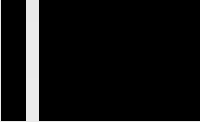# Creativity of the Polish students in foreign language learning:

the benefits of English in the process of the acquisition of German

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Is the study of closely related languages a facilitation for Polish students, or rather a full handicap?

Survay

- June 2019

- first, second and third year students of the first degree (undergraduate studies) of Applied Linguistics at Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland

- groups studying English and German in parallel

Questionnaire

1. How long have you been studying English?

2. Where did you learn English?

3. How long have you been studying German?

4. Where did you learn German?

5. What similarities do you see between English and German? Please give 4-5 examples.

       a) in terms of pronunciation

       b) in the field of morphology

       c) in the field of syntax

       d) in the field of lexis

6. Do you think English can be useful in learning German? Please justify giving examples.

7. Do you think that learning English has a positive / negative effect on the learning process of another foreign language?

Language transfer

- the negative transfer – difficulties and errors (the phenomenon of interference)

- the positive transfer

Linguistic creativity

• only at higher levels of learning

• a kind of support for the learning process

Results

- English – on average for 16 years (kindergarten, middle school, high school, university) [Q1, Q2]

- German – from 3 to 12 years (junior high school, secondary school, primary school) [Q3, Q4]

- Students look for similarities between languages in terms of pronunciation, spelling, grammatical structures or vocabulary [Q5a – Q5d]

Similarities between English and German

Pronunciation:

fish – Fisch

attractive – attraktiv

computer – Computer

person – Person

soup – Suppe

sea – See

wind – Wind

house – Haus

summer – Sommer

name – Name

winter – Winter

super – super

next – nächst

thing – Ding

Similarities between English and German

Grammatical structures, e.g.:

- *begin-began-begun – beginnen-begann-begonnen*

- *have* and *haben*

- *thank for – sich bedanken für*

- *a new car – ein neues Auto*

- *long-longer-the longest – lang-länger, der/die/das längste/am längsten,*

- *my – mein*

- *It was told – Es wurde gesagt*

- *I try to learn – Ich versuche zu lernen*

- Present Perfect – Perfekt, Past Perfect – Plusquamperfekt, Futur Simple – Futur I,

- subject + verb + rest, verb+ subject + rest.

Similarities between English and German

Vocabulary (1):

- creating complex nouns, e.g.:

  week-end –   Wochen-ende, work-place – Arbeits-platz,   snow-man – Schnee-mann, Fri-day – Frei-tag, sky-scraper – Wolken-kratzer, foot-ball – Fußball,

- derivation with suffix **–er**, e.g.:

  *drive/driv**er** – fahren/Fahr**er**,*

- forming adjectives/adverbs with prefixes **in**-/**im**-/**un**-, e.g.:

  clear/unclear – klar/unklar, possible/impossible – möglich/unmöglich

Vocabulary (2):

- graphical or phonetic similarity, e.g.:

to find – finden, adjective – Adjektiv, family – Familie, mouse – Maus, emotional – emotional, to google – googeln, bronchitis – Bronchitis, to send – senden, to sink – sinken, to sing – singen, verb – Verb, to have – haben, paper – Papier, to bring – bringen, vocabulary – Vokabular, doctor – Doktor, son – Sohn, to make – machen, mouth – Mund, bread – Brot, to backe – backen, wolf – Wolf, all – alle, to come – kommen, still – still, student – Student, quality – Qualität, quantity – Quantität, word – Wort, coast – Küste; colour names; month names

Vocabulary (2)

- associations:

book – Buch, milk – Milch, to tolerate – tolerieren, king – König, school – Schule,

nice – nett, ellbow – Ellbogen, father – Vater, mother – Mutter, to build – bauen,

light – Licht, to fly – fliegen, brother – Bruder, can – können, night – Nacht

Similarities between English and German

Vocabulary (2)
- Anglicisms:

T-Shirt, Party, Job, Interview, Computer, Scan, Leasing, Jeans, Chat, Burn-out, Manager

Can English be useful in learning German?

- *"Positively, because if one man learns one language, the next will be easy"*

- *"Many grammatical structures are similar, and English pronunciation facilitates reading borrowed words from English in German"*

- *"Vocabulary helps me because there are many similarities"*

- *"It helps me a lot, because many words and grammatical constructions are similar in both languages"*

- *"Facilitates, because there are similar grammatical constructions and many similar words"*

Do you think that learning English has a positive / negative effect on the learning process of another foreign language?   [Q7]

- "It helps, but you have to be careful because some of the structures may differ in spite of the similarities"

- „You have to watch out for 'false friends', e.g. confident – Konfident, gift - das Gift"

- „Interference can go too far and results in, for example, spelling mistakes: English instead of Englisch in German"

- „There is a problem of language interference that may negatively affect the learning of subsequent languages, resulting in incorrect structures or pronunciation"

Do you think that learning English has a positive / negative effect on the learning process of another foreign language?

- *"The similarities in spelling and pronunciation may be confusing"*

- *"There are constructions similar but different"*

- *„It bothers if the words are formally similar, but different in meaning"*
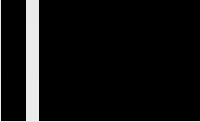
- *"There are language sheets"*

- *"Languages mix"*

Previous experience in learning foreign languages may facilitate the learning of new languages.

- *"Learning a language and learning about a language, in this case English, makes it much easier to learn another language, especially in the field of grammar and vocabulary"*

- *"Language intuition develops, which can help in using a different language"*

- *"Thanks to the analysis of the similarities and differences we learn quickly absorbed by other languages"*

- *"You can remember new words and structures on associations"*

- *"You can find analogies in vocabulary and grammar"*

Previous experience in learning foreign languages may facilitate the learning of new languages

- *„Yes, because there are Anglicism in many languages"*

- *"Very positive, because you can compare syntax and vocabulary, which makes learning easier"*

- *"Yes, because there are borrowings from English, so it's easier to learn vocabulary"*

- *"Because with each subsequent one it is easier to learn"*

- *"Because English is the basis, model and help in the sense of grammar and of other languages"*

- *"Because knowledge of one foreign language motivates to learn other languages"*

- *"Because you can compare it with another language"*

„I think that every new language is useful in learning the next one, it does not even have to be English."

Thank you very much for your attention.