

Loan words or (neo)linguistic purism: A false alternative instead of complementary dialectics

Loan words generally have a bad reputation – but it is hard to imagine the language without them anyway. The reason for this ambivalence seems not least to be the fact that foreign borrowings, mostly in *statu nascendi*, may cause hostility because of the disruption of the usual resting position, while their numerically serious catalytic role in the establishment of target language equivalents – usually with the disappearance of the borrowings connected – mostly goes unnoticed. This discrepancy is summed up as the dialectic of conflict, and according to Spitzmüller (2005) as the “incompatibility of two divergent discourses”: “[It] shows that language in public is more than a medium of communication: it functions as a collective ›social symbol‹ and as a means of constituting identity and alterity. Metalinguistic discourse is therefore never exclusively related to language. Social fears, social conflicts and therefore a given socio-historical situation always stand behind it.”

Keywords: foreign words, loan words, (neo)linguistic purism, nomination, recipient and donor languages.