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Lexical Borrowing and Linguistic Convergence in Pennsylvania German

Lexical borrowing is the most obvious of linguistic convergent behaviors, and it is common in all instances of language contact. The borrowing of vocabulary items and phrasal patterns is in itself a simple process of substitution which may leave the grammatical systems of the borrowing language unaffected. But nonnative lexical material can also establish new linguistic models and affect other components of the native grammar. The borrowing language converges toward the contact language on the basis of these newly established models.

The purpose of this study is to document the distribution of English vocabulary words across Pennsylvania German speech communities and to view that distribution within the context of linguistic convergence. Three areas are of concern: 1. the distribution of English borrowings across Pennsylvania German communities; 2. the effect of morphological integration; and 3. the influence of borrowing on syntax and discourse behavior. It will be argued that in language contact lexical borrowing initiates and drives the process of convergence. As borrowing becomes more obvious, speakers also begin to question the integrity of the borrowing (minority) language. Extensive borrowing may consequently lead speakers to adopt the dominant language for all their communicative needs.

Procedures

The observations below are based on data from interviews with 32 native speakers of Pennsylvania German: 13 nonplain (nonsectarian), 10 Mennonites and 9 Amish. All informants are bilingual. They are classified into three groups:

Group N: Nonplain native speakers of Pennsylvania German. The nonplain native speakers of Pennsylvania German range in age from 35 to 75 years and live in the farm valleys of southern Northumberland, northern Dauphin, and western Schuylkill counties. All but the two

youngest (35 and 47 years old) continue to speak Pennsylvania German with their spouses and peers, but all speak English to their children.

Group M: The Mennonites. The Mennonite group consists of members of an Old Order Mennonite community, also called "Team Mennonites."

Group A: The Amish. The Amish group consists of 8 members of a conservative wing of the New Order Amish and one member of an Old Order Amish community.

The Mennonites and Amish (the plain or sectarian sample) range from 24 to 65 years of age. All except one individual were born and raised in Lancaster County but currently reside in Union County, Pennsylvania. Because the plain speakers moved to Union County as adults, one may question whether the displacement itself plays a role in their receptivity to borrowed forms. All plain informants maintain contact with their home Lancaster County communities. Plain groups also live apart from the main society, regardless of their location. Because of their continued relationship to Lancaster County and their separateness from nongroup members in Union County, it is unlikely that the displacement affects the linguistic development of the sectarian sample. The Mennonites and the Amish speak Pennsylvania German for daily discourse within the family and community. Both groups are characterized by horse and buggy transportation, distinctive dress, and limited education to the eighth grade.

The interviews were carried out from September 1985 to Janaury 1986. Each interview lasted one-and-one-half hours and consisted of three parts: free conversation, translation of English sentences into Pennsylvania German, and description of pictures. The topic of all three interview tasks centered on domestic activities typical of families in rural farm communities. Only one segment of the picture description task was designed to elicit specific vocabulary items; therefore the lexical data for this study have been drawn from all three parts of the interview.

I. Lexical Variation in Pennsylvania German

Lexical variation within Pennsylvania German exists apart from apparent English influence. Generally, the nonplain differ from the plain, but there are examples where the nonplain and the Mennonites differ from the Amish (see table 1).

Informants report that on occasion lexical differences cause misunderstandings. In such a case, each group tends to believe that the form used by the other group is "more German." This lexical variation seems to have existed at the time of settlement and reflects regional provenience. The Reed and Seifert *Linguistic Atlas of Pennsylvania German* (1954) maps some of these and many other examples. (See also Seifert 1946, 1971; Reed 1957.) Such lexical variation contributes toward subgroup identification among the Pennsylvania Germans, and speakers of one subgroup often report of other subgroups: "They speak a little different Dutch, but I can understand them."

Table 1
Distribution of PG Lexical Variants

Translation	PG Vocabulary	N	M	A
'smell' (vb)	*schmacke*	0	7	7
	rieche	8	0	0
'loud noise'	*Zucht*	12	0	0
	Yacht	0	6	2
	laut (mache)	0	0	6
'be afraid'	*bang sei*	8	0	0
	sich fariche	0	7	9
'leaf'	*Blaat*	10	8	0
	en Bledder	0	0	3
	Laab	0	2	4
'cry' (vb)	*brille*	9	6	0
	heile	0	1	8
'shovel' (n)	*Schipp*	8	0	0
	Schaufel	(1)	10	9
'bark' (vb)	*gauze*	10	14	14
	blaffe	6	0	0
'(sit) down here'	*do hie/her*	9	0	2
	do anne	0	7	6
'sit (down here)'	*hocke*	9	7	0
	sitze	0	0	8

Other lexical variation indicates the encroachment of English into the Pennsylvania German lexicon. The literature dealing with English loans in Pennsylvania German is long and varied. Much of it attempts to determine the level at which borrowing has occurred. Rauch (1879, iii–iv) estimates that from 18% to 20% of all words in Pennsylvania German are English in origin. Lambert (1924, ix–x) places the estimates from 0% to 12% or 15%, depending upon the writer or speaker and the topic. Buffington (1941, 67–68) estimates 2.5% to 5% English loans in Pennsylvania German popular newspaper prose; he counts 6% English loans in the Pennsylvania German of six women at a quilting party and 7% in the informal conversation of younger Pennsylvania German speakers at a local hotel. Enninger (1979, 47) places English borrowings in the Pennsylvania German writings of an Old Order Amish scribe to the Amish newspaper *Die Botschaft* at 7%. Knodt (1986, 56) counts 14% English loans in the data elicited by direct questioning from Old Order Amish informants in Delaware. Buffington and most recent investigators assert that early estimates of English loans in Pennsylvania German are inflated. They also emphasize that loans from English have had little effect on Pennsylvania German morphology and, as Reed (1948, 244) suggests, "that future studies will reveal more extensive influence in the field of syntax" (cf. also Schach 1951, 267).

The purpose here is not to pursue the percentages of English loan words in Pennsylvania German. While the frequency of borrowing often affects speakers' attitudes toward the borrowing language, lexical substitution per se does not affect the application of native language linguistic rules. As will be argued below, the linguistic code of the borrowing language is affected by recurring (and reproducible) patterns, and these patterns may involve a single, even infrequently borrowed item.

Direct borrowing of English words into Pennsylvania German is realized to varying degrees in the speech of members of the three groups in the sample (see table 2).

The first fifteen examples indicate that English words replace Pennsylvania German words more frequently among plain groups than nonplain, especially in the speech of the Amish in this sample. The Pennsylvania German vocabulary items *Iems, Ent, Eechel, Debbich,* and *schlachde* appear not to be used in the plain communities; *schleise, ham, schwinge, picke, but, Daeds, farm/Blatz,* and the pattern *(Geld) mache* replace Pennsylvania German counterparts more frequently among the plain, especially in the speech of the Amish. Although nonplain also make such replacements, there are no instances of nonplain replacing *deel* by *some* or *awer* by *but,* and the nonplain vary in the use of *gaunsche/schwinge, Debbich/Gwilt, coat/Rock, schlachde/butschere, arig/really, Iems/meal, gheere/belonge,* and *Hof mehe/Graas mehe.* The nonplain (Group N) show variation within their group while the plain (Groups M and A) each tend to opt for one variant. If some members of the nonplain group respond with the English borrowing, other members of the same group know and use the Pennsylvania German counterpart. For the Mennonites and Amish, this is less often the case. Other lexical items vary in the speech of members of all three groups: *viel* and *a lot* are used variably to translate 'a lot' and *bis, by,* and *an* are all used to translate 'by' as used in the phrase 'to be at work by eight-thirty'.

The number of examples is limited, but the variation among the three groups reflects patterns of convergence which are evident in other components of the grammar. Among nonplain speakers, Pennsylvania German is dying, but it shows less evidence of convergence to English than the Pennsylvania German spoken by the plain groups. (See Huffines 1986 for convergence patterns involving the verb aspectual system, and Huffines 1987b for convergence patterns in the case system.) Among the nonplain, Group N, the lexical variation is typical of a stage of language death: some speakers forget a word and substitute a borrowing; but the native word is still present in the community's native speaker lexicon, and it occurs variably in the speech of individual speakers. This generation of native speakers is the last in this nonplain community. The borrowed items will not be passed on. In the nonplain group, individuals often accommodate their English surroundings by means of lexical borrowing, but if such accommodation becomes too apparent, members of Group N simply switch to English. In such cases, borrowing initiates the switch, but the motivation for the switch has more to do with a speaker's intolerance for borrowing than with an

Table 2
Distribution of PG and Eng. Loan Variants

Translation	PG Vocabulary	N	M	A
'ham'	*Schunke*	8	8	4
	ham	1	2	5
'acorn'	*Eechel*	8	1	0
	acorn	2	9	9
'duck' (n)	*Ent*	8	(1)	0
	duck	1	10	9
'meal'	*Iems*	9	0	0
	meal	7	11	15
'quilt' (n)	*Debbich*	7	0	0
	comfort	3	4	0
	Gwilt	5	8	6
	Deck	0	3	2
'pick (flowers)'	*robbe*	6	2	1
	picke	2	5	6
'parents'	*Eldre*	10	13	4
	Daeds	0	1	10
'farm' (n)	*Bauerei*	33	18	6
	Blatz	0	17	15
	farm	0	2	10
'earn (money)'	*verdiene*	7	4	2
	(Geld) mache	0	2	4
'butcher' (vb)	*schlachde*	4	0	1
	butschere	4	7	8
'really' (adv)	*arig*	10	8	1
	really	5	29	40
'swing' (vb)	*gaunsche*	4	7	0
	swinge	5	0	7
'slice' (vb)	*schneide*	7	6	4
	schleise	2	4	4
'some' (adj/pro)	*deel*	44	68	28
	some	0	12	40
'but'	*awer*	193	94	68
	but	0	41	36
'belong'	*gheere*	10	14	15
	belonge	10	0	0
'coat' (n)	*Rock*	3	2	2
	Wammes	0	2	6
	coat	8	7	5
'mow grass'	*Hof/Hefli mehe*	5	7	7
	Graas mehe	5	0	0
	lawn mehe	2	0	0

automatic (subconscious) linguistic force driven by word and phrasal collocations. For speakers of minority languages, extensive borrowing is often proof of the inadequacy of their language (cf. Hill and Hill 1977, 61).

Among the Mennonites and Amish (Groups M and A), English variants are being passed on to subsequent generations as part of their variety of Pennsylvania German. In that transmission, the Pennsylvania German item is lost and the English counterpart takes its place. New words are borrowed rather than invented by using native lexical items and derivational morphemes. In minority languages in contact, coinage and derivational processes often become unproductive and seem to be beyond what speakers are willing to do. Pennsylvania German has also long been severed from its European German roots, and today's Pennsylvania German has no productive relationship to European German to obtain lexical elaboration. The obsolescent variety of standard German used by Mennonites and Amish fills only liturgical functions. Plain communites use English borrowings to accommodate their surroundings without switching to English or inventing new Pennsylvania German forms.

II. Morphological Integration

For most linguists, the incorporation of a borrowed word into the morphological system signals full adoption, and the form is often no longer perceived by speakers to be nonnative. The enveloping of nonnative material by native inflectional and derivational morphemes legitimizes the borrowed word and gives it a "hometown" feel, as it were. In Pennsylvania German, such legitimizations are legion (cf. Reed 1948; see examples in list 1).

List 1
Morphological Integration of English Borrowings

1. der Jake un ich hen *gestart farme*
   'Jake and I started farming.'
2. s waar yuscht en *boringer* Job
   'It was a boring job.'
3. mer *watche* sei chance
   'We watch his chance.'
4. sie is en *share* mit ihr friends
   'She is sharing with her friends.'
   (Note: *en* is a phonological reduction of *am*.)
5. s is ordlich gut *ausgeturned*
   'It turned out rather well.'

Forms which lack this morphological disguise, either because they resist adoption or because the native language does not mark the grammatical category, are more obvious borrowings (see list 2).

List 2
Borrowings without Morphological Marking

1. Ich hap verleicht mei *eighth grade* faddich gemacht
   'Maybe I finished my eighth grade.'
2. mer sin no in die Schul gange mit well die ganz *neighborhood*
   'Then we went to school with, well, the whole neighborhood.'
3. s is allfatt kumme wann s Hoi *ready* waar
   'It always came when the hay was ready.'
4. nau sell is was ich es menscht *remember* devun
   'Now that is what I remember the most of it.'
5. mir hen sell *different* geduh
   'We did that differently.'

In addition to occurring without morphological integration, borrowed lexical items often bring their own morphological endings along as baggage. In this way simple individual lexical substitutions introduce recurring and reproducible morphological patterns (see list 3).

List 3
Borrowings with English Morphological Markers

1. mer ware *acquainted* mit alli selli Leit
   'We were acquainted with all those people.'
2. waar ich no bei some *neighbors* gewest
   'Then I was at the neighbors' [house].'
3. mer hen sie menscht *frozen*
   'We mostly froze them.'
4. wann die kinner in die Schul gen far ihr *lunches*
   'When the children go to school for their lunches.'
5. no hat ar *farming* iwwer gnumme
   'Then he took over farming.'

These nonnative endings serve as new models which directly or indirectly penetrate the native system and may ultimately alter morphological paradigms, resulting in faulty morphological forms in the speech of native speakers (see list 4).

List 4
Faulty Morphological Marking

1. mer dun practically all unser vegetables *frier* or can
   'We freeze or can practically all our vegetables.'
2. far *ihr* lunches
   'for their lunches'
3. mit *ihr* friends
   'with her friends'

4. Unser yinschter Bu hat sei Grossdadi *gebsucht*
   'Our youngest boy has visited his grandpa.'
5. no sell *is* gfrore awer net *canned*
   'Then that is frozen but not canned.'

The following description from an Amish woman leads one to ask how much longer this community can continue to absorb borrowing and the resultant convergence into its speech:

> Sie dun ihr pigs un ihr beef / ya / sie dun some un ar dutt aa balonies mache un sie dun de Fleesch / sie dun de Fleesch schteh losse far a certain amount of Zeit / nau net lang verleicht en Daag adder so mit alli seasonings drin which sie hen en certaini recipe defar
>
> 'They do their pigs and their beef. Yes, they do some and he also makes balonies, and they do the meat, they let the meat stand for a certain amount of time. Now not long, perhaps a day or so with all the seasonings in it for which they have a certain recipe.'
> (Note: *de Fleesch* is an error in gender agreement.)

Borrowing can progress from a single lexical item and its morphological endings to that item's usual collocations and then extend to longer stretches of discourse as the following series of sentences illustrates:

1. sell is *pretty well* faddich da September
2. s hap ich *well filled* mit Erbse Welschkann
3. ich hap unser freezer *pretty well filled with vegetables*

While it is clear that lexical items can "trigger" (cf. Clyne 1972a) a language switch, which the last example arguably may be, the borrowed item itself influences lexical slots beyond its usual collocations and creatively expands the linguistic options for filling those slots.

Morphological integration cannot mask the frequency with which extensive borrowing occurs. Speakers react to the English stems and words when they recognize them, and the recognition reinforces their perception that their minority language is so heavily dependent on English that it is hardly worth the risk of "ruining" their children's English by speaking Pennsylvania German to them. As nonnative inflectional and derivational endings recur, they can disrupt native paradigms and themselves become productive beyond nonnative material. Similarly, collocations of borrowed items may expand well beyond the grammatical and semantic fields associated with the item itself. In this case, the borrowing can initiate a language switch through an extended series of borrowed collocations from the contact language.

III. Lexical Influence on Syntax and Discourse Behavior

Stretches of discourse composed of frequently borrowed items and their collocations provide models for new syntactic options. Such modeling can be clearly seen in the influence which the borrowing of

English adverbs and conjunctions has on Pennsylvania German word order.

Adverbs usually occur in a sentence position as governed by Pennsylvania German rules:

1. *lately* hen mir en Kuh ghatt
   'Recently we had a cow.'
2. ich bin *usually* gange far der Dadi helfe
   'I usually went to help daddy.'
3. mer hen *really* en lot gelannt in die Schul
   'We really learned a lot in school.'
4. ich hap s *anyhow* gut schwetze kenne
   'I was able to speak it well anyhow.'

Occasionally a collocation is strong enough to resist the Pennsylvania German rule or is loosely enough connected to the Pennsylvania German sentence to operate outside of it:

5. sie *really* gleicht s draus
   'She really likes it outside.'
6. *Of course* ich hap die Arwet geduh
   'Of course I did the work.'

Borrowed conjunctions tend to occur with English word order:

7. *unless* sie wrappe es far uns
   'Unless they wrap it for us.'
8. *because* der Jake hat sell so oft immer welle
   'Because Jake always wanted that so often.'

The relative pronoun *which* normally operates in accordance with the Pennsylvania German relative clause rules:

9. *which* mer really gleiche
   'Which we really like.'

But that rule does not apply in all cases for *which:*

10. *which* unser Heemet is nau
    'Which is our home now.'

Word order with the conjunction *but* varies; both dependent and independent word orders are possible:

11. *but* sie yuse es far sell
    'But they use it for that.'
12. *but* sin mer abkumme devun
    'But we got away from it.'

Lexical items borrowed from English also appear at the discourse level in Pennsylvania German. The use of English *well, now,* and *why,* as well as the counterpart to the ubiquitous English "you know," Pennsylvania German *weescht,* occur in Pennsylvania German discourse as they

do in English. Often called discourse markers (Schiffrin 1987), these forms are essentially devoid of lexical meaning; they act instead as discourse facilitators, communicating to the listener information about the discourse itself. They mark the pace of turn-taking, establish coherence between utterances, and verify the listener's participation. Clyne (1972b) reports a similar use of English discourse markers in the German of German-English bilinguals in Australia. In Pennsylvania German, English discourse markers operate independently of other syntactic structures and do not affect word order in the clause to which they are attached (see examples in list 5).

List 5
Borrowed Discourse Markers

1. *well* mer hen die Millich faahre misse
   'Well, we had to haul the milk.'
2. *well* mer hen als en lot fun ghatt
   'Well, we used to have a lot of fun.'
3. sis en lotti Arewet *weescht* in aa Summer
   'It's a lot of work, you know, also in summer.'
4. ich duh s menscht vun unser Gleeder naehe *weescht* as mer weare
   'I sew most of our clothes, you know, that we wear.'
5. *now* wann mer beef gebutschert hen
   'Now when we butchered beef.'
6. *now* mer gleiche net soviel buckwheat Mehl
   'Now we don't like so much buckwheat flour.'
7. wann der Offe anyhow uff hascht *why* is es kee difference
   'When you have the oven on anyhow, why there is no difference.'
8. sidder s ich gheiert bin *why* mei Mann sei Family sie hen Sei gebutschert
   'Since I've been married, why my husband's family they have butchered pigs.'

By occurring in positions which are outside the discourse by virtue of their function to comment on the discourse, these markers create lexical slots which speakers can reinterpret as viable syntactic positions. These simple borrowings have the potential to bring about syntactic restructuring. (See Huffines 1986 for a similar restructuring in the sectarian use of the Pennsylvania German progressive.)

Adverbs, conjunctions, and discourse markers form a very small part of the total number of items borrowed from English into Pennsylvania German. However, these items appear in positions which are sensitive to specific Pennsylvania German grammar rules, rules which contrast with those of English. The English borrowing renders the application of the native Pennsylvania German rules uncertain, and the uncertainty effects linguistic variation, the prerequisite of linguistic change.

Discussion

Linguistic convergence is a cumulative process which often begins with lexical borrowing. Borrowing, which in some cases is more apparent than frequent, affects speakers' attitudes toward the language and its use: If lexical importation appears to be frequent, speakers deem their language an unworthy mixture and despair of its maintenance. One commonly hears: "If they use so much English in their Dutch anyway, why don't they just speak English?"—a statement heard most frequently to refer to the Amish by Mennonite and nonplain Pennsylvania Germans and reflected in Amish apologies for how they speak Dutch. That the plain borrow English vocabulary items more frequently than the nonplain, seems to result from language usage patterns: In plain communities switching to English is inappropriate. Because the plain maintain Pennsylvania German for daily discourse, they exploit English linguistic resources to supplement Pennsylvania German. In nonplain communities frequent borrowing is not as necessary because nonplain speakers switch languages.

The extensive morphological integration of English borrowings does not camouflage for speakers/listeners the extensiveness of the borrowing from English. On the contrary, morphological integration into Pennsylvania German does not prevent importation of English morphological marking or the disruption of native paradigms. Syntactically, single recurring borrowed patterns influence native constructions far more than the number of different borrowed items. Compared to nouns, for example, adverbs and conjunctions are rarely borrowed, but while the borrowing itself may seem to be of little consequence, English adverbs and conjunctions intrude on Pennsylvania German precisely at those sentence positions which are regulated by Pennsylvania German syntactic rules. Similarly, the discourse marking, which so closely parallels that of English and also borrows English markers, places these items in rule-sensitive positions. Such borrowings obscure the applicability of the Pennsylvania German rules and set precedents for new native usages.

Borrowing initiates linguistic convergence and is the vehicle by which linguistic influence due to contact obtains. When borrowed items occupy syntactic positions where corresponding native forms would not occur, native rules are compromised and become variable. One would expect frequent borrowers to exhibit more convergent patterns in their speech than do those speakers who borrow less. This is, indeed, the case for the sample under consideration. The sectarians, who borrow more frequently than the nonsectarians, place, for example, past participles in independent clauses more frequently in nonfinal position (see table 3; cf. Huffines, forthcoming).

The placement of English borrowings rather than the frequency interrupts the syntactic analysis necessary to apply Pennsylvania German syntactic rules appropriately. If speakers analyze syntax on the basis of lexical cues, borrowed forms in critical syntactic slots will result in altered syntax. Speakers in contact situations seem readily to compre-

hend a familiar (though borrowed) syntactic construction without objecting that it occurs in the wrong language. Bilingual speakers in contact situations are also notorious for their inability to identify which language they are speaking.

Table 3
Position of the Past Participle in Independent Clauses

Group	Total Number of Participles	Number Nonfinal	Percent Nonfinal
N	788	143	18%
M	587	176	30%
A	453	173	38%

Borrowing directly affects second-language learners in minority language communities. These speakers have little opportunity to test syntactic options. Nonnative (nonsectarian) Pennsylvania German speakers, i.e., native English speakers who learn Pennsylvania German as a second language, receive convergent formulations as input. Because of their minimal exposure to regularly spoken Pennsylvania German, they are likely to re-analyze the native-speaker Pennsylvania German rule and incorporate the new pattern into their variety of Pennsylvania German (cf. Huffines 1987a). Even the two youngest native (nonsectarian) speakers, for example, place past particles in independent clauses in nonfinal position at a rate (39%) twice as frequent as that of the older speakers. Nonnative speakers and younger native speakers come to use a variety which contrasts sharply with that of the other native speakers.

In language contact, individual borrowed vocabulary items initiate linguistic convergence by creating opportunities for new syntactic options and re-analysis of native rules. More frequent borrowers exhibit more convergence; younger speakers and second-language learners also acquire re-analyzed rules and have almost no access to the conservative native speaker norms. In addition to facilitating linguistic convergence, borrowing is an emotional issue, and sensitivity to borrowing varies from community to community. As extensive borrowing becomes apparent, speakers approach a threshold of tolerance for borrowings and affected stretches of speech. Beyond this threshold, discourse in Pennsylvania German becomes problematic for speakers who evaluate it as containing more English than appropriate. This evaluation often results in the rejection of Pennsylvania German and regular use of English.

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