In Old Order Amish (OOA) communities, the worship service plays a crucial role for social interaction and group identity. For every Amish, worship Sunday is a “day of anticipation.” Furthermore, the worship service is the main occasion where all three languages in the repertoire of OOA play a role in interaction: American English (AE), Pennsylvania German (PG), and Amish High German (AHG). Despite the important role of the worship service and its interesting linguistic structure, the language use in the worship service of OOA has not been examined comprehensively. Only a small number of studies within the ethnographic approach describe language use in OOA worship services in detail.

As a ceremonial event, the worship service is more rule-governed than many other speech situations. Thus, it is an interesting setting for analyzing the connection between language use and its social rules (sociolinguistic norms). The analysis of OOA worship services during my dissertation project on Pennsylvania German speakers in Kansas shows that worship services are linguistically more complex than prior studies imply. The very rules that restrict language choice in the worship service cause a communicative problem—the “preacher’s dilemma”: The sociolinguistic norm prescribes avoidance of American English in the worship service, but clashes with the limited AHG competence of Amish. The scriptures used in the worship services are in AHG and the preachers need to translate unknown words from AHG into AE to ensure that the congregation understands the sermon. I will show that preachers solve this dilemma through flexible use of communication strategies, i.e., self-translations and metalinguistic remarks, thus limiting the use of AE to the necessary minimum while producing a comprehensive and cohesive sermon.

Data for speech behavior in the sermons were collected during my dissertation project by participant observation in twenty worship services in
two Old Order Amish districts in Anderson County, Kansas. In Anderson County, two OOA districts are adjacent, consisting of 39 families at the time of the study. I attended worship services in both districts, taking notes during the sermons and more notes were written down immediately after the worship service. Taping the sermons would have been too disruptive and was not attempted. This method proved to be sufficient to describe communicative strategies and give a general description of language alternation in sermons. Because of the method of documentation, the data from sermons have limitations and do not allow quantitative analyses of code switching or analyzing phonetic details.

The data from sermons in the Anderson County OOA community contribute to filling the gap in knowledge about language use in ceremonial events and provide information on how speakers manage communicative problems in a highly regulated setting. Furthermore, analyzing multilingual communication strategies is a first step to analyze code switching within domains of language use in OOA communities as most prior studies focus on the use of different languages in different domains.⁵

Because language use in OOA sermons is determined by sociolinguistic norms, I will start with a description of the religious and cultural context that determines these norms. The second part will discuss the sociolinguistic norm for OOA worship services and the difficulties to define it. The language use in OOA worship services is determined by the linguistic structure of the languages involved which will be described in the third part. Part four introduces the concept of communication strategies and provides the analysis of their usage in OOA worship services.

Religious and Cultural Context of Sermons

Amish theology is focused on living the faith in the community. Thus, the worship service is the central event in Amish life.⁶ Worship services take place every other Sunday in homes of congregation members. In Anderson County, every member of the congregation hosts a worship service twice a year and worship Sundays alternate between the two neighboring districts. The districts have two preachers each and share the bishop and the deacon. The bishop, with the preachers and deacons, administers the worship services in both districts.

The worship Sunday does not only fulfill a religious function. It is connected to several elements of community formation. Very important for the group identity is the occasional council after worship service in which matters of congregational discipline are discussed. Only baptized congregation members attend while all non-baptized have to leave the room.⁷ Furthermore, gathering on worship Sundays creates many opportunities to converse with
other congregation members. All congregation members have lunch together and the young Amish meet again in the evening for singing. The rest of the day consists of conversations among the adults while the children play together.

The importance of worship Sunday is reflected in the strict social norms and numerous traditions for this day. Except the sick and small babies, everyone attends worship service. All attendees at the worship service comply with a dress code, wearing plain clothes, for example without buttons or zippers on jacket and coat. The OOA have a strong emphasis on the dress code, a common marker of group membership, next to language choice. Another marker of group membership for OOA is the use of horse and buggy for work and private transportation. Different from most OOA, the Anderson County, OOA use tractors for work and some errands, but never on worship Sundays: only horse and buggy are used to travel to the worship services.

As an in-group event, worship Sundays are dominated by PG-use. American English is only used if visitors who do not speak PG are present, but only outside of the worship service. The language use in the worship service is determined by the individual speech events. The OOA worship service in Anderson County consists of the following eleven speech events.

1. Opening
2. Hymn singing
3. Abrath (council)
4. First sermon (in PG “klenne Deel,” in English “the small part”)
5. Prayer
6. Scripture reading
7. Main sermon (in PG “schwere Deel,” in English “the heavy/difficult part”)
8. Zeignis (testimony)
9. Prayer & Benediction
10. Announcements
11. Hymn singing

The status of the worship service as a religious event results in the usage of formulaic speech. The opening, the prayers, and the announcements concerning the next place of worship at the end of the service are formulas in AHG used in many Amish districts. These formulas are recited in a monotonous intonation with higher speed and pitch than the rest of the sermon. Hostetler describes the register for the prayer as “chant style” and a similar intonation-pattern for the sermons.

The scripture reading is the liturgical center of the worship service because it provides the textual base for the sermons. For Amish, the delivery of the
scripture has priority over its interpretation and the preacher's interpretation of the scriptures is not regarded as dogmatic but rather as one proposition on how the scriptures could be applied to daily life.13

The sermons in the worship services are presented through free speech in PG with scripture quotes in AHG. The sermons are prepared in two ways: First, the preachers read and analyze the scriptures at home and, second, discuss the major points of the sermons at the beginning of the worship service in a council, the Abrath. The Abrath provides the opportunity to prepare the sermon in a discussion with all the preachers and to determine who will give the sermon at this day.

Besides the sermons, two short speech events contain PG: the so-called Zeignis (in English: testimony) after the main sermon, and the announcements before the last hymn singing. The Zeignis consists of short comments on the sermon by the preachers, usually one to five minutes long. The Zeignis is the direct result of the theological concept in Anabaptist communities that preachers do not have an authoritative interpretation of the scriptures. Congregation members have to confirm that the presented interpretation of the scriptures is acceptable and did not omit important points.14

Sociolinguistic Norms

The strict social norms for the worship service extend to the sociolinguistic norms, i.e., the rules governing language use in the worship service. As informants in Anderson County describe, hymns, scripture readings and sermons can only be conducted in AHG or PG; accommodations for visitors without knowledge of PG and AHG cannot be made. This distinguishes the worship service from the rest of in-group interaction: PG is the common language within OOA communities, but speakers switch to AE when outsiders are present. The rules for using German in worship services are commonly mentioned in studies on OOA, but the sociolinguistic norms for OOA communities have not been empirically described. A general description of sociolinguistic norms is usually derived from observed patterns of language use, mostly within the domain model. In the domain model, the use of one language for one domain is predicted.15 However, few studies on PG have actually described the domains of PG communities in detail or tested the salience of domains and their assumed sociolinguistic norms in the speech community. The most detailed analyses of language use in OOA communities include a possible domain structure, but focus on the role of the speaker as a factor for the selection of languages in a speech situation, without investigating the sociolinguistic norm for the whole situation.16 As the most detailed study in the ethnographic approach, Enninger and Raith describe the roles of speakers as main factors for the distribution of PG and AHG in Amish
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worship services. Their results confirm the findings from Anderson County
that sociolinguistic norms for worship services exclude the usage of AE.17

The absence of systematic data on sociolinguistic norms in OOA worship
services does not mean that the existing statements on sociolinguistic norms
in OOA communities are not valid. In accordance with the ethnographic
approach to language studies, rules of speech behavior can be derived from
the observed behavior.18 For my own study, I also did not use an empirical
approach to determine sociolinguistic norms because this was not part of my
original research design. I followed a qualitative ethnographic approach of
gathering data through participant observation and included individual state­
ments of speakers as well as observations by other scholars in my analysis of
sociolinguistic norms. As already mentioned, some informants for my study
explained that they cannot use AE in the worship service and would not
make any accommodations for visitors. In the worship services observed for
my study, AE was not used with two exceptions: one is the occasional read­
ing of letters out loud from other communities that asked for assistance. The
other exceptions are occasional quotes in AE and code switching as means of
solving communicative problems during the sermons. The latter exception
from the general avoidance of AE in worship services is the main focus of
this study. This phenomenon poses a double question: does the occasional
usage of AE in sermons mean that the sociolinguistic norm allows AE usage?
If so, we would have to adjust our description of the sociolinguistic norm and
refine interpretations of the significance of AHG and PG in worship service
and possibly in OOA communities in general. If the sociolinguistic norm
generally does not allow AE usage in worship service, what circumstances
justify a violation of the general rule?

Before I address the relationship between language use and sociolinguis­
tic norms in sermons, I have to outline the linguistic repertoire of OOA
speakers.

The Linguistic Repertoire of Old Order Amish

Old Order Amish usually grow up with PG as a first language, learn AE
as a second language, and use AHG in the worship service. I will describe AE
only briefly and will spend more time on PG and AHG because the structure
of PG supports the use of multilingual communication strategies and the
particular status of AHG is the source of communication problems in the
sermons.

American English is the second language of OOA children and they are
not fully competent in AE before they are teenagers. The informants from
Anderson County report that children are taught some AE by parents and
peers before attaining school age, so that children get along in school. In
Anderson County, most children attend public school where all instruction is in AE. Even two families who home-schooled their children used AE as the language of instruction. As teenagers, OOA children have become fully bilingual with AE and PG, with PG being used only with the members of the district and other PG-speaking Anabaptists. The structure of PG has been examined in numerous studies, often with a focus on language change and the possible influence of AE on PG. Most studies conclude that PG undergoes changes within the framework of German syntax and morphology but includes approximately ten to fifteen percent loan words from AE and additionally loan translations. The loan words in PG are not a sign of decline of the PG vocabulary, but rather expand the expressive tools of speakers. Loan words from AE are usually morphologically integrated, e.g., verbs receive inflectional endings and suffixes according to PG morphology rules and nouns are used in compound nouns. These integration processes result in hybrid forms that are partly AE, partly PG, e.g., /carpenterarwett/ for 'carpenter work,' /readykrige/ for 'getting done,' or /anyebbes/ for 'anything.' The integration of loan words neither reduces PG vocabulary nor changes the basic syntax of PG. Consequently, we cannot talk of convergence between PA and AE but rather of a regular presence of AE elements in PG through borrowing.

Not only borrowing but also code switching introduces AE elements into PG speech. Code switching shares features with borrowing and the two phenomena are difficult to distinguish, especially when only individual words from the second language are used. The use of individual words from a second language has been defined as code switching if words are singular occurrences, not morphologically integrated, or fulfill different functions than loan words. Some AE words used by OOA could be classified as code switching and, therefore, OOA are not only used to AE loan words but also to a certain degree of code switching. But further research is needed to determine whether a distinction between code switching and borrowing can be made, whether the two phenomena fulfill different functions, and whether the speakers perceive the phenomena as different.

Both borrowing and code switching have been described as gradual phenomena: AE loans can be found in different degrees of integration into PG, with less and less awareness by speakers that the words were borrowed from AE. Code switching has been described as borrowing with a low degree of integration and low frequency of occurrence. Because of borrowing and code switching, sociolinguistic norms that prescribe PG usage have to be open to a certain amount of AE words.

The third language in the repertoire of OOA is AHG, the spoken version of Standard German found mainly in the scriptures, some liturgical texts and
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a few non-religious writings used by OOA. Frey describes AHG as similar to spoken German in Pennsylvania during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though distinguished by "some peculiarities in pronunciation that are typically Amish." Amish High German includes some archaic vocabulary because OOA use the Luther translation. The AHG competence of OOA is usually limited to reproductive use, i.e., reading written texts or quoting them from memory. Amish do not usually write or converse in AHG. The children of Anderson County OOA become acquainted with AHG in a bi-weekly Bible School and a week-long summer school once a year. Otherwise, AHG is only encountered in private Bible studies and during worship services. As a consequence, the Anderson County OOA have limited competence in AHG and often consult dictionaries or English translations of scriptures in order to understand texts written in German. The meaning or pronunciation of AHG words cause problems, as I will show in the analysis of sermons.

Communication Strategies

For the Anderson County Amish, the main communicative problem in the sermons is the "preacher's dilemma" but other problems can result from gaps in the communicative competence of OOA. The preachers employ communication strategies to solve these communicative problems. Communication strategies have been defined as "a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty." These difficulties can be gaps in the linguistic system of a non-native speaker resulting in production errors, or problems of discourse organization. In multilingual settings, communication strategies are often connected with code switching. Because OOA are fluent speakers of two languages, PG and AE, they have the choice between two languages to compensate for deficits in the third language. In multilingual settings, the results of communication strategies can look similar to ad hoc products of multilingual speech, e.g., borrowing. Different from ad hoc language, communication strategies are planned behavior, oriented towards the solution of communicative problems that are caused by the restricted control of one language in their repertoire. My analysis of communication strategies in OOA sermons concentrates on two main communication strategies that are used to resolve the preacher's dilemma: metalinguistic remarks and self-translations.

Metalinguistic remarks are employed "whenever the addresser and/or the addressee need to check up whether they use the same code, speech is focused on the CODE." Metalinguistic remarks can occur as implicit or explicit utterances and are often marked by different prosodies and decreases in volume. Metalinguistic remarks can be in the same language as the main language of an utterance but in bilingual communication they are often connected to
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code switching. These features are framing-mechanisms, enabling the recognition of metalinguistic remarks by conversation partners. Metalinguistic remarks can be distinguished regarding their object: metacommunication is talking about the relationship between speakers, while metapragmatics refer to the use of language, not its linguistic form or semantics.

The functions of metalinguistic remarks can be symbolic, organizing the discourse, signaling how utterances should be interpreted (e.g., as ironic), and repair of communicative problems. The repair function makes metalinguistic remarks suitable for the resolution of the “preacher's dilemma.” The preachers in the Anderson County OOA-districts employ metalinguistic comments on their language use mainly as a strategy mainly to address problems connected to the understanding of words in AHG, but also regarding problems with the pronunciation of AHG and the recollection of quotes.

When addressing problems in understanding AHG preachers refer to the AE meaning of a word.

1  in englisch ded ma saache seared with hot iron  
   [in English one would say seared with hot iron]

This type of metalinguistic remark provides the majority of tokens in the data from Anderson County. These types of remarks are metapragmatic, i.e., they refer to the use of translations and in this way to the organization of the speech event.

Some metalinguistic comments express the insecurity regarding the correctness of a provided translation:

2  ich denk des heest wie lost wie don't care  
   [I think it means like lost or don't care]

The use of /ich denk/ (AE: I think) and the presentation of two different translations shows that the speaker is not sure of his translation and wants the listeners to be aware of the limited validity of his translation. Like the first example, this example has an implicit metapragmatic function by referring to the use of translations. Explicit references to translations are rare in Anderson County sermons but occur occasionally:

3  mir wolle denke was se määne (.) ich kann's ned alles explaine (.)  
   ich kann de dictionary nemme un' s versuuche  
   [we want to think about what they mean (.) I cannot explain it all (.)  
   I can take the dictionary and try it]

In this example, the preacher addresses the congregation. Integrating the audience has been described as increasing the effectiveness of communication strategies. Furthermore, the preacher in example 3 states his difficulties in
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finding the correct meaning for an AHG word, similar to the preacher in the next example:

4  *wenn ich's letz hab gucken's nooch*
   [if I got it wrong, look it up]

This metalinguistic remark on the preacher's possibly erroneous interpretation of an AHG scripture is consistent with the role of preachers in OOA communities. They are not expected to deliver a dogmatic interpretation of scriptures.

Besides issues with translating or understanding AHG scripture sequences, metalinguistic remarks sometimes refer to problems with the pronunciation of AHG words:

5  *Bosheit—ich wees ned ob ich des pronouncä duh recht—uf englisch is, meen ich, malice*
   [Malice—I do not know whether I pronounce it the right way—in English (it) is, I think, malice]

The example contains two metalinguistic remarks that refer to different problems: after referring to his lack of competence in the pronunciation of AHG, the preacher addresses the problem of finding the correct meaning of the word (/uf englisch is me:n ich malice/). The AHG word /Bosheit/ triggered at least two other metalinguistic remarks by the same preacher, both referring to the difficulties in translating the word properly. The other aspect mentioned, i.e., difficulties with the pronunciation, are not addressed very often. This is partly due a limited amount of such problems. Amish High German has leveled the major differences between the phonology of written German and PG.

Besides issues with the translation and the pronunciation of AHG words, metalinguistic comments in the sermons address problems with recalling quotes:

6  *wenn ich die worte noch recht krigge kann*
   [if I still can get the correct words]

This problem arises because the preachers often recite long quotes from memory and attempt to reproduce them as literally as possible. This aim of verbatim reproduction is connected to Amish theology which defines the main function of preachers as reproducing the scriptures rather than delivering a dogmatic interpretation. The importance of verbatim quotes is demonstrated by the fact that the preachers interrupt and try to remember the quote if recalling the exact quote causes issues. Occasionally, they start over several times in attempts to reproduce the exact words of the scriptures.
Besides using metalinguistic remarks, preachers try to solve the Preacher's Dilemma with self-translations. Self-translations are translations of lexical items or longer phrases by the same speaker immediately after or in close proximity to the utterance of the original item. The self-translations in Anderson County sermons have repair functions because they fill gaps in the AHG-lexicon of congregation members:

7  *alle Gesetze halten*—*alle laws halten*
    [keeping all laws—keeping all laws]

Self-translations are a form of repetition or reiteration. Gumperz defined reiterations as the verbatim or modified repetition of a message in another code. Self-translations are formally distinguished from other translations by their position in the discourse and the absence of a lexical frame, i.e., they are not introduced by a word or expression that marks the translation as such. As shown in example seven, the translation often follows the problematic word immediately or with only one or two words separating original and translation. However, the preachers also regularly repeat the whole phrase that contains the problematic word and only translate the problematic word:

8  *die Zichtigung gibt uns nicht Freude*—*die Zichtigung gibt uns nicht joy*
    [the castigation does not give us joy]

9  *er war eens fun de Aposchtlen (.) er war eens fun de disciples*
    [He was one of the disciples (.) he was one of the disciples]

Some words that were subject to self-translations in sermons in Anderson County are listed below:

AHG items in Self-translations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AHG original</th>
<th>Self-translation in AE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verschreckt</td>
<td>troubled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unparteilichkeit</td>
<td>impartiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinigung</td>
<td>purge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erlesungswerk</td>
<td>plan of salvation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gehorchen</td>
<td>obedient (used with PG /sei/)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gottesfirchtig</td>
<td>god fearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>erneuerten Sinn</td>
<td>renewed mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vergeblich</td>
<td>in vain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unsträflich</td>
<td>without rebuke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Occasionally, preachers translate complete sentences into AE, also without an introduction of the translation and then continuing in PG right after the self-translation:

10 Wie sollen wir entkommen wenn wir so eine groose seeligkeit missachten?
   How should we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

Most self-translations in sermons are translations from AHG into AE, but some translations into PG have been observed. Examples are shown below:

Self-translations into PG, observed in sermons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AHG original</th>
<th>Self-translation in PG</th>
<th>Meaning in AE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>werden [Gott] schauen</td>
<td>zelle sehe</td>
<td>will see [god]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>war in Banden</td>
<td>is in kette gwest</td>
<td>was in chains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>er verschied</td>
<td>is gschdorwe</td>
<td>he died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zerbreche</td>
<td>verbreche (.) weech</td>
<td>to break apart (.) to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mache (.) ma kennt</td>
<td>soften (.) one could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sache tenderizä</td>
<td>say to tenderize</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

The analysis of OOA sermons shows that they are linguistically dynamic on the micro-level within strict sociolinguistic norms on the macro-level. The use of the two communication strategies metalinguistic remarks and self-translations successfully manage the “preacher’s dilemma” and support the efficient performance of the speech event. The use of AE for the communication strategies is possible because the structure of PG includes more or less integrated AE elements and speakers are used to a certain amount of code switching. Consequently, a sociolinguistic norm that prescribes the use of PG allows a certain amount of AE. Metalinguistic remarks and self-translations allow the usage of the amount of AE necessary for a comprehensible sermon while keeping the use of AE to a minimum. Addressing communication problems in metalinguistic remarks is supported by the theological concept that preachers do not provide a dogmatic interpretation of the scriptures. Moving the speech to the metalinguistic level enables a certain amount of interaction with the audience (controlling the preacher’s translations and interpretations), thus increasing the efficiency of the communicative strategy.

My data on OOA sermons in Anderson County allow a first description of communication strategies but are insufficient for a detailed analysis of micro-level strategies like code switching. More data are needed, especially audio-taped data, to investigate code switching and communication
strategies. Neither phenomena have been investigated for PG but such analyses promise interesting insights into the language choice within speech situations and the managing of interaction in multilingual settings. Future studies should be expanded to more communication strategies and more situations. A better understanding of how OOA perceive sociolinguistic norms in their speech communities would be beneficial for future studies on PG use and the symbolic function of PG. Understanding communication strategies and their sociolinguistic factors in OOA communities use offers a broad field for future research with possible implications for many other multilingual speech communities.

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Notes

1 John Andrew Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 209–10. Thank you very much to Eileen Beazley and Summer Eglinski for their help with preparing the manuscript for this article.


3 Ibid., 5.


7 Ibid., 218.

8 Ibid., 220.


10 Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 213.


14 Ibid., 74.


17 Joachim Raith, *Sprachgemeinschaftstyp, Sprachkontakt, Sprachgebrauch* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner Verlag, 1982), 188.
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19 For the details of language choice in Anderson County see Meindl, “Language Use,” 81–118.


25 Meindl, 62.


30 Eastman, Codeswitching, 16.


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(1979), 50; Marion Lois Huffines, "Pennsylvania German: Convergence and Change as Strategies of Discourse," in First Language Attrition, ed. Herbert Seliger and Robert Vago (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 48; Raith mentions the use of AHG for diaries or letters (Sprachgemeinschaftstyp, 188).


42 Ibid., 326; Lucy, " Reflexive Language," 17.


45 Enninger and Raith, Ethnography-of-Communication, 61.


47 Self-translations also show formal features of repairs. Repairs are often marked by hesitations and changes in speed and volume (Kovács, Code-Switching, 120). In the sermons, very brief pauses seem to separate the self-translation from the translated item and the volume of the self-translations seems only slightly lower. However, better data is needed to describe volume and speed of self-translations.

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----------. “Social Roles and Language Choice in an Old Order Amish Community.” *Sociologica Internationalis* 17 (1979): 47–70.


