Lowkey, I Think He's Cringe

A morphological examination of the lexeme *cringe* in online communication by German and English-speaking youth

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Conversion/Zero-derivation:

When a lexeme changes word class without any marking change

"Cringe: (verb) to suddenly move away from someone or something because you are frightened...(informal) to feel very embarrassed"

(Cambridge 2023)

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An adjective that describes something "…very embarrassing, because of being so bad or silly" (Cambridge 2023) "...drückt ein Gefühl des Fremdschämens aus und kann auch als Adjektiv Gebrauch finden...'Cringe' kann aber auch ein Ausruf des Unbehagens sein und wird oft verwendet, wenn eine Situation peinlich ist" (Langenscheidt 2021).

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 - \circ ~ Examine the morphological conversion in English of cringe
 - Compare & contrast the usage by German & English youth speakers.
 - Analyze language samples using cringe on social media

• Language Innovation & Online Communication (McCulloch 2019)

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 - They use language & linguistic variation to mark identity, "coolness"/status, & separation from older generations

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"Ein Vergleich der Wortbedeutungen eines Anglizismus mit seinem englischsprachigen Vorbild dokumentiert, dass im Zuge der Entlehnung **nie der gesamte Bedeutungsumfang eines englischen Sprachzeichens übernommen wird**, sondern **meist aus einem bestimmten Anlass** eine Bedeutung" (Busse 2001, 139).

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- Why TikTok?
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 - Terms of Service (ToS), account holders: "can only use the Platform if you are 13 years of age or older" (TikTok 2022).

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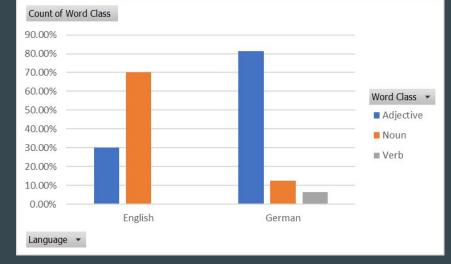
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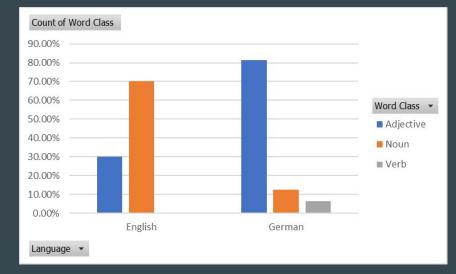
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 - \circ substitution test

English Results



English Results

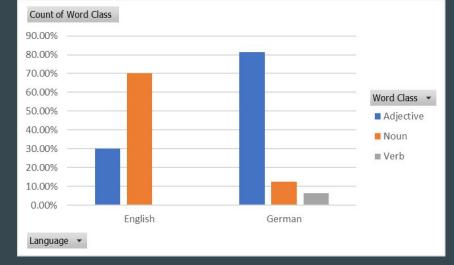
• 20 Samples



English Results

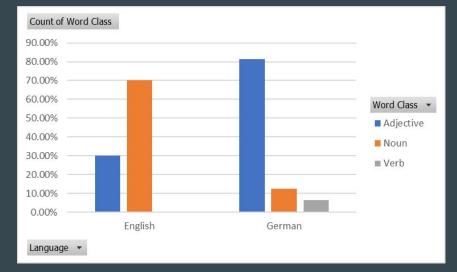
• 20 Samples

• 70% are nouns



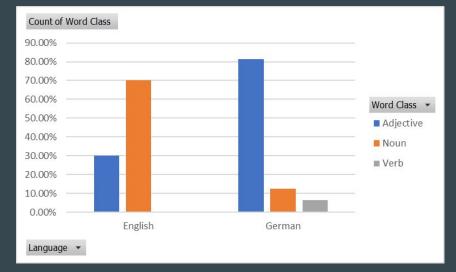
English Results

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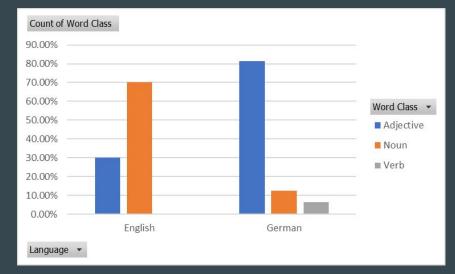
English Results

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 - Indirect object



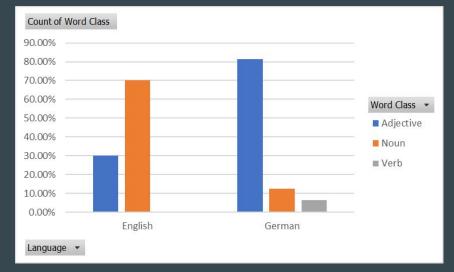
English Results

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 - Adjectives



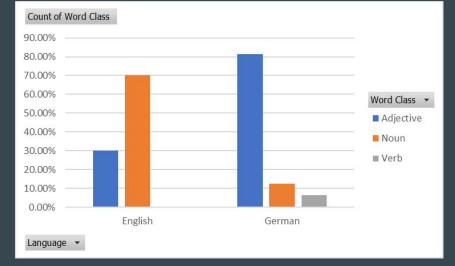
English Results

- 20 Samples
 - > 70% are nouns
 - NP + Preposition patterns
 - Indirect object
 - Adjectives
 - Mostly predicative



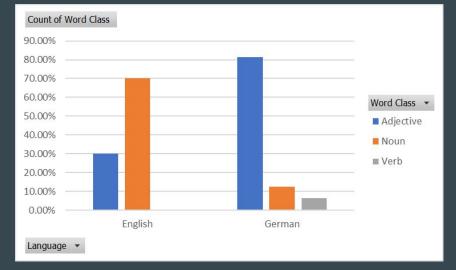
English Results

- 20 Samples
 - **70% are nouns**
 - NP + Preposition patterns
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 - Mostly predicative
 - Used with modifiers



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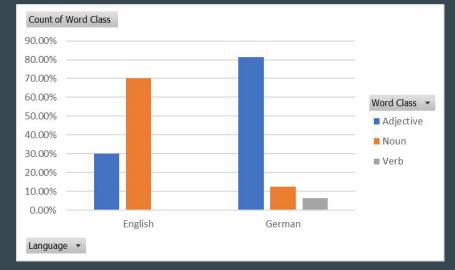


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• 16 Samples

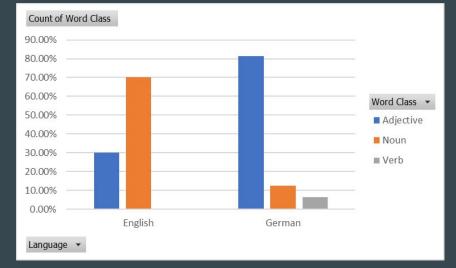


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German Results

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 - 81.25% are adjectives

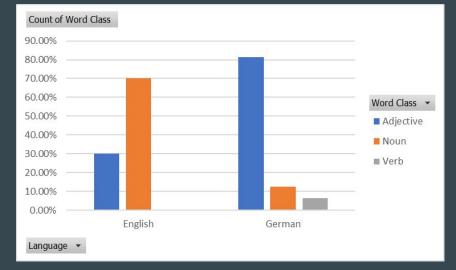


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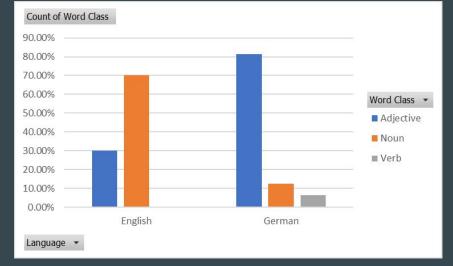


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 - 81.25% are adjectives
 - Attributive
 - Without inflection or in a title

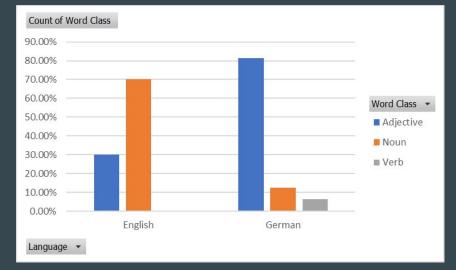


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German Results

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 - 81.25% are adjectives
 - Attributive
 - Without inflection or in a title
 - Predicative
 - Often combined with adverbs

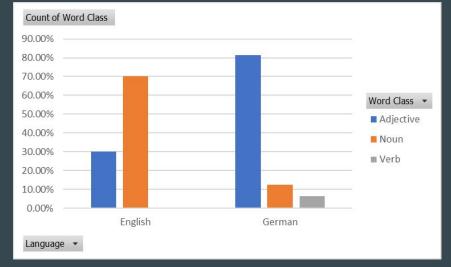




Figure 2: Sample integrating *cringe* as a noun



das erste mal das es nicht ancringet, das echt lustig hahhaha @romii

2022-11-10 💙 0 Reply

• Evidence of advanced integration into German systems



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das erste mal das es nicht ancringet, das echt lustig hahhaha @romii 2022-11-10 20 Reply

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"Es ist aber auch häufig der Fall, dass sich ein Anglizismus, **sobald er im Deutschen Fuß gefasst hat**, durch seine Feldnachbarn beeinflusst wird, und **Bedutungen entwickelt, die er in seiner Ursprungssprache nicht besaß**, also semantisches Eigenleben losgelöst von der Modellsprache führt [...] In dieser Hinsicht **unterliegen Anglizismen den gleichen Bedingungen des Sprachwandels wie indigene Lexikoneinheiten**" (Busse 2001, 139).



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• Future research

- Effects of conversion/zero-derivation in L1 on L2 when a word is borrowed
- Effects of internet & social media on loanword integration

Thanks! Questions, comments or critiques?

Email: hanna.celeste.elstad@stud.uni-hannover.de Email, LinkedIn & digital feedback form:



Appendix

Figure 1: Word usage within language category (as percentage)

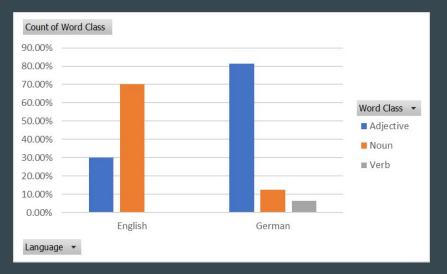


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Figure 3: Sample integrating *cringe* as Partizip II



das erste mal das es nicht ancringet, das echt lustig hahhaha @romii

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