

German words in Tok Pisin dictionaries

Tracing the effects of colonial contact

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The (original) research question:

What was the lexical **influence of German** on Tok Pisin at the time and in the contact area of German missions and under German colonial rule in New Guinea ?

→ What (and how many) German-origin lexemes **were in use** in Tok Pisin and when?

→ What (and how many) German-origin lexemes **are recorded** in Tok Pisin dictionaries?
(= traces of contact)



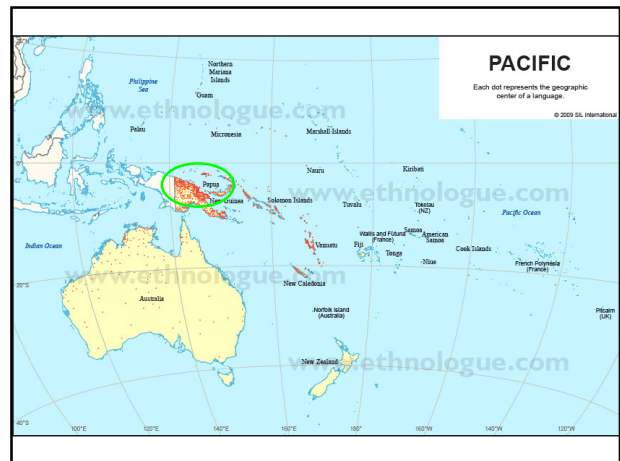
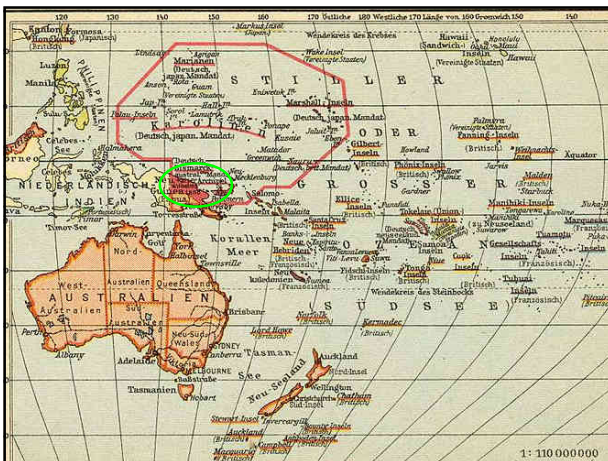
The contact setting (I)

- German colonial claims in the Pacific (1884 – 1914)
- German missionaries in New Guinea (from 1886)
- ...



German colonial claims in the Pacific (1884 – 1914)

- German New Guinea (1884)
(Kaiser-Wilhelmsland, Bismarck Archipelago, Northern Solomon Islands)
- Marshall Islands (1885)
- Nauru (1888) (administratively included in the Marshall Islands)
- Marianas (excl. Guam) (1899)
- Caroline Islands (with Palau) (1899)
- (Western) Samoa (1900)



The contact setting (II)

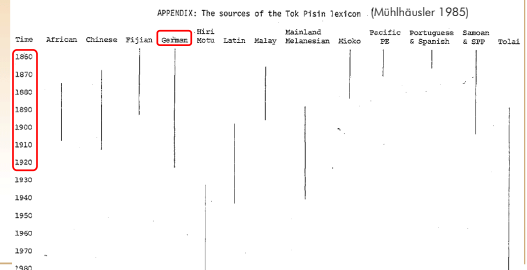
- German colonial claims in the Pacific
- German missionaries in New Guinea (from 1886)
- roughly 700 languages > German was established as mission lingua franca
 - most influential: *Societas Verbi Divini*, in GNG from 1895/6

& Tok Pisin was developing and in use



The contact setting: Lexical outcome

- Estimate of German-origin lexemes in Tok Pisin: up to 200 (Romaine 2001)



The variety: Tok Pisin *et al.*

- A changing variety (different stages, cf. Mühlhäusler 2003)
- A continuum
- Terms used in the investigated dictionaries:
 - Beach-la-mar / Jargon / Trade Speech (1911)
 - Pigeon English / Bichelamar (1913)
 - Tokboi (1926)
 - Melanesian Pidgin English (1943f.)
 - Pidgin English (1943)
 - Neo-Melanesian (1957)
 - Pisin (1969)
 - Melanesian Pidgin (1971)
 - New Guinea Pidgin (1978)
 - **Tok Pisin** (New Guinea Pidgin) (1985+)



The study

- The focus: lexical / linguistic & methodological (& etymological, historical, sociolinguistic)
- The items: 14 lexemes of (possibly) German origin, attested by several authors in secondary literature
- The dictionaries/word lists (29): 1911 – 2008+, handwritten / in print / on-line

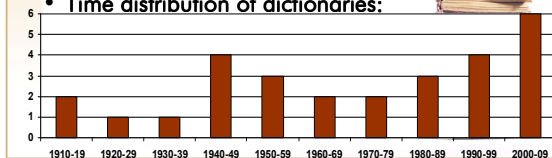


Items & dictionaries

• List of items:

Alkohol *alcohol*, Ananas *pineapple*, beten *pray*, Flagge *flag*, Mast *mast*, Meter (unit) *metre/meter/(yard)*, Pause *break*, Pflaster *bandage*, Pudding *(sweet) pudding*, raus *out*, Ring *ring*, Rucksack *backpack*, Strafe *punishment*, vorbei *over, past*

• Time distribution of dictionaries:



“Complications”

- Language-related problems
 - Identification of relevant items
- Methodological problems
 - Limited comparability of sources
 - Locating specific lexical items



Language-related problems: Identification of *relevant* lexemes

- (1) clearly German origin (*raus*, *bros/brus* 'chest', *popeia*)
- (2) ambiguous origin (E/G): *ring*, *house/haus*, *ros* 'rust'
- (3) clearly non-German origin (i.e., English or other)



Identification of *relevant* lexemes

- Fairly easy (word form+semantics): group (1)
- Interesting but difficult: group (2)
 - Multiple etymologies (cf. Mühlhäusler 1985, 2003:26, etc.)
 - Example: **sanga** 'fork in a branch, tongs, open jaws of a crocodile, catapult'
 - < (B)English **shanghai** (slingshot) + German **Zange** 'pliers' + Malay **tjang** 'forked branch'
- Time & context of integration into Tok Pisin
 - Example: *ananas* (Dutch/German) 'pineapple'
 - > decisive: time of first appearance; introduced 'before 1870' → needs more (historical/agricultural) investigation



Methodological/lexicographical problems (I): Limited comparability of sources

- Differences in focus (e.g., sports dictionary, New Testament dictionary, medical terminology)
- Differences in approach (time of compilation, geographical area, length of study, L1 of lexicographer)
- Differences in spelling:
 - Etymological (English-based)
 - L1-based (E, F, G)
 - Standardized



Methodological/lexicographical problems (II): Locating specific lexical items

...can be difficult because (of):

- unusual spelling
- variation in entries between directions of translation
- item is not listed as a lexeme but "hidden" within another entry

→ Examples ...



Locating specific lexical items

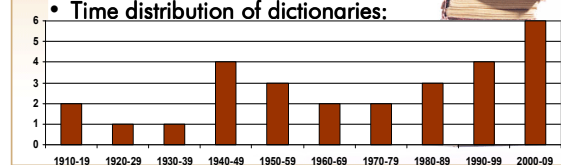
- Unusual spelling
 - *rouse* 'out' /*raus* (Churchill 1911)
 - *tèke maout* 'arracher'/'pull out, take out' (Pionnier 1913)
- Variation in entries
 - E pineapple – TP *ananas*, *painap*
 - TP *ananas* – E pineapple (Murphy 1966)
- "Hidden" item
 - no entry for *mas(t)* 'mast(pole)'
 - but: **plakmas** (under the entry **plak** 'flag') (Baing et al. 2008)



Items & dictionaries

- **List of items:**
Alcohol *alcohol*, Ananas *pineapple*, beten *pray*, Flagge *flag*, Mast *mast*, Meter (unit) *metre/meter/(yard)*, Pause *break*, Pflaster *bandage*, Pudding (*sweet*) *pudding*, raus *out*, Ring *ring*, Rucksack *backpack*, Strafe *punishment*, vorbei *over, past*

- **Time distribution of dictionaries:**



List of items

German	English	Tok Pisin (Mihalic 1971)
Alkohol	alcohol	alkohol
Ananas	pineapple	ananas, painap
beten	pray, give honor to	beten
Flagge	flag	plak
Mast	mast	mas
Meter (unit)	metre/meter	meta 'ruler', metaim 'measure sth.'
Pause	break	(pause), malolo
Pflaster	bandage	plasta
Pudding	(sweet) pudding	puding
raus	out	raus 'leave', rausim 'take/throw away'
Ring	ring	ring
Rucksack	backpack	ruksak 'army pack'
Strafe	punishment	strafe, strafim 'punish'
vorbei	over, past	popaia 'miss the mark'

Findings for the selected lexical items

	1910-19	1920-29	1930-39	1940-49	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09
ALKOHOL			1		1	1		1	1	
ANANAS		1	1	2	1	1	2	2	4	
BETEN		1		2			1	2	3	3
FLAGGE		1	1	2	3	3	1	2	1	3
MAST	1	1	1	2	2	3	1	2	1	2
METER (UNIT)				2	1	1	2	2	2	
PAUSE			1			2				
PFLASTER				3	1	1	2	2	3	
PUDDING			2	1	1	1			1	
RAUS	1	1	1	4	3	2	1	3	3	6
RING	1	1	2	3	3	1	3	2	4	
RUCKSACK		1	1	3	3	2	1	2	1	2
STRAFE			1	2	1		1	1	1	2
VORBEI / POPEIA			1	1	2		1	2		3
	1910-19 (2)	1920-29 (1)	1930-39 (1)	1940-49 (4)	1950-59 (3)	1960-69 (3)	1970-79 (2)	1980-89 (3)	1990-99 (4)	2000-09 (6)

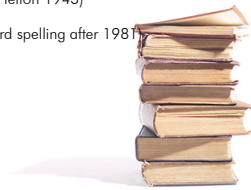
Non-straightforward findings

- Same item with different spelling
- Hidden information
- Background / etymological knowledge required



Example: Spelling

- 'mother' / 'father' (G *fam.* Mama / Papa)
 - maman / papa (Pionnier 1913)
 - mumma / puppa (Helton 1943)
 - mama, papa (standard spelling after 1981)



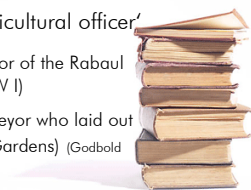
Example: Hidden information

- Ananas ananas
 „ (d.Eingeb.) **blume**
 (...)
- Blume flauer, palawa
- Gruß zB. gutbai (...)
 **gris God**
 (Gruß der Katholiken im Vorbeigehen)
 (van Baar 1930)



Example: Background / etymological knowledge

- **puy** 'naked'
 < missionaries' use of **G pfui!** (expression of disapproval/disgust) 'tu!' (Mühlhäusler 1979)
- **didiman** (pl. didiman) 'agricultural officer'
 < Dr. **Bredemann** (senior curator of the Rabaul Botanical Gardens, prior to WW I)
 or Mr. **Dietmann** (German surveyor who laid out the original Rabaul Botanical Gardens) (Godbold 2010:v fn.1)



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Results: Can (lexical) effects of colonial-time contact be traced in dictionaries?

- Yes: in the recorded existence of lexical items at different times (lexical traces)
- Yes: in the attitudes that are revealed by the selection of lexemes and by translations / interpretations (traces of eurocentric perspective)



How to deal with the (lexical/methodological) limitations of the data sources (I)

- Reflexive awareness of
 - Author's perspective & goal with the word list/dictionary
 - Author's L1
 - Variation within and across varieties
- Taking dictionaries as „pointers“ to extralinguistic context:
 - interpreting authors' presuppositions and backgrounds
- Drawing on additional historical and cultural background information



How to deal with the (lexical/methodological) limitations of the data sources (II)

- Dictionaries / word lists **record** and **judge** Tok Pisin at the same time;
- if working with them, it is essential to tease these two aspects apart
- They are time- and context-bound historical documents:
 - offering a time-specific record of the variety at one given point
 - not providing objective linguistic information
 - reflecting a subjective view from a historical perspective we cannot reconstruct without these sources.



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