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**Rainbow Denglish:  
The colour-related expressions  
in contemporary German  
in the context of English**

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**Abstract**

The text presents the results of a study on Anglicisms used to denote colour names, extracted from the corpus included in *Der Anglizismen-Index 2022. Deutsch statt Denglish* (2022) and *Duden. Band 5. Das Fremdwörterbuch* (2020). The study examined the degree of assimilation of these terms, their word-formation potential, and semantic aspects, particularly in the context of linguistic resources available in the contemporary German lexicon. The aim of the research is to determine the degree of assimilation in the context of the phenomenon of Denglish, the lasting influence of the English language on German. The study found that Anglicisms belonging to this group should not be viewed as a threat to native German expressions for describing colours.

**Keywords**

Denglish, Anglicisms, German lexical resource

**Tęczowy Denglish: O angielskich nazwach  
kolorów we współczesnej niemczyźnie****Abstrakt**

Tekst prezentuje wyniki badania anglicyzmów służącymi do określania nazw kolorów wyekscerpowanych z korpusu zawartego w słownikach *Der Anglizismen-Index 2022. Deutsch statt Denglish* (2022) i *Duden. Band 5. Das Fremdwörterbuch* (2020). Badanie objęło określenie stopnia zasymilowania, jak również rozpoznanie wykazywanego przez nie potencjału słowotwórczego oraz aspektu znaczeniowego, także w kontekście środków językowych dostępnych we współczesnym niemieckim leksykonie. Celem badania jest określenie stopnia zasymilowania w kontekście zjawiska Denglish, czyli trwałego wpływu języka angielskiego na język niemiecki. Badanie wykazało, że anglicyzmów z tej grupy nie należy postrzegać jako zagrożenia dla rdzennych niemieckich wyrażen określających kolory.

**Słowa kluczowe**

zjawisko Denglish, anglicyzmy, niemiecki zasób leksykalny

**1. Introduction**

Crucial as they are for communication, colour compounds have been widely investigated not only in the context of specific languages, but also from the comparativist perspective (Stanulewicz 2006, 2007, 2009, Stanulewicz, Pawłowski 2018, Komo-

rowska, Stanulewicz 2018, 2022, Vejdemo et al. 2014 etc.).<sup>1</sup> A significant amount of research on colour compounds have been devoted to the cultural impact of such phrases, with the discussion of their place and function in the transmission of the heritage of a given language community, such as, for example, the role of colour terms in the system of Slavic magic beliefs (Libera 1987, Voolaid 2019, Babič 2019). Other scholarly texts analysed the semantics of the colour compounds and their place in meaning formation (Grossmann, D'Achille 2019: 61-82, Skuza 2015: 90-111). The following article, however, focuses on the word-formation aspect of the phenomenon in question, situating it in the framework of lexicon studies and pertains specifically to the German language. Language evolves continually, so does the lexicon, provoking the question if – and to what extent – the terms for colour compounds change, too. Hence, the following text presents an analysis targeting the use of English-derived colour compounds in contemporary German, the purpose being to study the degree of assimilation of English colour compounds and to trace the processes involved in their incorporation into the German lexicon, represented by the 2022 edition of “Deutsch statt Denglish index” and the 2020 edition of “DUDEN. Das Fremdwörterbuch Band 54”. This is going to be achieved with the help of the analysis of their structural aspect and spelling as well as the semantic aspect in the context of their interpretation in Polish and German.

A significant angle of the research presented here is provided by the considerations on the status of the German language and the possible threat to its identity in light of the apparent cultural hegemony of the English language. Exposed to strong English influence since 1945, German is often perceived as endangered by the influx of easily accessible English lexical items. The question of the colour compounds assimilation is therefore important from the point of view of the so-called Denglish debate, and as such it is going to be covered here.

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<sup>1</sup> See discussions about colours in Modern Greek (Androulaki et al. 2006), in Croatian (Raffaeli 2017), in Finnish (Uusküla 2007), in Estonian (Vainik 2022) etc.

## 2. **Denglish phenomenon** – **definition and studies**

The influence of English on other language systems has been a subject of debate, accelerating in the 1990s (Crystal 2003: 23), among both the proponents of enriching the native language with foreign vocabulary and the staunch opponents of the process. Studied by researchers for years, the term *Denglisch* refers to the use of English terms in contemporary German language (see Carstensen 1965, Fink 1997, Schlobinski 2000, Plümer 2000, Glahn 2002, 2005 Lipczuk 2014 etc.). It is often discussed by language purists keen to address the issue of German's susceptibility to English influences, highlighting the dangers of excessive and unreflective borrowing of foreign lexicon by the German language (see Plümer 2000, Földes 2002, Zabel 2003, Pörksen 2005, Schneider 2008 etc.). The term *Denglish* itself is not entirely neutral in meaning, as indicated by the following definition:

1. (pejorative) "German influenced by English words, word components, or expressions for reasons of prestige; an English expression in German perceived as disruptive";
2. rarely "(jocular or straightforward) mixed language of English and German" ("*Denglish*" n.d.<sup>2</sup>)

The pejorative meaning of *Denglish* could be noticed in the abovementioned fragment, as it positions English influences as awkward and overused. Then again, in the second part, the definition notices that in the case of general public these processes tend to be neglected and fail to garner proper recognition.

Although the influence of a foreign language is far from being a recent phenomenon, with e.g. Latin playing the role of *lingua franca* in the past (Crystal 2003: 7), the impact of English on

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<sup>2</sup>“1) (abwertend) ‘aus Prestige Gründen von englischen Wörtern, Wortbestandteilen oder Ausdrucksweisen durchsetztes Deutsch; als störend empfundener englischer Ausdruck im Deutschen‘; 2) selten ‘(scherzhafte oder geradebrechte) Mischsprache aus Englisch und Deutsch’ ‘(*Denglish*’ n.d.) [translated by AK].

German, dictated by various geographical-historical and socio-cultural factors (Crystal 2003: 29-30), is significant enough to remain a topic of interest not only among the aforementioned purist scholars. This is largely due to the English language's global reach (see Fink 1997: 6), as well as the long-standing fashion for using the English language. Carstensen (1965: 270-271) draws attention to this fact when he states:

As it happens, numerous English words are guests in the German language. However, by no means is it certain, nor likely, that they will all become firmly established. Some of the foreign words adopted after 1945 have already been forgotten today (...). Some words are a reflection of a fashion trend (...) and therefore remain in the guest language only for a limited time. (...) The intrusion of Americanisms and Anglicisms into the German language after 1945 was clearly noticeable, although the different parts of the German language were affected by this influence in varying degrees. In principle, however, this influence should not be overestimated.<sup>3</sup>

It is noteworthy that the post-war influence of the English language on German has not diminished over the years, as evidenced by the constant presence of "old" Anglicisms, as well as the emergence of the new ones. Borrowing, like other changes in vocabulary, is a natural process resulting from the dynamic nature of language and the current needs of its users (Schippan 2002: 256-257), yet in the case of the English language the number of Anglicisms in the German lexicon is highly noticeable (see Eisenberg 2013); what is more, their incorporation into common usage fails to stem from a justified need to name new

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<sup>3</sup> "Es ergab sich, dass heute sehr viele englische Wörter im Deutschen zu Gast sind. Dabei ist keineswegs sicher und überdies unwahrscheinlich, dass sie alle fest eingebürgert sind. Einige von den nach 1945 übernommenen Fremdwörtern haben wir heute schon vergessen (...). Manche Wörter sind Ausdruck der Modeerscheinung (...) und bleiben daher nur eine Zeitlang in der Gastsprache. (...) Das Eindringen von Amerikanismen und Anglizismen in die deutsche Sprache nach 1945 war eindeutig festzustellen, wenn auch die verschiedenen Teile der deutschen Sprache von diesem Einfluss unterschiedlich erfasst werden. Grundsätzlich sollte dieser Einfluss aber nicht überbewertet werden" (Carstensen 1965: 270-271) [translated by AK].

objects, but signifies a preference to use English names for existing objects. Although this is not a rule, these words are usually borrowed in their entirety, i.e., retaining both their form and meaning (Waszakowa 2005: 170), and then adapted to the native lexicon when the integration of Anglicisms becomes complete due to several stages (phonological, typographic, morphological and semantic) distinguishable in this process (Carstensen 1965: 90-91, Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2008: 113).

Regardless of the degree of assimilation they exhibit, lexical English borrowings penetrate everyday communication relatively easily, often functioning in German alongside strictly German lexemes, and sometimes completely replacing them (see Klawon 2007). As a result, the frequency of Anglicisms in the native lexicon seems to be constantly increasing; what is more, this is happening relatively fast. One of the factors supporting this trend is the active participation of English borrowings in word-formation processes, which results in, among other things, a great diversity of units with an Anglophone element. Lexemes acquired through borrowing usually take part in the process of creating new units, such as compounds or collocations. Furthermore, not only are Anglicisms present in private conversations, but also in business communication (Glahn 2005), both written and oral, failing to be limited to the areas that have been previously closely associated with the English language (such as the computer industry (see Youngick 2005) or the advertising world (Fink 1997). Nowadays, they are also used in fashion (O'Halloran 2005) and business slang, as well as in the language of athletes and scientists.

### **3. Linguistic means of expressing colour**

While lexemes representing different parts of speech participate in the process of borrowing, the influence of the English language is currently most pronounced within the framework of nouns ("Anglizismus": n.d.). This may be due to the fact that nouns usually serve to name new objects, phenomena, and ideas. In terms of frequency, it should be emphasized that

Anglophone adjectives come second and only then come the verbs. It could be mean that adjectives highlight the selected property of the object and have an impact on its valuation and can be charged with positive or negative connotations. Colour names, for which adjectives are primary indicators, deserve special attention in this group. As Ampel-Rudolf (1994: 53) notes, there are different ways of coding information pertaining to the colour, yet – as the information in question is related to a feature of the object – the primary means of expression here would be an adjective (Ampel-Rudolf 1994: 53).

However, it should be observed that regardless of the dominance of adjectives in colour naming, language systems offer other possibilities. Other parts of speech used for this purpose would be nouns, adverbs, and verbs, depending on the perception of the colour of a given object as a feature either stable, or time-related (Ampel-Rudolf 1994: 53). This is the case with Polish, where colour names can be represented relatively frequently:

**Table 1**

Lexical means of expressions for colours  
in Polish (following Benenowska 2011: 51)

	Examples
Nouns	<i>biel, czerwień, amarant, błękit</i>
Adjectives	<i>zielony, czarny, buraczkowy</i>
Verbs	<i>żółknąć, zielenić się, czerwienieć</i>
Participles	<i>żółknący, zieleniejąc, czerwieniejący</i>
Idiomatic expressions	<i>czerwone włosy</i> = <i>rude</i> 'red hair', <i>biała blacha</i> = <i>ocynowana</i> 'galvanized', <i>czarna polewka</i> = <i>czernina</i> 'blood soup'
Colour disambiguating terms	<i>blady, ciemny, jasny, matowy, nasycony, intensywny, soczysty, rozbielony, zgaszony</i>

The above-mentioned table shows the already researched options available in a North Slavic language. The question remains, however, if German language allows for a similar range of colour names representations – and how are English borrowings in-

volved in creating them. Universally speaking, the terms representing colours are relatively common and their aforementioned lexical diversity may result from the fact that, as Tokarski (2004: 21) has it, colour lexicon changes depending on the world conceptualisation typical for a given language, thus taking part in the cultural differentiation of languages. Nevertheless, as John Gage (1999) points out, “colour-salience as revealed by language must be related to the wider experience of colour in a given culture, this experience differing among the different groups within this culture to whom colour is of some concern” (Gage 1999: 79). My research is, therefore, oriented towards the role of colour terms incorporated into German lexicon from the English language and their impact on the further development of the German language.

#### **4. Methodology and analysis**

The culture-specific experience of colour mentioned above became an inspiration for the following considerations on the behaviour of German colour names borrowed from English. The subject of this study is currently used German lexical units containing a component which is an unassimilated English name of a colour. The research corpus was extracted from the publication “Der Anglizismen-Index 2022. Deutsch statt Denglisch” (2022) and the latest available edition of the foreign words dictionary “DUDEN. Das Fremdwörterbuch Band 54” (2020). Only the basic colour scale, i.e. white, black, red, green, blue, yellow, was considered, following the scale proposed in the paper of Ampel-Rudolf (1994: 19). Then, the collected lexical units were analysed in terms of their structure, represented type of word formation, degree of assimilation, meaning, and their Polish interpretation.

##### **4.1. Structural aspect and spelling**

The analysis proves that although present as they are in the German lexical repertoire, English colour names fail to be



overused. They are hardly ever simple Anglicisms, with the exceptions of *das Green* meaning '1) green'; '2) in golf: the closest surroundings of the hole' and *der Blues* 'a genre of music', the latter increasingly perceived as a non-foreign word. Anglicisms are more common in compound formations, but even in such cases they show only moderate lexical connectivity with strictly German components. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that colour-designating Anglicisms partake in word formation, participating primarily in the creation of compounds, collocations, and (less frequently) derivatives, such as, for example: a) *das Whiteboard*, *das/der Blackout*, *das Redwood*, *der Greenkeeper*, *der Bluescreen*, *yellowpages*<sup>4</sup>, *white list*, *die Greenfee* (compounds); b) *der/das Blue Movie*, *blue hour*, *Black Bikeday*, *die Yellow Press*, *greenwashing* (collocations); c) *Blacky* (proper name) (derivatives, affixal).

In the majority of the above-mentioned examples, the word formation processes involve an English colour term and another Anglicism. English-German hybrids are rather rare here, attested in the corpus by only four units<sup>5</sup>, i.e. *die White-Collar-Kriminalität*, *die Blackbox Methode*, *der Blackbox-Test*, and *das Redgumholz*.

It should be noted that colour-designating Anglicisms do not constitute the basis of word formation but can have a descriptive function. This could be seen, among other things, in the case of collocations in which the primary association with a given colour is blurred and the unit has already gained a figurative meaning, e.g. *der/das Blue Movie* 'erotic film, soft porn', *white noise* 'gentle background noise', *green room* 'waiting room', *black box test* 'checking a computer program for its functions'. Sometimes the original reference to a colour is still clear, provided that the property it evokes is an essential part of the object or idea in question, for example *das Whiteboard*, *das/der Blackout* in the sense of a break in or complete cut-off of the access

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<sup>4</sup> All examples are written according to the sources from the research corpus.

<sup>5</sup> Due to the fact that spelling differences will be the topic of further considerations, in this part of the text they will be omitted.

to a light source, *das Greenhorn* ‘a novice, someone who is “green” in a particular field’, *yellow pages* ‘a business telephone directory’ (the naming reflects the colour of the pages on which the advertisements are placed).

In the context of the structure and word-formation, it can be stated that two-element formations such as *der Blackbottom*, *das Redwood*, *die Greencard*, *der Bluechip*, predominate in the analysed corpus. Formations consisting of more than two independent lexical units are rather rare (represented in the corpus only by *das Redgumholz*, *die White-Collar-Kriminalität*, *die Blackbox-Methode*). It is worth special attention, because it is precisely the multi-element compounds<sup>6</sup> that distinguish the German lexical inventory from other languages, for example Polish (Grzegorzczkowska 1981: 59).

Conventional compounds, i.e. those derived from two independent words, are represented in the corpus mainly by agglutinations and combinations. It should be noted that these compounds can be written with a hyphen, as one word, or separately, depending on the stage of assimilation with the recipient language<sup>7</sup>. Nevertheless, all the mentioned types of spelling are in use, even if their orthographic correctness may be questioned, e.g. *die Green-Card* / *Greencard* / *green card*, *die Black Mail* / *Blackmail*, *die Yellow Press* / *yellowpress*.

Differences in spelling are also evident in the case of nouns, which according to German orthography are distinguished by a capital letter. However, this rule is not strictly observed in the corpus. Moreover, even the compliance with the above rule does

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<sup>6</sup> More about this topic write Fleischer, Barz (1995), who explain it as “compounds with four or more base morphemes. (...) Today, the most common formations are those made up of four base morphemes, one of which is sometimes an adjective or verb root, but the first overall unit is a noun: *Autobahn-raststätte*, *Braunkohlen-tagebau* (...); *Roggen-vollkornbrot*, *Welt-Tierärztegesellschaft*, *Glieder-schnelltreibwagen*, *Waffenstillstand-verhandlungen*, *Wohngebietsgestaltungs-konzeption*, *Straßenverkehrs-Zulassungs-Ordnung*” (Fleischer, Barz 1995: 97) [translated by AK].

<sup>7</sup> In contrast to compounds in Polish, in which the presence of a hyphen indicates equivalence of all components. The spelling without hyphen on the other hand means subordination of the first element to the second (see Naskręt, (n.d.). *Złożenia, zrosty i zestawienia...*).

not always mean its implementation for all nominal components of the formation. Sometimes the capital letter appears at the beginning of the word, and then in each of its nominal parts. However, in a given lexeme the spelling is always conventional, which makes it seem quite random and insufficiently fixed. For this reason, it is common to see the spelling of such compounds in lowercase letters, and quite often the subsequent components with similar semantic rank are written separately, each of them with a capital letter, e.g. *die Black Power*, *das Blue Baby*, *die Yellow Press*, *Green IT*.

The spelling of the nominal units examined above is the most obvious manifestation of assimilation in the corpus. In their case, the use of a capital letter indicates the earliest sign of assimilation, even with relative freedom regarding joint and separate spelling. Thanks to typography it is also easier to identify new Anglicisms as nouns, which naturally results in assigning them the appropriate article and associating them with one of three grammatical genders, i.e., Masculine (male gender), Feminine (female gender), and Neuter (neutral gender). This allows for the further integration of the given unit, expressed by the possibility of its correct declension, which in German is signalled, precisely by the article. Assigning a lexeme to a given grammatical gender is, in turn, based on rules applicable in the German word formation, that refer, among other things, to morphological and lexical criteria.

In the analysed units this is particularly evident in the case of agglutinations in which the second element plays a decisive role in determining the grammatical gender, in accordance with the German rules of composition. As a result, it participates in the morphological assimilation of the given compound. Due to the fact that the integration with the recipient's language can also proceed at different rates at this level, it happens that new units function for a longer time with more than one article, e.g., *der/das Blue Movie*, *der/das Blackout/Black-out/blackout*,

*der/das Blackberry*. Assigning a new word two<sup>8</sup> articles, of course, also results in discrepancies in declension. Nevertheless, it allows to popularize a given lexeme, which to some extent simplifies and shortens the process of assimilation.

It should also be noted that in the case of the analysed collocations and combinations, morphological integration proceeds similarly, although this is not always as evident a process as orthographic assimilation. Moreover, at this stage, subsequent components with similar semantic rank are quite often written separately, and each of them begins with a capital letter, e.g., *die Black Power*, *das Blue Baby*, *die Yellow Press*, *Green IT*.

#### **4.2. Semantic aspect in the context of interpretation in Polish and German**

The last point of the analysis of the extracted units is the semantic aspect. As previously noted, the English component designating the colour in the case of compounds is usually located at the beginning of the given structure. As a result, it determines the meaning of the entire unit, either by constituting its direct, literal justification, or by giving it a figurative meaning, only to some extent resulting from the symbolism of the colour or its cultural conditioning. The intermediate goal of the analysis was therefore to establish to what extent the designation of a given colour constituted a significant part of a given lexeme's meaning. Its importance could be indicated by the presence of a given component in its translation equivalent. Therefore, during the study, they were confronted with equivalent explanations in Polish and strictly German counterparts, if available.

As stated during the analysis, in the case of all colours included in the corpus, meaning is established in two ways, as seen in the following comparison:

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<sup>8</sup> Sometimes even three, e.g. *der/die/das Blackband* (in this case it depends on the meaning of the German word *Band*).

**Table 2**  
Meanings of colours based on excerpted units

Colour name	Meaning / interpretation	Examples
<i>black</i> (Polish: <i>czarny</i> , German: <i>schwarz</i> )	'black colour' 'dark, immersed in darkness, deprived of light; dark-skinned; bad, negative'	<i>das Blackhole</i> , <i>Black Belt</i> , <i>die Black Tongue</i> , <i>Black Magic</i> , <i>der Black Metal</i> , <i>black facing</i>
<i>White</i> (Polish: <i>biały</i> , German: <i>weiß</i> )	'white colour' 'bright, positive, clean, delicate, gentle, non-invasive'	<i>das Whiteboard</i> , <i>white space</i> , <i>white noise</i> , <i>die White-Collar-Kriminalität</i> ;
<i>green</i> (Polish: <i>zielony</i> , German: <i>grün</i> )	'green colour' 'inexperienced, new in a given field; ecological, caring for the natural environment; calming, soothing'	<i>das Green</i> , <i>green belt</i> <i>der Greenhorn</i> , <i>greenwashing</i> , <i>green IT</i> , <i>green room</i> ;
<i>blue</i> (Polish: <i>niebieski</i> , German: <i>blau</i> )	'blue colour' 'sad, with a lowered mood, depressive, melancholic'; 'for technical matters'	<i>die Bluejeans</i> , <i>das Blue Baby</i> , <i>bluebug</i> <i>der Blues</i> <i>blue hour</i> , <i>der Bluescreen</i> , <i>die Bluebox</i>
<i>red</i> (Polish: <i>czerwony</i> German: <i>rot</i> )	'red colour' 'related to First Nation Americans (representatives of the red race), associated with Americans from the southern states of the USA and the working class'	<i>das Redwood</i> ; <i>das Redgumholz</i> <i>der Redneck</i> , <i>die Red Power</i>
<i>yellow</i> (Polish: <i>żółty</i> , German: <i>gelb</i> )	'yellow colour' 'of inferior quality, cheaper; gossipy, entertaining'	<i>yellow pages</i> , <i>Yellowback</i> <i>die Yellow Press</i>

For some of the analysed Anglicisms, the primary meaning of a particular colour turned out to be crucial, while references to cultural context or symbolism did not matter at all. In such cases, the English name of the colour served the function of describing the physical characteristics of the object, for example, *Whiteboard* meaning a board in the colour white, *Blackhole* 'black hole', a concept in astronomy denoting an object that completely absorbs visible light, *Blueback* meaning fur with a blue tint, made from the fur of young harbour seals. The English component here allowed for a straightforward justification of the word's existence and simultaneously took into account its origin. Sometimes, however, it also provided additional information. One example is the Anglicism *green belt*. On the one hand, it refers to a belt made of green colour fabric. However, since it is mainly used in Eastern martial arts, the reference to the colour serves not only the description of the object but also carries additional significance. The colour of the belt worn by a practitioner has extra meaning, as it indicates the person's experience and skills, thereby placing them in a certain group and non-verbally conveying information about their status.

Symbolic or culturally/socially conditioned meanings of colour terms are also indicated by other Anglicisms in the corpus, which can be traced through examples. Regarding the component *yellow*, it appears relatively rarely in the examined units. It could have a literal meaning, as in the collocation *yellow pages*, referring to a business directory printed on yellow paper (German: *gelbe Seiten*). Another example would be *Yellowback*, short for *yellow paperback*, meaning 'cheap book, pulp fiction', originally printed on low-cost acidic paper which turned yellow over time. What is interesting, both examples belong into the category of objects of inferior quality, cheaper, lower-rated, or of lower value, thus enhancing the negative connotations associated with the colour yellow. According to Kopaliński (1990: 506), yellow symbolizes jealousy, infidelity, betrayal, instability, cowardice, bad luck, disease, hypocrisy, and sensationalism (Kopaliński 1990: 506). The negative connotations in this case emphasize not only the general symbolism of this colour but

also its historical context (Kopaliński 1990: 506). As follows, *die Yellow Press/yellowpress*, also present in the corpus, has a negative connotation – they mean sensational, tabloid press with little informative value. The American term from the end of the 19th century should be considered here, as it originally referred to “panicky articles in the tabloid press about the <yellow peril> supposedly threatening the West (and especially its trade) from China and Japan”<sup>9</sup> (Kopaliński 1990: 506), thus supporting the negative connotations thesis. Though the term *yellow press* is known in Polish, it has not found wider use, unlike in German, where the term *die Yellow Press* still functions, despite the existence of native German equivalents *die Regenbogenpresse* and *das Revolverblatt*.

As for the component *green*, its use usually indicated the freshness or immaturity of a given object. The basis of a given compound, combination, or collocation was usually an object or person, and the mention of colour allowed for the introduction of a valuation element, e.g. *der Greenhorn* “greenhorn, novice, someone <green>, i.e. inexperienced in a given field”. Anglicisms with this element mainly indicate the symbolic meaning of green, emphasizing youth, ignorance, and innocence resulting from the lack of experience (Kopaliński 1990: 492). In some Anglicisms, this component also refers to ecology and issues related (also seemingly) to the protection of the natural environment, e.g. *greenwashing* “pretending that something is environmentally friendly”, *green IT* “about an ecological, gentle IT industry”. Its partial Polish equivalent is the term “ecological, living in harmony with nature, environmentally friendly; gentle, delicate”. An interesting case in this group of Anglicisms are the lexemes related to golf. In their case, the component *green* serves as an indicator that the given term is motivated by the greenery of golf courses, for example, *das Green* ‘the area around the golf hole with short-cut grass’, *der Green-Keeper/Greenkeeper* ‘person

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<sup>9</sup>“panikarskie artykuły w prasie brukowej na temat „żółtego niebezpieczeństwa”, zagrażającego rzekomo Zachodowi (a zwłaszcza jego handlowi) ze strony Chin i Japonii” (Kopaliński 1990: 506) [translated by AK].

caring for the grass on the golf course', *die Green Fee/die Green-Fee* 'fee for the opportunity to play golf'.

The component *blue* in the examined Anglicisms most frequently pertained to strictly technical matters, such as film technology, photography, or computer errors, for example, *die Bluebox/die Blue Box* 'device used in the film industry for creating artificial background keying', *der Blue Screen/Bluescreen* '1) synonym for Bluebox'; '2) Blue Screen of Death, i.e., a serious error message in the Windows operating system', *blue hour* 'i.e., the time just before sunrise or immediately after sunset, often used in professional photography', *der Blueprint* 'photographic reproduction of a plan, design, or print'. Sometimes this component indicates psychological states related to a worsened mood, depression, and melancholy. This is evidenced by all the meanings of the lexeme *der Blues* '1) sad African American song'; '2) the oldest genre in jazz characterized by a deep 3rd and 7th note in the musical scale, the so-called blue note'; '3) North American dance in 4/4 meter'; '4) depression, melancholy, mental depression'. Two Anglicisms in this group particularly deserve attention, namely *der Blue Chip* and *der/das Blue Movie*. In *Blue Chip*, the original meaning of the colour has already been partially blurred. It used to describe the most expensive poker chip, which was blue; however, nowadays, the word is mainly used in the financial industry and on the stock market, where it refers to a large company with a relatively stable stock price and good capitalization. The initial motivation of this lexeme related to the colour blue (poker game) is now completely unclear. Interestingly, this Anglicism functions both in German (in assimilated form, also morphologically, usually in the plural) and in Polish (retaining English spelling, it remains an uninflected word). On the other hand, in the lexeme *der/das Blue Movie* the colour component in the semantic layer was immediately completely omitted. This Anglicism refers to an erotic or pornographic film, therefore showing no connection to the previously mentioned meanings of the word *blue*.

In contrast to other Anglicisms that describe colours, the element *red* appears least frequently in the corpus, only in 4 units,



i.e. *der Redneck*, *die Red Power*, *das Redwood*, *das Redgumholz*. Of these, two imply a meaning indirectly justified by the colour red. Thus, in the units *der Redneck* and *die Red Power*, the component *red* indicates a connection with the working class, that is Americans from the southern United States, and Indians as representatives of the red race. It is therefore to some extent an evaluative element. Nevertheless, the valuation takes place in a very discreet way here and requires the recipient to be oriented in cultural and social nuances. In the remaining two cases, colour refers to an important visual feature of the object. *Das Redwood* 'sequoia' as well as *das Redgumholz* 'red rubber tree' denote North American trees with red wood colouring. The significant element motivating the name here is the observed colour of the wood, so there are no connections with symbolism or cultural implications.

On the other hand, when it comes to Anglicisms containing the component *white*, it fulfils both before mentioned functions, as used to describe the colour of a given object, e.g. *das Whiteboard* 'whiteboard' or to indicate empty space, e.g. *white space* 'white space', a term related to the basics of design. Sometimes, the mention of the white colour also serves as a distinguishing feature for a selected group/phenomenon, such as in the lexeme *die White-Collar-Kriminalität*. The compound refers to the so-called white-collar workers (*white collar*), i.e. people who perform jobs that do not require physical work (*białe kołnierzyki*: n.d.). Finally, *White-Collar-Kriminalität* means crime occurring in this social group and is a negatively charged term. In some Anglicisms, the component *white* indicates symbolic meaning. For example, *white list* "a list of approved items or individuals, in contrast to a black list where unwanted or inappropriate entities are placed and perceived as undesirable"; *white noise* "so-called white noise, which is apparent noise, a mixture of sounds allowing for calming and quieting, often going unnoticed by the recipient"; *white paper* "a document published by an organization or startup, containing details about a specific project; its release precedes, for example, the launch of a new network and

serves as a manifesto aimed at convincing potential investors to collaborate”.

Similarly, the semantic aspect differentiates in the case of Anglicisms with the component *black*. There are the most lexemes formally related to this colour in the corpus. However, only a small portion of them directly refer to the colour black as a distinctive feature in the appearance of a given object, such as *black board* ‘i.e., a board of black colour’. Occasionally, the signalled blackness arises from the lack of light, sometimes intentionally achieved for technical purposes, as in *die Blackbox* ‘1) a part of a cybernetics system used to determine unknown functions of a device’; ‘2) a recorder in an aircraft, also known as a black box’; ‘3) in theatre: a stage element arranged entirely in black’; *der/das Blackout* ‘1) a medical term for the sudden shutdown of certain bodily functions’; ‘2) nighttime turning off of city lights’; ‘3) in theatre: sudden darkening at the end of a scene’; ‘4) in astronautics: a break in radio contact’.

The second group of Anglicisms with this component directly indicates the black colour of the skin and, by extension, refers to individuals of the black race, for example, *der Black Panther* ‘member of an organization uniting African Americans, aimed at combating racial discrimination; *die Black Power* ‘North American social movement uniting black individuals, focused on combating racial discrimination, particularly active in the 1960s’; *blackfacing* ‘in theatre: a style of makeup involving painting performers of black-skinned roles black, originated in the late 19th century’; *der Blackbottom* ‘a type of North American social dance of African origin, similar to the foxtrot, popular in the interwar period’. Additionally, in the before mentioned examples, the colour element has specific social connotations, as it not only points to black-skinned individuals but also indirectly signals their reception in society and the cultural issues associated with them (such as social intolerance, racial discrimination, and segregation, along with related violence). One Anglicism particularly deserving attention in this group is the name of the international anti-racist movement *Black Lives Matter*, which, after the riots in the United States in 2020, quickly entered the lexical

repertoire of many languages worldwide. It functions in them in an unchanged, unassimilated form (the term is translated only for clarification of the context in which it is used).

Sometimes, the *black* component is used due to its symbolism, implying association with evil, danger, and condemnation, for example, *black magic* ‘magic associated with the worship of dark forces’; *der Black Metal* ‘a subgenre of heavy metal music, referencing Satanism and incorporating nationalist and racist motifs’; *die Blackmail* ‘blackmail, extortion’, but also considering a general association with bad luck, misfortune, and negative feelings. What is particularly interesting in this context is the use of the word *black* in advertising slogans like *der Black Friday*, *Black Weekend*, and *Black Bike Day*, which are designed to attract the attention of potential customers as names of days starting the sales season. Interestingly, both *Black Friday* and *Black Weekend* have become popular not only in German but also in other languages, including Polish. Despite the origin of *Black Friday* from the crash on the American stock exchange, leading to a global financial crisis and increased poverty in society, the term is now used in a positive sense. It is employed in commerce to draw the attention of consumers to the benefits they can gain as shoppers during specific days of seasonal price reductions. In this case, the *black* component is not intended to deter and emphasize negative associations but rather signifies a turning point and heralds a positive transformation.

## 5. Conclusions

Much has already been said about the phenomenon of Denglish in contemporary Germany. As Engelberg (2020: 27) rightly observes that “when considering the neological lexemes in the German vocabulary of the last 30 years, the proportion of foreign words is about 35 %. More than 90 % of these foreign words come from English”<sup>10</sup>. The trend of anglicizing vocabulary has

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<sup>10</sup> “betrachtet man die neologistischen Lexeme im deutschen Wortschatz der letzten 30 Jahre, so liegt der Anteil der Fremdwörter bei etwa 35 %. Über

been evident for years. Based on the analysis of a corpus extracted from two complementary dictionary sources, however, it can be assumed that English components describing primary colours do not confirm this trend. Despite their relatively high productivity, they do not currently compete with native German names to the extent that they could be perceived as a real lexical threat. While they are active word-formation components, as evidenced by their active involvement in creating new compounds, blends, or collocations, they do not exhibit dominant characteristics compared to German colour names. They are, however, an interesting research problem when it comes to selecting strictly German equivalents for Anglicisms formed with their involvement, as well as in the context of selecting equivalents in the process of translating them into a foreign language. In my opinion, it is this issue, rather than concerns about the current state of the German language, that will be worth exploring further in the context of anglicization of German vocabulary, not only through colour names.

## Tables

Table 1: Lexical means of expressions for colours in Polish (following Benenowska 2011: 51). Benenowska, Iwona (2011). "O kolorach w języku (na tle różnych perspektyw badawczych)". In: Beata Afeltowicz, Jolanta Ignatowicz-Skowrońska, Piotr Wojdak (ed.). *In silva verborum*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Volumina.

Table 2: Meanings of colours based on excerpted units

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90 % dieser Fremdwörter stammen aus dem Englischen". (Engelberg 2020: 27) [translated by AK].

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