THE IMPACT OF SOCIETAL CHANGES AND ATTITUDES ON THE MAINTENANCE
AND SHIFT OF PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN AMONG THE OLD ORDER AMISH IN
LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

A Dissertation in
German
by
Marie Y. Qvarnström

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The dissertation of Marie Y. Qvarnström was reviewed and approved * by the following:

B. Richard Page  
Associate Professor of German and Linguistics  
Head of the Department of Germanic & Slavic Languages & Literatures  
Dissertation Advisor  
Chair of Committee

Carrie N. Jackson  
Associate Professor of German and Linguistics

Michael T. Putnam  
Associate Professor of German and Linguistics

John M. Lipski  
Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Spanish & Linguistics

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.
ABSTRACT

Most literature on the maintenance and shift of Pennsylvania German among the Old Order Amish (hereafter often referred to as PG and OOA) suggests that PG among this conservative group of Amish will in the future still be maintained much as it has in the past. Some scholars, however, argue that a shift to English is possible in the future.

The researcher of this study proposes that too little attention has been paid to the societal changes that may influence the PG spoken by the OOA in Lancaster County and suggests that the linguistic situation is not so stable as has generally been assumed.

For that reason, this sociolinguistic study was aimed at exploring language use and attitudes among the OOA in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The purpose of the study was to analyze the language use in community and home, to gain insight and understanding about attitudes of the community members toward their heritage language and culture, and to attempt an assessment of the degree to which the language use and attitudes indicate heritage language maintenance or shift. It was also to propose possible positive actions to ensure the maintenance of the PG language.

Drawing from questionnaires, interviews, participant observation, and analyses of actual conversations, the researcher concludes that English is spoken much more frequently than before, especially among the young people working off-farm employment. As a result, an increased usage of English in the home can be detected although PG is still the preferred language.

A number of factors contribute to the maintenance of PG. PG is still used extensively in intra-communication between Amish in the community and also in the workplace with Amish workmates. The Amish find it important to speak both PG and English. PG is thus still passed on to younger generations. PG serves a significant ceremonial function with respect to community worship.
Furthermore, community members, both young and old, express mostly positive attitudes and loyalty toward the heritage language and culture.

Despite strong maintenance, the seeds of language shift were observed as well. Elements likely to promote languages shift included increased off-farm work and more intense customer contacts, singings, youth-group meetings, and “rumspringa.” Some negative attitudes were also expressed about PG constantly including an ever greater number of English words and expressions to an extent that in the end it will not be PG anymore. The question of identity then arose along with the issue of what will happen to the Amish as a separate people.

To secure language maintenance, different measures need to be taken, especially to protect the home domain from the encroaching English language and to ensure that the OOA, especially the young, continue to regard PG in a positive light and thus wish to speak it also in the future.

**KEY WORDS:** PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN/LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE/ SHIFT/ ATTITUDE/SOCIOECONOMIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL CHANGES / LANCASTER COUNTY
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The impetus for my interest in the Old Order Amish was sparked when I spent a year as an exchange student in West Chester, Pennsylvania, some twenty-five years ago and my host mother, Louise Lippert, took me on a tour of “Amish Country” in Lancaster County. I feel very grateful to her for doing so because had she not done that, this dissertation would probably never have been written. During the following years, I read almost everything I could get my hands on about the Amish. When it was time for graduate studies at Penn State, I was delighted to be able to finally combine my own personal interest in the Amish with that of my academic field in German linguistics.

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DEDICATION

In memory of my Dad, my biggest supporter, whose heart was of gold
but too weak to hold out for the completion of this project.
   Tack, Paps!
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Catalyst for the Study

The event that triggered the researcher’s interest in this topic and ultimately led to the present study was the following conversation that took place on a day when a friend and the researcher went to the shop of an Amish woman in Lancaster County. The researcher’s friend and the Amish woman, who have known each other for many years, were inquiring about each other’s families while customers walked in and out of the shop. All conversation that took place during this time between the Amish woman and her old-time friend, as well as the customers was in English. All of a sudden the friend commented on this by saying, “You hardly speak ‘Dutch’ anymore, do you?” The Amish shop owner responded, “Well, my husband scorns me all the time ‘cause we talk much more English at home than we used to.” In the meantime, the sister of the shop owner had entered the store, and overheard the last part of the conversation, and made the following comment, “Yeah, we talk much less Amish now . . . since the shop. But we do try to talk Amish with the grandkids although there are customers around who don’t speak Amish. It’s not easy ‘cause they [the grandkids] come and wanna talk, and I say something in Amish and they don’t understand me so I have to say it in English instead. That’s how we lose it . . . our language, I mean.” After interviewing many Amish women and their families, the researcher believes the overheard conversation presents an accurate picture of the Old Order Amish community in Lancaster County at the beginning of the twenty-first century.
The widespread pattern of language shift in many immigrant and indigenous communities in North America has its roots in the changes that have been made in the language of work for these communities in the last decades. Many of these communities have lost much of their land and do no longer find traditional farming supporting their economic needs sufficiently. The changes have been the result of key developments in the economic structure of the dominant society and ways members of minority communities have been able to relate to these new developments. Many times participation in wage-based activities has become a necessity for meeting the economic needs of the family. In this context, work-related issues become a source of motivation, which also includes specific language skills needed for that particular work environment.

Throughout the centuries, for the Old Order Amish, language seems to have functioned as a means of separation from the dominant society and as a marker of group beliefs. Changing the way one makes a living is not the only element contributing to language shift, but many times the social values and attitudes of the group in question may be as important. For most groups, when their values and attitudes change, the group becomes receptive to new economic standards and alliances with groups that have previously been avoided. That this is true can be seen in the present study by looking at the nonsectarians and some Anabaptist groups who abandoned their former rural lifestyle for a more urbanized life and at the same time shifted from speaking PG to using English instead.

The OOA are still trying to stay true to a life of separation from the rest of the world. Many traditional features are preserved, but the OOA community is far from static. It embraces new elements, some more willingly than others, which are forced upon them to enhance the survival of the community. Such developments are primarily changes in socioeconomic conditions that,
more frequently than before compel people to seek other means of employment, which in turn has the anticipated effect of intensifying contact with English speakers and thus perhaps promoting language shift. For the OOA, PG continues to be a social marker, a marker expressing community identity, which raises questions about the role of language in the construction of community identity in the future. This dissertation is therefore an attempt to examine if and how new elements affect the way people perceive not only their culture, but even more so their colonial heritage language (hereafter referred to as heritage language).¹

1.2 Problem Statement

The OOA in Lancaster County live in a society that features a dominant majority language, English, and a minority language, Pennsylvania German. Pennsylvania German is surrounded by a social, cultural, economic, and political environment that does not favor the maintenance and promotion of small minority languages. Yet, it seems that the OOA are maintaining their heritage language rather well.

The sociolinguistic literature on minority languages is filled with accounts of how speakers of minority languages surrendered to the pressure of the dominant society and shifted their language use to the dominant language(s). However, there is very little literature describing and analyzing successful language and cultural maintenance by threatened minority language communities. Two groups in the United States that have been able to maintain diglossia with stable bilingualism are the Hasidic Jews and the sectarian Pennsylvania Germans (Romaine, 1995).

¹ *Heritage language.* Joshua Fishman identifies three types of heritage languages in the United States (Fishman, 2001b). These categories emphasize the historical and social conditions of other languages relative to English: (1) Immigrant heritage languages, (2) Indigenous heritage languages, and (3) Colonial heritage languages. The colonial heritage languages are the languages of the various European groups that first colonized what is now the United States and are still spoken here. These include such languages as Dutch, German, Pennsylvania German, Finnish, French, Spanish, Norwegian and Swedish.
This study will concentrate on the OOA in Lancaster County. What can be learned from the OOA of Lancaster County regarding language maintenance? How do they do it? Or are the outward signs of language maintenance merely a façade for an underlying process of language shift in which English, the language used with outsiders primarily during business transactions and which has been strictly excluded from home and religious use, is continuously encroaching on these domains?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In this study the researcher examines the Old Order Amish Pennsylvania German language community for the following purposes:

1. To analyze language use in home and community in order to assess the degree to which it indicates language maintenance and shift specifically how and in what ways occupational changes affect the maintenance of PG.

2. To determine if there are other societal changes in OOA life that might have an impact on the maintenance or shift of PG.

3. To gain insight and understanding about the attitude of the community people toward their heritage language as well as other languages.

4. To propose potential actions to be taken if maintenance efforts are needed to ensure the heritage language’s future.

1.4 Incentive for the Study

Although language, first and foremost, functions as a means of communication, it serves other functions as well. Not only does language express identity, the glue that unites members of a certain group, it is also a collection of human knowledge and traditions. Words of a language used either in oral traditions or in written form provide a great deal of information about the
people who are using the language, manifested in a labeling which reflects people’s perception of their immediate environment. Because people come from different cultural backgrounds, they perceive their environment differently. Every language, regardless of its perceived insignificance, carries in it values specific to the people who speak it; and therefore, as long as it carries those values, it deserves to be a part of the wealth of languages in existence in the world today.

More countries than not are multilingual, with many of their people capable of speaking two or more languages. In general, when people speak two languages, they choose the language that corresponds best to a particular social situation. They switch between different languages or varieties. The fact that speakers select different languages and or varieties for use in different situations shows that not all languages or varieties are equal or viewed as equally appropriate for use in all speech events. Thus, rather than the two languages competing, they complement each other. Nevertheless, one language may for different reasons make its way into the domains normally reserved for the other language; as a result, the two languages compete for the same domains, causing speakers to use one language more and more, ultimately resulting in a switch to the more dominant language and monolingualism. The disappearance of a language is a rather common result of language contact-situations. This process, in which a community of speakers of a native language becomes bilingual in another language and gradually shifts allegiance to that language until it ceases to use its native language, is called language death. This process of assimilation can either be forced upon a population or be voluntary. Languages with a small, geographically isolated population of speakers can die out when their speakers are wiped out through unforeseeable forces such as genocide, natural disasters, or disease. Although there is great variation from one place to another, the following factors are also often cited as having
caused people to abandon their languages collectively in favor of languages regarded as having greater utility or prestige: intermarriage, educational programs, cultural or religious assimilation, political structures, settlement patterns, social and economic forces, and the media (Fishman 1991, Romaine 1995, Crystal 2000). However, it is important to remember that not all factors apply to all language situations. In some instances a number of factors may apply whereas in other instances only one factor may be the culprit for the change in language use.

When a language dies, an integral part of the history, philosophy, religion, values, and way of life of a particular group of people is lost. Culture and language are interdependent. However, the language itself is in most cases not responsible for its dying. Rather, it is the people’s decision for whatever reason to discontinue the use of the language that causes it to die. Unfortunately, the majority of languages that are on the verge of extinction are minority languages, many times spoken by the politically and economically less powerful. Merely between five and ten percent of the estimated six thousand languages in the world are likely to survive. The rest are either endangered or moribund (Krauss 1992; Crystal 2000). Krauss states that the world’s languages can be classified into three groups: moribund, endangered, and safe. A language is considered moribund if it is no longer learned as a mother tongue by children. Consequently, it is destined for extinction. If a language is still being learned by children but there are signs that before long it will cease to be learned by children, the language is considered endangered. The language that is neither moribund nor endangered is safe.

The United States is a multilingual country with many large as well as small minority language groups with varying degrees of success in maintaining their minority language. Language use and language change within these language groups can only be understood when the socio-communicative environment of the speakers is analyzed. The reasons for that are social
factors, cultural norms, and social networks that determine the communicative needs and norms of language use in particular speech communities. Patterns of language use are thus the result of the cultural context in which the speakers live.

This dissertation is devoted to the study of one of the possibly endangered minority languages, Pennsylvania German, spoken by the Old Order Amish. A substantial amount of research on the PG language has been conducted since the late nineteenth century, covering the development of the language, the maintenance efforts and/or loss in some specific communities, language choice in different contexts and the correlation of language and identity. These areas will once again be addressed in this study, but only to better understand the main focus of the study, which is to understand the impact that extensive occupational changes in the last decades have had on the maintenance of PG in the very public Old Order Amish community in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Three hundred years of being deeply rooted in small tight-knit agricultural communities, which served as the backbone for church, family, and work has begun to give way to the persistent encroachment of the modern world. The turn from mainly farming to the establishment of Amish-owned microenterprises, capable of manufacturing products that can reach the global market, has drawn attention from the public as well as within the Amish community. Therefore, in addition, the study will focus on what role the OOA people’s own attitudes and perception play in maintenance efforts in a community surrounded by English-speaking people.

1.5 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of eight chapters. In addition to this introductory chapter, chapter two presents a flashback, starting with the migration history in order to understand better the historical roots of the Pennsylvania Germans and ultimately how the OOA were shaped into
the people and religious movement they are today. It is also a short but comprehensive account of past scholarly research on the PG language, beginning with Haldeman, who in 1872, without having conducted any real field work, is the first scholar to note that PG not only blends different German dialects but also has some English mixed into it, to today’s research, which is primarily sociolinguistic in nature, focusing on language maintenance and shift in different PG-speaking communities. The correlation between language and identity has in recent years also become the focus of some researchers.

In chapter three, a glimpse is offered into the world of Pennsylvania Germans who do not belong to the large continuum of Anabaptist groups but still, because of their heritage, are considered Pennsylvania Germans (the nonsectarians), primarily Lutherans and Reformed. Until the latter half of the twentieth century, these nonsectarians constituted the great majority of Pennsylvania German speakers. The lives of the nonsectarians, for the most part, are vastly different from that of the majority of sectarians in that they have been assimilated into mainstream American life. Except for a few older people and some PG language enthusiasts, the vast majority is composed of monolingual English speakers. A comparative approach has been adopted to give a sociocultural description of these nonsectarian Pennsylvania German communities and the forces behind the shift in language use that has taken place in their communities in the last sixty years, which with a few exceptions have turned once bilingual speakers into English monolinguals. In order for the PG language not to become completely extinct in the targeted communities, various language maintenance efforts have taken place; they are described as well.

The portrayal of the linguistic situation in nonsectarian communities is followed by a depiction of the three branches of Anabaptist groups (the sectarians) that exist according to
Kraybill and Hostetter – namely, the traditional, transitional, and transformational groups (cf. Kraybill and Hostetter 2001). For comparative reasons some of the sectarian “cousins” in Lancaster County are given special attention. An analysis of the interplay between language use and culture within speech situations studies the characteristics of these three branches and their ways of dealing with the outside world and modernity. Also, it looks at the extent to which they are proselytizing, which ultimately guides their decision as to what language to choose in their daily discourse. The chapter ends with a general description of the linguistic situation and the relationship between the three languages used in OOA communities - PG, Amish High German, and English. Also provided is a short illustration of the social and cultural factors that determine these norms of language use, especially the prevailing belief and value system that is a guideline not only for the OOA way of living but also for their way of speaking.

Chapter four is an explanation of the research design with an account of the research questions, which focus primarily on the changing sociocultural and socioeconomic factors that for the last three decades have to an ever increasing extent affected the OOAs attitudes and perception of their native language and thus their maintenance efforts. Furthermore, the instrumentation, the informants and their distribution are described in great detail.

Chapter five follows with a description in greater detail of the employment structure of the OOA in Lancaster County, past and present. An unprecedented occupational shift, caused by changing demographics, has occurred in the Lancaster OOA settlement in the last three decades. Instead of farming, some alternative means of earning a living are explained as well as the approach that has worked best for the OOA in Lancaster County – namely, the creation of small businesses, so-called cottage industries. Tourism, as a catalyst to Amish entrepreneurship, is also taken into consideration, as well as its positive and negative influences on the OOA way of life.
Chapter six is a description of the model that seems to be the most appropriate to use in the study to describe language use on the community level, the social network model. The data obtained from the study is then tested on the social network model. The once dense and multiplex network of kinship, school, play, and work relationships that resulted in language stability has, because of socioeconomic changes in the last decades, undergone some changes that have resulted in a different type of work environment as well as different network constellations. These could prove to be significant factors in language maintenance or shift. Background data provided in previous chapters is essential for an accurate analysis and understanding of current language use and attitudes by the OOA in the Lancaster County settlement.

Chapter seven is a compilation of the tabulated and analyzed field data and a discussion of these findings. Chapter eight brings the study to a conclusion, and offers suggestions for possible actions that can be taken to maintain PG, and also makes recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2

THE PENNSYLVANIA GERMANS AND THEIR LANGUAGE

2.1 Historical Background

Language and culture exist in a symbiotic relationship. When a culture is able to protect its boundaries, elements of the culture, which include language, have a better chance of survival (Fishman 1989). Therefore, the awareness of the historical and cultural background of the people under investigation is of vital importance for the general understanding of that particular group, in this case the Old Order Amish.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europe was a continent plagued by economic hardship, warfare, political turmoil, and religious persecution. In the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, from which the Anabaptists originate, it was no different. As a consequence of the Peace of Augsburg of 1555, the head of state in each of the two hundred twenty-five different principalities of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was allowed to decide on the religion of his domain. This practice was known as *cuius regio, eius religio* (Garvan and Hummel 1982). The denominations recognized by the treaty were Catholics but also some Lutherans. Other denominations, including Anabaptists such as the Mennonites, were in danger of persecution.

The Anabaptists, from which the OOA descend, can trace their roots back to this time of Radical Reformation in the sixteenth century. According to a small group of young radicals in Switzerland (which included George Blaurock, Felix Manz, Conrad Grebel, and Michael Sattler), the leader of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, together with fellow reformers...
in Switzerland, such as Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, were not radical enough in their interpretation of the Bible and various practices involving the church. The criticism included questions about the Mass, church taxes, use of images, and the morality of church officials. Before long, the clash centered on the role of baptism. Based on passages such as: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you . . .,” (New International Version, Matt. 28:19-20), these radicals insisted that baptism was solely for adult believers. They claimed that infants and small children were unable to understand the teaching about salvation and repentance and therefore could not promise to live a life of obedience to Christ. This radical group of reformers and their followers quickly became known as Anabaptists. The movement’s first adult baptism took place in January 1525 in Zurich, Switzerland (Kraybill 1989). Their beliefs in adult baptism, separation of church and state, voluntary church membership, pacifism, and no swearing of oaths were a threat to the social fabric of Europe, where much depended upon the collection of church taxes, the sworn loyalty to the emperor, as well as the fighting of infidel Turks. Refusal to comply resulted in ruthless persecution and torture of the Anabaptists, as portrayed in great detail in Martyrs Mirror and the Ausbund (Dyck 1981). Fearful for their lives, they escaped and began worshipping in caves or secluded homes in mountainous areas throughout Switzerland, southern Germany, and Holland. To avoid religious persecution, economic hardship, and war, they began to emigrate to North America during the latter half of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. Many of them chose to immigrate to Pennsylvania after William Penn explicitly invited colonizers to his new state during his promotional tours to Germany in 1671 and 1677. William Penn’s assurance of fertile land and religious freedom was the hope and respite for which they
yearned (Garvan and Hummel 1982). The majority of the early settlers that came to Pennsylvania during this time originated primarily in the Palatinate, but Baden, Württemberg, Hesse, Alsace, and the German areas of Switzerland also supplied the area with many immigrants (Hostetler 1993).

2.2 The Pennsylvania Germans

After the founding of Pennsylvania in 1681, the first Germans arrived in America in 1683 and settled in Philadelphia County in an area that became known as Germantown. However, the bulk of Germans arrived between 1720 and 1750, and by the time of the American Revolution more than one-third of the colony’s population was German (Glatfelter 2002). The immigrants who arrived in Pennsylvania and the adjoining states before 1808 to 1810 and their descendants are what scholars today call the Pennsylvania Germans (Glatfelter 2002). Struble, an early-twentieth-century scholar of the PG language writes:

They [the Pennsylvania Germans] came to this country in colonial times, colonized in large groups, and their folk ways and their religion and their secular dialect set them quite apart from the other Germans who came later. Very early they cut themselves loose from all ties to the homeland, and this (though it sounds paradoxical) as well as their cultural and linguistic isolation in the new environment caused them to cling tenaciously to the old ways (Struble 1935: 164).

Among the people who arrived during the early days of German immigration were the sect people, primarily Anabaptists. Nonetheless, according to Fogleman (1996), less than ten percent of German-speaking immigrants prior to 1776 were sectarians. The Amish immigrants numbered only between two hundred sixty-five and three hundred in the years between 1709 and 1776, but there were as many as 5,500 Mennonites who made the trip to the New World during the same time. The so-called church people, Lutherans and Reformed, made up the largest group of Germans that arrived during this time (Fogleman 1996). During the second wave of
immigration (1815-1860) approximately 3,000 more Amish men, women, and children found their way to America. Whereas the Amish, who arrived during the early stages of immigration, settled in Pennsylvania, the later Amish immigrants settled in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, New York, Maryland, and Ontario, Canada.

As has been noted, though the Germans first settled in Pennsylvania and acquired the name Pennsylvania Germans, it is important to remember that being Pennsylvania German today does not necessarily imply geographical residency restricted to the state of Pennsylvania. PG may also be spoken in secondary and tertiary settlements wherever they may be. Today sectarian Pennsylvania Germans can be found in thirty states in the continental United States and in Ontario, Canada (Amish Population Trends 1991-2010 Twenty-Year Highlights). In the last few years, the highest growth rate of OOA has been recorded in New York, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. South Dakota is the newest state to welcome an Old Order Amish settlement. In the summer of 2010, some Amish land scouts from a settlement in upstate New York visited Alaska in search of farmland and, thus, the possibility for a new settlement. However, their trip proved unsuccessful. Other groups from Illinois and Missouri went to Mexico for the same reason but also without success (Scolforo 2010). The majority of sectarian Pennsylvania Germans, however, still live in the traditional strongholds of Lancaster County, Holmes County and LaGrange County, in the states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana respectively (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001).

The largest group of Anabaptists in the United States is the Mennonites, which at the present time numbers approximately 360,000 people (children included). It is also one of the most complex Anabaptist groups because its differences in history, ethnic backgrounds, and convictions. Because of this, the Mennonites in the United States are currently represented in
more than thirty different groups belonging to two main branches: Mennonite Church USA and the Mennonite Brethren (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001). However, they all have a common origin, dating back to Switzerland in the 1520s and get their name from Menno Simons, a Dutch Catholic priest who left the Catholic Church in 1536 in favor of the Anabaptist movement.

The next largest group is the Amish. They are divided into four main bodies: Old Order Amish, Beachy Amish, New Order Amish, and Amish Mennonites. They number a total of approximately 290,000. The OOA is unquestionably the largest and the best known of these groups. Their numbers have multiplied greatly since the turn of the nineteenth century, when the estimated number of OOA was approximately 5,000 (Kraybill and Bowman 2001, Kraybill 2003). There is an estimated Amish population of approximately 67,000 in Pennsylvania and almost 33,000 in Lancaster County. This includes baptized and non-baptized Amish (Amish Population by State [2014]). The Amish groups take their name from Jacob Ammann, a Swiss Anabaptist leader under whose leadership a faction separated from the Swiss Mennonites in Europe in 1693. The separation was the result of Ammann’s conviction that the church was too lenient in regard to discipline and simple living. Ammann advocated that communion should be observed twice a year instead of once a year as was customary. Ammann also favored social avoidance or shunning (Meidung) of someone who had been excommunicated from the church.

2.3 Scholarly Treatment of the Pennsylvania German Language – Overview

The Pennsylvania Germans spoke, and to a certain degree, depending on denomination and level of conservatism, still speak a language derived from the German dialects spoken by the early settlers in the colonial period, which has come to be called Pennsylvania German, Pennsylvania Dutch, Pennsylfawnisch, or simply Deitsch. The word “Dutch” in Pennsylvania
German is not to be mistaken with the language spoken in the Netherlands. Rather, PG represents a leveling of various German dialects that came to Pennsylvania with the first wave of German and Swiss immigrants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and most closely resembles the dialects of the eastern Palatinate (Vorderpfalz), from which the vast majority of immigrants descended, but also from Alsace, Baden-Württemberg, Swabia, and other parts of southwestern and west central Germany as well as Switzerland. Until approximately 1789, the majority of Germans settled in Germantown. Around 1790, however, large numbers of settlers started moving into the valleys of the Blue Mountain and along the Susquehanna River. As the German-speaking population moved away from the urban area surrounding Philadelphia to the rural areas of eastern and central Pennsylvania, the peoples began to mix. Immigrants from several different areas of Germany, who spoke a variety of German dialects, were now in close proximity of each other. The proximity in which the Germans lived, but also the intermingling with English-speaking people, contributed to a leveling of the different dialects (Seifert 1971). Consequently, a new, more or less homogeneous dialect, a dialect in its own right, evolved: Pennsylvania German. It is important to remember the importance of dialects at this point in time, at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century. Standard German was not yet established as the language ordinary people used in everyday conversations. Thus, rather than using Standard German or English as the common language, the dialects remained in use and were adapted to fit their new function as a common language among various groups. PG is, thus, accredited to the blending and leveling of the immigrants’ dialects, which occurred in the late nineteenth century (Buffington 1939, 1970). In the following, Buffington

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2 According to the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, in earlier times, “Dutch” commonly referred to both peoples and languages in what are nowadays Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the northern part of Belgium.
explains the results of the coexistence of German-speaking and English-speaking people in close proximity, the fact that the Palatinate speakers were numerically dominant among German immigrants to Pennsylvania, and the impact this had on the development of Pennsylvania German.

These German immigrants [mainly from the Rheinish Palatinate] spoke the German dialects peculiar to the sections from which they came (Buffington 1965:1) . . . . As these various Middle and South German dialects intermingled in Pennsylvania they passed through a leveling process which has resulted in a fairly homogeneous dialect (popularly referred to today as “Pennsylvania Dutch”) (Buffington 1965: 137-338).

This definition has received support from scholars such as Bausch (1997), who in his article describes the process in a similar way: “Die Einwander sprechen . . . [die] Dialekt ihrer Heimat. Im täglichen Umgang miteinander bildete sich mit der Zeit eine allen verständliche Umgangssprache heraus. Amerikaner nennen sie: Pennsylvania Deutsch, die Sprache selbst” (Bausch 1997: 4).

The aforementioned leveling process is not the only hypothesis that exists about the development of PG in colonial times. Raith (1992) believes that the various dialects that came into contact with each other did not blend. Instead, one dialect was stronger and more powerful than the others. The other dialects adapted their main features to that dialect so that all dialects were adapted in accordance to that one dialect. Raith suggests that in the case of PG, the Palatinate dialect was the strongest; and thus, contemporary speech of PG is suggestive of the Palatinate dialect. By the twentieth century, the different dialects had merged enough to form one language, Pennsylvania German (Raith 1992).

In addition, it is of importance to remember that dialect maintenance in Pennsylvania was supported by the fact that the majority of people who left their home country during the early stages of migration to America did so for religious reasons and would thus be more likely to
move with their entire family and settle in communities with similar religious convictions. In the late eighteenth century, as noted below by Fogleman, the horizontal ties or local networks were a very important unifying factor.

[T]he bonds of community, which had been growing stronger during the decades of recovery and rebuilding in southwest Germany, remained important after the villagers immigrated into Greater Pennsylvania. Many who had crossed the Atlantic together also settled together, and those who did not settle in the same township as many of their village neighbours nevertheless lived with their families in the region and stayed in touch through networks established by the village (Fogleman 1996: 79).

Later on, during the nineteenth and twentieth century, as many of the immigrant groups strove for individual prosperity, the tight-knit networks that had been the characteristics of these communities, built upon common religious beliefs, were relaxed. However, since the OOA have never striven for any individual gain or recognition but have at all times emphasized the community spirit; the strong network ties that were once established within the community remained very strong (cf. chapter 6).

Throughout the years, the focus of research on the PG language has changed. Many of the more significant and wide-ranging studies on PG were written prior to 1950 and were structural descriptions of the language, or dialectological studies. Van Ness in her (1990) work, Changes in an Obsolescing Language: Pennsylvania German in West Virginia, makes a rather sweeping outline of the last one hundred years of scholarly research and notes that “the majority of the most important and comprehensive studies in PaG were written before 1950, at a time when sociolinguistics was in its inception and serious interest in language attrition and language death was still twenty-five years in the future” (Van Ness 1990: 5). According to Van Ness, the latter part of the 1930s, as well as the 1940s was a time of rather intense scholarly research, followed by a thirty-year period of very little interest in the language, during which time very
few articles were published (cf. section 2.3.3). When new attention was given to the language at the end of the 1970s, the focus had changed from dialectology to “the subject of language maintenance and shift from a socio-cultural perspective” (Van Ness 1990: 10). This focus has to a great extent remained the center of attention for many contemporary scholars such as Huffines (1980, 1987, 1988), Johnson-Weiner (1992), Keiser (2001), Louden (1988, 1991, 1992), and Moelleken (1983).

Louden (2001) is more explicit in dividing the scholarly research carried out in the past one hundred years by separating it into three approximate time periods: (1) the 1870s–1900s. This is the time when the intellectual elite became interested in promoting and maintaining PG. A natural outcome of the heightened interest in all things Pennsylvania German was the founding in 1891 of the Pennsylvania German Society, the primary role of which is to promote and preserve the Pennsylvania German language and culture. After this upsurge in interest for anything Pennsylvania German, the first two decades of the twentieth century were characterized by stagnation in research on the language; (2) the late 1930s–1940s. This was the beginning of a dynamic time for Buffington, Reed and Seifert whose research later proved to be significant for the future study of the PG language as well as other areas of study; (3) the 1940s to the present. After almost two decades of prolific work on the PG language, research almost came to a halt in the 1950s. Very little was published in the next two decades. It was not until the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s that a new-found interest in PG was noted. The researcher largely responsible for the beginning of this new era in the study of PG is Marion Lois Huffines, who published articles in which the focus of interest had shifted from dialectology to sociolinguistics.
A survey of the most relevant research during the past one hundred years will provide a better understanding of the trajectory leading to the current status of the study of the PG language as well as an appreciation of the significance of the present study.

2.3.1 Early Records of Pennsylvania German Speakers

The earliest records of people speaking PG were made during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when some German-speaking visitors traveled through the northeast and wrote about their encounters with large numbers of people of German descent who had maintained their German language. One of the more famous accounts was made in 1783-1784 by a physician, Johann Schöpf, who had worked for German troops in America. Most likely, he was oblivious of the fact that when he described the German language that he stumbled upon during his travels throughout the northeast, it was the very first description of an emerging new language – Pennsylvania German.

Schöpf claimed that the Germans he encountered randomly incorporated English words into their language. The following is a conversation Schöpf said he overheard while traveling among the Germans in Pennsylvania:

Ich hab’ wollen mit einem Nachbar joinen, un ein Stück geklart Land purchasen. Wir hatten no doubt ein guten Bargain gemacht und hatten können gut drauf ausmachen. Ich war aber nicht capable so’ne Summe Geld aufzumachen, und konnt nicht länger expekten (Waldenrath 1978: 6).

A few decades later, 1834 to 1836, Charles Murry, a Briton, traveled through Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and made the following observation:

This part of the country was chiefly settled by Germans; indeed many of them speak very little English. They have German preachers, and a German printing press; and yet so corrupted is their dialect that I very much doubt a Saxon, a Brunswicker, or a Hanovarian would understand them readily. One old man with whom I spoke was third in descent, American born, his grandfather having come from Frankfort; he could speak neither language intelligibly (Waldenrath 1978: 7).

Since neither Schöpf nor Murry were trained linguists, it is difficult to know how accurate their observations actually were. It is certain, however, that at the beginning of the nineteenth century a new language was emerging through language contact and leveling (Buffington 1939, Meister-Ferré 1991). It is also true that these early accounts by Schöpf and Murry address two distinct areas that have been subject to speculation and research ever since – i.e., the linguistic structure and sociolinguistic status juxtaposed with language maintenance and shift of PG (Louden 2001).

2.3.2 Pennsylvania German Linguistics: 1870-1900

The years 1872 to 1900 have been referred to as the “Language-Conscious Period” (Louden 2001: 21). It was during this time, with regard to a possible demise of PG, that the first scholarly studies on PG were published.
In 1872 Haldeman’s work, *Pennsylvania Dutch: A Dialect of South German with an Infusion of English*, was published, in which Haldeman is the first scholar to note that PG is not only a blend of different German dialects but also has some English mixed into it. In addition, Haldeman perceived PG as a homogenous dialect with some slight variations. He makes the following comment:

The dialect of German known as Pennsylvania Dutch presents variations due to the limited intercourse of a widely scattered agricultural population, and to the several dialects brought from abroad (Haldeman 1872: 1).

Ever since Haldeman’s work was published in 1872, the language has stimulated an extensive body of research. Just over a decade later, Haldeman’s work was followed by M. Learned’s *The Pennsylvania German Dialect* (1889), which was an extensive diachronic study of PG traced back to Middle and Old High German. Whereas Haldeman in his work stated, without being too specific, that the origins of PG were to be found in the southern part of Germany, Learned pointed to the area of the Palatinate – and through extensive phonological and morphological research, more specifically to that of the western Palatinate (Learned 1889). Furthermore, one chapter is dedicated to English–German speech mixture. Learned was the first scholar to discuss the state of PG at the end of the nineteenth century, mentioning the PG competence among nonsectarians as being that of “balanced, Pennsylvania German-dominant or English-dominant bilingual speakers” (Louden 2001: 9). Although the total PG-speaking population was increasing around the turn of the nineteenth century, there was already an indication of decline in the use of PG among nonsectarians. Learned notes:

Parents speak their dialect among themselves and to the children, while the latter speak English among themselves and to their peers. In many sections of the State (Pennsylvania) [sic], Lancaster, and York counties for example, which one or two generations ago were distinctly German, the old vernacular, is fast disappearing and
English is becoming the current speech, leaving only the name of the speaker and locality as reminders of a once flourishing German community (Learned 1889: 18).

Stahr (1903: III) is one of the first to comment on the extensive borrowing of English words in PG as he writes the following:

The dialect still spoken by some of the descendants of the German settlers of Pennsylvania has received a good deal of attention . . . . The fact is that it is simply the perpetuation in varying degrees of purity of the dialects spoken by the common people in the portions of Germany and Switzerland from which the early settlers came to this country. The German language is noted for its flexibility and the readiness with which it adopts words borrowed from other languages, which may be clothed in a German dress and made to do service as if to the manner born. English words, in this way, have been readily and freely introduced into the dialect, in many cases to its great disadvantage and disfigurement. The dialect has also been modified by the coalescence of speech elements where settlers from different regions in Germany settled here in the same community.

Following this initial surge in scholarly research on PG at the end of the nineteenth century, the next thirty years are, for the most part, characterized by a large void of any significant studies on PG. One exception during this time of little scholarly research was the publication in 1924 of M. Lambert’s ground-breaking *A Dictionary of the Non-English Words of the Pennsylvania-German Dialect*. It was the first Pennsylvania German dictionary of such scope, containing the largest number of entries, over 16,000, ever documented (Van Ness 1990). To this day it remains one of the most important reference works on Pennsylvania German. Lambert was also one of the scholars who concurred with Learned’s earlier (1889) findings that the origins of PG were to be found in the western Palatinate dialects (Lambert 1924). Lambert’s findings are in contrast to the findings of Buffington (Buffington 1939), who argues that PG is closer to the dialect in the eastern Palatinate (cf. chapter 2, 2.3.3).
2.3.3 Pennsylvania German Linguistics, 1930-1940

In the 1930s, because of the newly awakened interest in Pennsylvania German, three articles: Tucker (1934), Struble (1935), and Page (1937) – were published in quick succession. These articles did not portray the English influence on PG but revealed the Pennsylvania German influence on English - what later became known as Dutchified English.

Yet, more significant for this study was Bickel’s (1930) article, in which he stated that PG had started losing ground within the nonsectarian population. Although the demise of PG had been mentioned already at the end of the nineteenth century, this was the first time in a scholarly paper that concern was expressed about the decline of PG. Bickel’s (1930) article, as well as articles published by Follin (1929) and Struble (1935), were all in agreement with work done on the Pennsylvania German language during the nineteenth century, which acknowledged, albeit in rather vague terms, that PG was indeed a southern German dialect mixed with some English.

A Grammatical and Linguistic Study of Pennsylvania German, the first doctoral thesis ever written on the language, was completed by A. Buffington in 1937. Buffington’s dissertation was a descriptive study, in which he, in accordance with Learned a few decades earlier, attempted to describe the PG language as a whole. However, Buffington based his study on his own native pronunciation of the language, representative of Dauphin, Northumberland, and Schuylkill Counties. In his dissertation Buffington used primarily written sources. However, in the 1940s, in his continued research, which resulted in his (1948) work, Linguistic Variants in the Pennsylvania German Dialect, Buffington was the first scholar to gather dialectal field data and prepare charts. Because of this novel method of collecting data in the field of PG research, Springer (1943) credited Buffington’s work as being the catalyst which generated new approaches to the study of the language.
This is also the era when Carroll Reed and Lester Seifert were actively conducting research, building on the research carried out earlier by Buffington. Reed and Seifert were the first linguists to undertake a systematic study of PG and its lexical and phonological variants. As graduate students they conducted their research in Lehigh and Berks Counties, Pennsylvania, utilizing a questionnaire that had been developed in 1939. This questionnaire, the so-called Pennsylvania German Workbook, later became known as the Reed-Seifert questionnaire (Van Ness 1990).

Reed and Seifert’s study was dialectological in nature and the aim was to define variation within certain linguistic areas and then relate them to settlement history, religious background, and cultural influences. Their fieldwork, conducted between the years 1939 to 1941, resulted in the (1954) publication of A Linguistic Atlas of Pennsylvania German. Until this point, PG had been treated by researchers as very homogenous. However, through the results of their studies Buffington, as well as Reed and Seifert, were the first linguists to describe regional variation in PG.

As had already been concluded by earlier research, PG is most closely related to Palatinate German. Buffington (1939), however, was the first scholar who stated that the language is closely related to the eastern Palatinate rather than the western Palatinate. This came as a surprise as most of the early German settlers in the present PG area came from the western Palatinate region. Buffington (1939: 278) writes:

It is hardly conceivable that the German settlers in Pennsylvania deliberately adopted the dialect used by the immigrants coming from the Vorderpfalz. It is more reasonable to assume that, as the various Franconian and Alemannic dialects mingled in Pennsylvania, a general leveling process took place, which finally resulted in the dropping of most of those dialectal characteristics which were peculiar only to the Alemannic or the western Palatinate dialects.
Buffington’s evidence was most convincing and provided a useful tool for further historical studies of PG and its development. In 1954 Buffington, in collaboration with Barba, published *A Pennsylvania German Grammar*. In this grammar Buffington remarks on the derogatory comments made by German teachers, at both the high school and college levels, about the PG language. Because of these negative comments, he considered it important to mention that PG originates from existing dialects spoken in the eastern Palatinate.

During the past few years I have heard high school and college teachers of German describe Pennsylvania German as follows: “a form of debased German”, “corrupt German”, “a mixture of bad German and English”, “a mixture of Dutch and English”, “Low German”, or “Low German with English words mixed in”. Pennsylvania German does not fit any of these descriptions, but is a respectable German dialect (with a small percentage of English loan words), which happen to resemble most closely the dialects spoken today in the eastern half of the Rhenish Palatinate (Buffington and Barba 1954: 131).

Buffington was also one of the first scholars to maintain that the English influence on PG was overrated and notes in his (1939: 279) article:

> In most instances the influence of English on the dialect has been greatly exaggerated. It is true that English has had considerable influence on the syntax and vocabulary of the dialect, but in the phonology and morphology of Pennsylvania German there is almost no English influence to be observed.

In 1954 Buffington acknowledged that the percentage of English loan words in PG, especially among the younger generation, had increased dramatically in the past fifty years. He continued by saying that such an increase was to be expected and writes:

> The Pennsylvania Germans have never hesitated to borrow an English word, if they needed one for their purposes. When the early German settlers first arrived in Pennsylvania they met many objects for the first time, and therefore learned to recognize them by their English names. They also were compelled to call other objects by their English names, because the tradesmen with whom they frequently transacted business could not speak the dialect (Buffington and Barba 1954: 138).
Following Buffington’s findings (1937, 1939, 1954), during the next decades other scholars such as Christmann (1950), Reed (1957, 1972), and Veith (1968) continued to conduct morphological and phonological research on PG. Veith extended his research to include also lexicological aspects of the language. They all concurred that the area around Mannheim, the eastern part of the Palatinate, linguistically was the area that showed most similarities to PG. Even so, Springer (1943) cautioned that because of the blend and leveling of the settlers’ dialects that had taken place during the centuries they have resided in the New World, it is impossible to identify one specific home community from which PG descends although the majority of immigrants originated in the southwestern part of Germany, the Palatinate. In 1991 Meister-Ferré concluded that ever since the beginning of scholarly research in the nineteenth century, there has been no consensus as to the origin of PG – that PG is a blend and leveling of older German dialects.

After a time of intense research in the late 1930s and the 1940s, the interest in PG during the following three decades was weak, with the exception of a few publications. Kloss’s (1966) work was significant in that it positioned PG in the general sociolinguistic context of German language maintenance in the United States. Thirty years after Buffington first noted that the influence of English on PG was not as great as people in general might have thought, according to one of his last articles (1970) his views of the English influence on PG had not changed. Buffington writes:

My investigations have revealed that the percentage of English loan words used today by speakers of Pennsylvania German varies from two to eight per cent, which is not nearly as high as many people estimate. The average layman is not aware of the linguistic relationship between English and German, and therefore he regards many of the words which are not derivatives but simply cognates as English loan words (Buffington 1970: 96).
While in the beginning of the 1980s a new-found interest in PG could be detected, the focus of interest had shifted, and researchers were no longer interested in the dialectology of the language. Instead, researchers embarked on studies that addressed the issue of language maintenance and shift from a sociocultural perspective.

2.3.4 A New Focus: Pennsylvania German Linguistics, 1980 to the Present

During the mid to late 1970s a new focus in linguistics occurred. There was a change in focus from dialect geography to language maintenance, shift, attrition, and death. There are many different outcomes of extensive language-contact situations, and certainly not all of them are language death. Many researchers noted that the mechanisms that contribute to language maintenance or death are both social and cultural (cf. Blom and Gumperz 1972, Dorian 1981, 1982, 1989, Gal 1979, Gumperz 1982, Schmidt 1985). In all the related studies, the minority language has been maintained as long as it meets the ever-changing needs of the group that speaks it. However, when it no longer does, as when it is no longer possible for its speakers to receive education, participate in church life, go about one’s daily business in society, or support oneself, the group might alter the language in different ways or shift to the majority language altogether. In addition, according to Fishman language maintenance is “the strongest among those immigrants who have maintained greatest psychological, social and cultural distance from the institutions, processes and values of American core society” (Fishman 1972: 54).

On the other hand, language shift, which is the gradual displacement of one language by another, has been the norm rather than the exception for members of many language-minority communities in the United States. Language shift usually happens when there is a marked difference in prestige of and support for the minority language versus the majority language. When the promise of social and economic advancement is assured by mastery of the majority
language, the incentive to shift to the majority language is great. As expected, the ultimate outcome will be a steady decline in those social contexts in which the minority language can and will still be used. The rate of this decline undeniably depends on differences in population size and the concentration in relatively isolated areas. Historically, in the American context without a steady flow of immigrants from the minority language’s homeland, the number of fluent speakers slowly but surely diminishes, and in turn leads to fewer social contexts in which the minority language could still be applied. Eventually, within two or three generations, no real social context exists in which it is appropriate to speak the minority language, not even in the domain of the home (Huffines 1989). The number of speakers is thus reduced, and many times the language is no longer structurally intact (Dorian 1980). The minority language has been replaced by the language of the dominant culture. This phenomenon has been studied quite extensively in primarily two areas: the indigenous languages of the United States and Canada and the transplanted immigrant languages to the United States. Examples of the former are Cherokee in the eastern part of the United States and Cree in Saskatchewan, Canada (Blair and Fredeen 1995, Louden 2003). A good illustration of the latter are Norwegian immigrants to the New World during the nineteenth century, who by the 1950s after only two or three generations, made an almost complete shift to English, the language of the dominant culture (Haugen 1989). Clausing’s study of Icelandic communities in the United States and Canada, in which Icelandic was the dominant language where after merely two generations Icelandic was replaced by English, is another illustration of the latter (Clausing 1986).

The fate of PG, on the other hand, is quite different. It has enjoyed an extraordinarily long history despite earlier predictions of its imminent and total demise, and there is a consensus among scholars that PG is the most prominent German language in the New World. Why is it
that some immigrant languages in the United States survive and sometimes even flourish whereas others are destined for extinction? As previously mentioned Fishman claims that maintenance is the strongest among immigrants who have maintained greatest social, cultural, and psychological distance from the dominant society (Fishman 1972). Kloss (1966) examines German language maintenance efforts in the United States, and his conclusions are similar to Fishman’s. Kloss pointed to six factors that play a crucial role in maintaining an immigrant language: (1) socio-religious isolation; 3 (2) time of immigration, earlier or at the same time as the Anglo-Americans; 4 (3) the existence of language islands; 5 (4) denominational fostering of parochial schools; 6 (5) pre-immigration experience with language maintenance efforts; 7 and (6) prestige resulting from official use as only language spoken during pre-Anglo-American period (Kloss, 6) 1966). 8 While some of these factors are the primary influence for the maintenance of PG – i.e., (1), (2), (3), and (4) – factors (5) and (6) affect the maintenance of PG very little.

During the last decades of the twentieth century, as mainstream society encroached more and more upon countless Amish communities, many of which are now in close proximity to urban areas, the cultural and linguistic demands on the PG-speaking population changed and with that also the interest of the researchers. As a result, since the beginning of the 1980s, the focus of PG research has primarily been on language maintenance, shift, and death. Recent research of special importance to the study of maintenance and shift of PG among nonsectarians and/or sectarians has been carried out by scholars such as Huffines (1980, 1987, 1988, 1991a, 1991b), Moelleken (1983), Louden (1988, 1991, 1992), Enninger (1988), Johnson-Weiner (1989, 1990).

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3 Socio-religious isolation – e.g., the OOA, the OOM, Hutterites, and Hassidic Jews.
4 Time of immigration – e.g., Germans in Pennsylvania, Spaniards in Florida, and Russians in Alaska.
5 Language islands – e.g., Czechs in Texas, Anabaptist groups (theological isolation).
6 Denominational fostering of parochial schools – e.g., OOA.
7 Pre-immigration experience with language maintenance efforts – e.g., Polish and French-Canadians.
8 Prestige – e.g., Spanish in New Mexico and French in Missouri and Louisiana.
Chapter 3

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT IN VARIOUS

PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN COMMUNITIES

3.1 Introduction

Language maintenance and shift have been studied in language communities around the world. In countries where minority languages exist alongside majority languages, the inclination is clearly the same: minority languages are negatively affected by the dominance of majority languages. In case after case, minority languages are dying out as their speakers shift toward majority languages so that there is a decrease in the numbers of speakers of a language and the use of that language in different domains (Romaine 1995). In a community where two or more languages are spoken, it is important for each language to serve a specific function – to be used in a specific domain. If two languages can be used interchangeably at all times, one language no longer meets the needs of the speakers. Thus, a language is maintained by speakers as long as the language meets the needs of these speakers. When it no longer meets these needs, the speakers will somehow modify the language to fit their needs better, or they will shift languages altogether. Therefore, for the continuation of bilingualism within a speech community, the different languages of the community have to fulfill different functions, be used in different domains (Huffines 1980). According to Johnson-Weiner (1998), an alteration of the language or
a complete shift of languages may show a shift in identity of certain speakers – that is, how these speakers define themselves in comparison to the rest of society.

To establish causes for language maintenance and shift in a particular area is not as simple as it seems because shift is often related to political power as well as social, cultural, and economic changes. When shift does occur, different factors may be in effect simultaneously but not necessarily in any certain order. Thus, a large minority group does not necessarily guarantee that a language will survive; it merely provides a better opportunity for that language to survive. By the same token, language competence is worth nothing if an environment for language use is not present. This point is well taken by the Irish experience, where the successful teaching of Irish Gaelic in the schools resulted in competent speakers, but the out-of-school environment offered very little or no opportunity for using the newly acquired language (Fishman 1991). In addition, factors that encourage maintenance in one place may promote shift in another. Hence, factors affecting language maintenance in one place, cannot simply be applied to any given language situation to determine which response to language contact is actually happening in a particular place. Each situation is unique and must be assessed individually and carefully. The language shift that is taking place in Finland, with the minority language Finland-Swedish being replaced by the majority language Finnish (cf. Tandefelt 1994), is very different from what is happening in Australia where a very rapid language shift involving the minority language Dutch in favor of the majority language English, is occurring (Clyne 1992).

It is common for minority groups, given access to the dominant language and incentive to use it, to shift languages. They, however, vary in their degree of ethnic maintenance and the rate of shift (Paulston 1994). While the fate of most minority languages in multilingual communities in the United State seems to be shift, maintenance is not unattainable for them. According to
Paulston (1994: 20-21), there are three main reasons why shift does not take place and thus why minority languages are maintained: (1) externally imposed boundaries, (2) the existence of a diglossic-like situation resulting from prolonged bilingualism, (3) self-imposed boundary maintenance. Geographic isolation is a well-known form of external boundary that contributes to language maintenance, such as the Quechua in the Andes (King 2001). Providing evidence of diglossic situations from Guarani and Spanish in Paraguay and Modern Standard Arabic, Paulston (1994: 21) notes that “full-fledged bilingualism is the exception rather than the rule.” Typically, self-imposed boundary maintenance results from reasons other than language. According to Paulston (1994), examples of minority groups with self-imposed boundaries are the Old Order Amish and the orthodox Jewish Hassidim, who have chosen to maintain their heritage languages rather than shift to English for the sake of their religions. Paulston’s notion of self-imposed boundary maintenance relates to conservative religious communities as religion plays a key role in the people’s self-identity and ethnic identity.

3.2 Pennsylvania German Speakers: Different Pieces to the Same Puzzle

Like any speech community, Pennsylvania German-speakers are not a homogeneous group. They are heterogeneous, representing a complex pattern of cultural, social, and religious diversity – a fact which needs to be taken into account when assessing the present linguistic situation. The degree of assimilation into mainstream society has reached different levels among these subgroups and splinter groups, ranging from the ultra-conservative Swartzentruber Amish to those whose life is indistinguishable from that of mainstream Americans. To the outsider these splinter groups are very confusing and difficult to understand. Variation in religious practices are rooted in different interpretations of core Anabaptist beliefs and their application to daily life.
Among PG-speaking groups, language shift is not a new phenomenon. At the turn of the twentieth century an estimated 750,000 people of German descent – with various denominational backgrounds such as Lutheran, Reformed, and Mennonite – spoke PG. The Amish accounted for about 5,000 speakers and were in a clear minority (Keiser 2003). At the present time the opposite is true, with only a few older non-Amish still speaking the language, while the Amish speakers currently number more than 290,000 (Amish Population by State [2014]). In order to assess better the current linguistic situation of the OOA community in question, it is essential to comprehend the different types of relationships these groups have maintained with society at large, which are reflected in the language(s) these groups speak in any given situation. Moelleken (1983) reflects on the importance of knowing some background information about the different PG-speaking groups before making any assumptions about language maintenance and shift in these various groups. Moelleken notes:

Since this language is used by speakers from a variety of socio-religious and cultural groups, comments on language shift in Pennsylvania German without reference to the exact speech community to which they pertain cannot do justice to the actual language situation (Moelleken 1983: 173).

To do this, a closer look at the social, cultural, and religious complexity of these various groups is necessary, and a distinction between sectarian and nonsectarian groups needs to be established. The following describes the PG linguistic situation in nonsectarian communities, followed by an overview of the different sectarian groups – the traditional, transitional, and transformational – that exist alongside the OOA in Lancaster County. Subsequently, the linguistic situation in the OOA communities in Lancaster County is portrayed.
3.3 Nonsectarian Communities

The nonsectarians do not belong to the great continuum of Anabaptist groups, but have their origins in a variety of religious backgrounds, primarily Lutheran and Reformed. Until the dawn of industrialization, they lived lives that were very similar to that of the rural farmers in the traditional Anabaptist groups. However, during the latter part of the twentieth century, they became urbanized and have since adapted fully to the surrounding society and culture. Today they own cars, dress in a contemporary fashion, accept any kind of work, send their children to public schools and, perhaps most importantly, the overwhelming majority speak English, not PG.

3.3.1 Language Shift in Nonsectarian Communities

It has often been assumed that the largely isolated and rural environment the Pennsylvania Germans in general have lived in during the three hundred years in which they have been in North America has contributed to the survival of their heritage language (Huffines 1980). Nevertheless, the differences, in sociocultural, economic, religious, and linguistic conditions under which the sectarian and nonsectarian communities exist today are reflected in various linguistic results of language maintenance and shift.

In the most conservative sectarian groups the language is more successfully maintained than among nonsectarians, where it is moribund. Louden (1988) and Huffines (1991) both note that some fifty years ago PG varied primarily according to the geographic area in which it was spoken. Today the difference lies primarily in the religious denomination to which the speaker belongs. Hence, the total number of speakers of PG is approximately the same today as it was fifty years ago. However, the distribution of PG speakers has changed. In the 1950s the nonsectarians still represented the overall majority of speakers, with approximately 300,000 speakers of PG (Buffington and Barba 1954). However, since then a clear shift from PG/English
bilingualism to English monolingualism has taken place among them, and the number of nonsectarians who still speak PG has dramatically declined to less than 100,000.

As the ensuing account indicates, the reasons for this decline are manifold. They stem in large part from the fact that PG no longer has any sociolinguistic function within the nonsectarian communities. There are no supporting institutions that try to maintain the language: government, school, and church are all conducted in English. Huffines (1980: 55) argues that PG holds “null social value.” She notices that among the nonsectarians PG has always been considered a nonstandard, primarily oral medium with vague origins and therefore has been negatively compared to German and especially to English, the dominant language in society at large. In line with Huffines, Louden (2003) argues that the key factors that have made PG almost extinct among nonsectarians have existed ever since the beginning of PG. There has never been a stable diglossic relationship between PG and German among the nonsectarians.

Crawford (2007), in his study of indigenous languages, lists three contributing factors that threaten the maintenance of a language, particularly among Native American languages and old-immigrant languages\(^9\) of the United States, to which PG belongs: (1) the average age of those who are fluent in the language increases, (2) the language loses domains or functions in which it was previously used, and (3) an increasing number of parents fail to transfer the language to the next generation. All three factors are currently present in nonsectarian communities speaking PG.

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\(^9\) *Old immigrants* were the immigrants who arrived in America before the Civil War. They descended primarily from northern and western Europe, were fair-skinned, were Protestants, and came over as families, were generally fairly well skilled, and spoke English or some other Germanic language. Examples of nationalities: English, Norwegians, and Germans.
3.3.2 Level of Pennsylvania German Proficiency among Nonsectarians

The linguistic repertoire of the earliest Pennsylvania Germans, sectarians and nonsectarians alike, consisted of three languages – High German, Pennsylvania German, and American English. The language choice was decided by domain. In the mid-nineteenth century a gradual loss of High German was becoming obvious, and in general, today nonsectarians no longer have any knowledge of the language. Until quite recently the nonsectarian communities were considered bilingual but non-diglossic communities, speaking PG and English.

However, currently PG is constantly losing ground to English, and the number of nonsectarian speakers of PG is continuously dwindling. A very small number of speakers still use PG in daily discourse, such as when speaking to a spouse. However, the overwhelming majority of nonsectarians use PG only when speaking to some older members of the family, or when they try to keep secrets from children or grandchildren. (Huffines 1980, 1994). The level of proficiency among the nonsectarians ranges from fully competent speakers; to the vast majority, the so-called semi-speakers\(^{10}\) who speak very little PG and are much more comfortable speaking English; to those who do not speak PG at all (cf. Dorian, 1982a and b). According to Burridge (2002), this continuum is directly related to the speaker’s level of religious conservatism. The more conservative a person is, the more fluent in PG he or she is.

There is a tendency for older members of the community to have a higher level of proficiency in the language. Thus, the younger the speaker, the more varied and less fluent the use of PG seems to be. In fact, at the present time it is very difficult to find a native nonsectarian

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\(^{10}\) *Semi-speaker*, a term coined by linguist Nancy Dorian in her work on East Sutherland Gaelic in Scotland, which refers to the last imperfect speakers of a dying language (cf. Dorian 1982a, 1982b).

As previously mentioned, Huffines (1980) maintains that for the nonsectarians PG no longer serves any communicative function. The values of speaking PG have been lost. Thus, as soon as PG fails them or when it is socially appropriate, they do not hesitate to continue the rest of the conversation in English. In other words, instead of not using PG at all, they say what they are capable of in PG; what they cannot communicate in PG, they express in English (Huffines, 1980, 1987, 1988, 1991a, 1991b). When languages undergo shift, they often display certain characteristic changes – for example, simplification of complex grammatical structures. Because of the frequency with which the nonsectarians switch to English, linguistically their PG shows the most conservatism. Hence, among the nonsectarians PG is dying rather quickly because the younger generation has very limited opportunities to hear and practice it. To use a phrase that Dorian has used extensively in her own research on East Sutherland Gaelic, but which fits well also in the PG context, “the language is dying but with its morphological boots on” (Hyltestam and Stroud 1991: 14).

3.3.3 Cultural Assimilation Encouraging Language Shift

“A change in pattern of language maintenance can often be linked directly to changing economic and social conditions, . . .” (Dorian 1982a: 46). This general statement made by Dorian in her research on East Sutherland Gaelic applies well to the changing sociolinguistic conditions of the nonsectarian communities during the twentieth century. As previously mentioned (cf. 2.3.2 Pennsylvania German Linguistics, 1870-1900), the decrease in numbers of PG speakers among the nonsectarian population had already started before the turn of the twentieth century. Learned’s (1889: 315) view of the future of PG was very pessimistic as he
argued that “the rising generation regards with contempt the speech of their fathers, and thus not only contributes to the growing speech mixture, but bids fair in a few generations to erase the last vestiges of the sturdy German vernacular.”

Intolerance or other negative sentiments on the part of the dominant society toward a minority language are other key factors that accelerated the downfall of PG among nonsectarians. Just as the Civil War during the nineteenth century hastened the demise of PG among nonsectarians, one of the main reasons for the rapidly decreasing numbers of PG-speaking nonsectarians at the beginning of the twentieth century was the overwhelming resentment and hatred toward anything German in the United States during the two World Wars, especially during World War I (Louden: 2003). Dorian (1994: 119) notes: “Discussions of the history of assimilation of immigrant groups in the U.S. often overlook the watershed effect of World War I in heritage language maintenance. After the outbreak of that war public attitudes toward German became strongly hostile.” Thus, in 1917 many public and private schools banned the teaching of German altogether. German language publications were forbidden or went out of print. Landmarks with German-sounding names were renamed. German American businesses were shunned. Because of the increased American patriotic sentiments during this time, many nonsectarian PG speakers did not want to be associated with being German and started abandoning their native language in favor of English. The situation for children who spoke PG was especially difficult, and they were often scorned by their teachers and teased by their fellow students as being the “dumb Dutch”, incapable of speaking proper English. Moelleken gives a good account of some Berks County nonsectarians, who as youngsters were ashamed to speak PG because it was frowned upon by society at large and also by many of their peers. They wanted to avoid being teased and called “dumb Dutch” (Moelleken 1983).
Because of their lack of English proficiency these children were often considered cognitively disabled (Stine 1938, 1942). According to Parsons:

Thousands of young parents who had heard no language but Pennsylvania Dutch in their own childhood, forbade their children to learn the dialect, and punished them when they did. Many were still branded verbally by a thick Dutch accent in their English speech (Parsons 1985: 237).

Yet, World War I was not the only contributing factor to the decreasing numbers of PG-speaking nonsectarians at the beginning of the twentieth century. The same social and economic factors that increasingly made people in the rest of America abandon their rural lifestyle and move into the cities, go to school and find jobs there, industrialization and urbanization, were tightening their grip around this group of people as well. For the nonsectarians the abandonment of their rural lifestyle was not such a difficult one because from the beginning, when they first settled on American soil, they had been different from their PG-speaking sectarian brothers and sisters in that they had been part of and had participated in American cultural, social and political life.

With the move away from farming as the traditional occupation for these people higher education became a necessity. Nonsectarians who pursued higher education or moved to urban areas in search for jobs did not want to be associated with the PG-speaking community. Therefore, while the need for a solid knowledge of English constantly increased with the urbanization of the nonsectarians, the domains in which PG was spoken continued to decrease. Clearly, for many who tried to make a career for themselves and wanted status in the new emerging society, speaking “Deitsch” was something they were ashamed of and tried to hide (Moelleken 1983). Instead, they wished to assimilate culturally and linguistically into mainstream America, and they were aware that the key to social advancement and personal
fulfillment was linked to English monolingualism (cf. Giles, Bourhis and Taylor 1977). This was yet another reason why many parents stopped speaking PG to their children. Parents concerned about their children’s future did not want them to pick up a “dutchified” accent with the stereotypical phonological features such as the confusion of v and w, the falling intonation of yes/no questions, and the frequently superfluous usage of adverbs such as already, once, and still, which to the outsider traditionally indicated that he or she was dealing with a “simple” farmer. Huffines (1980) notes that PG continued to be associated with having little education and that speaking PG could hinder children in school.

Huffines, in another article (1992: 169), continues her thoughts:

The desire of nonplain Pennsylvania German parents for their children to excel in school outweighs any consideration of Pennsylvania German language maintenance within the family. The decision to speak English to children is a fairly uniform one . . . . The children of these parents, when speaking of the period of that time [the time of school consolidation], describe their own efforts to hide their so-called “Dutch accent” and to eliminate characteristics of “Dutchified English” from their speech.

However, already in 1942 Stine had articulated the sentiments of the Pennsylvania German “intelligentsia” of the late nineteenth century when he wrote:

The intelligentsia, influenced by an Anglo-American culture, cared not at all for the retention of German, and at times, led in the movement for its elimination. When the intelligentsia founded colleges, they made the colleges English, and they refused to support the few educators who tried to establish a German normal school. Only the rural Germans, with an intense loyalty to the language and way of life of their fathers and wishing to live unmolested culturally and politically, opposed the language change (Stine 1942: 124).

Historically, most nonsectarians belonged to Lutheran or Reformed churches and used German in their worship services. Today, the language of choice is with very few exceptions English. More often than not the pastor’s knowledge of PG is nonexistent. However, annually or biannually many of these Lutheran and Reformed churches, which in the past held their services
in German, hold a commemorative service in the language of their ancestors. Since this is only a once-a-year event, the significance of it as an attempt to keep the language alive is minor. It is merely a token attempt to connect with one’s heritage (Moelleken 1983).

A rather negative attitude toward PG exists among nonsectarians today. The native language of the nonsectarians is no longer transferred from one generation to another and therefore is not learned as anyone’s first language. If it is learned at all, it is learned later in life, taught by friends, family, or in dialect classes. PG has ceased to serve any function in the lives of the nonsectarians. In order to be maintained by the community, there needs to be some significant, identifiable benefits to knowing and speaking PG. The language no longer has a domain in which it is spoken for the majority of nonsectarians. PG used to be spoken within the intimate domain of family and close friends. The language never carried any overt prestige, but for the nonsectarian it has also completely lost its covert prestige as a symbol of group identity and solidarity.

If a language lacks both overt and covert prestige, its survival chances are slim; a complete assimilation to mainstream America has occurred. Nonsectarians dress in modern fashion, drive automobiles, have professional jobs, and use English in all aspects of daily life. These factors have all contributed to a classic example of unstable bilingualism. Louden (1988) distinguishes between stable bilingualism and unstable bilingualism. Early bilingualism is promoted by three factors: early acquisition, equally positive attitudes toward the languages involved, and the appropriateness and necessity of both languages in substantial, non-overlapping domains. In an unstable bilingual situation the three factors mentioned above are not present. The minority language can no longer be maintained. Instead, a shift takes place in which bilingualism gradually gives way to monolingualism. Among nonsectarians PG is dying rather
quickly. It is also dying intact, showing little convergence toward English (Huffines, 1980, 1987, 1988, 1991a, 1991b, 1992)

3.4 Various Means of Language Preservation

3.4.1 Dialect Class

That the feeling of shame is still prevalent among the nonsectarians of the twenty-first century is well illustrated in an introductory PG language class of thirty-eight students offered by the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in the spring of 2006. Almost half of the students reported that as children their parents and/or grandparents of Pennsylvania German descent had refused to speak to them in PG except when they were reprimanding them or trying to keep secrets from them. The refusal of the parents to speak PG to their children was done out of consideration for the children. It was done to avoid the stigma of speaking a “Dutchified English”, which the parents thought could be a detriment to the future success of their children.

By offering dialect classes, a genuine effort has been made to maintain the language. These classes have been offered in various Pennsylvania German conversational settings as well as at historical societies since the mid-twentieth century. There are different types of classes: the majority of classes are designed for those who have no or minimal knowledge of PG and want to be able to converse in the dialect. Others are for those who want to read dialect literature. In York, Lebanon, and Berks Counties the classes are primarily geared toward the conversational level of the dialect. The two classes offered in Lancaster County each spring and fall are geared toward speaking proficiency in addition to some knowledge of grammar.

That the interest in trying to preserve the language is great can be seen in the large numbers of people attending the classes. Thirty-eight people who had signed up for the spring
2006 Introduction to Pennsylvania German class; about thirty people said they were there for the sole reason of wanting to be able to understand the language their parents or grandparents spoke, which was never transferred to them or only very sporadically spoken in their presence. Half of the people (approximately fifteen) who wanted to be able to speak the language of their ancestors were nonsectarians, and the other half belonged to the sectarian – the transformational groups – except for one couple who belonged to an Old Order Mennonite group. Some of the participants were complete novices in the dialect, but the majority said they knew a few words because PG had always been spoken when secrets were told. Some had a passive knowledge of the language and could be regarded as semi-speakers (cf. Dorian 1982a, 1982b).

The common denominator among these people was that they were all interested in trying to preserve the language of their parents and/or grandparents. They considered the language to be a link to their past and the history of their people. In terms of language maintenance, the classes do expose participants to the dialect and encourage the continued use of the dialect in authentic settings after the ten weeks of classes. In a sense, these classes are not only trying to preserve the language but are attempting to generate new speakers of the dialect.

3.4.2 The Fersommling

The Fersommling is an annual gathering of regional groups of Pennsylvania Germans who come together to celebrate their Pennsylvania German heritage with fellowship, games and food. However, for the majority of the several hundred – sometimes thousands – of participants, the main attraction is the chance to speak PG with fellow Pennsylvania Germans. PG is prominent at these gatherings, and the participants share the view that PG should be the only language allowed at the Fersommling. At some Fersommlinge the old tradition of having to pay
for every English word used is still in effect. If someone happens to use an English word, he pays
the price and has to put a quarter in a jar designated for such “offenses”.

The *Fersommlinge* are very popular events in counties like Berks, where there is still a
large contingent of older Lutheran and Reformed PG speakers. Because of the popularity of
these events, some of the *Fersommlinge* have waiting lists for tickets, and it can take as long as a
year or more to be able to purchase them. Supposedly, because there are very few nonsectarians
in this area, there are currently no *Fersommlinge* in Lancaster County (Leasa).

At this time, the focus of attention will shift to some of the sectarian groups that live
alongside their OOA cousins in Lancaster County. There are, in fact, three Anabaptist-related
groups in Lancaster County: the Amish, the Mennonites, and the Brethren. All three groups share
the Anabaptist belief that calls for making a conscious choice to accept baptism. The three
groups also share the same basic values pertaining to the all-encompassing authority of Scripture,
a philosophy of discipleship, non-resistance and the importance of family and community. The
various groups differ primarily in dress code, form of worship, the extent to which they allow
modern technology and the forces of the outside world to impact their way of life, and also
language used. They have all faced the pressure from the surrounding English-speaking society,
but each group has made its own decision on which language to use. Johnson-Weiner (1998:
377-378) notes:

> Each church community has actively decided for itself the value of PG and the pattern of
language use that most effectively represents the community’s notion of itself and its
place in the world. Thus, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and other areas of Amish
and Mennonite settlement, members of Old Order PG-speaking often live side by side
with members of groups that used to be PG-speaking, some of which may have shifted to
English only a generation or two ago.

Differences between these groups will be described below in greater detail.
3.5 The Intricate Web of Sectarian Communities

Despite their common origin, the various Amish and Mennonite groups are very diverse ethnically, religiously, and linguistically.

The Old Order sectarian group – to which the OOA of Lancaster County belong, are the most traditional of the traditional groups – that is, the Old Order Amish, the Old Order Mennonites, and the New Order Amish. The other end of the Anabaptist continuum is formed by the progressive transformational groups, such as the Mennonite Church USA and Church of the Brethren, with transitional groups like the Beachy Amish in between.

![Figure 3-1. Selected branches in Lancaster County by level of assimilation (adapted from Kraybill and Hostetter 2001)](image)

3.5.1 Traditional Groups

The Old Order sectarians cherish life in separation from mainstream American culture. They consider themselves Old Order in that they emphasize and vehemently preserve traditional
religious practices. They are known as the Plain people\textsuperscript{11} and their lifestyle is characterized by a wish to live in isolation from mainstream society.

They also exhibit at least one of the following traditional traits: they dress distinctively, speak a German dialect, forbid private ownership of automobiles, and use modern technology selectively. However, before adopting new technology into community life, they carefully take into consideration the impact this might have on the community as a whole (Kraybill 1989 and Kraybill and Hostetter 2001). Until recently the Old Order groups have been primarily rural farmers, but in the past four decades this has changed. They are still living mainly in rural areas, but many support themselves through work in nonagricultural activities. They rear large families with many children, averaging six to eight children per family (Donnermeyer 2004). The children receive an eighth-grade education because the Old Order groups believe that for their lives as farmers this level of education is quite sufficient. In Lancaster County the traditional sectarian group that is probably the best known, most visible, and an illustration of the aforementioned characteristics is the OOA. Since this group is the focus of the study, more features to its characteristics and linguistic situation will be given later in the chapter.

The Old Order Mennonite group is another rather well-known and diverse group that belongs to the traditional branch of the continuum, as well as its lesser-known cousin, the New Order Amish. These traditional groups are especially prevalent in Lancaster County.

3.5.1.1 Old Order Mennonites

Old Order Mennonites is a name given to certain conservative groups which separated from the Lancaster Mennonite Conference (MC) in the United States and Canada during the time of the

\textsuperscript{11} Plain People are Christian groups characterized by separation from the world and simple living, including plain dress. To these groups belong the Old Order Amish, the Old Order Mennonites, Hutterites and other groups with similar religious views.
“Great Awakening,”12, 1850-1900, maintaining Old Order traditional values in daily life and worship. One of the groups that grew out of this movement was the Weaverland Conference Mennonites, also known as the “Horning” Mennonites after their bishop, Moses Horning (Lee 2000).

3.5.1.2 The Beginnings of the Weaverland Conference Mennonites

The Weaverland Conference Mennonites trace their roots back to 1893, when several hundred church followers protested against the innovations that were being introduced into the church at that time. These believers were not willing to accept the new ways of Christian education, evangelism through Sunday schools, or revival meetings. They opposed the performance of marriage ceremonies for nonmembers, and they also opposed use of the English language instead of PG in their church services. The outcome was a rupture and withdrawal by the most conservative members and, consequently, the Weaverland Conference Mennonite Church was founded (Scott 1996, and Johnson-Weiner 1998).

3.5.1.3 A Split Church

In the 1920s there was a new schism among the Old Order Mennonites in Lancaster County over the use of automobiles for transportation. Half of the followers opposed using cars, arguing that automobiles would split the community. Eventually, in 1927 this disagreement resulted in a split in which opponents to the use of cars became the Groffdale Conference Mennonite Church, more commonly known as the “Wenger” Mennonites after their first bishop, Joseph O. Wenger, or “Team” Mennonites because of their use of the horse-and-buggy for

12 A Great Awakening within a church is a term that generally refers to a specific period of increased spiritual interest or renewal in the life of a church congregation or in the church worldwide. In North America the third Great Awakening began in the 1850s and lasted until the turn of the century.
transportation. Those who favored cars became known as the “Horning” Mennonites after Bishop Moses Horning (Scott 1996). Yet, for many years it was compulsory for the members of the Horning or Weaverland Conference Mennonites to paint any chrome on their cars black, thus their nickname “Black Bumpers”. Currently, this rule only applies to ministers of the church (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001).

3.5.1.4 Present-day Weaverland Conference “Horning” Mennonites

The population growth and spread of the Horning Mennonites has slowed since the early 1980s, and today sixty-seven percent of all Weaverland Conference congregations can be found in Pennsylvania (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001). Like their OOA counterparts they started leaving the farm in the 1980s to find work in small businesses and construction sites. The Horning Mennonites do not oppose driving cars, and scholars like Kraybill and Hurd (2006) hold the acceptance of the car partly responsible for the lower number of new members since the early 1980s. The Hornings depend less on farming for their livelihood. Many Horning Mennonites have left the farms behind in favor of the establishment of small-business enterprises. Increased mobility makes it easier to enter into new business ventures. The outcome is that the children no longer constitute the same economic asset as when they were working alongside their parents in the fields, and thus, family size is likely to shrink. One Wenger Mennonite remarked: “If you have a car like the Hornings . . ., then it can lead anywhere – to a big farm or into big business” (Kraybill and Hurd 2006: 247).

The car is a “modern” invention and there are also other areas in which the Hornings have adapted to the world at large, they use electricity, telephones and modern farm equipment in the field (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001). However, in many other ways they adhere to Old
Order values. They do not believe in Sunday schools, revival meetings, and they are against proselytizing (Kraybill and Hurd 2006).

3.5.1.5 Pennsylvania German of the “Horning” Mennonites: Unstable Bilingualism

The Horning Mennonites have, more often than not, replaced PG with English in their homes, especially when parents speak to their children or siblings speak to each other. At the present time only the older generation (sixty and above) still speaks PG on a regular basis. PG has been completely replaced by English in their church services. “It should be remembered that the switch to English in this domain was one of the major causes for the Old Order Mennonite schism” (Moelleken 1983: 178).

3.5.1.6 The Groffdale Conference “Wenger” Mennonites

The Wenger Mennonites contrast sharply with their sister church, the Weaverland Conference (Horning) Mennonites. They are continuously gaining importance because their number of members is steadily increasing, not only in Pennsylvania but also in the eight other states where they have established themselves (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001). The original 1927 group of 1,000 adults and children, out of which five hundred were baptized members, has grown to approximately 18,000 (8,000 baptized members). The number of Wenger Mennonites in Lancaster County is still small in comparison to their OOA cousins (Kraybill and Hurd 2006). However, their cultural and religious conservatism and practices are very similar to OOA. The Wenger Mennonites are a peace church,13 which believes in a literal interpretation of the Bible,

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13 Peace churches are Christian churches, groups or communities advocating Christian pacifism. Historically, the term peace church refers specifically to three church groups: Church of the Brethren, Mennonites (including Amish), and Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The peace churches agree that Jesus advocated nonviolence. Whether physical force can ever be justified, either in defending oneself or others, remains controversial. Many believers adhere strictly to a moral attitude of nonresistance in the face of advocated nonviolence. These churches generally concur that violence on behalf of nations and their governments is contrary to Christian morality.
especially the New Testament and the Sermon on the Mount. Resembling the OOA, the Wenger Mennonites also believe in a patriarchal society that advocates mutual aid, sends its young people to school for only eight years, and utilizes horse-drawn vehicles for transportation. For the same reasons as for the OOA, many Wenger Mennonites have, for economic reasons, been forced to work off the farm in cottage industries and on construction sites (Kraybill and Bowman 2001, Kraybill and Hurd 2006).

There are, however, some key differences between the OOA and the Wenger Mennonites. The Wenger Mennonites use electricity and telephones in their homes and also consent to the use of tractors in the fields as long as the farmer removes the rubber tires from the wheels. Their garb is less conservative than their OOA counterparts. Women are allowed to wear print dresses, and men do not have to grow a beard when they marry (Kraybill and Hurd 2006).

3.5.1.7 The Struggle between Language Repertoires in the “Wenger” Community

According to Kraybill and Hurd (2006), the Wenger Mennonites represent the fastest-growing PG-speaking group in the country. Like their OOA cousins, the Wenger Mennonites speak PG in their homes and among church members in the community. It is also the language used for church services, with some English and High German intermixed.

The decision, however, by some preachers to add a portion of English to the sermon is usually an intentional way of making the sermon more comprehensible to the young folks (Kraybill and Hurd 2006). The amount of English used in a sermon also depends on the number of “English” people that partake in the Sunday service or are invited to a wedding or funeral. More English is spoken when English-speaking visitors are present than otherwise. Some preachers like to preach in High German, but to make the message more comprehensible, most
preachers preach in PG. High German is taught in Wenger schools, but how much the students actually learn is, to a large degree, based on the teacher’s own level of proficiency in the language. According to one Wenger Mennonite, the dialect and horse- and-buggy transportation are the two primary markers of Wenger Mennonite identity; “everything else is window dressing” (Kraybill and Hurd 2006: 54). That the Wenger Mennonites are very serious about and have a great desire to maintain their language and strive to pass it on to the next generation is evident. During the winter months they open the doors to a German school for adults. Like the OOA the Wenger Mennonites begin learning English when they start school, their own parochial schools. Whereas some OOA teachers try to enforce the speaking of English not only in class but also during recess in the school yard, the Wenger Mennonites allow and encourage PG during recess (Moelleken 1983). English is also the language used with outsiders (Kraybill and Hurd 2006).

3.5.1.8 Less Conservative but Still Amish: The New Order Amish

Disagreements concerning the policy of shunning, so-called spiritual awakening, and the use of electricity plagued the OOA community in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These schisms resulted in a split from the OOA and the founding of the first New Order Amish congregation in 1966 in Holmes County, Ohio. Today sixty New Order congregations are dispersed in thirteen states, but the majority (thirty-four), is located in Ohio. Despite the wide geographic distribution of New Order Amish settlements, their numbers are still small – approximately 7,900 adults and children, of which nearly 3,500 are baptized members (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001).

In doctrine and practice the New Order Amish are very similar to the OOA – church services in the homes of members, although in many places celebrated every Sunday (instead of
every other as is the case among the OOA), and plain garb. Some distinctive features of the New Order congregations: permission to use electricity and telephones in the home, permission in some places for cars and approval for using tractors in the fields (Meyers, “New Order Amish”). The New Order Amish send their children to public school until eighth grade, and some of them earn their high-school diplomas through home-study programs. In many ways the New Order Amish resemble groups considered transitional instead of traditional. They demonstrate openness to a personalized faith experience, which encourages them to have Sunday schools, youth Bible studies, as well as outreach programs, and to be involved in mission work both in Latin America and Africa, all of which are completely discouraged by the OOA (Bengtson 2008).

3.5.1.9 – The New Order Amish: Linguistically Conservative

Although the New Order Amish have adopted some new practices in contrast to their more conservative OOA cousins, their linguistic practices are similar to that of the OOA. The native language for the New Order Amish is PG, and children do not learn English until they start attending school. PG is spoken in the domain of the home, with family, friends, and neighbors. Amish High German during the church service, however, has in many places been replaced by English. English is always used when speaking to outsiders (Bengtson 2008).

3.6 Transitional Groups

People who belong to any of the transitional groups come from two directions. Some have previously belonged to more conservative – that is, traditional groups like the OOA, OOM, or the New Order Amish and wish for a more liberal church. Others want to preserve more traditional values and have left a transformational group, like the Mennonite Church USA, in favor of a transitional group. Probably the most well-known transitional group in Lancaster County is the Beachy Amish (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001).
3.6.1 The Beachy Amish

The Beachy Amish originated in the late 1920s in Lancaster and Somerset Counties, Pennsylvania, where their stronghold still remains although the group has spread to twenty-one other states in the United States. Like the traditional groups, the Beachy Amish emphasize separation from the world. The group requires its members, especially women, to dress in traditional garb, which sets them apart from the rest of society. Although they share a conservative worldview with their traditional cousins, they allow members automobile ownership, electricity, and the latest technology but forbid television and sometimes radio ownership. Even though they stress separateness, they frequently interact with the outside world and are very supportive of mission work. The Beachy Amish believe in an individual faith experience and are thus active and supportive of youth meetings, Sunday schools, Bible studies and Christian education. Although they meet in church buildings and not in the homes of their members, their churches are still very plain. Instruments are not allowed during the worship service, and the ministers are still chosen by lot; thus, they lack any kind of formal training and are not salaried. The language of choice for the majority of Beachy Amish is English, both in domains of family and friends as well as when speaking to outsiders. However, in some Beachy families the extent to which English is used regularly at home varies, and PG is used at certain occasions. When the Beachy Amish began using English instead of PG, it was a conscious decision to make the church more appealing and accessible to the outside world, to seekers, and especially to the young. In wanting to do so, the language of separation, PG, had to be abandoned. (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001).
3.7 Transformational Groups

The transformational (assimilated) branch is numerically the largest, consisting of approximately two-thirds of all adult Anabaptists in the United States. After the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church in 2002 into the new body of Mennonite Church USA, it has by far become the largest body within the transformational group. More than 120,000 people in forty-one states in the United States belong to Mennonite Church USA, followed by the Church of the Brethren, the second largest body of the transformational groups, with members in thirty-nine states in the United States (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001).

The transformational groups predominantly accept and utilize technology and higher education. They run colleges and seminaries. Their members find employment in many different areas, ranging from farming to professional jobs such as doctors and lawyers. They dress like people in mainstream society, allow ownership of automobiles, television sets, computers, cell phones, and other modern devices (Kraybill and Bowman 2001). Members of these groups actively engage in the surrounding culture. They vigorously support a wide range of mission programs and service organizations, varying from soup kitchens in the immediate community to mission work overseas. Although there are overwhelming differences among these diverse groups of believers on issues related to the ordination of women, homosexuality, abortion, and political involvement, they all have their personal faith experience in common. A personal relationship with Christ is of more importance than the collective authority of the church over the community. These groups all meet in church buildings, usually equipped with modern conveniences, where a paid minister together with a worship team, consisting of singers and instrumentalists, are in charge of the service. Sunday school, youth groups, and vacation Bible school play an integral part in these groups’ Christian education programs. English is the
language used in daily life but also in the church service, and PG is only a relic of a bygone era. (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001).

3.8 The Current Linguistic Situation in Old Order Amish Communities

The OOA with their horse-and-buggy and distinctive dress are probably the most noticeable group of Pennsylvania Germans. To many outsiders the OOA not only look peculiar but also speak a peculiar language. In his now famous article, Amish Triple Talk, Frey (1945) wrote that generally outsiders think of PG as a bastardization of High German: “Naive outsiders have frequently dismissed the matter of the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect by describing it simply as ‘garbled English’ in the mouths of ignorant farmers who speak with a heavy Dutch accent” (Frey 1945: 85). More specifically, however, Frey writes about the trilingualism – PG, Amish High German, and American English – the OOA of Lancaster County display. Some researchers agreed with Frey, and as late as the mid-1980s held on to the assumption that the OOA were trilingual (Enninger, et al. 1984). Most scholars, however, dispute the fact that the OOA of Lancaster County were ever trilingual, and by no means are they trilingual today. Instead, they have to be regarded as balanced bilinguals, speaking PG and English (Louden 1988, Meister-Ferré 1991).

3.8.1 Amish High German

The Amish competence in New High German or standard German is very limited. If Amish happen to read standard German or recite it, they use a PG-based pronunciation, recognized as Amish High German. In other words, Amish High German is not the German spoken in today’s Germany. It is basically “Luther German”, the German of the Luther Bible. Amish High German or Pennsylvania High German, as it is also labeled, is never used by the OOA in spoken everyday conversations, and most members of the OOA communities have only
a passive knowledge of it (Wood 1942). Wood attributes the origins of AHG to eighteenth century Pennsylvania and the interplay between spoken and written varieties of German (Wood 1942). Frey suggests that the origins of AHG date back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: “German preaching days in Pennsylvania churches” (Frey 1945: 86). In his paper Frey also notes: “If he [the Amish man] never holds a church office he may practically never discourse in High German, except to quote from the Bible at home” (Frey 1945: 87). Since the majority of the OOA will never hold a church office, their competence in AHG will remain very limited, both in the understanding of grammatical features and lexicon. Amish High German is restricted to very specific domains: the reading of Scripture and German prayer books, sermons, prayer, and hymn-singing during the worship service. The OOA use the Luther translation of the Bible and the Ausbund for a hymnal. The Ausbund was first published in 1564, approximately during the same time frame as the Luther Bible (1523). Huffines describes AHG as “Luther German with PG phonology” (Huffines 1991: 48) whereas many Amish simply consider AHG a sacred language to be used in specific domains. In other words, the main area of usage of AHG is in ceremonial texts. Frey’s comments about AHG corroborate what Louden (2003: 131) notes almost sixty years later, when he discusses the ability of the OOA to speak High German, and observes that the OOA “are unable to produce anything beyond single words in speech or writing.” Since the OOA are not able to read High German fluently, most preachers own Bibles with both Luther and the King James translations side by side. That way they are able to work out the meaning of the High German by comparing it to the English version, particularly in the narrative passages of the Old Testament and in the gospels of the New Testament (Hartman 1999). An Amish man, a preacher who participated in this study, mentioned that although he has
a bilingual German-English Bible, if the two versions differ significantly, he relies on the German version “because it is older and more authentic.”

There is also a passive use of AHG, which is described by Johnson-Weiner in her studies on Amish schools (cf. Johnson-Weiner 1997). In her research Johnson-Weiner has found that a number of OOA, depending on their level of conservatism, use AHG in some instances in school and in the family – for example, in private Bible studies with the family if the community is liberal enough to allow Bible or Sunday school. In those cases the Sunday school usually meets on the “off- Sunday”, when the church district does not have worship service. Sunday school usually lasts for about two hours and is taught by one of the older church members. During Sunday school the participants sing hymns, read the Bible, discuss, interpret, and memorize Bible verses in German.

Because of the importance attached to the preservation of High German as a hagiolect,14 many OOA communities have institutionalized standard German language classes one or two hours a week in their own schools. Interestingly, the German school books are still, like the version of the Bible the OOA use, written in the Gothic script (Fraktur), and in most cases the schoolteachers themselves are unaware of the fact that the Gothic script is no longer used in modern-day Germany.

However, books that are not considered school books are in English. There are no children’s books in Pennsylvania German. Again, the maintenance of tradition and adherence to

14 *Hagiolect*, a specific variety of language used for religious purposes – for example, High German among the Amish population in Pennsylvania or Latin in Europe before the introduction of vernaculars for religious services. The term derives from Greek *hagios*, “saint”.
the “old ways” are expressions of the OOA tenacity to hold on to a particular way of life. Many Amish fear that a shift from German to English will open the door to many other changes within the community. In the long run, “a borrowed language might bring in a borrowed theology” (Johnson-Weiner 1992: 33). On the other hand, changes of a social or economic nature also bring about changes in the use of languages within the community (cf. chapter 5).

3.8.2 Bilingualism in the Old Order Amish Community

Language use is critical to a sound understanding of the linguistic situation in a community such as the OOA, who speak a minority language yet live in the midst of a society that speaks a dominant language. When people have command of two or more languages, they make choices as to when to use a certain language. In 1968 Fishman formulated his domain analysis, in which he stated that “domains” were regarded as institutional contexts in which one language was more appropriate than another and were to be seen as collections of other factors such as participant, topic, and location. In other words, what language an individual is using depends on with whom he or she is speaking, what he or she is talking about, and where the conversation is taking place. The concept of domain may also include such notions as formality and informality (Baker and Pryjs Jones 1988). Many times, minority languages are linked to informal situations while majority languages are associated with formal situations. Although different studies employ different domains, common domains include home and family, neighborhood, school, mass media, business and commerce.

Domain and diglossia are two concepts closely interrelated. Frequently, each language or variety in a multilingual community serves a specialized function and is used for particular purposes. Societies that are diglossic are characterized not only by the concept of complementary distribution of two languages in different domains but also by the restrictions in accessibility it
imposes on its speakers in certain domains. Diglossia was first used by Ferguson (1959). The more prestigious language (High language, High, or just H) and the less prestigious low variety (Low language, Low, or L) differ not only in vocabulary but also in grammar and phonology, but maybe even more so in regard to function, acquisition, standardization, and maintenance. The low variety is acquired as a native language at home and is used throughout life, primarily within the family and with friends. On the other hand, the high variety is learned through schooling, never at home. Frequently the high variety is supported by institutions outside the home. To acquire access to higher institutions and government normally requires knowledge of the more prestigious language.

Diglossia has been said to be a supporting factor in language maintenance (cf. Louden 1988). Currently, OOA communities are said to be bilingual and diglossic, PG and English. The more prestigious language (High language) English is used in formal public domains whereas the less prestigious low variety (Low language) PG is used in informal and intimate domains. In 1959, when Ferguson first mentioned diglossia, it was assumed that only two languages could be involved. However, since then scholars like Fishman have noted that it is possible for societies to have two H varieties and one L variety (Fishman 1980). Among the OOA the low variety (L), in this case PG, is acquired as a mother tongue at home and is continuously used throughout life with family and friends. English, the high variety (H), is learned later in life through socialization processes of different kinds and never at home. The H variety is used in interaction with different institutions and authorities. Since PG is not a written language, books are read in English, and notes and letters written to other Amish are normally also in English. Thus, the languages are used alongside each other in different domains. Fishman (1980) mentions the OOA communities
as examples of a kind of “triglossic” situation, in which Amish High German and English constitute the H variety, and PG the L variety.

Louden (1988) goes one step further, noting the difference in linguistic situations in nonsectarian communities vs. sectarian communities. He dismisses nonsectarian communities as being diglossic because of the lack of clearly defined domains. He suggests a new categorization and refers to these communities as having *unstable bilingualism* in contrast to sectarian communities, which he refers to as having *stable bilingualism* (Louden 1987). Louden continues by referring to the first language as L1 and the dominant contact language as L2 and thus gives stable bilingualism the following definition: “active use of L1 and L2 by all speakers in a given speech community with little change over time” (Louden 1987: 20). Unstable bilingualism, on the other hand, differs from one generation to the next and shows no clear connection to the different roles of the speakers. Stable bilingualism thus supports language maintenance whereas unstable bilingualism is a ground for language shift. For stable bilingualism to occur in a speech community, Louden identifies three factors that need to be present: (1) both the L1 and L2 have to be acquired early, before eleven years of age; (2) the domains in which the languages are spoken have to be clearly defined and not overlapping; (3) the speakers’ attitudes towards both languages are positive or at least not negative (Louden 1988). According to Louden all three conditions are at hand in OOA communities but not in nonsectarian communities. In OOA communities PG and English are acquired successively. PG the L1, however, is the language learned as a mother tongue.

The domains in which the languages are being used in an OOA community – family, friendship, religion, employment, and education – are loosely based on Fishman, Cooper and Ma’s list of five major domains in which either English or Spanish was spoken during interviews.
and observations in research carried out on the Puerto Rican community in New York City (cf. Fishman, Cooper and Ma 1971). That English and PG have different roles in the OOA community and are thus used in different domains that do not overlap is corroborated by Enninger (1988). However, even in societies with distinct sets of sociolinguistic norms for when to use respective language, the languages will inevitably start converging over time. Although one of the languages will still be considered the dominant one, it is not the one exclusively used. This should be accepted as regular language use and not dismissed as norm violation (Gardner-Chloros 1995).

In OOA communities PG is the intragroup language, which facilitates socialization and expresses a certain sense of belonging and trust. PG is spoken in informal situations – with family, in the homes, and friends in the community. The use of PG within this domain is not only encouraged but prescribed by the *Ordnung*.¹⁵ PG is maintained as the first language among the children, but the informants of this study report quite a few exceptions to the rule. In many of the households participating in the study, PG is still the dominant language but frequent code switching between PG and English occurs. The same is true for conversations with friends and neighbors. Many times these code switching events are triggered by certain topics or in paraphrasing English-speaking people. However, PG is also used in some more formal domains as a marker of identity, such as during church sermons, discussions of Scripture readings, when

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¹⁵ The *Ordnung* is the blueprint for the Old Order Amish way of life, the unwritten set of rules by which Old Order Amish are expected to live. The *Ordnung* makes prescriptions as well as prohibitions. One of the prescriptions is the use of PG. Church members are strongly urged by their church leaders, especially by the bishops, to follow the *Ordnung* in their daily lives (cf. Kraybill 2001: 115). If they do not follow the rules of the *Ordnung*, disciplinary action will be taken by the church.
visited by clergy, and at school board or parent/teacher meetings, and when conducting business with other members of the PG community (Louden 1987).

Farming has been the traditional way of earning a living for the Amish since the time they first set foot on American soil. When working on the farm, father/son and coworker overlapped in their roles which also led to an overlap in language use and speaking of PG out in the fields. However, in recent times, in many communities in which off-farm employment has become the primary source of earning a living, the situation looks different. In some cases, as in Amish-owned construction companies, the language of choice is still PG because the majority of the employees and coworkers are Amish. However, other types of off-farm employment might be a business run by the “English,” in which the dominant language is English because the majority of coworkers, employees, and customers are “English” (cf. chapter 7).

English is usually not learned until the child starts school, where it is spoken and read. It is the language of instruction. At present, however, many parents teach their children some English at home to make the transition to school a bit easier. If the child who is about to start school has an older sibling, the likelihood is that s/he has already picked up some English. The Amish believe that learning two languages may present a challenge for someone with a disability, and therefore English is generally the language used when speaking to disabled children and youth. This, in turn, is also to aid disabled children to get through school, since handicapped children generally, unless it is not logistically possible, attend the regular Amish school, taught in English (Huffines 1980). That English is used with disabled children is confirmed during a conversation the researcher had with one of the informants. When his mentally challenged teenage daughter entered the room, the conversation turned to an exchange between father and daughter, all in English. After the daughter left the room, the father made the
following comment: “We always speak English with her. . . from the beginning”. Her brothers and sisters also speak English with her. She knows Dutch. . . a bit. . . but English definitely comes easier to her.”

English is also used as an intragroup language within the Old Order community when reading newspapers and magazines, writing notes, letters, taking messages, and even telling jokes and stories. To speak with the “English” – that is, non-plain family members, friends, and neighbors. – English is the language of choice or necessity (Louden 1991). If an outsider has some knowledge of PG, the conversation might be in PG, but the preferred language is still English. Speaking to an outsider, the OOA almost always initiate the conversation in English. Although the outsider might attempt to speak PG, the conversation still takes place in English most of the time. To the OOA, PG is a symbol of being Amish and expresses a sense of group membership. Knowing PG does not automatically make someone Amish; therefore, the language for outsiders is still English, regardless of whether or not they may be conversant in PG.

Until recently the functions of PG and English have not overlapped, and neither language has been dominant over the other. The attitude toward both languages has been equally positive. These factors, together with the high number of children who speak PG and can later pass on the language to the next generation; have contributed to a stable bilingual situation continuing at present in OOA communities. Johnson-Weiner writes:

Old Order parents will continue to teach their children to speak two languages, teaching them the English they will need for necessary interaction with the world and the German they will need for the community and worship. The children must continue to choose to remain isolated from the world around them . . . . The decision to maintain German must be made anew in each generation. (Johnson-Weiner 1998: 389).
3.8.3 Other Language-use Factors in the Maintenance Efforts of a Language

3.8.3.1 Code-switching

Code-switching, the alternate use of two languages in the same utterance is a phenomenon frequently encountered in bilingual/multilingual settings and also in OOA communities. It is believed that the more similar two languages are syntactically, the more freely code-switching occurs.

Looking at code-switching from a grammatical standpoint, Poplack (1980) identifies three types of switching – namely, tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. Tag-switching involves the insertion of a tag from one language into an utterance in the other language. To illustrate tag-switching, he offers the following examples from Spanish/English switching: *Vendía arroz ['n shit] “He sold rice ‘n shit” (Poplack 1980: 589).*

Inter-sentential switching involves a switch at a clause or sentence boundary, where each clause or sentence is in one language or another. He provided following example of Spanish/English switching: *[Sometimes I start in English] y terminó en español” Sometimes I’ll start a sentence in English and finish it in Spanish (Poplack 1980: 589).* Intra-sentential switching involves a switch within a clause or sentence and sometimes within word boundaries. Poplack also gives examples of intra-sentential switching in Spanish/English in the following: *[He was sitting down] en la cama, mirandonos peleando, y [really, I don’t remember] si el nos separó [or whatever you know] “He was sitting down in bed watching us fighting and really, I don’t remember if he separated us or whatever, you know” (Poplack 1980: 589).*

Poplack (1980) argues that among the three types of switching, tag-switching requires the least competence, whereas intra-sentential can only be performed by the most fluent bilinguals, whose knowledge of both languages is extraordinary and who are thus capable of producing such
switches. Tags can be freely moved and inserted anywhere without violating any grammatical rules. Tag-switching should therefore be possible for even the least fluent bilingual to produce. The opposite can be said about intra-sentential switching as speakers need to have good command of both languages in order not to violate the rules governing both languages involved. Because intra-sentential switching is more complex, requiring a good command of underlying syntactic rules of the two languages, Poplack claims that intra-sentential is more intimate and as a result seems more favorable for in-group membership. Although code-switching may seem to be a cause for language shift, code-switching can, on the contrary, be a feature of language use that can help maintain a heritage language, especially since code-switching, in particular intra-sentential code-switching, requires a rather high level of fluency in the language.

3.8.3.2 Borrowing

Another feature of language use that encourages maintenance of the heritage language, although at first it may not seem so, concerns the notion of borrowing. According to Crystal (2000), an extensive incorporation of words from the dominant language into the speech of the minority language can be an indication of language shift. Yet, not all incorporations of the more prestigious language should be considered a stimulus for language shift. Borrowings are a good example of this. Borrowed words that represent concepts or objects new or foreign to the heritage culture are crucial for the survival of the language. The world constantly changes, and new things arise all the time. People need new words to express those new concepts. In fact, borrowing existing words from other languages has been a common process for a long time. Doing that does not mean that borrowing languages have to die out. On the contrary, a minority language cannot afford to be inflexible because people may decide to shift away from their language if they feel that it is not capable of adequately expressing what is on their minds.
Woolard (1989) maintains that languages that strive for purity and resist borrowing words are much more likely to experience language shift than those languages that change and adapt. Therefore, borrowing words from English to express concepts in PG can work to promote the maintenance of the language. However, borrowing should not be confused with substitution. Substitution is something different and, instead of promoting language maintenance, can cause shift. When people substitute, they use words of the dominant language to substitute for words already existing in the heritage language.

### 3.8.3.3 Linguistic Convergence as a Factor of Language Maintenance

In OOA communities the *Ordung*, prescribes the usage of PG in all conversation with members of the community. It is not permissible for a speaker to switch to English when a word or structure fails him. However, because of the position PG has in the midst of an English-speaking environment, it is inevitably influenced by the majority language. Contrary to common belief, the OOA do not live in complete isolation. If PG is to have a chance to continue to meet the ever-changing needs of the OOA communities and survive, a great need exists for elaboration and evolution of the language by using various linguistic resources from English.

Through many studies of language maintenance and shift, Huffines (1987, 1988, 1994) found that OOA speakers were less conservative in their use of PG, showing more convergence to English than the nonsectarian speakers. Among the OOA, PG is the prescribed sociolinguistic norm and has to meet all the communicative needs of the community. It is considered inappropriate to switch to English when speaking with other OOA. Thus, English has become a device through which a renewal and an expansion of PG can take place. The OOA are adapting their language to the dominant language that surrounds them, thus using a method of preservation which has made it possible for the OOA to continue to speak their own language.
Huffines (1988) has come to the conclusion that, in general, linguistic convergence is a cumulative process which is most often initiated by lexical borrowing. This is also true in the case of PG in which the lexicon is the area of PG with the most contact-induced change, mainly because of loan words. The number of lexical borrowings is large and exists in all word classes, with nouns being in the majority. The borrowings often consist of words without equivalent in PG (Kopp 2006).

The people who formed the original Pennsylvania German culture and language arrived in the New World before the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. Therefore, much of the industrial vocabulary relating to electricity, machinery, and modern farm equipment are concepts and objects that did not exist when the immigrants first settled on American soil some three hundred years ago. Since immigration from Germany and German-speaking countries is very low today, PG speakers have limited if any, contact, with modern German. The only option that remains is to borrow words from English. Louden (1997), on the other hand, gives account of increased borrowings of words that do not fill a lexical gap in PG, stating that contrary to common belief, the English borrowings do not include marginal lexical items but core vocabulary relating to terms for relatives, health, food, daily life, farm, work, machines, appliances, plants, animals, names of months, and numbers. There are also a number of English words that have been used ever since the first settlers arrived in Pennsylvania. Some of the most common ones are: *bet“, “depend“, “just“, “just about“, “to jump“, “chap“, “guy“, “dad“, and “mom“. In addition, many English discourse markers are also used from time to time – for example, the following particles: *you know, well, now, of course, anyhow* – and some connectives – *so, because, and, but, or* (Salmons 1990).
Syntactically PG also shows considerable evidence of convergence to English, especially in its case usage where the dative case has merged with the accusative and common case, but also in some verbal aspects (Huffines, 1987, 1988, 1994). Morphologically and phonologically PG has also been influenced by contact with the majority language. However, the extensive and comprehensive linguistic data that would be necessary to draw any conclusions about the extent to which syntax, morphology, and phonology have been influenced by English are beyond the scope of this study.

3.8.4 Faith: a Major Contributing Factor to the Maintenance of PG

The role of religion in supporting language maintenance should not and cannot be ignored since in many instances it is the primary factor for a language to survive. Language is seldom preserved for its own sake. Rather, maintenance is more often a result of the ongoing role that is assigned to the language. In his essay Luebke notes: “Few of these groups [the Pennsylvania Germans] deliberately tried to preserve German languages and customs for their own sakes, but most considered them important for the preservation of the faith” (Luebke 1990: 160). That this statement is accurate has already been established in previous sections of this chapter, where language use among sectarian speakers is described. Among this group a conscious decision to maintain strict network ties has had consequences on the linguistic level – namely, language maintenance. In contrast stands a description of the language maintenance situation of the nonsectarians, among whom geographic and social mobility have caused a recent shift to English. Holding on to PG for centuries was for that group “maintenance by inertia” (Louden 2003).

Kloss (1966: 260) gives reference to Old Order communities’ belief in the religious value of the language when he states:
In the United States their [the Old Order groups’] point of departure has always been religion rather than nationality or language. They maintain their language in order to more fully exclude worldly influences and, perhaps, because change in itself is considered sinful. Neither language nor nationality is valued for its own sake.

That the above-mentioned statement, made by Kloss over forty years ago, still holds true today, is illustrated in a statement given by one of the informants, who says: “If we give up speaking PG, our lives will change. It’s who we are. It shows the rest of the world that we belong together . . . . That we are Amish and are different from them.”

Because of the covert prestige PG has – as a symbol of identity, tradition, belonging, and solidarity within that group – the language has managed to survive and thrive within the OOA communities for more than two hundred years. Three words that express submissiveness (Gelassenheit)\(^{16}\) and regulate every aspect of OOA life and have thus been contributing factors to the survival of PG are: separation, nonconformity, and humility. Separation permeates all aspects of Old Order life: plain dress, means of transportation, language, school, jobs, and technology. By and large, the OOA are still an isolated and rural people. Whereas industrialization and urbanization have played a vital role in the nonsectarians’ shift to English, these factors have continued to play virtually no role at all in the OOA communities’ language maintenance efforts. Instead, the OOA consider themselves a chosen people and identify themselves mainly in relationship to God rather than with society at large. They are convinced that in order to remain faithful to God, they must live like strangers and pilgrims in the world, “to be in the world but not of the world” (New International Version, 1 Peter 2:11), looking after their own needs and obligations, and serving God in their own way. The same sentiment can be found in the

\(^{16}\) Gelassenheit is difficult to translate, but in general, it means to yield to a higher authority. Members willingly sacrifice individual needs and wants for the good of the group. For a child, older siblings, parents, and teachers are all authorities; for adults, higher authorities include God, church leaders, and tradition.
following passage (*New International Version*, 1 John 1:15-17), which by the OOA is interpreted literally:

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

Therefore, over the past three centuries the OOA have settled rather compactly in areas where they have been known for their thriftiness and industriousness as farmers. The OOA believe that the Bible instructs them to farm to be stewards of the soil and practice a lifestyle that will eventually lead them into the presence of God. The farm not only provides the economic means of support for the family but also offers many covert values. The daily chores on the farm teach the children personal responsibility and the virtues of hard manual work. Parents and the extended family are always nearby – supervising, directing, assisting, but also reprimanding in Pennsylvania German. In this way the OOA have lived for over three hundred years, largely separated from mainstream America, working, playing, and socializing primarily within their own communities, their own social networks of other OOA. Thus, their faith requires the establishment of strict boundaries, not only in geographical but also in a social and linguistic sense, between the Old Order groups and mainstream society. PG allows for a sense of identification with the group, but at the same time it is perceived as an instrument to detach and separate oneself from the outside world. Kraybill (1989: 47) correctly notes that PG is a language of separation and has several functions: “[The] language also integrates and separates. It unites those who speak the common tongue and excludes outsiders.” Hence, the tight-knit community of the OOA has contributed to the maintenance of PG, given that PG is the language of family and close friends, work, play, and intimacy. Also, the OOA have to a large degree been self-
sufficient, and therefore their social contact with and pressures from the English-speaking environment have been relatively small. Use of English has been restricted to irregular encounters with outsiders, in conversation with non-plain neighbors, at roadside stands, on visits to town, or in doctors’ or dentists’ offices.

*Nonconformity* is another imperative aspect of OOA life that has contributed to the maintenance of PG within OOA communities. The OOA adhere to the following Bible verses: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” *(New International Version, 1 Peter 2:9)*, and “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” *(New International Version, Romans 12:2)*. Their adherence to nonconformity means that they try to keep their traditional ways and change to a minimum. The OOA do not reject change per se but the effects of change. However, if change is perceived as beneficial to the community in general, a modification to the *Ordnung* will be made to make the change acceptable.

Amish High German is the language of the Amish Bible, the word of God; and PG is seen as a sign of humility (*Demut*) and therefore good but also godly, the appropriate language to speak on a daily basis. Horse-and-buggy transportation, plain dress, and PG are all symbols of humility. Language choice in the worship service is of special significance for maintenance efforts in OOA communities. According to Huffines, the secret lies in the fact that as long as the language meets the daily needs of the group, it will be maintained; but as soon as it no longer does, it will be altered in some way, or a shift will take place. Huffines notes that even more important for the maintenance of PG is to what extent the language is being used in church services. She writes:
The use of Pennsylvania German in sectarian communities is dependent on the use of Amish High German in worship services. When English replaces Amish High German in worship, English will also replace Pennsylvania German within the family and community (Huffines 1991: 22).

This quote is consistent with a statement made by one of the informants of the study when he says: “Just look at the Beachy Amish! They started using English in church, and what happened? Now, they use cars. It’s like they aren’t Amish anymore.”

3.9 Language Attitudes

Language attitudes are constantly changing because the economic situation of a country or region might be changing, for better or worse, and thus they produce a different set of attitudes toward a language among its speakers. In Fasold’s viewpoint (1984) language attitudes should not restrict themselves to attitudes towards language alone (for example, rich, poor, beautiful, ugly, harsh, etc.) but should also include attitudes towards language maintenance and planning. According to Appel & Muysken (1987: 16) “languages are not only objective, socially neutral instruments for conveying meaning, but are linked up with the identities of social or ethnic groups; has consequences for the social evaluation of, and the attitudes towards languages.” Thus, maintaining two languages in the speaker’s linguistic repertoire involves more than the linguistic ability in those particular languages. It also involves a sense of identity, an identity deeply rooted within the culture in which the language is spoken. Thus, it can be expected that speakers have different perceptions but, above all, different attitudes toward the languages they are using.

Attitudes are essential in language maintenance and shift, and they define and promote certain behaviors. Louden (1988) maintains that a positive attitude toward one’s own heritage
language may contribute to a people’s preservation or restoration of the language whereas a negative attitude may lead to language decline or even language obsolescence.

However, in order to maintain a positive self-image, people’s responses to attitude questions may be affected by social desirability. They may not reveal their true attitudes but answer in a way that they feel is socially acceptable (Osgood, et al. 1957). This is frequently the case in societies governed by many rules and regulations.

The status and importance of a language to an individual, as well as the role of a language in society, develop primarily from adopted or learned attitudes. To study linguistic situations in a country with many minority languages, like the United States, the notion of attitudes is vital because it reflects the thinking and behavior of both individuals and groups. It is limited not only to attitudes toward the language itself, but more often than not, the concept of language attitudes includes attitudes toward speakers and of a particular language as well as the particular culture in which they live. According to Baker (1988), attitudes are learned not innate, predispositions and are expected to be rather stable and persistent. Depending on the experience of the speaker, the attitudes are favorable or unfavorable. Sometimes there may be positive as well as negative feelings toward a language at the same time. The views of a language can vary according to social status and group solidarity. Another aspect, in-group solidarity or language loyalty, reflects the social pressure to maintain a language, even one without social prestige, because of

17 During the interviews and conversations the informants are reminded that their conversation partner is a researcher, and thus they try to give the researcher the “ideal” answer. In other words, they adjust their answers to what they think the researcher wants to hear. This is very obvious when comparing the data from the questionnaires with that of the more informal conversations the researcher had with some of the informants. Filling out the questionnaires, the informants did so the “official way”, the way they were expected to fill them out in accordance with what their community expects them to do. The data compiled through the questionnaires thus communicate a favorable opinion in maintaining PG as an intragroup language. However, as the informants learned to know the researcher better and a sense of trust was built between researcher and informants, informal conversations took place, and more candid answers, especially from informants fifty and above, were given; and negative attitudes toward the possibility of maintaining PG the way it is spoken today were conveyed.
factors such as religious use of the language. All of these factors apply to various extents to the Pennsylvania German-speaking communities in Lancaster County. According to Baker and Prys Jones (1998), “attitudes to languages are regarded as an important barometer, providing a measure of the climate of the language.”

Attitudes, whether positive or negative, are found not only within the language community itself but also in society at large. The intolerance and negative attitudes of mainstream society toward minority languages in the United States, especially at the beginning of the twentieth century, are two of the large culprits for the decline of PG among certain PG-speaking groups. Dorian (1994: 119) writes: “Discussions of the history of assimilation of immigrant groups in the US often overlook the watershed effect of World War I in heritage language maintenance. After the outbreak of the war public attitudes toward German became suddenly and strongly hostile.” This hostile environment was a stark contrast to the rather favorable environment toward German that had previously existed in the United States.

The negative attitude toward German in mainstream society, paired with a society that was changing from a kinship-based economy to a wage-based economic system, was also making the speaking of PG less desirable. When the parameters of the workplace change, usually the language of the workplace changes as well. In a kinship-based economy, the members of that community can many times speak their heritage language in the workplace. However, when the conditions change, because of industrialization and urbanization, a language different from the mother tongue may be required. In other words, the language the parents encourage their children to learn is influenced by their perception of what language skills are required to meet life’s basic needs, to receive a good education, and find a job. This is what happened when the nonsectarians in the beginning of the twentieth century wanted to provide a better life for their
children and stopped speaking PG to them at home, thus not passing on the mother tongue to their children for fear of putting them at a disadvantage when it came to speaking English with what they believed would be an accent.

These negative language attitudes toward PG are also evident among what Page and Brown (2007) call assimilated Mennonites.\textsuperscript{18} According to the assimilated Mennonites who were interviewed for their study, the experience that most negatively affected their attitude toward the mother tongue was going to school and being unable to make themselves understood. They did not understand their English-speaking teacher, and in many cases, the teacher did not understand them. Although for generations PG had been one of the markers for Pennsylvania German identity, many of the assimilated Mennonites did not want their own children to have to go through the same traumatic experience when they entered school as they themselves had to endure. Thus, they did not pass on their native language to their children. It is not only the experience in school that has contributed to the negative attitudes toward PG. Page and Brown (2007: 135), describe “lack of functional domain for a language” as another contributor. The interviewees stated that it was only when the older generations did not want the children to know what they were talking about that PG was used. Although negative attitudes toward PG have led to the discontinued use of PG among some of these interviewees, there is still a strong sense of Mennonite identity.

On the other hand, Page and Brown (2007) noted in their study, conducted among a diverse group of Anabaptists, that currently monolingual English-speaking descendants of PG-speakers demonstrate a positive attitude toward PG, which they claim is a sense of nostalgia toward a dying language and state: “Younger generations of formerly bilingual communities

\textsuperscript{18}Assimilated Mennonites wear non-plain dress, drive automobiles, and worship in English; bilingualism occurs only among older members; no diglossia (Page and Brown 2007).
often regret the demise of the heritage language” (Page and Brown 2007: 127). That this is true can be seen in the great attraction of the PG language classes that are offered at places such as the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society (cf. 3.4.1).

Since language attitudes among the OOA in Lancaster County is one of the focal points of this thesis, it will be further discussed in chapter 7.6.

3.10 Language Maintenance or Language Shift among the Old Order Amish?

In summary, as early as the 1930s and 1940s some scholars described PG as a “bastardization” of German. Buffington (1939) and Frey (1945) were surprised to find that PG had been able to survive as long as it had. Sixty years after their findings, among certain groups such as the OOA, PG is still alive. What is the secret for the vitality of PG within one group of people when its use is constantly dwindling in another group? The answer is to be found in the symbolic value that PG has within a particular community. Huffines notes: “The answer lies in how important speakers perceive their ethnicity to be and how strongly they wish to express it linguistically” (Huffines 1991: 9). The symbolic value of the language among the OOA is certainly the most important reason it has been able to survive as long as it has.

According to Stewart (1968), the strength and social value of a language is shown in the presence or lack of four attributes: (1) autonomy, (2) historicity, (3) standardization, and (4) vitality. Huffines (1980) notes that sectarians, but in particular nonsectarians, agree that there is a lack of all four aforementioned attributes in their respective communities. PG is no longer perceived as having autonomy. PG is regarded by many as a mixture of German and English, or even worse, as a corrupt language lacking in purity and independence.

Directly related to the matter of autonomy is historicity. PG is considered to have no reputable history. Sectarians as well as nonsectarians are aware of their Swiss/German ancestry
and the fact that PG is a form of German. However, they also recognize their German
background as having nothing to do with the German nation or German language that exists
today and also that PG does not completely match any dialect in Germany. Instead, it is a
mixture of German dialects that developed in America rather than Germany.

PG is not standardized. There is no formalized grammar, no correct spelling, and no
standard dictionary for PG – all of which make writing in PG very difficult.

In the beginning of the 1980s, the view of sectarians and nonsectarians alike was still that
in the next few generations the language would eventually become extinct among the
nonsectarians whereas it would survive and maybe even thrive among the sectarians (Huffines
1980). That Huffines’ statement about thriving OOA settlements still holds true some twenty
years later is illustrated in Keiser (2002: 253) in which he notes:

As the twenty-first century begins, Deitsch persists and even thrives; it is the first
language of more than 200,000 speakers, most of whom are members of plain (i.e. Amish
or Mennonite) religious groups and live in the Midwest far beyond the dialect “cradle” in
Pennsylvania.

The connection that Keiser makes between a thriving PG language, especially among
plain groups in the Midwest, is important. PG among the OOA in Lancaster County has until
recently also been thriving with a diglossic and stable bilingual situation. But what is the
situation actually like today?

Since the mid-1970s, the infrastructure of Lancaster County has experienced a
remarkable transformation and change. Many people, including the OOA, who relied on farming
for their livelihood, have had to abandon the soil in favor of other occupations. By giving up
farming and having to contend with the outside world in a way that was previously unknown to
the OOA, the extent to which English is spoken among the OOA has inevitably increased. The
change in the economic structure has led to many women also working outside the home. This
dissertation explores the effect of these social changes on language use among the OOA. The
next chapter discusses the research design of the study.
Chapter 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

This dissertation is a sociolinguistic study of the OOA community in Lancaster County, and the Pennsylvania German language spoken by its people. In this study, questionnaires, interviews, and participant observation were used as instruments to elicit quantitative and qualitative information from the participants. The questionnaires were comprised of questions in relation to demographics such as family size, age, gender, and occupation. Through participant observation, questionnaires, and interviews, information was also gathered about participants’ attitudes toward language and cultural practices.

The results of this study cannot be said to be representative of the speech pattern of the OOA in Pennsylvania in general. The assumption has to be made that the Old Order Amish informants involved in this study are more open-minded toward outsiders than some of their fellow Amish men and women, or they would have declined to participate. If English is, in fact, gaining influence in OOA communities, it would be expected to be through these community members, the ones who are more in the world and maybe ready to jump the fence first. However, in order to make a more representative analysis, a larger number of informants from various Old Order communities in different parts of the country, who were involved with the outside world to
various extents, would have to be interviewed. Nevertheless, the presented data are good indicators of the present trend in regard to language maintenance and shift among the OOA in Lancaster County.

4.2 Research Questions

Among the OOA population in Lancaster County, the recent shift from being largely an agricultural community to that of a community of people working off the farms and as entrepreneurs (Kraybill and Nolt 2004) suggests not only an increased contact with the outside world but also that changes might be occurring in the use of PG as well. As a result, this raises several questions as to what is happening to the preservation of PG among the OOA.

In an attempt to find answers to the following questions, the purpose of this study is:

1. To analyze language use in home and community in order to assess the degree to which it indicates language maintenance and shift, specifically how and in what ways occupational changes affect the maintenance of PG.

2. To determine if there are other societal changes in OOA life that might have an impact on the maintenance or shift of PG.

3. To gain insight and understanding about the attitude of the community people toward their heritage language as well as other languages.

4. To propose potential actions to be taken if maintenance efforts are needed to ensure the heritage language’s future.
4.3 Instrumentation

Depending on the purpose and type of language-attitude study, a variety of methods can be employed to investigate language attitudes in combination with other variables, such as occupational changes. Of those techniques, matched guise developed by Lambert and his colleagues (1960), used in combination with semantic differential scales advanced by Osgood and others (1957), seems to be the most standard procedure as it has been adopted with some modifications in many research projects. However, Fasold (1984) adds that, as suggested by Agheyisi and Fishman (1970), other methods like questionnaires, interviews, and participant observation are possible as well. Measuring language attitudes is not an easy task. Not only do attitudes change, but people’s self-report of their attitude toward certain things and their actual thinking or behavior very often do not coincide because of fear of not answering correctly – that is, answering in a way that is not socially desirable, so-called social desirability bias.\(^\text{19}\) This is especially true in societies governed by many rules and regulations.

Therefore, because of the nature of this research, a combination of questionnaires, interviews, and observations are employed to ascertain relevant information regarding language attitudes from different contexts in order to reduce the number of answers given that are “socially desirable” compared to a true reflection of the interviewee’s feelings and attitudes toward his or her language. Nevertheless, when an analysis of the obtained data was complete, it became evident that their answers many times still do not correspond with their actual thinking or actions.

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\(^{19}\) *Social desirability bias* refers to the fact that in self-reports people will often report inaccurately on sensitive topics in order to present themselves in the best-possible light. This can be due to self-deception. Social desirability can affect the validity of survey-research findings, but procedures such as the use of forced-choice items and the use of proxy subjects can be effective in preventing or reducing social desirability bias (Fisher, R. J. 1993, Nederhof, A. J. 1985).
To organize and structure the interviews, the researcher prepared a questionnaire using a combination of open-ended and closed questions to support the research questions mentioned in section 4.2. The open questions allowed the informants to answer more freely and openly as well as give an opportunity to disclose their own perceptions and attitudes toward their mother tongue. The closed questions kept the answers to a limited number of options without a chance for the informants to expand on them.

Initially, a pilot study of five OOA was conducted. The purpose of this initial study was to acquire the knowledge necessary to create a questionnaire that would not appear offensive to the Amish population that was to be studied. Based on information and advice of a doctor friend who has more than thirty-five years’ experience working closely, on a daily basis, with the Amish population in Lancaster County, the original questionnaire used in the pilot study was revised and shortened. In the end, it contained a total number of eighteen questions, some with follow-up questions focusing on daily life, work, and the community. After the first interview stage was concluded, a shorter second questionnaire (eight questions) was developed to aid in the clarification of some of the questions in the original questionnaire.

As the field study progressed and after it was completed the data from the closed questions were tabulated and transformed into figures, which matched the different categories into which the informants had been divided (cf. section 4.4). The open questions were all reviewed and classified according to gender, age, and occupation. (cf. section 4.4). This way a significant amount of demographic and ethnographic data was collected. More data were collected through general scholarly work written on the language and culture of the OOA.
4.4 Informants and Their Distribution

After gathering historical, cultural, geographical, and socioeconomic background information on the OOA in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the initial field work had begun. Early on, it became evident that the biggest hurdle to overcome in the study among the OOA in Lancaster County would be to gain access to the OOA community as well as find people willing to participate in the study. With OOA settlements in general, the difficulties of accessibility as well as the difficulty of obtaining permission to record data, are well documented. Werner Enninger (1988) is quite accurate when he writes:


As someone with no family ties to anyone in Lancaster County and no ancestry from either Germany or Switzerland, access to the targeted population seemed difficult though not impossible. Since knocking on doors without referrals in hand from people they know was not an option, a different strategy had to be implemented to gain access to the OOA community.

The first approach was to do a mass mailing to one hundred and twenty randomly selected OOA, which included a letter and a questionnaire. The Lancaster County Amish Church Directory proved to be an invaluable source in this endeavor. It provided the addresses needed, but it also provided other demographic data such as birth dates, marriages, deaths, number of children, and occupations — all relevant information for this study. In the letter of introduction, the Amish were asked about the possibility of paying a visit to their homes for the purpose of an
interview. (A summary of the questionnaire, which guided the interview, as well as the letter of introduction, can be found in the appendix).

However, knowing the importance of being introduced as a friend of someone known to the Amish rendered the mass-mailing approach unsuccessful as proven by the meager response. Out of twenty-one responses, sixteen were positive in that the informants had filled out the questionnaire and/or welcomed a visit to their homes. Five OOA politely declined to participate in the study. Six letters proved undeliverable to the addressee and were later returned. With a list of names provided by a historian who enjoys mutual friendships with the Amish community, letters asking for an interview were written to an additional twenty-two families, but this time as “a friend of a friend.”

That this method proved more successful is evident by the fact that fourteen (seventy percent) of the responses were positive in the way of a completed questionnaire or an invitation to visit the home. “So you know so and so” and “How do you know him?” were often part of the initial greeting and led to a marked willingness to provide responses to the questions asked, proving once again the importance of personal relationships among the OOA.

The third method, and by far the best and most successful method for recruiting participants, was through good friends willing to provide introductions to Amish acquaintances and friends. On some occasions these friends went along to the interviews but unaccompanied visits also proved successful because of the willingness of the Amish to do a favor for some very highly regarded “English” person whom they had known for many years. As a friend of these highly regarded, respectable friends (retired doctors to the Amish, as well as coworkers for many years) there was an immediate acceptance and willingness of the Amish to open their homes to a “friend of a friend.”
The only exception was an older Amish man who firmly advised in no uncertain terms that he did not trust anyone “who comes around with a questionnaire in his hands.” He went on by saying: “Too many untruths have been said and written about us, especially by some so-called researchers.” However, after two weeks the Amish man’s wife called to advise that her husband had not been able to sleep well since the visit. He was feeling guilty about having turned down a request for an interview. She asked if there was the possibility of another visit so that they would be able to give their views on the matter without using a questionnaire. Considering her gracious invitation as a golden opportunity to remedy some of the preconceived notions the Amish man had about researchers, I spent an entire evening the following week discussing their native language. Since permission was granted to take notes regarding answers to (memorized) questions asked, this Amish couple’s responses can still be used for the purpose of the study.

As word spread about the research on the language, the researcher felt comfortable to inquire about other OOA who might be willing to participate in the study. The result was the development of a network of informants, in which many of the informants were connected in different ways through kinship, work, and church.

During the time of fieldwork and through participation in various social events, such as church services and frolics, the researcher met several hundred OOA, and a conversation was sometimes initiated. However, only a total of sixty people were interviewed. Still, not all of the interview data are utilized in this study because five of the informants are ex-Amish, men and women, who for different reasons, voluntarily or involuntarily, have left the OOA community. They are now part of mainstream America, where they live and work. As a result, the material in this study is the responses of fifty-five informants, thirty women and twenty-five men ranging in age between 18 to 77 years of age. The data that were collected during many visits to Amish
homes and work places all throughout Lancaster County, from Manheim in the northern part of the county to Peach Bottom in the south (cf. figure 4.1) were collected during the years 2005, 2007, and 2008.

The reason for collecting data throughout Lancaster County but excluding the northeastern part of the county is that the Plain population in that region consists primarily of Old Order Mennonites. However, it was essential to incorporate the rest of Lancaster County in order to obtain as large a sample as possible of informants in different professions who are involved to various degrees with the outside world.

Figure 4-1. Map of the distributions of OOA informants in Lancaster County, Marie Qvarnström
The interviews generally lasted from half an hour to two hours. The informants in this study did not consent to recorded interviews, giving reasons such as: “we are not allowed to use tape recorders, so we think it’s appropriate if you don’t use one either.” Responses to the questions and all other pertinent information given during the interviews, as well as during more informal conversations, were recorded by hand during the interview, and immediately after the interview more notes were written down. Some informants, however, volunteered to fill out the questionnaires themselves. The majority of the informants gave short, simple answers to the questions, especially the closed ones, whereas some informants, when given a chance in the open questions to elaborate more fully on the answers, went into great detail about their perceptions and attitudes toward the languages they speak. Some of the most interesting data, however, were obtained when, on different occasions, an entire day was spent as a guest as well as a participant observer in Amish homes husking corn, helping out in the hen house, hauling Amish people to the hospital or being part of their church service. During these times the atmosphere was more relaxed, and the informants talked more freely about their thoughts toward their native language.

Here some remarks are in order about the difficulties of collecting data by participant observation. Enninger and Wand (1983) have addressed the complexity of being a participant observer in OOA communities, in which, because of the closed nature of the community, the presence of the researcher is more disruptive than in more open communities. This is what Labov considers the Observer’s Paradox, which he describes as “the aim in linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation” (Labov 1972: 209). Although Labov, in his research, observed how people spoke and did not look at the attitudes or perceptions toward how a language
is used, the *Observer’s Paradox* proved to be true in conducting research for this study as well. Only by systematically interacting and observing the OOA was it possible to obtain data about their attitudes and perceptions about the languages they speak.

After the initial interviews, it was clear that some follow-up interviews would help clarify some issues that had been raised. A semi-structured interview was, therefore, subsequently undertaken with a handful of chosen informants (the questionnaire can be found in the appendix). The eight selected informants are people who, through their line of work, are in contact with the outside world on a daily basis. These informants were revisited once, some twice. Undoubtedly, because of repeated visits and offers to assist with different chores and transportation, a mutual “trust” was established and there was more of an acceptance. These repeated visits proved to be very fruitful in terms of the exceptionally candid answers given in casual conversations, triggered by the questionnaire, about their attitudes and perception of their mother tongue.

In the analysis, the informants have been divided into six different categories based upon their primary occupation. The male informants have been divided into following categories: (1) *farmer*, (2) *part time farmer/off-farm worker* (they are still farming to a certain degree but obtain part of their income from other sources), (3) *off-farm worker/man* (the informants belonging to this category have given up farming altogether in favor of some other occupation, from which they earn their living). The female informants have been equally divided into the following three categories: (1) *homemaker*, (2) *part time homemaker/off-farm worker* (they are still homemakers but work, mostly part time, outside the home in a small business, at a market or roadside stand), (3) *off-farm worker/woman* (women whose primary income originates from work in the outside world).
Each of the three categories was originally divided into seven age cohorts, but for practical reasons when analyzing the data, these categories were later reduced to three age cohorts. Therefore, the first two age cohorts, 18-27 and the 28-37-year-olds were grouped together, and jointly make up the new category of 18-37-year-olds. The 38-47- year-olds and 48-57-year-olds were joined together, and form the new group of 38-57- year-olds; and finally the 58-67 and 68-77-year-olds were grouped together in the 58-77- year-olds. Originally there were two more age cohorts, the 78-87 and 88-97-year-olds, but these cohorts do not contain any data and have therefore been eliminated. The cohorts are grouped together according to shared characteristics. In the first group we find many Amish men still “running around” and thus speaking English often with their “English” peers at different gatherings, but we also find many young adults that are just starting out and working off the farm. Interestingly, the study shows that none of the young men work as farmers, but all are involved in work off the farm. The majority of these young informants are in contact with the “English,” both locals and tourists, on a daily basis in their shops, on construction sites, or in other lines of business.

The women were originally equally divided into seven age cohorts like the men but were later reduced to three age cohorts as well. Just like the men, the women who belong to the first two cohorts have much in common. Women get married earlier than men and start bearing children. Therefore, childbearing prevents them, to a large degree, from being involved in small businesses. This is demonstrated in the tabulated data, which show that none of the women in the youngest age cohort work in small businesses; instead all of them are homemakers. Although none of the women were working outside the house, the majority of the informants said they would have liked to work outside the home to provide some extra income for the family.
The second age cohort shows similar characteristics in that the lives of both men and women have stabilized; they have settled down and are mostly done with childbearing and rearing. Among both men and women we find the largest group of informants working two jobs. In addition to being part time farmers or homemakers, fifty-five percent of the men and sixty-six percent of the women work off the farm, many times receiving their family’s primary income from that job. This is also the age group in which we find the only informant that still farms.

In the OOA communities under examination, both men and women belonging to the oldest age groups have many commonalities: they are slowly going into retirement and therefore try to find something to do that is not too strenuous. Thus, the majority (ninety percent of the men) find themselves working in shops selling a variety of items: crafts, produce, groceries, windows, agricultural equipment, lawn ornaments, and furniture. Some informants provide services like bookkeeping and print making.

The majority of women of this age group (sixty-two percent) are busy as homemakers. However, almost twenty-five percent of the women in this age cohort work part time in shops selling quilts, crafts, flowers, floral decorations, and food. It is also in this age group that the only two women can be found who consider their primary function to be outside the home, working other jobs. Interestingly, these women are employed in larger mainstream businesses.
Chapter 5

A SHIFT IN OCCUPATIONS:
THE AMISH AS EXTRAORDINARY ENTREPRENEURS

The title of this chapter would have been an oxymoron a few decades ago. It would have been unheard of to consider the OOA as entrepreneurs. Ever since the OOA first settled in the New World, they have been stewards of the soil and of their social, cultural, and religious values; the very structure of their society has been based upon the agrarian way of life. Some scholars – Martineau and MacQueen (1977), Ericksen and Klein (1981), as well as many Plain people – have maintained that the survival of Old Order Amish society rests upon an agrarian lifestyle. Farming is not merely a job; it is viewed as a way of life anchored in Scripture, blessed by God. It is a highly respected occupation which provides a seedbed for nurturing strong families in the values of hard work, responsibility, simplicity, frugality, and family collaboration. An older Amish man interviewed for this study, who used to be a full time farmer but has been forced into business part time, wished he could still farm full time and expressed his opinion in the following way:

You see, in the country we [the Amish] find a much closer communication with God. Life on the farm is awake to the natural order of daylight and dark, sunshine and rain, the swing of the seasons, and the blessings with which God has ordered our world . . . . It is a life which allows us to not only witness daily, but also be a part of, the natural world of God’s creation. Only by living in the country is it possible to farm, which we consider the most ideal occupation for a Christian family. Farming allows us to be part of the cycle of life, death, and the renewal that God planned in His wisdom. The Christian father belongs at home with his family not in some factory far away where he can’t keep an eye on his children and teach them right from wrong. On the farm, we have the opportunity to work together, father, son, and grandfather. The way God intended it to be, you know.
Another younger Amish man who is working part time as a carpenter off the farm had listened in on the conversation with the older Amish man and added: “We’ve always been a people of the land, and working the soil has a spiritual significance to us. The spirituality that we experience by working the farm is somewhat lost when we aren’t around and can lead our children on the right path.”

Today, however, only a minority of the OOA throughout North America still uphold the agrarian tradition and farm their lands as their ancestors did long before them and as many of their children and grandchildren were hoping to do in the future (Hurst and McConnel 2010). In certain areas of the United States, especially in the older and larger settlements of Holmes County, Ohio; Elkhart-Lagrange Indiana; and Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; farming has become less attractive for the OOA. Farmers belonging to the OOA communities in these counties are in a minority, and approximately seventy percent of the working population finds employment in small businesses and factories. Among Lancaster County Amish men this number is much higher, approaching almost ninety percent (Kraybill and Nolt 2004).

5.1 Changing Demographics

Initially the only businesses and shops in Amish communities were the ones that fulfilled Amish needs, such as harness shops and carriage makers. The first small steps toward a shift among the OOA, working the plows to working as businessmen and entrepreneurs, had little to do with the Amish population itself but with farming changes among the non-Amish. Horse-drawn equipment became increasingly scarce in the late 1940s, as a growing number of American farmers began using tractors and other mechanized farm equipment. As a result, several OOA mechanics realized there was a segment of the market that needed their skills. Consequently, they opened machine shops to restore horse-drawn equipment owned by the
“English.” Amish mechanics and welders also started producing parts to repair equipment. Eventually, they even began buying equipment designed for tractors and adapting it for the use of horses (Kraybill and Nolt 2004).

Also around this time, at the beginning of the 1950s, the demographics of Lancaster County started to change. Large numbers of people from surrounding areas began to arrive and settle in Lancaster County. These people needed a place to live so large areas of farmland were transformed into new housing developments. This was also the time when the first Amish constructions crews were hired for work on different projects. This was not the only way the infrastructure changed. The majority of the new arrivals did not work as farmers. They worked primarily in industrial jobs in the many new factories that were built (Martineau and MacQueen 1977). These factories were often built on prime farmland. The 1950s was also the decade when the working population began to enjoy benefits, such as more leisure and vacation time, which in turn led to the rise of tourism to Lancaster County. An increase in tourism to Lancaster County encouraged the development of hotels, motels, restaurants, shops, and new and better road systems (cf. 5.3.2).

Because of the previously mentioned factors, farmland in Lancaster County became scarcer, which in turn pushed up the prices to unaffordable levels for many of the OOA farmers in the area. Others found payments on mortgages, building loans, and high interest rates very difficult to meet. This trend continued in the 1960s. By the middle of the 1970s, getting started as a farmer or making a living from farming was becoming increasingly difficult and sometimes even impossible for some OOA. The high retention rate of OOA youth within the community also contributed to these difficulties. Traditionally Amish parents have helped their children. But
with costs of land skyrocketing, for many OOA adolescents who wanted to start their own families and homes, farmland was not available, or if available, then simply not affordable.

An Amish bishop, who himself has been a farmer for more than fifty years, expresses his concern about the prices for farmland in Lancaster County:

It’s just outrageous! Here I can buy a thirty acre farm for $100,000 but in Nebraska I can get three hundred acres for the same money . . . . Many Amish, because of financial difficulties, go into trades other than farming and, of course, it can’t be good for him or his family. Man was made to work the soil, you know. We are made from soil and we are closer to God when we work it. This has been a continuing trend throughout the last part of the twentieth century, and no end is in sight. It’s hard; I don’t know what to tell you . . .

According to Huffington Post, however, prices for purchasing good farmland in Pennsylvania are even higher than what the Amish bishop pointed out during the interview. Premium farmland in Pennsylvania can cost $15,000 an acre, compared to other places where the OOA have settled in recent years and have to pay between $2,000 and $3,000 per acre (Huffington Post, July 29, 2010).

5.2 Alternatives to Working on the Farm

Because of the scarcity of land in Lancaster County in the 1960s and 1970s, many OOA had no choice but to move to new settlements in the Midwest or further north and west in Pennsylvania, where farmland was more readily available and less expensive. For some, the only option that remained was to work in factories.

However, many church leaders, especially in Lancaster County, discouraged members from working in factories. They feared that going outside the family and community for work, although it was for economic survival, would disrupt the family dynamics. In the middle of the 1970s one bishop expressed his fears of the people leaving the farm in favor of work in shops, on construction sites, and factories. “Past experiences have proven that it is not best for the Amish
people to leave the farm. If they get away from the farm, they soon get away from the church, at least after the first generation” (Kraybill 1995: 192). Church leaders saw how the men were removed from the family and the farm and tempted into cursing, smoking, drinking, telling dirty jokes, and wearing modern clothing when working outside their own community. Factory workers earned more than the average farmer and thus had more money available. More available funds in combination with more leisure time were, according to many church leaders, a source of trouble and pride. Moreover, factory workers’ work schedules made it difficult for the OOA to take time off from work to participate in weddings, barn raisings, frolics, and other communitywide events and therefore did not foster community spirit. If the contact with the “English” became too intense, there was a real fear that the tight-knit social network could begin to crumble and even fall apart.

This is what Keiser (2001), calls the “lunch pail threat” among the Amish when he describes the development of a Midwestern dialect of Pennsylvania German: The fear that major changes in the occupational makeup – that is, the necessity for the OOA to work in factories – will destroy the Amish way of living by the increased contact with mainstream America and thus an increased use of English because most factory employment generally requires the use of English and not the mother tongue. The shift from small family-based farm units to involvement in wage-based institutions implies changes in the social network structure, which in the end may weaken the minority language’s position. In his article Meyers (1994) describes a similar situation involving OOA in Indiana, in which a shift from traditional farming to factory work has taken place, causing a change in social roles as more cash and leisure time become available to the OOA. Both studies conclude that the occupational changes that have taken place in those communities have not altered the core values of the OOA. Keiser goes one step further in that he
opposes the assumption that off-farm employment will lead to more usage of English and less usage of PG. In his study Keiser has shown that in the Midwestern communities under investigation, which are surrounded by other PG-speaking communities, the connection between off-farm employment and language use is not very strong. However, Keiser adds that speech communities without the close proximity to other PG-speaking communities may show different results and need to be studied at a later date.

Except for factory work, when the scarcity of good farmland started to become acute in the 1970s, according to Kraybill, there were seven options available to the OOA: “1) migration, 2) subdivision of farms, 3) purchase of new farmland, 4) non-Amish employment, 5) use of artificial birth control, 6) higher education, and 7) micro-enterprises” (Kraybill 2004: 27).

For various reasons the first six options only had a limited effect on solving the problems at hand or were not culturally and religiously acceptable to the OOA community. Thus, a cultural compromise was made; if the OOA had to leave the farm to find work, the creation of small businesses, cottage industries, was a far better option than working in factories, which some Amish leaders perceived as a threat to the core values of the traditional lifestyle, given that work in factories normally does not take place within the immediate circle of family, friends, and neighbors. Instead, the so-called microenterprises were created on the Amish community’s own terms, close to the Amish homes, many times even as part of their own homes, employing primarily family, friends, and neighbors in the community. This way, financial resources are kept within the community, but even more important, the OOA are in control and can eliminate fringe benefits, such as medical insurance, retirement plans, and other similar policies with which they do not agree. Moreover, they can prohibit Sunday sales. This kind of kinship-based economic system also allowed its members to use their native language in the workplace. Combined, all of
these factors contributing to the maintenance of a tight-knit social structure was and still is favorable in the eyes of the Amish in that no worldly influence is imposed upon the people. It is a separation from the world as prescribed by the *Ordnung* (Kraybill 2001).

Etched into every aspect of Amish life is *Gelassenheit*, the very core value by which the OOA live, which asks them to be patient and yielding to higher authorities, to submit to the community, and avoid individuality and excess. Great success in the business world threatens *Gelassenheit*. Success creates wealth and affects gender roles because women own and operate their own businesses. Success in the business world also suggests that children receive less attention as the demands of the business increase. In their efforts to balance separatism with assimilation to the business world, the negotiation that allows for small businesses and cottage industries has contributed to the maintenance of Amish cultural values and identity, which in turn has worked in favor of the maintenance of PG. Currently there are more than 9,000 Amish-owned and operated businesses throughout North America (Wesner 2010).

5.2.1 A Novel Model of Amish Enterprise

Although they were only in a small number a few decades ago, as long as there have been Amish in Lancaster County, there have been Amish-run shops and businesses catering to the Amish population. However, the upsurge of Amish-owned businesses in the late 1970s was exceptional. The number of Amish-owned businesses in Lancaster County increased from some sixty businesses in the early 1970s to an approximately 1,600 at the beginning of the twenty-first century. A generation ago almost seventy-five percent of the OOA in Lancaster County still farmed. These days, the picture is the reverse. Farmers are in a distinct minority. Between seventy-five and eighty percent of all OOA men in the Lancaster settlement, have given up farming altogether and, instead, are engaging in some kind of full time business enterprise from
which they also receive their primary income, or they farm part time and engage in other off-
farm work activities part time (Kraybill and Nolt 2004).

The number of Amish women working outside the home is lower but is also on the
increase and had, according to the 2000 census, risen almost twenty percent in the years 1995 to
2000. Over twenty percent of all Amish-owned shops are owned by women (Kraybill 2001).
Over fifty percent of all single women work on a full time basis outside their homes as domestic
help, in restaurants, as shop clerks, or as teachers in the Amish parochial school. Married women
hardly ever work full time outside the home but are seen working part time jobs, selling or
producing items geared toward women – quilts and crafts, foods, and floral decorations. They are
what Kwoleck-Folland (1998) calls “feminized niches”. The majority of the businesses run by
OOA women in the Lancaster settlement cater to tourists and the outside world.

Men generally engage in businesses that cater more to the Amish community as they
produce and sell harnesses, cabinets, greenhouses, gazebos, agricultural equipment, and lawn
furniture. However, they also repair buggies and other farm equipment or work in other closely
farm-related or woodworking-related areas, such as in lumberyards, construction companies, or
as part of harvesting crews. In Lancaster County, breeding dogs has also become a way of
earning money (Kraybill and Nolt 1995).

Today, there is a whole continuum of Amish-owned cottage industries that, depending on
how integrated they are with society at large, are able to preserve their cultural norms and values
to different degrees. At one end of the continuum we find the segregated businesses. This kind of
business is located in the middle of the OOA community, where it caters primarily to the
community itself. More often than not it is adjacent to the family dwelling. The owner and the
employers are typically all Amish – family, friends, and neighbors. The shops usually have a
small number of employees, one to five, but sometimes the larger shops or manufacturing enterprises may have as many as twenty people employed. A carriage maker, a greenhouse or craft shop are examples of this kind of enterprise. In such a shop, Old Order traditional values, attitudes and norms permeate the atmosphere, and PG is spoken with fellow employees as well as dealers, suppliers, and customers. Children are frequently included in the work, which means that values as well as language are transferred from one generation to the next. There is no doubt that in this kind of environment PG will survive. To the OOA this type of business provides the ultimate working environment, in which values and language are preserved through the daily contact with other members of the community (Kraybill and Nolt 2004).

At the other end of the continuum we find the integrated business. As the word integrated implies, these businesses are fully intertwined in society at large. The owner of the business as well as some employees might very well be OOA, but the shop or business is most often not located adjacent to the home of the Amish and may even be outside the main area for the Amish. Perhaps it is located at a farmers’ market, in a nearby town, or even in a larger city like Philadelphia or Baltimore along the northeastern seaboard. This kind of business caters primarily to non-Amish customers living in Lancaster County or elsewhere and to tourists, and it is frequently run by women. The suppliers and dealers are usually non-Amish. The language spoken here is generally English (Kraybill and Nolt 1995). Because of the great influx of the modern world on these enterprises, traditional values and attitudes are more difficult to uphold to the same extent as in the segregated business environment. Thus, the likelihood that the perception of PG is more negative is greater not only among the adult speakers of PG but also maybe to an even larger degree among children and adolescents. It is realistic to assume that the adolescents who help out in a business like this will most likely start substituting some of their
PG in favor of English because of the intense interaction with the English-speaking population. There is also a tendency among the OOA working in an integrated shop or business to speak English with each other while in the shop. These days, when customers are present, it is common for the older generation to give instructions to the younger generation(s) in English when talking to each other. Amish clerks almost exclusively use English numbers when discussing accounts in their own stores with other Amish. These are domains where PG traditionally has been spoken (Kraybill and Nolt 1995).

Between the segregated businesses and the integrated enterprises many different levels of integration are found. What was seen as the best solution to keeping OOA values and traditions a few decades ago – working out of one’s home or in a shop adjacent to it – has lately turned into a bit of a dilemma. The quickly increasing number of tourists in Lancaster County and the outside world with its modern ways of doing things are coming into an ever-closer proximity to the Amish homes with their adjacent shops. Many OOA do not see this as a problem, but to some church leaders, working in the outside world is seen as lowering the boundaries of cultural separation and threatening the core values and symbols of Amish identity, in which PG plays an important role.

5.3 Tourism as a Catalyst to Amish Entrepreneurship

Our modern society has moved past the novelty of what once surrounded the circus and the town carnival. Yet this does not mean that our fascination for the somewhat unusual or peculiar has diminished – merely shifted its focus. People nowadays want reality and authenticity, but there is still a certain fascination for the bygone era. That is the prime reason why Amish communities like the one in Lancaster County have become the target of the tourism industry. They attract tourists with the allure of a lifestyle that disappeared from America generations ago.
5.3.1 The Dawn of Tourism in Lancaster County

Lancaster County is home to the oldest tourism industry focusing on the Amish in the country. David Luthy, a historian and Amish man himself has traced the beginnings of Amish tourism to the publication in 1937 of Bernice Steinfeldt’s booklet, *The Amish of Lancaster County*, and a second booklet by A. Monroe Aurand Jr., *Little Known Facts about the Amish and Mennonites* (1938), both of which aroused a lot of interest in the Plain people of Pennsylvania. In the middle of the 1940s tours of “Amish country” of Lancaster County were offered for the first time, followed by books, articles, a musical, and a movie in the 1950s. People were flocking to Lancaster County, and by 1965 approximately two million people a year visited the area, primarily during the summer and early fall months. However, it was not until the release of the blockbuster movie *Witness*, filmed in Lancaster County in 1985, that tourism started to soar and become part of Amish life year round (Luthy 1994). Tourism for Lancaster County has now reached an all-time high of about eleven million annually (Trollinger 2012).

5.3.2 Amish Pseudo-Enterprises in Lancaster County: Blessing or Curse?

Clearly the Amish are against having the public wandering through their homes and yards, riding in their buggies, and interrupting them while working out in the fields. As a result, there are many websites, guidebooks, and tourist brochures advertising the opportunities to visit one of the many pseudo-Amish establishments such as The Amish Barn, The Amish Farm & House, The Amish Motel or Amish Stuff Etc. The same brochures and online advertisements that try to convince tourists to go shopping and stay overnight in the many B&Bs and motels in the area are also tempting tourists to try one of the numerous Amish pseudo-attractions that are being offered: riding in an Amish carriage or experiencing an “authentic” Amish farm. The Amish Farm and House advertises on its own website that:
On July 1, 1955, The Amish Farm and House was born. It was opened to provide a quality educational experience reflecting the historical and modern customs of Lancaster County’s Amish and that is authentic, accurate, cooperative and respectful of its Amish neighbors. We are proud to say that we are the first tourist attraction in Lancaster County and the first tourist Amish attraction in the United States. Although many have tried to copy the Amish Farm & House, no one can match the quality, expertise, and authenticity that is located on this nearly-300 year old farm (“About Us”, amishfarmandhouse.com).

However, ever since the dawn of tourism to Lancaster County, these inns, restaurants, and attractions, as well as the shops displaying and selling Amish artifacts, such as toys, faceless dolls, refrigerator magnets, key rings, bonnets, and so-called Amish foods, such as pies and preserves, are not run by the Amish, but in the majority of cases by people in the tourism industry trying to make a profit selling the Amish. Instead the OOA wish to stay away from these kinds of establishments, saying that to them “the tourism industry symbolizes worldly pleasures causing someone to seek entertainment, waste money and just kill time” (Amish man in his fifties), all of which is in conflict with the core beliefs of the Amish – to work hard and be frugal with one’s money.

Many Amish are concerned that these pseudo-Amish establishments are conveying a distorted picture of the Amish. Instead of focusing on the Amish turning away modern conveniences because they believe worldliness to be contradictory to the teachings of the Bible, the tourism industry conveys a picturesque and embellished picture of the Amish embracing a lifestyle of a bygone era. Kraybill (1989), in his book The Riddle of Amish Culture, interviewed an Amish woman who expressed her concern about these non-Amish enterprises’ way of luring tourists to Lancaster County:

Personally, I don’t feel any resentment against tourists, but these tourist places are what’s working against us. We are not living our peculiar way to attract attention. We merely want to live pure, Christian lives according to our religion and church standards and want to be left alone, like any human beings. We are opposed to having our souls marketed by
having our sacred beliefs and traditions stolen from us and then distributed to tourists, and sometimes having them mocked (Kraybill 1989: 231).

5.3.3 Authenticity: A Winning Concept for Amish Enterprises

With the boom of tourists to Lancaster County during the 1980s enterprises and establishments owned and operated by nonsectarians mushroomed. Developers converted more and more prime farmland into commercial and residential real estate. In Lancaster County a developer turned farmland into a miniature golf course. The golf course is right next to an Amish dairy farm. The Amish man, in his forties, who owns the farm, commented on the building of the golf course in the following way: “I don’t think it’s being good stewards of the land . . . One thing about developers using good farm land . . . once it’s used for something else, it won’t be used as farmland again.”

The scarcity and increased cost of farmland made it difficult for many OOA to support themselves financially as farmers. From the necessity to support one’s family a compromise between the OOA and the tourists took shape, which became a win-win situation for both parties. The OOA opened up small roadside stands at the edge of their farm or family dwelling, selling homemade crafts, produce, and baked goods – providing an income to the OOA but at the same time giving the tourists a chance to get a peek into OOA life by actually interacting with an authentic Amish person in a controlled way. Some OOA families have even gone one step further in that they invite tourists into their homes for meals.

The 1980s also saw the arrival of another type of enterprise geared primarily to satisfy the desires of the tourists visiting Lancaster County and run by the OOA themselves – the cottage industries: selling baked goods, quilts and other handicrafts. The manufacturing businesses gained importance selling lawn furniture, birdhouses, doghouses, lawn decorations,
and even small storage sheds to satisfy the tourists’ desire for “good quality handiwork.” For many OOA in Lancaster County, to be able to financially support the family, they have to engage in the tourism trade. The only other remaining alternative is to move away to another county or state less crowded by tourists. This is the reason why the OOA have a very ambivalent relationship to tourism. At this point they cannot live without the tourists, but they can also not live with them. In *The Riddle of Amish Culture* Kraybill writes:

> Oddly enough, the more separate and unusual they seem the more attractive they are to Moderns. Surprisingly, the tourism that appears to threaten their solitude and privacy may actually help to bolster their cultural identity. Ironically, the tourism that exacerbates the problem of shrinking farmland and nudges them off the farm has strengthened their ties to their Lancaster home by providing a ready market for Amish crafts (Kraybill 1989: 227).

There are several negative effects of tourism in Lancaster County: congested roads, commercial development of prime farmland, disruption of normal OOA daily social life, distorted images of the plain groups, commercialization of cultural and religious symbols, to name a few. According to one Amish man in his fifties, visitors do not always understand Amish culture or respect Amish ways. He made the following comment about tourists: “They are a nuisance when I go to town. I can’t go to any public place in town without them asking me questions and trying to take pictures. They are invading my privacy in a way that I don’t like at all. But I know we can’t live without them. They bring money to our community.” One of the biggest problems for the OOA community, however, might be that the great exposure to the outside world through the tourism industry causes some Amish to start questioning their very core beliefs, and thus it threatens to erode the way they dress, use technology, and speak PG.
5.4 The Negative Effects of Tourism on Pennsylvania German

With the dawn of cottage industries run and operated by OOA in the 1980s, OOA shops and businesses started producing a large variety of goods and services catering to different segments of the population. Whereas Amish men were and still are primarily involved in woodworking, machine-, harness- and buggy repair, welding, or agricultural equipment shops – products that cater primarily to the Amish population – women are more engaged in niches that try to satisfy the desires of tourists visiting Lancaster County - quilts and crafts, flowers, and foods. Although, the Amish women’s businesses primarily employ other Amish women, family, and friends, many women interviewed in this study who work in Amish women’s businesses stated that most of the day they speak English in the shop, also with their fellow Amish women, because they do not want to be rude to the tourists who visit the shop. Quite a large number of these Amish businesswomen thus speak English all day with the tourists patronizing their shops. One Amish woman in her late fifties, who owns a quilt and craft shop and participated in this study, expressed her husband’s concern when she said: “Sometimes when I close up at night and go home to cook dinner, I keep talking English. Then my husband scorns me. He tells me to speak ‘Amish’ when it’s just the two of us, but it’s difficult to switch over just like that when I’ve been talking English all day.”

The tight-knit network to which these Amish women and men belong clearly forces its members to speak PG. However, with changing social pressures of the community and the interruption of outsiders into the world of the Amish, the high-density network structure is being threatened. The men and women, who have worked and talked PG alongside each other for generations, now to a large degree, in order to be able to serve their customers, frequently have to switch to English. Thus, the closeness of the network is becoming less tight, which in the end
may have a negative impact on PG as well. At the moment, one of the biggest threats to the maintenance of PG among the OOA seems to be tourism. The great numbers of tourists that descend on Lancaster County each season make it difficult for the large numbers of Amish who own shops and businesses that cater to the tourists to stay within their tight-knit network. Will their network be strong enough to withstand the great pressure of all the tourists invading Lancaster County, or will pressure from the outside world eventually make the tight-knit community fall apart as the OOA find themselves forced to give in, piece by piece, on such core symbols as their native language for the worldly demands that tourists put on them? Huffines (1996) maintains that although the OOA live in relative isolation, they are by no means immune to the factors that often lead to language shift in many minority language communities. Huffines continues:

As Amish are forced to seek alternative occupations to farming and as they establish extensive cottage industries and develop new marketing strategies in order to survive in the modern economic climate, they increasingly embrace English (Huffines 1996: 64).

Huffines (1996) also notes that the OOA themselves maintain that PG will survive as long as it is used in their worship services.

Since language and culture live in such a close interdependent relationship, if the boundaries that have protected the OOA community from having to accept a fast-paced modern society that fosters individualism and pleasure-seeking start to crumble, the risk of language shift is tangible.
Chapter 6

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AS A THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

Previous research has shown that social networks are an important indicator of whether a minority language or dialect will be maintained (Milroy 1987). In the case of a bilingual community, such as the OOA, an understanding of the network structure can lead to insight into the process of possible language shift because it studies both internal ties – that is, those of individuals with similar backgrounds – as well as external ties among individuals with a different type of network experience.

Tight-knit, high-density networks have shown to be conducive of language maintenance of minority languages. Since OOA communities are dense and tight-knit communities, the social network theory therefore seemed the most fitting theoretical framework to use in this study.

The social network theory has proven to be useful and effective in the study of how the social structure of relationships surrounding a person, group, organization, as well as a nation, affect behaviors and beliefs. Its origins, on a small scale, can be found in social anthropology, but in the last thirty years it has proved useful in various disciplines, such as sociology, social psychology, political science, geography, mathematics, and sociolinguistics. Lately in the field of sociolinguistics the network concept has been applied in many studies on language maintenance and shift because it very nicely takes into account the different socializing habits of individuals and their degree of involvement within the local community (cf. 6.1 and 6.4 below). In addition, social networks are very responsive to political and economic forces.
6.1 The Advent of the Social Network Structure

The term *social network* was first used by J. A. Barnes in his article *Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish* (1954), in which he described the configuration and social relations of the villagers of Bremnes, Norway. They were the people he lived with and had the opportunity to study closely in the years of 1952 to 1953. However, after the publication of Barnes’s work on the concept of social networks, it lost a bit of its momentum, although according to Milroy (1987), William Labov was implicitly describing social networks in his Martha’s Vineyard (1963) and Harlem studies (1968). These studies, however, were overshadowed by his more famous New York City study (1966). In this study Labov collected large amounts of data from random samples of individuals, which he then analyzed and compiled according to certain key characteristics and correlated with the social background of the individuals (cf. Labov 1966). His results suggested that society was like a layer cake, with different socioeconomic layers stacked on top of each other. In a way, this is a beneficial insight into how society functions but it is grossly oversimplified. In reality, people do not usually live in such clear-cut layers. Someone from the so-called working class might socialize with members of the middle class and vice versa. In general, there was no mentioning of the extent to which these groups were homogenous. More importantly for this study, this is not the way Old Order Amish society is structured. Instead, researchers within the sociolinguistic field began studying the individual to see what patterns emerge regardless of social class. They realized that people have a tendency to assemble into groups of people, social networks, which regularly interact with one another regardless of class affiliation because of a connection through kinship, friendship, and/or work. Thus, the network analysis focused on the relationships between people instead of on the characteristics of people. Network studies became a better way to provide a
more realistic picture of the way people actually interact in real life. Furthermore, for the sociolinguist, a detailed study of the social networks within a particular speech community provides the researcher with useful information on how the kind of people in an individual’s network has an effect on which linguistic codes are used, when they are used, in which domain, and with whom. Thus, it is clear that the people with whom the individual interacts is a powerful source of influence on the languages used. Another advantage in using the social network structure as a theoretical framework in sociolinguistic research is that the researcher, if introduced into the network as a “friend of a friend”, is more likely to be accepted and thus included in a natural way into the conversation of the members of that particular network.

The concept of social networks was explicitly used for the first time in a sociolinguistic study by Blom and Gumperz in their now classical (1972) study of the bilingual village of Hemnes in northern Norway (cf. Blom and Gumperz 1972).

The focus of their study was the relationship and choice of language among the population of Hemnes. The people of Hemnes have access to the dialect of the region (*ranamål*) but also to one of the official standard Norwegian languages (*bokmål*). Their findings showed that the linguistic choice between *ranamål* and *bokmål* was closely related to an intricate system of local social values and situational constraints. In addition, their findings showed that both linguistic codes had a good chance of survival because of the support they enjoyed through a stable social system, in which both codes conveyed different but equally important social meanings (Milroy 2001).

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20 In Norway two official standard languages exist side by side. The two standards are known as *Bokmål* and *Nynorsk*. Both languages have equal official status. *Bokmål* is the language of the press, of the majority of books and also the language for the majority of school children, as the medium of education. *Nynorsk* is used in the western part of Norway and is the language of about twenty percent of school children in Norway. It is the language of some of the local press in that area. In addition, it is the language used in much poetry and literature, particularly in works of rural background. All official documents are in both languages, children have to learn to read and write both, and both languages are used extensively in radio and television.
Although Blom and Gumperz’s study was carried out in the early 1970s and was based upon a social network structure, it was not until the publication of James and Lesley Milroy’s very detailed and explicit Belfast, Northern Ireland, study in 1978 that the concept of social networks became well-known in sociolinguistic research (Milroy and Milroy 1978, Milroy 1980). In this study the Milroys investigated three poor working-class communities in Belfast – the Hammer, Ballymacarett, and the Clonard. Through informal contacts with “key people” in the different communities, Lesley was able to approach other members of the communities in the capacity of a “friend of a friend”. In this role she was accepted and trusted and was able to interact in long and informal conversations. Not only did she observe the language of the people she studied but also the social networks in which they were involved.

Network models analyze the connection of speakers by categorizing them according to their density and multiplexity. Additional factors of importance in determining the network ties are the duration and frequency of the contacts between the speakers in the network. In Milroy’s findings, she points out that a tight-knit, dense network structure is an important mechanism to enforce linguistic norms and ultimately language maintenance. The vernaculars persist because social networks enforce the local community spirit and thus the vernacular norms as opposed to national or standard norms that typically reflect status and prestige. On the other hand, in an open, loose-knit community, change occurs because of unstable social conditions, which cause disruptions in the social network structures and thus also a shift in language pattern or language preference (Milroy 1987).
6.2 Tight-knit, High-density Network

Members of a speech community are connected to one another in different capacities, in different networks. In the middle is the anchor person, the focal point of the network. The anchor person is linked to other people through kinships, friendships, neighborhoods, and work. Theoretically, the maximum size of a well-working social network seems to be approximately 150 people (Dunbar 1992). Practically, however, twenty to fifty people is the optimum range that makes these networks best reinforce common ideas, values, culture, and language most effectively (Milroy and Milroy 1978). The networks can either be high-density, closed personal networks or low-density, open personal networks. Within a high-density network the anchor person is not only connected to family but to friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Family members, friends, and coworkers are in turn tied to each other and are thus part of a network that is considered multiplex. The strength of these ties is determined by the duration, intimacy, and intensity of these contacts. Strong ties are dense and multiplex, characterized by intense and intimate contact between the people in the network. The social boundaries that separate them from others are sharp.

These kinds of dense closed social networks can be seen primarily in rural speech communities that exhibit a nonstandard or vernacular variety of a language, like the OOA in Lancaster County. In Lancaster County the Amish are linked to each other in several different capacities – through marriage, kinship, work, and church. “Everybody knows everybody” is an accurate description of this kind of network. The people tied together in a closed personal social network exchange goods and services with each other on a daily basis and feel safe within the network structure because they know they can, in a time of need, rely on assistance from the members of the network. This kind of social network can also put a lot of pressure on its
members in that it acts like an invisible force that imposes unwritten rules, regulations, obligations, and sometimes even prohibitions on its members. A dense, multiplex social network will thus resist not only social change in the community but also linguistic change.

6.2.1 The Tight-knit Network as an Instrument of Language Maintenance

This kind of tight-knit group not only has the potential of putting a lot of social pressure on its members but also has the capacity of enforcing linguistic norms and is, therefore, an important instrument of language maintenance in that the speakers of a speech community are able to form a unified group capable of withstanding social and linguistic pressure from outside groups. In other words, chances are better that a language will be maintained in a high-density, closed social network than in one that is low-density and open (Milroy 1987). Milroy’s findings also imply the reversed picture for an open network – an open, low-density network will facilitate language shift (Milroy 1987).

Figure 6-1. A high-density personal network structure in which X is the focal point of the network (Source: Milroy, Lesley. 1980: 20).

6.3 The Open, Low density Network

In a low-density, open personal network, the anchor person is connected to people who in turn are not linked to other individuals in more than one way. This kind of low-density network is therefore called uniplex, which is characterized by weak ties between its members. In communities like these, there is therefore no “community feeling” in which
members have a desire to assist one another during sickness, financial difficulties, or other times of need. There is no invisible hand that dictates what a person is allowed to do or not to do, which not only impacts the social make-up but also weakens the language ties in the community. (Milroy and Milroy 1978). If the language ties are disrupted, then people will be more open to the influence of the majority language. Speakers normally use their heritage language as a means of affirming identity and loyalty to the local group, but if these ties are weak or do not exist any longer, Labov (1994) perceives these weak or nonexistent ties as the beginning of innovation and therefore also change in a language.

Figure 6-2. A low-density personal network structure, in which X is the focal point of the network (Source: Milroy, Lesley. 1980: 20).

6.4 Previous Sociolinguistic Studies Utilizing the Social Network Structure

In the last decades a few studies have been carried out in which the population under investigation, in more than one way, resembles the Amish community under investigation in this study, and in which a social network theory has been utilized. Therefore, it is imperative for this study to take a closer look at some of them.

Gumperz’s (1976) study of the bilingual German/Slovenian community in the Gail Valley of Austria, in which he associates the move toward a monolingual German society with
the shift from a predominantly farming community to that of a service community, is a good example of the usefulness of the social network as an analytical tool. Gumperz linked the continued use of Slovenian with the maintenance of in-group social networks. He found that although many communities in the region had ceased to use Slovenian, shifting completely to German, people in the Gail Valley had maintained their bilingualism. Gumperz attributed the continued viability of the Slovenian language to the community’s closed social system in which ties based on kinship, friendship, occupation, and religion were very strong and overlapped. People assisted and relied on each other for harvesting, house building, and other important tasks of everyday life. Getting together for different leisure activities, such as singings or working on different crafts, was also very important. With the improvement of the infrastructure surrounding the Gail Valley in the last few decades, the situation in the community started to change. Tourists started to arrive, and instead of selling produce to the inhabitants of Gail, the people of the Gail Valley began selling their produce and baked goods to German-speaking tourists. The tourists needed room and board, and buildings were converted into overnight accommodations that provided employment for many, especially young women in the community. The people of the very tight-knit farming community of Gail no longer interacted solely with people belonging to their own circle of kin, friends, and coworkers but to a large degree with outsiders. They were no longer as dependent upon the socioeconomic and friendship networks of the community but more on the economic opportunities created by the improved infrastructure around their own community, which also made for easy access to several urban areas with good job opportunities for people with knowledge of German. The change to a service economy was the trigger that changed the social network structure in the community, and according to Gumperz, the result was the loss of the Slovenian language in favor of German, since Slovenian is associated with
local values, whereas German is the language of wider communication and sophistication (Gumperz 1982).

Other similar studies that are of relevance to the present study are Gal’s (1978) study of language shift in the bilingual German/Hungarian community of Oberwart in Austria, in which she uses the personal social network framework to determine what language a person will use, Hungarian or German. Gal illustrates how social and economic changes in the village of Oberwart, where two language communities coexisted for centuries, resulted for the Hungarian speakers in a gradual process, spanning several generations, to shift to German. In her findings she makes the discovery that the more peasants the informant knows and has in his or her own personal network, the more likely it is he or she will speak Hungarian. In the study, as well as in the aforementioned study by Gumperz, industrialization and urbanization play a vital role. Gal makes the observation that it is primarily the peasant women of Oberwart who want to leave their lifestyle behind and move up in society. New job opportunities, in which German is required are found in the nearby cities. The move into the city changes the structure of their personal network, which in turn changes the choice of language from Hungarian to German. The functions and domains of the languages have changed, and Gal predicts that it will continue this way and perhaps even escalate until the whole community of Oberwart is a monolingual German-speaking community (Romaine 1995).

6.5 The Amish Community as a Social Network Construct

As Milroy (1987) suggests, the more cohesive the group, the more likely it is that individual members and therefore the group itself will resist pressure from the outside to change. The more constant the group supervision of individual members, the less likely the individual is to make changes, linguistically or otherwise, that threaten the group.
Old Order communities are “closed” communities in that everyone in the community knows each other, and interactions with others in the community, but especially to those in the outside world, are restricted to clearly defined territories and situations. Outsiders think of the OOA communities as static communities in an ever-changing world. This is certainly not true.

The unwritten rules of the Ordnung, which control “the whole range of human behavior” (Hostetler 1980: 85), make clear what is considered worldly and thus sinful. Raith (1982) describes four major types of communicative networks that apply to the OOA: (1) Within their own districts, (2) with other OOA that have a similar Ordnung (cf. 3.8.2), (3) with Amish that are still Old Order but with a considerably different Ordnung, and (4) with non-Amish. Within these various networks, all Amish are members of other networks such as family, neighbors, friends, and work mates. Every church district adopts its own interpretation of the Ordnung as framework of its basic rules and regulations. OOA communities survive not only by adopting the Ordnung to fit their particular community but by adapting and preserving their own culture through the very strong social network structure that encourages the close social connections within their own group. The Lancaster County OOA are in some ways more liberal than some other OOA groups in various parts of the United States but have certainly remained within the framework of rules, the Ordnung, for the Old Order Amish.

Despite sometimes extensive contact with the “English” on the job as coworkers, customers, distributors, and suppliers, until recently family, friends and neighbors have been predominantly OOA. It is these networks that have helped reinforce and preserve OOA culture and language.

The Amish community can be described as a high-density, closed social network. The anchor person in the network is someone with a great deal of respect, often the bishop of the
district. The Amish who live in one particular district do not only know the bishop, but they themselves are interrelated or know one another through marriage, work, play, and church. This is what Hostetler (1980) describes as a high-context culture with network connections significantly different from the surrounding low-context mainstream non-Amish culture. A high-context culture like the Amish is, according to Hostetler, characterized by a very high level of social control and intragroup communication. Hostetler writes:

A high context culture is one in which people are deeply involved with one another. Awareness of situations, experience, activity, and one’s social standing is keenly developed. Information is widely shared. Simple messages with deep meaning flow freely. There are many levels of communication – overt and covert, implicit and explicit, signs, symbols and body gestures, and things one may or may not talk about. Members are sensitive to a screening process that distinguishes outsiders from insiders (Hostetler 1980: 18).

The church is a very important contributor to the preservation of a closed social network structure. Only baptized members are allowed church membership, which excludes any outsiders from being more than visitors to an Amish church service. This also makes marriage to an outsider impossible without being shunned. Amish children sometimes do play with non-Amish children, but this is something that is discouraged by the OOA church leaders who do not want their children to become influenced by worldly games and gadgets like video games, TVs, computers, iPods, iPhones, and such. This study, however, brought the researcher to some homes in which the Amish provided child care for an “English” neighbor’s child. In these cases the OOA children were in close contact with English-speaking children at an early age.

In the past in their work as farmers, the OOA exposure to outsiders was very limited. They worked in the fields alongside their children and extended family and sometimes friends and neighbors, all belonging to the OOA faith. This, of course, created a very tight-knit, dense, and multiplex community, where the same values and beliefs were shared and where the
common language, as a symbol of this relationship, was PG. However, the socioeconomic situation has changed in the past thirty years and has forced many OOA off their farms into new areas of activities and employment. Thus, the OOA have, in an unprecedented way, been exposed to values and beliefs of the outside world that are not necessarily in agreement with their own values and beliefs.

The existence of cultural support from within a certain group is frequently seen as one of the most important supporting factors for language maintenance but when the socioeconomic landscape drastically changes the parameters within, the support system might change as well. The Amish community in this study is very similar to the bilingual Slovenian-German community in the Gail Valley of Austria, investigated by Gumperz. The members of the bilingual community in the Gail Valley had been farming the land for generations, embedded in networks of mutual support by friends, neighbors, and coworkers. They socialized within the boundaries of their community. However, such behavior changed as the economy shifted from one that was restricted to farming for survival within the community to one that was primarily a service economy. As the road systems improved, a host of other changes followed. Tourists started coming into the area; farmers started selling produce to outsiders, larger enterprises, and factories rather than trading with other local farmers. Furthermore, farm buildings were converted into tourist accommodations and work and leisure activities were no longer confined to the immediate area. As many of their everyday interactions came to be with urban outsiders, the farmers in the valley to a large degree lost their dependence on the local support network and ultimately the choice of language.

Since the mid-1970s, as a result of the development of better road systems, hotels, and restaurants, and the increase in tourism, many Amish have been forced by external changes to
shift their focal point of economic activities. As was described in chapter five, traditionally the OOA in Lancaster County relied on agriculture and smaller enterprises, selling what they harvested from the land. However, suggestive of a change similar to the one in Austria, many Amish have shifted their focus away from farming to small businesses and other enterprises, working off the farm. In addition, goods are no longer sold predominantly to their own but to the “English” on a regular basis and, in particular, to tourists at local markets and roadside stands (cf. chapter five). Many Amish men, as well as some women, are forced to carpool with the “English” to get to their new jobs, working as construction workers, painters, and domestic maids. The transformation of the old, traditional agricultural society that the Amish have lived in for centuries have affected the way they participate in their community’s dense and multiplex social network. These days, working for many Amish is no longer a family affair on the farm; many have been forced to work with people who are different from their own neighbors or relatives and develop new contacts with suppliers, distributors, and customers off the farm. For these people the tight-knit familiar social network no longer exists in its original shape. In social network terms they have created more loose ties outside of the OOA community (Milroy 1988).

The changes that have forced the social networks to become less dense and less multiplex have triggered some changes in language use among the Amish. It is most prominent among Amish men, who through their extensive work off the farm, are in regular contact with English-speaking people. This, in turn, seems to have resulted in a change in language patterns, in which English is spoken much more frequently than before, not only with English-speaking people but in domains previously reserved for PG, such as with family, friends, and Amish neighbors. Thus, language-choice patterns do not seem to be haphazard, but closely linked as a response to large-scale
macro-economic social changes, changes affecting a whole community’s social network
structure. Nevertheless, Johnson-Weiner (1992) notes:

Research of Old Order communities suggests that a group will maintain its language or
shift to another not in response to external economic, prestige, or industrial factors but
rather as a consequence of the way it defines itself in relation to the society exerting the
pressure. The theological commitment of the Old Order groups to a particular set of
beliefs and behaviors that emphasize their separateness from the surrounding “English”
world have helped to ensure the survival of Pennsylvania German (Johnson-Weiner

Johnson-Weiner’s comment appears to hold true for many Amish communities in which
the theological commitment is very strong. Nevertheless, the theological commitment varies
from one community to another, which causes the various OOA communities to react differently
to outside socioeconomic pressure and thus exhibit large differences in language maintenance
efforts. In her paper Johnson-Weiner (1992) describes an OOA community in Norfolk, New
York, that in many ways exhibits several similar features to the one under investigation in this
study. Their Ordnung permits its members greater interaction with the English-speaking world
than many other OOA communities. It allows its members to work in jobs such as carpentry,
painting, and domestic work. The people who work such jobs are forced to rely on their non-
Amish friends and neighbors for transportation to work but also to go to the bank and other
public places. The laxness with which the Ordnung is interpreted in this community has not only
weakened the social network structure of it but has also caused instability in the community’s
linguistic situation. Amish High German is still spoken in church, but English is gaining
increasingly more ground, not only in interaction with the “English” but also in contact with
other Amish within the community. This is a similar pattern that is only too familiar also in the
community under investigation in this study. English is not only spoken with English-speaking
people but increasingly used in intra-community interaction, in domains previously reserved for
family, close friends, and Amish neighbors. Therefore, the crucial question is: has the easing of the social network structure reached a point of no return, or do religious beliefs and tradition, together with the sheer number of OOA who still speak PG collectively put such emotional, social, and religious pressure on the community that the OOA will continue to speak PG for the foreseeable future and thus keep their Amish identity? This is an issue that will be discussed in great detail in chapter seven, when the results of this study’s data are analyzed and evaluated.
7.1 Current Demographic Data for the Old Order Amish in Lancaster County

For the OOA, the shift from work exclusively on the farm to work primarily off the farm in small businesses, cottage industries, and various manual jobs not only suggest changes in the socioeconomic structure of the tight-knit community in which the OOA live but also the possibility of shift in the domains of PG. These changes in the use of PG are believed to take place not only at the community level such as in shops and establishments run by the Amish when catering to the public. More subtle and often not mentioned but to a greater extent than previously thought, PG is being replaced by English in some domains previously reserved for PG, among them, intra-community interaction such as with family, Amish friends and neighbors. The notion of these changes was the catalyst for the research and the findings that are presented in this chapter.

As mentioned in chapter 4.4, the study includes fifty-five informants: twenty-five men and thirty women. The informants were divided into different categories depending on their primary occupation. Three categories of men: (1) farmers, (2) part time farmers/off-farm workers, and (3) off-farm workers/men. Women were equally divided into three different groups: (1) homemakers, (2) part time homemakers/off-farm workers, and (3) off-farm workers/women. Each category was created after a careful analysis of the informants’ responses about their occupations had been completed. At the beginning of each interview the informants were told
they were permitted to check as few or as many boxes as they found appropriate for each question (cf. appendix questionnaire). When questioned about their occupation, some informants exclusively checked the box related to farmers or homemakers because they considered these to be their only occupations. Informants who checked those same boxes in addition to one of the other possible occupational boxes were considered to be part time farmers or part time homemakers as well as off-farm workers. The informants who checked only one of the boxes stating various occupations regarded themselves exclusively as off-farm workers who support themselves and their families through jobs found solely off the farm. The distribution of occupation among men and women is illustrated in figures 7-1 and 7-3.

![Occupations of Men](image)

7.1 Distribution of occupations among male participants (n=25)

The result in figure 7-1 is not surprising but merely an affirmation of what researchers such as Kraybill (2004) have stated in recent times: the majority of OOA in Lancaster County, for the most part, no longer support themselves from farming. A few decades prior to when Kraybill published his results, Martineau and MacQueen (1977) predicted that this would happen, after having conducted a district-by-district study in which “a farming level of at least sixty percent was found in seventy percent of the districts” (1977: 386). Clearly, farming was still the principal way of providing for one’s family, but Martineau and McQueen were well
aware of the fact that this number was dwindling and much smaller than in previous generations when working off the farm was almost nonexistent. The mid and late-1970s was the era when the launching of Amish-run business enterprises mushroomed. Martineau and MacQueen were very attentive to the fact that what they observed was only the beginning of a boom in Amish entrepreneurship. That there has been a very rapid increase in the number of Amish people working off the farm is well illustrated in this study. Almost one-third (eight) of the interviewed Amish men derive their primary income from a combination of farming and off-farm work/entrepreneurship, and as many as sixty-four percent (sixteen) earn their livelihood solely from working off the farm in different undertakings. In summary, in this study the total number of Amish men who work in some kind of non-farming occupation, either full time or part time is over ninety percent. This is a significant number, which will unquestionably have an impact on many different aspects of Amish life, not the least on the choice of language among the men in the study.

![Figure 7-2. Age distribution of occupations among male participants (n=25)](image)

The data in figure 7-2 are a good indication, as well as a confirmation of what was previously mentioned in chapter five, about the negative effects that a lack of land and exorbitant
land prices in Lancaster County have had on the Old Order Amish people’s choices of occupation in the last decades. Since the younger generation is unable to obtain land at reasonable prices, it finds itself in a quandary. The vast majority in this study (ninety-six percent) is married, but there is no or very little land available; hence, they have to find other venues of income since they need to support themselves and their families. Many of them turn to small businesses or entrepreneurship. This predicament is especially apparent in the youngest age cohort, in which all OOA men have to a certain degree, turned their backs on farming. Approximately a third of these young Amish men, age 18 to 37, still do part time farming but supplement their income through off-farm work. Two-thirds of the young men have completely left farming in favor of other sources of income.

Of particular interest is the fact that the study shows that nine out of ten older OOA, age 58 to 77, have abandoned farming all together in favor of off-farm work. The men in the study implied that, as they age, they want something less physically strenuous than farming, and consequently, they have turned to different forms of off-farm work. One Amish man in his sixties, who used to farm full time, made the following remark about why he is not farming any longer:

Farming is for the young folks. They are the ones who have the strength to do it and should do it. But, unfortunately, that’s not the way it works in Lancaster nowadays. There isn’t enough farmland to go around for all our young people. They have to look for work on constructions sites and in shops. That’s not the way we want it, but they have to support their family.
As figure 7-3 illustrates, the majority of women are still homemakers although a surprisingly large number (thirteen) of the informants, are working part time or full time in different occupations outside the home, primarily in quilt or craft shops but also as domestic help to the “English” or by providing meals to the “English” in restaurants or in their own homes. This finding corroborates research conducted by Kraybill (2004) and Graybill in her (2009) dissertation, in which they point to the large number of women who have gone into business in recent years.

Figure 7-4. Age distribution of occupations among female participants (n = 30)
Figure 7-4 illustrates that young women (18-37) do not have time to engage in any kind of business venture. They are all married and busy with childbearing and rearing. In addition, it needs to be emphasized that almost ninety percent of these women have children younger than ten years of age. Still, in their comments a large number of young informants (18-37) revealed their wish to have the time to work outside the home. One woman expressed a certain level of frustration when she said: “I wish I could help support our family, but with seven children I just don’t have the time, maybe later.” The same scenario holds true for all women in this age cohort who have children under the age of ten. It is when these women become middle-aged (38-57) and the majority of their children are older or grown up and are able to fend for themselves that two-thirds of these women find the time to work outside the home and help support their family. The study also reveals that among the oldest women (58-77) the reversed picture is true: the majority of women have returned to work in their homes.

There is a plethora of occupations that an Amish man/woman can engage in if s/he chooses or is forced to work off the farm. The results of this study provide an illustration of the diverse occupations that the OOA in Lancaster County are working in today. The occupations that the participants in this study are engaged in can be divided into nonfarm work at the home or adjacent to the homestead or work away from the home. As already mentioned in chapter five, work on the farmstead or close to home is the kind of work preferred by OOA church leaders. It keeps the family together and protects them from the wickedness of the outside world. However, because of the socioeconomic situation that has arisen in the last few decades, they have been forced to accept other options or their members would not be able to support themselves. In this study, work close to home includes jobs marked blue in figure 7-5 below. Some occupations belong to a grey zone. For example, some carpenters can work in their own shop adjacent to their
home, either alone or together with family and friends from the Amish community, manufacturing fine furniture, gazebos, and such, whereas others must work away from home on some large project, many times together with the “English.” The remaining jobs the informants are engaged in can be found away from the farm and are marked red in the diagram.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Close to Home</th>
<th>Grey Zone</th>
<th>Work Away from Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printmaker</td>
<td></td>
<td>Housekeeping-assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welder</td>
<td></td>
<td>Employment in restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeper</td>
<td></td>
<td>Babysitter for the “English”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kitchen help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery store owner</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window salesman</td>
<td></td>
<td>Employment in warehouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesman agri.euip./animals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Construction-site worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment in/owner of furniture/woodworking store</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse/Nursery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilt/Craft store</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider of meals in one’s home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling produce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment in/owner of various shops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamstress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7-5. The interconnectedness of different kinds of work among the OOA, Marie Qvarnström**

The jobs listed in figure 7-5 are jobs that many Americans who belong to mainstream society engage in as well but with a major difference. Unlike mainstream American society, where it is not unusual for a person to switch jobs every few years, this study shows that regardless of gender and age, changing jobs is not very common. Even among the OOA in the youngest age cohort, which consists exclusively of part time farmers/off-farm workers, five out of six Amish have worked in the same occupation for ten years or longer. This high number is significant in other ways as well: it is a good indicator that the majority of these participants has
never been full time farmers but have always worked in the same non-farming occupation that they were in at the time of the study. The same picture is true for the middle-aged (38-57) men where the majority, eight of eleven, has worked in the same occupation between eleven and thirty years; the remaining three informants have worked in the same occupation for thirty-one years or longer. The older men (58-77), however, show interesting results in that almost as many as two-thirds of the informants have worked in the same occupation they are currently in for a period of ten years or less. The remaining men have been engaged in the same line of work for thirty or more years. These figures suggest that as they grow older, they do not have the same energy and stamina as before. Many belonging to this group have, in the past ten years, voluntarily or involuntarily abandoned farming altogether in favor of less strenuous physical work as entrepreneurs/off-farm workers. An Amish man in his sixties, who does some bookkeeping, commented: “I have worked as a farmer all my life, my body is tired, . . . but I can’t just sit around and roll my thumbs. That’s not the Amish way, you know. I had to do something . . . and I’m fairly good with numbers.”

The trend among OOA women is similar to that of the men, but it still ought to be discussed separately. Among the younger women (18-37) four out of five have already worked as homemakers for up to ten years, which supports research already carried out among the OOA in Lancaster County and is an indication of the following: (1) Amish women marry early. (2) Married women do not generally work outside the home during the early child nurturing years (Kraybill 1989, Kraybill and Nolt 2004). Significant is also the fact that over half of all middle-aged women (38-57), for a considerable period of time (0-10 years) parallel to working as homemakers, have worked part time as off-farm workers. More than a quarter of these women
have worked part time outside the home considerably longer than that, thirty-one to thirty-five years.

The importance of discussing the place and length of employment at this point is that there may be a correlation between the preferred language spoken by the Amish under investigation and the people (Amish or non-Amish), with whom they consistently work.

**7.2 Workplace Demographics and Language Contact**

Because of the high number of OOA men and women (cf. figures 7-1 and 7-3) who work off the farm in different capacities, the researcher believes it important to determine if there is a correlation between the number of Amish and other PG-speaking people vs. the number of English-speaking people in the workplace, and the Amish workers’ choice of language in these settings. Therefore, the informants were asked about the language environment in which they are engaged in at work. Noteworthy is that only one farmer participated in the study. When the work environment was discussed, the farming man and the women, who work exclusively as homemakers, responded that they normally do not work together with other people at all and have for that reason not been included in the results. The results of the remaining OOA men and women are illustrated in figures 7.6 to 7.13.

Although the past three decades have seen radical changes in the way the majority of the OOA earn their living, the Amish have so far been able to survive by adjusting in ways that have helped them preserve their specific culture. This is where social networks, which support the interaction with other Amish people, have played a vital role (cf. chapter 6.5). Meyers notes: “Such networks prevent the Amish from being stranded in a non-Amish environment for an extended period of time . . ., Amish friendship networks on the job and in the community consist primarily of other Amish people. These networks of ethnicity reinforce and help to preserve
"Amish culture" (Meyers 1994: 179). These networks not only support the preservation of culture but also the language. The connection between off-farm work and language choice is intertwined with the linguistic competence of the interlocutor and the different communicative networks in which s/he is involved. According to Hartman Keiser (2001) and Kraybill (2004), regardless of gender and age the majority of OOA engaged in a business enterprise, is working in a setting which is quite favorable to speaking PG. It is typically a small setting that primarily employs the immediate and extended family, Amish friends, and neighbors. This study (figures 7.6 to 7.9) corroborate Kraybill’s and Hartman Keiser’s data, which affirm that an overwhelming majority of the OOA men and women who work in non-farming occupations work in small settings (<5 Amish employed). Especially interesting is the fact that all men who are working as part time farmers and supplement their income by part time work, work in a small workplace (<5 Amish employed), figure 7-6, whereas the Amish who have abandoned farming altogether and whose employment consists exclusively of work off the farm at times found work in somewhat larger workplaces (<15 Amish workers/employees), figure 7-7.

Figure 7-6.
Number of OOA employed where the part farmers/off-farm workers of different ages work

Figure 7-7.
Number of OOA employed where the off-farm workers/men of different ages work
Figures 7-8 and 7-9 reveal a similar pattern for women. All women but one responded that they work in settings with fewer than five Amish employed.

![Figure 7-8. Number of OOA employed where the part time homemakers/off-farm workers of different ages work](image1)

![Figure 7-9. Number of OOA employed where the off-farm workers/women of different ages work](image2)

Although figures 7-6 to 7-9 did not show very surprising results but merely confirmed what other research has already revealed, some of the results shown in figures 7-10 - 7-13 are bit more unanticipated. The study explicitly shows that not only do all the men work with a small number of other Amish but the number of English-speaking work mates is small (<5) as well (figures 7-10 and 7-11). The women who are part time homemakers/off-farm workers show a similar pattern. They also work in smaller businesses/enterprises, <5 people, (figure 7-12). These results were to be expected since the OOA do prefer smaller work settings, which help them preserve the Amish way of life. However, the older women (58-77) have found jobs in settings with many (>16) English-speaking people (figure 7-13).

Amish women stated in conversations with the researcher that they work more frequently together with other Amish women. An Amish woman in her fifties commented: “We are three...
generations of Amish women working in the store.” However, the tabulated data show that the women work together with as many Amish as “English” women (cf. figures 7-8 and 7-9 to 7-12 and 7-13).

The study also shows that the majority of the Amish male informants work (although the workplace may be small in size) together with almost as many “English” coworkers as Amish work mates (cf. figures 7-6 and 7-7 to 7-10 and 7-11).

Figure 7-10. Number of “English” working where the part time farmers/off-farm workers of different ages are employed

Figure 7-11. Number of “English working where the off-farm workers/men of different ages are employed
Regardless of with whom the Amish work, the setting in which they work remains small. It is the kind of work setting which paves the way for a dense, multiplex network structure. Such a network does not only put social pressure on its members but it also has the ability to protect and prevent the heritage language from changing (cf. 6.2.1). By default the language of the workplace for many of the Amish in the study is PG.

Church leaders within the OOA church discourage interaction in excess with the “English,” which they argue could be detrimental for the Amish way of life. Therefore, these work relationships are hardly ever developed and are thus weaker and much less multiplex than the interactions among the Amish themselves. Nevertheless, as soon as there are “English” in the workplace, the preferred language will inevitably be English. Regardless of whether the English-speaking person knows how to speak PG, the preferred language is English. To the Amish, PG is a marker of Amish identity and belongs to the OOA community, separating them from the rest of the world. According to the Amish, knowledge of PG does not make a person Amish. Therefore,
the language for outsiders is English. That this is true is revealed in the following statement given by an Amish man who works in a large woodworking shop:

There are mostly Amish like me working in the shop but there are two, sometimes three “English” fellas working there as well. When they are there uh . . . two of them work full time, you see . . . so they ARE there almost all the time, but also when suppliers or distributors are visiting, we always talk English. That’s just the way we do it, you know. At work we talk a bit, but that’s it. We don’t join them after work for a movie or a beer . . . That wouldn’t be acceptable, you know.

This is just one example of many when English is spoken in the workplace. Therefore, the notion that English is frequently spoken in the workplace with English-speaking coworkers must be regarded as a potential catalyst to a possible change in language behavior of the OOA. But is it the only catalyst?

It is easy to forget that there are other people besides the OOA who speak PG. The informants were asked if there are any non-Amish PG-speaking people in their workplace with whom they communicate in PG. A very small number of informants responded to this question, and only five responded in the affirmative (three men and two women). Since the number of respondents is small and thus insignificant, the respondents’ answers have been deemed statistically unpredictable and not been taken into account. Therefore, the study had to consider other possible catalysts outside the workplace.

### 7.3 Language-contact Situations outside the Workplace

Of importance to this study is to determine how often the informants interact with other Amish outside their immediate family as well as with the “English.” Table 7-1 reveals some interesting, though not very surprising results. The traditional OOA way of life has emphasized farming with a high level of self-sufficiency. When farming fathers work together with their sons and their extended family, friends, and neighbors in the fields they share a common language.
The language used on the farm is PG. This study shows that the farmer who is working in the fields by himself or with the help of family members is one of the few informants whose interaction with other OOA outside the immediate family is limited to a weekly basis. This is easily explained by the fact that, as a farmer without a roadside stand, he does not have the need to interact with other people outside the farm on a regular basis.

On the other hand, all but one of the middle-aged part time farmers interacts daily with other Amish people outside their immediate family. The picture is the same among the Amish working exclusively as off-farm workers. The majority are in daily interaction with other Amish, who do not belong to their immediate family. This is an illustration of the frequency with which the Amish have an opportunity to interact with other PG-speaking people. The Amish under investigation may not be aware of these interactions being a positive influence for maintaining their own language but it undoubtedly aids in the language preservation. That the interviewed Amish men look upon their native language in a positive way is revealed in the following statement given by a part time farmer/carpenter in his forties: “I speak English a lot in my line of business, and I know it well. But it’s when I speak Amish with my fellow Amish men... THAT’S when I feel like people understand me.”
Table 7-1. Frequency in contact with Amish outside the immediate family, according to male participants of different occupations and ages

Table 7-2 illustrates the results of the women informants. It confirms that the majority of women, regardless of age and occupation, interact with Amish people outside their immediate family on a daily basis. This is especially true among the homemakers. Many of these women state that they normally go to market once a week or talk to their neighbors, who are frequently Amish, quite often. Thus, they have contact with other PG-speaking people on a regular basis. The following is the answer of a young homemaker in her thirties when asked about how often she interacts with her fellow Amish outside the immediate family: “It’s not like we live in total
isolation, you know. Many “English” seem to think so. I talk to my neighbors every day when I’m out in the yard.”

However, it is also worth noticing that more women than men have less-frequent contact with other Amish and might only be in touch with other Amish on a weekly basis (cf. table 7-1) whereas men’s interaction with other Amish is normally more frequent, often on a daily basis. This is not surprising, since these women are homemakers with many children, and do not have the same opportunity as the men to get out of the home and interact with people outside the farm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation/Age</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Several times a month</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homemakers, 18-37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemakers, 38-57</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemakers, 58-77</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Part time homem./off-farm workers, 18-37</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time homem./off-farm workers, 58-77</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-farm workers/women, 18-37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-farm worker/women, 38-57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-farm workers/women, 58-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7-2. Frequency in contact with Amish outside the immediate family, according to female participants of different occupations and ages
Table 7-2 is also an illustration that part time homemakers/off-farm workers interact slightly less than homemakers with other Amish. This is most likely an indication that, as business women or women working outside the home, they have an increased interaction with English-speaking people instead.

The only informant who responded that she did not interact with other Amish on a daily or weekly basis is an older woman who works in a large commercial kitchen. In her response she stated that only seldom does she speak to other PG-speaking people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation/Age</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Several times a month</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farmers, 18-37</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farmers, 38-57</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Farmer, 58-77</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part time farmers/off-farm workers, 18-37</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part time farmer/off-farm workers, 38-57</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part time farmers/off-farm workers, 58-77</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Off-farm workers/men, 18-37</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Off-farm worker/men, 38-57</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Off-farm workers/men, 58-77</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7-3. Frequency in contact with the “English”, according to male participants of different occupations and ages
For centuries the primary interlocutors to the OOA were other Amish within the community, and only rarely were they in contact with English-speaking people. However, because of the socioeconomic changes that have taken place in recent years, it is to be assumed that the contact with the “English” is almost as frequent as that with other Amish men and women. That this assumption holds true is illustrated by table 7-3, which indicates that the single farmer participating in the study is the only one who is linguistically more isolated than the other informants participating in the study. According to table 7-1, not only does the farmer interact with other Amish only on a weekly basis, his interaction with English-speaking people is limited to the family’s visits to town or public places like the doctor’s or dentist’s office. The farmer lets the researcher know that visits to public places only happen on rare occasions, no more than once or twice a month (cf. table 7-3). With such limited language contact with other Amish people in general, but more specifically with English-speaking people, the likelihood that this man will shift from his native language to English in the foreseeable future is very slim. In his comments the farmer explains his lack of contact with the “English” by saying: ”I am a farmer. I work on the farm. I’m rather self-sufficient. I like it that way. I don’t need to run into town every time I need something. I can wait.”

Table 7-1 should be compared to table 7-3. The two tables illustrate very interesting results: that the part time farmers’/off-farm workers’ interaction with the “English” is almost as frequent as their interaction with other Amish. This is significant in that the frequent contact with the outside English-speaking world, although not in any way as multiplex or dense as that of PG, does affect the Amish choice of language. An Amish man in his fifties, who still farms but is also the proprietor of a relatively large grocery store, was asked what language he speaks when he comes home to his family after a day in the store: “I try . . . but it’s hard. I speak much more
English at home than I should . . . and what I used to. After a long day in the shop, it’s easy to just carry on in English. I think we speak seventy to eighty percent Dutch at home. I don’t know.” However, the Amish who responded that they speak English on a daily or weekly basis do speak English not only with customers in their store, at their roadside stand, or other home-based enterprises but also, as previously mentioned, many times with their English-speaking coworkers, suppliers, and distributors. For some, in particular the informants who live along US Rt. 30 east of Lancaster in the vicinity of the small town of Intercourse and work exclusively in off-farm occupations, the influx of and interaction with English-speaking tourists is great.

Table 7-3 indicates that the majority of off-farm workers, regardless of age, interact daily with English-speaking people, which is a confirmation that the intensity with which the interaction between the Amish and English-speaking population occurs has increased. This is not surprising since many of their products and services cater to the English-speaking market, not only to the locals, but maybe to an even greater number of tourists. This development must be regarded as detrimental to the language maintenance efforts of PG since tourists speak almost exclusively English and converse with the Amish in that language.
Table 7-4. Frequency in contact with the “English”, according to female participants of different occupations and ages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation/Age</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Several times a month</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Homemakers, 18-37</td>
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<td>Homemakers, 38-57</td>
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<td>Homemakers, 58-77</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Part time homem./off-farm workers, 18-37</td>
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<td>Part time homem./off-farm workers, 38-57</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time homem./off-farm workers, 58-77</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Off-farm workers/women, 18-37</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Off-farm worker/women, 38-57</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-farm workers/women, 58-77</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The assumption that the majority of homemakers, regardless of age, do not have an opportunity to speak English as frequently as other groups is corroborated by the data in table 7-4. The majority (twenty) of the total number of informants indicate that their interaction with English-speaking people is no more than on a weekly basis. A homemaker in her thirties said: “I speak English when I go to market or when I’m in town . . . usually once a week.” That “going to market” seems to be the time when homemakers have an opportunity to speak English was corroborated by two other homemakers, who nodded their heads in agreement.
The data in table 7-4 show a different picture for part time homemakers/off-farm workers. The middle-aged women (38-57) are the ones typically involved in different business ventures, and more than half of these women speak English on a daily basis as the following experience of two women in their mid-fifties shows. One of the women, who sell produce at a roadside stand, made the following comment:

I shouldn’t say this, you know, but we just don’t speak Dutch anymore. I’d lie if I said we did. I’d say we speak maybe eighty percent Dutch. We speak much more English than we used to, you know, but not as much as many other families. In some families they hardly speak Dutch to their kids anymore . . . . I catch myself sometimes when I speak English to my own kids.

The other woman, also in her mid-fifties, sells produce at a market two or three days a week and made the following comment:

I speak much more English than I used to. When I am at market I speak English every day, all day, also with my kids . . . most of the time. Dutch still comes easier to me, though. And I don’t speak as much English as some families do, you know. I know for a fact, that a small part of the Amish families . . . maybe ten percent, don’t speak Dutch at all. I know a family that owns a small business and comes to market with us. Their children don’t speak Dutch at all. Can you believe that?

Their comments are quite remarkable in that they speak of the duration and intensity with which they interact with the “English” and how it obviously, although the connection is not multiplex, has had an impact upon how much English they speak with their children.

Table 7-4 is also a suggestion that half of the older women (58-77) who work outside the home in some capacity and participated in the study interact with their fellow coworkers in English on a daily basis. The off-farm working women are the same women who are employed in settings with a larger number of English-speaking people; more than 16 people (cf. figure 7-13). The duration and intensity with which these women interact with the “English” is
significant. One of the women admitted to speaking almost exclusively in English, not only to the “English” but also to her fellow Amish.

Tables 7-3 and 7-4 indicate the widespread frequency with which Amish men and women interact with English-speaking people. The figures confirm that the frequency in which this happens is quite extensive. Hence, for this study it is important to determine if the primary domain for the usage of PG, the Amish home, has been impacted by the increased usage of English outside the family, primarily in business transactions.

7.4 English Influence on Pennsylvania German Spoken in the Home

During the field study, the researcher found that the OOA – regardless of age, gender, and occupation – were using their native PG actively around their community. At the same time, they generate much of their new English vocabulary and concepts as a response to the social, cultural, and economic developments going on in English-speaking mainstream society surrounding them. Many of these new words and concepts are used in interactions in public, but there is no doubt that many of the same words and concepts have entered into the private sphere of the OOA.

Hostetler (1993) acknowledged that among the OOA, those who are most likely to use English in domains that have previously been reserved for PG are the innovators, the ones who are usually crowding the fence. In OOA society, the fence crowders are frequently the people who have started their own businesses. For the OOA in Lancaster County, one’s occupation seemed to be the most important factor determining the amount of English spoken in the domain of the home. Romaine (2001) notes, that the failure to maintain the home domain for the usage of one’s native language has been critical for a shift in languages. A total of eight Amish (five men and three women) were revisited after the initial interview, two and sometimes three times. This
was done as an attempt to determine if there were any internal factors in the home that contributed specifically to the maintenance and/or shift of the heritage language. In the domain of the home the researcher observed the Amish men and women’s language use as well as attitudes toward the language. If no internal factors were found, it all had to be external. Therefore, during the interview with these informants they were asked about how much of their conversation at home they think is in Dutch. Half of the informants responded that they still speak close to one hundred percent PG at home whereas the remaining half responded that approximately seventy-five percent of all conversations that takes place in their home is in PG. Noteworthy but not surprising is the fact that all of the revisited informants, who replied that they speak English in the domain of their homes, spend much of their time in an environment, such as the workplace, in which English is the dominant language. However, these families do not consider themselves to be the worst “offenders.” Instead they perceive the younger generation and other families to be the big delinquents. They are the ones who use English to such a large extent that it pushes their own native language aside. The following comments were heard from a couple, a farmer/off-farm worker in his fifties and a homemaker/off-farm worker, also in her fifties, when asked about how much of their conversation at home takes place in English: The husband: “Oh, yes, nowadays we speak much more English at home . . . and my children speak more English with their children than we EVER did with ours.” His wife’s comment: “We speak much more English than we used to, but not as much as many other families. I do catch myself sometimes . . . speaking English to my kids, I mean.”

Another Amish man in his fifties, who speaks English more frequently in the home domain than he used to, is not worried about his own language behavior but that of his children, who he thinks speak “a dreadful PG” because of how their jobs take them into the outside world:
I know I speak more English nowadays, but I’m sure I can avoid speaking it at home and speak Dutch instead. But I’m not so sure about my kids, who work construction and help out in a restaurant. They hear English all day long . . . Well, so do I . . . but there is a big difference. I heard Dutch for so many years before I went into business and started speaking English regularly. My kids, on the other hand, kinda grew into it, without having the . . . what do you call it . . . uh, foundation in Dutch. So, I’m worried about them losing the language.

A language is in danger when its speakers no longer pass it onto the next generation. Today many speech communities of minority languages are threatened, and their languages will not survive unless maintenance efforts are encouraged. This means that ultimately, language maintenance or shift is a function of the decision and the behavior of the speakers of the language in question. This is captured most clearly by Fishman’s (1991) term *intergenerational transfer*. If every generation passes on the language to the next, the language survives. If it does not, it will be in the danger zone. This is very much a family issue. It is about what language parents use when speaking to their children. In this study, all informants support the continued use of PG in their homes, and they also appear to recognize the importance of intergenerational transfer for continued use of their mother tongue. Therefore, they must aspire to be more persistent in their own homes and insist on their children and grandchildren speaking PG. One of the female informants, in her forties responded:

> Our little chat has been an eye-opener for me. As you can see for yourself, my kids answer me as much in English as in Dutch . . . but from now on I will insist on my children speaking to me in Dutch. If they don’t do that, I’ll certainly reprimand them.

Because of intergenerational transfer and continued use of the language in the home domain, this father and grandfather in his fifties is confident that PG has a chance of survival. His response expresses very strong feelings toward his native PG and the wish to try to maintain it when he said:
I know I speak much more English at home with my wife, and I’m not happy about it; but I will speak Dutch with my grandkids for sure because to learn Dutch at a very young age is easy. English will be easy for them to learn once they go to school and are out in the world. But they are born Amish, so they need to learn Dutch first. I don’t know about other people, but I think that if we teach them Dutch when they are very young, they won’t as easily abandon their language as they need to use it to speak with us. So, everything depends on the parents really. If they speak Dutch to their children, the children will always speak Dutch, I think . . . I hope.

Despite such a positive outlook, it cannot be guaranteed that PG will be maintained and ultimately survive without the cooperation of the grandchildren’s generation amid the area of globalization and increased use of information technology, which they encounter to an ever-larger degree when they are forced off the farm and into other forms of non-farming occupations. In other words, while people from the grandparents’ and parents’ generation may strongly believe that the heritage language will be maintained as long as they keep speaking it to their children, the language may not survive if the grandchildren’s generation does not continue in the same fashion. It is a fact that Amish children, when they enter first grade, do know more English than did previous generations.

7.5 Is Language Use in Amish Schools in a State of Flux?

Since half of the Amish informants responded that they do indeed use more English in their homes than was previously the case, but also because of their responses that their children and grandchildren speak English more frequently at home than they, the older generations, ever did, it is of great interest to this study to discern how much English the informants in the different age cohorts had mastered when they entered first grade. Huffines (1980) notes that the majority of her Old Order informants mentioned struggling in first grade because they had not learned any English before entering first grade. Just as in previous generations OOA children acquire PG as their first language, but in this day and age, according
to Keiser (2002: 259) most preschoolers in Ohio have a passive knowledge of English and “those
with older siblings in school . . . are effectively fluent bilinguals by the time they enter first
grade.” It is to be assumed that the same is true for Lancaster County.

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Table 7-5. Male participants’ knowledge of English when starting school, according to different occupations and age
The responses are illustrated in tables 7-5 and 7-6. The data indicate that, in general, the majority of both men and women, regardless of age and occupation, responded that they possessed at least some knowledge of English when they entered first grade although some of the informants replied that what they knew was “very little.” An older homemaker (58-77) made the following comment when asked if she knew any English when she went off to school for the first time:

Very little. My children knew more, and my grandchildren even more. They spoke English very well. Some children still don’t speak English when they go to school. It’s rare, but it happens. It depends on where you live, really.
Noteworthy is also that many women, when filling out the questionnaire, answered in the affirmative. However, when they commented on the same question, they humbly responded “but I knew very little,” and then continued by giving an account of what the situation is like today instead of talking about what their own situation was like when they were children. In this day and age, the Amish believe that their children must be able to use English as correctly and effortlessly as they use PG in preparation for a life in which many of them will find work outside their own community among the “English” (Johnson-Weiner 2007). Huffines (1980) notes that some informants admit to teaching their children some English words to make the transition to school easier since Amish schoolteachers try to speak exclusively English in the classroom. Johnson-Weiner (2007: 87) notes that among various Old Order groups and the very conservative Swartzentrubers, children are told that “English has its place.” Two young Amish women (18-37) commented on the present-day situation by making the following observations when asked the aforementioned question: “In some schools they even speak English during recess. We never did. In school I still spoke more Dutch than English.” The other young woman made the following observation: “Today, in some schools, the kids speak English all the time, even during recess in the playground. The woman’s daughter, who is in eighth grade and too young to participate in the study, was sitting at the same table with her mother during the interview and corroborated what her mother had just articulated when she commented:

We talk English most of the time in school, not just in class but also in the playground during recess . . . I know, I shouldn’t be doing it, but many times I talk English with my friends, not just in school, but when we get together and uh . . . play or do something after school.
This comment is significant in that the teenage girl confirms that even when she is communicating with peers who belong to the same dense, multiplex network as she, she regularly speaks English.

Significant about the responses is also that a much larger number of women than men, especially among the middle-aged (38-57) group, who are part time homemakers/off-farm workers responded in the affirmative. They stated that they had baby-sat “English” children and, as a result, had picked up English before going off to school. A woman in her thirties commented: “I’ve always loved children, so when our “English” neighbors asked me if I wanted to babysit their little baby girl . . . of course I said YES! I didn’t know any English then, you know. But, by playing with her, I picked up my first English words.” The same women are also the ones who are the most vocal about how their families as well as other people within the OOA community speak too much English these days (cf. quotes in section 7.6). Is it possible that this early exposure to English-speaking people makes these women feel more comfortable going into business and dealing with the English-speaking world on a regular basis?

On the other hand, in this study as many women as men responded that they did not possess any knowledge of English when they entered first grade. The data collected in the study support studies conducted by Huffines (1980) and Moelleken (1983), in which they discovered that, in general, the older siblings in an Amish family used to possess very limited knowledge of English or none at all when they started school, whereas the younger siblings’ knowledge of English was rather good, since they had heard their older siblings speak English. This is corroborated by quite a few comments made by the informants in this study, who were the oldest child in their family: For instance, an Amish man in his seventies commented in the following way: “I didn’t know ANY English when I went to school. Many of my classmates knew some . .
and I struggled for a bit . . . but after a couple of months it was much better.” An Amish homemaker in her twenties made a similar comment:

I’m the oldest child in my family, so when I went off to school I didn’t know any English. I struggled quite a bit, and I had the feeling everybody knew some English but me. And I still don’t feel real comfortable speaking English because I’m not sure I use the right words. Dutch comes much easier to me.

Comments that merely confirm what Huffines (1980) and Moelleken (1983) had already discovered were also heard from informants, when asked if they knew English when they started school, who are the younger siblings in their family. In the present study an Amish off-farm worker in his thirties responded:

I knew it from my older brothers and sisters. I’m one of the younger ones in my family. When I saw my brothers and sisters work on their homework, I wanted to do that too. I kinda learned English by watching my brothers and sisters. It just happened. So, when I finally went to school, I already knew English.

The issue of knowing English before going off to school is closely related to whether or not the informants want their children to learn PG and English equally well or if they have a preference for one language over the other. The eight informants that were revisited all responded that both languages are of equal importance to them. Without indicating a preference for either language, a shop owner in his forties justifies his thinking in such a way as the following quote illustrates:

I think it’s important for the kids to keep Dutch, but learn English for school. It’s important to work with the kids at home to try to keep Dutch. It’s very important that the parents talk Dutch in their homes. If we don’t teach them at home where are they gonna learn it? We have to be role models, and we have to do it NOW . . . before we lose more than we already have. We speak much more English at home than just ten years ago.
Two part time homemakers/off-farm workers in their fifties made the following observations:

They need to know English so they understand what’s being said and done in school. I don’t think they would be content with knowing only Dutch. I want them to speak both Dutch and English. They need to know both. After all, everybody around us speaks English.

I do want them to speak Dutch and English. They’ve gotta speak both. After all, everybody around speaks English. Every Wednesday the kids have German in school, but I think it’s important for the parents to read in German on the in-between Sundays.

It is important to remember that the older-generation Amish attended regular public schools until the mid-1950s, when the consolidation of public schools was gaining momentum (Kraybill 1989). The teachers in the public schools were all “English” with no knowledge of PG. Thus, the Amish children of that era were forced to speak English all day while in school. When these students graduated from eighth grade and went to work, the majority worked as farmers and used PG while working with their extended family on the farm. The older generation went from speaking primarily PG at home as children, to speaking English in school, to switching back to PG at work, thus strengthening the ties to the network of extended family, friends, and neighbors and the language they all shared – Pennsylvania German. To the OOA higher education has always been viewed as undermining the tradition of farm work, luring the Amish youth away from life in the country to careers in the city (Stine 1942). Hence, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Amish refused to send their children to the consolidated schools any longer and began building their own parochial schools. They wanted their children to be taught in local schools with their own Amish teachers, where they would not be taught subjects such as science (evolution and sex education) and physical education and where they would also not be exposed to worldly values such as individualism, competition and materialism. Although the language of
instruction was and still is English, the rest of the time PG is the language used for communication.

Contrary to the older generation when, after graduating from eighth grade, the majority went to work with their fathers, brothers, and extended family on the farm, the majority of the younger generation of Amish join the work force, not on the farm, but working off the farm. Many times they work with other OOA, but almost as often they work with the “English” and thus communicate largely in English (cf. figures 7-6 – 7-7 and 7-10 – 7-11). Hence, as the older generation’s educational experience was all in English, it was counteracted by work experience in PG, which clearly facilitated the maintenance of PG. However, with the younger generation the reverse is true. The educational experience, added to the work experience, makes it more difficult to maintain PG in the same way.

7.6 Young People’s Perception of PG, Seen through the Eyes of the Old Folks

The ways people use and perceive their native language encourage the maintenance or shift thereof. Do they perceive their language to be a good language to know or not? As the minority group becomes increasingly fluent in the language of mainstream society, it has a tendency to use its own heritage language less and may even consider it inferior. This is, in particular, the case among younger people. According to Huffines (1980: 45) “such perceptions can lead to a conscious or unconscious decision as to whether or not to learn a language or to speak it to one’s children.

Of all language-use features, intergenerational transfer of the mother tongue is the most prominent maintenance feature. The best chance a minority language has to be maintained is if it is intergenerationally transmitted (Fishman 1990, 1991, 2001a). Throughout the generations, the OOA have spent almost all time together as a family working and playing together and thus
passing on their heritage language from one generation to the next. However, in the last few decades the intergenerational transmission has become somewhat inconsistent as it is influenced by the dominant language, English. The main reason for that is that some family members spend much of their time working in places where English is spoken. Therefore, not only is language use important to encourage maintenance but also the perception and attitudes people have of the language they speak. Positive attitudes within a group may not lead to language maintenance, but they may slow language shift; on the other hand, negative attitudes almost certainly lead to diminishing efforts in trying actively to maintain the language (Romaine, 1994)

Language attitude is by Crystal (1997: 215) defined as: "The feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others" (cf. chapter 3.9). The feelings the OOA have for the languages they speak are generally strong. This became clear when discussing what immense pressure the dominant English language is placing on PG. The parents and grandparents generations seemed not only to be in favor of maintaining PG but also to be very keen on having their children and grandchildren speak both languages (cf. section 7.4). But, what do the young people think? What are their attitudes toward their heritage language? Since they are the ones who will eventually pass on the language to the next generation, it is imperative to determine whether the young people themselves are interested in speaking PG. If the adolescents have no desire and do not even like to speak PG, the language is in greater peril of not being maintained than previously believed. Or are the positive attitudes toward the heritage language so strong that, in turn, it will encourage people to maintain and transfer the language in its present form to future generations?

Unfortunately, this study is, because of research-protection constraints, somewhat limited and does not cover any responses from informants under the age of eighteen. This is a
disadvantage since the answers are not obtained from the people most qualified to answer these questions, the youth themselves. Instead, the answers are given by adult informants, whose observation of the youths’ attitudes toward their language is merely second hand, but better than none at all. Five men and three women between the ages of eighteen and seventy-seven were questioned as to whether young people in their community (without being given any further explanation to the definition of the word young) like to speak PG. The results of the tabulated data were very interesting in that there was a one hundred percent affirmation that young people like to speak their native PG. Although positive language attitudes are expressed explicitly by all informants, when they started elaborating on the issue at hand, their responses regarding young people’s attitudes and perception toward their native language were much more negative than earlier documented in the tabulated data. One man in his fifties, who owns a large craft store, made the following comment: “They [the young folks] want to be ‘bigger’ than they are. They get together, and they speak ONLY English; but once they are married, most of them TRY to speak Dutch. We have to tell them not to speak English all the time.” Another man, also in his fifties, expressed almost the same sentiment as he responded:

I think the young like it [PG], but they think they are somehow, uh . . . I think, better than others and . . . what’s the word, uh . . . more sophisticated when they speak English. So many young folks work off the farm and speak English all the time, even at home.

That English is spoken in domains previously reserved for PG is not a one-time occurrence, but it happens regularly and is illustrated in the following comment given by a man in his thirties, who owns a print shop and considers himself to belong to the “young folks.”

I think they [the young folks] want to learn it, but when they work with the “English” and interact with the “English,” it’s easier to go on in English, you know. I know families
who speak mostly English at home. I wish I didn’t, but I also speak a lot of English at home . . . . After a long day at work it just comes easier to me.

The two remaining informants, one in his forties the other one in his fifties, expressed the same views when they responded: “Yes, but they [the young] are influenced by the ‘English,’ and more and more people speak English almost all the time,” and “Yes, they [the young folks] do [like to speak PG], but they still use English more and more.” This last statement is almost identical to the one given by a homemaker/off-farm worker in her late thirties:

Yes, they [the young folks] – well, maybe I should say “we” – like to speak Dutch, but we speak English more and more, not only in the shop but also at home when we come home from the shop and the kids come home from school. I shouldn’t say this but I hear the kids talk to each other in English all the time . . . Sometimes, I tell them they can’t do that, and they switch to Dutch for a while, but after a couple of minutes they are back talking English again . . . It’s not easy, you know, but I . . . never mind.

This is the point when the Amish woman most likely realizes that maybe she has revealed too much to someone who is not part of her own community and stops in the middle of a sentence.

Another woman in her forties, who is a homemaker, was even more open and expressive:

I think they do [want to speak Dutch], but it’s just so easy to speak English and be like the rest of the world. They [the young folks] try to speak Dutch when they get married, but it’s difficult to do, you see. So many young couples go on in English when they are married. When they have kids, they DO try to speak Dutch, but sometimes it’s just too hard . . . . when you work out on construction all day . . . or do roofing or siding all day . . . together with the “English,” and the only language you hear is English . . . . It’s just too hard.

A part time homemaker/off-farm worker in her fifties did not only see off-farm work as detrimental to the maintenance of PG but believes that the negative influence starts much earlier, at the “singings,” which Amish young people usually attend on Sunday afternoons and evenings.
to sing “fast songs.”\textsuperscript{21} Although some conversation is in PG, she suggests that most of the conversation is in English at the Sunday-night singings. That she believes “singings” are the culprit is clear by the following comment:

Yes, they want to [speak PG], but they go to singings where they speak only English. During the “rumspringa” they join crowds where . . . maybe forty percent speak only English and they work with the “English” in construction and stores. . . and speak English all day. They come home after a long day, and they just go on in English. They don’t realize what they are losing . . . . It’s a privilege to be able to speak Dutch. In the southern part of the county [Lancaster], they are plainer than us and don’t speak English as much as the young folks around here.

That young people’s language preference cannot be dismissed but needs to be taken very seriously in the maintenance efforts of PG within the OOA community is obvious when considering Johnson-Weiner’s (1992) study of OOA people in upstate New York, where she was told by a bishop: “You keep the young folk if you keep the Amish speech, if you keep the mother’s speech” (1992: 35). According to the Amish participating in this study, the desire among the young to preserve the language is real. However, external factors like singings and jobs off the farm pull them in the direction of English. If the Amish youth speak English during the singings, together with other fellow Amish, as well as during the rumspringa, when they establish interpersonal relationships with non-Amish youth, it is without any doubt that English is gaining ground among these young people. The density and multiplexity of the social networks to which they belong do not seem to completely protect them from outside influences. Instead, during this period of time the youth have in many instances adopted English as their language of choice. Generally, the interactions and friendships with the non-Amish are drastically reduced when rumspringa is over, and it is time to join the church; but some find it

\textsuperscript{21} Fast songs are more modern, and include a wide variety of influences from African American and British music in comparison to older Amish hymns, which are sung langsame Weise, featuring drawn-out tones.
difficult to give up speaking English, especially if they maintain their contacts and sometimes even friendships with the non-Amish in the adult years.

7.7 Code-switching among the Old Order Amish

Code-switching, the alternate use of two languages in the same utterance is a well-known phenomenon in multilingual communities and has a number of implications for the maintenance and shift of a language. When a language is threatened, the amount of code-switching usually increases dramatically, with the threatened language incorporating features from the contact language (Crystal 2000). Although the existence of code-switching has often been cited as a factor leading to language death, in some cases it is a positive force in maintaining multilingualism (Myers-Scotton 1982). Code-switching is relevant to the study of language use among the OOA because of its important implications for language maintenance and shift. Although code-switching occurs quite frequently among the OOA, it is not employed by all speakers or in all contexts. It may be used to underline authority but also to communicate friendship, family bonding, and identity (Baker and Prys and Jones 1998), which can be observed in some of the answers given. The *Ordnung* prescribes the use of PG. But, at the same time, it does not proscribe the use of English when talking about certain topics, when quoting the “English,” or when outsiders are present. If code-switching occurs when an OOA person is conversing with someone who speaks a different language, code-switching does not point to language shift. However, the process may suggest a shift away from the heritage language if the OOA frequently switch to English when communicating among themselves. Therefore, two types of code-switching can be detected in the speech of the OOA in Lancaster County, intersentential and intra-sentential. The former refers to a switch at a clause or sentence boundary,
where each clause or sentence is in one language or the other. The latter involves a switch within a clause, sentence, and sometimes within word boundaries (Poplack 1980).

The results of the responses received to this question are illustrated in figures 7-14 and 7-15. They show such striking conformity among the different occupational cohorts that these have become redundant and thus omitted. Instead, two gender-specific cohorts (men and women) have been created. In these cohorts the age divisions have been maintained to become better aware of the generational differences. The same method of illustrating the results has also been used in figures 7-16, 7-17, 7-18, 7-19, 7-20 and 7-21, as well as in tables 7-9 and 7-10. Still, the researcher found it important to give the reader an idea about some of the informants’ thoughts on the matter by including a number of comments given by the informants, belonging to the different age and occupational cohorts, in the text.
Figures 7-14 and 7-15 clearly show that the majority of men as well as women sometimes switch to English when speaking PG. This is consistent with what is also to be assumed when studying the data for the different occupational groups. It turns out that the only farmer in the study is the informant who recognizes that he never switches to English. This is also the same informant who only a few times a month interacts with the “English” (cf. table 7-3). Therefore, the assumption has to be made that his social network almost exclusively consists of extended family and some Amish friends and neighbors with whom he speaks PG without ever switching languages. Also worth mentioning is the fact that the only informant who responded that she switches to English all the time is a part time homemaker/off–farm worker. Through her line of work at a market she acknowledges not only that she is in almost daily contact with the “English” but also that she switches languages quite frequently and even seem to be a bit concerned about it:

I think I speak more English than Dutch nowadays. Sometimes I know I say something in Dutch but in the middle of the sentence I switch to English, just like that [snapping her fingers]. I don’t know why I do it, you know, but I just do. Sometimes, I do it the other way around and say something in English and end the sentence in Dutch. I think that
happens more often when I talk to people I know well, like my family. I guess I catch myself talking a language I shouldn’t be talking. Sometimes I even think I’m losing both languages.

In response to the follow-up question regarding, with whom they are engaged in conversation when they switch from PG to English, only a total of seven informants – four men and three women – responded. It is not unexpected that in their responses, five of these informants answered that they sometimes switch languages when they speak to Amish workmates, suppliers, distributors, and customers. An Amish storekeeper in his fifties commented in the following way:

The other day I had some problems with my cash register, and I asked my repair guy who is Plain like me what to do about it. When he came, we talked a little about how things are going in general . . . in Dutch, but as soon as we started talking about the cash register, we switched to English. There ain’t no good words in Dutch for a machine like that.

This switch is not so remarkable, taking into consideration the fact that the Amish man is working in a field with new technology, for which there are no PG words. What is more surprising is that all seven informants very readily admitted to switching sometimes when speaking with family members, Amish friends, and neighbors. Nevertheless, for these informants, PG is still the dominant language for communication with family and friends.

Interestingly, the results in figures 7-16 and 7-17 reveal very similar results to those in the previous question. The majority of informants responded that they sometimes switch from English to PG. Thus, similar to what other researchers such as Hufffines (1980) and Moelleken (1983) have already discovered, the OOA switch rather freely between their two languages. A middle-aged homemaker’s response: “As soon as I know that the English-speaking person I am talking to knows Dutch, I talk Dutch to her. Many times we go back and forth [between PG and English].” This response is a little surprising since the Amish recognize PG as part of what it
means to be OOA and many times try to refrain from speaking PG with the “English,” although
the outsider may be a speaker of PG. This behavior is corroborated by Keiser’s (2003) study, in
which he observes the same phenomenon happening in the interaction between employee and
customer in two different Amish-owned shops. This behavior promotes the maintenance of PG in
the community. Nevertheless, the preferred language when speaking to the “English” is
undeniably English.

Closely related to the previous two questions is the follow-up question eight informants
(five men and three women) were asked to ponder during the researcher’s second visit with
them: They were asked to think about times when they used to speak Dutch, but nowadays they
use English in those circumstances instead. All but one male informant answered not only
affirmatively to the shift in language use but responded with rather lengthy explanations about
where, when, and with whom they speak more English these days. A store owner in his fifties
responded: “I speak much more English at home than I should . . . and what I used to . . . . But
when I get home after a long day in the shop, I kinda forget, and it’s just easier to talk English,
you know.”

Another store owner, also in his fifties, expressed similar views when he remarked:

Nowadays, I think in English, and that’s probably because most of my customers speak
English . . . but also my distributors. My customers are both Amish and “English.” I’d
say as many Amish as “English.” I don’t like that I think in English, but I can’t do
anything about it. English just comes easier to me. I think we have to discipline ourselves
much more not to think and speak English.

This is also the reaction of a woman in her fifties who runs her own roadside stand: “We
speak more English than we used to, but not as much as many other families. Sometimes I catch
myself speaking English to my kids. I didn’t do that ten years ago.” Another woman, also in her
fifties, who sells her produce at the Maryland Market twice, sometimes three times a week, made
almost the same comment: “I use much more English than I used to. When I am at the Maryland Market, I speak English all day. Dutch still comes easier to me, though. I don’t speak as much English as some families, but still . . . I know it’s too much. “

7.8 Pennsylvania German or English – What Is the Their Own Preference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation/Age</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Either one</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers, 18-37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers, 38-57</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers, 58-77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time farmers/off-farm workers, 18-37</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time farmer/off-farm workers, 38-57</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time farmers/off-farm workers, 58-77</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-farm workers/men, 18-37</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-farm worker/men, 38-57</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-farm workers/men, 58-77</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7-7. Language choice among male participants according to different occupations and ages

In the interest of this study on maintenance and shift, it is essential to learn more about the informants’ preferences for English and PG, respectively. If there is no fondness for PG at all the chances of its survival are slim. When studying the results of table 7-7, one is not surprised
that the farmer responded that he prefers to speak PG. Previously (cf. table 7-3), it was determined that he interacts with English-speaking people only sporadically, at the most a few times a month. Table 7-7 also shows, not very surprisingly, that the majority of part time farmers/off-farm workers, as well as off-farm workers regardless of age, would prefer PG in favor of English if they had a choice between the two languages. The consensus among these men who responded that they prefer speaking PG was along the lines: “That’s the language I learned as a child. It’s my mother tongue” (Amish man in his seventies). It’s much easier for me to speak Dutch. It just comes to me” (Amish man in his sixties). It’s my native language (Amish man in his forties). Significant, however, is the fact that a quarter of all off-farm working men responded that it does not matter whether they speak PG or English. In addition, another two informants (off-farm workers) even indicated a preference for English. Especially one response from an off-farm worker in his thirties is rather remarkable: “Well, I’d still speak Dutch with people I know speak Dutch and English with people I know speak English . . . . Nowadays I think in English most of the time, though.” This short remark was the only one the researcher received during her first visit to the Amish man’s print shop. However, the researcher decided to pay this man a second visit. There was a sense that he might have more to say. During the second visit, he was asked if he could think of times when he used to speak PG but these days, in its place, speaks English. The following was his response:

I think in English, and that’s because almost all my customers speak English. When the phone rings, I always speak English. I don’t like that I have started to think in English, but there is really nothing I can do about it. I REALLY try to speak Dutch to my kids, but after a long day in the shop, it’s tough. English just comes easier to me, you know. Too easy . . . We have to be much more disciplined not to think and speak English all the time, or Dutch will disappear faster than we think.
The fact that he thinks in English could be a first indication that he is slowly abandoning his native language. What is also interesting is that he says that he really tries to speak Dutch with his children. During the visit he emphasizes that “I REALLY do try to speak Dutch to my children.” His children are three and five years of age, and during the visit they are in the shop the whole time. At one point he states that his children hardly know any English which the researcher finds hard to believe since their body language indicates an understanding of large parts of the conversation between the informant and the researcher. Unfortunately, because of the study’s research-protection constraints the children’s knowledge of English cannot be tested.

The proprietor of the print shop is a perfect example of someone whose work and interaction with outsiders on the job make it more difficult to maintain PG. The owner is a relatively young man who is working in an off-farm occupation. Although he does not have any employees with whom he converses in English, his whole network of suppliers, distributors, and customers are all English-speaking people, who force him to speak English in whatever interaction he is involved during the day. As his business expands, he spends more and more time working in his business. His growing business is thus an indication of an increased use of the English language as his networks of English-speaking, suppliers, distributors, but especially customers grow stronger and more intense.
The results shown in table 7-8 are perhaps not that surprising, given the fact that women spend most of the time in their homes. Fascinating are the results of the older women (58-77), who prefer English over PG. The assumption needs to be made that the reason for their choice of language is the settings in which they work. Both women work in larger settings (>16 employees) with the majority of workers using English as the language of communication.

Closely related to the issue of language preference is the issue of avoiding speaking PG. This is an issue that was discussed with a selected few informants that were visited a second time. Language etiquette, the unwillingness to speak PG in front of non-speakers of PG, appears
to be the main reason for switching languages, showing preference for one language in particular, in this case English. The informants imply that they feel uncomfortable and even impolite speaking PG, giving responses such as: “Yes, I DO avoid speaking Dutch sometimes, but only if there are English-speaking people around. If someone comes into the store, someone “English” that I know speaks Dutch, I don’t even like speaking Dutch to him. I speak English with him” (owner of a woodworking shop, in his fifties). Another store owner in his fifties commented in the following way:

I avoid speaking Dutch when there are English-speaking people in the store. For example, if I’m speaking Dutch and someone “English” comes into the store, I switch to English. It’s not polite to speak a language others don’t understand. But as soon as a Dutch person comes into the store I speak Dutch. The man you just saw leave the store is “English” but speaks Dutch, and there were no other customers in the store so I spoke Dutch to him.

The only woman (owner of a road side stand, in her forties) who commented on this question responded in a way that reflects the same opinion as that of the Amish men: “I don’t speak Dutch when English-speaking people are around.” These answers reveal that the informants are not intentionally trying to avoid speaking Dutch in interaction with their interlocutors but do it because they do not want to appear impolite in the company of people who do not speak their language. Many times the preference for one particular language also has to do with the advantages the speaker perceives in speaking that language. This is something that will be studied further in the next section.

7.9 The Advantages of Knowing Pennsylvania German

In section 7.8 it became evident that a majority of informants, regardless of age and gender, responded that if they were given the choice of speaking PG or English with anyone at any time, they would choose PG (cf. tables 7-7 and 7-8). This answer does not come as a
surprise, given the sociocultural and religious background of the OOA. Although the majority of the informants opted for PG as the preferred language, do they do so because they find it advantageous to speak it or do they only do so because their *Ordnung* prescribes them to do so? If they do find it to be an advantage to know and speak PG, in what ways has it been an advantage?

![Figure 7-18. Number of OOA male participants according to age, who find PG to be of advantage in their lives.](image1)

![Figure 7-19. Number of OOA female participants according to age, who find PG to be of advantage in their lives.](image2)

The majority, regardless of age and gender, answered favorably (figures 7-18 and 7-19). However, when these informants were asked to elaborate on why knowing PG was an advantage the responses were a little surprising; but they all agree that each language has its own advantages and disadvantages, depending on interlocutor, occasion, and place. Although positive language attitudes are expressed explicitly by the majority of the informants, positive attitudes are sometimes acknowledged in unexpected ways. To comprehend this, people of the “modern world” need to understand the perspective of the Amish and bear in mind that the markers of OOA separation, identity, and humility are dress code, horse-and-buggy-transportation, and the Pennsylvania German language. Nevertheless, among the eight men who
elaborated on this question, only one responded that the language had anything to do with their Amish identity. To him, the advantage of speaking PG is being able to read and understand the Bible better than if he had been monolingual. This is illustrated in the follow response: “Because we can read Scripture in both German and English, we can compare the texts and get a better understanding of the passages than if we only knew one language” (owner of a woodworking shop, in his fifties).

The remaining informants, who, incidentally, were involved in off-farm work either on a part time or full time basis, regarded the advantages of knowing and speaking PG as more secular in nature. To them it was positive to know more than one language and to be able to speak to other people. A part time farmer/off-farm worker in his forties commented in the following way: “It’s good to be able to know more than one language. To be able to switch between Dutch, English, and German keeps your brains sharp. I would like to learn another language, but not everybody likes that.” By this last comment the Amish man implies that speaking more than the languages he already knows would be a sign of pride and not well accepted among the leaders in his community. A shop owner in his fifties noted:

We meet German people sometimes . . . and it’s nice to be able to speak to them in their own tongue. They are usually surprised when they can understand us and we can understand them. It’s also good for business.

Another man in his fifties put it very plainly when he said: “To be ‘bilingual’ is fun.” A part time farmer/off-farm worker made the following remark: “There is always an advantage of knowing more than one language. But we really don’t know Dutch that well. We know half Dutch, half English, and ten percent German.”

Almost half of the women in the study (fourteen) wanted to comment on this question. Four of them mentioned that knowing PG was an advantage because of their heritage and
tradition. A homemaker in her twenties noted: “It’s good to know more than one language . . . and also it’s part of our heritage.” Another homemaker in her forties commented: “We are keeping with tradition.” This was also the sentiment of a homemaker/off-farm worker in her forties: “We are keeping with our traditions by keeping Dutch.”

The remaining women alluded to the practicality of being able to speak more than one language. One homemaker in her sixties observed: “Speaking two languages is good, especially if you wanna keep secrets.” To keep secrets away from children and grandchildren is, according to findings by other researchers such as Huffines (1980) and Moelleken (1983), one of the few times when older nonsectarians who still know some PG use the language. In the case of the Amish, however, the reverse picture is true. The Amish woman is referring to English as the language of choice in keeping secrets from children and grandchildren. A homemaker/off-farm worker in her forties acknowledged the fact that it is useful to be able to speak two languages in her line of business by making the following remark: “It can be useful to speak two languages. Really, we speak three: Dutch, German, and English. Uhh . . . in our shop we do meet people now and then who speak German so it’s nice if we can talk to them.”

Clearly, since the majority of respondents found it to be to their advantage to speak a second language, the question whether they find speaking PG a disadvantage became redundant. Then again, closely tied to the question of why it is advantageous to speak PG is the question of the significance of speaking PG in the OOA community. What does speaking PG really mean to ordinary OOA persons? Does it have any meaning, or is it something they do without thinking about why they are doing it because that is the way they have always done it.
7.10 Is There More to Speaking PG Than Just Inheriting the Mother Tongue?

For many people, speaking their native language is nothing extraordinary. They have always spoken it and will most likely continue doing so until the day they die. It is the dominant language of the region in which they live. To them, their language does not evoke any special feelings or convey any special meaning. It is a matter of practicality to speak that particular language. It is needed for functioning in the world in which the person lives – in school and in the workplace to earn a living but also to communicate with family and friends at home and during spare time. It is valued for what it accomplishes for the individual speaking the language, not for what it represents.

On the other hand, when a person’s native language is in a minority position, the language is used for more than a means of communication. It is often held in high regard for what it is and what it represents; therefore, efforts are often made to maintain the language because of the special meaning the language has to the speakers of the language.

This is the case among the OOA, who live in a world where the dominant language is English but where the language of their ancestors, PG, has been maintained. PG has special significance to the Amish, since speaking in PG is one way of distancing themselves from the non-Amish world, which is what they believe the Bible requires them to do. However, the researcher believes PG has even broader significance for the OOA. For that reason, it is necessary to take a look at what the OOA perceive as the main reasons for continuing to speak PG. What does the language really mean to them?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connotations linked to speaking PG</th>
<th>Men 18-37</th>
<th>Men 38-57</th>
<th>Men 58-77</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>It has no meaning to me</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Good to speak a language not many people know</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It’s easier to express myself</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It’s easier telling jokes in Dutch</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Friends and family speak it</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Religious identity</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>More part of my community</em></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Separation from the world</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tradition</em></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 7-9. Connotations linked to speaking PG, according to OOA male participants of different ages
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connotations linked to speaking PG</th>
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<th>Women 38-57</th>
<th>Women 58-77</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good to speak a language not many people know</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easier to express myself</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easier telling jokes in Dutch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends and family speak it</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious identity</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>More part of my community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separation from the world</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7-10. Connotations linked to speaking PG, according to OOA female participants of different ages

Given that PG is so ingrained into OOA life and psyche, the responses given by the informants in this study were not exceptionally surprising. Both men and women, regardless of age and occupation, responded that speaking PG primarily represents tradition and religious identity. One Amish man in his thirties responded: “It’s getting harder all the time to keep our tradition, especially since we speak more and more English . . . and I hope we don’t lose it.” Another Amish man, in his forties, commented in the following way: “I think it will take generations before Dutch disappears . . . if at all. It’s very important that we try to preserve as much as we can because it’s who we are.” To both of these men, speaking PG has positive connotations because it is closely connected to their tradition and who they are as a people. This agrees with Kraybill’s (1989: 41) view of the importance of tradition in the OOA community.
when he notes that it “slows things down and provides an anchor to a solid past.” This is also corroborated by previous research by Moelleken (1983), Johnson-Weiner (1992), and once again by Kraybill (1989: 48) as he continues:

The dialect preserves Amish identity in several ways. It provides a direct link to their religious roots. The Amish faith was forged in a Germanic context. Thus the Amish believe that the use of German and the dialect engenders sacred communion with God […]. The dialect also functions as an oral depository for folklore, an essential vehicle for transporting Amish traditions. A shift to English as the primary tongue would erode oral traditions.

Obviously, traditions can be a positive part of who we were as a people generations ago, who we are at the present time, and who we most likely will be in the future because of our heritage and ancestors. However, traditions can also be a negative reminder or a stumbling block that shows, because of social or religious constraints, our unwillingness or inability to change. In the case of the informants who went on further to elaborate on this question, it seemed as if they perceived tradition as placing too many restrictions on them. They felt powerless in their ever-so-subtle attempts to move forward. Five informants, among them four women, chose to respond; and in doing so, they implied that they think the OOA community emphasizes the role of tradition too much when referring to why PG is still the native language of their people. With a subtle sigh, two homemakers in their forties commented in the following way: “This is the way our forefathers spoke, but that was a long time ago. We live in the twenty-first century.” This is an interesting remark in itself in that it refers not only to the traditional view of the OOA still speaking PG but also to the fact that these women consider themselves modern, which frequently goes hand in hand with change. Another homemaker, also in her forties, expressed herself even more candidly as to the reason for the OOA commitment to speaking PG when she simply remarked: “Sometimes I think it’s too much tradition.”
Except for tradition and religious identity, the results show that there are two other key factors of which to the informants PG is a representation: (1) separation from the rest of the English-speaking world and (2) identification with their own close-knit community. Because everyone in an Amish church district follows the same set of rules, there is a great deal of uniformity within the group. This uniformity gives members a strong sense of identity and more clearly distinguishes them as outsiders, separate from mainstream society. On the other hand, they are well aware of their place in their own community of believers. In addition, a large number of women (nine) find it easier to express themselves when speaking PG. The high number may be attributed to the fact that the majority of women are homemakers and speak primarily PG, whereas this number is much smaller among the men (three) who, to a larger degree, work off the farm and are used to speaking and hearing English more frequently. Although some of the informants do not have an entirely positive attitude toward their mother tongue, only one informant in her forties responded that to her the language has “absolutely no meaning.”

7.11 The Symbolic Value of Ethnic Markers on Modern-day Old Order Amish.

Each country or ethnic group has its own specific artifacts or markers that symbolize who they are as a people and what sets them apart from the rest of the world. This is also true of the different Anabaptists groups described in this thesis. They strongly believe that God’s people must remain separate from the surrounding world. The more liberal groups, however, interpret this separation as a spiritual one, believing in the personal salvation of its church members, and in most cases do not feel the need for any outward signs to demonstrate that they are separate. On the other side of the spectrum are the Old Orders, who literally feel the need to live physically and socially separate from mainstream society.
What symbolic value do the ethnic markers of Amish identity have on the modern Old Order Amish? Huffines (1989) suggests that to the OOA PG may not be valued as much for an expression of cultural separation as distinct clothing and horse-and-buggy transportation (referred to as H&B in figures 7-20 and 7-21). Data in this study show an ambiguous picture. By using ethnic markers, the OOA set a boundary between us and them. The ethnic markers create a great deal of homogeneity within the group. The homogeneity gives members a strong sense of belonging and an identity that more clearly distinguishes them from outsiders. The symbols that identify the OOA are closely connected to Gelassenheit and are evidence of members’ willingness to sacrifice individual wants and needs for the good of the group. These symbols are: working as farmers, horse-and-buggy transportation, a distinctive dress code, and speaking the Pennsylvania German language. All are symbols that provoke deep emotions among the Amish and are tangible expression of their history and identity that shape their everyday lives.

The Amish see themselves as stewards of the soil, and by living off the land and watching the changes in the seasons; they believe they are in close contact with their Maker. Thus, they view the farm as an ideal place to live and rear a family. The farm provides many opportunities for the family to work together and interact in their heritage language. It is a place closely connected to the maintenance of the Amish lifestyle. It is an identifying marker of “Amishness.”

The Amish rely on their horses as the major source of transportation. It is a symbol of Amish culture. Kraybill (1989: 60) notes:

As society turned to cars and tractors in the twentieth century the horse, by default, became a prime symbol of Amish life. […] As a symbol of Amish culture, the horse articulates several key values: tradition, time, limits, nature and sacrifice. As a sacred link with history, the horse is hard evidence that modern Amish have not acquiesced to
progress. It heralds the triumph of tradition and signals that one has been faithful to ethnic tradition.

The *Ordnung* not only regulates the preferred line of work and mode of transportation but also regulates how the Amish are to dress. Typically, it requires them to wear plain clothing. To the modern world, the way the Amish dress sets them apart maybe more than anything else.

Kraybill (1989: 49) explains:

As manufactured clothing became popular in the twentieth century, dress became the distinctive badge of Amish identity. Traditional clothing became a defensive tactic to sharpen their cultural separation. [...] In Amish society, dress signals Gelassenheit, submission to the collective order.

The Pennsylvania German language has special significance to the Amish as speaking PG distances them from the “English.” Regulated by the *Ordnung*, it is a symbol of separation and control. It controls and limits the social interaction and intimate relationship with non PG-speaking people. An Amish man in his fifties made the following comment:

Just as it would be a loss not to know English, it would be wrong not to pass our dialect to our children . . . that rich language our forebears left us . . . . The value of that heritage is so great that we can’t afford to lose it. It’s a symbol of who we are as a people.

When the Amish informants in this study wrestled with the question of what the most important symbol of being Amish is, the responses from the various occupational cohorts were in such agreement with one another that these have been discarded and instead joined together in a men’s group and women’s group. In addition, the result is a good example of what an invisible influence the *Ordnung* has on the close-knit community and to what extent it reinforces its rules and regulations upon its members and makes them conform in body, mind, and spirit.

According to Johnson-Weiner (1992: 28), “The maintenance of German among OOA and Mennonite groups is an expression of their commitment to a particular way of life.” PG separates the OOA from the outside world, but it also protects them from it. Already Keim (1975: 9)
brought the issue of PG to a whole new level when he spoke about the role of PG in OOA communities and argued that PG “is the single most significant element in the continuity of the Amish community.”

![Figure 7-20. The symbolic value of various ethnic markers of “Amishness,” according to male participants of different ages](image)

![Figure 7-21. The symbolic value of various ethnic markers of “Amishness,” according to female participants of different ages](image)

That Keim’s statement about the significance of PG appears to signal some truth is demonstrated by the results in figures 7-20 and 7-21, in which language, according to the Amish themselves, together with a distinct dress code, are the two most important symbols identifying and defining the Amish community. Horse-and-buggy transportation as well as being a farmer play subordinate roles. Yet, as one part time farmer/off-farm worker in his thirties commented: “At the present time all four symbols are linked to each other and can’t really be separated.” Two men, one in his thirties and one in his sixties, did not think the symbols of “Amishness” were of great importance, but “religion and living out your beliefs” is what counts. One homemaker in her thirties made the following comment: “I think people would recognize us as Amish by the way we dress rather than our language. Uh . . . there are quite a bit of non-Amish that can speak
Pennsylvania Dutch in our area.” Another homemaker in her fifties, who was interviewed at the same time, did not agree and made the following statement: “But language is so much who we are.” One homemaker in her thirties did not think any of the symbols were uniquely Amish. Instead she pointed out the importance of how the Amish are perceived when living out their Christian faith and made the following comment:

Most important above and beyond everything is Christianity because the Amish have deeply ingrained Christian values . . . . I treasure the community we live in. There is less exposure to the world and less temptation . . . . Not that Christians elsewhere have less chance of being Christians . . . and not that all Amish live their faith. But Amish are expected to be Christians, you know. We are individuals just like you.

It is undeniable that the markers of “Amishness” have different meaning and vary in importance to the informants of this study. The majority of the informants, however, did find PG as being one of the most important markers. This might be an indication of good survival chances of PG, which will be looked at in greater detail in the following section.

7.12 The Survival Chances of Present-day Pennsylvania German

Being bilingual is the ability not only to converse in two different languages but to have an identity that is deeply embedded in the speech community which uses that particular language. To speak PG is choosing a certain identity. By choosing this identity, not only do the Pennsylvania Germans perceive themselves as Pennsylvania Germans but so does mainstream society.

To mainstream society these days, the very characteristic but outdated fashion style of eighteenth-century Europe appears to be the most distinctive symbol of Amish identity. However, this study shows that the Amish themselves perceive their distinctive dress code and PG to be the most important symbols representing “Amishness.” Therefore, it is also of value to
this study to gain more knowledge about what the Amish themselves think of their language’s survival chances – not only if it will survive but if it will survive the way it is currently spoken.

<table>
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Table 7-11. Male participants’ opinions on the survival chances of PG, according to different occupations and ages.
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Table 7-12. Female participants’ opinions on the survival chances of PG, according to different occupations and ages

Although the difference between men and women, illustrated in tables 7-11 and 7-12, confirms that the majority of men responded more pessimistically about the future of their language while women had a more positive outlook, the differences are not remarkable. After the data had been tabulated and analyzed, some interesting facts emerged: While more than half of all male informants had answered either negatively or were not certain whether PG would survive the way it is currently spoken among the Amish, numerous respondents wanted to comment on this question and their remarks were undeniably more positive than the tabulated data. The following three comments were given by middle-aged part time farmers/off-farm
workers: (1) “It will take at least two hundred to three hundred years for the language to change”; (2) “There are still a lot of people speaking Dutch”; and (3) “I think it will take generations before Dutch disappears . . . if at all. It’s very important that we try to preserve as much as we can because it’s who we are.” Another comment made by a woodworking shop owner in his fifties points to the importance of continuity between generations when he notes: “We’ve spoken it for generations and it will take a long time for it to change so that it’s not Dutch anymore.” However, there are comments demonstrating a negative attitude as well. One example is a comment made by a man in his thirties who has his own business enterprise: “It’s getting harder all the time to keep our traditions, and I hope we don’t lose it.” One man in his late twenties, who is the owner of a small store, commented in the following way concerning the survival chances of PG: “No, not with [English] language education in schools, with grammar books and dictionaries, and working off the farms, it won’t survive.”

On the other hand, when the tabulated data for the women were analyzed, their opinion of the survival chances of PG appeared to be more positive. Three out of five of the 18-37-year-old homemakers responded in the affirmative, and half of the middle-aged and older homemakers did the same. A number that is even more interesting is the 50-50 (cf. table 7-12) relationship of the two off-farm working-female informants, who are 58-77 years of age. One of the informants believes with conviction that the PG language will not survive in its current state whereas the other woman is not so sure what will happen to it. Among part time homemakers/off-farm workers there is an exceptionally encouraging attitude toward the language’s chances of survival (cf. table 7-12). An informant belonging to this cohort responded: “It’s [PG] changing all the time. More and more English words will be used, but its roots are deep, so in the end, I think it’ll survive.”
The reason for the disparity in answers among female informants is most likely due to the fact that the homemakers in the study spend a much larger amount of time on the farm together with PG-speaking family, friends, and neighbors and might not, to the same extent, be aware of how much PG is influenced by English. But the women who work outside the farm are actively involved in the outside world, frequently interacting with the “English” through different businesses activities and have seen firsthand the great influence English has on PG.

Although the tabulated data of female informants demonstrate a more positive outlook regarding the survival chances of PG the way it is spoken at the present time, the comments given when the researcher repeated her visits to the informants and sat down with them for a longer chat without the restrictions of having to go over a certain number of questions in a questionnaire was very fruitful and presented an entirely different and more negative picture. Almost half of all women considered the language to be in a state of flux. Comments such as the following, given by a homemaker in her forties, is an illustration of the negative perception these women have of the survival chances of PG: “More and more English words are added to the language. There are many words that our children don’t understand because they only know the English word.” A woman in her seventies made the following remark: “Many, many English words are used not only by children in school but also by parents and elders in the community. I think there will be a continued change as time goes on.” A homemaker in her seventies noted: It’s changing. There are too many English words in the language.”

7.13 Too Much English Spoken in the Community

Since the majority of both Amish men and women are concerned about the survival of PG, the obvious question to follow is if the OOA believe too much English is spoken in their own community. The Old Order communities, Amish and Mennonite alike, regard the increasing
use of English as a direct source of alarming changes – changes that will weaken the invisible fence that exists between them and the outside world. Tables 7-13 and 7-14 below are good illustrations of the fact that Amish men and women – regardless of age, gender, and occupation – overwhelmingly believe that English is spoken too much in their community at the present time. This is especially the case among both male and female informants in the older cohort (58-77). That such a large number of off-farm workers/men believe that English is spoken too much in their community is not that unexpected. They are all involved, in one way or another, in the outside world, where English is the dominant language. As a result, they are aware of how much more English is being used by their own people in the various workplaces these days. More surprising is the fact that such a large number of homemakers believe that English is spoken too much in the community. Why do they believe too much English is spoken when they spend time primarily in a domain where the preferred language is PG? According to some comments given by homemakers, English is not only spoken on the workplace but is continued when the young people come home in the evening, as well as at singings and youth gatherings (cf. comments section 7.6). This is a phenomenon that has been noticed by the homemakers.

Noteworthy is also the fact that very few informants answered with a straight “no” to this question; only one male and two females did. The majority answered that they did not know what to think. In four out of five comments made in regard to this question, the informants referred to the “young folks” as being the offenders of speaking too much English.
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Table 7-13. On whether English is spoken too much in the community: opinions of male participants of different occupations and ages
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Table 7-14. On whether English is spoken too much in the community: opinions of female participants of different occupations and ages

Indeed, the informants wanted to voice their opinion on this issue, and it was by far the question that generated the largest number of comments. A sentiment that materialized as a reason for speaking more English is leaving the childhood home and fending for oneself in a predominantly English-speaking world. An off-farm worker in his thirties commented in the following way:

I speak much more English than when I lived at home. This is of course, because of all the customers that I have who speak English. I speak English every day, all day, and it's difficult to switch over when I get home, you know. I do try to speak Dutch to my
children. Dutch needs to be preserved, but I don’t know how . . . . Uh, I think it’s slowly dying, especially among us that work and interact with the “English” ALL the time.

A part time homemaker/off-farm worker in her forties also mentioned that she speaks English more frequently these days than when she lived at home. ”I speak more English today than I used to when I lived at home. I speak English with many of my friends that I used to go to Sunday singings with and run around with. I try to speak Dutch with my children but sometimes it turns into English.”

A part time farmer/off-farm worker in his fifties painted an even bleaker picture of the survival chances for PG by making the following comment:

Yes, it’s [English] spoken too much. Some families hardly speak any Dutch at all anymore. In our school we have a lady who hardly speaks Dutch at all, so we have to have all our meetings in English. The school is a mix of Amish and conservative Mennonite children, but anyhow . . . . What difference does it make? Many times our conservative cousins are more conservative than us, but they don’t speak Dutch.

Finding a job off the farm is the most commonly used reason why people, especially the young, are presumed to speak English more frequently. A part time farmer/off-farm worker in his fifties made the following remark: “It’s spoken too much among the young people. They speak it all the time, not just at work but also at home. Eventually, I think that Dutch will die out. Not in the next fifty years but later.” A similar comment was made by a shop owner, also in his fifties when he noted: “English is spoken by the young people because they find jobs outside the farm, in construction, dealing with tourists, and such. It’s not good for the language. They are losing it.” Yet another off-farm worker in his fifties made an almost identical comment: “Yes, the young people speak it way too much. Many young folks that work outside the home continue to speak it [English] when they get home.” Although the men are the ones who primarily work off the farm, the women were vocal, if not even more vocal, about this issue than the men. This
is illustrated in sentiments like the following, given by a woman in her late forties who is a part
time homemaker but who also sells her produce at a roadside stand and at a market a few times a
week:

More and more people work outside the farm and come home and speak English. The
younger generation speaks almost only English when they get together. I don’t know
about my son . . . if he speaks English all day at work or not. He speaks Dutch when he
comes home, though. I don’t know what we can do about it, but something needs to be
done.

Some other comments that were made during my visits to these families were the
following, all related to the fact that the young work too much off the farm together with
English-speaking people: “The young people speak too much English, but what can we do?
When you work in the ‘English’ world, you have to speak English. People don’t understand
Dutch” (homemaker in her forties). “Young people go out and work. Many young people in their
thirties speak primarily English” (homemaker in her thirties). “Too many young people speak
English. Many families speak almost no Dutch or very little Dutch at home” (part time
homemaker/off-farm worker in her fifties). “The younger generation speaks much more English
than we do. They speak all day at work” (part time homemaker/off-farm worker in her fifties).
“English is spoken all the time among the Amish. They go out and work, and they still talk
English at home” (homemaker in her forties). “The younger generation speaks it all the time at
work but also when they get home in the evening” (part time homemaker/off-farm worker in her
thirties). “Way too much English is spoken. People going out in the world hardly speak Dutch at
all. Look at all the roadside stands and quilt shops. They are there for the tourists, and the tourists
speak English” (part time homemaker/off-farm worker in her forties).
However, the Amish women did not see the off-farm workplaces as the only culprit for the young people’s abandonment of their native language in favor of English. Several women held the Sunday singings and youth group meetings liable for the young folks’ preference for English instead of Dutch. A part-time homemaker/off-farm worker in her forties with teenage children and children in their twenties commented in the following way:

Yes, it [English] is spoken too much among our young. The young, when they get together at the youth group meeting, speak English . . . ONLY. They speak English at work. At home we sometimes speak English to our children. We never did that before. It’s so difficult to know what could be done about it. We are not the only ones, though. It used to be that when young people got baptized into the church and married, they stopped talking English but, you know . . . now many “30 something people” speak English in their homes. They started speaking English at youth meetings, and when they married, they just kept at it.

That the aforementioned observation is not an isolated comment but a real concern of many of the informants is well illustrated in the following statement, also given by a homemaker/off-farm worker in her fifties:

I’d say in about forty percent of the youth groups only English is spoken . . . uhh . . . . The more conservative Amish in the southern part of the county, though, speak less English. . . And young people find work outside the Amish community, you know. Many young folks in their thirties primarily speak English at home.”

However, one homemaker/off-farm worker in her forties also touched upon something that is almost taboo to speak about in the Amish community because of Gelassenheit that permeates their whole society – prestige. In the case of the OOA, it is the importance of sounding sophisticated and therefore not using one’s native language, PG, because of its implicit lack of sophistication. She made the following remark: “Some of the young teenagers think that speaking English is being more sophisticated than using PG, but as they get older, they usually conform to speaking Dutch.” Interesting about this statement is that it was one of the prevailing sentiments among the nonsectarians’ unwillingness to pass on PG to their children at the
beginning of the twentieth century. They did not want their children to sound unsophisticated or “Dutchy” and have fewer chances of obtaining higher education and good job opportunities.

Moelleken (1983:180) writes:

> . . . speaking English offered more advantages for school children than Pennsylvania German and there were indeed some disadvantages in knowing the latter only. Pennsylvania German speakers were ridiculed in their youth as ‘dumb Dutch’ or were simply afraid to speak the ‘dialect’.

A part time farmer/off-farm worker in his forties takes the issue of prestige one step further by pointing to one particular section of the young [the young men] that speak more English than in the past in order to sound more refined:

> It’s spoken too much among the young, liberal Amish. When two young guys get together, they almost always speak English. When a boy and girl get together, it’s mostly Dutch but sometimes English, and when we talk at home, it’s Dutch . . . or it’s supposed to be . . . . We tend to use words for inventions, like threshing machine, generator, or train although we would have a word for them in German.

Although it is an interesting observation, it is not very significant. Again, it merely confirms that English is spoken more among young men because they have a greater exposure to the language because of the socioeconomic situation in Lancaster County has forced them to take on jobs off the farm, many times working alongside the “English.”

The previous statement was an example of the gender differences that are present. However, some of the informants also touched upon the generational differences that cause the younger generation sometimes to have problems understanding the older generation.

A farmer/off-farm worker in his fifties, who is both a father and grandfather, made the following comment when asked if young people speak more English than people of his generation:
Many young people speak much more English than we do. There are words that we know that they don’t know in Dutch. It’s hard to stop it. If you force Dutch upon people, like taking classes, it’s going to backfire; and they won’t do it at all. That’s what happened with Stephen Miller’s classes.23

A homemaker in her fifties made the following comment in regard to speaking English instead of Dutch because of the younger generation’s lack of knowledge of PG:

“Nowadays I say ‘careful’ instead of geb acht; . . . and I used to say Bauchweh to my littlest one, but she didn’t understand it so now I say bellyweh.”

An almost identical response was given by another Amish woman in her fifties, who in her job as the proprietor of a gift shop interacts with the “English” on a daily basis.

Yeah, we talk much less Amish now . . . since the shop. But we do try to talk Amish with our grandkids, but it’s not easy when they come running into the store, and I tell them to go down to the Weschmaschien, and they just look at me ‘cause they don’t understand the words I’m using. Then, I have to say it in English instead so they understand what I want them to do . . . There are many words they don’t understand anymore – and I mean common words that we use all the time – like Geburtsdaag (birthday), Gaardesach (vegetable), and Seirippe (spare ribs). That’s how we lose it – the language I mean.

7.14 Is a Monolingual English-speaking OOA Community in the Future?

According to Kraybill, “Historically, English was viewed by the Amish as a symbol of high culture and worldly society, a sophisticated language at odds with the lowly spirit of Gelassenheit” (Kraybill 1989: 49). For that reason, the OOA believe that the language of the world needs to be kept at bay as much as possible. In a community, particular values and practices are passed down through generations and are many times difficult to change. As one Amish man in his fifties said when asked about speaking PG: “This is the way we’ve always done it, so why change now.” At the same time, the people of a community can strive to resist

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23. Stephen Miller: A non-Amish man, turned Amish, who taught PG to interested parties in Lancaster County.
changes and values imposed on them from the outside world. One value in particular that appears to delay language shift is religious use of the minority language. Huffines (1996: 65) even argues that the Amish are not very faithful to PG or German “apart from its religious ties which increasingly hinder their religious understanding [which are] the primary allegiance.” In several former studies the observation has been made that the lack of PG during the worship service has been considered a threat to the very fabric of what it means to be Amish. For instance, in her (1992: 35) study Johnson-Weiner notes: “The threat is not simply that these groups will no longer be separated but that they will no longer remain Old Order, that to speak English is to become ‘English.” Johnson-Weiner continues: “For the Old Orders, speaking German is evidence of their commitment to their Christian faith” (1992: 35). Therefore, after having analyzed the initial data, the researcher found herself revisiting some informants to get some additional answers to the question of the relationship between Amish identity and language use.

As a result, during the researcher’s second visit the matter of whether the OOA community would survive if English were spoken all the time or if it is necessary to speak Dutch to be Amish was discussed at great length.

The more time the researcher spent discussing the issue of maintenance and shift with the Amish, the more she realized what a sensitive issue it is. The researcher also realized that the consensus among the OOA is the belief that not much can be done about the present situation. Therefore, they take it in stride and accept the fact that the outside world is encroaching upon their close-knit Amish community to a greater extent than ever before. This situation forces them to interact in English on a much larger scale, not only with the “English” but with fellow Amish men and women as well.
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<tr>
<td>Farmers, 58-77</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>11</td>
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Table 7-15. The survival chances of the Amish community were English to be spoken at all times: opinions of male participants of different occupations and ages
<table>
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<td>Off-farm workers/women, 18-37</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
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</table>

Table 7-16. The survival chances of the Amish community were English to be spoken at all times: opinions of female participants of different occupations and ages

The results from the responses to the question whether the Amish men and women think their Amish community would survive if English were spoken at all times are interesting. They reveal that the majority – regardless of gender, age, or occupation – either do not think their Amish community would survive or they have serious doubts whether their Amish community would survive were English to be spoken at all times (tables 7-15 and 7-16). This is especially true among middle-aged men and women (38-57) and older men and women (58-77). The majority, more than two-thirds of all male informants, either do not know if their community
would survive if English were spoken at all times or they do not believe in the survival the
Amish community at all if that were the case. The owner of a woodworking shop, a man in his
fifties, made the following observation: “Dutch is so much a part of who we are . . . . If we lose
Dutch we’ll lose part of who we are. It’s in our hearts.”

Should English be spoken in the community at all times, the few men who believe in a
future for the Amish, even if their native language has been abandoned, emphasize the strong
work ethic, community support, and the fact that their Amish culture has survived for such a
long time as the main components contributing to why the Amish community would survive
despite English being spoken. An older off-farm worker in his seventies makes the remark: “As
long as there are Amish and the Amish work together, the Amish language will survive . . . not
the way it’s now but somehow in a different shape and form.” Almost the same sentiment is
expressed by another off-farm worker in his forties when he notes: “Our culture has survived for
so long, and it wouldn’t just disappear because we don’t speak Dutch. Our culture is SO strong.”
These statements are good examples of the tight-knit group the OOA belong to that puts a lot of
social pressure on its members but at the same time has the capacity of enforcing linguistic
norms and is thus an important instrument of language maintenance.

In one of her studies on language maintenance and shift, Huffines (1991) addressed the
importance of speaking German during the Amish church service in order to preserve the
language. Huffines (1991: 22) made the following observation:

The use of Pennsylvania German in sectarian communities is dependent on the use of
Amish High German in worship services. When English replaces Amish High German in
worship, English will also replace Pennsylvania German within the family and community.
The topic of maintaining AHG as the language for the Amish church service and thus maintaining Amish identity is of great concern to the informants. The results corroborated Huffines’ (1991) sentiments and expressed serious concerns about what would happen if AHG were abandoned during the church service. Using English during the church service goes hand in hand with changes in lifestyle and will be a first step toward no longer being Amish. A shop owner in his fifties who on a daily basis speaks a great deal of English with his customers, made the following comment: “To be Amish is to speak Dutch. When we speak English all the time, we aren’t Amish anymore. Look at those other churches [the Beachy Amish].” However, it is important to remember, when listening to this Amish man’s comment about the Beachy Amish, that they very strongly support evangelistic programs and missions, which have made it necessary for them to make a shift to English not only in their worship services but also in their daily lives (Kraybill and Hostetter 2001).

The significance attributed to maintaining AHG in church does not only have to do with maintaining Amish identity but also emphasizes the theological importance of AHG when the informants describe German versions of the Bible as older, more correct, and plainer than their English counterparts. Thus, the use of German texts during the church service cannot simply be ignored. The importance of this topic was articulated by one of the informants in his fifties. He is the owner of a large woodworking shop and speaks English with customers and distributors on a daily basis: “If we speak English in church all the time, we’d quickly lose what it means to be Amish. Many people see German in church as more powerful, forceful . . . . There is more Kraft in the Schprooch. It’s easier to explain the Bible in German than in English.” Another off-farm worker in his fifties became very excited when he began to answer this question and jumped
from one thought to another when trying to explain what is in the glue that keeps the Amish
community together but also what is detrimental for the language:

There are so many other things that define who we are – how we dress and how we live
our lives. So, I hope those things are strong enough to keep us together. First, they [the
children] only spoke English in class; now they speak English during recess and with
each other all day in school. It’s also important to keep German in church. It’s more
power in German than English. I can explain something from the Bible better in Dutch
than in English.

What these men express is also conveyed by Moelleken (1983: 181) when he notes:

In a society that distinguishes itself from its surroundings by rejecting the new and
clinging to the old, language stereotypes are positive maintenance factors. Pennsylvania
German, for both the Old Order Amish and the Old Order Mennonites, is considered an
integral part of the old ways as well as being part of their religion. Thus, Pennsylvania
German is essential and must be maintained if they hope to retain their religion.

However, this is not the opinion of a middle-aged (38-57) farmer/off-farm worker, who
believes that the Amish community will survive no matter what language is spoken in church
when he makes the following comment:

The Old Order Mennonites in Virginia, the Horning Mennonites, and the Old German
Baptist Brethren have switched to English and still exist as churches today. I think it
really has to do with the closeness of the people . . . and we are a people that help each
other out.

Among women the picture is even bleaker, where seventy percent of all women are
doubtful or do not believe that their community will survive if English is spoken on a regular
basis. These numbers are especially high among part time homemakers/off-farm workers 38 to
57 years of age (cf. table 7-16). The reason for this might be that they are the women who most
frequently work outside the home in some capacity, own their own business, interact with the
“English” on a regular basis, and see what is happening to their heritage language. Some of the
women’s doubts are well expressed in the following statements made by two homemakers in
their thirties: “If we speak like the ‘English,’ we may want to be like the ‘English.’” And “I think we would be losing a valuable part of our heritage. The reason it [PG] would not survive is because of too much English.” A homemaker in her sixties expressed the same doubts when she remarked: “Much would be lost if we all spoke English, especially if we start using English in our church services. I think some people . . . young people . . . may be lost to the outside world.” Another homemaker, in her forties, was more outspoken but at the same time ambivalent in her opinions about the future of the community when she gave the following answer:

I don’t think it [PG] will completely disappear. I think a percentage will still continue to speak Dutch. We take Dutch for granted. It’s tradition. It defines who we are. It’s our identity; and if we take it away, what happens then for the rest who don’t speak Dutch? Will we even be Amish anymore? Dress is also really important; so if we still dress Amish, I guess we’re still Amish, right? I don’t know.

Among the women who believe that their community would have a chance to survive, even if English were spoken all the time, the following comments were heard from two middle-aged homemakers in their forties: “There are so many other things that make us Amish. Dress is one of them.” Also, “religion is what keeps us together. It’s the way we live that’s important.”

Another question, which was only briefly touched upon but very much related to the previous question of community survival, is the question of which language the Amish will speak three generations from now. Only the eight informants that were revisited were asked this question. It is significant that half of the informants believe that PG will still be spoken among the Amish in their community whereas the other half believes that English will be the language used. However, among the informants who believe that even though PG is still the language that will be spoken, everyone commented that English will be a very significant part of PG. Comments like the following were heard from two off-farm workers in their fifties: “I think Dutch will still be spoken but with many, many English words mixed in.” One homemaker in her
forties commented: “We’ll still speak Dutch but with lots and lots of English.” The consensus among the OOA seems to be that it is imperative to continue to speak PG although it may be with an abundance of English words mixed in. Whatever it takes to maintain not only PG as their native language but also their identity as Amish people has to be done. One part time farmer in his forties concludes: “It is better to have Dutch resembling English than no Dutch at all.” Or as an off-farm worker in his seventies, who is also a bishop, commented: “We don’t know what a borrowed language may bring…maybe a borrowed theology?”
Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

Pennsylvania German, together with Yiddish spoken by the Hasidic Jews in the United States, has been one of the few success stories among immigrant language maintenance in North America. In contrast to the typical pattern of cultural and linguistic assimilation, in which minority language communities shift to English monolingualism by the third generation, PG has been continuously spoken in North America for over three centuries. In many places where it is still spoken, it persists and thrives.

Because the OOA are one of the fastest-growing religious groups in the United States and double their population in size every twenty years (Kraybill 2001), it would appear the language has a good chance of being maintained in the foreseeable future. To establish whether this is true or not has been the purpose of this study.

The increasing number of speakers is only one piece, and sometimes not a very reliable piece, in the puzzle that will determine if PG will be maintained or not among the OOA in general and more specifically among the OOA in Lancaster County. The present study has analyzed language use in the community and home of Lancaster County OOA in an attempt to make an assessment of the impact of occupational changes on the maintenance or shift of PG. It has also tried to determine if there are other societal changes that may affect the way PG is used. An effort has also been made to gain insight and understanding about the attitudes of the PG speakers toward their heritage language.
From the derived data the researcher has attempted to determine whether support for the maintenance of PG among the OOA in Lancaster County is present. Language usage and language attitude data were derived from field notes, questionnaires, interviews, and conversations. The analyzed data showed clear signs of social desirability bias. Suggestions for potential action to be taken in the maintenance efforts of PG were made and an account of potential areas that would benefit from further investigation was given.

8.2 Linguistic Change in the Nonsectarian Community

The major social and economic changes that affected America in the beginning of the twentieth century contributed to the linguistic assimilation of almost all PG-speaking nonsectarians to English, the language of mainstream society, in order to gain a competitive edge in society. There are no longer any institutions – such as schools, churches, or governmental bodies – that conduct their affairs in PG. The lack of standardized orthography is also of importance since no native speaker is ever taught to read and write in PG. Also, in comparison to the sectarians, demographic strength among the nonsectarians is missing.

Through participation in a Pennsylvania German language class, it became evident to the researcher that to some assimilated sectarians and nonsectarians alike, going back to their roots was very important, but the researcher also learned that many nonsectarian children and grandchildren are rather indifferent to learning the language of their parents and grandparents. This corresponds to Bankston and Henry (1998), who note that strong cultural identification and emotional bonds with a minority language may not always correlate positively with language maintenance, particularly when it comes to transmitting a low-status language to children. Instead, these nonsectarians’ attitudes toward the language of their ancestors are rather negative because they see no advantage in knowing PG. The value of speaking the language has been lost,
except within the domain of the home of a few older speakers. Very few identify themselves with the Pennsylvania German culture anymore. Huffines (1980:51) notes: “There should be some tangible, recognizable advantage to knowing and speaking Pennsylvania German.”

8.3 Present-day Old Order Amish Work-related Demographics

The OOA, even those who do no longer farm, consider rural farm work to be the ideal and preferred occupation. However, in Lancaster County the number of OOA men employed as farmers has dropped dramatically, as the present study clearly illustrates, with merely one informant still working as a full time farmer. The number of OOA working off-farm employment has been on the rise in the last decades, and in the present study it has reached a peak, with over ninety percent of all male informants and over forty percent of all the female informants having full time or part time jobs that involve rather intense interaction with non-Amish people. The changing economic foundation of many Amish communities, so also in Lancaster County, makes for a dynamic situation in terms of language use in the workplace.

The assumption was made that off-farm work involved interaction to a greater degree with “English” coworkers and customers, which may have an impact on the maintenance of PG. Although the majority of Amish men in the present study have been forced to take on off-farm jobs, the bulk of men working these jobs work in small businesses – woodworking stores, quilt and craft shops, remote market stands, and construction crews, employing up to five Amish or “English” people. Frequently they are paired together in “Amish work crews” and are thus able to continue speaking primarily PG on the job. The present study also points in the direction of the emergence of a number of one-man businesses, providing services such as printmaking, bookkeeping, welding, and sewing, catering primarily to the Amish community. Since the number of English-speaking workmates in these lines of businesses is rather small or non-
existent, the reason for the increased usage of English has to be found elsewhere: in the interaction with suppliers and distributors, but first and foremost, in the increased contact the OOA have in catering to “English” customers, locals as well as tourists. As in Gumperz (1976) study of the Gail Valley in Austria, the researcher believes the introduction of a wage-based service economy catering primarily to tourists has had a negative effect on maintaining the heritage language of the OOA. English is not only the language used in transactions between Amish businessmen/women and their customers but to an increasingly larger degree between the Amish working together in stores and roadside stands on a daily basis. That this is indeed the case is corroborated by this study which shows that men are in rather intense contact with the English-speaking world. More than sixty percent of all OOA men interact daily with the “English” whereas the majority of women (sixty percent) interact only on a weekly basis with the “English.” The intense interaction with the “English” applies especially to the middle-aged male and female informants in the study. The current frequent interaction with English-speaking people must be considered a detriment for the maintenance of PG. On the other hand, the majority (over eighty percent) of OOA male informants and more than fifty percent of the OOA female informants, regardless of age and occupation, interact daily with other Amish outside the immediate family. The study also shows that half of the informants work in an environment in which they can speak their native PG. All of this, of course, promotes the retention of the language.

Interestingly, the study also shows that male informants who are most frequently in interaction with English speakers are also the ones with the most negative attitude toward English. Women, on the other hand, who interact less frequently with English-speaking persons, have a slightly more positive attitude toward English.
8.4 Increased Use of English in the Community Not Only a Work and Age-related Phenomenon

“So many young folks work off the farm and speak English all the time, even at home.”

This is a statement that the researcher heard many times during the study, not only from the older generation but also from the so-called younger folks.

In the present study the overwhelming consensus among the informants is the belief that English is spoken too much in their community among all people, but primarily among the young, also in domains and at times when it would not be necessary to do so and should not be done. By the same token, everyone agrees it is difficult to do anything about it. According to the informants, the desire among the young to preserve the language is real. However, external factors pull them in the direction of English. When the informants started elaborating more freely in conversations with the researcher about the issue at hand, their responses about young people’s attitudes and perception toward their native language were very different – more negative than in earlier-documented tabulated data. Could this be a result of social desirability bias? It is difficult to know but needs to be taken into consideration.

Because of the changing socioeconomic situation in Lancaster County, when young people start doing off-farm work English is spoken more frequently, especially among young men who generally work alongside the “English” on construction sites and other similar work sites. However, the study also shows that more frequently than in their interaction with workmates they are forced to speak English when interacting with “English” customers. One Amish man in his thirties commented: “I have no choice, I have to speak English. My customers don’t understand Dutch.”
Although working off-farm jobs contributes to the frequent contact with English-speaking people, the study also shows that many female informants believe the negative influences start earlier. They hold Sunday-night singings and youth-group meetings largely responsible for the increased use of English among young Amish men and women. During these gatherings English is many times the primary language spoken among these teenagers with their own peers. In other words, the basic norms of in-group talk are changing. A woman in her late thirties noted: “We spoke almost only English when we got together.” The pressure seems to be even greater to speak English during *rumspringa*. Comments such as the following were heard from Amish women in their fifties: During *rumspringa* they join crowds where . . . maybe forty percent speak ONLY English.” The female informants agreed that for the young liberal Amish men it is more important than for the young women to sound sophisticated, and by speaking English they believe they do, and at the same time, they have a chance to “show off” when speaking to other Amish men. In the intra-communication among young Amish women, English is used much less frequently.

The younger folks in the study tried to justify why they speak more English by saying that, when they were still living at home with parents and younger siblings, it was easier to obey and speak PG because they felt the pressure to do so; but once they are on their own and no one is watching over them, it is easy to give in. A woman in her late thirties noted: “It becomes natural to continue speaking English to people one has gone to singings and run around with. You don’t have anyone telling you it’s wrong.” She even admitted to speaking English to her children many times, which corroborates a remark made by a man in his seventies: “Young folks, when they joined the church and married, stopped talking English but now . . . many people in their thirties still speak English in their homes.” Although there was a one-hundred-
percent affirmation that the young like to speak their native PG, the density and multiplexity of
the social networks to which the OOA belong do not seem to protect them completely from
outside influences. Instead, the youth have in many instances adopted English as the language of
choice. It is a conscious decision, not one that is haphazard. Nevertheless, PG is still the
dominant language for communication with family and friends for these informants.

Although the present study shows a consensus among the informants, who believe the
frequent use of English is, first and foremost, a problem of the younger generation, they also
acknowledge the fact that it is not only children and younger people who use more English these
days but also parents, grandparents, and elders in church.

With the older generation the increased use of English is primarily impacted by the ever-
increasing customer contact in Amish-owned or -operated quilt and craft shops, woodworking
shops, and grocery stores. A very common answer among the older generation was: “I speak
much more English than I used to but not as much as the family down the road,” not wanting to
own up to the fact that he or she speaks more English these days and instead holding other
people responsible for doing so.

8.5 The Linguistic Situation in the Home Domain

Living in North America, where English is the dominant language, the OOA not only
believe it is a useful language to know but they believe they need to know it. However, they also
believe it is necessary for English to be kept in its place and, although more English is spoken in
domains such as the home, that is to the OOA still not the place for it because it represents the
outside world. Although English and PG may be of equal importance to the OOA community,
this study shows their use is not. English is clearly the language of economic survival. Its use is
intended primarily for functioning in the workplace, to earn a living. It is valued for what it accomplishes, not for what it represents.

On the other hand, the language of the home has often been valued as the language of one’s heritage and, in contrast, been held in high regard for what it is and for what it represents. It expresses group identity. This is also the case in the present study, in which it expresses group solidarity and is a symbol of being Amish. It is clear that the OOA in the present study are not against using the English language per se, but they object to using it excessively in traditionally PG and AHG domains, seeing this as a sign of worldliness. For many of the OOA informants in this study, speaking English in domains traditionally reserved for PG or AHG is equal to “acting English,” signals a rejection of Old Order values, and should thus be avoided.

The study also shows signs of overlap of language usage and even subtle decreased usage of PG on the individual level in the home domain. Among the OOA in Lancaster County, PG has been maintained in the home despite pressure from English because each language has served specific roles in which it has been used, and these roles have not been overlapping. The study shows that half of the informants responded that they still speak close to one hundred percent PG at home whereas the other half replied that approximately seventy-five percent of all conversations that take place in their homes are in PG. They note that it is difficult not to speak English after a long day at work where there has been a constant interaction with English-speaking people. Although some of the informants responded that they speak some English in their homes, all informants supported the continued use of PG in their homes. The informants are aware of the fact that the more the language of the home changes to a mix between PG and English, the more difficult it will be to keep the boundaries of each language intact, and they are afraid that in the end English will take over as the language of the home domain. An
Amish man in his fifties, who admits to speaking more English these days also in the home domain, worries:

Their [the children’s] jobs take them into the outside world: I know I speak more English nowadays but I’m sure I can avoid speaking it at home and speak Dutch instead. I’ve spoken Dutch for so long. But what about my kids? They work construction and help out in a restaurant. It’s so easy for them to switch. Their Dutch is dreadful. Maybe one day they just find it easier to speak English all the time?

These results can be compared to Johnson-Weiner’s (1989) study, in which she investigated an OOA community in New York State and found that the separation of roles for each language was breaking down and also having an impact on the maintenance of PG in the home domain.

8.5.1 Intergenerational Transfer

It also appears that the OOA in this study recognize the importance of intergenerational transfer. Since English is spoken more frequently than before in some homes, the general opinion of the informants in this study is that parents are the ones who have to make their children speak PG at home. They have to be disciplined about it and not give in to the pressure and ease of continuing to speak English after a long day at work. These days, in preparation for a life in which many of the Amish will find work outside their own community among the “English,” they believe that their children must be able to use English as correctly and effortlessly as they use PG. Therefore, as long as OOA parents continue to encourage their children to learn both English and German, teaching them the English they need for interactions with the world around them and the German they need for worship and the community, there will be a continuation of PG. However, the intergenerational transfer is not complete without the children’s own wish to remain Amish, identify with Old Order values, and desire to speak and thus maintain PG as a marker of that particular identity.
The sheer number of children in OOA families has in previous generations also supported the maintenance of PG. However, because of the changing socio-economic conditions in OOA communities, children are not needed to help out with farm work to the same extent as before, and thus fewer children are born. Therefore, there are fewer children to whom to pass on the heritage language.

8.6 The School’s Role in the Shifting Linguistic Landscape

Formal education is often the first point of contact children have with the world outside their own community. For the OOA, schools provide a key context for the use of English. From the time the Amish children begin school and onward, they are often exposed to more English than PG, not only in the classroom and during recess but also later when looking for work in the outside world. This was not the case in earlier generations, in which the children attended public school and spoke English but, after finishing eighth grade, worked primarily in the fields together with PG-speaking family and friends. The younger generation’s educational experience, added to their work experience, makes it more difficult to maintain PG in the same way previous generations did.

The study also shows that the majority of the informants – regardless of gender, age, and occupation – possessed at least some knowledge of English already when they entered first grade. More women than men responded affirmatively, probably because of their frequent babysitting jobs for “English” neighbors. However, the interview data also suggest that Amish children these days acquire English at a much earlier age than previous generations did. According to the informants, many of the children these days have a good command of the English language before even entering first grade.
At the present time in Amish schools, German is taught a maximum of two times a week. The informants in the study do not believe that increasing the number of hours German is taught is an option in the maintenance efforts of German. Only a small number of informants want to see PG used more frequently in Amish schools. They believe that teaching PG as well as German is an obligation and responsibility of the parents, who have to be role models and teach and speak it in their homes and with friends. Besides, most Amish informants do not consider the increased use of English in the school domain as any indication of linguistic assimilation toward the dominant English language. Instead, they recognize the necessity of knowing English for economic survival of their family and ultimately the community. However, some concerns were expressed, especially among young informants, such as a man in his late twenties. With the increased use of English in school, he doubts the survival of PG and commented: “No, not with [English] language education in schools, with grammar books and dictionaries, and working off the farms, it won’t survive.” Although schools are major agents of cultural and linguistic assimilation, provisions of schooling in their native language for the OOA will not automatically protect PG in the future. Since the majority of the informants does not consider earlier acquisition of and increased use of English in the school to be a problem and instead regard English as an asset for economic survival, not much can and will be done in the foreseeable future to encourage more PG use in the OOA schools.

8.7 A Positive Attitude: A Major Element in Maintenance Efforts for PG

Positive attitudes within a group may not lead to language maintenance but may slow language shift whereas negative language attitudes almost definitely lead to diminishing efforts in actively trying to maintain the language. This study shows that the collective attitude of the OOA, both young and old alike, in trying to preserve PG seems to be more positive than
negative. Also, the study shows no indication of wanting to give up PG, except for one farmer who is rather self-sufficient and rarely has any interaction with the English-speaking world but adamantly believes that PG has to give way to English. The researcher believes that he does not have enough contact with the outside world to be qualified entirely to judge the state of the PG language spoken by his fellow Amish in Lancaster County. Also, one informant in her forties responded that PG has “absolutely no meaning to me,” but still she wants to keep PG because it identifies her as being Amish. The attitudes toward PG are much more favorable among young, middle-aged, and older part time farmers/off-farm workers although they are the ones interacting with the English-speaking world the most. The researcher believes that through their frequent interactions with the outside English-speaking world, they realize how much English they speak and also that if they continue to do so, their own language might be at risk. They do not want to lose it because it is the language in which they can express fine, subtle nuances. It is the intimate language of family and friends. An off-farm worker in his forties commented: “I speak English a lot in my line of business, and I know it well. But it’s when I speak Amish with my fellow Amish men, . . . THAT’S when I feel like people understand me. They know why I think the way I do.” By speaking PG, this Amish man expresses a feeling of identity and belonging to the OOA, which is a major contributing factor to language maintenance.

8.8 The Future of Pennsylvania German among the OOA in Lancaster County

This study shows that the consensus among the OOA is that, since they cannot do much about it, they need to accept the fact that the outside world is encroaching upon their close-knit Amish community to a greater extent than ever before. This forces them to interact in English on a much larger scale, not only with the “English” but with fellow Amish men and women as well. These sentiments were expressed very well by a rhetorical question asked by a shop owner in his
fifties who replied: “I don’t know what could be done about it. Do you?” In previous research (cf. Keiser 2002), accounts of potential methods to promote PG are given. Methods that to “moderns” sound like potential solutions in maintaining PG are not as likely to gain real ground among the OOA. Therefore, just as Fishman (1991) argues that those language maintenance efforts must begin in the community itself through voluntary efforts; this researcher believes that this is also true for the OOA community in Lancaster County. At the moment, many of the OOA interviewed for this study are worried about the changes that are taking place with their native language and notice how much more English is spoken, contrasted with only a few years ago. Nevertheless, the people that are worried are also the same people that blame the others [the neighbors, the Amish family selling produce at the market, and the more liberal Amish in different parts of the county]. Until these informants learn to take their own responsibility, nothing in the direction of active language maintenance will occur.

8.8.1 Possible Actions to be taken in Maintenance Efforts of Pennsylvania German

Keiser (2002) notes that in recent years some literature (religious poetry, the New Testament and a collection of Bible stories) has been published in PG by the New Order Amish in Ohio. However, it must be noted that most OOA do not read PG and think that reading and writing in English meets all their non-religious literary needs. The development of widespread literacy in PG among the OOA is very unlikely. Therefore, writing and publishing in PG does not seem like the right way to promote the maintenance of PG.

After having studied the informants for a long time, interviewing them, and listening to their stories, this researcher realized that trying to increase the use of PG in OOA schools and printing books and other materials in PG will not help maintain PG among the OOA. There is an issue that runs deeper than that.
The sociolinguistic function of the church service as the core of Amish identity and the importance of language choice in the church service for the maintenance of PG has been considered in great detail in earlier studies (cf. Huffines 1980, Meindl 2009), and not much emphasis has been placed on it in this study. However, language is seldom preserved for its own sake, but the preservation of a group’s faith is many times the primary source for a language to survive. The interview data of this study demonstrate the importance of AHG for the identity of the OOA. Informants emphasize the theological significance of AHG when they describe the German version of the Bible as older and more authoritative and powerful than the English version. The Luther German Bible is also perceived as being more accurate. Consequently, use of the German Scripture just cannot be neglected. Maintenance of both PG and AHG are important symbols of Amish identity and tangible connections with their spiritual heritage. The lack of PG during the worship service is considered a threat to the very fabric of what it means to be Amish. Also, informants in this study pointed to the fact that abandoning AHG goes along with changes in lifestyle and points away from what it means to be OOA. This is in accordance with Johnson-Weiner (1992: 28), who writes: “The maintenance of German among Old Order Amish and Mennonite groups is an expression of their commitment to a particular way of life.” This researcher believes that as long as the OOA in Lancaster County perceive their language as a symbol of their religious identity, efforts will be made to maintain and pass on the language to future generations.

8.9 Directions for Future Research

The findings of this dissertation are tentative rather than definite. If supported by future research, additional questions that have been raised throughout this process will be answered.
The economic changes that have altered the Amish workplace environment in the last three or four decades are far from complete. They are only the beginning. The long-term effects of the linguistic changes are still uncertain. As the boundaries to mainstream society become more permeable, it is uncertain what the effects of the increased interactions with the outside world will be. A monitoring of how the social, cultural, and economic changes are affecting the linguistic behavior in OOA communities is thus necessary.

OOA communities in North America are booming in population, thus ensuring the vitality of PG in general for the foreseeable future. So, the future of PG studies lies in tracking language maintenance and shift through diachronic studies in the historically tourist-oriented communities and in smaller new settlements that have developed in recent years. The newly founded Amish communities are usually small in size. Because of the smallness of the community, Amish business owners, in order to survive, need to attract non-Amish customers, which ultimately will lead to more customer contact with the English-speaking population.

In larger settlements, such as Lancaster County, because of population pressure, Amish small businesses are likely to gain even further ground in the future, and farming will remain a minority occupation. However, the final blow for farming has not yet been given.

Organic farming is a route the Amish are pursuing more and more. A growing number of Amish are farming organic produce, meats, and milk. An ever-increasing demand from a health-conscious public and higher prices are incentives for the Amish to pursue organic farming. Higher prices means more income by producing less, thereby reducing the size of land needed to maintain a farm.

Another growing trend among the Amish is produce farming. Whereas eighty to one hundred twenty acres are generally needed for a dairy farm, produce can be grown on only a few...
acres. Produce farms are highly labor-dependent and rely on intensive cultivation, which fits well with what the Amish believe in: working the soil together with extended family.

If an increasing number of Amish go back to their roots of farming, they may actually speak less English since they will be working primarily with their family on the farm and speaking PG as they work. On the other hand, the “English” are the ones mostly interested in organically grown products. Therefore, they may end up speaking English to a large extent if they sell their produce at a roadside stand or own their own store selling dairy products primarily to non-Amish locals and tourists. More research needs to be done in this area to see if produce farming and organic farming have any effect on language use among the OOA in Lancaster County.

The present study provides interesting insight into attitudes of the informants in regard to language use, but the data are not complete since many of the “young people” referred to so frequently throughout the study could not be interviewed because of research-protection restrictions. Instead, the study has looked at young people’s perceptions and attitudes toward their native language through the eyes of the older generations (eighteen and above). The majority of the informants believe that the young people want to maintain PG. How true is that? Is the younger generation as positive toward PG as the older generation claims it to be, or has it been influenced by outside forces to such a degree that an attitude change toward their native language is about to take place? The young are, after all, the ones speaking the most English, not only outside their own home but also at home. For future research, it would thus be interesting to study the younger generation (those under the age of eighteen), especially in their involvement in youth group meetings, singings, and “rumspringa.” Research also needs to be undertaken in off-farm work-related situations in trying to determine the impact that workplace changes have on
the next generation (the children of those employed in settings in which English is spoken on a regular basis today). Subsequently, a comparison between the younger and the older generation would be valuable.

The inability of minorities to maintain the home as an intact domain for the use of their heritage language has often been decisive for language shift. Thus, additional research of language use in the home domain of OOA families needs to be undertaken. By analyzing the data in the present study, it is obvious that for many OOA families who, in their line of business, interact on a regular basis with the outside English-speaking world, an increased usage of English in the home domain is emerging. This researcher believes this is only the beginning of increased usage of English in the homes of OOA; therefore, studies in the home domain under prolonged periods of time need to be carried out.

8.10 A Final Analysis: Elements That Will Encourage the Maintenance of PG in the Future

In addition to the maintenance of AHG as the language of the church service, the assumption can be made from this study that there are two elements of especially vital importance that will have an impact on whether PG among the OOA in Lancaster County will be maintained or not: (1) a continued dense social network structure and (2) identity.

Regarding a continued dense social network structure the study shows that the majority of informants answered negatively to the question whether PG will survive the way it is currently spoken among the Amish, stating the increased amount of work off the farm as the primary culprit. By working off the farm, they many times work with or serve people who normally do not belong to their close social network. However, the more cohesive the group, the more likely it is that the OOA will be able to withstand the pressure from the world outside and keep the
community values and notion of itself intact. So, in the short term, the three elements that Louden (1988) lists as vital for language maintenance, 1) both languages have to be learned at an early age, 2) the domains in which they are used cannot be overlapping, and 3) the attitudes toward both languages have to be positive or at least not negative, still do exist in the OOA community under investigation. This is attributed to the still rather tight-knit and dense social network. PG is still transferred from one generation to the next and thus learned at an early age. However, some of the informants expressed a deep concern that parents are getting more negligent in their efforts to transfer PG to their children and called for more discipline in speaking PG to them. This, of course, also has to do with the real concern at the moment: the increasing use of English in domains previously reserved for PG, especially in the home. It is important for the OOA to keep the English spoken in the homes to a minimum or English will gain increasingly more ground and PG will eventually become redundant and a shift may occur. On the positive side, the OOA informants, both young and old alike, seem to have a positive attitude toward their heritage language and a willingness to preserve it.

This study shows that the social network has become more open through the increasing interaction with English-speaking customers, tourists, and others speaking English. However, the majority of the informants believe that the closeness and spirit of working together, continuing to assist each other in times of need that still exists within the community, will continue to impose social pressure upon its members and especially on those who are struggling – the young who are constantly exposed to English, not just at work but in their social lives – and thus reinforce positive linguistic norms and attitudes toward their mother tongue. The informants do believe their language is in a state of flux, but “the Amish language will survive, not the way it is now
but somehow in a different shape and form,” and “it will take a long time, generations, before it changes.

(2) **Identity.** In the long run, the researcher believes that whether PG will be maintained or not has more to do with identity than anything else. The Amish life pivots on *Gelassenheit* - living a life of submission to a higher authority, and the *Ordnung* - the blueprint for prescribed and prohibited practices. The informants state that they are willing to negotiate with the outside world on many things, such as lights, signals and reflectors on buggies, nonfarm employment, the hiring of cars and vans, and the selective use of electricity. However, certain things are non-negotiable. The non-negotiables are features that have to do with who they are as a people, symbols or markers of “Amishness” – a preference for working as farmers, horse-and-buggy transportation, traditional dress, and, last but not least, speaking Pennsylvania German. To stay within the boundaries of what is allowed within a particular community, challenging the *Ordnung* in its stipulations of when to use PG is closely intertwined with the issue of identity.

According to Johnson-Weiner (1998: 383), trying to maintain a language is not a passive act but an active assertion of identity, a choice to draw the line between those who are Old Order and those who are not or who have ceased to be. Since most of them think that PG is one of the most important markers of being Amish, they are trying to protect their language.

It is undeniably so that the markers of “Amishness” have different meaning and vary in importance to the informants of this study. The study clearly shows that for the majority of the informants the unique dress code and especially speaking PG identify and define who they are as a separate people. They believe that by giving up speaking PG, not only will they not be separated from but, by speaking English, they will become “English.” Speaking PG is a commitment to their Christian faith but also a symbol of tradition. As one Amish man noted: “To
be Amish is to speak Dutch. It’s in our hearts. That’s what my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents did. When we speak English all the time, we aren’t Amish anymore.” The fact that a majority (eighty percent) of the informants, especially among the part time farmers/off-farm workers, regardless of age, would speak PG even if they had a choice between PG and English is indicative of their positive attitude and wish to try to maintain PG. At the same time the older generations strongly believe that the language will be maintained as long as they (the middle-aged) keep speaking to their children in PG, but they are not as certain about the grandchildren’s generation. The study also shows that only a small minority (about twenty percent) of the informants responded that it does not matter which language they speak. PG separates the OOA from the outside world, but it also protects them from it and makes them conform in body, mind, and spirit.

So, if they do not speak PG anymore, would there still be an Amish community? This is a valid question since participants expressed some serious doubts whether the OOA community would survive at all were English to be spoken at all times. Especially doubtful are the middle-aged (38-57) part time homemakers/off-farm workers and older (58-77) male off-farm workers – both groups with some of the greatest exposure to the outside English-speaking world. Although negative comments and doubts about the survival chances of the OOA community were expressed among these cohorts, the study clearly shows that in general the majority of the informants still believes that what is of greater importance for the survival chances of their community than dressing or speaking “Amish” is to maintain their separateness, live righteous Christian lives, do the right things, and help each other out in times of need. That this is true is confirmed by one of the Amish informants in his fifties who comments: “Religion is what keeps us together. It’s the way we live that’s important.” This is also in line with Huffines’ (1989)
findings. People still perceive the Amish as being Amish even if they have given up speaking PG but dress Amish and live a good Christian life.

For now, after having analyzed the data, this researcher believes that despite societal changes, language use and attitudes among the OOA in this study support the maintenance of PG. At the present time, loan words enable the informants to communicate efficiently by adjusting their lexicon and by allowing a certain amount of code-switching to English. So, there is a communal wish to maintain the language, but there also has to be a communal wish to do something about keeping the language.

When a language serves important religious functions, as PG and AHG do among the OOA, it may stand a better chance of survival. The OOA have maintained PG to resist secular authority, to remain separate from mainstream society, to preserve the traditions of their forefathers, and most importantly, to identify themselves as Old Order. However, it is the opinion of the researcher that it is very likely that with time, if there are sufficient other elements that define these people as separate, the forces of societal change may result in a redefinition of the Amish theological commitment to separateness, which may well lead to the maintenance of Old Order ethnicity but to a monolingual English-speaking OOA community in Lancaster County.

There are two very significant factors, one societal and one linguistic, which could cause the OOA to make a conscious shift to English. Linguistic boundary maintenance is of great importance to the OOA, but societal boundary control might be of even greater importance for maintaining their way of life. Clear boundaries of separation from the surrounding world are central to the OOA understanding of what it means to be Christian. In this view the loss of language means the loss of separation, which means the unthinkable – a loss of faith.
Nevertheless, if the OOA see English as a necessary tool for economic survival – that is, to work and do business, to educate their children, socialize and thus keep their children within the OOA fold – they will most likely choose English as a way of preserving their world. As Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985 239-40) note: “Feelings of ethnic identity can survive total language loss.” The above statement by Tabouret-Keller seems to apply to the long term prospects of PG among the OOA in Lancaster County. The informants of this study seem to believe that if they still have a feeling of belonging to the ethnic fold of the Old Orders, in the end, it does not matter if they speak PG or not.
### APPENDIX A

#### INFORMANT DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
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<th>AGE</th>
<th>DOMICILE</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>38-57</td>
<td>East Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>38-57</td>
<td>Paradise</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>18-37</td>
<td>Bird-in-Hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>58-77</td>
<td>Gordonville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>18-37</td>
<td>Gordonville</td>
</tr>
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<td>Salesman agro./equipment/animals</td>
<td>58-77</td>
<td>Leola</td>
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<td>58-77</td>
<td>Leola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>18-37</td>
<td>Ronks</td>
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<td>18-37</td>
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<td>58-77</td>
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<td>Gap</td>
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<td>Provider of meals in own home</td>
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<tr>
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List of the informants in this study and some of their relevant demographics
June 24, 2005

Dear Mr. and Mrs. X,

My name is Marie Qvarnström. I was born and raised in Sweden, lived in Germany for many years and have lived in the Lancaster area for the last few years. I am a student at Penn State University and at the same time I am working as a teacher, teaching German language and culture.

For me to finish my studies I have to write a paper about something that has to do with the German language. I have chosen to write mine on the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect which has intrigued me ever since I was a teenager and spent a year in Pennsylvania. I will try to find out if the Old Order Amish of Lancaster County are using Pennsylvania Dutch and English differently than before, due to changing social and economic conditions which have forced some people to find jobs off the farm, in a variety of occupations.

I would appreciate the opportunity to come and visit sometime and talk to you about the languages you speak, but I know how busy you are during the summer and fall months. If you feel you do not have the time for me to visit, I would appreciate it very much if you could help me out by taking just a few minutes to answer my enclosed questions.

However, if you agree to a visit, please contact me by returning this letter in the self-addressed envelope indicating if a particular day of the week or time of day is better than others. You can also use the same envelope to return the answers to my questions. Everything will of course be confidential. I am the only person who will know your name.

Any help is very much appreciated and I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Marie Qvarnström
APPENDIX C

Pennsylvania Dutch vs. English

Please check all the boxes that apply to you

Male □ Female □

Age: 18-27 □ 28-37 □ 38-47 □ 48-57 □
      58-67 □ 68-77 □ 78-87 □ 88-97 □

Single □ Married Without Children □ Married With Children □ Widowed □

Age of Children: 0-5 □ 6-10 □ 11-15 □ 16-20 □ 21-25 □
     26-30 □ 31-35 □ 36-40 □ 41-45 □ 46 or older □

1. What is your occupation?

   Farmer without a roadside stand □
   Farmer with a roadside stand □
   Construction site worker □
   Blacksmith □
   Carpenter □
   Salesman agricultural equipment/animals □
   Employed in or owner of a quilt shop/craft shop □
   Employed in or owner of a furniture/woodworking shop □
   Employed in or owner of a bakery □
   Employed in or owner of a greenhouse or nursery □
   Employed in a restaurant □
   Provider of meals in your own home □
   Domestic help for the “English” □
   Babysitter for the “English” □
   Teacher □
   Homemaker □
   Other ____________________________
2. How long have you been working in this occupation?

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<td>21-25 years</td>
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<td>26-30 years</td>
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<td>31-35 years</td>
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<td>36-40 years</td>
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<td>41-45 years</td>
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<td>Longer</td>
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3. How many Amish are employed where you work?

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4. How many “English” are working with you?

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5a. Are there any other Pennsylvania Dutch-speaking people, other than Amish, at your workplace?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

5b. If your answer to question # 5a is “yes,” please explain with whom else you speak Pennsylvania Dutch except for your Amish work mates?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

6. How often are you in contact with the Amish outside your own immediate family?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Several times a month
- Seldom
- Never
7 How often are you in contact with the “English”?

Daily ☐
Weekly ☐
Several times a month ☐
Seldom ☐
Never ☐

8. Did you already know English when you started school?

Yes ☐
No ☐
Some ☐

9a. When speaking Pennsylvania Dutch do you find yourself switching into English?

Always ☐
Often ☐
Sometimes ☐
Seldom ☐
Never ☐

9b. If your answer to question # 9a was “Always” or “Often,” with whom are you talking when you switch?

Mother ☐
Father ☐
Younger brother(s) ☐
Older brother(s) ☐
Younger sister(s) ☐
Older sister(s) ☐
Spouse ☐
Grandparents ☐
Children living at home ☐
Children living on their own ☐
Amish friends ☐
“English” friends ☐
Boy/Girlfriend ☐
Amish workmates ☐
“English” workmates ☐
Supplier(s)/dealer(s) ☐
Customer(s) ☐
Neighbors ☐
10a. When speaking English, do you ever switch to Pennsylvania Dutch?

Always  □
Often    □
Sometimes □
Seldom   □
Never    □

10b. If your answer to question # 10a was “Always” or “Often,” with whom are you talking when you switch?

Mother    □
Father     □
Younger brother(s) □
Older brother(s)  □
Younger sister(s) □
Older sister(s)  □
Spouse     □
Grandparents □
Children living at home □
Children living on their own □
“English” friends □
“English” workmates □
Boy/Girlfriend □
Amish friends □
Amish workmates □
Supplier(s)/dealer(s) □
Customer(s) □
Neighbors □

11. If you had the choice of speaking Pennsylvania Dutch or English at anytime, with anybody, which language would you choose?

Pennsylvania Dutch □
English         □
Either one     □

12a. In general, do you think that knowing Pennsylvania Dutch has been an advantage in your life?

Yes       □
No        □
I don’t know □

12b. If your answer to question # 12a is “yes,” in what way has it been an advantage in your life?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
13a. Has there been any disadvantage in your life to knowing Pennsylvania Dutch?

Yes  ☐
No  ☐
I don’t know  ☐

13b. If your answer to question # 13a is “yes,” what is the disadvantage?
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

14. What does speaking Pennsylvania Dutch mean to you?

Tradition ☐
Separation from the rest of the world ☐
It makes me feel more part of my community ☐
Religious identity ☐
My closest family and friends speak it ☐
It’s easier telling jokes in Dutch ☐
It’s easier for me to express myself when speaking Dutch ☐
It’s good to be able to speak a language not many outsiders understand ☐
It has no meaning to me ☐

15. What is, do you think, the most important symbol of being Amish?

The Language – Pennsylvania Dutch ☐
Dress ☐
Horse and Buggy Transportation ☐
Being a Farmer ☐

16a. Do you think that Pennsylvania Dutch will survive the way it is spoken among the Amish today?

Yes ☐
No ☐
I don’t know ☐
16b. Additional comments to why you think this way.

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

17a. Do you think that English is spoken too much in your community today?

Yes ☐
No ☐
I don’t know ☐

17b. Additional comments to why you think this way.

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

18a. Do you think that your Amish community would survive if you spoke English all the time?

Yes ☐
No ☐
I don’t know ☐

18b. Additional comments to why you think this way.

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
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Dank! Thank You
APPENDIX D

Additional Questions Pennsylvania Dutch vs. English Survey

1. Do you ever avoid speaking Pennsylvania Dutch?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

2. How much of your conversation at home, do you think, is in Pennsylvania Dutch?
   ☐ About 100%  ☐ About 75%  ☐ About 50%  ☐ About 25%

3. Can you think of times when you used to speak Pennsylvania Dutch and instead you use English in those situations now?

4. Do/did you want your children to learn to speak Pennsylvania Dutch and English equally well, or do/did you have a preference for one language?
   ☐ Pennsylvania Dutch  ☐ English  ☐ Either one

5. Do young people in your community want to speak Pennsylvania Dutch?
   ☐ Yes  ☐ No

6. Should Pennsylvania Dutch be used less or more in the following settings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Less</th>
<th>More</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>☐</td>
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7. Do you think that your community would survive if English were spoken all the time, or is it necessary to speak Pennsylvania Dutch to be Amish?
   ☐ Yes  ☐ No

8. What language(s) do you think the Amish will speak three generations from now?
   ☐ Pennsylvania Dutch  ☐ English  ☐ Both
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VITA

Marie Y. Qvarnström

EDUCATION

M.A, German Linguistics, Literature and Culture, Mälardalen University, Sweden 1998.

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

Adjunct Professor, Millersville University
Elementary German I, spring 2010 and spring 2014
Elementary German II, spring 2012
Amish and Other PA Dutch, spring 2010 - spring 2012

Lecturer & Adjunct Professor, Elizabethtown College
Elementary German, fall 2006 – spring 2010
Intermediate German, fall 2007 – spring 2010
Business German, spring 2006 – fall 2007
Introduction to Sweden, Its Language, Culture and People, spring 2005 – fall 2005
Modern German Society, fall 2004

Teaching Assistant, Penn State University
Stalinism and Nazism, spring 2003
German History and Culture during the 20th Century, spring 2003
Intermediate German, fall 2002
“Heimat” Through Film, spring 2002
Pennsylvania German History and Culture, fall 2000 - spring 2002

ADDITIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Continuing Education Teacher, Medborgarskolan, Västerås and Mölndal, Sweden
Elementary German, fall 1992 – spring 1993
Elementary German, fall 1987 – fall 1988
Intermediate German, fall 1987 –fall 1988

FELLOWSHIPS and GRANTS
Thompson Scholarship, Penn State University, 2001-2010
Doctoral Fellow, The Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown College, PA, 2004
Dissertation Support Grant, Penn State University, 2003
Research and Travel Grant, Mälardalen University, Västerås, Sweden, 1996
Stiftelsen B. Boncompagni-Ludovisi Outstanding Scholar Award, Stockholm, Sweden, 1995
Fredrika Bremer Award, Stockholm, Sweden, 1995

PRESENTED PAPERS (SELECTED)