

Lexical borrowings in Texas German

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This paper analyzes English nominal loans in Texas German with respect to the community's shift to English. According to Gilbert (1965: 107), classification of English loans can potentially be a good measure of external and internal pressures in the speech community. Through this investigation of loan words in Texas German, our goal is to better understand external and internal factors of language change and to describe the gradual, multigenerational shifts in Texas German. We find that although English has an impact on the structure of the Texas German lexicon, certain lexical items indicate that Texas German experienced a gradual shift from dialectal German to English rather than a rapid shift.

Previous research on English loans in Texas German focuses on loanword phonology, their morphological structure, and the semantic fields of loans (cf. Gilbert 1965, Meister 1969, Wilson 1977, Jordan 1977, and Boas & Pierce 2011). These works have primarily focused on the influence of English on Texas German and have found that although heavy contact with English has led to a variety of phonological and lexical innovations, the grammatical structures of loanwords have remained mostly stable over time.

This paper adds to the previous research by analyzing lexical and phonological properties of some loans that have been overlooked in previous research and others which come from novel data. Our novel data comes from translations produced by Texas German speakers from Gillespie County, Texas (source Texas German Dialect Project, Boas et al. 2010). Loans in our corpus can be classified as one of three types based on the typology presented in Haugen (1950): (1) loan translations, e.g., *Feuerplatz* 'fireplace' (standard German *Kamin*), (2) loan blends, e.g., *Küchesink* 'kitchen sink' (standard German *Küchenspüle/Spülbecken*), and (3) loan words, e.g., *Jerky* 'jerky' (standard German *Trockenfleisch*).

Phonologically, Type (3) exists along a cline ranging from unadapted loans (e.g., [dʒə-ki] *Jerky* 'jerky'), moderately adapted (e.g., [ʃantʃ] *Ranch* 'ranch'), and heavily adapted (e.g., [bʊŋgɪs] *Bungis* 'pumpkin') (cf. Gilbert 1965: 110). Morphologically complex English loans which are treated as morphologically simple in Texas German have some of the highest degrees of phonological adaptation such as *Bungis* 'pumpkin' < English *pumpkin+s* and *Locks* 'log' < English *log+s*. The structure of these words suggests that phonological properties of English were ignored in early Texas German and the loans were adapted to the structure of the donor dialects. Failure to replace morphological missegmentation and phonological adaptation with faithful English forms suggests a gradual shift toward English proficiency. In a rapid shift, the younger generation would most likely correct the structures of the earlier generations.

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