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Wisconsin Pomeranian Low German

1 Introduction

The U.S. state of Wisconsin is well-known for its rich German (broadly speaking) heritage and culture, yet the number of competent German speakers has drastically decreased over the past century.[1] Here, I discuss the present state of the German language in Wisconsin, with a particular focus on the moribund Pomeranian Low German dialect spoken in Marathon and Lincoln counties in the central area of the state. The primary data for the linguistic analysis come from interviews conducted by the author in 2013 and 2014 with the last generation of German speakers in this area.[2] "Wisconsin German" differs from other German-American varieties such as Texas German and Pennsylvania German in that immigrants from different German dialect areas formed small, relatively isolated communities and largely maintained their regional varieties, and these varieties did not mix or coalesce into a unified, mutually intelligible *koiné*. Thus, the moniker "Wisconsin German" is less appropriate than community-specific terms such as "Central Wisconsin Pomeranian," "Dane County Kölsch," or "New Glarus Swiss German." Like most German-American varieties, Wisconsin German has undergone drastic language shift since around 1940 and is nearing the point of language death, as most competent speakers are well over the age of 65.[3] The Pomeranian Low German community of central Wisconsin is representative of this linguistic situation: the immigrants formed a small community in a rural area centered around small country churches and most speakers had some command of both the regional dialect and standard High German, resulting in a unique situation of language contact. In this paper, I first provide a general overview

of German(s) in Wisconsin (Section 2), before discussing the sociohistorical background (Section 3) and structure (Section 4) of Central Wisconsin Pomeranian.

2 German in Wisconsin

Before discussing in detail the Pomeranian Low German dialect spoken in central Wisconsin, this section provides a brief overview of the German situation in the state to contextualize the speech community focused on in this article.[4] German immigration to Wisconsin began in the first quarter of the 19th century and increased drastically in the following decades. In 1850, only 15% of the Wisconsin population was born in Germany, but by the end of the 19th century, Wisconsin was home to more German immigrants than any other U.S. state. The peak of German immigration occurred in 1882 (Everest 1892), and by 1890 around 37% of the state's population was either born in Germany or first-generation offspring of German immigrants. Thus, at the turn of the century roughly one third of Wisconsin's population had at least some understanding of, if not total competence in German. Wisconsin was also famous for being a bastion of German culture in the 19th century, as many migrants of high social standing promoted the German culture after settling in urban areas such as Milwaukee, Sheboygan, and Watertown. The prominence of German in Wisconsin is also reflected in the high readership of German media (newspapers, magazines), which in some cases sold twice as many copies than their English counterparts (Wittke 1957).

Immigration to Wisconsin was neither uniform nor large-scale. Rather, small groups of migrants from different areas of Europe settled at different times and in different places. Levi (1898) claims that immigrants could be found from nearly all German dialect areas. However, the Low German dialects, particularly Pomeranian, were the most prominent and longest lasting in the state. As noted above, the German dialects brought to Wisconsin did not coalesce into a mutually intelligible *koiné*, primarily because the settlers remained in small, rural communities and had little contact with speakers of other varieties.[5] Other contributing factors include the availability of Standard German and later English as a common language, the drastic differences between the German varieties, and the lack of prestige associated with German dialects.

Typically, Germans in Wisconsin were exposed to their local dialect, High German, and English. The local dialect was spoken in familiar settings such as the farmstead or home, High German was the language of church and parochial schools into the 1930s (or later in rural areas), and English was used with those outside of the community and gradually became the dominant

language. The dialects brought to Wisconsin exhibit few differences from the donor dialects spoken in Europe at the time of migration in the 19th century, and there has been little if any continued contact with modern Standard German (StG), let alone the regional dialects in Europe.

The loss of German (both standard and dialects) began around 1900 and has accelerated since. Germans in urban areas shifted to English earliest, and those in the rural areas followed suit, so that virtually no native speaker remains who was born after 1950. Protestant German communities preserved the language slightly longer than Catholic ones, as German was reinforced by the Protestant (especially Lutheran) churches. The remaining speakers typically exhibit attrition, as many of them have not used German regularly since childhood and use it only in certain situations with specific people. As such, they often struggle speaking German fluently when discussing domains apart from home, farm, church, and other domains prominent in their childhood. Present-day Wisconsin Germans are rarely competent in the written language, as High German literacy was only taught up to the 8th grade in parochial schools, if at all.

For the most part, the sociolinguistic characteristics of German speakers in Wisconsin described in this brief overview also apply to the Central Wisconsin Pomeranians and are expounded on in more detail as they apply to this particular community.

3 Wisconsin Pomeranian Low German: Sociohistorical background

The speech community under discussion is located in Marathon and Lincoln counties in central Wisconsin. Initial research on the community was conducted in 1968, when Jürgen Eichhoff (then professor at the University of Wisconsin – Madison) traveled the state conducting interviews with Wisconsin Germans. More recently, Louden (2009, 2011) provides cursory analyses of Wisconsin Low German, drawing on the Eichhoff recordings from a related group in southeastern Wisconsin. Jacob (2008) presents initial results from a large-scale study of the Central Wisconsin Pomeranians in the early 2000s, but the dissertation providing the basis for this article is yet unpublished. Henceforth, the abbreviation WLG is used to refer to the Central Wisconsin Pomeranian German language or the associated speech community.

Speakers of WLG emigrated from East Pomerania (Ger. *Hinterpommern* 'Far Pomerania') in the areas near Posen, Stargard, and Greifenberg. These regions were then part of the Prussian empire and are now in the northwest corner of present-day Poland. The first major migration of Pomeranians to the USA took place in the 1830s, when the Prussian government sought to unify

the various Reformed and Lutheran branches of Protestantism. The earliest emigrants were Old Lutherans (Ger. *Altlutheraner*) who did not wish to be united into a single church. Other Old Lutheran communities had previously migrated from Europe to America and sent reports of the opportunities and religious freedom they found in the New World. After receiving these reports, Pastor Johann Andreas A. Grabau recruited approximately 600 Pomeranians[6] who left their homes in June of 1839 and traveled to Berlin, where they were received by Pastor Grabau. There, they were joined by other emigrants from Silesia, Saxony, and Berlin, and sailed from Hamburg to New York. The Prussian Hauptmann Karl Georg Heinrich von Rohr, who had collaborated with Pastor Grabau, was already in the USA making preparations for the new immigrants. The party traveled westward, making their first stop in Buffalo, New York, where roughly half of the group (40 families) broke off and founded their own settlement. The remaining migrants moved onward to Wisconsin, where they founded the city of Freistadt (now incorporated into Mequon, Wisconsin) approximately 25 kilometers northwest of Milwaukee – another center of German migration.

The next and largest wave of Pomeranian migration took place in 1843, when approximately 1,000 Pomeranians sailed from Hamburg to America at the behest of Pastor Gustav Adolf Kindermann. Some of these settled in Milwaukee, but most of them settled the rural farmland outside of Milwaukee, in Washington, Dodge, and Ozaukee counties**.** As the area around Milwaukee became more populated, these settlers sought more land that could be found at better prices. They moved north and west in the 1850s and settled the regions around Manitowoc and Shawano counties in eastern and central Wisconsin, respectively. The community under discussion here moved farther west into Marathon and Lincoln counties, around the present-day cities of Wausau and Merrill. A key player in bringing Germans to the area was August Kickbusch – the first mayor of Wausau – who sought to populate the area more rapidly.[7] Between March and June of 1867, he traveled to Germany and recruited another 702 Pomeranians to the area. Kickbusch employed many of these immigrants in his businesses, while the majority bought inexpensive land plots for farming. These early settlers were joined in the following decades, particularly in the 1880s and 1890s by further waves of immigrants from German-speaking Europe.

The donor dialect of the Central Wisconsin Pomeranians is no longer spoken in Europe. The Vorpomeranian (West Pomeranian) dialect is still spoken in the German state of Mecklemburg-Vorpommern to the west of the settlers' home cities, but is substantially different from the Hinterpomeranian (East Pomeranian) dialect brought to Wisconsin (Postma 2014: 628) Hinterpomeranian exhibits several Ingwaeonisms characteristic of the North Sea Germanic area, which were brought during the *Ostsiedlung* of the area by

enterprisers from Saxony, Holland, and Frisia since the 11th century (Postma 2014: 628). These include various loan words, phonological features such as the loss of /n/ before spirants, and the development of a /-s/ plural morpheme.

Although most settlers came from Pomerania, they were also exposed to High German to various degrees. It was the language of the church as late as the 1940s, and several immigrants from High German dialect areas settled alongside the Pomeranians and occasionally intermarried. Several informants report one parent speaking High and the other Low German.[8] The effects of exposure to both varieties is evident in the interview data, as some speakers switch randomly between High and Low German in open-ended interviews or provide both High and Low German translations during the data elicitation interviews. It is unclear whether or to what extent this inter-dialectal contact led speakers to accommodate their speech in the sense of forming a mutually intelligible *koiné* (see Trudgill 2004).[9] In any case, this bidialectalism, in conjunction with increasing bilingualism as English became more prominent, led to a unique situation in which at least some speakers shifted not directly from Low German to English, but experienced an intermediate stage of competency in High German in a situation of compound bilingualism (Louden 2011; cf. Heredia and Brown 2006). The effects of this situation on the language of present-day WLG speakers is documented in the following section.

The primary institution that held together the newly-founded Pomeranian community in Central Wisconsin was the church. A vast majority of the new settlers were Lutheran farmers, so small congregations were founded throughout the countryside in the settled area. To this day, at least a dozen (primarily Missouri Synod Lutheran) churches still function in the areas northwest of Wausau. These churches not only provided religious services and instruction for youth in the form of Sunday school and confirmation classes, but they also served as the primary meeting place for members of the community. Informants reminisce about meeting their kinsmen at church and the tradition of taking turns hosting other families for meals after service, during which the older folks chatted about the weather and farm life while their children amused themselves in any way they could find. A handful of churches still conduct special services (e.g., Christmas services) in High German, and the church is one of the few areas where the remaining speakers of Low German can still use their language in informal conversation.

While informal conversation was typically carried out in dialect, church services and religious education were conducted in High German, in most cases by an American pastor who learned High German in seminary. For many young Wisconsin Germans, Sunday school and later confirmation classes were the first, and potentially only, encounter with the standard language. Several informants recalled or even still possessed their copy of the

German Fiebel, a primer for learning to read and write in standard High German, with individual chapters devoted to each grade level. Of course, for those who were not exposed to Standard/High German in daily life, the High German education did not hold and they felt much more comfortable using the Low German dialect.

Another institution that was frequently mentioned in interviews was the local Fromm Brothers mink and fox fur farm, which employed numerous Pomeranians, especially those who did not farm but also those looking for additional employment during slow or hard farming times, especially during the Great Depression.[10] The fur farm was well-known for the Low German dialect spoken there, as nearly all employees were competent in the local dialect, according to various WLG informants. The factory was one of the last remaining bastions of Low German dialect, as it still employed elderly speakers of WLG into the 1950s. The only other notable institutions in which WLG speakers met were the local taverns and dance halls – prime locations for young adult Pomeranians to meet their eventual spouses.

In the early 1990s, the remaining WLG community founded the Pommerscher Verein Central Wisconsin (PVCW; 'Pomeranian Club of Central Wisconsin') to support interaction among WLG speakers, as well as non-speakers with (Pomeranian) German heritage. The club holds monthly meetings and a larger annual event, *Picknick im Busch* ('Picnic in the Woods'). While the club uses WLG in ritual contexts such as songs and poems, as well as offering informal vocabulary lessons, most communication in club meetings is carried out in English.

The shift to English monolingualism began around 1920, and by 1950 virtually no children were brought up with WLG as their first language. While this drastic shift coincided with and was certainly supported by anti-German sentiments during the World Wars, Louden (2009) argues that the imminent loss of WLG is more appropriately attributed to domestic sociopolitical changes, particularly the shift from one-room country schools to English-only public schools and increased mobility bringing more English monolinguals to the area. Indeed, few informants mentioned feeling pressure to use English because of the war(s), whereas multiple informants attributed their increased use of English to social pressures (e.g., speaking English was fashionable among younger people). Due to the relative isolation of the community and prominence of WLG speakers, they experienced little discrimination or repression, but the lack of legal or institutional support for using German further promoted the shift to English. It is difficult to pin down the precise number of WLG speakers, but there are likely less than 500 competent speakers in the areas surrounding Wausau and Merrill, Wisconsin.[11] This number is also rapidly declining, as all speakers are over 60 years old, and the language will likely be extinct in the next 20-30 years.

Despite the bleak outlook for the language's maintenance, nearly all informants claimed they are proud to speak WLG and agreed that it is an important part of their identity. At the same time, most feel a sense of regret that they did not pass the language on to their children, stating that it did not seem as important or useful at the time to have their children learn a language with little practical benefit, given that WLG had no official status and all educational and professional opportunities required only knowledge of English.

4 Structure of WLG

4.1 Data and speaker profiles

The primary data for the following structural analysis come from interviews conducted by the author from late 2013 to summer 2014. The interview consisted of three parts: a translation task based on the questionnaire used by Gilbert (1972) and the Texas German Dialect Project (Boas 2009a), a biographical questionnaire on the contexts of language use and speaker attitudes (conducted in English), and open-ended conversations on diverse topics including migration, school life, and farm activities.[12] A total of 30 speakers were interviewed with varying degrees of fluency: two speakers had little competency in WLG but were present for the interview of their more competent spouses, and one other speaker exhibited significant attrition and produced little WLG in the open-ended interview.

Sociolinguistic profiles for the speakers come from the biographical questionnaire, which are available for 25 of the 30 speakers.[13] Only five of these speakers are female, while the other 20 are male. The year of birth ranges from 1914 to 1948, with an average birth year of 1936 (i.e. 80 years old at time of interviews). Of the 23 speakers who knew about the origin of their ancestors, all of them listed Pomerania and/or more specific locations within former Pomerania. Immigration data on the website of the PVCW also reflects the Pomeranian ancestry of the WLG community, and the specific areas of Regenwalde, Naugard, and Greifenberg are the most frequently listed places of origin. All but two of the responding informants list rural townships between Wausau and Merrill as their childhood home, while one was brought up in the city of Merrill and the other in Wausau. All respondents claimed some religious affiliation, with only one claiming Catholicism and all others being Protestant (primarily Lutheran). These data reflect the importance of church life and preponderance of Lutheranism among the early settlers.

With respect to their linguistic backgrounds and experiences, all informants are fluent in English. Seven of them spoke English since their earliest memories, including two who only acquired German later in their

childhood. The other 18 native WLG speakers began learning English between the ages of four and six, typically in conjunction with their first year of formal education.

When asked about their fluency and exposure to High German, eight claimed competency in High German and another thirteen said they had some command of the variant. Only three informants claimed they knew no High German. Again, these data reflect the early language contact situation in which the community was exposed to both Low and High German.

The linguistic diversity and drastic shift to English outlined above is clearly reflected in the present-day speech of the remaining speakers, who produce a combination of Pomeranian Low German dialect and High German and frequently switch to English. This variation is seen not only across different speakers (depending on their exposure to each language) but also in the speech of individual speakers. In the discussion below, I highlight the drastic variation within and across speakers and attempt to contextualize them in terms of language contact, loss, and attrition.[14]

4.2 Phonology

4.2.1 Vowels

Monophthongs		
[iː]	glik	'gleich'
[ɪ]	mit	'mit'
[yː]	Füür	'Feuer'
[y]	künn	'konnte'
[eː]	Eger	'Eier'
[ɛ]	bet	'bis'
[ɛː/æ]	Wäder	'Wetter'
[øː]	drög	'trocken'
[œ]	terög	'zurück'
[a]	Gras	'Gras'
[ɑ]	Wåter	'Wasser'
[oː]	groot	'groß'
[ɔ]	os	'uns(er)'
[uː]	Huus	'Haus'
[ʊ]	unne	'unten'
Diphthongs		
[aɪ]	veier	'vier'
[aʊ]	Schaul	'Schule'
[ɔɪ]	schoile	'sollen'

Table 1: Wisconsin Pomeranian vowel inventory (from Louden 2009: 172-173)

As observed by Louden (2009: 172f.), the vowel inventory of WLG is highly similar to that found in most Low German dialects. The inventory provided by Louden (2009: 172f.) is repeated in Table 1.

Although this description of the vowel inventory is generally valid for most WLG speakers, I point out some areas that exhibit variation. Unless otherwise noted, the data below comes from translation tasks, in which speakers are asked to translate an English word or phrase, thus allowing for easy speaker-to-speaker comparisons.[15]

One area for investigating phonological developments in the vowel system is in the production of front rounded vowels. In many extraterritorial varieties of German, these typologically uncommon vowel sounds are eliminated by maintaining only the frontness or roundedness feature (Pierce et al. 2015, Louden 2016: 15f.). WLG also eliminates such vowels in certain contexts, but maintains them in others.

Tables 2-6 below show the vowels produced in translations of five words where one would expect a front rounded vowel in StG. The vowels in the first four tables correspond to StG /y:/, while that in the last table corresponds to StG /ø:/.

StG *Tür* 'door'	Speakers[16]
[dɔɪə]	4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 28, 27 **Total = 16**
[dɛ:ə]	1, 6 **Total = 2**
[dø:ə]	11, 26 **Total = 2**

Table 2: WLG pronunciation of StG *Tür* 'door' (#8)[17]

StG *süß* 'sweet'	Speakers
[zuit]	27, 28, 7, 13, 16, 17, 18, 23 **Total = 8**
[zoit]	5, 10, 20, 22 **Total = 4**
[zy:t]	8 **Total = 1**
[zü:s]	11 **Total = 1**

Table 3: WLG pronunciation of StG *süß* 'sweet' (#19)

StG *Kühe* 'cows'	Speakers
[kø:ɪɣ]	1, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 26 **Total = 12**
[ku:ɪɣ]	2, 5, 8, 23, 28 **Total = 5**
[ko:ɪɣ]	4, 27, 12 **Total = 3**
[ke:ɣ]	6, 15 **Total = 2**
[kɾ:ɣ]	17 **Total = 1**

Table 4: WLG pronunciation of StG *Kühe* 'cows' (#68)

StG *fünf* 'five'	Speakers
[fi:v]	4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 23, 27, 28 **Total = 12**
[fi:və]	7, 8, 14, 22, 26 **Total = 5**
[fi:f]	1, 10, 17 **Total = 3**
[fymf]	2, 19 **Total = 2**

Table 5: WLG pronunciation of StG *fünf* 'five' (#146)

StG *Köpfe* 'heads'	Speakers
[køp(f)]	2, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23 **Total = 10**
[kʌp]	5, 6, 13, 26, 27, 28 **Total = 6**
[kop]	1, 4, 7, 15, 20 **Total = 5**
[kap]	12, 25 **Total = 2**
[kɛp]	18 **Total = 1**

Table 6: WLG pronunciation of StG *Köpfe* 'heads' (#71)

For the WLG translations of 'door', 'sweet', and 'cows', the vowel is most frequently pronounced as a diphthong, with the initial vowel being a back round /ɔ/, /o/, or /u/ or front round /ø/, and the final vowel being high front /i/ or /ɪ/. The vowel in 'five', however, is simply pronounced as the high front /i/ with loss of rounding in most cases, with vowel lengthening occurring due to the loss of /n/ before the spirant /f/ (cf. Postma 2014: 628). Note also that two speakers give the High German pronunciation with the vowel /y/ and

the nasal /m/. For the WLG translation of 'heads', nearly half of the speakers produce the front rounded central vowel /ø/, as expected in StG, but the remaining speakers use one of four different vowels (i.e. /ʌ, o, a, ɛ/). These data show that front rounded vowels are still produced by some speakers of present-day WLG, but there is significant variation across speakers, which is likely a result of variation in the local varieties of Pomeranian and/or of the breakdown of the vowel system due to language attrition.

Table 7 shows the pronunciation by WLG speakers of the StG diphthong /ai/ in the words 'a'/'one', 'two', 'small', and 'hot'.

StG word	# speakers [ai]	# speakers [eː]
ein- ('a', #4)	2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28 **Total = 18 (78%)**	1, 11, 14, 19, 26 **Total = 5**
klein ('small', #44)	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 27, 28 **Total = 24 (96%)**	11 **Total = 1**
heiß ('hot', #47)	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28 **Total = 18 (86%)**	1, 11, 14 **Total = 3**
zwei ('two', #18, #61-66)	**Total = 115 (85%)**	**Total = 21[18]**

Table 7: WLG pronunciation of StG /ai/

These examples show a preponderance of the diphthong [ai] over the monophong [eː]. The diphthong pronunciation is strongest in the word 'two' (96% of examples) and weakest in the pronunciation of 'a'/'one' (78% of examples). These data contrast with the pronunciation of 'my' (StG *mein*), whose vowel is a reflex of Proto-Germanic /iː/. In WLG, the vowel is most frequently pronounced [iː], as shown in Table 8.

	# speakers [ai]	# speakers [iː]
me**i**n- Kopf (#7)	4, 18, 23, 25 **Total = 4**	2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 27, 28 **Total = 16**
me**i**n- Stuhl (#39)	**Total = 0**	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28 **Total = 22**

Table 8: WLG pronunciation of *mein* ('my')

Interestingly, while all attestations of the possessive pronoun preceding the word *Stuhl* ('chair') exhibit the [i:] vowel, four of the 20 attestations preceding the word *Kopf* 'head' exhibit the diphthong [ai]. In fact, all of the speakers who produced diphthong [ai] in the *Kopf* translation produced the monophthong [i:] when introducing *Stuhl*.[19]

Tables 9-11 further demonstrate the variation in vowel production among WLG speakers, providing data for the translations of 'chair,' 'runs,' and 'snowed.'

	aʊ	ɔɪ	a:	o:	u:
Speakers	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 27, 28	16	20	1, 11, 14	25, 26
Total	15	1	1	3	2

Table 9: WLG pronunciation of the vowel in StG *Stuhl* ('chair', #39)

	ʌ	u:	ɛ	o:
Speakers	2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 23, 26, 27, 28	1, 4, 13, 19	18	15, 22, 25
Total	14	4	1	3

Table 10: WLG pronunciation of the vowel in StG *läuft* ('runs', #2)

	e:	i:
Speakers	1, 2, 4, 22, 26	5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 27, 28
Total	5	17

Table 11: WLG pronunciation of the vowel in StG *geschneit* ('snowed', #85)

The pronunciation of StG *Stuhl* ('chair') exhibits the diphthongization of StG /u:/ to /aʊ/ in Low German dialects. However, this pronunciation was only produced by 15 of the 22 informants responding to this item, while the remaining seven informants produced one of four different vowels, including the diphthong [ɔɪ] and the monophthongs [a:], [o:], and [u:]. While the [u:] pronunciation (by two speakers) corresponds to High German and can thus be attributed to dialect contact and mixing, the other pronunciations are less easily explained and may reflect a collapse of the WLG vowel system due to language attrition. Tables 10-11 are not elaborated on here, but serve to demonstrate similar variation in the vowels in WLG translations of 'runs' and 'snowed.'

One other noteworthy feature of WLG vowels is that the long vowel in words such as *noome* (StG *genommen*, 'taken', #15) or *Wåter* (StG *Wasser*, 'water', #47) appear to have a diphthongal character including a brief schwa at the end of the long vowel, e.g., [no:əmə], [vo:ətə].

4.2.2 Consonants

The consonants of WLG also differ from StG in ways expected for Low German and Pomeranian varieties. Most prominently, the voiceless stops /p, t, k/ did not undergo the Second Sound Shift (High German Consonant Shift) in the Pomeranian donor dialect. The use of Low German stops rather than High German affricates is still prominent in present-day WLG, but again there is much variation, as some shifted consonants appear where one would expect stops in Low German, suggesting potential interference from contact with High German. Table 12 shows the pronunciation of the consonants in the words 'apple', 'head', 'horse', 'make', and 'goats'.

	Low German realization and speakers	High German realization and speakers	Other
Apfel ('apple' #4)	**[-p-]** 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28 **Total = 23**	**[-pf-]** 22 **Total = 1**	
Kopf ('head' #7)	**[-p]** 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23, 25, 27, 28 **Total = 18**	**[-pf]** 19, 22, 26 **Total = 3**	
Pferd ('horse' #103)	**[p-]** 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28 **Total = 22**	**[pf-]** **Total = 0**	**[f-]** 7 **Total = 1**
machen ('make' #121)	**[-k-]** 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20, 23, 28 **Total = 12**	**[-x-]** **Total = 0**	
Ziege ('goats' #66)	**[t-]** **Total = 0**	**[ts-]** 5, 12 **Total = 2**	**[s-] / [z-]** 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 22, 23 **Total = 10**

Table 12: Realization of Low German stops/High German affricates in WLG

The data show a prominence of Low German phonology, with all but one of the examples being produced with the stops /p, t, k/ in the overwhelming majority of cases.

The lone exception is the pronunciation of 'goats' (StG *Ziegen*), with the majority of speakers using the aspirant [s] or [z] and only two speakers using the High German affricate [ts]. In contrast – although the word does not appear in the Gilbert translation sentences – WLG speakers pronounce the initial consonant of 'time' (StG *Zeit*) with the Low German stop [t]. As the initial consonant of both *Zeit* and *Ziege* is historically traced back to /t/, it is unclear why *Zeit* exhibits the Low German [t] while *Ziege* is pronounced with the fricative [s] or [z] found in High German dialects. Obviously, the word *Ziege* would have been encountered more frequently in Low German diglossic contexts (i.e. farm life) than in the High German domains of church and parochial school, so it is unlikely that this pronunciation can be attributed to dialect contact. Instead, it may be due to spelling pronunciation, the collapse of the WLG phonological system, or to earlier contact between speakers of Low and High German.

Table 13 shows the pronunciation of the High German fricatives /f/ and /s/ in the words *läuft* ('runs'), *besser* ('better'), and *heiss* ('hot').

	Low German realization and speakers	High German realization and speakers
läuft ('runs' #2)	**[-p-]** 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28 **Total = 22**	**[-f-]** 2 **Total = 1**
heiss ('hot' #47)	**[-t]** 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 27, 28 **Total = 19**	**[-s]** 16, 25 **Total = 2**
besser ('better' #121)	**[-t-]** 6, 8, 10, 17, 19, 20, 23, 28 **Total = 8**	**[-s-]** 1, 5, 7, 11, 12, 18, 22 **Total = 7**

Table 13: Realizations of StG fricatives /f/ and /s/

The postvocalic consonant in the translation of 'runs' is pronounced [p] as expected in Low German, and only one speaker produced the High German consonant [f]. The pronunciations of 'better' and 'hot', however, exhibit

interesting variation: the vast majority of speakers produce [t] in the word for 'hot', but the consonant of 'better' is pronounced [t] by eight speakers and [s] by seven speakers. It is unclear whether this is an item-specific feature of 'better' or if there is influence from High German in its pronunciation.

Another feature of the Low German donor dialect is that the consonants /b, t, g/ are lenited intervocallically in WLG to /v, d, ɣ/, respectively. This leads to the pronunciation of words such as *haben* ('to have') as [hɛvə] or *Ziegen* ('goats') as [ziːɣə] in many cases, but roughly one fourth of the speakers produce intervocalic stops, as in StG.[20] The lenition of /t/ to /d/ is actually not limited to intervocalic positions and also occurs in word-initial, pre-vocalic positions, resulting in pronunciations such as [dɪʃ] for StG *Tisch* ('table') or [dɔɪə] for StG *Tür* ('door'). Such lenition outside of intervocalic contexts is limited to alveolar stops and does not appear to affect bilabial or uvular stops.

A further point of variation in WLG's consonantal phonology is the pronunciation of the StG stop /g/ as the palatal semi-vowel /j/, generally in word-initial positions, a widespread feature in German dialects. This pronunciation appears highly variable across speakers and lexical items. For instance, only one of 16 speakers uses initial [j] in the pronunciation of *gaut* (StG *gut*, 'good', #134) and only one of 15 speakers uses initial [j] in the pronunciation of *goa(n)* (StG *gegangen*, 'gone', #28). In contrast, approximately half of the informants produce word-initial [j] in the word *gestern* ('yesterday', #97). This type of consonant variation was documented by Priewe and Teuchert (1928) for the donor dialects of West Pomerania and thus appears to be upheld to the present day in WLG.

WLG also exhibits unique pronunciations of /r/, resulting from both the donor dialect and potentially from contact with English. Very few speakers use the uvular fricative [ʁ] common in modern StG and instead produce the coronal tap [ɾ] or, more frequently, especially among younger speakers, the retroflex [r] of American English, presumably due to contact with English. As in German dialects, WLG speakers often delete word-final /r/.

An interesting feature of certain Hinterpomeranian dialects is the pronunciation of intervocalic /d/ as /r/, which is often realized as a coronal tap /ɾ/, as in the word *räɾe* (StG *reden* 'to speak'). This realization, combined with the diphthongization of Low German, leads to a unique pronunciation of words such as *gute* (inflected *gut*, 'good') as *gauɾe*. Interestingly, it appears some speakers have extended this consonant shift to more general postvocalic contexts, as several speakers pronounce StG *Bett* ('bed') with a final (retroflex) [r]: *[bɛr]*.

4.3 Morphosyntax

4.3.1 Plural formation

Plural formation in WLG exhibits striking variation, so it is difficult to identify any rules or patterns characterizing plural morphology. Individual nouns appear with different sets of plural markers, and the plural form for a given noun differs not only across speakers but also across utterances by individual speakers. Table 14 shows the plural forms for the nouns 'daughter,' 'window,' 'room,' 'plate,' 'wagon,' and 'boy.'[21]

Item	Forms (# of speakers)
#18 two daughters	Tochter (4) Tochtern (1) Tochtere (1) Tochters (2) Määkes (10)
#61 two windows	Fe(n)ster (12) Fenstern (7) Fensters (1)
#62 two rooms	Stuuwe (13) Stuuw (5) Zimmer (1) Zimmers (1)
#63 two plates	Tellern (9) Teller (7)
#64 two wagons	Wǻgen (13) Wǻge (10)
#65 two boys	Jungens (13) Junges (10) Junge (2) Jungä (1)

Table 14: WLG plural formation

Each of these five nouns exhibits significant variation in plural marking, including no overt marking or the addition of plural morphemes, most frequently /-e/, /-n/, or /-s/. With the exception of *Määkes* and *Junge(n)s*, which are consistently given the /-s/ ending, no noun was assigned the same plural marker by more than 72% of the respondents.

While the *-s* plural ending frequently occurs on the nouns *Määke* ('girl') and *Junge(n)* ('boy'), it is difficult to attribute this solely to English contact.

For one, the morpheme is realized as voiceless [-s] rather than voiced [-z] as expected in English. The -s plural marker is also found in many German dialects, particularly those in the north. The low frequency of the /-s/ ending and the prevalence of other German plural markers further suggest that English has had little influence on the plural formation system of WLG. Of course, this statement only applies to German-origin nouns, as most loaned English nouns are assigned the English /-s/ ending.

4.3.2 Articles and pronouns

The case and gender marking features of WLG are characteristic of extraterritorial and/or moribund German dialects (see Boas 2009b, Rosenberg 2003, 2005), as the articles and possessive pronouns assigned to a given noun are highly variable both within and across speakers. This variation is common in situations of dialect death and language attrition, as most speakers have not used the language consistently for several decades and have thus forgotten the gender of nouns (if they knew them at all) or the article system. It appears that this breakdown in case and gender marking is a recent development in WLG, as the transcriptions of speakers born around 1900 in Louden (2009) show much more consistent case and gender marking than that found in present-day WLG, as demonstrated here.

In (Low) German dialects, the articles *ein* ('a') and *mein* ('my') in the nominative case receive no ending when the noun is neuter or masculine and the -e ending with feminine nouns. However, in the WLG data, speakers vary significantly in whether or not they use the -e ending for a given noun, as shown in Tables 15-17.

ein/een Appel	eine/eene Appel
1, 2, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 26, 28 **Total = 9**	4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27 **Total = 14**

Table 15: Article marking for 'an apple' (#4)

mein/min Kopp	meine/mine Kopp	mi(a) Kopp
11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 25, 27, 28 **Total = 8**	2, 4, 10, 12, 26 **Total = 5**	5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 16, 19, 22 **Total = 8**

Table 16: Article marking for 'my head' (#7)

mein/min Stauel	meine/mine Stauel	mi(a) Stauel
17, 25, 28 **Total = 3**	4, 10, 12, 13 **Total = 4**	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 26, 27 **Total = 15**

Table 17: Article marking for 'my chair' (#39)

For the noun *Appel* ('apple'), nine speakers apply no ending and 14 speakers apply the –*e* ending. For *Kopp* ('head'), eight speakers use no ending and five use the –*e* ending. For *Stauel* ('chair'), three use no ending and four use the –*e* ending.[22]

According to Postma (2019), who draws on data from Pomeranian speakers in Brazil, the nominative articles in the Pomeranian donor dialect are *dei* for masculine, feminine, and plural nouns, and *dat* for neuter nouns. The article *dei* is frequently phonologically reduced to *de*. Only masculine articles differ in the accusative, appearing with either the article *dera* or, as in the nominative, with *de*. In dative case, masculine and neuter nouns appear with the article *dem*, while the feminine and plural dative article is *dera* or *de*. In WLG, however, speakers seem to apply articles with little to no systematicity in many cases. There are also cases in which speakers use the High German articles *die* and *das*, thus adding further variation to the WLG article system.

Data from the translation task portion of the interviews are again used to demonstrate the variation in case and gender marking on articles. The nouns *Deuer* ('door', Item #8) and *Disch* ('table', Item #9) exhibit consistent article marking, as they are used with *de* by all 15 and 16 speakers, respectively.[23] While this marking is expected for *Disch*, which is masculine in the donor dialect, *Deuer* is allegedly feminine and is thus expected to appear with the article *dei*.

The articles used to introduce the nouns *Tier* ('animal') and *Stinkkatt* ('skunk'), given in Tables 18-19, however, demonstrate the inter-speaker variation in article selection in WLG. Although *Tier* is historically a neuter noun, only one of nine WLG speakers uses the neuter article *dat*, while seven use *de* and one uses *dei*.

de Tier	dat Tier	dei Tier
4, 6, 10, 11, 14, 16, 22 **Total = 7**	5 **Total = 1**	19 **Total = 1**

Table 18: Article marking for 'the animal' (#11)

The noun *Stinkkatt* can be interpreted as either masculine (i.e. *der Kater* 'the tomcat') or feminine (i.e. *die Katze* 'the cat'). In WLG, two speakers use the neutral article *dat* while the other ten speakers use the gendered articles *de* (five speakers) or *dei* (seven speakers).

de Stinkkatt	dat Stinkkatt	dei Stinkkatt
1, 4, 5, 8, 27 Total = 5	18, 22 Total = 2	2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 23 Total = 7

Table 19: Article marking for 'the skunk' (#39)

This confusion with respect to gender marking is further evidenced by the responses of several informants who were explicitly asked when each article is applied, as well as for the translations for 'the man,' 'the woman,' and 'the child,' which should have elicited different articles due to their clear gender differences. In each of these cases, the speakers produced the article *de* for each of the nouns and appeared to have no clear idea of why they use the different articles.

In some cases, WLG speakers differentiate masculine (and possibly neuter) nouns used in the nominative from those used in the dative or accusative case. For instance, in the sentence *The animal died in the pasture* (#11), German requires the noun *pasture* to be used in the dative case. Indeed, 12 of 14 speakers said *in dem* or *im* to introduce the noun *Pasture*[24] or *Busch*. The remaining two speakers said *in de Pasture/Busch*. In the translation of *Who did we see* (#29), the interrogative pronoun *who* should be in the accusative case and thus appear as *wen* in StG and *wem* in Pomeranian (Postma 2019). In the WLG data, 16 speakers use the expected oblique pronoun *wem* while five use the nominative pronoun *wer*. While these items show a fairly consistent use of accusative-dative object marking, the results from Item #129 (*Is that a squirrel on the tree?*) exhibit much more variation in the articles (and prepositions) used to translate the phrase *on the tree* (StG *auf/in dem Baum*). These are given in Table 20.[25]

de	# speakers	dem/'m	# speakers	no art.	# speakers
an de	4	am/an dem	3		
in de	1	im/in dem	7	in	2
op de	1	oom	2		
Total *de*	6	**Total *dem***	12	**Total ø**	2

Table 20: Translation of *on the* in context 'on the tree' (StG *auf/in dem Baum*; #129)

Finally, to emphasize the collapse of the case and gender marking system of present-day WLG, Tables 21-24 show the results of Items #50-51, which are used to test case marking on two-way prepositions.

de	dat	die
8, 12, 15, 16, 20, 27	1, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28	2
Total = 6	Total = 16	Total = 1

Table 21: WLG articles for *Bild* ('picture') in 'Hang the picture over the bed.' (#50)

de	dat	dei
6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28	1, 4, 5, 14, 17, 19	20
Total = 13	Total = 6	Total = 1

Table 22: WLG articles for *Bild* ('picture') in 'The picture hangs over the bed.' (#51)

de	dat/'t	dem
4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 18, 20, 23, 25, 26	1, 5, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17	22
Total = 11	Total = 7	Total = 1

Table 23: WLG articles for *Bett/Berr* ('bed) in 'Hang the picture over the bed.' (#50)

de	dat/'t	das	die	dem
1, 7, 8, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23, 25, 26, 27	5, 10, 14, 19	12	2	4, 22
Total = 13	Total = 4	Total = 1	Total = 1	Total = 2

Table 24: WLG articles for *Bett/Berr* ('bed) in 'The picture hangs over the bed.' (#51)

First, compare the article used with *Bild* ('picture') in the two sentences: in Item #50 (Table 21), six speakers use *de* while 16 speakers use *dat*, whereas in Item #51 (Table 22) the trend is reversed, with 13 speakers using *de* and only six using *dat*. For *Bett/Berr* ('bed'), WLG speakers again vary significantly in their article use, including the use of High German *das* and *die* by one speaker each. Further, the dative *dem* expected in Item #51 is used by only two speakers, which contrasts with the frequent *dem/wem* use in the translations of 'in the pasture,' 'in the tree,' and 'who(m)' described above.

In contrast to the collapsing case and gender marking system for articles, the pronoun system in WLG appears to be intact. This system differentiates between subject and non-subject pronouns and is given in Table 25.

	Subject	Non-subject
1. sg.	ik	mi
2. sg.	du	di

3. sg. m.	hei	em
3. sg. f.	sei	ehr
3. sg. n.	dat	em
1. pl.	wi / wei	ous
2. pl.	jij / jii	juuch
3. pl.	sei / dei	dem / em

Table 25: Pronouns in WLG

While there is some variation in the second-person plural forms, with some speakers producing the corresponding singular *du/di* rather than *jii/juuch*, the remaining pronouns are used consistently. The difference in stability between the article and pronoun system may well be attributed to English contact, as English distinguishes case in most pronouns but not in articles. However, evidence from other German speech islands suggests that the breakdown of the article case system is due to internal language change along with language attrition (Boas 2009b, Rosenberg 2003, 2005).

4.3.3 Verb tense/aspect

With respect to tense and aspect marking in the verbal system, three major points are considered. The first is whether WLG speakers use analytic or synthetic forms for past and present progressive formation.[26] For the past tense, German dialects exhibit both a synthetic preterite verb form (e.g., *came*) and an analytic perfect form (e.g., *has come*), with the perfect form being most frequent, especially in spoken discourse and in Low German dialects. The present tense can be expressed using the simple present verb (e.g., *comes*; often with a temporal adverb such as *jetzt* or *gerade* 'now') or analytically to express progressive aspect in one of two structures: StG *tut kommen* ('does come') or *ist am kommen* ('is on coming').

The translation task includes 15 sentences that allow for an analysis of WLG past tense formation. The sentences contain 12 distinct verbs, as the verb *went* was included in two sentences, each of which was elicited twice from speakers. For all but three of these 15 sentences, over 90% of the responses used the perfect form rather than the preterite. The verb *come* in the sentence *He came with me* (Item #30) was used in the preterite in eight of 24 instances (33%) with various phonological forms such as *küüm, kemmt,* and *kam*. The verb *worked* in *He worked too hard* (Item #124) was used in the preterite (*arbeet*) in 16 of 21 instances (76%). The verb *were* in *You were both here yesterday* (Item #95) was given in preterite form (*veere*) by 19 of 23 speakers (83%). The frequently-occurring, semantically light verbs 'were' and 'came' are frequently used in the preterite even in European German, so the WLG data correspond to that expected based on German dialects. However, it is

unclear why the verb 'worked' (*arbeet*) is used so frequently in the preterite with such frequency.

With respect to present tense forms, only two sentences were analyzed to determine whether the simple present or analytical progressive forms were used. These sentences are *He is running now* (Item #2) and *He is helping me now* (Item #31). Each item was elicited by 20 different speakers, and all but one speaker produced the simple present form along with the adverb *nu* or *jetz(t)* ('now'): i.e. *Hij luppt nu* and *Hij helpt mi nu*. The remaining speaker produced the analytical form for both sentences using the auxiliary *doen* (StG *tun*) and the main verb in the infinitive: *Hij deet nu lope, Hij deet mi nu helpe*.

The second question regarding verb tense and aspect involves the auxiliary used in the perfect form. In German, verbs of change-of-state or change-of-location are used with the auxiliary *sein* ('to be') while other verbs are used with auxiliary *haben* ('to have'), whereas in English, all verbs are used with the auxiliary *have*. Of the eight translation items where the auxiliary *sein* is expected in StG, 114 of the 139 responses (82%) included a form of *sein* as expected based on German. Of the 25 responses using *haben*, 19 of these were produced by a small set of four speakers. These four individuals were all born in 1941 or later and are thus in the youngest generation of WLG speakers, and it is likely that the relatively short period of WLG use and high exposure to English influenced the frequency with which they use the English-related auxiliary *haben* where *sein* is expected in German varieties.

The final question related to (past) tense in WLG involves the formation of past participles. Participle formation in WLG is also relatively consistent, as speakers largely use the same participle for a given verb with only minimal variation. A major difference between participle marking between High and Low German varieties is that High German employs the *ge-* prefix whereas Low German does not. Furthermore, Low German varieties differ in that those farther west employ the *–t* participle ending while those in the east employ *–en* endings (which are typically pronounced [-ə] due to the deletion of final /-n/. Indeed, most of the participles of the 12 verbs produced in this analysis follow this pattern, as exemplified in Table 26. None of the participles have the *ge-* prefix, and only four of the 12 are more frequently used with the *–t* ending rather than the expected *–e(n)* ending.

Item #	English participle	Primary WLG participle[27]	StG Participle
11	died	dootblääve (15/19)	gestorben
28	went	goa (20/21)	gegangen
97	arrived	koma (19/20)	angekommen
30	came	koma (13/16)	gekommen
95	were	weest (4/4)	gewesen
15	took	noome (17/19)	genommen

29	seen	saia (20/21)	gesehen
85	snowed	schnie(gh)t (22/22)	geschneit
87	named	(Nåme) gewwt (8/17)	genannt
91	caught (a cold)	kreeghe (8/13)	gekriegt
92	told	seggt (19/23)	gesagt
124	worked	arbeet (5/5)	gearbeitet

Table 26: Participle formation in WLG

In sum, the Low German verbal tense and aspect system is largely intact in WLG, as perfect forms are preferred to preterite forms, the distinction between *sein* and *haben* as auxiliary is respected, and participles are generally formed with no *ge-* prefix and with either schwa or no overt ending.

4.3.4 Word order

The general word order properties of WLG are as expected for (Low) German dialects. Present-day speakers generally retain the German Satzklammer structure: in main clauses, finite verbs appear in second position and non-finite forms in clause-final position, while in dependent clauses all verbs appear in clause-final position. This is shown in (1), where the auxiliary *hewwe* (StG 'habe') is in second position and the participle *woont* (StG 'gewohnt') is in final position, with a locational and a temporal adverbial between them.

(1) *Ik heww op dem Farm sechsig Joohr woont.* (WILG-1-24-1-1-a; F, 1914)[28]
       I have on the farm sixty years lived
       'I lived on the farm for sixty years.'

As is common in colloquial German, extraposition (*Ausklammerung*) is prevalent in the data, typically involving the expression of adverbial phrases after the non-finite verb forms, as shown in (2).

(2) *Dei hewwe a Blockhuus bucht in Busch.* (WILG-1-24-1-9-a; F, 1914)
       they have a blockhouse built in woods
       'They built a blockhouse in the woods.'

In clauses headed by subordinating conjunctions, WLG speakers consistently place the verbs in clause-final position in accordance with German grammar. In (3), the speaker employs two subordinate clauses and utters the verbs at the end of each clause.

(3) *denn sin dei doo rinnemoved fer… bit sei a Piece of Land hadde, wo sei un Huus kunne buche un woohne.* (WILG-1-24-1-9-a; F, 1914)

then are they there in-moved for … until they a piece of land had, where they a house could build and live
'Then they moved in there for… until they had a piece of land where they could build a house and live.'

With respect to the relative ordering of non-finite forms, German dialects differ with respect to whether the main verb precedes or follows the support verb (auxiliary, modal). In general, the support verb follows the main verb in High German dialects, whereas the main verb follows the support verb in Low German dialects. Both types of ordering can be found in the WLG data, and are demonstrated in (4) and (5) below. This variation may have been present in the Pomeranian donor dialects, but it is also likely that contact with High German has increased the frequency of the main verb-support verb ordering observed in (4).

(4) *Da 's alles, wat hij seggt het.* (WILG-1-14-1-2; M, 1927)
      That is all what he said has.
      'That is all he said.'

(5) *Ik weea twei Jaahr olt, wenn mi Hamburg hett goa.* (WILG-1-15-1-1; M, 1941)
      I was two years old when we Hamburg had gone.
      'I was two years old when we went to Hamburg.'

In sum, this cursory look at WLG word order suggests that there has been relatively little influence from English contact, as the positioning of verbs largely follows that expected for German colloquial varieties. There are likely some effects of contact between Low and High German in the positioning of verbs in clause-final position, but overall it appears the word order of WLG is remaining intact with the final generation of its speakers.[29]

4.4 Lexicon

In discussing the lexicon of WLG, I first present interesting Pomeranian dialect words that differ from StG equivalents. I then present all instances of code-switching and loan translation found in 10-minute segments of open-ended interviews for two speakers to give a general picture of lexical interference. Finally, I discuss other English influence observed in the data, as well as mentioning some words found in Jacob's (2008) previous analysis of WLG.

Pomeranian dialect words that stand out as being unique or different from StG are provided in Table 27.

WLG	StG	English
(ver)friegt	(ver)heiratet	marry/married
Früünschaft	Verwandtschaft	relatives
Buchwehdauch	Bauchweh/Bauchschmerzen	stomachache
Pissmeier(e)	rote Ameise	red ants / fire ants
entwee	kaput; entzwei	broken
Sunnavond	Samstag	Saturday
drög	trocken	dry

Table 27: Pomeranian dialect lexical items

The tables below list all code-switched and loan-translated items produced in ten-minute sub-sections of open-ended interviews with two speakers, in order to give a picture of what words are most commonly loaned from English. These data do not include cases of alternational code-switching (Muysken 1997), in which speakers produce larger segments of discourse in English, though alternational code-switching is prevalent in the open-ended data, especially when discussing domains outside of the home and farm. Accurately distinguishing nonce code-switches from established borrowings requires a comparison of current WLG speech with earlier data, which is currently not available but must be conducted in future research.[30] The transferred items are organized according to part-of-speech.

Proper Nouns	Nouns	Verbs	Other	Loan transl.
Town of X (2)[31] X County (3) Germany Ellis Island July	farm (2) government railroad train tractor binder	shock (schocke)	for sure (2) well (2) y'know (2)	corn (Maiz) gleichen (2) runnerschreive Platz meeste de Weg

Table 28: Code-switches in open-ended interview of Speaker 6 (Female, Born 1928)

The interview segment analyzed for Speaker 6 includes 22 total instances of code-switching involving 15 different lexical items, along with six instances of loan translation with five different items. Nouns comprise the majority of code-switches, including five different proper noun types and seven different common noun types. The words *town* and *county* in proper noun contexts describing local locations (e.g., *Town of Berlin*, *Marathon County*) are very frequent in the open-ended interview data. The code-switched noun *farm* is also prevalent in WLG (and other German-American varieties) due to the centrality of farms for WLG culture and their different organization from those in 19th century Europe. Other code-switched nouns typically refer to

concepts not present in the culture of the original immigrants, especially those involving technological advances after the time of immigration (e.g., *railroad, tractor*). The only code-switched verb produced by this speaker is the verb *shock* (i.e. the process of bundling crops), which is given the German schwa ending marking it as an infinitive. The speaker uses the English discourse markers *well* and *y'know* twice each and the adverbial phrase *for sure* twice as well.

As for loan translations, the speaker refers to the maize crop with the noun *corn*, whereas the German noun *Korn* refers to grain. The loan-translated verb *gleichen* (StG 'be similar to') in the sense of 'to like something,' is used twice by the speaker and appears to be a regular lexical development in American-German dialects, having been documented for Pennsylvania German (Lambert 1924: 66), Texas German (Dux 2017, 2020), and Kansas German (Keel 2014). The speaker also calques the English expression 'most of the way' as *meeste de Weg*. Finally, the prefix verb *runnerschreive* ('down-write') is a loan hybrid based on English 'write down' and contrasts with the German expression *aufschreiben*.

Proper Nouns	Nouns	Verbs	Other	Loan transl.
Town of X (3) X County (4) Civil War (zweite) Brigade	farm (2) midwife hospital (2) letter electric lines army contractor public service	read (pr. rääd) drafted	reformed well	dockter (Arzt)

Table 29: Code-switches in open-ended interview of Speaker 4 (Male, Born 1933)

Speaker 4 produces 23 instances of code-switching involving 16 different lexical items, as well as one instance of loan translation. Again, the most frequent code-switches are proper nouns referring to local towns and counties. The noun *farm* is code-switched twice, as is the noun *hospital*. As with the previous speaker, most code-switches by Speaker 4 refer to modern cultural and technological innovations (e.g., *electric lines, public service*). Interestingly, the speaker also produces two code-switches for concepts that were common for the original immigrants, namely the noun *letter* and the verb *read*. Both of these are given German pronunciations (*lääter, rääd*), which is not the case for the other code-switches, so this may be a case of language attrition whereby the speaker thinks that these are WLG cognates of the English terms. The only code-switched adjective is *reformed*, used in the context of the Reformed

Church, and the speaker uses the English discourse marker *well* one time. The only loan translation in this interview segment is the noun *Doctor* (pronounced /doktə/) to refer to a medical doctor (i.e., *Arzt* in German). Speaker 4 did not code-switch any adverbs or grammatical morphemes.

Other prominent loan translations and code-switches identified in the data include *Isicle* (using German pronunciation: [iːsɪk̲l̲]), *Candy*, and *Kalt* (for StG *Erkältung*, 'a cold'). The words for skunk (*Stinkkatt*, lit. 'stink-cat', StG *Stinktier*) and squirrel (*Fenskatt*, lit. 'fence-cat', StG *Eichhörnchen*) are also interesting (and humorous) loan hybrids.[32] Finally, some WLG speakers use the adjective *hart* ('hard') in the sense of 'difficult.' Other code-switches observed by Jacob (2008) but not found in analyses of the present data include the nouns *air conditioning, department, teacher*, the verbs *moven, improven, upcatchen*, the adverbs *well, fast, really, plenty*, the conjunctions *because, since, but, unless, until*, and the adpositions *across, except for*, and *nächst te* ('next to', StG 'neben').

To frame these findings in terms of Thomason and Kaufmann's (1988) borrowing scale, the WLG-English contact situation can be classified as Stage 2 ("slightly more intense contact"), which involves the borrowing of adverbial particles (e.g., *well, y'know*) and conjunctions (e.g., *because*) but not more structural morphemes.[33] It is possible that the contact situation was approaching Stage 3 of the model, as some WLG adpositions appear to be borrowed from, or at least modeled on English (e.g., *nächst te* for 'next to', StG 'neben'), but the shift to English occurred before these more structural morphemes could be established in WLG.

5 Conclusions

This article has provided an overview of (Central) Wisconsin Pomeranian Low German as a single representative of several German speech communities that migrated to Wisconsin in the 19th century, strongly maintained their language into the 1920s and 1930s, but are now facing extinction due to the large-scale shift to English monolingualism that occurred around 1940. While German dialects, along with a semi-standard "Wisconsin High German," could be heard throughout the state one hundred years ago, today the German language is only spoken by a small percentage of the oldest generation of Wisconsinites. The outlook for language revitalization is very bleak, as most young people prefer to remain monolingual or learn more "practical" languages such as Spanish rather than the language of their forefathers.

The structural analysis suggests that WLG is dying with only one of its morphological boots on, to play on the quote from Dorian's (1978) account of East Sutherland Gaelic. That is, while certain aspects of the language

– particularly the vowel and article systems – exhibit significant variation suggesting a breakdown of the language, other aspects of WLG structure (e.g., word order, pronoun system) have remained largely intact since being brought to the USA in the mid-19th century. While many speakers tend to mix Low German dialect with the more standard High German and with English, most appear to be aware of the differences between these varieties. Future work must examine more closely the use of each variety in more naturalistic speech settings than the translation data cited in this work. Furthermore, a more comprehensive account of WLG's donor dialects and of the various stages of WLG throughout the 20th century are necessary to provide a more complete picture of the trajectory of language change in WLG and Wisconsin German more generally.

As pointed out in the introduction, the situation in Wisconsin differs from Texas and Pennsylvania German due to the small-scale migration and diverse dialects spoken in the state, which precludes a homogeneous moniker "Wisconsin German." At the same time, in each of these cases we are dealing with German varieties that were prominent at the turn of the 19th century but are facing extinction in the present day (with the exception of Pennsylvania German among socially isolated Old Order Mennonite and Amish sects). In addition to their shared fate, these varieties have undergone similar developments in phonology (e.g., reduction of front-rounded vowels), morphosyntax (e.g., case loss/syncretism), and lexicon (e.g., prevalence of words such as *farm* [farm], *Stinkkatze* [skunk], and *gleichen* [to like]). Such parallels among different German varieties beg for comparative analyses that will help us understand why and how languages change given certain socio-political contexts.

Another variety which must be compared with Wisconsin Pomeranian is Pomerano, a variety with the same or a closely similar donor dialect that is spoken in Espirito Santo, Brazil. This community appears to have maintained their Pomeranian identity and language to a much greater degree than the Wisconsin Pomeranians, and a comparison of the contexts of migration and language policy will help us understand the different outcomes of the two varieties. Recent research by scholars such as Ismael Tressmann and Gertjan Postma should provide valuable data for such comparisons and increase our understanding of German speech islands in particular and the broader themes of language contact, change, and death.

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Notes

[1] I thank Marc Pierce, Mark Louden, Roslyn Burns, Hans C. Boas, and Martin Hilpert for their helpful feedback on this paper.

[2] The interviews consisted of a translation task adapted from Gilbert (1972) and the Texas German Dialect Project (Boas 2009a), open-ended ethnographic interviews, and a biographical questionnaire (conducted in English) about speaker variables, language use, and language attitudes.

[3] In recent years, sectarian speakers of Pennsylvania German have begun to settle in rural areas of Wisconsin, particularly in the northwestern part of the state, so the German language will likely remain alive in these isolated communities.

[4] This section is based largely on Eichhoff (1971), which is – to my knowledge – the only general summary of Wisconsin German.

[5] Eichhoff (1971) also mentions that the prevalence of English and, to a lesser extent, Standard German made it unnecessary to form a koiné based on the dialects.

[6] Helbich et al. (1988: 287) cite 570 original immigrants, while Clemens (1976: 53) mentions 622 immigrants.

[7] This information comes from Kickbusch's obituary in the *Wausau Pilot* newspaper from June 4, 1901, accessed through http://www.pvcw.org/Stories/AugustKickbuschStory.aspx.

[8] Wisconsin was also settled by other immigrant communities, such as Irish, Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian, and Polish (Bowman 1948: 40). It does not appear that there was significant contact between the WLG community and these other immigrants, but future research may reveal otherwise.

[9] Louden (2011) discusses the potential substrate effects that the prominence of Low German dialects had on a semi-standard "Wisconsin High German."

[10] "At its height [in the 1930s], Fromm has over 1,000 employees in north central Wisconsin. Being in the midst of the Great Depression, there are long lines several hundreds deep of people waiting outside the Fromm Bros. gates in Hamburg, WI hoping for an opportunity to join the team." (https://frommfamily.com/about/our-history/)

[11] Louden (2009) claims that there are no more fluent speakers in the earlier-established settlement of Freistadt in Mequon, Wisconsin.

[12] These data may be available in the near future through a collaboration with the Texas German Dialect Project (www.tgdp.org; Boas 2009a). Interested readers may contact the author for more information about the data and the data collection process.

[13] Two informants are excluded because they are not native WLG speakers but spouses thereof, and three others did not complete the questionnaire.

[14] The structural analysis compares WLG against StG, because the existing resources on the donor dialect are not suited for a comparison against Pomeranian or "Standard" Low German. While a detailed account of changes in the Pomeranian dialect since it was brought to the USA is certainly desirable, this must be left for future research, as all accounts of Pomeranian available to the author during the preparation of this article focus on small geographic spaces relatively distant from the areas where WLG originates (Stritzel 1937) or on minor phonological variation and developments from Middle Low German in different areas (Holsten 1928, Priewe and Teuchert 1928). The recent publication of Gertjan (2019) provides a comprehensive grammar of Pomeranian on the basis of the dialect spoken in Espirito Santo, Brazil. This manuscript promises to be a valuable source for comparative analyses of Pomeranian in the USA and Brazil and for comparisons against the donor dialect(s).

[15] The data only include examples that are relevant for the discussion and in which the speaker clearly produced the word with the sound in question. For this reason, the number of examples listed varies from item to item.

[16] Within these tables, the numbers in normal font in the right-hand column refer to the informant ID numbers. For instance, in Table 2, Speaker 1 and Speaker 6 produce [dɛːə] for 'door.'

[17] Numbers preceded by the '#' sign refer to the item numbers on the translation list used in the study, which were originally used by Gilbert (1972) and later by Boas (2009a) for Texas German.

[18] Individual speaker numbers are not provided for the pronunciation of 'two' due to space limitations, as this word appears in seven different translation items for a total of 136 occurrences.

[19] This difference may be due to the *Kopf* example occurring earlier in the interview, as speakers may have initially felt pressure to use the 'proper' High German pronunciation and only later felt comfortable using Low German phonology.

[20] For instance, in the translation of 'goats' in Item #66, three speakers produce [g] and nine speakers produce [ɣ].

[21] For reasons of space, Table 14 only lists the total number of speakers producing a given plural form rather than listing each individual speaker number.

[22] As indicated in the tables, several speakers pronounce the first person possessive pronoun as [mi:] or [mi:ə] with minimal phonological difference, making it difficult to determine whether the gender-marking schwa is present.

[23] The frequency of *de* as the definite article in these and the following examples may be influenced by its phonological similarity to English *the*, which is occasionally pronounced with initial /d/ in spoken Wisconsin English

[24] Pasture is code-switched from English and is thus not traditionally associated with a gender in German.

[25] Individual speaker numbers are not included in Table 20.

[26] The author thanks the participants of the German Abroad 2 conference (Austin, TX, November 2016) for their feedback on the data presented in this section.

[27] The numbers following the WLG participle refer to the number of speakers producing the listed participle and the total number of responses. For instance, 20 out of 21 speakers gave the participle *goa* for Item #28.

[28] The content in parentheses following the examples in this section indicate the interview segment identifier, the speaker's gender (both male), and the speaker's birth year.

[29] Louden (2011) provides a detailed analysis of word order in the High German speech of Wisconsin Germans in the Freistadt area, arguing that the High German of these speakers is merely a "relexified" form of Low German, as the High German discourse follows the word-order properties of Low German despite employing High German lexical items.

[30] The Max Kade Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison houses recordings of WLG speakers conducted by Jürgen Eichhoff in 1968, which may be a promising source for diachronic comparisons of WLG. At present, however, most of these data are not publicly available.

[31] Numbers in parentheses refer to the number of times a given item was used if it was used multiple times. "X" stands for the name of a town or county.

[32] Texas German also uses the word *Stinkkatze* for 'skunk' (Boas and Pierce 2011).

[33] Although *because* did not occur in the data analyzed here, it is uttered by multiple speakers in other interview segments and was also reported by Jacobs (2008).

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