

1 Introduction: Historical background

German immigration to the United States began as early as the 1670s, but German immigration to what is now the state of Texas came somewhat later. The first German immigrants to Texas arrived in the late 1820s, when Texas was still part of Mexico (Campbell 2003). The first well-documented German settler to Texas was Johann Friedrich Ernst, who arrived in Texas in 1829 (Boas 2018). Ernst's 1832 letter to his relatives in Oldenburg, extolling the virtues of Texas (cheap and readily available farmland, religious freedom, etc.), was republished widely in German-speaking newspapers. In 1836 Texas declared its independence from Mexico, and the newly independent country needed, among other things, to develop its infrastructure more fully, to expand its agricultural efforts, and to build an army to defend itself against Mexico. To help accomplish these goals, Sam Houston, then President of the Republic of Texas, instituted a system of land grants (later superseded by the Homestead Act of 1854). At the same time, political and economic hardships in Germany also made Texas a more attractive destination for many Germans. The result was greatly increased European immigration to Texas.¹

In 1842, the *Mainzer Adelsverein* was set up to aid German immigration to Texas (Biesele 1930, Kearney 2010, Boas 2018). Between 1844 and 1847, this society (later renamed *Der Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas*) brought over 7000 Germans to Texas. These immigrants settled primarily in the Texas Hill Country and what is now called the German Belt, founding cities such as Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, some of the traditional strongholds of Texas German.² Active recruitment of German-speaking immigrants to Texas ended around 1850, but the number of Germans in

Texas continued to increase. By 1880 about 1/3 of the population of San Antonio (out of a total population of about 20,000) was German-speaking (Jordan 1969), by 1890 there were about 40,000 Texas Germans (Boas 2018), in 1907 there were approximately 75,000-100,000 Texas Germans (Eichhoff 1986), and the number of Texas Germans peaked in 1940, at approximately 159,000 (Kloss 1977). Since then, the Texas German population has declined drastically; the best current estimate is about 3000 speakers (Boas 2018).

Texas German (hereafter TxG)³ is particularly well suited to studies of language contact and change, mainly because of three large-scale studies of the dialect conducted at intervals of several decades. These studies are Eikel (1954), based on data collected in the 1930s and 1940s; Gilbert (1972), based on data collected in the 1960s; and the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP; www.tgdp.org), directed by Hans C. Boas, which has been underway since 2001.⁴ These studies provide scholars with a rich pool of real-time data for analysis.⁵ In this chapter, we first outline the sociohistorical background of TxG (section 2) and then its structure (sections 3, 4, and 5). Section 6 concludes. We focus largely on New Braunfels German (hereafter NBG), the best-studied dialect of TxG (e.g., by Fred Eikel [1954], himself a native speaker of TxG, and Boas [2009a], for instance).⁶ We also note that there is widespread variation in all dialects of TxG today; the examples cited here are representative.⁷ As is traditional in the study of NBG, we use Standard German as a point of comparison, which is not meant to imply that we see TxG as a descendant of Standard German. Finally, space constraints prevent us from discussing a number of sociohistorical topics, e.g., the formation of TxG and the role of Standard German in Texas,⁸ and force us to limit the discussion of linguistic issues to some of the most important developments since the appearance of Eikel (1954).

2 Sociohistorical and sociolinguistic aspects

A number of political and social factors kept Texas Germans largely isolated up until about the turn of the 20th century, including conscious attempts at self-sufficiency (e.g., Texas Germans had their own flour mills) and the abolitionist views held by most German settlers (which would have certainly isolated such settlers in a slave state like Texas).⁹ In addition, Texas Germans strove to maintain their language. There were numerous German-language churches and periodicals (some with excellent circulation numbers for the time),¹⁰ as well as a wide range of German-language literature (e.g. Friedrich Armand Strubberg's 1860 novel *An der Indianergrenze*), extensive German-language education (Heinen 1982, Boas 2009a),¹¹ and numerous German-speaking social organizations, ranging from choirs to shooting

clubs (Nicolini 2004: 46-49). German was also well established in official contexts, e.g., until 1890 the meetings of the New Braunfels City Council were conducted in German (Eikel 1954). As a result, up until the early 20th century, TxG was clearly in a state of language maintenance.

The decline of TxG began in 1909, when an English-only law for Texas public schools was passed (Salmons 1983: 188).¹² It is difficult to assess the exact impact of this law on TxG, since some school boards were composed entirely of Texas Germans, making it unlikely that they put this law into full practice (Boas 2009a). Moreover, had this law been totally effective, another law would not have been necessary less than a decade later. In 1918, another such law was enacted, which seems to have had more impact than the 1909 law (Salmons 1983, Blanton 2004). At around the same time, World War I led to the widespread stigmatization of German and the beginning of its decline.¹³ During the period between the World Wars, the TxG situation did stabilize somewhat.

Up to about World War I, there had been an overlapping diglossic situation in New Braunfels. In some domains (e.g., schools and churches) TxG was the L language, with Standard German being the H language; while in other domains (e.g., administration and commerce), Standard German was the L language, with English as the H language (Boas 2009a: 54).¹⁴ But by about 1920, the situation had changed considerably, with English being established as the H language in almost all domains, and TxG as the L language in such domains. Standard German remained the H language in a few domains (churches and newspapers). At this point, then, it seemed as if the diglossic situation would soon stabilize with English as the H and TxG as the L language across the board (Salmons 1983, Guion 1996, Boas 2009a). This was not to be the case, however.

World War II reinforced the stigma attached to German and hastened its decline. Especially following World War II, German was largely abandoned in a number of spheres. German-language newspapers and periodicals either folded or began to publish in English (e.g. *Das Wochenblatt*, then published in Austin, folded in 1940, while the *Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung*, the last German-language newspaper in Texas, switched to publishing in English in December 1957);¹⁵ German teaching ceased in a number of schools, and German-speaking churches shifted to using English (Nicolini 2004).

Various other factors contributed to the decline of Texas German after World War II. The migration of non-German speakers to the traditionally German-speaking areas of Texas, coupled with the consistent refusal of these newcomers to accommodate linguistically to Texas Germans by learning German, raised the public profile of English in these areas, at the expense of Texas German. A number of Texas Germans had served in the US

military during World War II, and after the end of the war, younger Texas Germans continued to leave their homes for military service, for other types of employment, or for education (Jordan 1977, Wilson 1977, Boas 2009a). Such Texas Germans generally gave up speaking German in favor of English, which led to declining fluency in Texas German. Moreover, many such Texas Germans married non-German-speaking partners, and normally spoke English with their spouses and children, resulting in the further abandonment of TxG. Finally, developments in transportation and infrastructure ended the isolation of the traditional German-speaking areas, especially after the American interstate highway system was developed starting in 1956. Once these communities were no longer isolated, it was considerably more difficult to preserve the German language. All of these factors led to the current state of TxG (critically endangered). We turn now to the linguistic aspects of NBG.

3 The phonetics and phonology of New Braunfels German

Eikel proposes the following vowel system for New Braunfels German:¹⁶

(1) The NBG vowel system (Eikel 1954, 1966)

	Front		Central (unrounded)	Back (Rounded)	
High	y: y	i: i		u: u	
Mid	ø: ø	e: e	ə	o: o	
Low		a: a			

Eikel also proposes “three falling diphthongs,” /ai/, /au/, and /oi/.¹⁷

Examples of these vowels and diphthongs include:¹⁸

(2) Examples of NBG vowels and diphthongs (Eikel 1954, 1966)

- a. /y:/ *Bücher* ‘books’ [by:çəʁ]
- b. /y/ *Küste* ‘coast’ [kystə]
- c. /ø:/ *schön* ‘pretty’ [ʃø:n]
- d. /ø/ *zwölf* ‘twelve’ [tʃvølf]
- e. /i:/ *Vieh* ‘cattle’ [fi:]
- f. /i/ *Kiste* ‘box’ [kistə]
- g. /e:/ *mäht* ‘mows’ [me:t]
- h. /e/ *elf* ‘eleven’ [elf]
- i. /a:/ *Abend* ‘evening’ [a:bənt]
- j. /a/ *Land* ‘land’ [lant]
- k. /u:/ *Schule* ‘school’ [ʃu:lə]

l.	/u/	<i>Hund</i> ‘dog’ [hunt]
m.	/o:/	<i>Brot</i> ‘bread’ [bro:t]
n.	/o/	<i>Kopf</i> ‘head’ [kopf]
o.	/ə/	<i>bitte</i> ‘please’ [bitə]
p.	/ai/	<i>Eimer</i> ‘bucket’ [aiməʁ]
q.	/au/	<i>Maus</i> ‘mouse’ [maus]
r.	/oi/	<i>heute</i> ‘today’ [hoitə]

According to Boas (2009a), there have been three major changes in the NBG vowel system since Eikel (1954). The first, and most important, involves the front rounded vowels.¹⁹ Although Eikel (1954) does include these vowels in his table of NBG phonemes, they were already being lost when he collected his data. Eikel (1954: 28) mentions this in his discussion of /y:/, stating that

Of the oldest generation of speakers of NBG two round this vowel distinctly and consistently, two show occasions of unrounding, and two do not round at all. Of the twelve informants of the second generation, one rounds consistently, all the others fluctuate, showing more instances of unrounding than rounding. All six informants of the third generation show no signs of rounding. Here /y:/ is completely replaced by /i:/.

He also reports this change for the other front rounded vowels (i.e. /y/, /ø:/, and /ø/).²⁰

Gilbert (1972) notes that many of these front rounded vowels had been eliminated. Gilbert (1972: 3) writes that “[f]or many speakers, all front vowels are non-round,” and his maps underscore this statement. Gilbert (1972) contains five maps for words that contain front rounded vowels in Standard German and where front rounded vowels therefore might also be expected to occur in NBG.²¹ Following Pierce et al. (2015), we look only at the maps for *die Tür* and *zwei Töchter* here (i.e., one form each containing a high front rounded vowel and a mid front rounded vowel). All of Gilbert’s New Braunfels informants use a high front long unrounded vowel, i.e., [i:] in *die Tür*. However, in *zwei Töchter*, Gilbert’s informants use the rounded variant much more consistently than they did for the high front vowel. In New Braunfels, although one speaker does retain a mid-front rounded vowel, other speakers normally unround the vowel to [e:].

Boas (2009a) indicates that front rounded vowels have been almost completely eliminated in present-day NBG. Again considering only the two forms examined when discussing Gilbert (1972), in *die Tür*, 49 of Boas’ 52 New Braunfels-area informants (98%) produced a high front unrounded vowel, i.e., [i:], while one informant produced the high front rounded vowel [y:], and two did not provide any answer. In *zwei Töchter*, 3 of his 52

informants (6%) produced [ø], 27 (55%) produced [e], 19 (39%) produced [o], and 3 produced *Schwestern* ‘sisters’ instead of *Töchter*. The open-ended interview data yielded much the same results (the general loss of front rounded vowels). Pierce et al. (2015) note that none of the nine instances of *Tür* found in an August 2011 search of this data contains a front rounded vowel, nor do any of the seven instances of *Töchter* contain a front rounded vowel. But there are nine instances of *Gemüse* in the open-ended data, four of which contain a front rounded vowel; and 46 instances of *zwölf* ‘twelve’, eleven of which contain a front rounded vowel. The oddity here is that speakers are producing a form in their (presumably) less monitored casual speech that they do not produce in their more monitored word-list tasks. The presence of these front rounded vowels in the open-ended interview data thus demonstrates that these vowels are still part of the NBG phoneme inventory today, if only for a few speakers. The bottom line for these vowels is therefore that there are more of these vowels in the Eikel data than in the Gilbert data, and there are more of these vowels in the Gilbert data than in the TGDP data.

Pierce et al. (2015) attribute this development to the following factors: (1) some of these instances of missing front rounded vowels are due to their absence from the donor dialects of NBG. If the donor dialects of NBG lacked front rounded vowels, then NBG itself would also not contain them.²² However, the data discussed in works like Eikel (1954) and Gilbert (1972) shows that front rounded vowels were indeed more common at earlier stages of NBG than today, which cannot be entirely accounted for by reference to the lack of such vowels in some of the relevant donor dialects. (2) Front rounded vowels are rare cross-linguistically (Maddieson 2013), indicating that they are highly marked and thus subject to elimination. (3) Since English generally lacks such vowels, and since all speakers of NBG are English-dominant bilinguals, contact with English is reinforcing an ongoing change (although it is not the main cause of this change). (4) Exposure to Standard German has decreased dramatically since Eikel (1954) collected his data. Thus, most speakers of NBG have far fewer opportunities to use a form of German with front rounded vowels, which Pierce et al. (2015: 128) contend has also “reinforced any lack or loss of front rounded vowels in NBG.” (5) Gradual language death can have profound linguistic consequences (Nettle and Romaine 2000: 53). In this case, as speakers’ fluency in NBG has declined, its speakers have generally abandoned front rounded vowels for more English-like vowels.

The second important development involves the NBG diphthongs.²³ One of the major sound changes from Middle High German (MHG) to Modern German involves the diphthongization of the MHG long vowels *î*, *û*, and *iu* ([y:]) to Modern German *ei*, *au*, and *eu*, e.g., MHG *mîn niues hûs* > Modern German *mein neues Haus* ‘my new house’.²⁴ Although this

change was eventually fully implemented in the standard language, its implementation in the dialects of German varies widely (König 2015), and TxG is no exception to this generalization, with some variation involving [aɪ] and [aʊ] reported in various sources. As noted above, Eikel includes both of these diphthongs in his account of the NBG phoneme system, in words like *Eimer* ‘bucket’ [aiməʃ] and *Maus* ‘mouse’ [maʊs], respectively (as well as /oil/, in words like *heute* ‘today’ [hoitə]), but notes no variation involving these diphthongs. Gilbert (1972) reports variation involving [aɪ] and [i:], as one of his 15 Comal County (the county containing New Braunfels) informants varies between [aɪ] and [i:] in *mein* ‘my’ (Gilbert 1972: Map 25, *mein Kopf* ‘my head’). He does not report variation involving [aʊ].²⁵ Boas (2009a) reports variation between [aʊ] and [u:] in NBG, but not between [aɪ] and [i:]. To the first of these, Boas (2009a: 129) notes that the vast majority of his NBG informants use the diphthong (88% in the resampled Gilbert data from Map 23 in Gilbert 1972; 95% in the resampled Gilbert data from Map 56 in Gilbert 1972; and 100% in the resampled Gilbert data from Map 129 in Gilbert 1972). He offers no account of this beyond noting the facts, however, “[s]ince the factors leading to this ... are unclear” (Boas 2009a: 128-130). To the second, 100% of his NBG informants use the diphthong in *mein* in the resampled Gilbert data from Map 25 in Gilbert 1972 (Boas 2009a: 127), meaning that the variation noted by Gilbert (1972) has been completely eliminated in present-day NBG.

In our view, the elimination of variation between [aɪ] and [i:] reflects the completion of a sound change in progress at earlier stages of NBG (and already largely complete by the 1960s, in light of the scarcity of attestations of [i:] in this context in Gilbert 1972).²⁶ The variation between [aʊ] and [u:] is more difficult to account for (Boas 2009a). Since Boas’s informants are consistent in their use of the individual variants – speakers who use the diphthong never use the long vowel in this context and vice versa – we suggest that this variation is due to the fossilization of an earlier, once more widespread pattern of variation in NBG. This suggestion must remain tentative, however, as neither Eikel (1954) nor Gilbert (1972) present the necessary data to determine this precisely.

The final major vocalic development discussed by Boas (2009a) involves the replacement of earlier [e] with [æ]. Eikel (1954) and Clardy (1954) both note this change, specifically in loan words from English, e.g., *pantry*, *handle*, *tractor*, and *candy*, among others. Clardy (1954: 28) notes that some of her informants have taken this development further, using [æ] in some German words with English cognates that contain [æ], e.g., *Giesskanne* ‘watering can’, where the presence of [æ] in English *can* is the cause of its presence in NBG *Giesskanne*. Clardy (1954: 59) further notes that one of her informants uses

[æ] “very frequently in words which are not cognates,” a point which we take up again below.

Gilbert (1965: 131) writes that:

[A] speaker of Standard German fails to distinguish between *Tex* ‘a man from Texas’ and *tax*; for him they are both /teks/. However, in Texas German a separate phoneme, /æ/, exists as opposed to /e/; the Texas German says *die* /ræntʃ/ and /tæks/ (= Steuer), but: /teks/ *der Mann*.

Gilbert (1972) reaffirms the presence of this vowel in NBG in English loanwords, although there is some variation in its integration into NBG. According to Gilbert (1972: Map 142), all 15 of his New Braunfels-area informants used [æ] in *tank*, showing that this loanword had not been fully integrated phonologically into NBG, but these same 15 informants all used [a] in *pasture*, showing that this loanword, in contrast, had been fully integrated phonologically into NBG (since it contains a native German vowel, as opposed to a vowel loaned into NBG from English).

The TGDP data discussed in Boas (2009a) shows that this vowel has spread farther into the NBG lexicon. In the resampled TGDP data for *tank* and *pasture* all of the New Braunfels area TGDP informants use [æ] in *tank* (as was already the case for Gilbert 1972’s informants as well), and [æ] is considerably more common in *pasture* than was the case for Gilbert’s (1972) informants, with 5 out of 36 (13%) TGDP informants using it (as opposed to none of Gilbert’s informants). Moreover, [æ] turns up fairly frequently in the TGDP open-ended interview data as well, albeit only in English loanwords like *gecampt* ‘camped’ (past participle) and *dancehalle* ‘dance hall’ (Boas 2009a: 133). Thus, the TGDP data shows that [æ] is more widely used today than at earlier stages of NBG, and also contradicts Clardy’s (1954: 59) claim about the use of [æ] in native NBG words (since none of the present-day TGDP informants use it in such words). Boas (2009a: 133) concludes that Clardy’s sole informant who used [æ] in native NBG words must have been an outlier,²⁷ and that [æ] “has become more of an everyday part of the Texas German phonological inventory, albeit restricted to English loanwords (or parts thereof).” We echo these conclusions here and turn now to the NBG consonantal system.

Eikel proposes a system of consonants for NBG that is essentially identical to the Standard German system, as follows.

(3) The consonant system of NBG (Eikel 1954: 26)²⁸

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Palato-Velar	Velar
Stops					
Voiceless	p		t	k	
Voiced	b		d	g	
Fricative					
Voiceless		f	s, ʃ	x (h)	(h)
Voiced		v	r	j	(r)
Affricates			ts, tʃ		
Nasals	m		n		ŋ
Liquids			l		

The most important differences between the NBG system described by Eikel (1954) and that of the standard language are the following. First, /g/ is rare intervocalically, where it is generally manifested as [j], e.g., *liegen* 'to lie' [li:jən] (pronounced [li:gən] in Standard German). Second, the Standard German affricate [pf] does not occur word-initially in NBG (which is presumably why Eikel omitted it from his table), and words like *Pferd* 'horse' and *Pfeffer* 'pepper' are pronounced with an initial [f] (Eikel 1954: 32). In other positions, "/p/ competes with /p/"" (Eikel 1954: 32), leading to doublets like [kopf] and [kop] for *Kopf* 'head' (pronounced with [pf] in the standard language). Third, Eikel (1954: 32) notes that some speakers lenite [t] to [d], e.g., for some speakers *Hüte* 'hats' is pronounced with a medial [d], although he does not note this process for the other voiceless stops. Fourth, the /s/ phoneme, which follows the same distribution pattern in NBG as in the standard language for most speakers (i.e. [z] initially before vowels, intervocalically, and between a liquid and a vowel, and [s] elsewhere) behaves differently in NBG for some speakers, who exhibit "a free interchange of the two allophones without any regularity" (Eikel 1954: 34). Such speakers exhibit doublets, sometimes pronouncing words like *selten* 'seldom' as [zeltən] and sometimes as [seltən], without any apparent regularity. Fifth, the dorsal fricative /x/ has an allophone not present in Standard German, [h], described by Eikel (1954: 35) as "an aspirate, which occurs only initially."²⁹ Sixth, Eikel proposes that [tʃ] is a phoneme in NBG, although it is not a phoneme in Standard German.

According to Eikel (1954: 38), this phoneme, which he describes as "a voiceless assimilated stop" and which we transcribe here as a voiceless affricate, can be found "in all positions in words borrowed from English," e.g., *match* and *ranch*, among others. Eikel (1954: 38) notes that his worksheets "were not designed to elicit this phoneme in NBG words," as it is not found in

Standard German, but also calls it “quite common in NBG,” listing a number of native NBG words that contain it, e.g., *Peitsche* ‘whip’.

A number of changes have affected the NBG consonant system since the 1950s, but we limit the following discussion to the development of /pf/, the lenition of voiceless stops, changes in the distribution of [s] and [ʃ], and the borrowing of certain consonantal phonemes from English, due to space constraints and the available data.³⁰ We begin with the development of [pf]. Gilbert (1972) points out that a number of words contain [pf] where it would perhaps be unexpected, e.g., all 15 of his New Braunfels-area informants use [pf] word-initially in *Pferd* ‘horse’ (Gilbert 1972: Map 103), which according to Eikel (1954) was pronounced with an initial [f]. The following figure, adapted from Boas (2009a: 136), summarizes Gilbert’s NBG data for words containing affricates in the standard language:

(4) Affricates in NBG (Gilbert 1972)

	pf	p
<i>Apfel</i> ‘apple’ (Map 4):	13 (86%)	1 (7%) ³¹
<i>Eiszapfen</i> ‘icicles’ (Map 5)	7 (64%)	4 (36%) ³²
<i>Kochtopf</i> ‘cooking pot’ (Map 6)	8 (57%)	6 (43%) ³³
<i>Kopf</i> ‘head’ (map 7)	6 (40%)	9 (60%)
<i>Köpfe</i> ‘heads’ (map 71)	11 (73%)	4 (27%)
<i>Pferd</i> ‘horse’ (map 103)	15 (100%)	0

The post-2001 TGDP data generally resembles the Gilbert data in this regard, although there are some clear differences. The similarities lie in *Apfel* ‘apple’ and *Kochtopf* ‘cooking pot’: 44 of Boas’s 52 informants (88%) use [pf] in *Apfel*, which is roughly the same percentage that used [pf] in the Gilbert data; and roughly the same percentage of TGDP informants use [pf] and [p] in *Kochtopf* that do in the Gilbert data (46% of the TGDP informants use [pf] and 50% use [p], as compared to 57% of Gilbert’s informants and 43%, respectively). On the other hand, the distribution of the variants in *Kopf* and *Köpfe* ‘head ~ heads’ is quite different. Whereas 40% of Gilbert’s informants had used [pf] in *Kopf*, as opposed to 60% who had used [p], in the TGDP data 61% use [pf] and 39% [p], and in *Köpfe*, where 73% of Gilbert’s informants had used [pf] and 27% [p], in the TGDP data 27% of the informants use [pf] and 69% [p] (two speakers used [f]). That is, in these two words the TGDP informants do the exact opposite of the Gilbert informants. Other differences

can be found in *Pferd* ‘horse’ (while 100% of Gilbert’s informants had used [pf] in *Pferd*, only 8% of the TGDGP informants did) and in *Eiszapfen* ‘icicles’, against 4 who used some kind of lexical variant, 14 who used *icicles*, and 32 who gave no response).

It is difficult to account for these developments. Boas (2009a: 137-138) links the differences between the Eikel data and the Gilbert data to the model of new dialect formation proposed by Trudgill (2004) and noted above, stating that “the data illustrate an instance of new dialect formation that is characteristic of Trudgill’s second stage of new dialect formation, where we find variability between speakers” (Boas 2009a: 138).³⁴ There are also a handful of explanatory possibilities for the differences between the Gilbert data and the TGDGP data. We suspect that they are the result of sound change. That is, [pf] > [f] is a relatively common sound change in German (as noted by Barbour and Stevenson 1990, among other scholars; see also Boas 2009a: 141 for additional discussion of this possibility). This change would be reinforced by the increased role of English in the linguistic lives of all NBG speakers; since English lacks such affricates, it would be unsurprising if NBG were also to eliminate them, especially in salient positions like word-initially.³⁵ Boas (2009a: 142) states that “the TGDGP data show a mixed picture for the distribution of [pf] and [p], which makes it difficult to draw any definite conclusions about their development over the past 40 years and their current status in Texas German,” and we once again see no compelling reason to dissent from this conclusion.

We now discuss the lenition of the voiceless stops. This process is very common in the German dialects (as demonstrated by the traditional term, *die binnendeutsche Konsonantenschwächung*), and is described in detail in works like Schirmunski (1962), Simmler (1983), and König (2015). As such, it might be expected to be common in NBG as well; if the donor dialects of NBG exhibited lenition, it should also occur in NBG. Eikel (1954: 32), however, reports only a very limited amount of lenition in NBG, stating that “[a]mong a few speakers /t/ appears lenis initially and medially.” Gilbert (1972) also reports a relatively limited amount of lenited [t], e.g., in 14 of his 15 New Braunfels-area informants (93%) used [t] in *Tür* ‘door’, with the remaining informant alternating between [t] and [d] (Gilbert 1972: Map 8), and records similar results for other words containing this consonant (e.g., *Tisch* ‘table’). As was the case with the Eikel data, the other voiceless stops are not lenited in the Gilbert data for New Braunfels.³⁶ The post-2001 TGDGP data paints a similar picture: a few speakers lenite /t/ to [d], e.g., 2 of 52 informants produce [d] in *Tisch* ‘table’, against 50 who produce [t] in this word (Boas 2009a: 147). There are a few more examples of lenited /t/ in the open-ended interview data, e.g., [d]otgeschossen for expected [t]otgeschossen

‘shot dead’ ([1-28-1-5-a])³⁷ and *El[d]ern* for expected *El[t]ern* ‘parents’ ([1-76-1-3-a]); Boas 2009a: 147). In general /k/ is also not lenited to [g], e.g., none of the TGDP informants produced lenited [k] in words like *Kopf* during the interview tasks, although there are relevant examples in the open-ended interview data, e.g., *Zuc[g]er* for expected *Zuc[k]er* ‘sugar’ [1-85-1-3-a] (Boas 2009a: 152). There are apparently also no examples of lenited /p/ in the TGDP NBG data. In sum, then, although lenition is quite common in some dialects of TxG, especially for /t/, it is considerably rarer in NBG. A more recent development in NBG involves the distribution of [s] and [ʃ], which has changed since Gilbert (1972).³⁸ Gilbert (1972: Maps 14-16) reports the following distribution in words with consonant clusters. In *Donnerstag* ‘Thursday’, 12 of his 15 informants (80%) used [s], with 2 (13%) using [ʃ], and 1 (7%) alternating between the two sounds; in *Wurst* ‘sausage’, 1 of his informants (7%) used [s], with 13 (87%) using [ʃ], and 1 (7%) alternating between the two sounds; and in *Haarbürste* ‘hairbrush’ 7 (47%) used [s] and 8 (53%) used [ʃ]. This distribution has since changed somewhat, as Boas (2009a: 152-55) notes. In the TGDP data, 11 out of 48 informants (23%) use the standard German [s] in *Donnerstag*, against 37 informants who use [ʃ]; only 3 informants (6%) use [s] in *Wurst*, against 46 (94%) who use [ʃ] in this word; and in *Haarbürste* only 1 informant (4%) uses [s], while 24 (96%) use [ʃ], and the remaining 27 speakers consulted either gave a different answer or did not respond. In other words, the use of the non-standard [ʃ] variant has increased dramatically in *Donnerstag* and *Haarbürste*, while generally remaining consistent in *Wurst*.³⁹

The causes of this development are difficult to pin down precisely. On the one hand, it could be a corpus issue, as Gilbert’s sample size is considerably smaller than that of the TGDP. Perhaps Gilbert’s New Braunfels-area informants are therefore not fully representative of NBG of his time. A different account is presented in Boas (2009a: 154-55), who suggests that it is due to leveling in favor of the non-standard variant, motivated by the speakers’ desire to express their identity as speakers of Texas German, not Standard German.⁴⁰ As long as the nonstandard variant is seen as a sign of TxG identity, then, it will be preferred by those who identify as Texas Germans. Echoing Boas (2009a: 155), we conclude that “a multiple causation scenario” is the most likely, even if it currently remains unclear.

4 Morphosyntax

Here we focus on case, plurals, gender, word order, and changes in the tense system, in that order. The standard language has four cases, nominative (used for subjects), accusative (used for direct objects), dative (used for indirect objects), and genitive (typically used for possession). There are also

prepositions that assign each of these cases except for the nominative. Various special considerations also play a role, e.g., accusative case is used for definite time (e.g., *nächsten Montag* ‘next Monday’) and genitive case is used for indefinite time (e.g., *eines Tages* ‘one day’); we leave these considerations aside here.⁴¹

According to Eikel (1949), the nominative and accusative cases are used in NBG as they are in Standard German. The dative case has generally been lost and replaced by the accusative, although dative occasionally occurs following *mit* ‘with’. The genitive case has also generally been lost, with the dative and/or accusative replacing it, although it is occasionally used with last names. Eikel (1954) draws largely the same conclusions, but fleshes his arguments out considerably. In the later work, based on data from 24 informants put into three age groups, Eikel demonstrates that at least some of changes in the NBG case system are linked to age: his oldest informants use the dative more often than the next oldest age group, and his youngest age group uses the dative the least often (Eikel 1954: 51-54). There are 102 instances in Eikel’s worksheets where Standard German would require the dative; his oldest group of speakers used the dative an average of 61 times, while his middle group used it an average of 52 times, and his youngest group used it an average of 15 times. While this seems to indicate the straightforward reduction of the case system, the data for the genitive case contradicts this claim, as it is in fact the middle group that uses the genitive the most often.⁴² In addition, Eikel notes considerable variation among individual speakers, e.g., one speaker uses dative with *während* ‘during’, although *während* is a genitive preposition in the standard language, but then states that “[t]he same informant used the genitive with *während* the next time” (Eikel 1954: 53). Finally, some idioms were also resistant to case loss (Boas 2009a, 2018). These issues, as well as those noted in Boas (2009a: 187-189), with Eikel’s analysis aside, the bottom line is that the NBG case system in Eikel’s time already differed somewhat from that of the standard language, in that for at least some speakers it had become a two-case system (a type also recorded for dialects in Germany; cf. König 2015).

The material presented in Gilbert (1972) indicates that case syncretism in TxG had continued; specifically, the genitive case is almost entirely lost and that the dative case has also retreated substantially since Eikel (1954).⁴³ Gilbert (1972: Map 57) presents a sentence that would involve the use of the dative case in Standard German, *Es liegt dort unten auf dem Boden* ‘it’s lying down there on the floor’. Of his 15 New Braunfels-area informants, 3 (20%) used the non-standard accusative, while the remaining 12 (80%) used the standard dative in this sentence. This observation contradicts the point just made about the loss of the dative, but when Gilbert’s other data is considered, it becomes clear that the dative had indeed retreated substantially

in the several decades separating his data collection from Eikel's. For instance, Gilbert (1972: Map 51) presents another sentence that would require the dative in Standard German, *Das Bild hängt über dem Bett* 'the picture is hanging over the bed'. Here only 2 of his 15 New Braunfels-area informants (13%) used the standard dative; the remaining 13 (87%) used the non-standard accusative. Similar results obtain for some of Gilbert's other maps (e.g., Map 53, *Er sitzt unter dem Baum* 'he's sitting under the tree', where Standard German requires the dative, but 13 (87%) of Gilbert's informants used the accusative, against only 2 (13%) who used the dative). Gilbert also finds that certain contexts are more resistant to case loss, e.g., the pronominal system (as in Modern English). The bottom line(s) for the case data reported in Gilbert (1972) are that case loss had indeed continued since Eikel's time, and there was considerable variation in the case systems among individual TxG speakers (e.g., in the cases assigned by individual prepositions, etc.).

The TGDP data paints a similar picture (widespread case loss, accompanied by widespread variation among individual NBG speakers). The resampled data collected for the TGDP for the three Gilbert maps just mentioned, for instance, yields the following results. For Map 57 (*Es liegt dort unten auf dem Boden*) the vast majority of TGDP informants used the accusative instead of the standard dative (38 of 54 informants, i.e. 94%), with only 3 (7%) using the standard dative, while 6 gave no answer and the remaining 5 gave other answers. For Map 51 (*Das Bild hängt über dem Bett*) all 49 of the TGDP informants who answered this question (3 others gave no answer) used the accusative instead of the standard dative. Finally, for Map 53 (*Er sitzt unter dem Baum*), 42 of the 45 TGDP informants (93%) who answered the question (7 others gave no answer) used the accusative, while only 3 (7%) used the dative (see Boas 2009a: 197-98 on the TGDP results for all three maps). The TGDP data also indicates the resistance to case loss in pronouns mentioned above.

A number of possible causes of this development have been suggested in the literature, including the following. Eikel (1949) connects it to the NBG donor dialects and to contact with English, suggesting that language contact is "much more important since the older people use the dative more freely than does the present generation" (Eikel 1949: 281).⁴⁴ Salmons (1994) and Salmons & Lucht (2006) link the decline of the TxG case system to exposure to Standard German. They contend that the greater preservation of the case system in the speech of the oldest generation of Eikel's speakers is connected to their greater exposure to Standard German, i.e., that more exposure to the more extensive case system of Standard German led to the preservation of a more standard-like case system in their NBG. In their view, once the position of Standard German had begun to recede, the systematic

case distinctions found in the older generations of TxG speakers also began to recede.⁴⁵ Most recently, Boas (2009a, 2009b) defends a multiple causation scenario, invoking internal factors like the phonological similarities between some of the individual case markers as well as external factors like contact with English. The last scenario is the most likely, as it best fits with what we know about language change in general and the development of TxG in particular.

Turning now to gender assignment in TxG, Standard German has a three-gender system (with the individual genders traditionally referred to as masculine, feminine, and neuter), and NBG has roughly the same system. Eikel (1954; 1967: 84) reports that “[t]he gender of the nouns in NBG follows S[tandard]G[erman]. The gender of English loanwords is quite uniform in NBG and differs frequently from the gender attributed to English loanwords that have been recorded in the studies of other German dialects in the United States.” Eikel (1967: 84-85) further reports the following English loanwords in Texas German with their genders.⁴⁶

(5) The gender of English loanwords in Texas German (Eikel 1967)

Masculine: basket, blanket, closet, desk, farmer, grocery store, honeymoon, shelf, tire

Feminine: box, car, cotton, fountain pen, match, napkin, office, station

Neuter: barrel, closet, depot, desk, garbage, loaf, movie, picnic, trash

As for the reasons behind these gender assignments, Eikel (1967: 85 fn 4) pessimistically writes,

It is of course impossible to see what ‘logic’ was at work in determining the gender of loanwords acquired in Texas. Frequently the principle of logical gender operated, as in *farmer* (masculine) and *home* (neuter). In many cases the gender of the borrowed noun was determined by the gender of its German equivalent, as in *der store: Laden* However, when the word suggests no German word from which it could have received its gender (e.g., *der blanket* and *der bottom*, i.e. river bottom) or when the word names an object that was unknown to the people while in Germany or was ‘invented’ later (e.g., *die fence*, ... *die car*, *der globe*... and *die ranch*), one cannot accurately account for the gender applied, and the linguist is reduced to mere speculation.⁴⁷

More recently, Boas (2009a) notes that in the TGDP data gender assignment in NBG very closely follows gender assignment in the standard language.⁴⁸

He reports only 37 instances where gender assignment in NBG differs from gender assignment in the standard language (in a corpus then containing over 305,000 words of TxG). Non-standard gender assignment is largely limited to only three speakers, which we interpret as meaning that the gender system is not breaking down for TxG in general, but only for these three speakers. Also, Boas argues that most non-standard gender assignments in TxG are neuter, e.g., *das Platz* ‘place’ (standard German *der Platz*) and *das Arbeit* ‘work’ (standard German *die Arbeit*), although a few of them are feminine (e.g., *die Krieg* ‘war’, Standard German *der Krieg*; *die Kopf* ‘head’, Standard German *der Kopf*; and *die Bus* ‘bus’, Standard German *der Bus*). This point is of particular interest here, as earlier work on Pennsylvania German gender, e.g., Buffington (1941) and Reed (1942), has argued that in Pennsylvania German there is a tendency for feminine to be the default gender (as opposed to the standard language, where the default gender is masculine).⁴⁹ Boas’s data contradicts this claim. We see these non-standard feminine genders as the straightforward result of speakers’ choosing the closest TxG equivalent to the English definite article *the*, presumably as the result of their fading fluency in TxG. Finally, Boas (2009a) notes that the relative stability of gender assignment in TxG contradicts results from some other dying languages, e.g., Southern Sutherland Gaelic (discussed in Dorian 1977), where gender assignment is considerably more variable and unstable.

We now address plural formation. Standard German has a number of rules for plural formation, some of which are given in (6):

(6) Plural formation in standard German

- a. Add –e, e.g., *Brief* – *Briefe* ‘letter – letters’
- b. Add –e and umlaut the stem vowel, e.g., *Zug* – *Züge* ‘train – trains’
- c. Add –er, e.g., *Kind* – *Kinder* ‘child – children’
- d. Add –er and umlaut the stem vowel, e.g., *Buch* – *Bücher* ‘book – books’
- e. No changes, e.g., *Mädchen* – *Mädchen* ‘girl – girls’

The situation is further complicated by factors like irregular plurals (which are presumably lexicalized), an ongoing trend to mark plurals explicitly, and a broad range of dialect variation in plural formation.⁵⁰ Previous research on plural formation in TxG includes the following.⁵¹ Eikel (1967), based on Eikel (1954), essentially equates TxG plural formation with plural formation in standard German. Eikel (1967: 83) writes: “[t]he plurals of nouns in NBG are often formed like the plurals of native nouns in Standard German (SG),” and further that “[s]ome nouns in NBG form their plurals by adding –s or –es to the singular of English nouns.” Interestingly, Eikel (1967: 83 fn 2)

notes that “[s]ome nouns borrowed from English have been Germanized and, beside the regular English plural, may have a competing form with a German plural ending.” He unfortunately does not cite any examples of such forms.

The data collected in Gilbert (1972) reveals a somewhat different picture: although some of Gilbert’s informants use plural forms that are identical with those of standard German, others do not. A representative sample of Gilbert’s material is as follows (Boas 2009a: 228-233).⁵²

(7) Texas German plurals (Gilbert 1972)

Map 62, <i>zwei Zimmer</i> ‘two rooms’:	21% zero ending (as in the standard)
	79% -n
Map 64: <i>zwei Wagen</i> ‘two wagons’:	87% zero ending (as in the standard)
	13% -s
Map 65: <i>zwei Jungen</i> ‘two boys’:	14% -n (as in the standard)
	71% -ns
	14% zero ending
Map 68: <i>zwei Kühe</i> ‘two cows’:	80% <i>Kiehe</i>
	20% <i>Kieh</i>

While some of these plurals clearly resemble standard German, others do not, for various reasons (in the case of *zwei Kühe*, for instance, the widespread loss of front rounded vowels prevented speakers from using the standard form).

Boas (2009a) found a great deal of variation in the present-day system, as in the following forms.⁵³

(8) Texas German plurals (Boas 2009a: 233)

- a. No ending: *Tag* ‘days’, *Jahr* ‘years’, *Hirsch* ‘deer’
- b. Umlaut the stem vowel: *Kieh* ‘cows’, *Männ* ‘men’
- c. Add -s: *Mädchens* ‘girls’, *Jungs* ‘boys’
- d. Add -en: *Tagen* ‘days’, *Tiren* ‘doors’
- e. Add -n: *Zimmern* ‘rooms’

This data led him to draw two conclusions. First, “the decrease in morphological plural markers signals a breakdown of a particular part of Texas German morphology” (Boas 2009: 232).

Second, the “increase in productivity of two plural morphemes, namely -s and -n, [is] a change characteristic of dying languages and dialects” (Boas 2009: 233). In other words, Boas (2009a) sees the plural system of current TxG as the result of the looming death of Texas German, which has led to the breakdown of this aspect of TxG morphology.

Here we propose a scenario involving influence from English, prosody, explicit plural marking, and the changing linguistic and social contexts of NBG. At first blush, influence from English could be seen as the key factor; since English forms regular plurals by adding *-s*, perhaps TxG speakers have simply replaced the older TxG plural rules with English plural rules.

Although this does account for plurals like *Amerikaners* ‘Americans’ (standard German *Amerikaner*), an explanation based solely on contact with English cannot be sustained in this case. This is because (1) *-s* is only one of the possible ways to form plurals in Texas German (as noted above), meaning that English cannot be the source of all of these different plurals; and (2) research on other changes in NBG has demonstrated that contact with English cannot always account for ongoing changes. We thus prefer to see contact with English as a factor reinforcing ongoing developments, not the cause of the developments themselves. As to prosody, a number of Texas German plurals fit the prosodic pattern described by Wiese (2009) for Standard German, i.e., some monosyllabic nouns add a second syllable in the plural (for at least some speakers), e.g., *Tagen* ‘days’ and *Tiren* ‘doors’, and some disyllabic nouns do not add an additional syllable in the plural (again, for at least some speakers), e.g., *Ziegen/ Ziege* ‘goats’. However, a number of Texas German plurals do not fit this pattern, e.g., some monosyllabic nouns like *Hirsch* ‘deer’ (plural) do not add a second syllable in the plural. This leads us to conclude that, while prosody certainly plays a role in Texas German plural formation, it is not the dominant factor involved (as it does seem to be in the standard language). We note also the same trend towards explicit plural marking found in colloquial standard German, e.g., *Fenster* ‘window’ ~ *Fenstern* ‘windows’. A handful of TxG plurals, e.g., *Kiehe* ‘cows’ have presumably been lexicalized. Finally, imminent language death can indeed result in morphological meltdowns of the type Boas (2009a) describes for Texas German plurals for a few speakers. The changing linguistic and social contexts of NBG have also had a significant linguistic effect, in this case, the widespread retention of standard German plural morphology in Eikel’s data (and, to a lesser extent, in Gilbert’s data) vs. the significant differences from standard German plural morphology found in Boas’ data.

We turn now to word order. Although Standard German is generally interpreted as having underlying SOV word order (e.g., by Haider 2010), this word order is not found in all of the German *Sprachinseln* (see, e.g., Loudon 1988, 2016 on Pennsylvania German, etc.). As for NBG, word order has been a largely neglected phenomenon; neither Eikel (1954) nor Gilbert (1972) comments on it. Clardy (1954: 3) does suggest that NBG might also not have the SOV word order of Standard German (although she did not couch her observation in those terms), but fails to provide any data in support of this suggestion. Other scholars of NBG do not comment on it.

Louden (1988: 184-186) argued on the basis of the following criteria that Pennsylvania German is underlyingly SOV: (1) the finite verb is in final position in embedded clauses; (2) the infinitive is in final position in “infinitival complement constructions”; (3) “In main clauses with prefixed verbs, the verbal prefix remains in final position”; and (4) “In dependent clauses with prefixed verbs, the finite verb remains attached to the prefix in final position.” Boas (2009a: 220-23) applied these criteria to TxG, with the following results.

5 Word order in TxG

1. TxG word order varies considerably in embedded clauses, e.g., in subordinate clauses it varies according to conjunction, e.g. *weil* ‘because’ is generally followed by SVO word order (where Standard German has SOV), but *bis* ‘until’ instead tends to follow the Standard German pattern.⁵⁴ Other conjunctions, e.g., *dass* ‘that’, appear with either SVO or SOV word order. The following examples illustrate these points:

(9)

- a. . . . weil die sollten nicht fliehen. [1-24-3-5-a]
- b. . . . bis ich wie alt war. [1-28-1-9-a]
- c. ...dass ich ein richtige beste Freund gehabt hab. [1-24-1-17-a]

In other types of dependent clauses, specifically such clauses introduced by “question words” like *wo* ‘where’ and *wie* ‘how’ (cf. Louden 1988: 184), NBG generally exhibits SOV word order. For more details on TxG dependent clauses headed by *wo*, see Boas et al. (2014). The following examples from Boas (2009a) reflect this:

(10)

- a. wo er Milchkieh gehabt hat. [1-35-1-1-a]
- b. wie mir es alles gemacht habn. [1-27-1-19-a]

2. In infinitival complement constructions, the TGDP informants normally place the infinitive at the end of the clause, as in the following examples:

(11)

- a. Das war ziemlich schwer gewesen, so ’n Prüfung zu machen.
[1-24-1-18-a]
- b. Ich muss denn nächsten Montag anfang zu lernen. [1-35-1- 19-a]
- c. Da hat er mich geholt zu tanzen. [1-80-1-13-a]

3. In constructions involving prefixed verbs, the TGDP informants normally place the prefix at the end of the clause, as in Standard German, as illustrated by the following examples:

(12)

- a. Ja, da kam 'n Brief an. [1-28-1-25a]
- b. Dann stop die Wurst un dann hängt zum hinten schmoken auf.
[1-82-1-7-a]
- c. . . . das kommt wieder zurick. [1-1-1-14-a]

4. Finally, the TGDP informants normally place the finite prefixed verb at the end of the clause, as in Standard German, as illustrated by the following examples:

(13)

- a. dass die Federn leicht rauskam. [1-30-1-7-a]
- b. dass de ein bisschen wegkommst. [1-8-1-13-a]
- c. dass das Schiff losgingt. [1-28-1-2-a]

TxG word order generally agrees with that of the standard language and fits three of Louden's four criteria for SOV word order (with the one exception being the mixed SOV/SVO pattern found in dependent clauses and varying by conjunction). The conditions governing the choice of SVO or SOV word order following *dass* remain unclear. Boas (2009a: 220) points out that "Some speakers ... switch between the two word orders..., apparently without any systematic pattern." Boas (2009a: 223) concludes that underlying word order in TxG is SOV, as in Pennsylvania German and in the standard language.⁵⁵

We conclude this section with some remarks on the loss of the preterit and its replacement by the perfect in TxG.⁵⁶ This change is very common in the German dialects (König 2015; see e.g., Rosenberg 2005 and Salmons 2018 for diachronic discussions), and it would therefore be unsurprising to find it in TxG as well. This is in fact the case. Eikel (1954: 61) points out that his oldest generation of speakers still uses the preterit, but that his youngest generation does not; it instead "seems to be characterized by the normal tendency of informal Colloquial German in the use of the past and present perfect." Gilbert (1972) contains three maps with relevant forms. His results are as follows:

(14) Gilbert (1972) and the preterit

- a. Map 97: *Er kam gestern* 'he came yesterday': 10 of his 15 (67%) New Braunfels-area informants who responded used present perfect; 3 (20%) used preterit; 2 (13% used both)

- b. Map 98: *Wir gingen nach Hause* ‘we went home’: 11 (79%) used present perfect, 3 (21%) used preterit
- c. Map 99: *Ihr wart beide gestern hier* ‘you were both here yesterday’: all 15 informants (100%) used preterit.

Gilbert’s data is typical for spoken colloquial German, which usually uses perfect tense with all but a handful of verbs (normally *haben*, *sein*, and the modals), with which the preterit is used, in that most of his speakers used perfect tense, except with *sein* ‘to be’.

The TGDP data reveals a similar picture, with a few refinements. The TGDP results are as follows (Boas 2009a: 225).

- (15) The preterit in the resampled Gilbert data
 - a. Map 97: 19 (40%) perfect, 28 (58%) preterit
 - b. Map 98: 34 (92%) perfect, 3 (8%) preterit

This shows a slight increase in the use of the preterit from the Gilbert data for Map 97, but slight decreases in its use for Maps 98 and 99. Due to this, and the relatively small sample size, Boas (2009a: 224) suggests only that further research is necessary to pin down the exact usages.

Boas and Schuchardt (2012: 4-6) offer a frequency-based comparison between TxG and the standard language, with frequency counts for the standard language taken from the Leipzig/BYU corpus (Jones and Tschirner 2006). Their search of the data collected between 2001 and 2007 in the TxG corpus yielded the following counts of the distribution of perfect and preterit forms for the most common German verbs.

(16) Distribution of perfect and preterit in the TGDP corpus, 2001-2007

Rank	Verb	Preterit	Perfect
1	<i>sagen</i>	14	441
2	<i>machen</i>	3	419
3	<i>geben</i>	16	85
4	<i>kommen</i>	781	148
5	<i>gehen</i>	113	348
6	<i>wissen</i>	75	11
7	<i>sehen</i>	25	76
8	<i>lassen</i>	0	16
9	<i>stehen</i>	2	27
10	<i>finden</i>	0	73

This data indicates that the perfect is indeed gaining ground at the expense of the preterit, except for *kommen*. At this point, we have no solid explanation for this variation, and can only agree with Boas (2009a) that further research is necessary to see if this issue can be pinned down.

6 Lexicon

The most conspicuous characteristic of TxG semantics and the lexicon is the impact of English. TxG exhibits a number of examples of semantic transfer (i.e. cases where the semantics of an English word have affected the meaning of a TxG word, based on some perceived similarity, normally semantic or phonological). Examples include *gleichen*, which means something like ‘to resemble, to be like something’ in the standard language, often means ‘to like’ in TxG (where Standard German would use *mögen*), e.g., *Gleichen Sie Kochkäse* ‘do you like cooked cheese’, Standard German *Mögen Sie Kochkäse* (1-8-1-2-a);⁵⁷ and *Grad*, which means ‘degree’ in Standard German, but often means ‘grade (in school)’ in TxG (Fingerhuth 2016), as in *Meine Großmutter an die Mami ihr Seit, is in die zweite Grad gegangen* ‘My maternal grandmother went to the second grade’ (1-76-1-19).

The current TxG lexicon is characterized by a number of loan words from English, and this number has increased steadily: there are more English loan words in the TGDP data than in the Gilbert data, and more English loan words in the Gilbert data than in the Eikel data. Studies like Gilbert (1965), Jordan (1977), and Wilson (1977) identify a number of semantic domains for English loan words, including flora and fauna (*Armadillo*, *Prickly Pear*, *Pecanbaum*), education (*Principal*, *Teacher*, *Schulyard*), technical expressions (*Carburetor*, *Truck*), agricultural terminology (*Fence*, *Pasture*), and political terminology (*County Commissioner*, *to naturalize*). Loan words include nouns, verbs, and adjectives, as well as discourse markers like *you know* and conjunctions like *but* and *because* (see e.g., Boas (2010), Boas and Pierce (2011), Weilbacher (2011), and Dux (2017) for recent studies of loan words in TxG).

Other relevant issues today include the following. Boas and Pierce (2011) note that for some forms, e.g., ‘garden rake’, there is more variability in the TGDP data than in the Gilbert data. That is, where 14 of Gilbert’s 15 New Braunfels-area informants (93%) gave *Rechen* for this word, with the other giving *Harken* (Gilbert 1972: Map 108), the TDGP informants gave a number of different answers, e.g., *Gartenrechen*, *Gartenrake*, and *Harken*. Also, a number of TGDP informants could not remember specific words, although lexical loss appears to be rarest with native German words from core semantic domains (e.g., *Fussboden* ‘floor’) and well-established English loan words like *creek* or *candy*. Additionally, although in cases of language death loanwords

from the dominant language tend to increase, there are some counterexamples to this in the TGDP data, e.g., *sink*. In the case of this particular word, all of Gilbert's (1972) informants used the English loanword, but a number of TGDP informants use German hybrid compounds like *Kichensink* instead. At this point it is not entirely clear if there are truly systematic patterns in the data which would allow for predictions about the development of particular word types. Finally, despite the large numbers of English loan words in present day TxG, Boas and Pierce (2011) reject the idea that lexical erosion has taken place, instead attributing developments that might stem from lexical erosion to factors like situationally-bound vocabulary use,⁵⁸ fading fluency in TxG, and general age-related cognitive factors.

7 Conclusions

To state it frankly, Texas German is dying. At its peak just before World War I, Texas German was the dominant language in a number of Texas cities and towns (including New Braunfels and Fredericksburg). Between the two World Wars, Texas German was still in a state of language maintenance, but by 1970 it had moved from this state of language maintenance to a state of language shift. Since the late 1960s Texas German has quite simply been overwhelmed by a number of social challenges and developments (as discussed in more detail above). The number of Texas German speakers has declined precipitously, from a high of around 159,000 in 1940 (Kloss 1998) to only about 3000 speakers today.⁵⁹ There are no monolingual speakers of Texas German today, or even any Texas German-dominant bilinguals, and the remaining speakers of Texas German are moreover almost all over the age of 80. In light of this, as well as the complete absence of any indications that the continuing shift to English can be stopped, let alone reversed, we reject the claim of Nicolini (2004: 165) that "Interviews mit alten Texanern lassen den Schluss zu, dass die deutsche Sprache am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts lebendiger ist, als es in der germanistischen Forschung gemeinhin gesehen wird." Instead, TxG is unfortunately on the list of about 3000 languages and dialects world-wide that are expected to go extinct by the end of the 21st century, with no way to prevent this (see Boas & Fingerhuth 2017).

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Notes

¹ The extent to which Texas resonated with German imaginations can be seen in Karl May's novel *Der Scout*, which takes place partially in La Grange, Texas.

² The “German belt” encompasses the area between Gillespie and Medina Counties in the west, Bell and Williamson Counties in the north, Bureson, Washington, Austin, and Fort Bend Counties in the east, and DeWitt, Karnes, and Wilson Counties in the south (Boas 2009a).

³ Following Boas (2009a), we use the term “Texas German” to refer to a set of standard-near varieties of German currently or formerly spoken in Texas, descended from the varieties of German brought to Texas by German speaking settlers in the 19th century.

⁴ There are a number of smaller-scale studies of TxG, e.g. Clardy (1954), Salmons (1983), and Guion (1996). Such studies generally reinforce the descriptions of TxG presented in the three large-scale studies, and we therefore focus on the large-scale works here. See Boas (2009a), Boas et al. (2010), and Boas (2021) for details on the design of the TGDP and the accompanying Texas German Dialect Archive (TGDA).

⁵ TGDP members have re-recorded the word and sentence lists used by Eikel (1954) and Gilbert (1972), and have also resampled the Gilbert data (i.e. collected data using the same questionnaire), which makes comparison with these earlier studies fairly straightforward. (One speaker from New Braunfels was in fact recorded both by Fred Eikel in the late 1930s or early 1940s, and by the TGDP team in 2004.)

⁶ See e.g. Roesch (2012, this volume) on Texas Alsatian, another German dialect spoken in Texas.

⁷ See Gilbert (1972) on the distribution of various linguistic features across the dialects of TxG.

⁸ To these two points, we note only that TxG was shaped by the process of new dialect formation proposed by Trudgill (2004), but that it apparently did not complete this process (Boas 2009a); and that the role of Standard German in Texas requires further investigation. See Boas and Fuchs (2018) and Salmons and Lucht (2006) for different perspectives on this question.

⁹ See Benjamin (1909) on the first of these points and Salmons (1983) on the second.

¹⁰ *Texas Vorwärts*, published in Austin, had a circulation of over 6000 in 1900, for instance (Salmons and Lucht 2006: 174).

¹¹ Although the exact number of German-language schools during this time period is difficult to determine, the statement of Boas (2009a: 48) that “German continued to dominate as a language of school instruction ... throughout the German Belt well into the 1900s, especially in the more rural areas” is certainly valid.

¹² This situation was not unique to Texas; similar situations arose in various other states with a strong German presence at around the same time.

¹³ We follow the viewpoint defended in Boas (2009a) and Boas et al. (2010) here. Others have contended that World War I should be viewed as something that exacerbated already-existing tendencies, not as a cause for these tendencies. We do not engage with this issue further here.

¹⁴ We employ a fairly loose definition of “diglossia” here.

¹⁵ See Salmons and Lucht (2006: 173-178) for further discussion of the German-language press in Texas. Note also that as late as 1949 the *Neu-Braunfeler Zeitung* had a circulation of 4000 (Eikel 1949: 278).

¹⁶ Eikel (1954) presents the fullest overview of the NBG phoneme system, so we rely on his work here. For an evaluation of Eikel's research on Texas German, see Pierce et al. (2019) and Pierce et al. (2021).

¹⁷ For a recent analysis of diphthongs in Texas German, see Warmuth (2023).

¹⁸ We have modified Eikel's transcriptions slightly in accordance with more current practices, e.g. he transcribes *Bücher* 'books' as [by:çəR] and describes [R] as "a weak post-velar fricative" (Eikel 1954: 37). Following Pierce et al. (2015), however, we have retained Eikel's transcription of all vowels as tense. Additionally, Eikel's examples indicate that his informants spoke a version of Texas German that was very close to Standard German. To the best of our knowledge, his examples are indeed representative of the NBG of his time. His examples also largely agree with those cited in other then-contemporary works like Clardy (1954).

¹⁹ The following discussion draws on Pierce et al. (2015), the most recent treatment of the problem. (That paper builds on the earlier discussion given in Boas 2009a.)

²⁰ This observation is echoed in Clardy (1954), who points out that her oldest informant has front rounded vowels in all contexts where they appear in standard German, that the next oldest group of informants uses front rounded vowels less consistently, and that her youngest informant lacks front rounded vowels altogether. See Boas (2009a: 107) for some commentary on Clardy's data.

²¹ These maps are: Map 17, *the door!* *die Tür*; map 18, *two daughters!* *zwei Töchter*; map 19, *sweet potatoes!* *Bataten, Süßkartoffeln*; map 20, *two cooking pots!* *zwei Kochtöpfe*; and map 21, *a hairbrush!* *eine Haarbürste*. There is some inconsistency among speakers in this regard, which we leave aside here. See Pierce et al. (2015) for details.

²² Gilbert (1972: 1, fn 5), Boas (2009a), and Salmons (2018: 258 fn 4) make similar points.

²³ This account builds on Boas (2009a).

²⁴ See Salmons (2018) for a recent handbook account of this sound change.

²⁵ Several of Gilbert's maps involve the preposition *auf* 'on', which contains the relevant diphthong in Standard German, but they only give lexical information, not phonological.

²⁶ Gilbert's one Comal County informant who used the long vowel variant is an outlier, whose use of this variant may just be an idiosyncratic speech pattern, or a stylistic choice, or something similar, although it is impossible to determine this with any certainty at this remove.

²⁷ Alternatively, this informant could have been at the forefront of an ongoing change in NBG, but this seems considerably less likely, given that the change is apparently not complete today, despite the nearly 60 years separating Clardy (1954) from Boas (2009a) and the increased contact with English characteristic of NBG speakers today.

²⁸ We have altered Eikel's transcriptions slightly in accordance with more current practices and have also reformatted his consonant chart slightly for convenience.

²⁹ Eikel's presentation of this consonant is somewhat unclear to us, e.g. when he states that *Hühner* 'chickens' and *China* 'China' "are homophonous in NBG," despite transcribing them differently (Eikel 1954: 35), and we therefore do not discuss it here.

³⁰ See Boas (2009a: 134-160) for a fuller treatment of these and other phonological issues in NBG.

³¹ One informant alternated between [pf] and [p].

³² Four informants gave no response.

³³ One informant used *Kochdopp*.

³⁴ He also considers the possibilities that these differences result from contact with other dialects or the influence of Standard German, but ultimately contends that there is no conclusive evidence in favor of either of these hypotheses. We note here that this could also potentially be the result of an issue with Eikel's corpus. As noted above, Eikel (1954: 32) reports variation between /pf/ and /p/ in non-initial position, and perhaps it was just by chance that none of his informants exhibited the same variation word-initially. It is of course impossible to verify this hypothesis at this point. Moreover, we have taken Eikel's data at face value throughout this paper, and do not propose to change our approach at this point.

³⁵ Boas (2009a: 141-142) suggests that lexical erosion could also play a role, but we see this as less likely than the sound change mentioned above.

³⁶ /k/ is lenited to [g] by a few speakers in Gillespie and Medina Counties, however (Gilbert 1972).

³⁷ The combination of numbers following each example is a unique file identification number that allows users of the TGDA to find the examples in the transcripts, thereby allowing for access to the relevant contexts in which the examples occur (see Boas et al. 2010 for details). For more details on the transcription conventions of the TGDA, see Blevins (2022).

³⁸ This development is discussed in neither Eikel (1954) nor Clardy (1954).

³⁹ For a more recent analysis of the variation of [ʃ] in Texas German, see Lindemann (2019).

⁴⁰ Similar phenomena have been recorded in other dying languages, on which see e.g. Schilling-Estes and Wolfram (1999) and Wolfram (2002), among others.

⁴¹ Boas (2009a, b) treats the individual uses of each case separately. For reasons of space, we lump our discussions of each usage together here.

⁴² We do not, however, want to make too much of this observation, due to the relatively small sample size and the closeness of the results (e.g. the oldest generation used the genitive an average of 4 times out of a possible 20, while the middle generation used it an average of 6 times out of 20).

⁴³ See Gilbert (1965) and Salmons (1983, 1994) for other discussions of the TxG case system.

⁴⁴ Eikel (1949: 281) labels the dative case an "überflüssiger Luxus" and the accusative "das Mädchen für Alles" (a term he attributes to Hermann Hirt), which gives some insight into his views on language change.

⁴⁵ For a different view, see Boas & Fuchs (2018).

⁴⁶ Eikel notes that some of these nouns show variable gender, e.g. *closet* can be masculine or neuter. We leave this refinement, which we view as an artifact of the borrowing process, aside here.

⁴⁷ By “the principle of logical gender” Eikel presumably means something like “individual semantic analogy to an existing German word.”

⁴⁸ Because Glenn Gilbert does not discuss gender at length in any of his work, and no real conclusions can be drawn about TxG gender from the Gilbert data, we jump from Eikel to the TGDP here.

⁴⁹ Page (2011) argues instead that the default gender in Pennsylvania German is masculine and that the gender assignment rules for standard German and Pennsylvania German differ sharply, which he attributes to developments in the history of Pennsylvania German (e.g. the apocope of word-final schwa, which created a number of monosyllabic feminine nouns).

⁵⁰ See Köpcke (1993), Davies and Langer (2006), Wiese (2009), Birkenes (2014), and Salmons (2018) for discussion of these and other issues in German plural formation.

⁵¹ See Salmons (1983) and Guion (1996) for additional analyses of TxG plurals.

⁵² As there are a few outliers, percentages do not always add up to 100%.

⁵³ To save space, singular forms are not given. In addition, there is a great deal of variation in plural formation in present-day Texas German. The forms in (2) are representative.

⁵⁴ SVO word order in *weil*-clauses seems to be increasingly common even in relatively standard forms of German, cf. Salmons (2018).

⁵⁵ Fuchs (2017), which focuses on dependent clauses, draws largely the same conclusion. For additional information on word order in Texas German, see Dux (2018).

⁵⁶ This issue is discussed less often than some other phenomena and our discussion is therefore somewhat brief. Some speakers either gave no response or gave a response that cannot be characterized precisely, e.g. one speaker gave “Er gekommen gestern” as a response for Map 97 (Boas 2009a: 225), meaning that the numbers differ slightly from map to map here. For a discussion of progressive aspect in TxG, see Blevins (2018).

⁵⁷ This usage of *gleichen* is very widespread in American German, see e.g., Schach (1951) on Pennsylvania German, Keel (2014) on Kansas German, and Dux (this volume, 2020) on Wisconsin Low German and TxG, respectively.

⁵⁸ They report on one informant, for instance, who could speak very fluently about hunting in TxG, but nothing else. (He had often gone hunting as a younger man with his father and brothers, and they had only spoken TxG on those trips, whence his retention of TxG in this one domain.)

⁵⁹ Texas does have considerable financial and social connections with Germany, and a number of native speakers of German have recently immigrated to Texas. These new immigrants, however, are too few and have arrived too late to “rescue” Texas German. See Salmons (1983) or Boas (2009a) for some discussion.

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