

Victoria Jesswein, Department of Germanic Studies, vjesswein@utexas.edu

Background and Purpose

A common linguistic phenomenon when languages are in contact is for one language to borrow words or phrases from another and incorporate them into the native vocabulary. Texas German, which has been in contact with English for over 100 years, shows extensive borrowing of English words. In addition to content word borrowing, lexical items such as nouns and verbs, Texas German shows examples of borrowings of discourse markers (DMs), which serve functional rather than lexical purposes. In this thesis I analyze the extent to which borrowed DMs *anyway* and *anyhow* exhibit the same semantic and pragmatic functions as in English. This research looks at data recorded or transcribed from 2008 to the present, to analyze differences in the system since Weilbacher's (2008) study.

History of Texas German and the TGDP

German immigration to Texas began in the mid 19th century, when Texas offered cheap land and economic, political and religious freedom. German immigrants in Texas came from diverse backgrounds and spoke equally diverse dialects. In Texas, groups lived and worked together, and this intermingling of dialects in Texas contributed to a levelling process of the language, resulting in a Texas German dialect. This unique dialect strengthened and maintained the culture of immigrant communities, which in turn contributed to the longevity of the dialect.

Up to 6000 Texans still speak German today, but that number continues to dwindle, and most speakers of Texas German (TxG) are over 60 years old. The dialect has not been passed on to younger generations and has almost been completely replaced by English. Created in 2002, the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP) has undertaken the task of recording and studying the dialect before its extinction.

Discourse Markers and *anyway*

Discourse markers (DMs) are a class of semantically null and syntactically optional words and phrases, the removal of which from an utterance does not alter the intelligibility of a sentence. Instead, the markers are used optionally to aid the flow of discourse and fill gaps in speech. Moreover, DMs can provide information about how an expression is intended to be received and interpreted by the listener. Both English and German have native DMs, but the German system, consisting of modal particles, has narrower meanings but more syntactic variation than the English system. TxG shows a borrowing of the English DM system, the most prevalent example of which is *anyway/anyhow*, which is especially salient because, like the German modal particles, *anyway/anyhow* functions pragmatically both as a DM and as an adverb. This research is to determine whether borrowed *anyway/anyhow* functions as it does in English, or if TxG shows innovative uses.

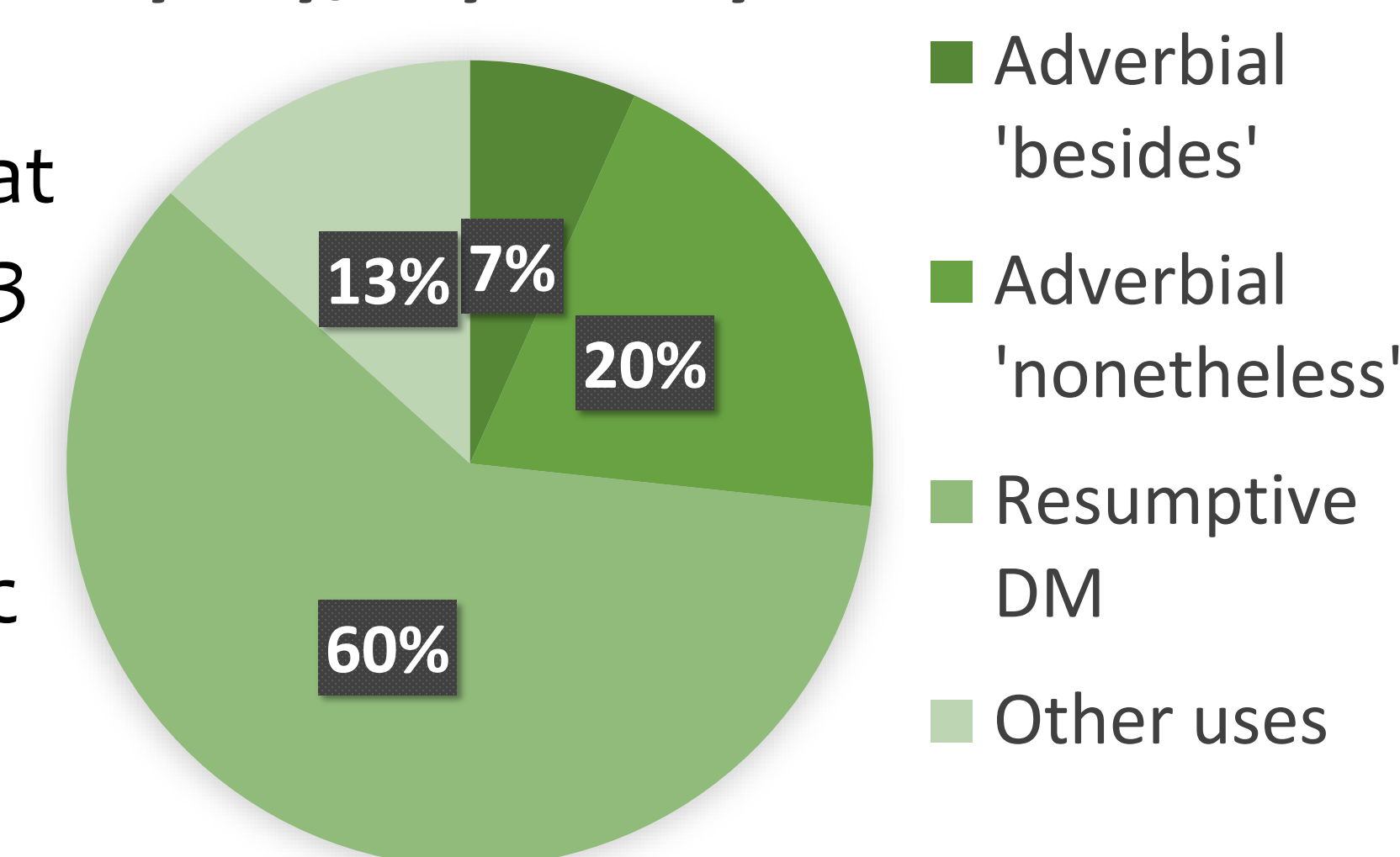
Methods and Results

Data was obtained through the Texas German Dialect website <speechislands.com>. Using the concordancer function, I searched the corpus for instances of *anyway* and *anyhow* spoken by the speaker in German conversation. After excluding examples of *anyway/anyhow* that appear in extended codeswitches (i.e. are not borrowed), the remaining instances are categorized into two adverbial uses--'additive' *anyway* with a meaning close to 'besides' and 'dismissive' *anyway* with a meaning close to 'nonetheless'-- and one DM use.

There are 15 total instances of *anyway* and *anyhow*—7 (46.6%) of *anyway*, and 8 (53.3%) of *anyhow*. Chart 1 shows the percentage of instances of *anyway/anyhow* that fit each category.

Over half of borrowed instances reflected the DM usage. There were also 2 instances of *anyhow/anyway* that could not be classified into the 3 main categories, and show innovative use. Examples 1-4 demonstrate different semantic uses of *anyway/anyhow* in TxG.

Percentage of total instances of *anyway/anyhow* by classification



Ex. 1 Adverbial 'besides':

Wir haben nicht viel Gras gehabt, wir haben so viel Hiehne darumlafen gar nicht viel yard anyhow, musste aufpassen, wos du wos du dreh

'We did not have much grass. We had so many hens running around what was not much yard anyhow, that you had to watch where you stepped' (10-139-1-15-a)

Ex. 2. Adverbial 'nonetheless':

Ich war nich gesagt, dass ich sollt aber ich hab's anyhow gedan
'I was not told that I could but I did it anyhow' (10-93-1-2-a)

Ex. 3. Resumptive DM:

Der Truck is gebrochen un was war denn da los? Un anyhow. un hab ic se Milche gegeben
'The truck broke and what was the problem? Anyhow I gave them milk' (1-167-2-45-a)

Ex. 4. Innovative use:

Das war, das war die answer und das war- und wir doden nich fit pitchen oder anyhow so was
'That was the [final] answer, and we did not pitch a fit or anything' (1-194-1-9-a)

Ex. 1. shows borrowed *anyhow* used as an additive adverb, with a meaning close to 'besides,' that gives an additional reason why one would not want to walk barefoot in the yard with chickens. Ex. 2 demonstrates the second adverbial category, with a meaning close to 'nonetheless,' and functions to dismiss the facts presented in the first half of the sentence. Ex. 3 is an example of the DM use of *anyway/anyhow*, which carries no semantic content but aids the flow of speech by resuming an original topic after a digression. Ex. 4 is one of two examples in the corpus of instances that do not fit into the English use categories. The meaning is close to 'anything' or 'whatever,' and represents anything in addition to "pitching a fit" that could have been done by the speaker.

Discussion and Conclusions

This analysis demonstrates that *anyway/anyhow* have been borrowed extensively into Texas German. They appear both as pragmatic DMs and as lexical adverbial forms, and as innovative that suggest overlap between the pragmatic and semantic forms of *anyway/anyhow*. Some borrowed forms are used within the German language matrix but carry the meaning of their original English origin forms, while others show innovative uses of *anyway/anyhow* that are not acceptable within an English language matrix. The prevalence of the DM forms in the data suggests that the pragmatic DM form is easier to borrow than its adverbial counterpart. Innovative forms suggest that borrowed *anyway/anyhow* are losing their English syntactic constraints or are occupying positions in German syntax which would otherwise contain a German particle of equivalent meaning and function.

The data used for this study represent only a fraction of the total recorded interviews by the TGDP. As more interviews are transcribed and new interviews are recorded, this research can be revisited. A larger searchable corpus will give more insight into the functions of borrowed English DMs in TxG. Further research will continue to contribute to the understanding of the borrowing of DMs and similar pragmatic linguistic devices and their evolution in language contact.

Select References and Acknowledgments

- Boas, Hans C. 2009. *The Life and Death of Texas German*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.
- Goss, Emily and Joe Salmons. 2000. The evolution of a bilingual discourse marking system: Modal particles and English markers in German- -American dialects. *International Journal of Bilingualism* (4.4): 469-484.
- Weilbacher, Hunter. 2008. *Das weiss ich anyhow nicht: the syntax and pragmatics of the bilingual discourse markers anyway and anyhow in Texas German* (master's thesis). University of Texas. Austin, Texas.

Special thanks to Dr. Marc Pierce, Dr. Hans Boas, and the TGDP.