

Names of Registered Cattle Breeds in Texas

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Onomastic research on the cattle industry of Texas and the names of the registered breeds therein reveals the use of predictable English language processes of word formation. I outline the development of the Texas cattle industry, which was an innovation of frontier America. I then report upon the linguistic devices used by speakers to cope with that sociological change. While the language changes can be explained by existing linguistic processes, the addition of sociolinguistic information provides even greater insight.

Texas Cattle

Fully aware that the governments and boundaries of Texas have changed considerably throughout the history of cattle and the accompanying industry, I limit this study to the geographical area of Texas as it exists today. The original Texas cattle, the bison, roamed the Texas area long before people laid claim to the land. By the time France claimed ownership, human settlers had brought European imported cattle, especially the Corriente, from the West Indies, Florida, Central America, and South America. Spain then declared that it (not France) owned the land. When Mexico seceded from Spain, Mexico claimed ownership. Eventually a group of Texians usurped Mexico's claim and solidified the area's name as Texas—an independent nation. Later, after a brief alliance with the Confederate States, Texas joined the United States.¹

Texans prefer the term *cattle*, not synonyms or quasi-synonyms such as *bos*, *cows*, *oxen*, *steers*, or *stock*, to refer to the species *bovidae*. Worldwide, six groups of *bovidae* exist: bison (Europe and North America), buffaloes (India, Africa), *Bos taurus* (European oxen), *Bos indicus* (African Zebu), gaur, gayal, and banteng (India and Southeast

Asia), and yak (Tibet). The convergence of cattle into Texas and the gradual registration of the various breeds has involved all groups except the yak.

Until recently bison and buffaloes have had limited influence on either Texas cattle history or the naming of cattle breeds. For centuries, the native bison grazed over much of North America, from Canada to Mexico. During the 16th century Spanish soldiers first encountered bison—and mistakenly referred to them as *búfalo*. The linguistic misnomer still exists in U.S English but with the English spelling *buffalo*.

Limiting ourselves to the present geographical area known as the state of Texas and chiefly to two groups of *bovidae*, *Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus*, a formidable linguistic problem remains: the derivation of the names of registered cattle as collected by the Texas Department of Agriculture. This linguistic problem is current; during the past two decades, the number of registered cattle breeds in Texas has doubled, from 37 in 1987 to 73 in 2007.²

Linguistic Findings

Sources such as Adams (1968), Baird (1968), Lees (1963), Marchand (1969), and Pyles and Algeo (1982) are in general agreement that there are nine major linguistic processes of word formation in English: lexicalization, compounding, prefixation, suffixation, conversion, back-formation, clipping, blending, and acronymy. As Texas ranchers and farmers gradually codified the breeding of cattle, they had, then, fewer than a dozen linguistic devices to help them name the various breeds.

A close examination of the 67 registered names that account for almost three thousand herds indicates that only four of the linguistic devices for word creation were actually used: lexicalization, blending, compounding, and clipping. In addition, seventeen names used mixtures of the four types.

Languages utilized in this naming process (listed in the order of their frequency) include English, French, Italian, German, African, Spanish, Tibetan, and Japanese. The predominance of English language influence should come as no surprise. The importance of French, Italian, and German, however, plus the absence of the importance of Spanish might provide surprise—as well as might the token influence of African, Tibetan, and Japanese languages.

Lexicalization

The term *lexicalization* includes *re-lexicalization*. The word *Montana*, for instance, while originally referring to a state in the United States, can be changed semantically to refer to a person from Montana. Using lexicalization, the registered cattle breeds *Aberdeen Angus*, *Ayrshire*, *Charlaise*, *Corriente*, *Devon*, *Dexter*, *Chianina*, *Guernsey*, *Galloway*, *Jersey*, *Limousin*, *Marchigiana*, *Normande*, *Parthenais*, *Piedmontes*, *Pinzgauer*, *Salers*, *Santa Gertrudis*, *Sussex*, *Tarentaise*, *Tuli*, *Watusi*, and *Zebu*, have all taken on the name of a geographical location or of a person.

Aberdeen Angus reflects the names of a city and a county, respectively, in Scotland; *Ayrshire*, a county in Scotland; *Devon*, a county in the southwest of England; *Dexter*, from the man who originated the breed; *Galloway*, from the name of a district in the southwest of Scotland; *Guernsey*, from the name of one of the Channel Islands; *Jersey*, the name of the largest of the Channel Islands; and *Sussex*, derived directly from the red cattle that inhabited the dense forests of the Weald at the time of the Norman Conquest.

The French language provides *Charolais*, from central France; *Limousin* (also *Lemosine* and *Limosine*), from an old province in central France; *Normande*, from the north; *Parthenais*, from the west (near Deaux Sevres); *Salers*, a French medieval town; and *Tarentaise*, from the Savoie region.

Italian provides *Chianina* and *Marchigiana* from central Italy and *Piedmontese* from the northwest.

From Iberia, *Corriente* is Spanish for ‘contemporary’, ‘current’, or ‘day-by-day’; *Santa Gertrudis* is from *Rincon de Santa Gertrudis*, the name of the original land grant purchased by Richard King, founder of the King Ranch in Texas.

African languages provide topographical names for *Tuli* (a non-Bos indicus breed) from the Ndobele word *utulili*, meaning ‘dust’, describing the terrain where the Tuli were developed and *Watusi* (*Watussi*, *Watutusi*)—the name of a minority racial group, probably of Ethiopic or Nilotic origin, which at one time were the majority among the Hutu.

Languages that provide one contribution each are German *Pinzgauer*, referring to a breed that originated in the 1600s in the Pinzgauer region

of Austria; Japanese *Wagyu* (literally ‘our cattle’, a cover term for several breeds imported over the years); and Tibetan *Zebu* from *cebu*, ‘hump’—clearly a re-lexification, albeit a descriptive one.

Finally, the registered name *Simmental* anglicizes the spelling of German *Zimmenthal* (*Simmenthal*), which lexifies the name of the Simme valley in the area of Berne, Switzerland.

Blending

Blending involves the process of combining two or more words, but keeping only parts of the words: as when *smoke* and *fog* are combined to produce *smog*.

English language blends include *Amerifax*, a four-way blend: “cross” (*x*) created by “American” breeders involving “Angus” and “Frisian;” *Beefalo*, “beef” and “buffalo” (while not registered in Texas, this same cross-breed is registered elsewhere as *Catalo*, *Cattalo*, and *Cattelo*, “cattle” and “buffalo”); *Brahmousin*, “Brahman” and “Limousin;” *Braford*, “Brahman” and “Hereford;” *Bralers*, American “Braham” and “Salers;” *Brangus*, “Braham” and “Angus;” *Charbray*, “Charolais” and “Brahman;” *Gelbray*, a three-way blend of “Gelbvieh,” “Brahman,” and “Red Angus;” *Salorn*, “Salers” and Texas (not British) “Longhorn;” *Senepol*, “Senegales” and “Red Polls;” *Simbrah*, “Simmental” and “Brahman.” Italian, the only other language involved in a Texas blend, produced *Romagnola*, really one breed of cattle known as *Roman Campagna*. (Note that of the various Brahman crossbreeds, four begin with a variation of *bra(h)* and two end in *bra(y)*. In all six crossbreeds, the Brahman is the minority contributor—never more than 3/8ths of the registered breed.

Compounding

Compounding combines two words (usually adjectives or nouns) into one word or phrase.

English language cattle breed compounds that utilize adjectives plus nouns include the *Belted Galloway*, the *Longhorn*, the *Scotch Highland*, the *Red Brangus*, and the *Shorthorn*. Those names that utilize adjective plus adjective include the *Belgian Blue*, the *British White*, and perhaps the *Red Poll* (cattle either have horns or the horns are cut, or “polled”). Noun+noun compounds include the *Beefmaster*, the *Brahman-Zebu*, and

the *Char-Swiss*. Two German compounds, *Braunvieh* “brown cattle” and *Gelbvieh* “fawn-colored cattle” are also registered, as is one French compound, the *Blonde D’Aquitaine*.

Clipping

As the name implies, clipping simply shortens a word or phrase, as shortening *examination* to *exam*. Texas now has two different registered cattle breeds, the Scottish *Aberdeen Angus* and the (clipped) Texas *Angus*. It also has the *Highlands*, but not the original re-lexified *Scottish Highlands*.

Mixtures

Mixtures utilize two or more of the word formation processes. In 1987 Texas had *Red Angus*, *Horned Hereford*, *Polled Hereford*, and *Frisian-Holstein*. The names for all four breeds were lexified, then compounded. In 2007, those same cattle names were clipped and are now known as *Angus*, *Hereford*, and *Holstein*, respectively. (The Hereford Association has two branches: the Horned and the Polled.)

For years European zoos found profit in exhibiting an unusual African breed of cattle with the compounded name *African Ankole*, with *Ankole* being a lexified topographical name. American beef cattle breeders became interested in the cattle for commercial purposes but changed the compound to *Ankole Watusi*, with *Watusi* designating another topographical region in Africa.

The compounded names *Brown Swiss*, *Murray Grey*, and *South Devon* all utilize adjectives to describe lexified topographical names: Switzerland, a valley in Australia, and England, respectively.

The compounded *American Breed* lexifies *America* and capitalizes on the American origin of bison to designate a unique breed (*Brahman*, *Bison*, *Charolais*, *Hereford*, and *Shorthorn*). *Maine-Anjou* lexifies the Maine and the Anjou river valleys in northwest France.

The blended name *Barzona* lexifies the name of the breeder (Bard) with his topographical location, the state of Arizona.

Russ Bueling lexifies his own name and creates what pretends to be a blend by capitalizing the letter <l> and suffixing <o> to create his North Dakota breed, the *BueLingo*.

Coda

Linguistically, this report could close with a note that the processes used by these Texas cattlemen are, with two exceptions, within predictable patterns of general English word formation processes. One of the exceptions is the lack of affixing. The established pattern in English language word formation is to use more affixing (about 30%) than any of the other devices. The second exception is in the weight put on the other processes. The cattle names lexified about 62% of the time (the expected norm would be only 6%); blended about 22% (expected 1 %); and compounded only about 15% (expected 28%).

The expected norms, however, are misleading in one major respect: The general studies included the entire range of vocabulary, while I have concentrated only on onomastics. At present I have been able to find no naming studies comparable to this one. However, I did find that a closer look at the movement of cattle to Texas gives sociolinguistic clues for the two exceptions previously mentioned.

That movement must start with this continent. In the opening discussion of bison, I left the impression that a handful of bison were still being cultivated. In fact, the majority of these bison are at present protected on government preserves.

This continent also produced another cattle breed before Texas came into a separate political existence. That breed is the Texas Longhorn. Texas Longhorns (not to be confused with the European breed of the same name) are, unromantically, the offspring of oxen from the continent of Europe (J. Biefeldt, p. c.). These particular oxen were brought by Spaniards to the area we now call Mexico when the first presidios, or settlements, were established in the 17th century. Over time these oxen escaped or were abandoned. In the wild they developed huge horns. Descendants of these oxen were later called Texas Longhorns.

When Anglo (as opposed to Spanish or French or Mexican) settlers began moving into the territory of Texas, they brought with them several breeds of European cattle, which had been in the United States since at least 1783.

The Mexican Longhorns that were here to greet these purebred intruders from another continent (and their hybrid companions) had long legs and little substance. However, after mostly unplanned and haphazard crossbreeding, the Texas Longhorn of both reality and myth came into

being. So prolific was the growth of this breed that Texas ranchers found they could supply enough beef for Texans and still have a surplus. So, borrowing trail-driving methods from Latin American vaqueros, the Texans moved huge herds to other markets: New Orleans, Cuba, the Middle West, and California.

While the Longhorn was moving from its unromantic oxen origins to its place in cowboy mystique, other cattle were brought to Texas to improve the existing dairy and beef industries. Some of these came directly from the European continent, others indirectly, through Brazil, Mexico, Canada, and other states in the United States. For a while the United States banned the importation of cattle (a ban that was lifted only in 1972). However, during this time three more breeds now registered in Texas were introduced through the importation of their semen. These three were the dual-purpose Maine-Anjou, the beef breed Blonde D'Aquitaine from Europe, and the beef breed Murray-Grey from Australia.

To associate this influx of cattle with the successful Texas cattle industry, though, is a bit premature. The northeastern portion of Texas had a climate that was appealing to the European breeds. But the rest of Texas had a climate that was hostile. Especially troublesome were the heat and humidity, the lack of drinking water, and the proliferation of insects, particularly flies and mosquitoes. The abundance of land and coarse grass, though, was enticing to the cattle raisers.

For cattle to provide a successful industry in the harsh climate, European breeds needed to be crossbred with more adaptable breeds. Various non-European breeds had the ability to survive in such a climate, but their beef was not as marketable as that of the European. Two of these non-European breeds proved to be especially successful in such crossbreeding. The Longhorn has already been mentioned. The second was the Brahman-Zebu from India. Only one breed of cow was brought to Texas from this, the third continent that contributed to the establishment of the Texas cattle industry. The Brahman's contribution, however, belies its aura of aloneness.

The term *Brahman* was chosen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as the name of all breeds of Indian cattle in the United States. In South America and in Europe these cattle are known as Zebu. For Texans involved in the exposition of cattle, this naming difference is more than

a linguistic squabble. Much of the market for beef cattle today is in Spanish-speaking America, where *Zebu* is used to refer to *Bos indicus* cattle; yet, Texans must work with the United States Department of Agriculture, proponents of the term *Brahman*.

Texport recognizes the problem by listing two breeders associations, both headquartered in Houston. One is the American Brahman Breeders Association, the other is the International Zebu Association. Technically, the Brahman and the Zebu are not the same breed, but linguistically Texport lists them as one, *Brahman-Zebu* (Briggs and Briggs 1980, 191).

In the linguistics section of this article I mentioned that the cattle names listed in the 1986 edition of the *Texport Cattle Directory* were produced with only four word formation processes: lexicalization, blending, compounding, and clipping. I now propose that two sociological variables account for these four types. The first variable is geography. With one or two exceptions, topographical names separate the names that were lexified from those that were created from the other three linguistic processes. The distinction is simple. All of the breeds of cattle that originated outside the American continent retained their original names as they arrived in Texas. Those breeds that originated in the United States received names that were the result of compounding, blending, and clipping. For several decades I have talked to cattlemen (not only in Texas, but also in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska) about this phenomenon. Consistently, they argue that it's the farmers' and ranchers' love of land—they wish to preserve the recognition of land. (This argument would also account for Mr. Bard's blending of his name with the state of Arizona for his new breed, the Barzona.)

The second sociological variable is economic purpose. The two main uses of cattle in Texas are the same as elsewhere: dairy and beef. All cattle are bred for these primary purposes; the secondary uses that rely on hides, bones, horns, hooves, and fat are not affected by breed type. Registered Texas cattle breeds of dairy and dual-purpose cattle tend to be imported with original names: *Ayeshire*, *Brown Swiss*, *Guernsey*, *Gelbvieh*, *Pinzgauer*.

Reading the websites of the various breeding associations, however, reveals a third purpose: breeding. The Bison, the Texas Longhorn and the Brahman all had an impact on the Texas beef economy that importing from the European continent could not supply by itself. All of the breeds

that originated within the United States started as hybrid beef, the offspring of breeds already named—breeds with lexified names. The economic purposes of breeding therefore left breeds of cattle that needed names. Blending and compounding allowed associations to create names that reflected both the original and the imported breed names.

Selective breeding, as distinct from crossbreeding, removed the horns from the Hereford breed. This removal of the horns resulted in a “polled” animal. Selective breeding also produced an Angus that was red, instead of the purebred black. After the Brangus was produced, selective breeding also produced a Red Brangus. Compounding was used in naming some of these new breeds: the *Texas Longhorn*, *Polled Hereford*, *Red Angus*, and *Red Brangus*. A fifth compound name drew attention to the purpose of the breed: *Beefmaster*. Each Beefmaster must be permanently identified with its breeder. Therefore, all breeders use a prefix name, such as *Santos Beefmaster*, to designate their own cattle. (Ensminger 1976).

Notes

1. According to the *Handbook of Texas Online*, the variant Spanish spellings of *Texas*: *tayshas*, *texias*, *thecas*, *techan*, *teysas*, *techas* all refer to a term used by the Indians of east Texas. The state motto, “Friendship,” carries the original meaning of the word as used by the Hasinai and their allied tribes, and the name of the state apparently was derived from the same source.

2. For the 1987 data see Texas Department of Agriculture, *Texport Cattle Directory*, Vol. 12, no. 1 (1986-87). For the 2007 data see Texas Department of Agriculture. *Texas Livestock Directory*. http://www.gotexan.org/vgn/tda/files/1670/10488_Livestock%20dir%200306.pdf.

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