

# Lexicography of Language Contact: An Internet Dictionary of Words of German Origin in Tok Pisin

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## Abstract

The paper presents an ongoing project in the domain of lexicography of language contact, namely, the “Internet Dictionary of Words of German Origin in Tok Pisin”. The German influence onto the lexicon of the main pidgin language of Papua New Guinea has its roots in the German colonial empire, where Tok Pisin played an important role as a lingua franca in the colony of German New Guinea. Tok Pisin also served as an intermediate language for many borrowing processes; that is, German loans entered many languages in the South Pacific via Tok Pisin.

The Internet Dictionary of Words of German Origin in Tok Pisin is based on all available lexicographical sources from the early 20th century up to now. These sources are systematically evaluated within our project; the results will be documented in the dictionary. The microstructure of the dictionary will be presented with respect to its major features: documentation of sources, examples for word usage, audio files, and lexicographic comment.

**Keywords:** language contact; borrowing; dictionary of language contact; electronic lexicography

## 1 Introduction

The lexicography of language contact is concerned with the lexicographic description of loanwords and foreign words, usually with respect to their phonological, grammatical, and semantic properties, the circumstances of the borrowing processes, and the changes the words have undergone during the borrowing process. Dictionaries of loanwords and foreign words come in two basic types, dictionaries that adopt the perspective of the target language and dictionaries written from the perspective of the source language. The former type is by far the dominating one: Lemmatized are lexemes of the target language of the borrowing process; this is done in common dictionaries of foreign words in English, German, etc. Dictionaries of the latter type are much harder to find: they lemmatize lexemes from the source language and follow their borrowing ways into other languages (cf. Wiegand 2001 and Engelberg 2010 for distinctions of this sort).

The German Loanword Portal (“Lehnwortportal Deutsch”; Meyer, Engelberg 2012ff.) at the “Institute for the German Language” (Institut für Deutsche Sprache, IDS) in Mannheim is an internet portal for loanword dictionaries; it collects dictionaries of this “inverted” type that document German loanwords in other languages (Meyer/Engelberg 2011; Engelberg/Meyer 2015).

The dictionaries can be consulted as stand-alone works and – since the dictionaries are interlinked via German metalemmata – as a virtual inverted dictionary of German loans in other languages. The portal will allow to display the borrowing chains from German into other languages via intermediate languages.

Two of the dictionaries that are currently being prepared for the German Loanword Portal are the

“Dictionary of German Loanwords in the Languages of the South Pacific” and the “Dictionary of Words of German Origin in Tok Pisin”. The latter one is the topic of this paper.

## 2 Words of German Origin in Oceania

Tok Pisin is an English-based extended pidgin that is widely spoken in Papua New Guinea. Its origins are pidgins used on plantations in Queensland, Samoa, and other places in the South Pacific in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In particular, the pidgin spoken in Samoa had been brought to New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago by labour migrants (Mühlhäusler 1978). There, Tok Pisin emerged as one of three major variants of Melanesian Pidgin. Tok Pisin spread and developed when north-eastern New Guinea and the adjacent islands were part of the German colonial empire.

Between 1884 and 1900, Germany took a number of islands into possession: large parts of Micronesia (the Carolines, the Northern Marianas, the Palau Islands, the Marshall Islands, Nauru), the northeastern part of New Guinea (Kaiser-Wilhelmsland), the Bismarck Archipelago, the Northern Solomon Islands, and the western part of Samoa. Except for Samoa these areas constituted the colony German New Guinea. Even though Germany lost its colonies in WWI, the German language had a certain lexical influence on many of the about 700 languages spoken in German New Guinea. In particular, words from the domains of school, religion, administration, household, and craft found their way into the local languages (Stolberg 2015). As Tok Pisin spread under German rule, besides the bulk of English-based words and quite a number of words from indigenous language, more than 100 German words like *ambos* (from Ger. *Amboß* ‘anvil’), *beten* (from Ger. *beten* ‘pray’), *binen* (from Ger. *Bienen* ‘bees’), or *gumi* (from Ger. *Gummi* ‘rubber; gum’) showed up in Tok Pisin. During the work on the “Dictionary of German Loanwords in the Languages of the South Pacific” (cf. Engelberg 2010), it became obvious that many putative German loans in these languages were not direct loans but probably borrowed via Tok Pisin. Thus, an investigation of the German part of the Tok Pisin lexicon was a prerequisite for the compilation of the loanword dictionary. These considerations were the origin of the “Dictionary of Words of German Origin in Tok Pisin” that will be described in the remainder of this paper.

## 3 The Dictionary Basis

The dictionary basis of the “Dictionary of Words of German Origin in Tok Pisin” (“Wortschatz deutschen Ursprungs im Tok Pisin”; Engelberg, Möhrs, Stolberg to appear 2017) consists of Tok Pisin dictionaries, linguistic publications on the lexicon of Tok Pisin (among them the seminal work by Mühlhäusler 1979), and a small and open collection of written and spoken Tok Pisin texts. The most important part of the dictionary basis is the library of about 40 Tok Pisin dictionaries and word lists reaching from 1909 up to the present; some of the older ones are unpublished works by missionaries. The dictionaries are sources that need to be examined critically for several reasons: Some of the older dictionaries not only contain words from Tok Pisin but also from other variants of Melanesian Pidgin. Lexical information about the source language of lexical items is sparse and sometimes not reliable. The same holds for the semantic description of Tok Pisin words that, in some dictionaries, does not differentiate enough between the meaning of the Tok Pisin words and the meaning of the words in the source language. Furthermore, the sources follow different ordering principles. In some sources, words are listed alphabetically with information on translation equivalents in English or other languages. Other dictionaries follow an onomasiological principle

and group headwords according to selected topics (e.g., agriculture, school/education, craft, etc.). Another problem is posed by the medium of the texts. While some of the sources are type-written texts, others are barely legible handwritten manuscripts. The first aim of our project is to analyze all the available material and to document the information in a systematic way.

#### 4 Headword Candidates

As mentioned above, one of the first steps of the lexicographic process was to analyze the different sources (dictionaries, word lists, research literature, e.g., Mühlhäusler 2001; Heitfeld 1977) in order to find Tok Pisin lexemes that count as possible candidates for words that are influenced by the German language. The entries in some dictionaries contain information about influences from other languages (in our case: especially from the German language), cf., for example, Figure. 1.

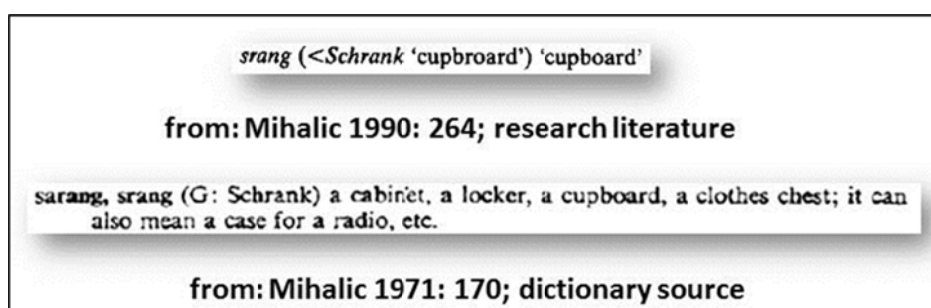



Figure 1: Entry *srang/sarang* (from Ger. *Schrank*) from a dictionary and a research article by Mihalic (1971; 1990).

However, word history is not in the focus of all lexicographic sources. Some authors provide information about this aspect (e.g., Mihalic 1971; Garnier 2006 etc., cf. Fig. 1) while others do not (e.g., Kutscher 1940; Newlin 2001, etc.). At the beginning, we concentrated on about ten sources that give explicit information about the influence of other languages on the lexicon of Tok Pisin. The main source was Mihalic (1971). On this basis, we compiled a list of lexical items explicitly marked as stemming from German (List A). List A contains around 90 lexemes. In a second step, the ten main sources were re-examined for words that were not explicitly marked for German origin but might nevertheless show German influence. For many of these words the possible lexical etymons in English and German are cognates, (e.g., Eng. *ring*, Ger. *Ring*) such that considerations about word history have to recur to non-linguistic reasoning.<sup>1</sup> The process yielded a candidate list (List B) of about 450 lexical items (including the items from List A). List B is the starting point for the evaluation of all other lexicographic sources.

#### 5 Lexicographical Information

In the following sections, we present the conception of the microstructure of the dictionary (cf. Fig. 2). The List B of headword candidates (cf. section 4) constitutes the basis for the lemma list of the "Dictionary of Words of German Origin in Tok Pisin".

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mühlhäusler (1985) on problems concerning the determination of the word history of Tok Pisin words.


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Suche nach deutschen Herkunftswörtern


**Wortschatz deutschen Ursprungs im Tok Pisin**  
 (Engelberg/Möhrs/Stolberg 2016)  
 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P R S T U V W Y

Herkunftswörterbuch

Deutsch

Lehnwörterbücher

Polnisch

Teschener Polnisch

Slovenisch

Hebräisch

**Tok Pisin**

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→ Zu diesem Artikel gehörige **Herkunftswörter**

# beten

zu deutsch *beten* (Verb)

bakbot  
 balaistip  
**beten**  
 binen  
 blut

## Bedeutungen

- ein Gebet sprechen
- Gebet

## Varianten

- *beiten*  
belegt In: MURPHY 1966, 60

## Belege

### Wörterbücher

- **Quelle:** VAN BAAR 1930, 13  
**Tok Pisin-Formen (laut Quelle):** beten; pre; prei
- **Quelle:** VAN BAAR 1930, 30  
**Tok Pisin-Formen (laut Quelle):** beten  
**Anmerkungen aus der Quelle**  
Gebel
- **Quelle:** KLITSCHER 1940, 28  
**Tok Pisin-Formen (laut Quelle):** raring
- **Quelle:** MIHALIC 1957, 15  
**Tok Pisin-Formen (laut Quelle):** beten  
**Etymologie:** deutsch  
**Anmerkungen aus der Quelle**  
(G: beten)  
1) a prayer;  
*mekim beten* = to say a prayer; *strongpela beten* = a fervent prayer;  
*longpela beten* = a lengthy prayer  
2) to pray;  
*beten nogut* = to pray without devotion;  
*beten paslain* = to lead the praying

### Sekundärliteratur

- **Quelle:** HEITFELD 1977, 76,79  
**Tok Pisin-Formen (laut Quelle):** beten  
**Etymologie:** deutsch
- **Quelle:** MÜHLHÄUSLER 1979, 205  
**Tok Pisin-Formen (laut Quelle):** beten  
**Anmerkungen aus der Quelle**  
to pray

### Beispiele

- Yumi beten.



Übersetzung (Englisch): *Let us pray.*  
(MIHALIC 1971, 208)

Figure 2: Extract from the preliminary example entry for Ger. *beten* (Tok Pisin: *beten*).

The goal of the lexicographic analysis is to make visible all traces of German in the Tok Pisin lexicon. With respect to the list of headwords for the dictionary, quite an amount of spelling variation has to be considered (e.g. *sarang/srang* from Ger. *Schrank*; cf. Fig. 1). Where possible, we adopt the spelling from Mihalic (1971) for the main entry in the dictionary; spelling variants and compounds containing the headword are listed in the article. Pronunciation information for every headword and every variant is given in form of an audio file spoken by a speaker of Tok Pisin. All information from entries from the analyzed sources will be systematically bundled and presented, including the bibliographic references. This pertains to information from dictionary sources, from the research literature, from hand written manuscripts, and from other word lists of Tok Pisin.

Some of the examined sources also provide example sentences, that is, short phrases or short sentences that present the lexeme in context.<sup>2</sup> These examples constitute another large part of the microstructure of the dictionary entry. The pronunciation of the examples is again rendered in form of audio files.<sup>3</sup> Besides collecting information about the possible German origin of Tok Pisin words from the literature, we also discussed many controversial cases with linguists who are speakers of Tok Pisin.<sup>4</sup> They provided a lot of otherwise unavailable information. The results of these consultations (about usage, spelling, etymology, etc.) will enter the dictionary in form of lexicographical notes. The dictionary entries will also be complemented with the results from an empirical investigation into the current use of words of German origin in Tok Pisin. This investigation was carried out by Craig Volker in cooperation with the authors of the dictionary. Volker checked the acquaintance of Tok Pisin speakers in different areas of Papua New Guinea with words of German origins from the lemma list of the dictionary.

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<sup>2</sup> Many of these examples have been double-checked for acceptability with competent speakers of Tok Pisin.

<sup>3</sup> See also the implementation of information about pronunciation in *ellexiko* ([www.ellexiko.de](http://www.ellexiko.de); <http://www.owid.de/wb/ellexiko/glossar/Hoerbelege.html>).

<sup>4</sup> We are grateful to Janna Zimmermann and Patricia Iha-Breithaupt, two speakers of Tok Pisin, and Professor Craig Alan Volker (Divine Word University, Madang, Papua New Guinea).



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