Epactonyms / Epactonimi / Epactonymes / Epactónimos: A New Terminology for “Loanwords” and “Linguistic Borrowings”

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Abstract

A new terminology for the so called loanwords is proposed.

Keywords: epactonyms - loanwords - linguistic terminology - history of words - foreign languages

Si propone una nuova terminologia relativa ai cosiddetti prestiti linguistici.

Parole chiave: epactonimi - prestiti linguistici - terminologia linguistica - storia delle parole - lingue straniere

Current linguistic terminology refers to words borrowed from a donor language and incorporated into a recipient language as loanwords. This is a curious definition, as borrowings are generally supposed to be paid back. As Ballester [2013: 54] states, «languages do not loan, banks loan; languages copy».

One could better speak of presents, as new words usually enrich (and don’t impoverish!) the language that receive them. Nevertheless the language that receives new words typically takes them without a precise will of the donor language, and this is not actually the case of presents.

We propose here a new term (that we used also in DESLI), starting from Greek epaktós ‘imported, taken from outside’, that is to say epactonyms (Italian epactonimi, French epactonymes, Spanish epactónimos). The correspondent verb could be to adopt (It. adottare, Fr. adopter, Sp. adoptar).

In this new terminology the English word money would not be «a loan borrowed from Italian (moneta)», but «an epactonym adopted from Italian (moneta)».

REFERENCES

Ballester, X. [2013], 40 Antídotos contra los venenos de la lingüística tradicional, Lugo, Axac, 2013.