

## How translations from English shape the genre of popular scientific writing in German

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The production of German popular science texts is characterized by a large number of translations from English. Research within the project “Covert Translation” (cf. Baumgarten / House / Probst 2004) has shown that various aspects of German popular scientific writing are shaped in accordance with the prestigious English model. This paper aims at providing an overview of the main changes which have taken place in the German genre that can be explained as resulting from language contact through translation (on the general nature of language variation and change through translation cf. Becher, Höder & Kranich 2009), based on corpus studies of English popular scientific texts, their German translations and German original texts produced in two time-spans (1978-1982 and 1999-2002).

Anglophone influence on German popular science texts via translation manifests itself as quantitative and qualitative changes concerning linguistic items associated with two major dimensions of English-German usage contrasts, namely interactionality (as visible in changing usage of cohesive devices and personal deixis) and hedging (as instantiated by epistemic modal expressions, such as *may*, *perhaps*, *probably*). These changes seem to first occur in the translations as a result of source-language interference. In this way, linguistic variation is introduced into the German popular science genre. In a second step, this variation influences monolingual German text production, yielding non-translated German texts of a hybrid nature following to some extent English, to some extent German communicative norms (cf. Böttger 2004).

Becher, House & Kranich (forthc.) have shown in a diachronic corpus study that sentence-initial concessive conjunctions (English *But* and its German equivalents *Aber* and *Doch*), which are often used to simulate an interaction between author and reader, are increasingly employed first in English-German translations and later also in German original texts. In total, the observed changes amount to a general trend of increasing addressee orientation and a shift towards the spoken end of the written-spoken continuum of language use (cf. Koch / Oesterreicher 2007: 349), moving the German popular science genre closer to the English one in terms of communicative conventions.

### References

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