PONS. Großes Schulwörterbuch Deutsch* (2002) provide entries. In terms of register the *Langenscheidt Großwörterbuch* regards *Kids* as belonging to spoken language ‘gespr[ochen]’ and the PONS treats it as colloquial. The absence of the word from the other dictionaries seems to suggest that the editors were of the opinion that the word is not an essential item for foreign learners of German.

As representatives of general purpose dictionaries the *Duden Rechtschreibung*,⁵ the *Duden Universalwörterbuch*, the *Duden. Das Große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* and corresponding works from other publishing houses were chosen.

The *Duden Rechtschreibung* first records the sense of ‘children’ in its twentieth edition in 1991. (All the previous editions from the ninth edition (1915) onward only cover the older senses of ‘goat skin’ and ‘gloves made of goat skin’). In terms of style level the sense ‘children’ is labelled as *colloquial* in the three latest editions:

Kid ... meist Plur.: ugs. für Jugendliche, Kinder

(Duden Rechtschreibung 1991; 1996; 2000 [= 20th, 21st and 22nd edition])

The same holds true for the treatment in the *Wahrig. Die deutsche Rechtschreibung* (2002). By contrast, the *Wahrig. Universalwörterbuch Rechtschreibung* (2003) adds the label *salopp* 'slangy'.

The *Duden. Deutsches Universalwörterbuch* from its second edition (1989) to its fifth and most recent edition (2003) labels the sense of 'child, teenager' as *Jargon*. In the front matter it is explained that *Jargon* characterises a headword as belonging to the parlance of a specific branch or field in contrast to the technical terms used there.

The comprehensive ten-volume dictionary *Duden. Das große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (2000) also labels the term as *Jargon* and provides three quotations from German periodicals; thematically these deal especially with pop music and sport:

Die reichen –s mit Papas Kohle (Spiegel 27/1980: 93).

..., die ihre Platte wohl vor allem deshalb veröffentlicht, damit die –s beim Konzert die Songs parat haben (Szene 6/1983: 56).

Unter den Topten der Sportidole findet sich bei den –s kein einziger Fußballer mehr (Woche 7.11.1997: 27).

Summary and conclusion

The treatment of the term *Kid(s)* in selected German dictionaries has revealed a number of interesting facts. Since the dictionaries differ in scope and size the amount of information provided is of course different. Average dictionary users would probably not consult a whole range of dictionaries in order to find out about the usage of this term in present-day German and would thus not be aware of how differently the description and especially the stylistic assessment are handled.

- 1) In the most simple case, the different meanings are given without any usage labels as e.g. in the *Duden Fremdwörterbuch*. This treatment rather disguises that the word was borrowed twice during the 20th century; first at the beginning as a technical term referring

to gloves, and again in the 1970s as a term used especially in the media with regard to children and adolescents. Even though the older term is of a restricted technical nature, this sense is still included in most German dictionaries. Usually this sense is given without a diatechnical label.

- 2) The more recent meaning of 'children', first recorded in the late 1980s (in *Wahrig* 1986), seems to have developed during the 1970s (according to the citations provided in the AWb). In most cases 'Kinder' and 'Jugendliche' are given as "synonyms" without any further specifications in terms of age. As regards its stylistic value, the treatment differs from unmarked standard usage (no label) to *colloquial*, *casual*, *slang(y)*, *modish*, *youth language* and *jargon*.
- 3) A great drawback of nearly all dictionaries under investigation is the fact that the apparatus of usage labels is not normally given in the front matter, instead the abbreviations used are listed in alphabetical order. Therefore, the number of labels and their inter-relationship does not become transparent for the users. From a meta-lexicographical point of view it is also difficult to compare them across dictionaries, because their value and their internal consistency depend on the overall number of labels used. Furthermore, a label might indeed reveal more about the *Sprachgefühl* of the editor than about the existence of real differences.
- 4) If the stylistic assessment of *Kids* does not change in consecutive editions, as for example in the *Duden Rechtschreibung* and in the *Duden Fremdwörterbuch*, this can either indicate that no changes in usage were observed by the lexicographers, or, perhaps more likely, that even in a revision previous decisions die hard and persist for quite some time.

- 5) My *Sprachgefühl* tells me that in present-day German the term in the sense of 'children, teenagers' does not occur in casual spoken language. Neither adults nor youngsters seem to use the term *Kids*. For this reason I would not label it as *colloquial*. It appears that journalists writing about young persons are using and perhaps over-using the term. In addition, it occurs frequently in advertisements for clothing and fashionable equipment for youngsters. Given the truth of these observations, labels such as *journal-ese* or *advertising jargon* in conjunction with at least one illustrative quotation would perhaps be helpful for users - native and non-native - wanting to learn about the usage of *Kids* in present-day German and its semantic and stylistic position in comparison to similar words.
- 6) The exclusion from most German learners' dictionaries seems to imply that *Kids* is a vogue word belonging to the periphery of German lexis.

Notes

1. In this article, the term *Anglicism* functions as an umbrella term for words or phrases borrowed or adapted from a variety of the English language regardless of their origin in Great Britain, the United States, or elsewhere.
2. According to my research for this article the *Wahrig. Deutsches Wörterbuch* (1986) seems to have been the first German dictionary to record this new sense, thus antedating the information given in the AWb (*Duden Fremdwörterbuch* 1990) by four years.
3. The previous four editions, which appeared between 1960 and 1982, only listed the first two senses by providing two entries; i.e. one for the leather, and another one for the gloves made thereof.
4. The following learners' dictionaries do not include the word *Kids*:
Duden. Deutsch als Fremdsprache. Standardwörterbuch. 2002.
Langenscheidt. Taschenwörterbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache. 2003.

PONS. *Basiswörterbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache*. 2002.

Hueber. *Wörterbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache*. 2003.

Wörterbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache. 2000.

5. As indicated by the title, the *Duden Rechtschreibung* is, first and foremost, concerned with orthography. However, for many language users, this is the only dictionary they use. For that reason, it often fulfils the role of a general purpose dictionary.

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