Germanisms in my land

Germanisms are often used in the language of my home region. These are the words in Croatian which were loaned and adopted from the German language. German influence on the Croatian language is thought to start in 16th century. It was the strongest in the areas where the Kajkavian dialect was spoken. These areas include Turopolje, where I live.

Germanisms are easily heard in my birthplace, and especially in my home. My grandparents influenced my Kajkavian speech the most, and their grandparents influenced theirs. The number of Germanisms in our language is large, estimated at as much as around 2000 words! This is why the expressions like *štala* (barn), *šaraf* (screw), *šos* (skirt), *veš* (laundry), *šlafrok* (bathrobe) etc. are part of my everyday vocabulary. Some expressions like *noklica* (dumpling), *lokna* (curl), *kifla* (bread roll), *rolanje* (roller-skating), *deka* (blanket) are so common that using genuine Croatian versions seems so unnatural to me.

Germanisms have been with me since my childhood, as I was often warned not to climb *ljestve* (ladder) for fear of falling. They also called me "mala *frajlica*" (young lady). While I was growing up, the presence of German words in my speech was growing as well. Nowadays I catch myself saying that I'm *na knap s vremenom* (short of time), that I'm not *ziher* (sure), or using *kinderbet* (children's bed) instead of the Croatian word *krevetac* while talking about my early childhood. People around me say they can't wait for their *penzija* (retirement), ask for *šeflja* (ladle) to be passed, describe someone as *šlampav* (sloppy), or approve saying *sve štima* (everything's in order). Then there are *dinstati* (stew), *blic* (flash), *bluza* (blouse), *rikverc* (reverse), *krafna* (doughnut), *špajza* (pantry)...

Germanisms have been passed down from generation to generation for centuries and they will surely stay among us for a while. Croatian dialects are very different and Kajkavian wouldn't be the same without Germanisms. They make language diverse and we are even unaware that some of them come from German. That is why these expressions will stay just as they are despite our preference for purely Croatian vocabulary, and *sve štima* (everything's in order) about that!

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