

English summary

How does a language keep up with rapid technical innovations? What are new developments called and are there certain regularities in finding suitable designations?

This book examines naming processes in the French language for Internet and computer terminology in the period 1996 to 2001. Within this special time period the official acceptance of the new medium Internet arose to the detriment of the old Minitel system in France.

This corpus-based linguistic analysis focuses on the use of Internet and computer terminology within French general language. It points out pragmatic aspects of the different uses of terms in computer contexts and other contexts of use.

The first chapter treats the history of the French language with its episodes of normative interventions; it points out the conflicts as well as the measures taken by the state. Against the background of this history the contact between language communities is discussed, especially concerning Anglicisms and traditional loan classifications. Language change and new tendencies in French vocabulary are examined.

The topics of language contact and borrowing processes are often discussed as a threat to the French language under the aspect of language maintenance. Previous studies in this field have described the Anglo-American influence on the French language and the characteristics of terms created by the French terminology commissions (Beinke 1990). The integration of Anglicisms in French (Klein / Lienart / Ostyn 1997) has been the subject of studies as well as the possible acceptance or rejection of neologisms among speakers of French (Helfrich 1993). Other studies focus on language for special purposes (Jansen 2005, Ahlers und Holtus 1999, Walter 1997), or on the effect of French terminology decrees on the language of computer scientists (Le Guilly-Wallis 1991).

The present study follows an empirical corpus-based approach and analyzes the actual occurrences and forms of Internet and computer terms. Furthermore, the period of six years allows a diachronic view of the development of naming processes.

The data sources for the present analysis were a self-compiled corpus of a French daily newspaper (*Le Monde*) and a weekly journal (*Le Nouvel Observateur*) as well as two annual business reports, one from a traditional business sector and the second from the telecommunications industry. A total of 254 terms were searched for in the corpus. A database system was developed in order to examine productive naming processes; the approach adopted was a componential analysis.

The second chapter presents the analysis of the empirical data. The first step of the analysis focuses on French, the second on English designations. The third part of the analysis concentrates on alternative uses, range of meanings and restrictions of context.

Chapter 3 discusses the analysis and classifies it among other research works. Furthermore, a prototypical model of lexematic integration is developed pointing out that both French and foreign designations are, in fact, common. The empirical data reveals a preference of indigenous linguistic material including words of Greek or Latin origin. Under certain conditions foreign, i.e. English, words are accepted as well: when they are often in use, precise, economical or when there is a lack of another suitable designation. Historical links to the language facilitate an integration as well as phonotactic compatibility. Even alternative designations may coexist for a period of time; they are rarely interchangeable alternatives but find themselves in certain distributions.

Furthermore, the data shows that with computer technology the extremely short period of technical development is mirrored by the speed of naming processes in comparison to other historical introductions of terminology (e.g. railway technology) as it creates the technical precondition of its worldwide diffusion itself.