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## Linguistic Modalities of Liturgical Registers: The Case of the Old Order Amish (O.O.A.) Church Service<sup>1</sup>

### 0. Introduction

Despite the wide interest of ethnographers in religious ceremonies and rituals, only few detailed linguistic analyses of verbal behavior in ceremonial and ritual events or methodological inquiries into the linguistic parameters of such genres have been undertaken.<sup>2</sup> With regard to the O.O.A., linguistic studies (in the stricter sense) focusing on ceremonial events are nonexistent. Yet, extant sociological and anthropological literature provides valuable clues to verbal behavior in the speech events of the speech situation *church service*, without, however, giving detailed linguistic analyses. Hostetler's notation of the O.O.A. preaching style, presented in analogy to musical notation, is a valuable data base, which is, however, not fully exploited in the ensuing analysis: "Delivery of the sermon falls into a stylized pattern. Somewhat like a chant, the preacher's voice rises to a rather high pitch; then, at the end of each phrase, it suddenly drops."<sup>3</sup> Huntington's analysis is even briefer: "The minister usually preaches in a rather unnatural voice, that has some of the intonations of a chant and carries well . . . Apparently, this stylized form of oratory is preferred to preaching in an ordinary speaking voice."<sup>4</sup> The paucity of facts in such statements, and the sketchy analyses are no doubt due to an overriding sociological and/or anthropological research interest of such publications. At the same time, however, the universal scarcity of linguistic analyses in the field of ritual and ceremonial speech appears to be due to the absence of a set of analytical concepts and notational devices that might permit the categorization and representation of "all levels and means of message production. This includes what might be called metarhythmic and metatonal (hence, musical) structures that serve to reinforce structures developed in other ways."<sup>5</sup>

### 1. Goal

This paper seeks first to contribute to the question of what exactly constitutes the linguistic distinctiveness<sup>6</sup> of the speech events *sermon* and

*prayer* of the speech situation *O.O.A. church service*. This paper seeks second to devise a notation which permits to relate the raw data of sermon and prayer a) to other speech events of the speech situation *church service*, and b) to profane everyday speech events of the *O.O.A.* culture and across its boundaries. This paper seeks third to interpret the descriptive results with regard to their societal functions.

## 2. Structural analysis

### 2.0. Definitions

In accordance with Turner<sup>7</sup> a distinction is made between a ritual event and a ceremonial event. The socially approved activities of a ritual event are associated with social transition from one status to another (*rites de passage*: birth, baptism, marriage, death, graduation, promotion, *vous-tu passage*), while those of a ceremonial event are associated with the confirmation of a societal status quo (devotion, prayer, church service). The purpose of ritual is transformative, the purpose of ceremony is confirmatory. The church service is thus defined as a ceremonial event.

For the purposes of this study the ceremonial event *church service* as defined by anthropology is conceived of as a speech situation in terms of the ethnography of communication. The speech situation *church service* is defined as an institutionalized, stable, culture-specific (emic) face-to-face interaction pattern of interrelated verbal and non-verbal components, (a) which is rule-governed as to spatio-temporal settings, participants' roles, channels, codes, message forms and topics, (b) which derives its structural stability from a tradition considered as sacred, and (c) whose performance within the acceptable allo-range constitutes the act of confirmation of the socioreligious status quo.

The verbal components of this speech situation ((1) hymn-singing, (1.1) council meeting, embedded in (1) as to time, (2) introductory sermon, (3) prayer, (4) Scripture reading, (5) main sermon, (6) Scripture reading with comments, (7) testimonies, (8) closing remarks, (9) prayer, (10) benediction, (11) announcements, (12) hymn singing)<sup>8</sup> are defined as speech events. Each of these speech events in turn consists of one or more speech acts in Hymes' (not Austin's) sense.

This study focuses on the linguistic modalities of the speech events *sermon* and *prayer*. The set of distinctive linguistic features of a speech event will be called the modality of the speech event. Following Crystal,<sup>9</sup> it is assumed that the distinctive modality of a spoken variety of language lies mainly in its characteristic use of prosodic (and paralinguistic) features. Therefore, we shall analyze our samples on the basis of the more specific assumption that they are "organized into prosodic systems of pitch-direction, pitch-range, loudness, tempo, rhythmicality, and pause,"<sup>10</sup> of which the first three appear to be the most relevant features in the case under investigation. In the case of multilingual speech communities, the distribution of the varieties of the verbal repertoire over the speech events is assumed to contribute to the distinctive features of the respective modalities. In the case of ceremonial speech situations and speech events, the linguistic distinctiveness is further enhanced by the incidence of then-coded texts which tend to reoccur in the periodical repetitions of the speech situations.

## 2.1. Prosodic analysis

It should be remembered that prosodic variables are typically continuous rather than discrete, not falling into clearly distinct and internally homogeneous classes. Therefore, the identification of the "high:mid:low" variants of the variable pitch-level, for example, is highly subjective. The following statements should, therefore, be taken to refer to focal points of perception of variations in a continuum, rather than to discrete classes free from overlap.

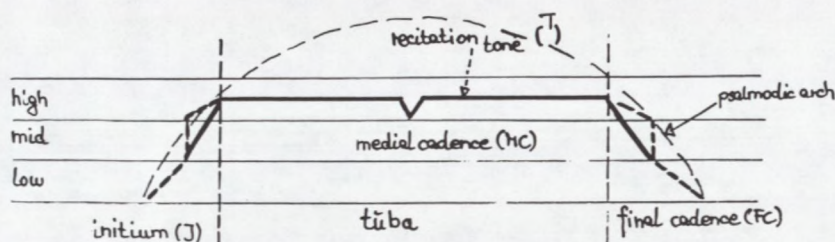
### 2.1.1. Prosodic modality of the speech event *sermon*

On the basis of prosodic characteristics, the O.O.A. sermon can be analyzed into (at least) two contrasting segment types: *psalmody* and *declamatory speech* (cf. transcriptions I-III).

#### 2.1.1.1. Psalmody

The term *psalmody* is preferred to the (intuitive) label *chant*, because it is a) better defined and b) admits of relating our findings to historical models, which also underlie Burkhardt's<sup>11</sup> analysis of the hymn singing event of the O.O.A. church service.

The psalmody segments are assumed to be replicas of the (medieval) psalmody model: "Anfangs- und Schlußformel und dazwischen einen durchgehaltenen Rezitationston."<sup>12</sup>



The psalmodic arch spans the components of the psalmody model. Initium, medial cadence and final cadence vary with the rhythmic structure of their verbal fillers. Thus, one can find one-step to three-step initia and cadences (cf. transcription III). The preacher aims at a specific recitation pitch level—in our cases the high pitch level. Once this recitation tone (T) has been reached, there are predominantly level tones; in other words, the pitch range in the tuba is restricted. Pitch movement occurs only in the initium (I) and the cadences (C).

In the first line of example I, there is an upward pitch movement in the second and third initium. The cadences here contain melismatic tones, i.e., more than one tone per syllable: [ — — — ]. The degree of loudness varies from a rapid crescendo to forte in the initium [ <math>\langle \rangle</math> ], a forte sustained through the recitation tone [ f ], and a decrescendo to piano in the cadences, notated [ >math>\rangle \rangle</math> ].

**I sermon**

poal. mody

es ich grad die Gräde Gatzler-läng widerformel sein Gott selbē Euch für Gräde an-fürmen durch die Erkenntnis Jesu Christi

decl. Spesh

durch die Erkenntnis Jesu Christi Selles war ein Märie der Gräde un der Fülle, wo ich allwē kenne, so viel Erkenntnis liegen

**II sermon**

poal. mody

er had gsaad Himmēl un Eird wene veghe er had gsaad mei eigene Worte wene hēd veghe

un sel was ma gehēd hen wo Schafe sin wo Lebendig vor Christi in dem zūschneidige Schut er had gsaad wolt krefe

**III sermon**

decl. Sp.

aber er had gsaad, was na hen zu dūn er had gsaad, was na hen zu dūn so Ihr pleht die vergänglich wōder wōlt

**IV prayer**

Da-um sollt Ihr also beēten: Unser Vater in dem Himmēl Den Name werde gehēlgt, Den Reich kōmme, Den Wille gestōhe auf der Eird wie in Himmēl unser täglich Brot gib uns hēute un vergib uns unssere Schüllien wie wir unssere Schüllien vergeben

**V prayer**

a-ber hūn sind wir, oh Lieber barmherziger Va-ter, hēf-zū von Na-tur nicht wir-dig ge-schūdt un lūchtig Den göttlich Wōlt zu rēten

**VI hymn**

Solo melismatic (arch) tutti

Oh Gott Va-ter wir lo-ben Dich

Notation:

- = pause
- = stressed, very stressed syll
- = end of syntactic unit
- ~ = modulation on recitation tone
- | = demarcates formal elements

J = initium

T = recitation tone

C = cadence

> = decreasing loudness

< = increasing loudness




p = piano

f = forte

~ = melismatic cadence

⌒ = fermata (holding of a tone)

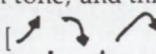
⌒ = psalmodic arch

The second example of a psalmody segment of the sermon (transcription II) represents a variant insofar as the recitation tone is immediately reached so that there is no inition; junctures have three prosodic exponents: a) short pauses notated as [ ' ], b) a fermata, i.e., the holding of a tone notated as [  ], and c) modulation of the recitation tone notated as [  ] (cf. line 2, "Christi"). The modulation of the recitation tone (notated as [  ]) produces the voice quality called vibrato. From an intra-group perspective this vibrato is sometimes taken as an indicator of *eifrig* 'heated' preaching.

The tempo of delivery is increased. Kendon<sup>13</sup> found a speech rate of 2.03 syllables per half second for the English dialogues he analyzed. On the basis of the few taped psalmody segments made available to us we estimate a speech rate of between three to four syllables per half second.

Hesitation phenomena are very rare. The few hesitations observed in the psalmody segments were typically not "unfilled," or filled with hesitation noises such as "er, mm," but hesitations filled with repeated phrases, so as to keep up the psalmody tuba and final cadence: "Wann mir die Worte nit fehle taete [-----], wann mir die Worte nit fehle taete [-----]." The scarcity of hesitation phenomena is plausible in the light of findings by Goldman-Eisler<sup>14</sup>: Periods of fluent speech correspond to the repetition of then-coded texts (Biblical quotations) and formulaic expressions conventionalized for the delivery of sermons (cf. 2.3).

#### 2.1.1.2. Declamatory speech

Declamatory speech is characterized first by lower pitch levels, i.e., low to mid pitch, as a rule, second by the fact that the preacher does not aim at a specific, constant recitation tone, and third by the incidence of pitch movement on stressed syllables [  ]. Syntactic units are marked by stress and pauses (cf. transcription I, line 2; transcription III). In comparison with the psalmody segments, the tempo of delivery and loudness are reduced to "normal." Hesitation phenomena are rare and take similar fillers as the psalmody segments.

Transcription III provides an opportunity for summarizing the above statements concerning the prosodic modality of the speech event *sermon*. Declamatory speech is performed on the low to mid pitch level; pitch movement takes place on stressed syllables; prosodic patterns coincide with syntactic patterns; there are neither melismatic tones, nor vibrato modulations; loudness and tempo of delivery are also "normal." By contrast, the second section of transcription III can be taken as a replica of the psalmody model: an inition with a one-step pitch movement to the high level, and with a rapid crescendo to forte loudness; a tuba with a forte recitation tone on the high-pitch level, accompanied by vibrato modulations; a cadence with a three-step pitch movement to mid-pitch level and with a decrescendo.

### 2.1.2. Prosodic modality of the speech event *prayer*

Examples IV and V are transcriptions of prayer. Both can be taken as replicas of the psalmody model; in both cases, however, the overall pitch level is lower than in the psalmody segments of the sermon, insofar as mid pitch predominates. Example V represents an interesting variant insofar as two alternating level tones are used in the tuba, namely the recitation tone and a tone one third lower. The wave-like alternating application of the two tones produces the impression of regularity of form. The speaker also contracts syllables so as to adjust the words to the prosodic pattern, which again contributes to the impression of regularity. When comparing the sermon and prayer modalities as to loudness and tempo, both parameters are clearly reduced to "lower" and "slower" in the prayer modality. They rank between the "normal" degree of declamatory speech on the one hand, and the "increased" degree of the psalmody segments of the sermon on the other. "Slightly increased" or "normal plus" appear to be the appropriate intuitive labels.

### 2.1.3. Prosodic modality of the speech event *hymn singing*

The inclusion of hymn singing in a study that focuses on the modalities of speech events is defended on the basis of the assumption that all of the musical and some of the verbal events of the O.O.A. church service share the psalmodic arch. The initium, the tuba, and the final cadence of the psalmody sections of the sermon and of the prayer can be conceived as melodic arches. The presence of such melodic arches in the hymn singing can be thrown into sharper profile when the musical notation<sup>15</sup> is replaced by a compromise notation integrating pitch levels of spoken language into the basic format of musical notation of language that is sung (cf. transcription VI). This reflects the impression of coherence among these otherwise distinct modalities, and in turn contributes to the acoustic impression of an overall harmony of the total ceremonial event. Beyond this shared basic pattern, the hymn singing shows a bundle of prosodic features that distinguishes it from other psalmodic events of the church service. First of all, the psalmodic arch itself appears in the variant of a melismatic arch, which is developed by the recurrent pitch movement on one syllable,<sup>16</sup> as for example by the six movements on the second syllable of *Vater*. Second, a much wider range of pitch is exploited, sometimes by extreme pitch movements on a single syllable. Third, the tempo of delivery is extremely slow. Taking Hostetler's observation,<sup>17</sup> namely that the singing of the 162 syllables of the *Loblied/Lobgesang* (*Ausbund*: p. 770) takes between eleven and twenty minutes, we get a mean of between 0.12 and 0.07 syllables per half second. Our data show a similar trend: The singing of the transcribed first line of the *Loblied* (transcription VI) takes about 25 seconds, whereas a comparable text segment of the sermon performed in the psalmody modality takes about three to four seconds. Taking these figures only as estimates, it is safe to say that the tempo of delivery of the hymns deviates far enough from "normal" so as to be perceived as emically distinct. Comparing the psalmody sections of the sermon and the hymn singing with regard to tempo of delivery, both clearly deviate from "normal," yet in opposite directions.

With regard to the variable loudness the hymn singing is hard to com-

pare with the other speech events of the church service, because it is the only event delivered in tutti fashion.

In summing up the analysis it is suggested that the prosodic modalities of the speech events of the O.O.A. church service can be distinguished with the help of the parameters 1. pitch range, 2. pitch change, 3. tempo, and 4. loudness.

prosodic modalities of events prosodic parameters	sermon		prayer	hymn
	psalmody	decl. speech		
pitch range	high (to mid)	low (to mid)	mid	unrestricted
pitch change	level tones prevail	pitch movement on accented syllables	level tones prevail	extreme pitch movement on one syllable
tempo	increased	normal	slightly increased	extremely slow
loudness	increased	normal	normal (to slightly increased)	(not comparable)

Each of the speech events analyzed can be assigned a unique bundle of prosodic features, i.e., a distinctive prosodic modality. Furthermore, three events, namely the sermon psalmody, the prayer and the hymn have prosodic modalities which set them clearly apart from normal everyday speech. With reference to the theory of markedness<sup>18</sup> one might say that these speech events are marked as non-everyday events by their prosodic modalities. Further analysis will have to show whether or not declamatory speech shares its prosodic "unmarkedness" with other speech events of the church service, such as the turn-taking negotiation in the council meeting (*Abrath*), the testimonies (*Zeugnis*), the announcements, and the (optional) congregation meeting of the full members. However, even if some of these should be unmarked prosodically, they may all the same be marked as ceremonial speech events by other than prosodic modalities, as for example by the choice of a specific variety of the verbal repertoire (or its complement, i.e., the suppression of one variety), and/or the use of then-coded formulaic expressions.

2.2. Distribution of verbal varieties American English (A.E.), Pennsylvania German (P.G.), and Amish High German (A.H.G.) over speech events  
Beside the prosodic modality, a speech event has also what might be

called a varietal modality that contributes to its distinctive overall message form. The speech events of religious life are no exception to this.

The kind of language a speech community uses for the expression of its religious beliefs on public occasions is usually one of the most distinctive varieties it possesses. Very often, it is so removed from the language of everyday conversation as to be almost unintelligible, save to an initiated minority; and occasionally one finds a completely foreign tongue being used as the official liturgical language of a community, one well-known instance being the use of Latin by the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>19</sup>

The pattern found among the O.O.A. is, thus, no exception to the general pattern of liturgical varieties, although the specific varieties used as the liturgical register are distinctive. Our data can neither be accommodated in the domain concept of macro-sociolinguistics,<sup>20</sup> nor do they fully confirm earlier culture-specific statements concerning either the general distribution of varieties over "occasions,"<sup>21</sup> or their specific use in the speech situation *church service*.

### 2.2.1. Varietal modality of the speech event *sermon*

As our data are inconclusive with regard to the distribution of varieties over the sermon psalmody and (sermon) declamatory speech, their separate discussion is not feasible at this point. Instead the sermon will be treated here as uniform with regard to language choice. This is the approach taken in extant literature: "This [the opening sermon; W. Enninger and J. Raith] like the rest of the service is delivered in High German with a strong admixture of 'Pennsylvania Dutch.' The Biblical quotations are from the Luther translation."<sup>22</sup> While Huntington does not mention English at all, Hostetler includes it in his statement: "With hands folded beneath his full-grown white beard, a preacher typically begins to mumble in a low voice, gradually building up to an audible and rhythmic flow of words in mixed Pennsylvania German, German, and English."<sup>23</sup> What appears to be a contradiction between Huntington ("no English") and Hostetler ("English, too") can be taken to reflect two perceptions of identical data, filtered through divergent verbal competences and linguistic approaches. Let us take Hostetler's data to illustrate this assumption:

English words and idioms are also used with a German prefix, as in *Er hat unser sins aus [ge] blot* 'He has blotted out our sins,' *Noah hat Gott nicht [aus] figur [a] kenna aber war gehorsam* 'Noah could not figure out God but was obedient,' or *Viel Leit heiligs [heitigs?]*; W. Enninger and J. Raith] *daags hen religion awwer ken salvation* 'Many people today have religion but no salvation.'<sup>24</sup>

Although Hostetler clearly sees the synchronic-structural process of morphological integration of items from one variety (A.E.) into utterances produced according to the grammatical rules of another, his knowledge of the three varieties as separate languages with distinct histories seems to make him emphasize the historical dimension. He emphasizes the etymological origin of individual items and can thus discover "foreign" elements borrowed from English. Huntington, on the other hand, does not appear to recognize the items with English etymologies (which can be assumed to have



been in her corpus) as items from her first language (A.E.). This leads to our assumption (supported by our data) that the borrowed items are largely integrated into P.G. both morphologically and phonologically so that she perceives them as non-English items.

For the purposes of this study the following rule-of-thumb statements may suffice to outline our assumptions:

1. What is borrowed into P.G. speech are items, rather than rules.<sup>25</sup>
2. The borrowed items are lexemes, not phonemes (with the possible exception of retroflex *r*).
3. The borrowed lexical items are subjected to P.G. rules on the level of morphology (*to figure out: ausfigura, to blot out: ausblotta, blotted out: ausgeblot*), phonemics (*to complain: [kəm'ple:nə]*, *salvation: [sɛl've:ʃən]*), and phonotactics (*stamps: [stɛmpz]*).
4. The syntax, grammatical morphemes, phonemes and phonotactics are P.G. The lexemes borrowed from English are stripped of their English realization rules and are realized according to P.G. rules. Rules of syntagmatic co-occurrence override "vertical realization rules."<sup>26</sup>

From the angle of these overriding co-occurrence rules we would suggest to treat the items of English origin as integral items of P.G. speech. On the basis of this approach we would defend the items *co-occurrence, suggest, treat, items, origin, integral* of the preceding sentence as English items, and not as foreign elements. From this angle our data can be accommodated in the following diagram. For the sake of brevity we include all speech events under analysis and the now-coding vs. then-coded dichotomy (cf. 2.3.).

varieties available as oral coding instruments	A.E.		P.G.		A.H.G.	
	now coding	then coded	now coding	then coded	∅	then coded
prosodically distinct speech-events						
sermon:psalmody	-	-	+	+	-	+
sermon:decl. speech	-	-	+	+	-	+
prayer reading	-	-	-	-	-	+
hymn singing	-	-	-	-	-	+

All speech events of the church service share the absence of the variety A.E., i.e., they are performed in P.G. and/or A.H.G. When used in non-religious domains, P.G. shows a high rate of words of English origin with the percentage varying with domain and topic. By contrast, when used in the speech event *sermon* the rate of words with English etymologies is greatly reduced, because the referential range of liturgical speech can largely be covered by P.G. and A.H.G. terms which conceptualize the crucial reli-

gious values. This domain-specific variant of P.G. is the ad-hoc coding instrument of both sermon psalmody and sermon declamatory speech, both texts of which are, however, interspersed with then-coded formulae in A.H.G. and P.G.

There is concern about P.G. and/or A.E. supplanting A.H.G. in the sermon: "The inability to use either Standard German or English in its entirety introduces linguistic stress and ambiguity. When the language of the world is used to express sacred concepts, separation [from the world; W. Enninger and J. Raith] is rendered ambiguous."<sup>27</sup> We would suggest that it is highly unlikely that any shift in the repertoire would ever produce a sermon variety totally identifiable with the varieties of everyday events. The distinctive purposes of the liturgical variety would be rendered futile if all features of the modality—including prosodic variables—were indistinguishable from non-liturgical modalities. The prosodic modalities, it is suggested, would be able to carry the additional functional load, should the verbal repertoire be reduced to (the varieties of) just one language. The many monolingual speech communities show that distinct registers are developed for socio-culturally distinct purposes. Archaisms on the levels of lexicon and syntax, then-coded sacred texts, as well as prosodic modalities can be used to keep the liturgical modalities distinct from all others.<sup>28</sup> From a functional angle, what is important is not structural purity, but structural distinctiveness. Structural purity is the justified concern of the folklorist, yet his research orientation should not be allowed to determine the approach of the sociolinguist.

#### 2.2.2. Varietal modality of the speech event *prayer*

As is well-known, A.H.G. is the only variety used in the prayer. The use of this variety—which is not available as an ad-hoc coding instrument—is made possible by the speaking rule that prayers should be verbatim quotations rather than spontaneous formulations. The rationale behind this speaking rule that might appear irrational at first sight will become clear in 2.3.

The prayer book used in the church service is invariably *Die ernsthafte Christenpflicht*,<sup>29</sup> which is reprinted on demand. Those prayers which are used most frequently have been included in service manuals, such as for example in *Von dem Christlichen Glauben und dem Leiden Jesu Christi*.<sup>30</sup> The texts are written in an older version of High German. Their oral reproduction during the service is, however, subject to articulatory transfer from P.G. and to spelling pronunciation: unstressed [e,e:,i:] instead of [ɛ], final *r* instead of [ʀ,ʁ].<sup>31</sup> The term A.H.G. is to indicate these traits, which distinguish this variety from the High German as spoken in Europe today. When A.H.G. is used as a now-coding instrument outside the church service, the resultant text reflects all signs of a language in its destandardization phase, although such spontaneous use is restricted to a few linguistically gifted persons.

#### 2.2.3. Varietal modality of the speech event *hymn singing*

With hymns, which are meant to be sung communally in a preconceived

fashion, the now-coding vs. then-coded dichotomy is negligible. Little is to be added to the well-known fact that most of the O.O.A. communities use the High German *Ausbund* (*das dicke Buechli* 'the thick booklet' 1/1564) as their church service hymnal. Among the few exceptions are the O.O.A. settlements in Somerset County (Pennsylvania), Kalona (Iowa), and Arthur (Illinois), where *Eine Unpartheiische Liedersammlung* (*das duenne Buechli* 'the thin booklet' 1/1860) is in use. The Davis County (Indiana) community and its daughter settlements use the *Unpartheiische Liedersammlung* (1/1892).<sup>32</sup> What may appear as three completely different hymnals providing three disjunct filler sets for the hymn singing events shows, however, considerable overlap with regard to the songs contained in each. *Eine Unpartheiische Liedersammlung* (1/1860) is a condensation of *Ein Unpartheiisches Gesangbuch* (1/1804), which in turn borrowed sixty-four songs from the *Ausbund* (1/1564), i.e., forty-five percent of the *Ausbund* total of songs. *Unpartheiische Liedersammlung* (1/1892) contains even more songs from the *Ausbund* than any other hymnal. Thus, we have a common stock of potential fillers for the hymn singing event across the whole O.O.A. culture, providing a potential for cross-community identification with the overall culture. This common stock derives from the *Ausbund*, certainly the Christian hymnal in use today with the longest tradition. The adherence to this hymnal and the regular use today of its songs can be taken as an indicator of the oft-quoted tradition-direction of the culture.

In our context it is worthy of note that despite the many modifications the High German texts have undergone in the course of the last 410 years, not one of the changes has affected the use of High German or the use of *Fraktur*. This graphetic feature appears to be so essential to the distinctive message form of these and all other devotional texts, that a change to Latin letters—which might reduce the decoding problems of the younger generation—has not been considered seriously. The bilingual Bibles—with the High German text in *Fraktur* and the English text in Latin letters—are the exceptions to this rule. The inclusion of English aims at facilitating the understanding of the "real" H.G. text.

What may appear as an effective language maintenance effort (of A.H.G.) is, in fact, rather a maintenance of sacred and devotional texts. A sentence generating mechanism needed for the production of spoken or written texts is practically absent. The skills maintained are written and oral identification and comprehension of known texts, as well as reading out aloud and recitation from memory. These fact may make A.H.G. uninteresting to the grammarian; on the other hand the enactment of such skills appears to be essential for the social construction of ceremonial events.

### 2.3. The formulaic modality of speech events of the church service

By focusing on the generation of novel sentences in a social vacuum the majority of linguists has not only disregarded "repeated speech" (*wiederholte Rede*; cf. Coseriu) but at the same time neglected the construction of ceremony and ritual through routinized speech. When the routine aspects of speech in ceremony and ritual have been treated it was done above all by anthropologists and sociologists. The verbal routines of the O.O.A. church

service are no exception to this. Most treatments are, however, limited to descriptive statements of the high rate of repeated speech in the speech events of the church service, and to evaluative comments to the point that this is "only" repeated speech. By contrast, we will take the incidence of repeated speech for granted and focus on the functionality of formulaic speech by relating the formulaic quality of sermon, prayer and hymn singing a) to other components of the speech situation, and b) to ecclesiological and theological aspects of Anabaptism.

The sermon psalmody event is most revealing from this angle. As should be expected from the high tempo of delivery and the low incidence of hesitation phenomena, the percentage of then-coded formulaic expressions—in our case Scriptural quotations and standard admonitions—is high. This descriptive fact is functional from a variety of perspectives. In a culture that a) does not put a high value on verbal excellence *per se*, b) subscribes to the principle of lay preachers, c) does not provide any formal training for its preachers, and d) does not allot any time for the *tractatio* (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria*) between the *Abrath*—in which the teaching duty is allocated—and the performance (*elocutio*), the sermon cannot be expected to be an elaborate and novel oration. Second, the rudimentary theology would not easily lend itself to a systematic explication in a chain of inductive, deductive and confutatory ratiocinations. Third, such abstractive and interpretative thought would conflict with the role of the preacher in Anabaptist theology: He is not the *ex officio* interpreter of God's Word to the laity, but the reciter of the Scripture and the admonisher to abide by it. Ever since Grebel (ca. 1498-1526) the principle of *sola scriptura*<sup>33</sup> has been of supreme importance to the Swiss Brethren and their descendants. Given the supreme importance of this principle, what Crystal says of the English services applies to the O.O.A. service to an even higher degree:

. . . there are the linguistic originals. In the case of the Bible, and with many of the common prayers, the requirement of conformity to the sacral character, as well as the sense, of the text in the original language is a restriction on one's choice of English which does not normally apply to other varieties. Similarly, there are traditional formulations of belief of doctrinal significance, which are difficult to alter without an accusation of inconsistency or heresy being levelled.<sup>34</sup>

After all, the sermon must pass the test of two to three witnesses in the *Zeugnis* event. Consequently, what is in the center must be verbatim quotations of memorized Scriptural passages, and not the preacher's interpretative thought requiring the ad-hoc generation of novel sentences which is naturally accompanied by hesitation phenomena. The formal features of the sermon psalmody, such as the high tempo of delivery, the extreme reduction of hesitation phenomena, the high rate of verbatim quotations from the High German Bible, and the formulaic quality of the hortatory speech acts are all functional requirements of a) the factor constellation of the speech situation and b) basic principles of Anabaptist theology. Furthermore, the O.O.A. sermon is only an extreme case of the epideitic genre of the rhetorical canon typical of recurrent and stable situations, in which epideitic speech is the appropriate instrument of the confirmatory purpose

of the ceremonial event. Whether or not linguists consider the analysis of routinized speech as below their dignity, the linguistic structure of the sermon is the appropriate enactment of a particular belief-system and the appropriate instrument for the production of commitment to it. This applies equally to prayer and hymn singing.

### 3. Functional interpretation<sup>35</sup>

The signifiatory and communicative behavior in ceremonial events has often been characterized as irrational. What Firth and Goody say of ritual applies to ceremony by implication. Firth conceives of such events as "formal procedures of a communicative but arbitrary kind,"<sup>36</sup> and Goody contours them as "a category of standardized behavior (custom) in which the relationship between the means and end is not intrinsic."<sup>37</sup> This lack of rationality claimed for the form of ceremonial acts (our substitution for "ritual acts"; W. Enninger and J. Raith) is, of course, due to their often petrified nature: the motivation for their original creation is no longer transparent to their performers which may lead to such acts being negatively evaluated as empty conventions and meaningless formalities. By contrast, sociolinguists assume that speech in whatever form it may appear is always adapted to culturally relevant functions. The validity of this assumption was shown above in the discussion of the meaningfulness of reciting pre-coded sacred texts. The recitation of sacred texts in their petrified form is not a meaningless formality, but a meaningful essential of Anabaptist theology. We assume that all the structural features of the speech events of the ceremonial event *church service* can ultimately be shown to be the formal exponents of societal functions.

The absence of A.E. from the above (and all other) speech events of the speech situation *church service* is functional in a culture that subscribes to the principles of no proselytizing, endogamy, and functions as a boundary demarcation instrument of the religious brotherhood and its sociological equivalent, i.e., the community, since it limits meaningful participation to persons socialized in the traditional O.O.A. way. The choice of "our old" P.G. and A.H.G. and the exclusion of the "new outside-world" A.E. alone can be considered as a formal exponent of the distinction "we-them." While the absence of A.E. demarcates the "we-them" boundary, the specifically "pure" variant of P.G. typical of the speech situation *church service*, the use of A.H.G. typically reserved for devotional texts, and the incidence of non-everyday prosodic modalities can be interpreted as a set of structural markers which distinguish the sacred ceremonial event from profane everyday domains. The material elaboration of the linguistic means, as well as their regularity of form constitute a metacommunicative feature marking out the societal significance of the ceremonial event.

From an overall point-of-view, the collective linguistic performance can be taken as the symbolic construction of the ceremonial event *church service* (*Gemeinde* in A.H.G.) which serves the confirmation of the values of the religious brotherhood (*Gemeinde*) and of the structure of its sociological counterpart, i.e., the community (*Gemeinde*). The folk taxonomy reflects the fact that the linguistic enactment of the church service is only a metaphor of the socio-religious core values of the culture. It attests to the general

validity of the assumption that ceremonies constitute collective metacommunicative events of societal-constructing significance.

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### Notes

1. The project has been supported by Die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, the Minister für Wissenschaft und Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, the John F. Kennedy-Institut at Berlin, the University of Delaware, and the University of Essen.

We would like to express our appreciation to Klaus-Dieter Matussek for his insights and invaluable assistance.

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