

# Unpacking before take-off: English for Swiss Purposes in code-mixed advertisement texts for 14-20-year olds

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*'Konto auf and I make the fly' or 'J'ouvre un compte and I turn the heels': in the first a young man with a shoulder bag adjusting his bow-tie, in the second a young woman propped up against her suitcase contorting her legs to expose the turned-up soles and heels of her boots. If you are under the age of twenty and clever enough to unpack one of these advertisement messages you might open a bank account and take off to London on a reduced-rate easyJet.com flight at your earliest convenience, perhaps to improve your English. If you are too old and feel inclined to stay at your desk, then read on.*

Dieser Artikel beleuchtet die Verwendung des Englischen als 'English for Swiss Purposes' in einer gemischtsprachigen Werbekampagne, die schülersprachliche Äusserungen zu verwenden scheint. Im Gegensatz zum üblichen Gebrauch des Englischen als prestigereiche, universale Werbesprache in einer mehrsprachigen Schweiz baut diese Kampagne vorrangig nicht auf den angloamerikanischen oder internationalen Symbolwert des Englischen, sondern auf das eher verdeckte Prestige jugendsprachlicher Quersprachigkeit und auf landessprachliche Identifizierung. Die Slogans bedienen sich zielgruppendifferenziert (schweizer)deutscher und französischer Redewendungen, die mit englischem Wortmaterial wiedergegeben und an landesprachliche Satzanfänge angefügt werden, also englisch aussehen, sich aber (schweizer)deutsch bzw. französisch anfühlen. Die Slogans für das Tessin stehen dazu im Kontrast. Das inszenierte Lernerenglisch der zwischensprachlichen Wortspiele wird als Reflexion eines sich wandelnden sprachlichen Repertoires und Selbstverständnisses von Nicht-Muttersprachlern interpretiert, die Englisch nicht nur als Fremdsprache lernen sondern sich auch als quersprachige Ausdrucksmöglichkeit zur Selbstdarstellung zu eigen machen.

## Introduction

English has been used for advertisements in Switzerland for decades, both for the prestige and power that the association with English-speaking countries such as the USA and Britain conveys and for its versatility and economy as a lingua franca of advertising in a plurilingual country. While this use of English for Advertisement Purposes ('EAP') is still increasing and becoming more sophisticated<sup>1</sup> there is now evidence for an additional trend or counter-current

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1 Cf. for example the complex interrogative structures used in a recent advertisement series for *Winston light* cigarettes: 'Do I look like I get no satisfaction?', 'Have you got a light?', 'Do I look

in which the kind of English that is used seems to be shifting away from native variety norms. In the instances under consideration here, English has been moved away from British or American norms which reflect the cultural symbolic value that English usually has as the language of the USA and Britain or as an international language of professionalism (Cheshire & Moser 1994). In some of the advertisements that Cheshire & Moser (1994: 451, 453) studied, English was used in a “special Suisse Romande way” and they observed that English was being appropriated as a symbol of Swiss national identity. In the advertisements studied here, English has not only changed in its symbolic value, but also in its form, towards what seem to be localised non-native (L2 or L3<sup>2</sup>) uses of English heavily influenced by and code-mixed with two national L1 languages, (Swiss) German and French. These slogans do not target an unsegmented Swiss public, however; these English slogans do not save the cost of translation into national languages. In fact, they were produced separately for Francophones and Germanophones and are in all likelihood incomprehensible outside their narrowly defined intended target groups. There must be other reasons than the usual ones for using English. Even though the advertisement slogans under consideration (mockingly) index their embeddedness in the tradition of English for Advertisement Purposes in Switzerland, and may be read as examples thereof by members of the public outside their immediate target groups, their function depends on their specific, not their universal appeal. Their specificity actually reflects the status of L2/L3 English among young people (14-20) in Switzerland beyond the role that they play as staged examples of learner language in the particular advertisements. It is the covert prestige associated with this unsanctioned, code-mixed English for Swiss Purposes among young people that the effect of the advertisements depends on. This prestige could derive from its value as a sign of resistance towards the English distributed through the education system (which it

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like I need more?', 'Do we look like we'd compromise on taste?'. Ten years ago there was not a single interrogative structure to be found in 390 advertisements using English from *L'Hebdo* and *L'Illustré* (Cheshire & Moser 1994:457).

- 2 It should be borne in mind that in Swiss contexts English is rarely if ever an L2 in the sense of a first foreign language in the order of acquisition in formal settings. Until very recently, English was always the second (L3) or third (L4) foreign language introduced at school after one or two of the national languages. For children from families who speak other than one of the four national languages at home, English would thus be an L4 (or L5). The same would apply for those members of the diglossic Swiss German population who regard Swiss German as their L1 and Standard German as learned in school as an L2, which was the case for more than a third of Rash's (1996a) respondents. In terms of dominance or preference (cf. also Christen & Näf 2001: 65, Dürmüller 2002: 117f), however, English may be adopted as an L2 in later years.

perhaps also mocks for humorous effect). Or it may derive from the interpretation of English as part of one's *sprachliches Selbstverständnis*, one's linguistic repertoire and identity kit<sup>3</sup>, which is also fed by the spread of 'English from below' (Preisler 1999). This influence of 'English from below' is exerted long before children in Switzerland get to learn English at school through the English they hear and read in their surroundings, often without realising that it is English.<sup>4</sup> Advertisements, shop signs and brand names (including names for fast food) are full of English lexical material or are completely in English. The lyrics of popular music are often in English. Dance, 'fun sports' and leisure terminology derives from English. TV presenters' and HipHoppers' speech styles are characterised by heavy borrowing or code-switching. The texts even of French- and German-language computer software, games, emails, chats and of mobile telephones is full of words and messages in English. There is also wide-spread use of English among young people for expressive purposes such as graffiti or swearing. 'English from below' may have a relatively speaking stronger influence on Swiss school children as English lessons in school set in relatively late. Except for very few experimental contexts children in Switzerland have not had English (as a L3-L5 cf. fn. 2) before their first year of secondary school when they are at least 12 or 13 years old. Only the most recent changes, which will take effect by 2003, are introducing 'early start' English (as a first foreign language) in the third year of primary school in some German-speaking parts of Switzerland.

Even if they involve the *hors sol* language English, code-switching and code-mixing appear to be healthy, politically correct plurilingual practises that could favour individual over societal plurilingualism for Switzerland. There is, however, the problem of mutual incomprehensibility. In many of the instances listed below, it really takes a French or (Swiss) German native speaker's competence (or help) to understand the English sentence parts. Even proficient users of the other national language as an L2 may not be able to understand the slogans. Is English thus exploited as a disguise for reinforcing monolingual habits, attitudes and identities? What seems clear at present is that beyond its purely decorative function, increasing use of this kind of English, i.e. what one might term 'English for Swiss German Purposes' and

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3 Cf. Eastman & Stein's (1993:187) concept of language display, which "...functions as an artifact of crossing linguistic boundaries without threatening social boundaries or as a reaction to social boundaries which cannot be crossed".

4 As in Preisler (1999:255), however, exposure to English can be ignored and does not automatically lead to comprehension let alone acquisition.

‘English for Swiss Romand Purposes’, might amount to ‘English as an anti-lingua franca’<sup>5</sup> whose function could be a reinforcement of the *Röschtigrahen*. It would be quite inappropriate and misguided, however, to take the present corpus as a basis for pursuing this issue, as the majority of the slogans were developed precisely for the purpose of limiting comprehension to two small target groups. The two groups are defined as much by their L1s as by their age, however. The slogans will also remain opaque to speakers of the right L1 if they are from the wrong age group. Whether appropriation of English by speakers of a common L1 entails the danger of rendering it incomprehensible to speakers with other language backgrounds, which is unlikely in most lingua franca contexts unless there is strong asymmetry in idiomaticity<sup>6</sup>, remains to be determined by future research. My use of the term English for Swiss Purposes as a reinterpretation of the acronym ESP and as opposed to English as an intra-nationally used lingua franca (cf. Dürmüller 2002: 117ff) is meant to reflect these very special purposes of serving a single ‘chrono-linguistic’ group<sup>7</sup>. It is argued below that ‘ESP’ in this sense is not an isolated phenomenon, however, but one that fits the concept of *Quersprachigkeit* (List & List 2001) as well as first approximations of “English as a postoccidental multi-repertoired performance” (Pennycook 2001).

## A corpus of advertisement slogans

This paper focuses on a small set of twenty-eight single-sentence printed instances of French-English and (Swiss) German-English language mixing used in a recent Swiss advertisement campaign targeted at young *Postfinance* customers. In what is referred to as an imitation of school children's L2/L3 English interlanguage productions<sup>8</sup>, mostly literal ‘(mis-)translations’ of German and French idioms into English are combined with German or French sentence beginnings. From May to September 2002 they were displayed on

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5 Barbara Seidlhofer, personal communication.

6 So far, however, the problem of “unilateral idiomaticity” in ELF communication as been looked at from the point of view of asymmetric use of native English idioms (Seidlhofer 2001:147, 2002).

7 Cf. the term “Neujungdenglish” in Rash's (1996b) title.

8 Documentation on the campaign for Postfinance staff contains the following:

Konto auf und I speak English. Jugendliche lernen Englisch, können es aber oft noch nicht perfekt. Und das hört sich dann ganz lustig an. Die neue Kampagne von Postfinance greift das lustige Kauderwelsch auf, welches entsteht, wenn jemand deutsche bzw. französische und italienische Redewendungen 1:1 ins Englische übersetzt. Wers [sic!] besser lernen will: Jugendkonto eröffnen und mit easyJet vergünstigt nach London verreisen!  
*Jugendkampagne 2002, 21. Mai bis 30. September, Personalinformation: S.9*

bill-boards, cards, in information materials and on web pages<sup>9</sup>, many of them together with illustrations mostly supporting the literal, not the idiomatic, meanings of the underlying German<sup>10</sup> and French idioms, thus adding an extra level of interpretation. Another twelve advertising slogans for the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland contrast markedly with these.

The data are described and analysed from several angles: what context they are embedded in, what and how they mean, what linguistic phenomena they can be classified as. In their description and interpretation I also draw on two telephone interviews with the account executive who was responsible for the campaign, reactions to the campaign in the press and on the web as well as an example of web-chat by young people from the target group.

All the slogans were used in a joint-promotion effort of *Postfinance/ DIE POST* and *easyJet.com* targeted at 14-20 year-olds, enticing them to open a *Yellow* bank account for young people by offering a SFr. 50.- reduction on *easyJet* flights to London. As in similar joint-promotion ‘open-an-account-and-get-a-present’ campaigns with other partners in previous years, this one was designed by *Publicis Zürich*, one of the top advertising agencies in the country. According to the account executive in charge of this campaign, the idea of using English developed in the context of the promotion offer. A creative team in Zurich was set up to develop funny one-to-one translations of (Swiss) German idioms that were easy to communicate graphically. The idea for the functional leitmotif of flaunting one's superiority through the idioms seems to have been triggered by a Swiss German idiomatic use of the verb *verreisen* ‘go away on a trip or journey’ in the imperative as *verreis!* meaning ‘go away!, clear off!, get lost!’. For one-to-one translations from French, help was recruited from *Publicis*' Lausanne branch. For Italian however, there was obviously less help available or less motivation to seek it. The rationalisation offered in my first interview with the executive was that Italian was “not idiomatic enough”, and so they simply used general English to convey a holiday feeling. In a second interview he also reported on translation attempts involving Italian, which were ultimately always rejected by either the translators themselves or the audience on which they were tested. They

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9 <http://yellowwww.postfinance.ch/> before September 30, 2002.

10 In the examples quoted above, it is the slang expression *die Fliege machen* ‘to beat it (inf.), to disappear’ (but note that in German *Fliege* ‘bow tie’ is a homonym of *Fliege* ‘fly’) and the French idiom *tourner les talons* ‘to turn on one's heel/turn quickly to face the opposite direction (and walk away)’.

agreed that literal translations involving Italian and English would either not work or be perceived as embarrassing. Therefore the slogans for the Italian target group were eventually out-sourced and produced by a translator who regularly works for *Postfinance*.

What may have motivated the use of this kind of ‘ESP’ – instead of the more usual, intra-nationally universal, English for Swiss Advertisement Purposes – in a campaign targeted at young Francophones and Germanophones did not immediately emerge in the interviews. That a different linguistic strategy (simple code-switching or borrowing) was used for the Italian-speaking target group (*Aprire il conto and take it easy*) may be attributed to a combination of factors. Lack of resources or a lack of interest in the smaller linguistic group, for whom a greater effort was not likely to pay off, may have played a role. What emerged in the second interview, however, was that language attitudes and different attitudes to code-mixing in the Italian translators and test audiences must have played a role as well. Through their use of code-switching with lingua franca English, however, the Italian slogans highlight the special ‘ESP’ quality of the French and German slogans.

The corpus of *Postfinance* advertisement slogans is presented in three tables in the appendix, one for each target group.

## Description

Each of the strings under consideration (cf. appendix) begins in one of three national languages, switches to English intrasententially and ends with a full stop. The sentences appeared on posters, postcards and on the web and were reproduced on the cover pages of information materials. Those with illustrations were also accompanied by the three relevant brand names: *easyJet.com* in the header signature line in the top right-hand corner, *Postfinance* and *DIE POST* in the footer signature line, also right-aligned; the web address was presented as part of the floor in the picture. Interestingly, the most informative part, with the main message in one of the national languages in each case<sup>11</sup>, appeared as the standing details, as if in a footnote, in a line of small-print that is usually dedicated to such details as the nicotine and tar content of cigarettes. (cf. also Cheshire & Moser 1994:456) Those slogans

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11 *Gelbes Jugendkonto eröffnen und CHF 50.- günstiger nach London.* [sic] or *Ouvre un Compte Jaune Jeunesse et Londres est à toi pour CHF 50.- de moins.* or *Apri un Conto Giallo Gioventù e vola a Londra per CHF 50.- in meno.*

without illustrations appeared inside 6-page customer information brochures as subheadings, set off from the surrounding German, French or Italian texts in colour, font and font size. Occasional English loans or coinages, anglicising spellings and code-switches in the otherwise national-language-only surrounding texts<sup>12</sup> are not taken into consideration in this paper. It should be noted, however, that in the cases indicated, the original national-language idiom was in fact used in the text immediately following the English relexification.

There are 14 sentences beginning in German (Appendix, Table 1: 1i-14), 14 sentences beginning in French (Appendix, Table 2: 15i-28) and twelve sentences beginning in Italian (Appendix, Table 3: 29i-40). All sentences are numbered for ease of reference, numbers with a lower-case i refer to slogans accompanied by illustrations (four different for German, four different for French, and three different for Italian, plus one showing an *easy.jet* aeroplane used for all three languages). The words in the national languages say more or less the same in each case. In German the opening is *(Gelbes) Konto auf* '(Yellow) Account open(ed)/up', in French it reads *J'ouvre un compte* 'I open an account' or *Ouvre un Compte Jaune* 'Open a Yellow Account' and in Italian *Aprire il conto* 'Opening (to open) the account' or *Apri un Conto Giallo* 'Open a Yellow Account'. The national language part is nearly always linked with the English part by the co-ordinator *and*, which in each case (except 28) introduces a consequence understood to depend on the condition specified in the first part, viz. the opening of a bank account at the Post Office. There is no overt conditional marking, probably to make the openings sound more like invitations. Only one of the slogans (21) contains the predictive modal *will*, which would generally be required by the conditional context in native varieties of English. There are two cases of *can*, in 4 and 10, used in an (ironical) permission sense, and four occurrences of *can* in a possibility sense, both meanings by implication including future time interpretation. These four occurrences of *can* include three instances of the only slogan that is used in all three language contexts alike, viz. *and you can easy jet to London* 'and you can jet off to London easily', in which the brand name *easy.jet* is reinterpreted as an adverb + verb pattern and used accordingly. There are two slogans, 5 and 19, which use *or* instead of *and* as a linking device, which makes the two

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12 For example *overnighnten* (for *übernachten* 'stay the night') and *Good shine* (for *Gutschein* 'voucher') for German, *Good* (for *Bon* 'voucher'), *games*, *décoller easy vers Londres*, *Check it out: www.postfinance.ch* for French or *just-in-time* for Italian.

slogans sound more like threats than invitations. One slogan, 28, uses an imperative with an exclamation mark. As can be seen from the detailed analysis of the individual instances in Tables 1 and 2 (cf. Appendix), most German and French code-mixed slogans use relexifications of L1 (ML cf. below) idioms. The information on meaning, use and origin or mental image connected to the L1/ML idioms in question indicates their degree of language specificity and illustrates the general analysis and classification of the code-mixed slogans in the following sections. The Italian code-mixed cases are different from either the French or the German ones and will be considered later in a separate section.

### **Borrowing, code-switching or cross-linguistic interference?**

On the whole, the use of English lexical material in examples 1 to 28 does not constitute either borrowing, that is the use of an imported foreign word or expression from a donor language which, in adapted or unadapted form, becomes part of the recipient language's lexicon over time (such as English sports terminology in many other European languages), or even nonce borrowing, the spontaneous use of a foreign word which is not adopted later on. Not even the concept of loan translations, in which a foreign expression or idiom is imported from a donor language but rendered in recipient-language words, is applicable here to a more than limited degree. What we are looking at is not English idioms rendered in German or French for Swiss readers nor is it German or French idioms rendered in English for British or American readers, as is sometimes the case in (ethnic heritage) language learning contexts. Where loan translations do play a role (probably 2i and 22), English idioms that were imported into German and French a long time ago in the form of loan translations, have been retranslated into English for German and French speaking readers, just for the sake of using English. All other cases (1i, 3i, 4i -12, and 15i -19i, 21, 23- 26, 28) can be regarded as German (or French) sentence parts which have been translated into English, as if they were loan translations, but have been re-embedded into their respective German or French contexts. In these examples English is not needed to fill lexical or conceptual gaps in either French or German. On the contrary, more often than not the idiomatic concepts or mental images which English is used to convey are genuinely tied up with (Swiss) German and French, as the information in Tables 1 and 2 amply demonstrates. English is not needed in the transactionally communicative sense, to say something that could not be said in either of the national languages; English is chosen for reasons that

have to do with the situation of use, and it is in this respect that code-switching seems to be a helpful concept.

Code-switching (CS) is a term which usually refers to the purposeful if not always consciously intentional use of more than one language by a (bi- or plurilingual) speaker in a given situation. Disregarding for the moment the fact that the instances under consideration have been produced by a process of 'translation' and not in spontaneous spoken discourse involving more than one language, we can apply the descriptive terminology of Myers-Scotton's (1992; Jake, Myers-Scotton & Gross 2002) approach to code-switching. Thus, (Swiss) German and French, respectively, are the Matrix Languages (MLs) and set the morpho-syntactic frames. English is the Embedded Language (EL) which provides the lexical material. However, in our cases the MLs also provide the blue-print for the idioms, that is, the collocational brackets come from the ML, too. Does that mean our examples are outside the scope of what can be accounted for by CS? This does not seem to be the case. As Turell (2002) has demonstrated, mixed constituents, EL structural islands and ML structural islands also occur in 'natural' cases of code-switching (especially intrasententially and if interlocutors are young) and can be accounted for by a recategorisation of Myers-Scotton's framework. The concepts of ML and EL remain relevant and useful even if used outside the context for which they were developed. In accounting for the process and not only the product, however, we also have to bear in mind that something similar to translation did in fact take place, though perhaps not in the usual sense.

### **Relexification and calques**

As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, in the majority of German and French code-mixed cases, English words are substituted for German or French words and employed to fill German/French syntactic or morphological frames. The English part is a word-by-word relexification of an underlying (Swiss) German or French idiomatic expression. Relexification is an interlanguage phenomenon and a communicative strategy known to be applied by L2/L3 learners especially in the early stages of learning and especially if these learners are inexperienced and working on the novice assumption that there is word-by-word or morpheme-by-morpheme equivalence between languages<sup>13</sup>.

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13 An attitude that could also be seen as an expression of a monolingual habitus, though not exactly in the sense intended by Gogolin (1994), Christiane Dalton-Puffer, personal communication.

However, lexical transfer of this kind can occur even in more advanced stages of language learning. The result is called *calque*, also a kind of loan translation of multi-word units (compounds, phrasal verbs or whole idioms), more often than not from one's L1 rather than from other previously learned languages (Ringbom 2001: 60ff). Relexification in the form of calques, where L2/L3 learners take two or more lexical units from the target language and assemble them according to “an L1-based pattern of meaning relationships” (Ringbom 2001:62) that is not attested in the target language, is thus a known feature of learner language.

The seemingly contrived use of English in the staged instances of learner language in the advertisement slogans is thus a viable approximation of cross-linguistic influence. As Näf & Pfander (2001:24) and Christen & Näf (2001) have shown, calques based on L1 and occasionally even L2 idioms are by no means the most frequent type of error in Francophone school leavers' English, but they do occur. But while it seems clear that in early stages of learning a foreign language at school the foreign words are accessed via mother-tongue equivalents (which promotes relexification), more advanced learners seem to develop direct access and, equally importantly, an avoidance strategy that prevents them from assuming similarity or equivalence even where it exists (Näf & Pfander 2001:12f)<sup>14</sup>. Too much similarity with the mother tongue is suspicious: the more dissimilar an expression is the likelier it is to be correct. By the same token, learners develop a sense of idiomaticity, they develop an awareness of the language -specificity of idiomatic expressions.

Both in the above sense of error and even in the wider sense of cross-linguistic influence it is implied that calques ‘happen’. The study of languages in contact has shown, however, that even though calques are often regarded as undesirable they can be intentional:

... the use of calques can be considered as an in-group marker, where the speaker signals that he/she belongs to [a] group of bilinguals. No matter which of the two languages happens to be the most prestigious in the situation (and this may differ) being bilingual has high prestige in itself. The use of calques can be considered as a way of handling two different languages at the same time- just like code-switching. Of course it is not regular code-switching, but one could call it ‘backwards code-switching’, ‘double-code-switching’ or ‘covert code-switching’. (Jacobsen 2000:4)

From my own experience as a learner of foreign languages at school it seems obvious to me that calques are not just a type of error. They are frequently

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14 This observation may be typical of a situation in which relatively closely related and therefore similar languages are concerned.

produced intentionally, as word play, for fun, as a dare. They depend for their effect on the L2/L3 learner/users' shared awareness that in producing and using them they jump the gap between their L1 and their additional language.

The (language teacher's) default expectation is that growing awareness of language-specific idiomaticity and avoidance of similarity will prevent more experienced learners from transferring idioms. But if the learner/users' desire is not to be correct but to be funny or daring or creative they will produce calques intentionally. In my interpretation then, the code-mixed advertisement slogans resemble code-switching – the intentional calques covert code-switching – while purporting to be erroneous learner language.

It is not clear, however, what they represented in the text-writers' intentionality and awareness. To many language professionals translation will usually mean rendering the meanings extricated from one language in another language as elegantly and idiomatically as possible, recreating a new text that does not give itself away as a translation while fully preserving the intention of the original. It may have been precisely this attitude that prevented the Italian translators consulted by *Publicis Zürich* from producing Italian equivalents to the slogans intended for the German-speaking target group. In language contact situations, however, translation can mean glossing, preserving something of the syntax of the original (syntactic calques) or of the original's idiomaticity, matching the original language's idioms as closely as possible. The resulting text is thus stylistically or lexically marked as a translation. (Thomason 1999)

In any case, whether as creative learner language, code-switching or marked contact translation (gloss), it takes a bilingual's language repertoire to produce and bilingual processing mode to interpret the calques. Caution is called for, in principle, in order to differentiate code-switching which reflects plurilingual competence and identity (Lüdi, in press<sup>15</sup>) from what Lüdi calls *translinguistic wording* (for French *formulation transcodique*), reflecting language learners' lexical gaps and other deficits which cause them to resort to their L1 or previously learned L2s as a “rescue device”<sup>16</sup>. The staged learner language of the advertisements, however, requires not so much caution as a kind of

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15 Lüdi grants that learners can code-switch in so far as this interpretation is co-constructed by the interlocutors in spite of asymmetric linguistic competencies.

16 But note the use of code-mixing for learning purposes in Switzerland, even in school, e.g. “Un, deux, trois, hinderem Hüsli steit le bois; quatre, cinq, six, i sym Bettli schlaft mon fils;...” in the FLE textbook *Bonne Chance* (Kessler et al. <sup>2</sup>1997:9).

double vision. As in the optical illusion in which we see either a vase, or kissing profiles, depending on what we foreground and background, or, if we know the phenomenon, a fluctuation between them, we can see several layers of interpretation converging in the description of the slogans. We can see a reflection of translinguistic wording in Lüdi's sense, (deviant) leaner language; we can see code-switching and *Quersprachigkeit* (cf. below) as is typical of young people's in-group discourse; we can see playful rule violations and we can see calques as in-group marking and covert code-switching.

### **CS for Italian-speaking Switzerland**

The instances of Italian code-switched with English are markedly different from the slogans for the German and French target groups. They are not based on underlying Italian idioms. The strings begin in Italian as the matrix language. Examples 29 to 31 start with an infinitival construction that is in fact not really typical of native-speaker Italian but rather a reflection of the telegraphic style of the German and French originals. The singular imperatives in 32 to 40 conform to native-speaker use. The embedded language is English. This time we do not find English lexical material used to convey expressions that are actually national-language idioms (except for 34). The embedded language is lingua franca English, produced by a *Postfinance* translator for the Italian speaking target group. It is idiomatically relatively neutral, a feature characteristic of successful English as a lingua franca communication (Seidlhofer 2001:147, 2002), and thus not perceived as problematic by the test audience, the agency or the client.

In all likelihood, due to its specific linguistic situation, there are fewer people on the whole in the Ticino who understand English well. English is learnt as the third foreign language after French and German at school and even highly educated people may have no English at all if they opted for Latin or Greek instead of English in their education. Even if the code-switched slogans vaguely reflect the styles of *Ticinesi* radio DJs, it is not clear if they are read as such by the Italian-speaking target group.

What is clear, however, is that in these slogans, there is little or no influence from the target group's L1 on the English that is used. One can interpret the English part of the sentences on the basis of one's competence in English. Influence from Italian was expressly avoided in order to conform to the perceived language attitude of the target group, which would have rejected interlingual puns. The absence of predictive modals in 33, 34, 36-38 and 40,

as well as the influence of German detected in many of the slogans (cf. Table 3) indicates that English as lingua franca is intended in the code-switched slogans, not any of the native varieties of English.

## **Interpretation**

As opposed to the slogans designed for the Ticino discussed above, the English parts of the strings appearing in German- and French-speaking Switzerland cannot be interpreted on the basis of one's competence of English alone without recourse to the languages in which the strings begin. Only if conditions are right, i.e. if there is a degree of familiarity with more than one of the languages concerned, can the multilingual mental lexicon process the messages. If these conditions apply, however, it does so almost instantaneously. And one gets the joke. And this is how the advertisement works: it grabs one's attention by giving one's mental lexicon something to do. When one has worked out the meaning – and note that in a few cases national-language clues are hidden away in the surrounding text to confirm or support comprehension of the puns – and understood the joke, one feels satisfied. One's improved self-image reflects on the product or service to be sold: a clever product for clever people. (cf. Janich 2001).

From the point of view of the multilingual lexicon it seems clear that both languages need to be 'switched on' in order to provide the kind of cross-linguistic interaction which is needed to process the advertisement slogans successfully. Depending on one's theoretical inclination one might argue holistically (following Grosjean 1995) that one needs to be in bilingual mode to process the code-mixed messages. Or one might argue in terms of active, selected, stand-by and dormant languages (cf. Williams & Hammarberg 1998) that there must be some degree of switching and adjusting going on. In either case, the joke of the "interlingual puns" (Thomason 1999:95) probably rests on jumping the perceived distance between the languages and in violating expectations of separateness and correctness.

But what if comprehension is not achieved? The meanings will arguably remain opaque to people who are not entirely at home in the matrix languages French and (Swiss) German, or who do not have enough English to decode the message – which is in fact the case with many (older-generation) Swiss. From the point of view of advertising the lay person may wonder why such an effort was made to produce slogans that are so difficult or even impossible to understand by the majority of the population, that are so prone to attract

criticism from people with heightened linguistic sensibilities. Even if we grant that the display function of English (Eastman & Stein 1993) referred to in Cheshire & Moser (1994:458) keeps the value of 'EAP' intact even when the text is not understood by consumers, there must be a better reason for restricting the appeal of the slogans in this way. It has to do with homing in on the young target group. It seems that advertising agencies are happy to pay the price of being criticised, and the price of much higher costs in developing and realising such a campaign, in order to achieve regional differentiation, localisation and individualisation (Kühn 1986: 145f). And this is certainly what the slogans in this campaign achieve<sup>17</sup>.

On the level of identification the relexified French and German idioms may look English but they are not transmogrified completely and still feel Swiss to those who can unpack the message. Interpreting the double alienation effect of English used to express (Swiss) German or French idioms together with illustrations that reinforce a literal as opposed to an idiomatic understanding of the messages may demand a considerable degree of linguistic meta-insight (or experience of one's monolingual habitus leading to error<sup>18</sup>). But it is playfully exploited, and is intellectually challenging and satisfying in making the recipients aware of how bilingual they are and how creative language play is. (Janich 2001: 70f)

The advertisements are not intended to be understood by just anybody. Nor can they be criticised or corrected by one's English teachers, because they are not intended to be correct, either. This lends a certain covert prestige to those who presumably use, or at least understand, this kind of language. As this language use is not publicly recommended, it can signal group solidarity and local identity. This is an obvious parallel with young people's discourse

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17 The so-called Poster Performance Index (PPI), i.e. the results of the formal assessment of the poster campaign based on marketing research by the APG, is based on face-to-face interview data. It provides figures on recall, correct association with the brand name as well as the campaign's general appeal. Research for the PPI is routinely carried out alternately in either Berne or Lausanne. Interviews for this campaign happened to be carried out in Berne. No data are available for the French- or Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland. In the German-speaking part of Switzerland the campaign was highly successful. The recall result of 67% was excellent (the finance and insurance sector's mean is 48 %), association with the brand name results reached the maximum value of 90% (!), general appeal at 57% was above average. While advertisements for the finance and insurance sector usually achieve higher results in male respondents, this campaign scored higher with female respondents. The PPI results did not become available until after this paper had been submitted for publication in Autumn 2002 and were therefore not taken into account in the interpretation of the data. It is felt, however, that they do support the current analysis and interpretation.

18 Cf. also Gogolin (1994).

styles as discussed in the literature: intentional impenetrability of the code-switched message to anyone outside the immediate peer group and the covert prestige that could be attached to using English in this unsanctioned way. In a study of switches from national language to English in young people's media discourse, Androutsopoulos (2001:1) also argues that "particular resources of English are important for the projection of 'exclusive' youth cultural identities". Using English can be a stance; CS can be metaphorical (cf. Rampton's (1995) language crossing). With regard to English in advertisements he observes that it "can be used to mitigate the usually disinterested reaction". He also argues that 'Englishisation' (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas 1999) is a highly differentiated process<sup>19</sup>. At least in the particular ecological niche under consideration, the concept of *Quersprachigkeit* (List & List 2001)<sup>20</sup> seems helpful. The term was coined to focus on the fact that plurilingual practices are often pragmatically organised across or traversing what has been regarded as different language systems. They may involve negotiating translinguistic combinations of registers appropriate to the situation and the addressee or target group and thus a meta-linguistic component. The concept of a special 'transcodic' register of *Quersprachigkeit* has been applied successfully to youth-cultural communication. (List & List 2001: 7, 11f) and seems very suitable for the code-mixed slogans and the specific register for in-group purposes that they reflect. Pennycook's (2001) concept of "English as a post-occidental multirepertoired performance" reflecting sub-cultural identity and style (Preisler 1999) has not yet been spelled out in full<sup>21</sup> but it also seems to apply to the case under discussion. It enables one to look at the spread of English in popular culture not just in terms of 'globalisation' but in terms of the alternative purposes to which English is put without thereby denying the "potential romanticization of appropriation" that could be a pitfall entailed in this approach.

Public use of non-native English as in the examples under consideration demonstrates that English is no longer perceived as something that belongs to

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19 Similar instances of Spanish in American English of 'Anglo' ethnic affiliation (on greeting cards, in advertisement texts, in film dialogues), which are also rationalised as humorous by their producers, have been called Mock Spanish and are regarded as sites of a new elite racist discourse. (Hill 1994, 1993).

20 Cf. the related concept of adolescent language "crossing" (Rampton 1995:280), which is used to refer to an adolescent practice of "code-alternation by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language they employ".

21 Alastair Pennycook, personal email communication 29-08-02.

its native speakers exclusively. Cheshire & Moser (1994: 457) observed that the puns and language play characteristic of native English advertising texts is hardly ever present in Swiss texts, as they would be beyond the non-native readers' power of appreciation. Yet here, non-native users are creative, they engage in language play in a self-ironising way, they use it to shift the tone and to challenge. For some (young) non-native users code-mixing and code-switching and interlingual puns (Thomason 1999:95) are part of their stylistic repertoire, as becomes visible in the advertisements. As in Auer (2000) "...code-switching serves to flag speakers' orientation towards a culture...". But is it affiliation to American culture? It does seem to signal a certain social affiliation to Anglo-American-oriented international youth culture but without disaffiliation from being Swiss, as the underlying German or French idioms indicate. Using English in this way demarcates its users not so much from other languages as from other age groups.

The staged public display of this marked, and traditionally stigmatised, use of L2/L3 English in my examples, its use outside schools in a public context, can be seen as reflecting appropriation. This points to a local undercurrent or counter-current to global 'Englishisation', maybe even anti-Englishisation, which has surfaced on Swiss billboards. Although it is mostly English from above, the institutionalised distribution of English through the education system, that enables teenagers and advertising copywriters to go on to use English for their own purposes, the fact that they do so publicly is a reflection of the spread of English from below (cf. Preissler 1999, Widdowson 1997). Part of young people's *Selbstverständnis* (the way they see themselves), part of their 'identity kit' is their use of English as an occasional register. As Eastman & Stein (1993) put it, language display is a statement of self or establishes a claim to identity. Thus, even though the slogans in the *Postfinance* campaign are clearly staged, and not authentic examples of L2/L3 English in Switzerland, they reflect and reinforce the status of non-native English in Switzerland. While native varieties of English can be regarded as *hors sol*, *Quersprachigkeit* involving English is a reality and it receives social value by being used for valued purposes such as in-group solidarity. In addition, the Swiss experience itself must contribute to a higher acceptance of "mixed" speech (cf. Lüdi, in press). Cheshire & Moser (1994: 465-467) came to the conclusion that English was used as a symbol of Swiss national identity by way of allowing the readers of their advertisements to construct a self-image consistent with the way the Swiss are culturally stereotyped by

outsiders. The slogans studied here, however, are Swiss from within for the young people whose linguistic reality they capture or approximate.

## Public reactions and linguistic repercussions

Anecdotal evidence of reactions to the kind of English used in the *Postfinance* slogans sampled from May to September 2002 ranged from lack of comprehension, especially from non-native users of French and (Swiss) German, to critical or appreciative coverage of the campaign in the media and in public space. Three perspectives can be broadly distinguished in these reactions: firstly, comments from within the field of public relations and marketing about the quality and effect of the campaign; secondly, pedagogical or puristic concerns about correctness and the linguistic impact on language learners and the Swiss linguistic landscape; thirdly, the perspective of the target group.

Private semi-professional opinions from within the field of advertisement as publicised on the web<sup>22</sup> criticised or ridiculed the campaign. On [www.werbewoche](http://www.werbewoche.ch) it was insinuated that the slogans had been produced by volunteer contributors to the new PONS Dictionary of Swiss German teenage slang<sup>23</sup>, whose advertisement campaign was itself the object of ridicule. In an [www.flagr.antville.org](http://www.flagr.antville.org) webchat exchange dated May 27, 28 and 29, 2002, i.e. immediately after the launch of the campaign, someone attacked the new slogans as Babel fish translations, i. e. compared them to the low-quality word-by-word translations provided by *altavista*'s machine translation service, and concluded:

aber scheissegal- "i don't give a fuck" tönt da in meinen ohren cooler, [sic] als "shit-equal" oder so =:-)

'but I don't give a damn- "i don't give a fuck" sounds cooler to my ears, [sic] than "shit-equal" or the like' followed by a 'punk-rocker' emoticon<sup>24</sup>

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22 [www.werbewoche.ch/update/adrating/meinungen,cfm?kampagneid=139](http://www.werbewoche.ch/update/adrating/meinungen,cfm?kampagneid=139) accessed 29/08/02 and <http://flagr.antville.org/stories/54472/>

23 The new *PONS Wörterbuch der Schweizer Jugendsprache 2002* was produced in connection with a competition among Swiss German-speaking school children and their teachers to contribute new and original Swiss German coinages. English, French and Standard German translations were actually produced by the publisher, not the school children. (cf. *Rundgang. Aktivitäten, Ereignisse und Neuheiten aus dem Klett und Balmer Verlag, Zug. Ausgabe für Lehrerinnen und Lehrer aller Stufen. August 2002/27/2: 15*).

24 Smiley symbols called emoticons: [http://www.onlinenetiquette.com/email\\_emoticons.html](http://www.onlinenetiquette.com/email_emoticons.html)

In most of the eleven reactions that this posting triggered it was argued that middle-aged advertisement executives and text-writers were too conceited and full of themselves to actually empathise with teenagers. Apart from the envy that these comments bespeak they seem to indicate firstly, that the poster launch was successful. The posters were noticed and their content polarised: a negative emotional reaction is much better than no emotional reaction; secondly, criticism must have come from people outside the age group and (sub)cultural group targeted in which the expressive effect of expletives is given priority over language play. Very appreciative coverage of the campaign appeared on [www.swissUp.com](http://www.swissUp.com), a website intended to link business and tertiary education<sup>25</sup>. The campaign was also very much noticed outside the field.

In *Le Matin dimanche* (cf. Galitch 2002) concern was expressed that even though exposure to English through advertisements may have a positive effect on teaching and learning English at school in very general terms, the teenagers interviewed for the article, who had only had one year of English, could not in fact translate the English slogans they were confronted with. The syntactic violations and literal translations in particular advertisement slogans aimed at adolescents, the article went on, as in “J'ouvre un compte and I pull me”, did nothing for preparing young people for encounters with English native speakers. The conclusion hinted that if there was no pedagogical pay-off then the Swiss Romans might consider following the French or Quebec model of linguistic protectionism. Pedagogic concern in public space about a wasted learning opportunity or anger about linguistic harassment without at least the benefit of exposure to correct English seemed to be expressed in a note scribbled directly onto a poster featuring slogan 18i on a billboard in Neuchâtel station's underpass: “Et vous êtes payé par qui pour nous apprendre l'anglais?” Below, in a different hand, there was this answer: “Par qui? Nous!”.

The perspective of the target group is present in public reactions in two ways. A most perceptive comment appeared in the context of a feature on young people's language use in *Fränzi und Fritz* (cf. Burkard 2002a&b, Burkard & Dansuer 2002), a monthly magazine for parents of children in compulsory education. Having explained about the functions of demarcation, provocative taboo breaches and resistance, Burkard & Danuser (2002:61f) observe:

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25 Cf. articles by Yves Nimis dated July 12, 2002 “Die Post baggert die Jungen an” [http://www.swissup.com/art\\_content.cfm?upid=DE2330](http://www.swissup.com/art_content.cfm?upid=DE2330) and “La poste drague les jeunes” [http://www.swissup.com/art\\_content.cfm?upid=FR2330](http://www.swissup.com/art_content.cfm?upid=FR2330)

Für Kinder und Jugendliche ist die Sprache aber nicht nur Mittel zur Provokation oder die verbale Form von Auflehnung. Es geht ihnen – wie auch unzähligen Erwachsenen – *um die innige Berührung mit der englischen Sprache*, die den Bezug zur grossen weiten Welt signalisiert. Die Sprache wird zum Spielmaterial mit eigenen Regeln, die auch von der Werbung gerne verwertet werden, wie man zur Zeit auf Plakaten lesen kann: “Konto auf und You can blow in my shoes” [sic] [my emphasis]

Using English is a matter of sense (relation to the whole wide world) and sensibility, as it were: the wish to be intimately and profoundly in touch (in the sensuous literal sense) with English for one's own aesthetic or performative purposes. This is what makes (young) people use the language according to their own rules, for language play, a fact that is exploited by and reflected in advertisement slogans such as the one quoted, and slightly distorted, in the above citation. Even if poetic sensitivity can help an adult empathise with non-native teenagers' motivation to use English this would hardly constitute empirical evidence of the teenagers' own attitude.

In spite of the observer's paradox and the bias introduced by any process of research, the following authentic chat contributions shed an empirical, though not necessarily representative, light on linguistic exploitations or repercussions connected with the campaign. When the campaign was launched on May 21, 2002 posters featuring slogans 1 to 4 went up on billboards all over German-speaking Switzerland on or around this day. In a message posted on May 24, 2002 (24.05.02, 13:21:53) in a Zug Boy Scouts' chat forum<sup>26</sup> ‘chrigi’ writes in Turn 1:

huet am 18.00 goemmer en grill go poschte or you can blow me in the shoes, traeffpunkt rh  
[today at 18.00 go-we a grill go<sup>27</sup> buy “or you can blow me in the shoes”, meeting point rh]  
‘today at 6 p.m. we'll go buy a grill or you can go to hell, meet me at rh’

In Turn 2 ‘fraggler’ writes back an hour later (14:21:16)

aber mini chatz isch scho rächt alt, keine Regel ohne ausnahme!, I'll be there  
[but my cat is already quite old, no rule without exception!, “I'll be there”]  
(referring back to their earlier topic of pets, then switching into English to confirm their meeting)

In Turn 3 ‘seismo’ replies to both of them at 14:57:07

I too! Schriibet mer das so?  
[“I too!” writes one that like this?]  
I too! ‘Is this how you write/spell it?’

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26 [http://www.pfadizug.ch/php/view\\_psz\\_forum.php?beitrag=1173](http://www.pfadizug.ch/php/view_psz_forum.php?beitrag=1173)

27 *gaa* ‘go’ is one of four verbs in Swiss German that take infinitival complements that are neither bare nor introduced by the regular infinitive marker *z* /*ts*/ but instead a phonetically reduced copy of themselves. Cf. <http://wwwling.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/sle2001/abstracts/web-riemsdijk.htm>

In Turn 4 'sürmel' contributes at 15:28:50

ui [sic]

possibly a typo for Swiss German *iu* 'indeed' for emphatic confirmation

Then 'fraggler' gets back at 17:20:44 in Turn 5:

eigentlich: Me too!

'actually:' "Me too!"

and in Turn 6 'ig', concludes at 18:02:14 (it is getting late for their appointment)

vor allem schribt mer...

'above all else one writes'

What we can see in Turn 1 is the use of the English part of Slogan 4i. It must either be authentic teenage usage after all or a quote from the billboards. In either case, there is no ridicule intended. Three of the answers confirm the meeting in English, i.e. there is code-switching into English triggered by the use of English for Swiss Purposes. At the same time, there is meta-linguistic concern about correctness from Turn 3 onwards. Turn 5 resolves the insecurity about correctness by convergence towards native-speaker variety idiomatic usage. Turn 6, however, reinforces that what counts is writing (English). What this shows is that code-switching into English is indeed part of the young chatters' linguistic repertoire. The topic-related code-switch is initiated by a relexified Swiss German idiom, but what counts is that it is in English. For these speakers appropriation for Swiss Purposes and convergence towards native-speaker norms are possible side-by-side. What the co-existence of both suggests is that English is indeed a multi-repertoired performance.

## Conclusions

As far back as 1986 Carstensen observed that Europeans regard English as a reservoir from which they can take words "at random" (p. 831) and then use them in their languages in ways that are not possible in English. Cheshire & Moser's (1994:468) research into advertisements in French-speaking Switzerland suggested that English serves as a reservoir for symbolic meaning also. The examples of English for Swiss Purposes considered here seem to indicate a new stage in this development. Advertisement text-writers are now doing publicly what learners have been doing either inadvertently or playfully all along, and what young non-native users of English are now doing with increasing confidence in their peer group discourse. They take English words and use them in an appropriated, code-mixed register of English in

ways not attested in native varieties of English. The function of this is two-fold. On the one hand it serves the purpose of language display (Eastman & Stein 1993:187), which functions as an artifact of crossing linguistic boundaries without threatening social boundaries or as a reaction to social boundaries which cannot be crossed. Without thereby claiming (near-) native-speakerhood, non-native users lay claim to a social identity which includes English. They have appropriated English for their purposes, some of which may be truly Swiss in-group purposes which signal solidarity within the peer group and are not intended to conform to anything apart from peer-group pressure. Other purposes will be oriented towards linguistic convergence with the mainstream and feed into a register that is more oriented towards native-speaker norms or the needs of international communication among non-native speakers. On the other hand, the English of the slogans represents language play. By extension of what Cook (2000:165) says about affectionate language play both between and among children and adults, in popular music, in avant-garde poetry, and in nonsense we can argue that

...[a]lthough the 'words' [or idioms] have no meaning in the sense of precise denotations known widely in the [native] speech community, they certainly achieve social meaning in their own context. Indeed we cannot stop them taking on such meaning as soon as they are uttered.

The instances under consideration could mean pragmatically, 'we are young, free and confident' or 'we are young, free and different' or 'we are young, free and happy to be Swiss', which sounds uncannily like native English banking and insurance slogans for or about<sup>28</sup> young people, for instance the following by *The Royal London Mutual Insurance Society* at:

[http://www.royal-london.co.uk/planning/young\\_free.htm](http://www.royal-london.co.uk/planning/young_free.htm)

Young, Free and Single

If you are young and single, why not consider putting your money into an instant access savings account. There'll be cash for emergencies and next year's holiday

But what about denotational meanings? Even if English for Swiss Purposes idioms will never enter the English language in general they certainly have idiomatic denotational meanings for their Swiss users and they are certainly English from the point of view of those who do not understand them. And in at least those cases in which no rules of native English grammar are violated, 'lexification' with English words automatically triggers semantic interpretation. As Cook (2000:166) argues

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28 "Teenagers are young, free and frugal. Many already own shares and credit cards, but teenagers still want to know more about managing money..." at:  
<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/07/30/1027926886281.html>

... it is quite impossible, once we 'lexify' by putting actual words in the place of grammatical categories, to prevent them from taking on semantic meaning. If, then, we cannot interpret the resulting sentences as referring to actual reality ..., we interpret them as referring to an alternative reality...

Even if there is no potential for use in Swiss idioms in 'English from above', what one might see in them is the alternative reality of plurilingual users' language play.

What does all this tell us about the role of L2/L3 English in Switzerland? Of all the registers of English used in this country, ranging from the native varieties of British, Australian, American expatriates through native-oriented teaching models and international uses of English as a lingua franca to intra-national lingua franca uses of English, the use of L2/L3 English in the young register of *Quersprachigkeit* is the most localised (Swiss) form of English. This register of English is not *hors sol*, it grows in young Swiss heads, and they like it because it feels Swiss while at the same time giving them intimate contact with the otherness of English. Following Pennycook's (2001) line of reasoning it could be argued that "...this is not merely a process of appropriation and hybridization... but rather 'a celebration of bi or pluri languaging', a focus on 'the crack between local histories and global designs'..." (Mignolo 2000 quoted in Pennycook 2001). The lingua franca quality of the English used in the Italian-English slogans highlights the utilitarian appeal that English has for Swiss communication. The calquing of the German and French code-mixings, made public in an advertisement campaign, highlights two things. The first is that English belongs to its non-native users for purposes of generational-linguistic demarcation as well as for language play and creativity. The second is that the humorous effect depends on non-native awareness of distances jumped and rules violated. *Quersprachigkeit* thus does not exclude co-existence with other, more mainstream-oriented, registers of English.

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## Appendix

The corpus of *Postfinance* advertisement slogans

Table 1: Slogans for the German speaking target group: shaded boxes indicate use on billboards

No	Slogan	underlying L1/ML idiom	meaning of the underlying idiom <sup>29</sup>	mental image or origin
1i	Konto auf and I make the fly. Variant: Gelbes Konto [sic] and you make the fly. Picture: Young man with shoulder bag looking at the viewer as if into a mirror, adjusting his bow-tie.	eine/die Fliege machen (middle-aged informants tend not to recognise this idiom as being in current use in German-speaking Switzerland)	to beat it, to disappear used in German military slang since 1939 (to mean 'to flee') and in teenage slang since 1955 (Küpper 1982-85)	to imitate/become a fly, vanish as quickly as a fly (Wermke et al. <sup>2</sup> 2002), but the homonym <i>Fliege</i> 'bow tie' is depicted in the cartoon
2i	Konto auf and I show you the cold shoulder. Picture: young woman with suitcase wearing sunglasses and an off-the-shoulder blouse looking sideways at the viewer over her naked left shoulder	die kalte Schulter zeigen	give the cold shoulder, reject, rebuff, pretend not be interested, look down on someone arrogantly	body-language: a cold shoulder-shrug instead of a warm embrace assumed to be a loan translation from English (Küpper 1982-85, Röhrich 1991/92)
3i	Konto auf and I whistle on you. Picture: a leggy young woman in knee-socks and shorts sitting on two travelling bags holding a pea-whistle in front of her mouth	auf jemanden pfeifen  Röhrich 1991/92 argues that n. <i>Pfeife</i> 'pipe' is something worthless [?]	show contempt or frustration, decide to ignore someone, to give up on someone, not to care about someone used at least since the 19 <sup>th</sup> century (Küpper 1982-85)	whistles as a signal (foul/end of match in football), whistling in place of booing for disapproval; used instead of answering whistling shows disdain (Küpper 1982-85)
4i	Konto auf and you can blow me in the shoes. Picture: barefooted young man squatting by his suitcase holding his shoe-laced sneakers	Swiss German du chasch mir i d'Schue blase  <i>du kannst mir in die Schuhe blasen</i> is not a well-known idiom outside German-	you can go to hell, get stuffed, leave me alone, I don't need you any more  Wermke <sup>2</sup> 2002 has <i>er/sie usw. kann mir in die Schuhe blasen</i> as (vulgar, Swiss, near-dialectal) 'soll	expiration as a reaction to bad odour? (of sweaty feet or sneakers)  The <i>Schweizerisches Idiotikon</i> Vol. 5 (1905) s.v. <i>bläse</i> <sup>n</sup> (p.142) records <i>Blasmer i' d' Schueh!</i> and

29 Translations into English mainly based on Terrell et al. <sup>3</sup>1997.

	towards the viewer	speaking Switzerland <sup>30</sup>	mich in Ruhe lassen' whereas Röhrich (1991/92:1411) gives a wrong meaning!	<i>Blas-mer i's (im) Füdle<sup>a</sup></i> as two of several formulae of contempt or rejection.
5i	Konto auf or you have the afterlook.  Picture: aeroplane taking off into the background leaving the viewer to gaze after it	das Nachsehen haben  already used in 'Eulenspiegel' (Low German, 16 <sup>th</sup> c.) (Paul <sup>10</sup> 2002)	not to get anywhere, feel cheated, be at a disadvantage, be left standing, not to get a look-in, to be left empty-handed  used in German football jargon since the 1950s (Küpper 1982-85)	watch others leave with their share of something and be left with nothing  word play on <i>nachsehen</i> 'gaze after' i.e. watch an aeroplane (or other moving object) leave
6	Gelbes Konto auf and you are the cock in the basket.	(der) Hahn im Korb sein  ( <i>Ob Hahn oder Henne im Korb</i> used in the German text below the sub-heading)	to be cock of the walk, (in the confident position of) an only male among females, absence of competition, be the focus of female attention (Röhrich 1991/92)	single dominating or valuable cock (rooster) on a chicken run (or sitting in a basket on the way to the market) (Küpper 1982-85, Pfeiffer 1989)
7	Gelbes Konto auf and you get the yellow of the egg.	[usu. negative: nicht gerade] das Gelbe vom Ei sein  ( <i>das Gelbe vom Ei</i> used in the German text below the subheading)	to be [not exactly] brilliant, to get the best part of sth  ( <i>yolk</i> rendered in one-to-one fashion from German <i>Ei-gelb</i> as <i>yellow</i> )	the yolk is the best part of the egg (Röhrich 1991/92:527)  yellow is the brand colour of Postfinance/ DIE POST, cf. Yellow Account, yellowww etc.
8	Gelbes Konto auf and the post goes off.	die Post geht ab	be(come) very active, involving a lot of energy, speed and sweat; depart (Röhrich 1991/92)  expression spread through a popular song (1838) (Küpper 1982-85)	speedy departure of the mail coach after the horses have been changed (Küpper 1982-85)  dynamic beginning of a party
9	Gelbes Konto auf and you have good cards.	[usu. neg. schlechte!] gute Karten haben  often sing. <i>eine gute Karte haben</i>	to have good chances of success, <i>to have good cards</i> is sometimes used metaphorically in NS	to have cards likely to win in a game of cards

30 But note that Küpper (1982-85) maintains it has been used as a crude expression of rejection since the 1920s as a euphemism for *blas mir in der Arsch!*

	used together with a drawing of the yellow 'Postcard'	<i>(gute Karten</i> is used in the German text below)	English in this sense, the more usual expression would be <i>to have a good hand</i>	
10	Gelbes Konto auf and you can make you on the socks.	sich auf die Socken machen <i>(Mach Dich ruhig auf die Socken</i> used below the subheading) German <i>dich</i> preceded by <i>du</i> would normally be rendered as <i>yourself</i>	to get going, leave used since the 18 <sup>th</sup> century to mean 'run away'; historically <i>Socke</i> referred to a light shoe also worn by comedians (Pfeiffer 1989)	get your socks on and leave without your shoes on not to make a noise or because you are in such a hurry (Röhrich 1991/92: 1578 s.v. Strümpfe)
11	Gelbes Konto auf and you make no office up.	Swiss German keis Büro uffdue <i>(Ein Büro aufmachen kannst Du woanders</i> used below the subheading)	do not waste time by being bureaucratic According to Burger (2002:25) <i>es Büro uffdue</i> 'etwas kompliziert anstellen' is a supraregional Swiss German idiom known to 94 % of his respondents and used by 56 %	to set up office; one-to-one rendering via Standard German <b>Mach kein Büro auf</b> , which is not, however, understood as an idiom outside German-speaking Switzerland
12	Gelbes Konto auf and you have mega pig.	Schwein haben, with <i>mega</i> inserted as an intensifier <i>(Sparschwein</i> 'piggy bank' used in the German text)	to be lucky (undeservedly, unexpectedly) used since the 19 <sup>th</sup> century (Küpper 1982-85); <i>mega</i> gives the well-established idiom its young touch	<i>Glücksschwein</i> , i.e. the pig as a symbol of good luck (possibly derived from medieval custom of giving a pig as a consolation prize) (Wermke et al. 2002, Pfeiffer 1989)
13	Gelbes Konto auf and you have fun on the picture umbrella.	different strategy!	expression stereotypically used in German-based Mock English on the web ( <i>Bildschirm</i> also used in German text)	literal rendering of the German compound <i>Bildschirm</i> 'screen' as Bild=picture + (Regen)schirm= umbrella
14	Gelbes Konto auf und you can easy jet to London.	different strategy!	easy is the most frequent loan in (young people's) (Swiss) German both as an adjective and as an adverb (cf. Schmidlin, in print)	brand name easy.jet reinterpreted as adverb+verb <i>jet off (to London) easily</i>

Table 2: Slogans for the French speaking target group: shaded boxes indicate use on billboards

No	Slogan	underlying L1/ML idiom <sup>31</sup>	meaning of the underlying idiom	origin or mental image <sup>32</sup>
15i	J'ouvre un compte and I send you on the roses.  Picture: a young woman holding a bunch of roses	envoyer qn sur les roses (informal)	to send somebody packing, send somebody about their business	the thorns of the roses will prick
16i	J'ouvre un compte and you go to make you cook an egg.  Picture: young man sitting on the floor between his bags, holding up an egg between his thumb and index finger for the viewer to look at	va te faire cuire un oeuf (very informal, slang, expressing contempt, scorn) a 'better' literal translation might be: <i>go get yourself boil(ing) an egg</i> as the semantic extension of English <i>cook</i> does not in fact include boiling eggs.	(go and) take a running jump!, get stuffed!  <i>a posteriori</i> explained as reduced form of <i>va te faire cuire un oeuf (un neuf) à huit heures</i> expressing impossibility <sup>33</sup>	sexual or scatological allusion (cf. the egg-shaped double zero 00 symbol for the toilet)?
17i	J'ouvre un compte and I pull me.  Picture: someone kneeling on the floor next to their rucksack, tearing or tugging at their own pullover	se tirer de	to get oneself out of (danger, situation)	breaking free, tearing oneself away
18i	J'ouvre un compte and I turn the heels.  variant: Compte Jaune and I turn the heels.  Picture shows a young woman exposing the turn-up soles and heels of her boots	tourner les talons	to turn on one's heel, turn quickly to face the opposite direction (and walk away) or take to your heels, run away quickly	showing one's heels by quickly turning round ?  <i>montrer (tourner) les talons</i> or <i>jouer des talons</i> or <i>du talon</i> is a word play on <i>talon de l'épée</i> the 'hilt of a sword'
19i	Ouvre un Compte Jaune or you are in the cabbages.  Picture shows a plane	être dans les choux	to be a write-off, to be right out of the running, to have had it, to be among the	derived from <i>echouer</i> 'to fail', also: cabbage is a cheap vegetable, <i>chou</i> also

31 Taken from The New Unabridged Collins Robert French Dictionary (5th ed. 1998).

32 Most explanations, esp. on the origins of idioms, are based on Rey & Chantreau 1993 unless otherwise indicated.

33 [http://www.leximot.net/expression.php3?id\\_expr=1712](http://www.leximot.net/expression.php3?id_expr=1712), cf. also Rey & Chantreau 1993 s.v. œuf.

	taking off into the background		last to finish a race	stands for 'backside, bum'
20	Ouvre un Compte Jaune and you can easy jet to London.	different strategy !	only slogan that is identical to one with a German sentence beginning	brand name easy.jet reinterpreted as adverb+verb <i>jet off (to London) easily</i>
21	Ouvre un Compte Jaune and you will be as a cock in paste.	être (vivre) comme un coq en pâte additional borrowing of the meaning of French <i>pâte</i> 'pastry, dough or pie crust', which is not included in the semantic...	to live/be in clover, live the life of Riley, to enjoy a life of wealth and comfort ...extension of English <i>paste</i> 'sticky substance (made by crushing and mixing food)'	metonymic transfer of the pleasure of tasting <i>coq en pâte</i> ('chicken in pie crust') to the victim's position in a comfortably warm bed of pie
22	Ouvre un Compte Jaune and you have the cherry on the cake.	la cerise sur le gâteau	(That would be) the icing on the cake, the cherry on the cake, the unexpected, added bonus	cherries on a cream cake, image of perfection assumed to be a loan translation from English
23	Ouvre un Compte Jaune and you have good cards in hands.	avoir tous les atouts en main (used in the French text below the subtitle)	to hold all the aces to have a good hand, to be in a strong position, have an advantage More obvious equivalence between <i>avoir une belle main</i> and <i>to have a good hand...</i>	in most card games it is an advantage to have all four aces  ...overruled by the need to use the word <i>card</i> to go with the yellow 'Postcard' drawing.
24	Ouvre un Compte Jaune and start on the hats of wheels.	démarrer sur les chapeaux de roues (informal) (used in the French text below the subtitle)	to shoot off at top speed, take off like a shot, or to get off to a good start	hub caps making contact with the ground when a car (?) is leaning to one side due to high speed (cambered wheels?)
25	Ouvre un Compte Jaune, it's as easy as good morning.	facile (simple) comme bonjour (informal) (used below the subtitle with <i>simple</i> )	as easy as pie, as easy as falling off a log, dead easy, very easy	greeting as the easiest part of language and social interaction
26	Ouvre un Compte Jaune and you have	avoir du pot + intensifier <i>méga</i>	to be lucky additional borrowing!	(ironical) scatological metaphor: good luck

	a mega pot.	used in hyphenated compounds ( <i>ramasser le pot</i> used below the subheading)	In fact the semantic extension of English <i>pot</i> does not include 'luck' whereas that of French <i>pot</i> does.	is what you find in the (chamber) pot <sup>34</sup>  container metaphor of good luck? (cf. Aladdin's lamp?) <sup>35</sup>
27	Ouvre un Compte Jaune and you have fun full screen.	Different strategy as <i>have fun</i> and <i>full screen</i> exist in English but not in this combination with <i>full screen</i> as an adverbial; ( <i>en (mode)) plein écran</i> or <i>écran pleine page</i> cf. also <i>plein la vue</i>	Full Screen video in RealPlayer enlarges the image window to the greatest size allowable for the clip, full page display  to the full, with maximum pleasure	If you open a new window in <b>full screen</b> mode this means that Menu bars and the status bar are disabled and you get the maximum view of a picture or video  i.e. you don't see a window, the display fills the whole screen
28	Ouvre un Compte Jaune and put the packet!	mettre le paquet	spare no expenses, to pull out all the stops, to put maximum energy or effort into a thing or action	derives from <i>hasarder, risquer le paquet</i> 'risk a large sum to win', bundle of bank notes?, deck of cards?

Table 3: Slogans for the Italian speaking target group: shaded boxes indicating use on billboards

	Slogan	ML Italian	EL English
29i	Aprire il conto and see you later.  Picture: Young woman with a bag hanging from her shoulder waving good-bye	ML Italian influenced by German model?	<i>See you later, alligator!</i> is a familiar song title; In NS varieties of English <i>See you later</i> is an elliptical form of <i>I'll see you later</i> for leave taking.
30i	Aprire il conto and take it easy.  Picture: Young man resting or sleeping on his back-pack	ML Italian influenced by German model?	<i>take it easy</i> has loan word status in Swiss German (Rash 1996a) used in the imperative
31i	Aprire il conto and let me fly higher.  Picture: Young man	ML Italian influenced by German model?	from song lyrics? (Green World by Alpha Omega?)

34 [http://www.leximot.net/expression.php3?id\\_expr=548](http://www.leximot.net/expression.php3?id_expr=548)

35 On [http://www.leximot.net/expression.php3?id\\_expr=383](http://www.leximot.net/expression.php3?id_expr=383) there is a hint that *avoir du pot/cul/vase/bol* has sexual connotations as all four nouns are used as slang expressions for sexual organs.

	jumping over his suitcase, his arms spread out like wings		
32	Apri un Conto Giallo and you can easy jet to London.	ML Italian	English words are used in the same way as in both the German and the French context: brand name <i>easy.jet</i> reinterpreted as adverb+verb <i>jet off (to London) easily</i>
33	Apri un Conto Giallo and you are the king.	ML Italian	EL English, but <i>king</i> is also a frequently used loan in (Swiss) German; allusion to Elvis Presley?  Absence of EL predictive modal due to lingua franca use
34	Apri un Conto Giallo and you have good cards  used together with a drawing of the yellow 'Postcard'	ML Italian	English used in the same way as in the German context but with a different effect: EL <i>to have good cards</i> is a loan translation from German; <i>un asso nella manica</i> used in the Italian text below the subheading
35	Apri un Conto Giallo and you can go wherever you want.	ML Italian	EL English cf. Microsoft advertisement slogan <i>Where do you want to go today?</i> <i>andare dove vuoi</i> used in the Italian text below the subheading
36	Apri un Conto Giallo and all is very simple.	ML Italian	<i>all is...</i> constructions in NS English have an obsolete proverbial feel to them; usually: <i>everything is</i>  Absence of EL predictive modal due to lingua franca use <i>aprire l'ufficio dove vuoi</i> used in the Italian text
37	Apri un Conto Giallo and you make money.	ML Italian	<i>make money</i> is an English collocation  Absence of EL predictive modal due to lingua franca use
38	Apri un Conto Giallo and you have fun on the monitor.	ML Italian	<i>have fun</i> is an EL collocation, the choice of <i>monitor</i> instead of <i>screen</i> may have been influenced by the fact that <i>monitor</i> is used in Italian (but <i>schermo</i> is used below)  Absence of EL predictive modal due to lingua franca use
39	Apri un Conto Giallo and enter the yellow world.	ML Italian	EL English, but Yellow World has nothing to do with Oxford United's Yellow World, the yellow colour is part of the <i>Postfinance</i> brand
40	Apri un Conto Giallo and you get the best.	ML Italian	EL English; <i>il melio</i> used in the Italian text below the subheading  Absence of EL predictive modal due to lingua franca use

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