

VERTICALIZATION, WARTIME AMERICANIZATION EFFORTS, AND THE GERMAN-
TO-ENGLISH SHIFT AMONG THE MENNONITE BRETHERN OF HILLSBORO, KANSAS

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ABSTRACT

Kayla Vix: Verticalization, Wartime Americanization Efforts, and the German-to-English Shift
Among the Mennonite Brethren of Hillsboro, Kansas
(Under the direction of Dr. David Mora-Marín)

In the early to mid-twentieth century, the Mennonite Brethren (MB) community of Hillsboro, Kansas, underwent a systematic language shift from German to English. Many attribute this shift to the anti-German sentiment and resulting discriminatory governmental measures caused by the World Wars. However, like many American communities in the early twentieth century, the MB in Hillsboro also underwent a process of community change called verticalization. Verticalization refers to the process by which a community's connections become less internally and locally bound (horizontal) and more externally and hierarchically bound (vertical). In recent scholarship (Salmons 2002; Lucht, Frey, & Salmons 2011), verticalization—and not the World Wars or other factors like urban–rural asymmetry—has been seen to have the strongest correlation with language shift. Using US census data, information about the community's German-language press, and meeting minutes from two area churches, this project traces the shift from German to English in this community as well as its verticalization. Additionally, it explores the effects of the World Wars on this community's language shift. The findings do not show a correlation between language shift and the World Wars, but they do show a strong consistency between verticalization and language shift. Crucially, this provides support for the theory of verticalization as a facilitator of language change.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

If you ask a member of the Mennonite Brethren community of Hillsboro, Kansas, what caused her ancestors to stop speaking German in favor of English, she will mostly likely tell you that it was because of governmental intervention and anti-German sentiment during the World Wars. This idea fits in with the Mennonites' long history of persecution and suffering for their beliefs and values, a story of which they are deservedly very proud. However, while admirable, this explanation fails to capture the full complexity of the language shift issue. An examination of such complexity involves more events than just the wars. It demands a survey of the linguistic climate and how it changed over time. It must be informed by other non-linguistic, non-war-related events that shaped the community. The real question is: does the language-shift data available actually correspond with a World-War-influence explanation, or does it correspond more closely with some other explanation?

This study seeks to trace the language shift of this Hillsboro, Kansas, Mennonite Brethren community and to explore the factors that contributed to its process. The project employs the theory of verticalization, the process by which shifting connections from the local or regional level to the state or national level changes a community's structure. This theory can be applied to language shift in that these shifting connections cause a community to become "looser." This weakens the community's capacity for language maintenance and allows it to assimilate to the language of its extra-community ties.

This study explores verticalization, language shift, and effects of wartime language attitudes and policies through an examination of census data, church meeting minutes, German-

language press, language laws, and Americanization activities. These data show that the process of verticalization began in the Hillsboro community long before World War I, occurring most noticeably between the late nineteenth century and 1910. This process paved the way for language laws and other anti-German-language efforts to have an effect on the community before and during World War I. The study found that the process of verticalization correlates with the language shift of this community, and the World War I efforts correlate with an increase in this shift.

The structure of the project will be as follows: 1. assessment of the literature on verticalization, language shift, and World War effects on German; 2. background on the Mennonite Brethren community of Hillsboro; 3. research questions and hypotheses; 4. materials and methods; 5. results from language shift study; 6. results from verticalization study; 7. results from World War effects study; 8. discussion; 9. conclusion and future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Verticalization

The theory of verticalization comes from a model for community change in the United States during the early to mid-twentieth century developed by Roland Warren (1972). Warren calls this model the “Great Change,” which he defines as “a series of interrelated developments which constitute the mainstream of change in American society as well as in other parts of the world” (1972: 343). He outlines these “interrelated developments” as:

1. Division of labor
2. Differentiation of interests and association
3. Increasing systemic relationships to the larger society
4. Bureaucratization and impersonalization
5. Transfer of functions to profit enterprise and government
6. Urbanization and suburbanization
7. Changing values

The process by which these factors cause a community to become increasingly less locally bound is called verticalization. Salmons defines the verticalization process as “a situation where connections among various local institutions (horizontal ties, in Warren’s terms) give way to ties between a given institution and its regional, state or national counterpart (vertical ties)” (2005a: 134–135). The model for this study, Lucht, Frey, and Salmons 2011, found that a community’s verticalization correlates strongly to its language shift.

As stated above, these factors of the Great Change are all interrelated: the development of

some will perpetuate or cause the development of others and vice versa. It will be useful to describe in further detail each of these seven factors that together comprise the Great Change. Division of labor can be characterized by increased specialization and diversity of jobs in a community. As a community undergoes increased division of labor, this also generates growing interdependence between individuals, because their own specializations do not cover all of their needs. (Warren 1972: 57). At the same time, this weakens the community cohesion that comes from shared occupation and occupational interests (Warren 1972: 59). As members of a community become more specialized in their occupations, they become more interdependent but also less like-minded due to lack of shared experience. As Warren states, “People become united through this complex interdependent network of specialized effort on which they are jointly dependent, united as functionally interrelated parts of a complex system, rather than by virtue of sharing the same type of occupational skills, problems, and points of view” (Warren 1972: 57). In this way, people’s personal connections are borne more out of necessity than out of shared experience, making them less likely to make decisions together as a community.

Differentiation of interests and association is based on how people collectively assign value: either by locality or by interest. In a locality-based situation, individuals are unified by their common locality; that is, they function together as a communal unit because of their proximity. Families tied together by locality share common interests because they live together as a unit. Conversely, in an interest-based association, a community’s members function as a unit because they share selective interests, even if they also share a common locality. Differentiation of interests and association is a movement from a locality-based to an interest-based relationship, effectively “pulling” people outside of their communities. As Warren puts it, “The locality is no longer the important reference group that it once was, and people tend to identify themselves

with various interest groups with which they are functionally much more closely interrelated than with their neighbors” (1972: 62). This effectively restructures the local community because its members no longer make decisions based on shared locality but instead on values they share with others living outside their local community.

Increasing systemic relationships to the larger society is the process by which a community increases its ties to extra-community systems via its own internal systems. Examples of this include community-based units like the local post office or the local health association—units which are located within and serve the community itself but which are tied to structures that exist outside the community. These types of units belong in two different worlds at once: “the world of the local community and the world of their own respective state or national systems” (Warren 1972: 63). The increased establishment and incorporation of these types of relationships that extend outside the community perpetuate the change of the community structure.

As a community becomes more complex and increasingly tied to extra-community systems, increased bureaucratization and impersonalization become necessary for the community to maintain functionality. This is because bureaucratic organization “is the most efficient means for organizing and administering the complex interrelated institutional systems of contemporary society” (Warren 1972: 67). At the community level, bureaucratization appears in the process of decision-making. It is a movement from individuals making decisions collectively to a carefully established structure that makes decisions “in a deliberate and organized fashion” (Warren 1972: 69). This takes the form of any type of administrative body that makes decisions on behalf of the community’s individuals. Impersonalization, then, is a natural consequence that accompanies bureaucratization. Warren argues that impersonalization is a necessary effect of bureaucratization because it is “the reverse of the coin whose other side is favoritism, personal

whim, and the misuse of power” (Warren 1972: 70). Bureaucratic systems strive above all to be fair, to treat every situation the exact same, without exception. This weakens community cohesion since the organization is “designed to favor the organization’s own goals” (Warren 1972: 72) as opposed to those of the community or individual.

To explain transfer of functions to profit enterprise and government, Warren outlines five possible groups to which various functions are allocated in the modern American community: “1. Individuals (families), 2. Special ad hoc groupings larger than the family, 3. Voluntary associations, 4. Business enterprise, 5. Government” (Warren 1972: 73). This component of verticalization is a movement from the Individual side of this continuum to the Business enterprise and Government side. This movement is tied very closely with division of labor.

Warren explains:

As an individual specializes, he depends on other people to perform functions he formerly performed himself. He pays for them with the money he earns by performing his own specialized function. He pays directly to an individual business enterprise or indirectly, through taxes, for the functions which the government performs. The net result is to get these functions standardized, to get them ‘into the price system,’ and to have them financed either through the operation of the market or through taxes. (1972: 73)

Prior to the transfer of functions, an individual’s necessary goods and services were provided by local community members outside the money-price market—family members, friends, neighbors—those in his primary group. As his job becomes more specialized, he relies increasingly upon secondary groups such as business and governmental units. Since these groups operate on monetary exchange, the individual must operate in the money-price market in order to obtain his necessary goods and services. Overall, this results in the increased vertical orientation

of the units which perform important functions in the community.

Both urbanization and suburbanization are part of the same “process of spatial distribution of complex and ever larger concentrations of people in metropolitan areas” (Warren 1972: 76). Urbanization is the process by which a population becomes more concentrated and centralized, moving toward city structures. Urbanization is heavily intertwined with those factors of the Great Change already presented because “the city as a form of social organization is ideally suited to embody” them (Warren 1972: 77). The process of industrialization that began in the eighteenth century gave another strong boost to urbanization and the city as a social form. Factories that required large numbers of concentrated workers and close proximity to power sources were conducive to the development of cities.

Suburbanization, is the process by which populations disperse and become decentralized. Warren describes suburbanization as a reaction against the effects of urbanization—the impersonalization, division of labor, profit and tax-supported enterprise, etc. (1972: 78 ff). But while suburbanization may have created something resembling a return to “older values” before the effects of urbanization took place, Warren argues that this is essentially “rootless” and “superficial” (Warren 1972: 85). Suburban communities still maintain mostly vertical ties and lack the cohesion of the pre-verticalized local communities they strive to be.

A community’s shared values are the “preferences for one type of condition, quality, or pattern of living” acquired and held by each of its individual members (Warren 1972: 85). Warren identifies several major value changes undergone by American communities during the Great Change. The first of these is the “*gradual acceptance of governmental activity as a positive value in an increasing number of fields*” (Warren 1972: 89, italics in original). This value change is the result of both increased government intervention and increased support for

governmental activity in areas such as education, industrial development, and health and welfare services. Other factors such as bureaucratization and transfer of functions to profit enterprise and government influence and are influenced by this change.

The second value change Warren identifies is the “*gradual change from a moral to a causal interpretation of human behavior*” (Warren,1972: 90, italics in original). An individual’s reaction to socially unacceptable behavior transitions from moral outrage or demand for punishment to a more therapeutic approach, calling for an understanding of the underlying environmental causes of such behavior. This change can be seen in public opinion reagrding issues such as mental health, homosexuality, and juvenile delinquency.

Another closely related value change is the “*change in community approach to social problems from that of moral reform to that of planning*” (Warren 1972: 91, italics in original). This change is most prevalent in “problem” fields, such as poverty, crime, and family breakdown. Instead of attempting to reform wrongdoers, the focus shifts toward rational planning of the community. This requires increased specialization and reliance on special delegate agencies to work toward prevention and control in these fields.

Finally, the last value change Warren describes is the “*change of emphasis from work and production to enjoyment and consumption*” (Warren 1972: 91, italics in original). As this occurs, the community does not undergo a renunciation of those old values but instead undergoes a shift in their emphasis. There is a stronger emphasis on conformity rather than individualism, on finding one’s value through one’s dedication to the organized group, and on science and practicality as a means for achieving happiness (Warren 1972: 93).

These trends in community change are not all necessary for a community to undergo verticalization. A community could very likely experience only some of them and even those at

very different rates. What is important about these factors is that they are all effects of verticalization and therefore serve as a basis for identifying and tracing a community's process of verticalization. Additionally, Salmons explains that the communities Warren describes do not function as whole units but instead as a series of "groups with specified functions" (2002: 181). This means that a community is made up of several domains which may have different ties to external structures and will therefore undergo the effects of verticalization at different rates and to different degrees. The effects of each domain's verticalization contribute to the verticalization of the community as a whole.

Verticalization and Language Shift

In their 2011 article, "Urban-Rural Asymmetries in Language Shift," Lucht, Frey, and Salmons compare the German-to-English language shift in three German-speaking communities of Wisconsin using Warren's (1972) "Great Change" model to account for the shift. In their paper, Lucht et. al test the idea that Milwaukee underwent language shift at a faster rate than Wisconsin's rural communities because the city experienced urbanization that did not affect Watertown and Lebanon to the same degree. They found that there was not, in fact, a strong asymmetry between the language shift of these communities based solely on urbanization. Instead, they found a correlation between the shift in all three of these communities and Warren's Great Change theory.

The authors state that, while urbanization is highly intertwined with verticalization, it alone does not contribute to shift. Although the community in Milwaukee underwent shift at a more rapid rate than those in Watertown and Lebanon, the many German-speaking institutions available to Milwaukee seem to refute the idea that the urbanization of this community alone was the cause of its language shift. What is more likely, given the evidence, is that the Milwaukee

community shifted its dependencies toward more extra-community systems quicker than did Watertown and Lebanon.

In an examination of census data, church service language data, and Wisconsin German-language publication information, Lucht et. al find evidence for “increased division of labor and specialization,” “increasing orientation to extra-community organizations,” and “the growth of cities and their suburbs” (where urbanization has an effect but is still only one factor) (2011: 350; 370 for evidence), all of which are factors in the Great Change outlined by Warren. As such, Lucht, Frey, and Salmons (2011) serves as the model for this project because it provides a framework for exploring the effects of verticalization on language shift from the community level.

The idea of verticalization as a correlate to language shift is relatively new, so few studies exist on the subject (see Salmons 2002, 2005b; Frey 2013; and Lucht 2007 for some examples). In his 2002 article, “The Shift from German to English, World War I and the German-language Press in Wisconsin,” Joseph Salmons concentrates on the case of the German-language press in Wisconsin as representative of the German-to-English language shift of Wisconsin German speakers. He cites Milroy and Milroy’s (1992) argument that “loose” social networks encourage language shift, while those with a denser internal structure encourage language maintenance (as cited in Salmons 2002: 180 ff).

Milroy and Milroy’s argument then becomes Salmons’s basis for applying Warren’s verticalization model to language shift, because it ties together the notion of community change through increased external ties with the notion of community language shift. As Salmons states, “A systematic centralization of power and authority in late 19th/early 20th century American society weakened local ties within most minority language communities, thereby weakening the

social fabric that was indispensable for language maintenance” (Salmons 2002: 182). The evidence Salmons finds suggests that the German-language press in Wisconsin suffered the same fate as all small newspapers during the beginning of the twentieth century: increased verticalization and weakening of community density caused them to be phased out in favor of larger publication conglomerates.

Language Shift

The definition of language shift on which this study operates is: the failure of intergenerational language transmission that occurs systematically throughout an entire community. This study is primarily interested in the language shift of an entire community, recognizing that language shift occurs at the level of the family or individual but that the community functions as a unit in its decision-making processes. This gives the community the power to allow or forestall structural changes that may influence language shift and/or maintenance.

Calvin Veltman’s 1983 book *Language Shift in the United States* offers a model of language shift in America based on linguistic demographics and subpopulations, not on individual communities. Veltman’s linguistic subpopulations are made up of all the native speakers of a particular language living in the United States. Veltman implements a population model which

proposes that the size of a given population at some future point is a function of a finite number of factors: its original size, the relation between the number of births and deaths which occur during the period being examined, and the relation between the number of immigrants and emigrants which enter and leave the territory during that period of time. (1983: 11)

He modifies this model to apply it to linguistic subpopulations in America, focusing on what he calls linguistic emigration. In Veltman's view, the language maintenance of a linguistic subpopulation is linked primarily to the number of speakers in that linguistic subpopulation. This is why, for example, in Veltman's brief examination of 1940 and 1960 census data pertaining to mother tongue and "usual language," he maintains that the "German language group" in the United States underwent "rapid erosion" during this time while the "Spanish language group" grew: because the German language group was no longer receiving immigrants to bolster its numbers while the Spanish language group was (Veltman 1983: 2 ff).

Veltman's model is enticing for its highly empirical approach, and it can provide insight into the status of these languages in the United States at a given time. However, for the purpose of understanding the process of language shift itself, the model is lacking in several areas. First, Veltman's model's analysis of a "minority language group" as an entire population of speakers cannot accurately represent any useful information regarding language maintenance. The group examined is too broad to exhibit anything about the language maintenance of the people within the group. The model does not trace communities or individuals, so it cannot trace linguistic trends at this level. Therefore, it does not account for language maintenance on the small-community level.

Also, since the model only focuses on population numbers of minority language groups, its scope is very narrowly cast. While population numbers may provide insight into language shift, they cannot account for any other factors in the process of shift and/or maintenance. Veltman does state that the purposes of his study include only an examination of "the current situation of minority language groups in the United States" and a measurement of "the structure, the extent, and the pace of linguistic assimilation" (1983: 2). Since this is only based on the

speaker population numbers of an entire country, however, the only explanation it can give for language shift of a language minority group is decreased or discontinued immigration. It cannot truly measure the contributing factors to language shift because too many other metrics are relevant for an accurate assessment. Veltman is quick to cast off what he calls “indirect measures” (1983: 1) of tracing language shift, deriding their tediousness and questioning their quality. While the development of a purely empirical measure of language shift that does not include these “indirect measures” is admirable, they seem necessary, in addition to more direct measures, in order to get a fuller picture of language shift.

Susan Gal does employ more “indirect measures” to trace language shift in Austria. She writes, “In studying language shift, I was studying the impact of large-scale historical processes on the minute details of intimate verbal interaction and of individuals’ linguistic expressions of their own identities” (1979: XI). In her study, she finds that speakers in Oberwart, Austria, chose which language to use based on how they wanted to present themselves to their listeners. In this way, Gal focuses on the social decisions of *individual speakers* as being influenced by outside sources rather than the linguistic decisions of an entire community, as the verticalization model does. Individual speaker volition becomes a factor in language shift once a community or the majority of a community becomes bilingual. It is at this point when a speaker can begin to make the kinds of choices Gal describes.

While the verticalization model describes language shift as correlating with the process of verticalization, it is not entirely inconsistent with Gal’s explanation. Gal’s view of social impact on speaker volition is related to the verticalization model’s conception of external effects on a community’s linguistic change. The two interpretations view the issue of volition differently. For Gal, an individual speaker’s linguistic decisions may be influenced by outside sources in a

systematic way (Gal 1979: 6), while verticalization argues that this systematic link with outside influence occurs in the linguistic decisions of a community unit. Both the individual and the community may make different linguistic decisions for different domains (for the individual, those it experiences in day-to-day life; for the community, those of which its structure is comprised). The difference between the models has to do with *who* has the power to make linguistic decisions.

World Wars

The most commonly cited cause for German-to-English language shift in the United States is the anti-German sentiment and resulting targeting Americanization measures by governmental organizations that came from negative attitudes about the Germans during the World Wars. Work has been done on the language policies and Americanization efforts from WWI (Wiley 1998; Luebke 1990; and Bender 1956) in addition to work on the effects of WWI on the Mennonites in America and elsewhere (Juhnke 1989 and Hartzler 1921), all of which claim that the war had a huge impact on the German language in America. This idea is most often based on stories of harassment, either by English-speaking U.S. citizens or by government entities of German-speaking Americans during the war. The Mennonites themselves also hold a similar view, though mostly anecdotally. State-mandated Americanization efforts in Kansas during WWI include the work of the Kansas State Council of Defense (Blackmar 1920) as well as measures regarding language use in education during this time (Luebke 1990). Little has been done to link language use in the United States to World War II, but Juhnke (2010) gives a thorough account of the Kansas Mennonites' activities in the years leading up to U.S. involvement in the Second World War.

Wiley's 1998 article, "The imposition of World War I era English-only policies and the

fate of German in North America,” offers a comprehensive look at how the political and social climate from the beginning of U.S. politics to the years just following World War I can be linked to language policy changes and the targeting of German speakers in America. He explains that the period between 1880 and 1900, the period of largest German immigration, experienced, as Macías (1992) puts it, “increased repressive and exclusive language legislation” (as cited in Wiley 1998: 218). In Kansas this took the form of a law which required that English be the language of instruction in schools. This did not seem to have much of an effect at the time, largely because of a lack of real government control.

Wiley goes on to describe the increase of suspicion and distrust of German-speaking Americans in the years leading up to U.S. involvement in the war. State governments set up State Councils of Defense to rally support and gather resources for the war effort. However, Wiley explains, it soon became clear that the purpose of these organizations was to investigate suspicions of sabotage and disloyalty on the local level. One of the chief signals of a true lack of patriotism was the use of the German language. He cites Crawford (1995), saying that at this time “some 18,000 persons in the Midwest alone were fined for language violations” (as cited in Wiley 1998: 223). German-speaking communities were pressured to give up their language and endured persecution in the form of harassment, boycott, and even arson from super-patriots. Wiley mentions the Mennonites as one of these groups. He describes investigations launched by State Councils of Defense of schools, churches, universities, and unions to discourage the use of any language other than English. Americanization efforts were begun around this same time, pressuring foreign-born citizens and children of foreign-born parents to participate in acculturation programs. After the war, Wiley quotes Burnell (1982) as noting that “anti-German feeling was largely replaced by an anger directed toward all symbols of foreign influence” (as

cited in Wiley 1998: 235).

What Wiley describes in his review of U.S. wartime language policies on German speakers is rather bleak and upsetting. However, he offers few statistics on the actual effect of these policies on the German-speaking population. He cites Conzen (1980), stating that the Missouri Synod of Lutheran Churches held more English-language services at the end of the war than at the beginning of it. However, he does not acknowledge that something else may have caused an increase in English use. He also does little to speculate on the idea that these German-speaking communities might have had the volition and the power to resist such harassment and pressure—indeed, most of what he reports is from the perspective of the state councils and governments and not from the perspective of the German speakers themselves.

Interestingly, the little scholarship that deals with the Mennonites and/or German-speakers in the United States during World War II does not explore language shift during this period¹. James Juhnke (2010) gives an account of the Mennonites' political ideals and activities in the years leading up to the second world war. Most of his report focuses on the General Conference Mennonites², however, who have often been more politically-minded than the Mennonite Brethren. Together with the Friends/Quakers and the Church of the Brethren, two other pacifist groups, the Mennonites formed a cooperation of the historic peace churches. In January 1940, after months of letter-writing and correspondence with state representatives, a delegation of the historic peace churches met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to voice their opposition to the prospect of a military draft. Nonetheless, draft registration took place on October 16, 1940, an event which the Mennonites had feared would launch the country into war

¹ Juhnke does mention language use but does not link it to the political activity of the time.

² These General Conference (GC) Mennonites make up the contemporary group from whose ancestors the Mennonite Brethren split in Russia in the 1860s.

during peacetime.

Juhnke explains that Peter Berg, editor of the *Hillsboro Journal*, which was read primarily by Mennonite Brethren, did advocate for the Republican platform before the election of 1940. The Mennonite people also demonstrated similar leanings when they voted overwhelmingly Republican that year, fearing that Roosevelt's decisions would lead the country into war (Juhnke 2010). When the draft was issued, the Mennonites were able to serve in the Civilian Public Service as conscientious objectors. To what extent the creation of such a service came from the influence of the historic peace churches is difficult to say. Nevertheless, several church agencies, including the Mennonite Central Committee, operated CPS camps through connection with the newly-created National Service Board for Religious Objectors (Hershberger 1990).

Joseph Salmons explicitly deals with the notion that WWI anti-German sentiment contributed to—or even further, was the main contributing factor to—German-to-English language shift among German communities in America (2002; 2005a; and 2005b). He explores the validity of this idea in an investigation of German language press in Wisconsin during the early twentieth century and offers a different explanation by demonstrating that the shift was already underway in German-speaking communities in Wisconsin prior to WWI. What he finds is that language shift correlates more closely with verticalization than with WWI because verticalization of the German-language press was already underway prior to the war.

However, an important underlying assumption Salmons seems to make here is that anti-German sentiment, and even language policies, could not make as effective an impact as proponents of this theory claim because these efforts cannot stop people from speaking their home language. While this is a very compelling explanation for monolingual German speakers,

the interesting difference in the Mennonite Brethren community of Hillsboro is that they spoke two dialects of German: Standard German in church settings and with other Germans in the town (Lutherans, mostly), and a dialect of Low German unique to them, called Plautdietsch, at home and amongst themselves in informal settings. This is true for nearly all Mennonites who immigrated from Russia.

Moreover, while the shift from Standard German to English appears to have occurred between 1920 and 1950, a fair amount of Mennonite Brethren maintained their Plautdietsch even until today, when the oldest of the population can still speak it. So it is possible that the World Wars may have had an influence on the Standard German of the Mennonite Brethren community of Hillsboro that did not touch the Plautdietsch in the same way. If this is true, it is possible that their Standard German was affected by both verticalization and the World Wars—likely by a combination of the two. It should be noted that the Standard German production of these Mennonite Brethren is traceable through primary and secondary documents, but Plautdietsch has no written form and so cannot be traced in this manner. It is for this reason that this study will focus only on the Standard German use of these Mennonite Brethren.

CHAPTER 3: COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

As stated above, the community under investigation for this project, the Mennonite Brethren people of Hillsboro, Kansas, spoke two dialects of German prior to their shift to English. They spoke High German (or Standard German) in their religious affairs and among other non-Mennonite German speakers, and they spoke a dialect of Low German (called Plautdietsch) in their everyday affairs among themselves. Some people of the older generation of Mennonites can still speak Plautdietsch fluently or near-fluently today. The Mennonite Brethren have always been a highly religious people, valuing piety, seclusion, thrift, and pacifism. They are not strangers to relocation, especially for religious reasons, and throughout their history they have always sought homes where they might have religious freedom and minimal interaction with outside cultures or governments. This propensity for living separate from “the world” has aided their German language maintenance throughout their history.

The Mennonite Brethren of Hillsboro, Kansas, are not the only Mennonite Brethren living in the world today. Indeed, there are Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren communities all over the world. But, of course, not all Mennonite Brethren of today are descendants of the first Mennonites from the Netherlands and Switzerland (Epp 1993). Those that are can be found concentrated in the Midwestern United States (heavily in Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Oklahoma), along the Pacific (in the Central Valley area of California), Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

In order to conduct a study on the language shift of the Mennonite Brethren community of Hillsboro, Kansas, it is important to understand their historical and linguistic origins and

background. The Mennonite Brethren people have long been a linguistic minority. Though they spoke two dialects of German, they originally migrated to the Midwestern United States from Russia and Prussia. This is because the Mennonite Brethren are an offshoot of the Mennonites, most of whom were of Dutch (Frisian) or Swiss origin. The Mennonites are a subset of Anabaptists, who originated in the Frisia Triplex, which consisted of West Friesland, Groningen, East Friesland (today, the Netherlands, northern Germany, and Belgium) (Epp 1993).

During the Protestant Reformation, those not satisfied with existing religious institutions found refuge in the Frisia Triplex. These “nonconformists” included a group who had become convinced of “believer’s baptism”—baptism in adulthood—and these were appropriately called the Anabaptists (from the Greek for “rebaptizer”), though they themselves used the German term *Wiedertäufer* or the Dutch term *Wederdooper* (Bender 1990). Soon the Anabaptists in the Frisia Triplex were joined by Flemish Anabaptist refugees from Flanders and some from southern Germany (Epp 1993: 50–51).

In the 1530s, a Roman Catholic priest from West Friesland named Menno Simons became convinced of the Anabaptist ideology and soon became their faithful elder and leader (Epp 1993: 51). It is from Menno Simons that the Mennonites took their name. Simons wrote many theological works, mostly in Dutch, about pacifism, a major tenet of the Mennonite identity and belief system.

During the days of Menno Simons, the Mennonites of East Friesland and Groningen mostly spoke Nether Saxon Low German, while those in West Friesland spoke Frisian (though the latter of these seem not to have been in the majority of those who later resettled in the Vistula River delta). The refugees from Flanders spoke Flemish, which eventually gave way to Nether Saxon Low German, and the refugees from southern Germany spoke High German but probably

also Low German in order to communicate with the other Mennonites (Epp 1993: 53). Most Mennonites who could write did so in Dutch, though it was frequently termed “impure Dutch” by Mennonite leaders in Amsterdam.

In 1534–1535, a group of radical Anabaptists called the Münsterites carried out a violent insurrection in the city of Münster. The rebellion prompted the authorities to consider all Anabaptists a threat, even the peaceful Mennonites. They posted proclamations against them in Friesland and Groningen, but East Friesland was more tolerant, so the peaceful Mennonites fled there. They remained in East Friesland until the Holy Roman emperor Charles V issued an edict ordering all Anabaptists out of East Friesland in 1549 (Epp 1993).

Around the same time as the Anabaptist persecution, the Mennonites were invited by landowners and city councils in Polish Royal Prussia to resettle in the lowlands of the Vistula River delta (Epp 1993: 64). The councils were aware of the Mennonites’ reputation for farming and hoped they would populate and agriculturally develop the swampy region. When the Mennonites began to arrive in 1540, the Vistula delta was already partially inhabited by German peoples. Most of these spoke Low German, and so the Mennonites moved into a linguistic area similar, with some dialectal differences, to that which they had just left (Epp 1993).

They continued to live in Royal Prussia, the majority of them in the Vistula delta, for over two more centuries (1540–1789). During this time, the Mennonites’ Low German underwent a pronunciation shift, and Epp notes, “Low German, as spoken among Mennonites in America who came here via Russia, is still oriented to the manner in which it was spoken in the Vistula delta at the time of their leaving there” (Epp 1993: 67). It was also in Royal Prussia that the Mennonites learned and began to use High German (Epp 1993: 71). High German was spoken by administrative officials of Prussia starting in the 1560s (prior to this, they had spoken

Low German). Concerning the Mennonites during this linguistic transition, Epp states, “The Mennonites continued to speak their Low German among themselves, using it or Dutch as their language of worship” (1993: 71). It wasn’t until two centuries later, at the end of the eighteenth century, that the Mennonite churches transitioned to using High German for religious affairs. And in the nineteenth century, young Mennonites began to learn High German in school. By the time they left for New Russia, they had all but replaced their use of Dutch with High German in worship and writing (while still maintaining their Low German at home).

The first Mennonites who came to Russia settled in the area along the middle Volga River in 1762 at the invitation of Catherine II (Catherine the Great), who had heard of their farming abilities and was interested in the agricultural development of this region. In exchange for their coming to settle the land, Catherine promised the Mennonites, in a manifesto of July 1763, “free lands, expenses for the move, freedom from taxation for 30 years, and exemption from civil and military service for themselves and their descendants” (Saul 1974). These promises were enticing to the Mennonites because they were a peaceful people who preferred to live in secluded communities free from governmental influence.

Later, after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 1783–1784, Prince Gregory Potemkin invited peoples from southeastern Europe, including a large number of Mennonites then living in Danzig, to settle this land called “New Russia.” Prince Gregory promised these Mennonites an even sweeter deal: in addition to all the conditions from the July 1763 manifesto, each family would receive a substantial subsidy to help them develop the region. Since the Mennonites in Prussia were facing increasing pressure from Frederick the Great to pay taxes and enlist in military service, many of them decided to accept Prince Gregory’s invitation.

In Russia, the Mennonites raised settlements in Chortitza in 1788 and later in Molotschna in 1803. It was from these settlements that the Mennonite Brethren formed. Objections to the Mennonite church's practices and subsequent disagreements caused several of the Brethren to form a new, independent church in 1860. Two new groups had formed independently in both settlements, but eventually the two joined together into one like-minded church. Despite strained relationships with the existing Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Brethren people continued to reside alongside them in Chortitza and Molotschna. The Mennonite Brethren Church then spread to new settlements all over South Russia as far east as the Volga River settlements (Lohrenz 2011).

Beginning in the 1840s, the Mennonite people's relationship with the Russian central government had begun to change. Catherine the Great was dead and the government had transferred all responsibilities of property to the Ministry of State Domains. This led the imperial government increasingly to scrutinize the Mennonite colonies and "to treat the colonists more and more as Russian state peasants" (Saul 1974). In the following decades, the reform movement sought to equalize landholdings among the agricultural population, which had a profound effect on the South Russian Mennonite way of life. This led to greater governmental interference overall, threatening internal community institutions such as separate schools and economic autonomy. Then, in 1870, the Russian government instated mandatory military service for all citizens (Lohrenz 2011).

While many—most often the Mennonites themselves—point to this event as the impetus for Mennonite migration to the United States, there are several other factors to consider. Though the mandatory draft was announced in 1870, only a small portion of Mennonites actually left Russia at this time. In fact, Norman E. Saul remarks in his history of the migration of Russian-

German Mennonites to Kansas that “the arriving immigrants in Kansas did not appear to include a particularly large number of recruitment age” (1984). Even then, the universal draft mandate was later modified to allow persons not willing to participate in the military to “substitute work in the forestry department instead” (Lohrenz 2011). So while it appears the expiration of their military exemption was not the main factor in the Mennonites’ decision to migrate, it may have been a catalyst for this idea. A survey of other events around this time paints the issue as quite complex.

As stated above, it was around this time that disputes within the Mennonite Church had caused several members to separate and generated the formation of the Mennonite Brethren church. As Saul puts it, “[d]isputes over church doctrine added to the impulse to get away and start over—to make a trek—which was already a part of the Mennonite tradition of founding daughter colonies” (1974). At this time the region was also undergoing a land population crisis and a decline in grain prices due to competition from the United States. These things, in conjunction with increased government interference, contributed to the idea of emigrating from Russia.

Meanwhile, in Kansas, the railroad boom had created opportunities for expansion in rural parts of the state. The railroads companies had been given eight and a half million acres of Kansas prairie and were looking for industrious people to whom to sell the land. Carl Bernhard Schmidt, a German-speaking Santa Fe railroad land agent and head of the newly formed governmental immigration office, learned of the Russian-Germans and their desire to emigrate through Russian-German Mennonite Cornelius Jansen. One of the Mennonites’ only contacts in the Russian government, Jansen had learned of the government’s planned changes and encouraged the Mennonites to emigrate to America, where they would have religious freedom.

He was expelled from Russia for doing so. By the time he met Schmidt in the summer of 1873, the Russian Mennonites had already organized and sent a delegation to Kansas. The delegation toured the area under the guidance of Santa Fe railroad agents, and by the end of October they had accepted a preliminary purchase agreement with Schmidt (Saul 1974).

Word from the reconnaissance mission soon circulated around the Mennonite colonies of South Russia, and in 1874 around 3,000 Russian-Mennonites settled in Kansas (more than any other state). The immigrants sometimes moved together as families and small groups, but often they would move and settle as whole congregations. The Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, another offshoot of the Mennonites independent of the Mennonite Brethren, were some of the first to leave Russia and settle in Marion County, Kansas, where Hillsboro is located. They settled together as one village, Gnadenau, which only lasted two or three years until the town of Hillsboro was built two miles to the north (Bender 1957). Other Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren came to Hillsboro mostly from parts of the Molotschna settlement in Russia (Krahn 1956). Others followed in the subsequent decade, bringing the total estimated number of Russian-Mennonite immigrants in Kansas in the 1870s to 12,000 (Saul 1974). Saul describes the Mennonites' linguistic experience upon first settling in Kansas:

The language barrier was an important cause of the initial separation of Russian-Germans from other Kansans. [...] The language difficulty made it impossible for ordinary Kansans to carry on a conversation with the new arrivals, but it did little to impede business negotiations, in part because of the concern of railroad agents, but also because of the experience that most of these people had in Russia with non-German speaking neighbors. To the Russian-Germans, a language problem was nothing new, nor was it unexpected. (1974)

When they first arrived in Marion County, the Mennonite Brethren settled in “fairly compact groups of single farmsteads” (GAMEO United States of America). Eventually they began to establish churches and school buildings in and around the town of Hillsboro. Two Mennonite Brethren families living among the Krimmer Mennonites of Gnadenau established Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren Church and built their first church building in 1883 (Baerg 1956). The Mennonite Brethren in the area established Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church in 1881 and built their first church building in 1890 (Hiebert & Thiessen 2014). These are the two churches on which the frequency study portion of this project (frequency of English words in church meeting minutes) focuses. It is important to note that, even now, Ebenfeld remains a rural church and Hillsboro has always been located “in town.” This distinction may have contributed to the different rates of both linguistic change and verticalization experienced by both churches.

In 1879, the Mennonite Brethren congregations in Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, and South Dakota formed the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. As John H. Lohrenz states, “The purpose for organizing was to build up the churches in their spiritual life, to give united expression to the position the church holds on various points, and to work unitedly in the various church activities” (Lohrenz 2011). A few years later, in 1884, the conference began to consider the idea of establishing a “Fortbildungsschule” (training school) in order “to retain the German language and to train teachers and mission workers” (Prieb 1959). Then, in 1907, the plan for a college was approved by both MB and Krimmer MB representatives, and in 1908 Tabor College was established (Prieb 1959).

When they first settled in Kansas, the Mennonite Brethren educated their children together in one of their homes. As their communities became more established, they built or bought schoolhouses and designated parochial teachers to educate the children in both academic

and religious matters. It is unclear at what point the Mennonite Brethren children would have begun to attend secular schools, but students with Mennonite names can be seen in Marion County public school records as far back as 1880, when the public school district was first organized (Van Meter 1972: 196).

Through the 1880s, the Mennonite Brethren contributed to the growth of the town of Hillsboro with businesses of their own despite the language barrier: “Language differences and difficulties did not seem to retard the growth of the new town. There was work to be done and goods to be exchanged. With some body language and if necessary, an interpreter, needs were understood” (Van Meter 1972: 179). They established grocery stores and retail businesses, and, in 1883, Hillsboro’s very first German-language newspaper, *Der Farmer Anzeiger*. Several other small, short-lived publications followed, taking advantage of the ripe conditions for starting a newspaper in the 1880s when all that was required was “a hand-operated press, a few stick-fuls of type and a few dollars” (Van Meter 1972: 184). Then, in 1913, the Mennonite Brethren Conference purchased a printing establishment in Hillsboro, where the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House was moved from McPherson.

Following the end of the 19th century, the Mennonites gradually began to shift from German to English as their primary language. Different domains in the community experienced different rates of shift; however, it appears that the shift was complete among most of the population by the 1960s. The only members left at this time who still spoke Standard German were the oldest of the population, and Standard German resources for them were dwindling by this time.

In summary, the linguistic history of the Mennonite Brethren is largely defined by their propensity for living separately from the mainstream culture. Many of the Mennonites began as

Dutch speakers, but Dutch gave way to High German during their residence in Prussia. Once High German became the language of their formal gatherings, it remained a crucial part of their identity regardless of other languages surrounding them. A big reason for this is the strong connection they made between High German, the language of the Lutheran Bible, and their Anabaptist faith. High German stayed with them when they moved to Russia and Crimea, where it was maintained despite the surrounding mainstream Russian, and it came with them to the United States. The Mennonites' Low German underwent similar changes in Prussia and was similarly maintained in Russia and the United States. Low German has survived longer in the Mennonite population than has High German, which may be due to the preservative effects of the "home" domain in which it is spoken. As mentioned above, High (Standard) German is the only dialect examined in the present study.

CHAPTER 4: QUESTIONS, MATERIALS, AND METHODS

Questions

The overall objective of this project is to research evidence for verticalization in this community and evidence for language shift in this community and then to examine the two side-by-side for correlations. Alongside this objective will be a research of wartime policies and Americanization efforts that will then be examined for correlations with the above findings.

Research questions for the study include:

1. When and how does the German-to-English shift occur in the Mennonite Brethren community of Hillsboro? When did it start and when did it end?

1a. How did the frequency of English and German words used among this community change from year to year?

1b. In what semantic spheres did the use of English first occur?

2. How did this community experience verticalization? How did they experience any of the following changes:

1. Division of labor

2. Differentiation of interests and association

3. Increasing systemic relationships to the larger society

4. Bureaucratization and impersonalization

5. Transfer of functions to profit enterprise and government

6. Urbanization and suburbanization

7. Changing values

3. How was this community's language use and/or verticalization affected by the World Wars?
4. How do each of these elements (language shift, verticalization, and World Wars) affect one another? Are there correlations among them?

I expect to find that the German-to-English shift among the Mennonite Brethren of Hillsboro is consistent with the verticalization of this community. I also expect to find a correlation between German-to-English shift and the implementation of wartime English language policies and Americanization efforts by governmental organizations.

Materials

The materials for this project include: 1. federal census records for Hillsboro, Kansas; 2. German-language press published in Hillsboro, Kansas; 3. church meeting minutes for two Hillsboro-area churches; 4. Kansas State governmental documents and historical accounts.

The federal censuses for Hillsboro, Kansas, were obtained from Ancestry.com, where they are available for download as pictures. Data was taken from each of the 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930 censuses. The 1940 census differs slightly from the earlier ones in that it only asked questions pertaining to language and industry to a small random sample (two individuals per census page). Unfortunately because of this methodology, there was not enough useful information to gather for a comparison. Information on the German-language press was taken from Arndt & Olson (1976) as well as from the archives of the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies (CMBS) in Hillsboro.

The church meeting minutes from the years 1920, 1930, 1940, and 1941 to 1950 were copied from the archives at CMBS. The study examined all meeting minute documents from 1920, 1930, and 1940, and samples of 4 to 5 pages for the years between 1941 and 1950. Minutes from 1920 and prior are either lost or incomplete and were therefore not included in the

study. All minutes from Ebenfeld and those from Hillsboro MB for the year 1920 are handwritten in German Gothic Script (with occasional names, places, and English words written in standard script). The Hillsboro MB minutes for 1930 and onward are typewritten in the standard script.

Gothic Script, or *Gotische Schrift*, was developed by German scribes and used by German speakers in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. The term “Gothic,” in this instance, has no connection with Gothic architecture or Gothic tribes; instead it was “derisively applied to denote inferiority” (The Center for Family History & Genealogy and Department of History, Brigham Young University 2014). The term “Gothic Script” refers to both the typeface(s)⁴ and the handwriting, but since the material dealt with for this project is the latter, the handwritten Gothic alphabet can be seen in Figure 1 below. Unfortunately, actual written letters are not often this easy to decipher, especially when they are being written hurriedly and with ample variation and shorthand.

All meeting minutes are recorded in Standard German, but it is possible that the meetings were held in Plautdietsch and transcribed by the secretary into Standard German because Plautdietsch has no writing system. The German of the meeting minutes may also be “colored” by Low German. Additionally, the language shift of these meeting minutes probably does not coincide exactly with the language shift of the community at large. Most likely, they are a delayed representation of the language use of the community at the time. Figure 2 below shows a sample of text written in combination Gothic Script and standard script from one of the meeting minutes.

⁴ There were multiple Gothic typefaces, but eventually they came to be known collectively as *Fraktur*.

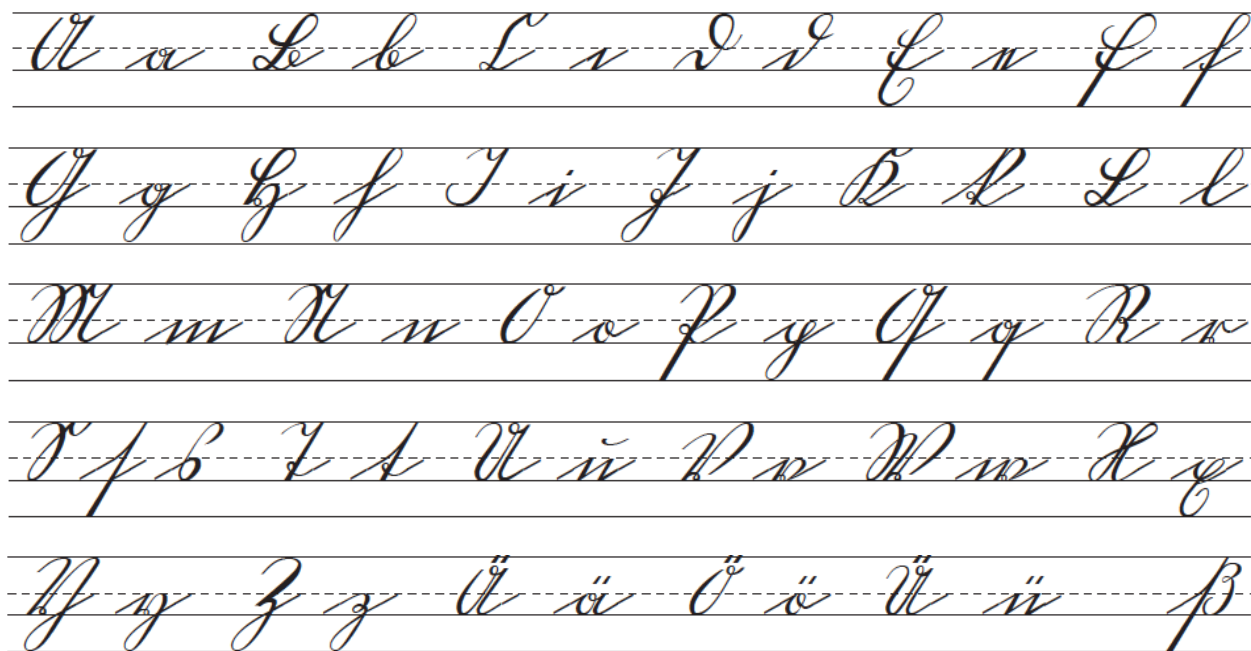


Figure 1. The German Alphabet in Gothic Script handwriting. Variations may occur. Obtained from The Center for Family History & Genealogy and Department of History, Brigham Young University 2014.

necessary information that would be asked of them by the state government for tax exemption purposes.

The information for governmental war-related activity includes both original documents, such as documentation of the work of the Kansas State Council of Defense, and historical accounts of such activity.

Methods

The census records were examined for both linguistic information and evidence for verticalization. As the data available differs from census year to census year, different data was taken from each census. Information from the age, place of birth, and occupation fields was collected for every census except 1880, for which only occupation information was gathered. For the 1910, 1920, and 1930 censuses only, information was also gathered from the immigration year and industry fields. Information on language use differs depending on the frame of the question. In 1900, it was very simple: “Whether able to speak English.” In 1910, it became more specific: “Whether able to speak English; or, if not, give language spoken.” In 1920, this had changed to two columns: “Whether able to speak English” and “Mother tongue,” and in 1930 they changed to “Whether able to speak English” and “Language spoken in home before coming to the United States.”

For analysis of German monolinguals, a subgroup was defined for each year based on different criteria depending on the information available. The group for 1900 was made up of individuals reporting an inability to speak English as well as reporting Russia or Germany as their place of birth. For 1910, this group consisted of persons who stated their language spoken as “German.” For 1920, it was persons who responded that they were unable to speak English and stated that their mother tongue was German. The 1930 group was made up of persons who

reported an inability to speak English in addition to one of two other parameters: 1. they listed German as the language they spoke at home before coming to the United States, or 2. they were born in the United States but had parents who were born in Russia or other family members who listed German as their home language prior to immigration.

The information collected for the German-language publications of Hillsboro included mostly number of publications per year, subscribers per year, and start and end dates of publication. Information regarding language use and subject matter for specific publications was obtained from microfiche copies and historical accounts. In addition, historical accounts were also a source for the general activities of the publications as anecdotal evidence for verticalization.

The church meeting minutes were analyzed by way of a frequency study. All words were counted and then placed in one of the following categories: German, English, Name, Place, Title, or Questionable. The Title category included words that were a part of an institutional title, such as “Tabor” in “Tabor College” (“College” was considered an English word). Names, places, and titles were excluded from the final percentages, but they were needed in order to calculate the average number of words per page that was used for the Hillsboro MB Church calculations.

When a cognate appeared that could be spelled the same in both German and English, it was considered German if it was written entirely in Gothic Script and English if it was written entirely in standard script. If the word was typewritten, it was considered questionable. Similarly, words were also considered questionable if they were abbreviations that were not distinguishable as English or German because of the nature of their abbreviation. For example, when abbreviations of month names appeared in the typewritten documents (such as “Feb.” for

“February” or “Februar”), it was impossible to tell whether English or German was the target language because the abbreviation was the same in both languages.

The Questionable category also included words that were written in a mixture of Gothic Script and standard script and/or used a mixture of German and English spelling. Most of the words in this category were cognates between German and English, which contributed to their ambiguity. For example, on one page of the 1940 documents from Ebenfeld, the word “program” is written twice, a couple of lines apart. The first time, it is written in standard script as “Programm,” with German spelling; the second time, it is also written with German spelling, but with only the first half of the word written in standard script and the latter half written in Gothic Script. Both of these instances were considered questionable since the German spelling was contradicted by the standard script, most likely because “programm” is a cognate of the English “program.”

Most words labeled as questionable were similar to this one. There were a few others, however, that were questionable because of the origin of the word. Several times throughout all the documents, the word “per” appeared. This word is of Latin origin, and it is difficult to say whether it entered the Mennonite Brethren’s German from Latin (which would make it a German word, for the purposes of this study) or from English. This is a complicated question because the Mennonites at this time had no ties to the contemporary German, and so their High German had evolved slightly differently than that of other German-speakers at the time.

This analysis was performed on all church minute documentation gathered. All data from Ebenfeld’s 1920, 1930, and 1940 documents were gathered. For Hillsboro MB, however, only those pages containing English words were gathered for 1920, 1930, and 1940. This was due to the large number of pages and the limited availability of the archive curator. To artificially

generate a completed data set in order to match that of Ebenfeld, the total number of pages for each year was recorded and the average number of words per page substituted for the missing pages, with all the words on these pages counted as German. For both churches for the years between 1941 and 1950, samples of 4 to 5 pages were taken for those years still containing German. Any years containing only English words were scanned closely but were not analyzed for specific word counts.

Then, the English words gathered from 1920, 1930, and 1940 were broken down into semantic categories. This was not done for the 1941–1950 documents because they were only samples from each year and might therefore misrepresent the use of English words for that particular year. The semantic categories chosen were based on trends of verticalization found throughout the data. They are: date, honorific, position inside the church, position outside the church, institution/company, youth, finance, and other. The categories are ordered this way to reflect the hierarchy of the categorization process. This was so that if a word like “college” appeared in a financial document, it would be labeled as an institution/company word and not a finance word. Likewise, it should be noted that youth and finance words counted whole passages pertaining to youth or finance, including less relevant words like function words and not just the words that were highly relevant for the category. Each of the semantic categories can be tied to verticalization change, and each of the instances of an English word in one of these categories can be seen as a marker of that change. This is explained further in the results section pertaining to semantic categories of English words found.

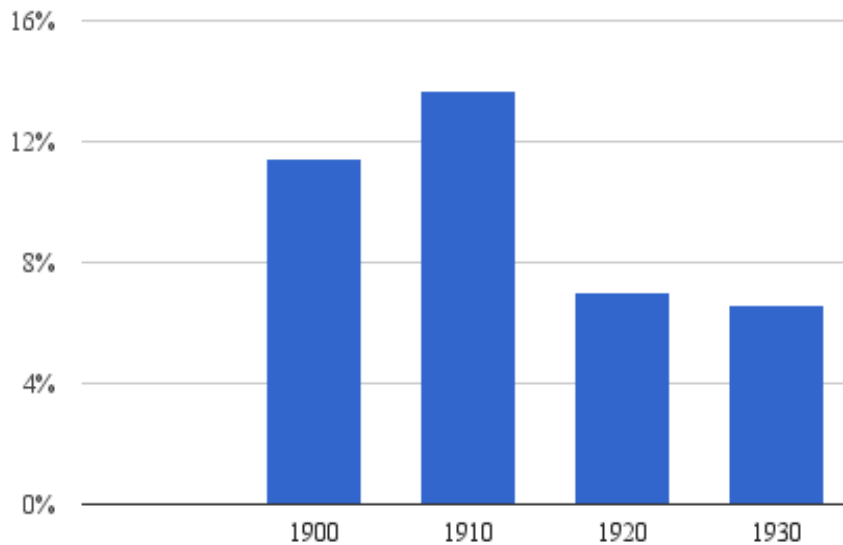
CHAPTER 5: LANGUAGE SHIFT RESULTS

Census Evidence

Information for language shift in Hillsboro was taken from United States Federal Census reports from 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930. Throughout these years, the vast majority of Hillsboro residents born outside the U.S. had immigrated from Russia and Prussia. Respondents' immigration years are concentrated between 1874 and 1888, during the largest wave of immigration. Thereafter, immigration is sparse, meaning that the community no longer benefited from the language maintenance effects of a continued influx of German-speaking immigrants. For this reason, 1900 was chosen as the first census year in the study because it was the first census taken in Hillsboro's post-immigration years. The data here presented cannot effectively trace the loss of German in the community because it relies on self-reported language use, which is often skewed by a number of factors including social pressure, and questions with limited scope (the 1930 census only asked for mother tongue if the person was foreign-born). However, it can help paint a picture of how German monolinguals—their presence and their environment—changed over this time.

The linguistic environment following the period of most concentrated immigration can be evaluated through reported language use data. Figure 3 below shows the percentage of respondents who reported an inability to speak English from 1900 to 1930. This is for individuals who are 10 years old and older.

Figure 3. Reported Inability to Speak English, 1900 to 1930



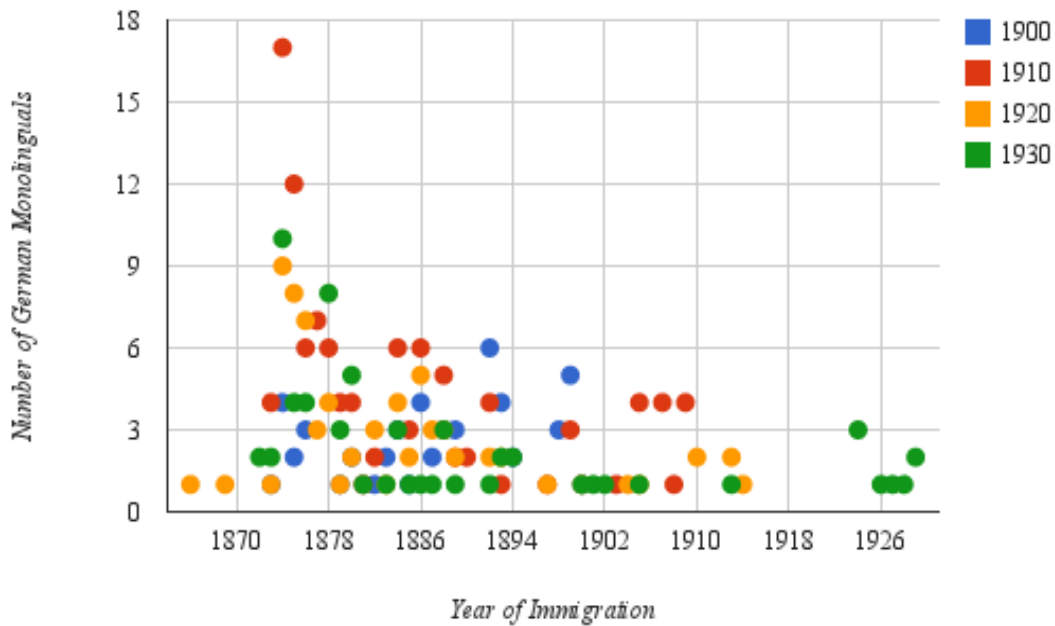
Most of these from 1910 reported German as their language spoken, and most from 1920 and 1930 reported German as their mother tongue. Those from 1900 were not asked any details about their language use beyond English speaking ability. It must be noted that some of the drop from 1910 to 1920 may be the fault of underreported German use or over-reported English ability due to social pressure from World War I.

To get a better understanding of how the linguistic environment changed from year to year, we can focus in on German monolinguals. These are defined as respondents who listed German as the language they spoke in 1910, as well as those who both reported an inability to speak English and who listed German as their mother tongue for 1920 and 1930⁵. Those from 1900 reported an inability to speak English and listed Russia or Germany as their place of birth. German monolinguals' immigration years (for those born outside the United States) consistently

⁵ Because the column in 1930 specifically asked for mother tongue only if the person was foreign-born, the few who reported an inability to speak English but who were born in the United States were further investigated for their parents' places of birth and mother tongues.

fall in the period of peak immigration (1874 to 1888) from census year to census year, indicating that the linguistic environment in the community was such that these German speakers were able to survive without knowing English for around ten to fifty years after their initial immigration. Figure 4 below displays the distribution of immigration years for German monolinguals ages 10 and older.

Figure 4. Year of Immigration of German Monolinguals in 1900 to 1930 Censuses



Across all census years, the vast majority of German monolinguals are immigrants. Very few were born in the United States, suggesting that monolingualism is not being replenished in the U.S.-born population during these years. So while the above data indicates a linguistic environment that is conducive to German monolingualism, it appears that bilingualism has an effect on the majority of those born in the United States. See Table 1 below for the birthplaces of German monolinguals in each census year.

Table 1. Birthplace of German Monolinguals ages 10 and older, 1900 to 1930

Birthplace	1900	1910	1920	1930
Germany ⁶	12	23	14	5
Russia	42	88	57	63
United States	1	5	2	3
Other	0	2	2	0
Total	55	118	75	71

The age distribution for German monolinguals shows the most overall increase in age from 1910 to 1920. Little change occurs from 1920 to 1930, and there is a moderate increase from 1900 to 1910. Table 2 below compares the mean ages for English speakers and German monolinguals across all years for individuals 10 years old and older. The results for English show a trend toward more midpoint ages, especially in the change from 1910 to 1920. In the same years⁶, there is a shift in German monolinguals' average age, toward the older generation. This suggests an "aging out" of German monolingualism and a relative normalization of English use across all ages.

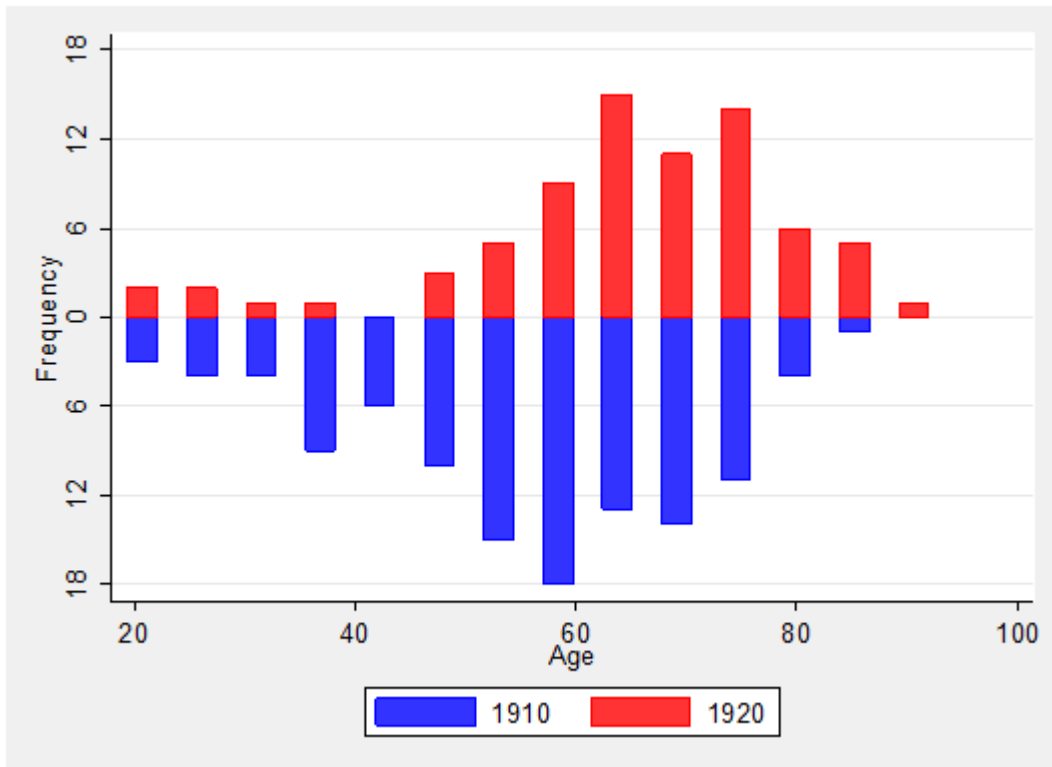
⁶ Includes "East Prussia" and "West Prussia." Also, it is possible that the census taker incorrectly labeled Russian Germans as being born in Germany because they spoke German--especially if they did not speak English well enough to explain otherwise.

Table 2. Mean age for each reported language (for individuals 10 and older)

	1900	1910	1920	1930
English	27	25	33	35
German	44	53	65	63

Examining closer the period of greatest change, 1910 to 1920, we can see this “aging out” of German even clearer. Figure 5 below compares the age distribution of German monolinguals from 1910 and 1920 for individuals 10 years old and older. Here, two things are happening: German monolingualism is no longer being replenished in people of younger ages, and German is becoming a language of the older generation. For this reason, 1910 to 1920 appears to be the period of greatest shift from German monolingualism to some English use and/or bilingualism.

Figure 5. Distribution of German Monolinguals’ Ages, 1910 & 1920



Finally, the employment statistics of German monolinguals from year to year show that opportunity for non-English speakers (of working age) in Hillsboro significantly changed from 1910 to 1920. These results are shown in the table below. While the majority of monolingual Germans listed “none” (or some form of housekeeping at home), “own income,” or nothing, those that worked held jobs almost exclusively in 1900 and 1910. The later years show one worker each, and even then the occupation (laborer) is probably one of the last to necessitate English usage. This sizeable drop in opportunities for German monolinguals suggests a change in the linguistic environment towards bilingualism.

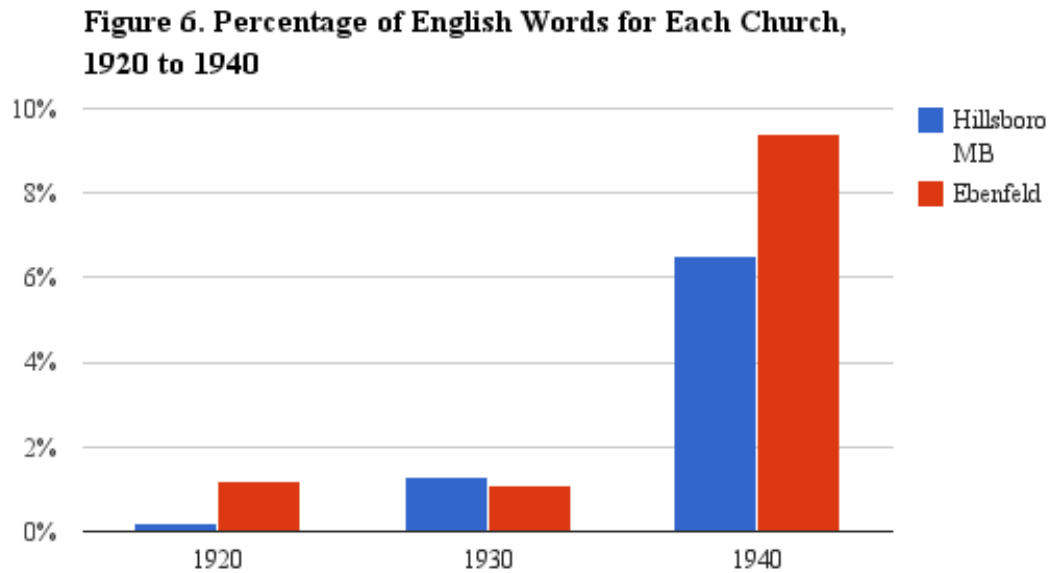
Table 3. Occupations held by monolingual German speakers of working age (14 to 65)

1900	1910	1920	1930
blacksmith (1), boot & shoe repair (2), city marshal (1), day laborer (2), flour mill laborer (1), dry goods salesman (1), servant (1)	carpenter (6), farmer (1), general laborer (5), laundress (1), maid (1), mason (1), shoemaker (1), veterinarian (1)	farm laborer (1)	general laborer (1)

Frequency Study Evidence

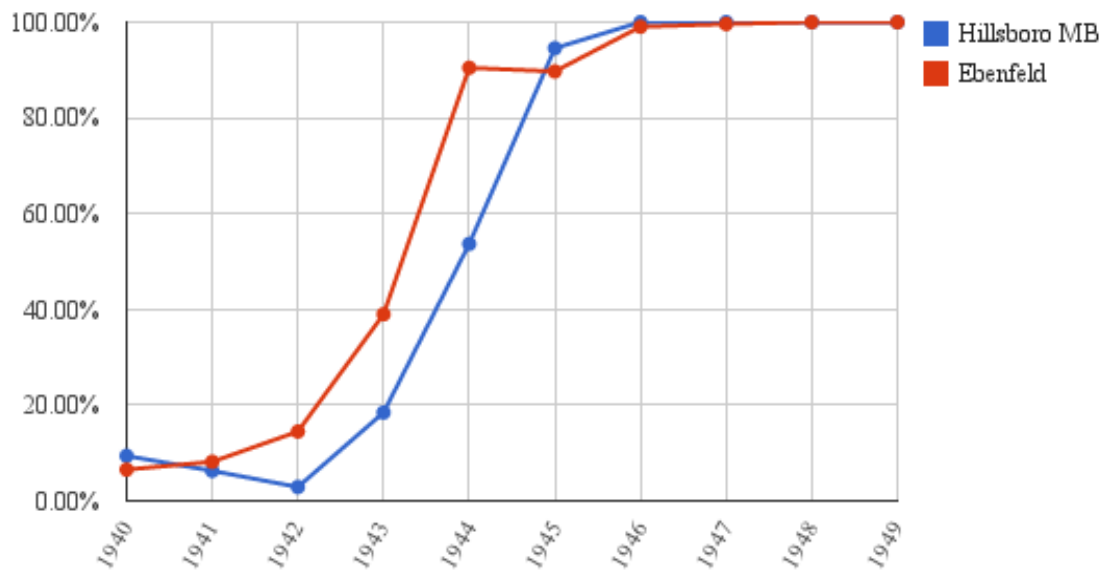
As a reminder, the objective of the frequency study is to determine, through the representative language data of church meeting minutes, how the rate of shift varied from year to year as well as which semantic domains experienced shift first and fastest. The study will begin by examining the number of words per language—English, German, or Questionable—for each year. The numbers are also broken down by church community so as not to obscure any community-specific trends present in the data.

Results for each church's use of English words for the years 1920, 1930, and 1940 are displayed in Figure 6 below. A close scanning of all 1950 data showed 100% English use for both churches, and so the breakdowns from this year are not included.



Both churches use very little English in 1920, and there is little change from that in 1930, but 1940 starts to display a lot more English use, with approximately one in every 15 words being English for Hillsboro MB and one in every 10 for Ebenfeld. Since by 1950 all minutes were written in English, it is evident that the vast majority of shift occurred in the years between 1940 and 1950, so a sample from each of these years was analyzed as well. Figure 7 traces the change in each church's English use through these years.

Figure 7. Percentage of English Words for Each Church, 1940 to 1949



The amount of English and German holds generally steady from 1940 to 1941 for both churches. In 1942 Ebenfeld nearly doubles its percentage of English words while Hillsboro MB's English is only a third of what it was the previous year. The slight downward trend in Hillsboro's English use from 1940 to 1942 may be indicative of some pushback against using English either by the speakers in the meetings or by the transcriber. Whatever the case, Hillsboro MB's numbers began to rise again in 1943 and then very steeply until they reached 100% English use in 1946. In fact, both churches experience a meaningful increase in the percentage of English words in 1943 and an even larger increase from 1943 to 1944. Hillsboro MB was slower to adopt English but reaches 100% English use two years earlier than Ebenfeld. It should be mentioned that no definitively German words were found for Ebenfeld in 1947—the only holdout to 100% English use in these documents is a small percentage of questionable words.

Ebenfeld's 1946 German occurs all together in one short passage, not as several scattered words throughout the English-dominant text. In fact, for both churches, as English begins to take

over as the dominant language, the German occurs largely in passage form. The fact that German appears almost exclusively in passage form during the English-dominant years makes the use of German in these later years seem very deliberate. Likewise, the increase in English passages in the years leading up to English dominance indicates a high command of English in these years. Table 4 below displays the number of full English sentences for each year leading up to its dominance.

Table 4. Number of English Sentences per Year for Each Church, 1941 to 1944

	Ebenfeld	Hillsboro
1941	0	4
1942	1	0
1943	20	7
1944	71	43

English sentences are first observed in 1940 (four found in Ebenfeld documents, three in Hillsboro MB), but the numbers from these years are not included in the table because they come from full collections of documents, unlike the samples from 1941–1947, and therefore cannot be directly compared to the data from these years. From these results, it seems likely that either the participants in these meetings or the transcriber were bilingual at the time full English sentences are first used. As 1940 marks the first use of full English sentences in the data, this is the earliest year during which bilingualism is attested in the data, though it certainly may have been present in earlier documents between 1930 and 1940. No full English sentences were found in 1920 or 1930.

The sharpness of the increase in English use in 1942–1946 might mean that it was triggered by some event that took place around this time. More likely, however, is the possibility

that the churches' adoption of English in these years lags behind that of the general community. This would make sense given the increased passage from German to English in the years leading up to its dominance and German thereafter. If the community was not already bilingual, this extreme growth in English use would not have been possible, and there would not be a reason for deliberate German use. Additionally, Ebenfeld's 1943 documents include a discussion about the congregation's ability to understand German. The committee prepares to survey the congregation in order to learn just how many people are unable to understand what is being said in church services because they are given in German.

CHAPTER 6: VERTICALIZATION RESULTS

Census Evidence

As community structure becomes more verticalized, one of the indicators of structural change is increased specificity and diversity of jobs. This creates a situation in which peoples' social connections are based more on functionality and less on shared experience. The environment of decreased familiarity in day-to-day life that results from this situation would promote the use of English in work domains. Table 5 below displays selected jobs for 1880, the earliest census report available after the beginning of Mennonite migration to the area, 1910, a midway point, and 1930, the latest census with full occupation/industry information for all respondents.

Table 5. Selected Occupations from 1880, 1910, and 1930 Censuses for Hillsboro, Kansas

	1880	1910	1930
Agricultural	farmer, cattle herder	farmer, thresher	farmer, hay baler
Labor	railroad laborer	delivery boy, laborer, (lumber yard) laborer	deliveryman, laborer, (street) grader, truck driver, yard-man (lumber), egg packer
Trades/ Crafts	carpenter, lumber man, blacksmith, stonemason, smith, wagonmaker	barber, blacksmith, broom maker, butcher, carpenter, engineer, harness maker, mason, miller, milliner, painter, photographer, printer, repairman, seamstress, shoemaker, tailor, teamster, tinner, wagon maker	baker, barber, blacksmith, broom maker, carpenter, jeweler, electrician, linotypist, machinist, mason, mechanic, miller, milliner, painter, printer, repairman, seamstress, shoemaker, teamster, welder
Commerce	merchant, stock dealer	cashier, cream merchant, junk dealer, retail merchant, sales(wo)man, wholesale merchant	cashier, retail merchant, sales(wo)man
Professional/ Managerial		(real estate) agent, dentist, doctor, editor, lawyer, minister, nurse, postmaster, teacher, veterinarian	(insurance) agent, (real estate) agent, chiropractor, clergyman, dentist, doctor, editor, librarian, nurse, optometrist, osteopath, postmaster, reporter, (hospital) superintendent, (public school) superintendent, teacher, veterinarian
Clerical/ Office		bookkeeper, central girl (telephone operator), (telegraph) operator, secretary, stenographer	bookkeeper, office assistant, stenographer, telegraph operator, telephone operator
Services		chauffeur, cook, laundress, mail carrier, plumber, waiter	cook, janitor, laundress, plumber, presser, (mail) carrier, waiter

The greatest change in job specialization and diversity happens between 1880 and 1910. It is evident from these samples that verticalization is taking place in the community at this time by means of division of labor. There is less change from 1910 to 1930, indicating that the peak of verticalization occurred prior to 1910. However, the community does still experience an increase in specificity and diversity of professional or managerial occupations. This can especially be seen in the increasing diversity of medical occupations from 1910, with doctor, nurse, and dentist only, to 1930, with doctor, nurse, dentist, optometrist, osteopath, and chiropractor. It makes sense that professional/managerial jobs are more prone to continued verticalization because they often belong to fields that experience continued specialization, like the medical field.

Further evidence for verticalization among the census documents is largely qualitative. From the occupations listed in the 1880 census as well as other historical accounts (Saul 1974), we know that there was a railroad and accompanying railway station located in Hillsboro during this time. Listed occupations from the 1910 census show that there was a flour mill in town at that time, and later censuses show that it continued operation at least until 1930. The 1910 census also showed the introduction of a lumber yard, which continued into 1940. Other industry developments shown through census data include: a post office in 1900; an ice plant, department store, telephone exchange, and college in 1910; a hospital in 1920; and a library and light and power company in 1930. The increase in industries indicates a transfer of functions to profit enterprise and government and also increasing systemic relationships to the larger society with such industries as the post office and hospital, which are located in the community but are tied to an extra-community system.

The hospital was in fact owned by the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren and opened in 1918. It was run by an administrative board to which three members—one from the chamber of

commerce, one from the General Conference Mennonites, and one from the Mennonite Brethren Conference—were added a few years later. The Krimmer Mennonite Brethren later sold the hospital to the Hillsboro community in 1951, when it was formed into a new corporation by elected delegates from religious communities in the city and the chamber of commerce.

Frequency Study Evidence

An examination of the English words used in church meeting minutes reveals several trends in their semantic domains related to verticalization. These are displayed by year in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Number of Words per Category for Each Church, 1920, 1930, 1940

		Occupation/ Position Inside Church	Occupation/ Position Outside Church	Institution/ Company	Youth	Finance	Other	Totals
1920	Ebenfeld	0	0	0	0	1	22	23
	Hillsboro	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
1930	Ebenfeld	2	0	3	0	3	14	22
	Hillsboro	10	5	24	0	33	21	90
1940	Ebenfeld	9	1	13	13	116	93	245
	Hillsboro	19	3	27	108	68	86	311

Words that comprise positions or occupations held by individuals both inside and outside the church are markers of increased division of labor. As the occupations both within a community and outside it (which are talked about within the community) become more diverse, they are likely to take on the language of the society from which they came. This is the reason that, for instance, the word “Janitor” is used to describe the individual whose job it is to clean the church building. After division of labor caused the demand for the position, the speakers chose to

use the English word to describe it⁷. Table 7 below displays the occupations or positions mentioned for each church in each year.

Table 7. English Language Occupations and Positions Used in Each Church’s Minutes 1930 & 1940

Occupation/Position Inside the Church		
	1930	1940
Ebenfeld	Usher Pianist	Secretary Usher Manager Janitor Reverend Pianist Preacher
Hillsboro MB	Janitor Usher Trustee	Secretary Trustee Reverend Treasurer Janitor Custodian Organist Pianist
Occupation/Position Outside the Church		
Ebenfeld		Missionary
Hillsboro MB	Mayor Councilman Student	Superintendent

Division of labor is especially observable among the positions inside the church from 1930 to 1940. Some of these, like Trustee and Treasurer, are positions with necessary

⁷ Interestingly, one instance (in Hillsboro MB’s 1930 documents) of the word “Janitor” occurs in parentheses after the German word “Kirchendiener.” When it occurs earlier in the document, it appears without the German. This may show the need for clarification for the German word to specifically mean “a person whose job it is to clean a building.” However, it may also show a choice on the part of the transcriber to write the word in English while the German word was spoken or vice versa.

connections to extra-community institutions. Others, like Janitor and Organist, reflect increased specialization of labor within the church itself. Instances of occupations outside the church also reflect vertical ties through bureaucratization and increasing systemic relationships to the larger society, especially official positions like Mayor and Superintendent. The adoption of these new English words into the church’s lexicon suggests an affinity for English to accompany several aspects of verticalization in the community.

Institution and company words are indicative of both division of labor and bureaucratization and impersonalization. This is because, as jobs become more specialized and more bureaucratization is put in place, a community will become connected with more companies who perform specialized work and institutions in charge of making decisions that affect the community. Most of the words in this category come from names of religious companies or institutions affiliated with the Mennonite Brethren. As such, Ebenfeld and Hillsboro MB were two of the many churches responsible for financially supporting these institutions. See Table 8 below for a full list of the institution and company names that occur in each church’s meeting minutes.

Table 8. English Language Institutions and Companies Referenced in Each Church’s Minutes 1930 & 1940

	1930	1940
Ebenfeld	(Tabor) College	Methodist Church (Tabor) College Civil Service Work Bureau
Hillsboro MB	First National Bank, (Badger) Lumber Company (Tabor) College City Council Mennonite Brethren Church	(Tabor) College (Sterling) College A Cappella Choir Christian Leader Grace Children’s Home (Burkholder) Lumber Company The National Cross (Tabor) College Men’s Chorus

In the category of youth, English words display increasing systemic relationships to the larger society. This is primarily in the community domain of schools, which serve the community but which are controlled by state and local governments. Because of the government's involvement in schools, children and young adults have a strong extra-community tie in that domain. If this entire demographic subset of the congregation had strong ties to English, it would make sense that the community's decisions regarding them might be discussed and recorded in English. Much of the material in the youth domain pertains to the scheduling of Sunday School classes and other youth-related events such as youth conferences and youth choirs. Part of the reason there are so many words in this category is because many of the discussions pertaining to youth are comprised of long passages of full sentences of which all of the words were counted.

Finally, the category of finance represents a trend for English words to be connected to increased bureaucratization through the government's increased involvement with the church via taxes. The Revenue Act of 1909 granted religious organizations tax exempt status provided that they did not generate a profit (Arnsberger, Ludlum, Riley, & Stanton 2008). While the church would not have had to pay taxes to the government, it would've had to make regular financial reports in order to maintain its tax exempt status. Especially considering that the government would likely have required these documents to be in English, it would have been advantageous for the churches to keep its financial records in English. Like the youth category, the finance category gets a lot of its size from the fact that it includes whole phrases, sentences, and passages that pertain to finance. Many of these are listed in ledger form as individual items, such as "felt for floor," and financial label words like "total," "cash on hand," and "cash in bank."

Anecdotal Evidence from Meeting Minutes

The church meeting minutes also reveal some anecdotal evidence for the verticalization of their communities. Following the methods they had developed in Russia and earlier, the Mennonite Brethren operated their churches on a volunteer-basis; that is, their pastors and other leadership figures were not hired or paid by the church. It was not until the 1940s that they began to consider hiring their pastors full-time. The decision to do so is indicative of internal verticalization, which could be seen as a tactic that would aid in language maintenance. However, it also brought an aspect of monetary exchange into the church, which is an effect of the transfer of functions to profit business and government. In this way, the churches began to operate less as communities and more as businesses. This would likely result in an increased amount of vertical ties.

Hillsboro MB received and filled out a survey in 1940 that was issued by the Mennonite Brethren General Conference. The survey asked for statistics regarding members' genders, ages, and occupations. Interestingly, the entire survey is in English, suggesting that the General Conference had shifted to English in its official documents by this time.

Presumably as a response to the nation's push for patriotism, Ebenfeld reported the purchase of an American flag in 1940 and United States war bonds in 1943. Ebenfeld's minutes also discuss the draft around this time, and the leaders decide that their young men can serve in alternative service as conscientious objectors and that the community will support them financially.

German-Language Publication Evidence

Hillsboro had a total of 21 German-language publications, the earliest of which began in 1883 and the latest of which ran until 1955. Most of these were geared toward Mennonite readers, and, with the help of the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, published by them as well. The Mennonite Brethren Publishing House was first established in Medford, Oklahoma, in 1904 and eventually moved to Hillsboro in 1913. German-language periodicals were some of the last holdouts of the German language in Hillsboro. By 1964, when the last all-German newspaper, the *Zionsbote*, ceased publication, the only readership was the oldest members of the Mennonite Brethren community. The *Zionsbote* had been the official periodical of North American Mennonite Brethren Church until 1951, when it was replaced by the *Christian Leader*, originally an English-language youth publication started in 1937 to cater to “a constituency that was fast switching from German to English” (US Mennonite Brethren 2013–2014).

During the period of German-language publication in Hillsboro, the number of publications fluctuated according to both readership and availability of resources. Arndt & Olson (1976) provide a comprehensive overview of German-language publications in the United States. This includes all types of publications including newspapers, magazines/periodicals, and supplements. The publication numbers for each year are presented in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8. Number of German-language Publications in Hillsboro, 1883 to 1955



From the first publication of *Der Farmers Anzeiger* in 1883, the popularity of creating new German-language publications gradually begins to catch on until 1902 when a peak eight publications were circulated. The drastic drop after 1902 is partially the fault of missing publication information. Two of the four publications that are shown as having ceased after 1902 only did so because further copies were never found and the end dates of these are not known. Nevertheless, Hillsboro German-language publications experienced a decline from 1902 onward, until only two remained in 1937.

These last two publications, the *Zionsbote* and the *Hillsboro Journal* (formerly *Vorwärts*), are two of the oldest newspapers in the collection, lasting 71 and 52 years respectively. The *Hillsboro Journal* may have been helped by the fact that it was published in both English and German from 1942 to 1953 when it ended. The *Zionsbote* lasted much longer, surviving as the only German-language publication in Hillsboro from 1953 until 1964. English or partially English articles did appear occasionally in the *Zionsbote* starting as early as 1936, but

these were often letters written by foreign missionaries; the majority of the publication was committed to printing in German through to its end.

Circulation numbers for these Hillsboro publications are few and far between. The only two newspapers with comparable numbers for multiple years are the *Hillsboro Anzeiger* and the *Zionsbote*, both which reported growth. The *Hillsboro Anzeiger* grew from 375 readers to 600 from 1890 to 1895, and the *Zionsbote* reported growth from 2,000 readers in 1910 to 2,625 in 1914 and to 3,050 in 1920. Despite this growth early in the twentieth century, a passage in the final issue of the *Zionsbote* naturally blames a lack of subscribers for the closing of the publication. Circulation numbers from other publications run from 375 to 2,568 for various periods between 1885 and 1900. All these circulation numbers most likely benefit from circulation outside Hillsboro. For the Mennonite Brethren publications, especially, it is likely that they were not sustained by the Hillsboro population alone.

Of these 21 publications, only four of them lasted more than four years. Most of them were founded before the turn of the century, during a time of great opportunity for small newspapers in America. As Salmons notes, “this creates an illusion of stability in the total number of publications, masking constant shifts in actual titles” (2002: 184). Some consolidation among Hillsboro’s publications does occur: the *Hillsboro Anzeiger* merged with a local paper in a nearby town, the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House acquired the *Vorwärts* when it moved to Hillsboro, and the *Vorwärts* became the *Hillsboro Journal* in 1939 and became amalgamated with another local paper in 1953.

Some fifteen different publishing companies together printed the 21 German-language publications of Hillsboro, sometimes replacing one another and often being owned by only one person. Several of the publications were printed in both English and German, or converted to do

so at some point. The first bilingual publication was the *Hillsboro Herald* in 1886. This was followed by the *Tabor College Herald*, the student publication of Tabor College, starting in 1912. The *Hillsboro Journal/Vorwärts* published in English and German from 1942 until it ended. The *Zionsbote* even allowed some of its articles to be published in English starting in 1948 (though some letters from missionaries printed in English are seen earlier). Understandably, the papers did this to reach a wider audience. It is certainly the case with the *Hillsboro Herald* that it wanted to reach both the Mennonite and non-Mennonite communities with this tactic. However, the *Tabor College Herald*, the *Hillsboro Journal/Vorwärts*, and the *Zionsbote* were all Mennonite Brethren publications, so their use of English is more telling of language shift within that community. This is also displayed by the MB Conference's introduction of an English-only periodical in 1937 called the *Christian Leader*. This publication was originally intended to be targeted toward young people, but it eventually replaced the *Zionsbote* as the official publication of the Mennonite Brethren Conference in 1951.

While most the Hillsboro publications actually spent their whole lives there, a few had moved from nearby cities. Much of the consolidation of old papers and creation of new ones came out of the establishment of the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House in Hillsboro. In the last issue of the *Zionsbote*, the editor mentions the trend of newspaper consolidations:

In dieser Zeit, wo Geschäfte sich zusammenschmelzen und größer und größer werden, um zu existieren, wird es schwerer und schwerer für uns als Diener einer kleinen und beschränkten Konferenz. (Mennonite Brethren Publishing House 1964)

In this time, where businesses are merging and becoming bigger and bigger, it is becoming harder and harder for us to exist as servants of a small and limited conference (translation by Christopher Dick)

The Mennonite Brethren Publishing House eventually merged with its Canadian counterpart, the Christian Press, Limited, in 1957. According to the Recommendations and Resolutions of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches 1878–1963, the reason for the merger was “for the sake of unifying the publication work of our General Conference, and to avoid unnecessary duplication and to serve the Conference and the Kingdom of God more effectively, efficiently and economically” (Janzen 1964: 144).

CHAPTER 7: WORLD WAR LANGUAGE POLICIES AND AMERICANIZATION

Kansas State Laws

Tracing governmental language laws and Americanization efforts through Kansas history requires an examination of historical documentation coupled with a survey of the government's true reach at the time. It is often seen with governmental efforts like language prescription that laws have little to no effect at the time of their implementation. This is simply because the government did not or could not enforce them in all the tiny communities of Kansas's vast rural landscape. This makes it all the more important when a true community change does coincide with a law's implementation, and it becomes important to decipher why the law "worked" this time but had little effect before.

Kansas was officially made a state in 1861 after declaring their dedication to the union efforts in the Civil War. Thus, by the time the Mennonites came in 1874, Kansas had only been a state for a little over a decade. As a result of the railroad land grants, large numbers of German-speaking immigrants had come into the state, quickly making German the most widely spoken language in Kansas other than English. Naturally, Anglo-American Kansans may have felt uneasy about what could have been looked at as a "takeover" of German culture. Two proposed state constitutions, one in 1857 and one in 1858, contained provisions requiring that all legal proceedings be in English only, but neither was ever approved by Congress (Ruppenthal 1920: 51). Regardless, the German speakers were largely confined to their respective settlement groups, where a lack of necessary English contact meant little threat to the Anglo-American way of life or, for that matter, to their German way of life.

Prior to the first Mennonites' arrival in 1874, the subject of language in schools throughout the state had already been a topic of discussion. An 1867 law allowed instruction in schools to be given in the German language if a group of "freeholders representing fifty pupils" requested it (Luebke 1990: 31). Since the law stipulated German specifically as the alternative language of instruction, it is safe to acknowledge that these German-speaking Kansans and their language had been recognized as "something to be dealt with" at this time.

Then, 1876 saw a sizeable overhaul of Kansas state school requirements. This was a modification of the school laws from Kansas's first statutes in 1862, which established requirements for schools. In both the 1862 and the 1876 laws, the only reference to English appears in a list of required subjects to be taught:

In each and every school district shall be taught orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, and arithmetic, and such other branches as may be determined by the district board. (1865 Kan. Sess. Laws, ch. 122, § xx).

This is not so much a mandate on the medium of instruction as a requirement that all children be taught the English language as one of their academic subjects. Luebke even states that "When the population of a school district was solidly German [...] the locally elected school board was likely to hire a German teacher who would instruct the children in the German language, or in both German and English, irrespective of what the statutory provision might have been" (Luebke 1990: 31).

This is also attested by Mennonite Brethren individuals who lived in Hillsboro or had family members who lived in Hillsboro prior to World War I. The Mennonite Brethren even told their young people who left to become certified as teachers that they should tell the district board that they spoke German and came from a German-speaking area. They had learned that doing so

gave them a good chance to be assigned to teach in Hillsboro (Peggy Goertzen, personal communication, April 7, 2014).

An 1874 law did mandate compulsory attendance for all children ages eight to fourteen at a public or private school “taught by a competent instructor” (1874 Kan. Sess. Laws, ch. 123, § 1). In the 1862 statutes, a “competent instructor” was determined by the County Superintendent as someone having “moral character, learning, and ability to teach school” (G.S. Kan. 1862, ch. 181, § xx). There is no mention of a language requirement, though the wording of the statute leaves much of the criteria up to the discretion of the County Superintendent, who could theoretically have only certified English-speaking candidates. In 1876, the conditions for teacher certification became more formal, requiring a three-person examining board to approve a candidate’s ability to teach all required subjects. As stated before, one of these required subjects was English grammar, so it seems probable that all successful candidates did know enough English to prove their teaching ability in this area. Depending on the degree of enforcement, it is likely that this combination of “competent instructor” requirements and required subjects introduced the first English into the German-speaking schools of Kansas.

After the school law overhaul of 1876, a provision was added to the portion of the law specifying required subjects in 1877, requiring that the language of instruction be English:

In each and every school district shall be taught orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, U.S. history, history of Kansas, and such other branches as may be determined by the district board: *Provided, That the instruction given in the several branches shall be in the English language.* (1877 Kan. Sess. Laws, ch. 170, § 1; emphasis mine)

It appears that this stipulation was not strongly enforced, especially considering the tendency for German-speaking instructors to teach in heavily German-speaking school districts. In addition, the provision seems only to apply to public schools, though the wording makes it difficult to say for sure. So private and parochial schools of the kind the Mennonites originally developed would probably be exempt from such a requirement. However, later, in 1919, the law saw an addition to the compulsory attendance mandate which also required English as the only medium of instruction:

Every parent, guardian, or other person in the State of Kansas having control or charge of any child or children having reached the age of 8 years and under 16 years shall be required to send such child or children to a public school or a private, denominational or parochial school *in which all instruction shall be given in the English language only.*

(1919 Kan. Sess. Laws, ch. 272, § 1; emphasis mine)

This time the English-only requirement was made explicitly to apply to all schools in the state. Several chapters later, the requirement is restated—this time as a provision for elementary schools only:

All elementary schools in this State, whether public, private, or parochial, shall use the English language exclusively as the medium of instruction. (1919 Kan. Sess. Laws, ch. 257, § 1)

Unlike those on the books at the time of the Mennonites' first immigration to Kansas, these 1919 laws were actively enforced, according to anecdotes from witnesses at the time, and all Hillsboro school teachers taught exclusively in English (Peggy Goertzen, personal communication, April 7, 2014).

The only other law regarding language during this time was a 1915 statute that allowed a juror to be challenged, with no principle cause, “for inability to read the English language or for want of competent knowledge of the language” (Ruppenthal 1920: 57). Ruppenthal also describes the “disenfranchising” treatment of non-English speakers at the voting polls at the time of his writing in 1920.

State Council of Defense

Luebke (1990) claims that English-only school laws like these started appearing all over the country as a consequence of pressure from patriotic organizations to force “American assimilation” on foreigners, especially Germans. These organizations formed out of the attitudes and atmosphere in the United States leading up to World War I. Increased representation of European Germans as “barbarians” caused these ultra-patriots to look upon anyone presenting characteristics of German nationality with suspicion. As for the Mennonites, who had no connection whatsoever to the nation of Germany, or even its culture for that matter, the fact that they spoke German was not helped by their pacifist ideals which prohibited them from supporting U.S. war efforts. Stories of harassment and even physical attacks are common in the Mennonite narrative of this time. In Hillsboro, an administrative building at Tabor College burned down in April of 1918, though arson was never proven (Juhnke 1989).

The Kansas State Council of Defense was officially organized in April of 1917, the same month of the United States’ official entry into WWI, and ended in December of 1918. The council was officially charged with directing food rationing and distribution, but their actions quickly became focused on rallying patriotist and loyalty throughout the state. Frank W. Blackmar’s *History of the Kansas state council of defense* (1920) is especially enlightening, particularly because it was written in 1920, only two years after the organization’s official

activity had ceased. The report reflects the council's attitudes with the same bravado as if it had been written by the council itself during the time of its activity.

It is clear throughout Blackmar's account that German speakers and the German language are singled out as important targets for Americanization as well as suspicion of disloyalty.

Blackmar writes,

The habitual use of the foreign language of our enemies in war time constituted a two-fold menace. It rendered the utterance of disloyal remarks comparatively safe, and it had a tendency to provoke mob violence on the part of the more hot-headed members of society. It was no more than natural, therefore, that this committee sought ways and means to restrict as much as possible the use of the German language. (1920: 69)

The council set out to restrict the use of German primarily in two ways: 1. by working to enforce English as the language of instruction in schools, and 2. by appealing directly to the German speakers to replace their German with English in their communities, particularly in their churches.

It is clear from Blackmar's report that the council was less than happy with the law of the time regarding English as the medium of instruction in schools. At their final meeting in December of 1818, the council drew two house bills that eventually became the English-only provisions in the 1919 school laws discussed above. These came at the end of a hard campaign for tougher English-only laws in both schools and churches. The council even considered pushing for a ban on the use of German in public gatherings, and appealed to the National Council of Defense for advice. The National Council responded after the war ended, saying it was not necessary to do so now that the war was over, but that it may have been necessary had the war continued. German was the only foreign language mentioned in their correspondence.

The council also met with representatives of various German-speaking religious groups to discuss the discontinuation of their holding church services in any language other than English. A number of prominent Mennonite figures were among the many representatives of German-speaking religious groups invited to the meeting, among them a minister from Ebenfeld Church, the secretary of the MB General Conference and chairman of the Tabor College board of directors, and a Tabor College faculty member. Blackmar mentions little about these men other than their names, only that their cooperation assured the council that their goal of eradicating German in churches would be carried out. The council urged “the advisability of increasing the use of the English language in their church services and other gatherings, especially of young people, and of gradually breaking away from the foreign language entirely” (Blackmar 1920: 70). The council then conducted “subsequent investigations” which Blackmar says “proved beyond a doubt” that their urgent advice was taken to heart. Indeed, he describes their methods as being “instrumental in bringing about a very largely increased use of the English language” in Kansas (Blackmar 1920: 70).

Truthfully, the Mennonite Brethren in Hillsboro most likely did not heed these strong suggestions when they were not under close watch. Witnesses at the time describe the investigations that followed, when people they called spies would visit their church services, and the church members would struggle to pray aloud in English while they were present (Peggy Goertzen, personal communication, April 7, 2014). That the witnesses describe a “struggle” to speak English indicates that they probably only did so during the few times council members were there to investigate. Once they left, the German services likely resumed. Nevertheless, the Kansas State Council of Defense was very vocal in making sure these German-speaking Kansas knew where they stood with the general public—and at times even with the law—if they

continued to flaunt their German language. Blackmar describes the council's interaction with them: "The large Mennonite community had a little trouble in seeing the war in the proper light, but after being dealt with in the generous American, but firm, manner, supported the war causes liberally with very little further trouble" (1920: 102).

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

From the data and other evidence here presented, it is possible to piece together a tentative timeline of the language change of this community. The Mennonite Brethren appear to have lived in a primarily German-speaking environment during the period of their first immigration starting in 1874. Gradually, as the community structure and the legal status of the German language began to change, the community came to be bilingual, speaking both English and German. The first documented evidence we see of bilingualism appears in 1940, with the first full English sentences used in church meeting minutes. However, we know from earlier statistics like census numbers and other historical information that a bilingual majority was probably the reality much earlier than 1940. This is further supported by the fact that the church meeting minutes display rapid shift to English following 1940. Even after the minutes shift completely to English in 1947, the survival of several German-language publications indicates that at least a small subpopulation continued to speak German fluently. Finally, the shift from Standard German to English appears to have been nearly completed in the 1960s with the closing of the last German-language newspaper.

As for the effects of verticalization and the World Wars, from these findings, the most likely case appears to be that verticalization in the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century paved the way for increased governmental influence to actually have an effect in years surrounding World War I. The laws and attitudes produced by World War I in turn had an increasing effect on the community's verticalization, which was already underway. World

War II is seen to have little effect on language shift. However, the Mennonites' heavy involvement with Civilian Public Service and in politics in general during the war are indicative of increased bureaucratization and the development of more systematic relationships with the larger society⁸.

The greatest effects of verticalization are shown in the 1910 census data, though some are displayed in earlier data as well, with the highly increased division of labor displayed by more specialized and diverse jobs. An increased number of industries also served to strengthen the community's systematic outward ties as well as transfer of functions to profit enterprise. The publication industry underwent verticalization through the death of a number of publications in these years as well as the relocation of the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House to Hillsboro, where it absorbed one of the local papers. However, the census of 1910 also displayed the best environment for German of all the census data. The greatest number of German monolinguals was found in this year, as well as the youngest mean age and greatest amount of job opportunities (though some of this was due to increased division of labor) of this group.

During this period and the one preceding it, the only laws concerning language use in schools were not strongly enforced and therefore had little effect. The Mennonite Brethren community had also developed a strategy for keeping German as the primary language in their schools and in the lives of their young people by coaching prospective teachers from the community to offer their German skills as a useful tool in German-speaking communities. Notably, the Hillsboro public school kept their records in English, so Mennonite Brethren children who attended there probably had more exposure to English.

⁸ Because the majority of this work was done by the General Conference Mennonites, these effects are likely to be slightly less for the community of Mennonite Brethren in Hillsboro.

The years leading up to 1920 saw further vertical advancements, like the addition of a hospital, as well as numerous legal developments concerning the language of instruction in schools. The Kansas State Council of Defense was instrumental in the creation of explicit legislation mandating English as the language of instruction in all schools. However, their attempts to achieve similar results in public and religious gatherings had little direct effect.

The 1920s saw continued verticalization with greater specificity of professional jobs, most likely as a result of the new hospital. The changes in language use during this period are most likely affected by the verticalization of the previous decade. Census data showed a significant drop in the number of German monolinguals, but this was partially due to underreporting because of the close eye kept on them during WWI. For those that did report German monolingualism, 1920 saw a significant drop in job opportunity. Additionally, this year displayed a trend toward the “aging out” of German monolingualism, as the average age climbed and the age distribution revealed a lack of replenishment among young people. This was also the start of the frequency study of church meeting minutes, whose language shift lags behind that of the general community. However, a very small percentage of words in this year’s documents were English, indicating that German still had a strong presence within the community. Nonetheless, it is probable that the community leaders who met with the Kansas State Council of Defense had adequate command of English because English would have been the language in which the council conducted the meetings. This could indicate bilingualism, at least among the leading members of the community, at this time.

The interesting question for this period is: how and why were the English-only school laws enforced this time but not before? Given the structural changes that occurred within the community between the first laws in 1877 and those in 1919, the reason appears to be because

the verticalization that occurred in the years leading up to the war “paved the way” for more government influence. Because of the increased extra-community ties and changing structure of dependencies, the government was allowed into the community with these laws in a way that they hadn’t been previously. The council’s efforts to eradicate or diminish the use of German in religious settings most likely did little to influence the Mennonites’ language use. First, they would have no reason to deliberately use English instead of German when they were not in the presence of the council’s “spies,” and second, the church meeting minutes from this time are evidence that they continued to use German in religious settings. The council also had seemingly little effect on the German-language press in Hillsboro, as the number of publications did not change much.

The anti-German attitudes surrounding the war probably did not affect the Mennonites’ language use directly for several reasons. First, the Mennonites have a history of persecution with which they are very familiar. It is possible that they might have seen their situation as a kind of martyrdom and felt heartened or validated by this. However, the terrorism they endured as a people together with other Mennonite communities in the state may have had some effect of fear. This is probably what caused the underreporting of German use in the 1920 census. Secondly, assuming that the Mennonite Brethren community was secluded or otherwise separate from those outside it, the scorn of outsiders would not make much of a difference to their everyday way of life. But if the community had already formed enough extra-community ties as a result of the verticalization in the previous decades, it is possible that they would have been more affected by the disdain of their neighbors.

The 1930s saw only a few differences from the previous decade in terms of either verticalization or language shift. There was an increase in the diversity and specificity of

professional jobs and the addition of some new industries. The church meeting minutes did not experience an increase in the number of English words. In addition, the Mennonite Brethren conference launched its first English-language publication in the *Christian Leader* as an attempt to engage younger members of the community unwilling or unable to read German. Another of the MB Publishing House's newspapers, the *Vorwärts*, added an English section to all its publications. The census data, however, showed very little change from that of 1920. The amount of German monolinguals held steady, as did the average age and lack of job opportunities. These reports are most likely closer to reality than those of 1920, with the immediate threat of WWI reduced. Given the introduction of an English-language publication into the community and the fact that data from church meeting minutes is most likely delayed (1940 displayed the first instances of English sentences), it is probable that the 1930s was a decade of widespread bilingualism in the MB community of Hillsboro.

The frequency study data for 1940 show a small but significant increase in the number of English words. The adoption of English words pertaining to occupations, industries, finance, and youth into the church's lexicon suggests an affinity for English to accompany several aspects of verticalization in the community. Increased verticalization forces English use when the minutes talk about the church's connections to new industries with English names. The appearance of a large number of youth-related English words display the after-effects of English-only school laws. Since these laws made it so that all children went to English-speaking schools, the youth were some of the first affected by the introduction of English into everyday life. This, in combination with the introduction of the *Christian Leader*, suggests that the youngest of the population were either having trouble with German or were not interested in using it.

As mentioned above, the first full English sentences were recorded in 1940 and the following years saw an increase in their number. The first year that English words are the majority of German is 1944, and by 1947 the churches had made the complete shift to English. The congregation's lack of German knowledge is discussed in 1943, indicating that shift was well underway and bilingualism was being replaced by English alone. Later, in 1948, the *Zionsbote* made the official decision to allow the printing of some of its articles in English.

The Second World War brought more influence to Americanize, and this time the Mennonite Brethren of Ebenfeld complied, purchasing both an American Flag and U.S. War Bonds. Both the meeting minutes and the *Zionsbote* also discuss the draft at this time, finding the alternative service for conscientious objects to be the most reasonable choice for their young men.

The 1950s and after saw the completion of Standard German to English shift among the MB community of Hillsboro. The *Christian Leader* replaced the *Zionsbote* as the official publication of the Mennonite Brethren conference in 1951, though the *Zionsbote* would survive more than a decade after that. As for furthered verticalization, the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren sold the hospital to the Hillsboro community in 1951, at which time it became a corporation. The *Hillsboro Journal* was discontinued in 1953, and 1957 saw the merger of the MB Publishing House with its Canadian counterpart. At this point, verticalization effects like these are indicative of completed or near-completed language shift. The discontinuation of the *Zionsbote* in 1964 signaled a decline in German use, and yet its last issue was still published in German, so there were still some in the community with German reading ability (though not enough to sustain a periodical publication).

Overall, these findings indicate a strong link between the Hillsboro community's verticalization and its German-to-English shift. This is consistent with the model for the study, Lucht et al. 2011, wherein verticalization—not urban–rural asymmetry—was found to have the strongest correlation with language shift. Wherever verticalization occurs on the timeline of the Hillsboro community, evidence for language shift consistently follows. Any effects from World War I appear to be either possible only because of previous verticalization or indicative of contemporaneous verticalization. While it is arguably possible to draw a correlation between World War II and language evidence from the church meeting minutes during the 1940s, this cannot be the case because the rapid rate of shift during this period indicates prior command of English. Add to this the language evidence from the 1900–1930 censuses and the fact that a denominational English-language publication was begun in 1937, and the war-pressure argument loses most of its credibility. Especially given that the war's effects fall in line with the verticalization of the time, it makes the most sense that verticalization is truly the process at work in this community during the 1940s and prior, just as Lucht et al. (2011) found with their Wisconsin communities.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The Mennonite Brethren community of Hillsboro, Kansas, experienced community restructuring through verticalization, increasing and strengthening its extra-community ties while weakening its internal ties. This is displayed in the changing publication numbers of the German-language press, the changing division of labor and number and power of industries, the mergings and takeovers of businesses, and the changing values of the Mennonite Brethren community.

This process appears to correspond with the community's German-to-English language shift, as displayed in both language statistics from censuses and a frequency study of English words in church meeting minutes. The verticalization of this community happened over several decades, but its most major effects are seen in the first decade of the twentieth century. Language shift then follows, starting with the areas of most verticalization and eventually spreading to all domains. Americanization and language policies that came out of World War I fit in during this time as well, but their effects correspond very closely with the "pathway" into the community created by the verticalization of the 1900s and earlier. These things led to a period of general bilingualism within the community, which gave way to full shift as verticalization continued to create space for the introduction of English into more and more domains within the community.

As for future research, the findings of this project could be applied to other languages in America affected by wars, such as Japanese during WWII, Russian during the Cold War, and Arabic during U.S. occupation of the Middle East. These communities would also be interesting to study because their similarities and differences could provide insight into the model of verticalization.

A further analysis of the syntactic features of the Standard German used in the church meeting minute documents could show further influence of English that a frequency study of English lexical items does not show. A supplemental study of Plautdietsch, the Low German dialect, would also provide insight as to outside influences on the Standard German of the minutes. Beyond the language shift analysis, the content of the church meeting minutes may provide more insight into issues of verticalization on a more qualitative level. In addition, personal interviews of individuals who witnessed various periods during the verticalization of the community could help to build on anecdotal data for verticalization. Such interviews might provide insight into the everyday language use of this community at various moments during the linguistic transition. One large factor not explored in the present study or its model is that of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl that surely affected this community during the 1930s. Increased dependency on the government through aid, increased urbanization and a decline in rural communities because of farming troubles, and industry changes as a result of financial difficulty are all possible events that would have contributed to change in the verticalization and language shift of Hillsboro's MB community.

A study of Plautdietsch would also be useful to explore the effects of verticalization on the community's two different dialects of German. An essential part of this study would be an investigation into the reasons (most likely involving verticalization) why the Low German was preserved longer than the High German. This study could also be compared with the language maintenance/shift among other religious groups in and around Hillsboro to see if there are similarities and/or differences in the rate or process of shift and/or verticalization.

Finally, future research could include the development of a unified metric for assessing verticalization and language shift so that a predictive rubric could be used as a model and tested

across several communities. This would help to further develop and strengthen the theory of verticalization as applied to language shift. An important aspect that the metric could employ for language shift is the S-curve model for diffusion of linguistic innovations through one or more speakers' language(s) or from one community to another (see Chambers & Trudgill 1980: 177 ff). This model predicts slow rates of diffusion at the beginning and end of a linguistic change. In between, a rapid rise occurs in rate of diffusion, forming an S-figure when represented graphically on a scale. This is exactly the figure that occurred during the 1940–1947 transition from English to German in this project's examination of church meeting minutes. Such a model could form an important component to a predictive rubric for verticalization and language shift.

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