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Moundridge (Kansas) Schweitzer German

1 Introduction: Historical background

Moundridge Schweitzer German (MSG) is a strictly oral moribund heritage variety of German spoken in and around Moundridge, Kansas, approximately 30 miles northeast of Wichita. They are a community of Mennonites whose dialect most closely resembles Eastern Palatinate. Today, there are estimated to be fewer than three dozen speakers remaining, all over the age of 65. The speakers are approximately the third or fourth generation of MSG speakers in the area, and also the last. In this chapter, we will present the historical background, describe sociolinguistic aspects, and discuss a number of distinctive linguistic features of the MSG community.

Moundridge is one of two settlements populated in the late 19th century by Anabaptist immigrants who originated from the northwestern region of Switzerland. After leaving Switzerland in 1670/71 for the Palatinate region of Germany due to religious persecution, the community settled in the Eastern Palatinate region of Germany, where they remained for nearly one hundred years. During their time in this region, the language of the community acquired features that define it still today as a Palatinate variety (Putnam 2012). The community emigrated to Russia (1784-1872) – specifically Galicia and Volhynia –, where an Anabaptist colony was formed together with settlers from Bern, Switzerland, and Northern Germany. In this Russian colony, Palatinate served as the common language of communication (“Ausgleichsmundart,” Rein 1977: 204) among the various Swiss and German dialects spoken there. The time in the Russian colony was a period of relative linguistic stability, reinforced by societal isolation. Some Russian lexical items were adopted (in particular food items), but the variety of German that came

with these Mennonites to the United States in the 1870s was Palatinate. The community formed two settlements, one in Moundridge, Kansas and one in Freeman, South Dakota. The settlement in Moundridge is adjacent to a much larger Low German-speaking settlement of Mennonites that was also founded in the 1870s.

Emigration from Russia was prompted by several factors. First, mandatory military service was introduced. Being pacifists, the Anabaptists sought a new location for their community. Another development was the establishment of Russian as a mandatory language for education (Moelleken 1987; Brandt 1992). This infringed on the community's religious and ethnic identity. The opportunity to acquire inexpensive land existed in the United States at the time, due to the founding of the Sante Fe and Kansas Pacific railroads, and the Homestead Act of 1862. "The new settlers had the opportunity to acquire a farmstead either free under the provisions of the Homestead Act (1862) or relatively cheaply from one of the transcontinental railroad companies" (Keel 2006a: 33). The Homestead Act allowed an unsettled parcel of land to be settled under the condition that the settler was over the age of 21 and had never taken up arms against the United States government (Huston 2004). Kansas was touted as a place where settlers could find freedom: both religious and ideological. Sent as a recruiter for the Santa Fe railroad, Carl Bernhard Schmidt traveled a number of times to Europe and brought back over 60,000 German-speaking settlers to the region (Keel 2006a: 36). Additionally, other institutions already existed in Kansas, such as the German-language abolitionist newspaper "Kansas Zeitung" (Keel 2006a: 30), which signaled to the settlers that they would find like-minded people.

During the first few decades, the communities were largely religiously homogeneous and, therefore, remained self-contained and isolated. While Mennonites were the most numerous of the German-speaking settlers (Rein, 1977: 8), Jews, Catholics, Lutherans and other protestant denominations settled in their own enclaves throughout Kansas (Keel 2006b: 14). In the immediate vicinity of Moundridge, in McPherson County, the two primary communities were the Palatinate-speaking Mennonites and Low German-speaking Mennonites. According to our MSG informants, there was little interaction between the two settlements. The Kansas Mennonite community in general, though, established a weekly newspaper, "Der Herold" (1909-41), which was published until 1916 entirely in German, then slowly transitioned to English, with the first entirely English edition being published under the name "Mennonite Weekly Review" in 1922 (Keel 2006a: 42). Within their own community, the MSG speakers set up schools and churches in which High German was used as the language of instruction and scripture. According to our informants, the use of German at home and on a monthly basis at church continued into the 1940s.

2 Sociohistorical and sociolinguistic aspects

Remnants of the more densely populated German-speaking communities in Kansas still exist today, but are in decline. This includes the communities of the Volga Germans in Ellis and Russell counties, Low German speakers in Marshall and Washington counties, Mennonite Low German speakers in Marion, McPherson and Reno counties, and Swiss Germans in Nemaha County, as well as the Mennonite Palatinate speakers in McPherson County to which the MSG community belongs (Keel 2006a: 30). The remaining speakers of the dialects in McPherson County have established a heritage event held at the local college in North Newton, Kansas. This “Fall Fest” features theater productions or traditional performances by the Low German and MSG speakers (Keel 2006a). Keel (2006a: 43) views such events as the “final stage” of these speech communities, as they are an effort to maintain what is left of the language and their heritage.

Today, there are estimated to be less than three dozen remaining speakers of MSG, all over the age of 65. The most proficient speakers who report learning MSG as their first language are all over the age of 80. We view the Moundridge community as a case of *bilingualism without diglossia* in the sense of Fishman (1980). Individuals are bilingual, yet there is no community or institutionalized support for the heritage dialect. This a result of strong language contact over the years between the Mennonite and the English-speaking communities. Although the heritage dialect was maintained for approximately four generations, the remaining speakers are dominant in English and report using their German less than one hour per week primarily to greet one another, for the occasional interjection or quick exchange, as slang, or a “secret language” (2014 interviews).

What led to the decline of German in this community? Interviews with our informants have revealed that, in previous generations, English was viewed as the more practical language, as it permitted entry into the English-speaking society and workforce. During the early-mid 20th century, members of the community began sending their children to the English-speaking schools and the churches began holding their services in English. At the same time, informants report that speaking German was frowned upon during the world wars, and even discouraged (2014 interviews) while the informants were in school. According to Keel (2006a) such sentiments accelerated the process of assimilation to English. Ultimately, little attention was paid to maintaining the language, but today, the remaining speakers have recognized the importance of their language for the community’s heritage.

3 Phonetics and phonology

The phonology of MSG is very similar to that of its sister colony in Freeman, SD, described by Rein (1977). Both varieties share many traits with Palatinate dialects, such as the lack of front rounded vowels and the diphthong /ɔɪ/ (often transcribed [ɔʏ]) found in many other varieties of German including Modern Standard German. The phonemic inventory of MSG vowels in stressed syllables is given in (1):

- (1) Vowel inventory in stressed syllables
- /i:/ tierchen [di:rçən] ‘little animal’
 - /e:/ zeh [tse:] ‘ten’
 - /u:/ bu [bu:] ‘boy’, cf. German *Bube*
 - /o:/ wo [wo:] ‘where’
 - /a:/ glas [gla:s] ‘glass’
 - /ɪ/ ausgidelt [aʊsgɪrl̩t] ‘shaken out’, cf. German *ausgeschüttelt*
 - /ɛ/ bett [bɛt] ‘bed’
 - /ʊ/ hund [hʊnt] ‘dog’
 - /ɔ/ grot [grɔt] ‘frog’,
 - /a/ wasser [vasər] ‘water’
 - /aʊ/ baum [baʊm] ‘tree’
 - /aɪ/ sei [zaɪ] ‘his’

Three vowels are found in unstressed syllables, /ə/, /i/ and /ʊ/. The vowel /ə/ is often found in plural endings as well as in unstressed affixes whereas the /i/ is often found in adjective endings and in epenthetic vowels as shown in (2):

- (2) Vowels in unstressed syllables
- /ə/ grotte [grɔtə] ‘frogs’
 - /i/ deitschi [daɪtʃi] ‘German+NOM.PL’, karrich [kariç] ‘church’
 - /ʊ/ zeitung [tsaɪtʊŋ] ‘newspaper’

Several of the speakers in our study appeared to have merged MSG /a/ and /ɔ/. In a study of low back merger in the speech of two MSG speakers, Joo et al. (to appear) measured F1, F2, and duration of realizations of MSG /a/ and /ɔ/ and of American English (AE) /ɑ/ and /ɔ/, the vowels in cot and caught respectively. They found that both speakers clearly distinguished AE /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ spectrally. One speaker also showed significant differences in measurements of F1 and F2 for MSG /a/ and /ɔ/ an indication that the vowels were contrastive. For the other speaker, differences in the measurements of F1, F2, F3 and duration between MSG /a/ and /ɔ/ were not significant, an

indication that the vowels may be merged or nearly merged. There is no evidence that contact with American English played a role in the apparent low back merger of this speaker, since he clearly maintains a contrast between the low back vowels /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ in American English.

The consonant inventories include two series of stops, which only contrast word-initially for /p/ and /b/ and word-medially for /t/ and /d/ except in loanwords such as *teacher* that have an initial /t/. There is also no voicing contrast in final position due to final devoicing. Examples are given in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1. Stops in MSG

	Initial	Medial	Final
Labial /p/	[pa:] ‘Pa’	---	[kɔp] ‘head’
/b/	[bu:]	[blaɪbə] ‘stay’	---
Alveolar /t/	---	[grɔtə] ‘frogs’	[hont] ‘dog’, [gərɛt] ‘talked’
/d/	[do:t] ‘dead’	[rɛrɛ] ‘talk INF’, [rɔndər] ‘down’, cf. German <i>herunter</i>	---
Velar /k/	[ku:] ‘cow’	[fərʃtekə] ‘to hide’	[vek] ‘way’
/g/	[gɛ:t] ‘geht’	[fo:gəl] ‘bird’	---

In initial position before vowels, there is a fortis ~ lenis opposition between /p/ and /b/ and between /k/ and /g/ as illustrated in Table 3.1. The contrast between /p/ and /b/ is only found in this position, whereas the contrast between /k/ and /g/ is also found intervocalically. Initial fortis stops are lightly aspirated. In initial stop-liquid clusters, only lenis stops appear as in [ɡlaɪn] ‘small’ and [ɡrɔt] ‘frog’, compare Standard German *klein* [klaɪn] ‘small’ and *Kröte* [krɔ:tə] ‘toad’. As is the case with many Palatinate-based German dialects in the Americas, there is not a contrast between voiceless aspirated alveolar stops and voiced alveolar stops in initial position in the native lexicon. Compare MSG [do:t] ‘dead’ with Standard German *tot* [tʰo:t] ‘dead’, MSG [da:k] ‘day’ with Standard German *Tag* [tʰa:k] ‘day’, and MSG [dɪç] ‘you ACC’ with Standard German *dich* [dɪç] ‘you ACC’. In medial position, the fortis-lenis opposition is maintained with voicing of lenis stops. The lenis alveolar stop is consistently flapped when realized intervocalically and followed by an unstressed vowel. Fortis medial stops are voiceless and

have an audible release. In final position, only voiceless stops appear. The stops in final position are fortis, not glottalized, and consistently have an audible release.

The affricate /ts/ is found initially, medially and finally. Examples include [tse:] ‘ten’, cf. Standard German *zehn* ‘ten’ [tse:n]; [ʃvaitsər] ‘Swiss’, cf. Standard German *Schweizer* [ʃvaitsə] ‘Swiss’. The affricate /pf/ is absent from MSG.

MSG fricatives are listed in Table 3.2. The fricatives /f/ and /v/ contrast word-initially. The fricative /v/ does not occur in morpheme-internal intervocalic position or in word-final position. The fricatives [s] and [z] are in complementary distribution. The allophone [s] occurs intervocalically after short vowels and in final position, e.g., [visə] ‘to know’ and [gla:s] ‘glass’. The allophone [z] occurs in initial position before vowels and intervocalically after long vowels, e.g., [ziç] ‘himself’ and [gro:zə] ‘big’.

Table 3.2. Fricatives in MSG

	Initial	Medial	Final
Labiodental /f/	[ʃɪndət] ‘finds’	[ʃlo:fə] ‘sleep’	[ʊf] ‘on’
/v/	[vas] ‘what’	[ʊfvəkə] ‘wake up’	---
Alveolar /s/	[ziç] ‘himself’	[visə] ‘to know’ [gro:zə] ‘big’ [e:z] ‘ass’	[gla:s] ‘glass’
Postalveolar /ʃ/	[ʃɪrɪt] ‘shakes’	[ʃmo:kə] ‘smoke’,	[flaʃ] ‘bottle’
Palatal /ç/ Velar	---	[di:rçən] ‘little animal’	[ziç] ‘himself, herself’ [lɔx] ‘hole’
Glottal	[hont] ‘dog’	---	---

As is typical in Palatinate-based varieties of German, sibilant plus consonant clusters are always realized with [ʃ] (never with [s]) in all positions: examples are [ʃti:bl] ‘boots’, cf. Standard German *Stiefel* [ʃti:ʃl] ‘boots’; [bɪʃt] ‘are.2.SG’, cf. Standard German *bist* [bɪst] ‘are.2.SG’, [aŋʃt] ‘fear’, cf. Standard German *Angst* [aŋst].

The voiceless palatal fricative [ç] and the voiceless velar fricative [x] are in complementary distribution and follow the same pattern as in Standard German. The palatal fricative is realized morpheme-initially in the diminutive suffix *-chen* and after front vowels, e.g., [di:rçən] ‘little animal’ and [ziç]

'himself, herself', and after sonorants consonants as in *manchmal* [manʃmal] 'sometimes'. The velar fricative is realized after back vowels, e.g., [lɔx] 'hole'. The glottal fricative /h/ is only found in the onset of stressed syllables as in [hʊnt] 'dog'.

The liquids /l/ and /r/ are found in all positions. Examples of /l/ include [lɔx] 'hole', [falə] 'fall', and [gədʊlt] 'patience'. As illustrated by [gədʊlt] 'patience', /l/ is often velarized in the syllable coda, particularly after a high back rounded vowel. The liquid /r/ is found in all positions. It is invariably realized as the trill [r] or tap [ɾ] in syllable onsets. In coda position, the alveolar approximant [ɹ] is in free variation with a trill [r] or tap [ɾ]. The use of [ɹ] appears to be particularly common in unstressed position, with less proficient speakers more likely to use the alveolar approximant [ɹ] found in American English than the trill or tap variants. Examples include [rɛrə] 'talk', [grɔt] 'frog', [andəri] 'other', [ʊnzɹ] 'our', [fɛnʃdɛr] 'window'. In contrast, Rein reports that /r/ is invariably realized as [r] or [ɾ] in all positions by Mennonite German speakers in Freeman, SD, Moundridge's sister settlement.

The lexical stress pattern in MSG is typical for a variety of German. The first syllable of the root bears lexical stress as in [ˈvaʃər] 'water'. Separable prefixes are stressed, e.g., MSG [ˈan.gə.laxt] 'laughed at', cf. Standard German *angelacht*; MSG [ˈʊm.dre:t] 'turns around' cf. Standard German *umdreht*. Inseparable prefixes are unstressed, e.g., [fər.'ʃte:] 'understand', cf. Standard German *verstehen* [fɛv.'ʃte:.ən] 'understand'; MSG [gə.'dʊlt] 'patience', cf. Standard German *Geduld*. The intonational pattern of MSG is quite unremarkable. A falling pitch contour with a high pitch on the syllable bearing main stress in the intonational phrase (i.e., nuclear stress) followed by a fall in pitch is commonly used for assertions, commands, and questions introduced by a *wh*-word. A rising pitch contour with low pitch on the syllable bearing nuclear stress followed by sharp rise in pitch at the end of the intonational phrase is typical of yes-no questions, of *wh*-questions and commands to make them sound more polite, of *wh*-questions to indicate disbelief, and in the middle of discourse to indicate that the speaker wishes to continue. There is no evidence in MSG of the fall contour used in Pennsylvania German for some yes-no questions as reported by Huffines (1980).

There are remarkably few indications of influence from English in MSG. The alveolar approximant [ɹ] is in free variation with a trill [r] or tap [ɾ] in coda position. As mentioned earlier, this pronunciation is not found in Freeman, SD, and is presumably due to the influence of American English. Similarly, the lateral /l/ is often velarized in coda position in MSG. The use of the occurrence of the approximant [ɹ] and the velarized lateral [ɭ] after back vowels in syllable codas is found in the variety of Pennsylvania German spoken in Lancaster County as well (Louden and Page 2005: 1389). Unlike

in Freeman, the obstruents /b/ and /g/ are not lenited to sonorant consonants intervocallically, whereas /d/ can be realized as a flap in both Moundridge and Freeman. It should be noted that /b/ and /g/ are also typically lenited in medial position in Pennsylvania Dutch, another Palatinate-based variety of German. The realization of /b/ and /g/ in intervocalic position as [b] and [g] respectively could well be due to the influence of American English. Note that both American English and MSG also realize /d/ as a flap intervocallically when the following vowel is unstressed. Unlike American English, MSG /t/ is not produced as a flap intervocallically before unstressed vowels, e.g., *grotte* [grɒtə] 'frog.' In sum, the phonological system of MSG looks very much like its Palatinate-based cousins and shows only minimal signs of contact-induced change.

4 Morphosyntax

In addition to the phonological factors previously discussed, MSG primarily exhibits a mixture of Eastern and Middle Western Palatinate morphosyntactic features. Similar in structure to other Middle German dialects, MSG possesses a three-gender system, although outside of gender assignment to human entities, the assignment of gender to other objects - both animate and inanimate - can be lossy, even within the same discourse utterances. The reduction in accurate mapping in the gender system is similar in some respect to what is witnessed in nominal plurals as well. Additional evidence can be readily found in the verbal morphology of MSG that indicates its Middle Palatinate heritage. Examples for these traits include: the first person singular inflection of the verb *haben* 'to have' occurs as *han* (Post 1992: 131), there appears to be no distinction between present perfect and pluperfect (*war...gewest* 'had....been') (Post 1992: 134), the lack of an -en ending on the majority of past participles (ex. *gefun(d)* 'found', Standard German *gefunden*) (Post 1992: 130), and the reduction of certain high frequency verbs in their participial form to allophonic variation without the perfective aspectual *ge-* prefix (ex. *kum* 'come', Standard German *gekommen*) (Post 1992: 130). The formation of past subjunctive mood with a generic modal derived from the predicate *tun* 'to do' /de:d/ also supports this hypothesis.

The case system in MSG has a two-way distinction between a combined nominative-accusative case and the dative (König 1998: 154). The dative case is realized predominantly by the addition of the shibboleth prepositional marker *an* 'on' or *zu* 'to' as illustrated in example (3):

- (3) Saww es net an unser Vater!
 say it not to other father
 'Don't tell our father!'

The usage of a prepositional dative case is common among Alemannic and Bavarian dialects (cf. Schirmunski 1962; Dal 1971; Seiler 2002, 2003) and appears to be a vestige from one of the base dialects that contributed to the formation of MSG. It is also worth noting that the dative case morphophonological distinctions, such as the -m ending for masculine singular, can optionally occur on the shibboleth preposition or the personal pronoun in example (3) above (see e.g., Putnam 2012: 48). Putnam (2012) notes a peculiar extension of the dative case in a handful of MSG speakers, where the feminine personal pronoun *ihr* ‘her’ can be used as a dative determiner as in (4) with feminine singular and occasionally with plurals (from Putnam 2012: 54):

- (4) Er schreewt ihre Frau en Brief.
 he writes 3SG.F.DAT woman a letter
 ‘He write a letter to the woman.’

Only a few remaining speakers occasionally employ this marking, and it has not been extended to either masculine or neutral forms. In the case of indefinite articles, there are common nominative-accusative forms, and all datives are prepositional datives. The Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below represent the case system for the majority of the remaining MSG speakers (from Putnam 2012: 56):

Table 4.1 Definite articles in MSG

	Singular			Plural
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	
Nominative	der	die	(d)es	die
Accusative	der/n	die	(d)es	die
Dative	an + ‘m/’n	an/zü + die	an + ‘n/’m	an + ‘n

Table 4.2 Indefinite articles in MSG

	Singular			Plural
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	
Nominative	en	eine	(e)s	---
Accusative	en	eine	(e)s	---
Dative	an + ‘n zü + einre	zü + eine	an + ‘m/’n zü + einem	---

4.1 General properties of word order

With respect to word order, although in matrix clauses MSG still maintains a verb-second ordering which is common place in continental German dialects as well as other Sprachinsel-variants, the situation is a bit more complicated in subordinate clauses. Hopp and Putnam (2015) analyzed the spontaneous speech of eight MSG-speaking informants and discovered that the type of complementizer heading the subordinate clause strongly influences whether verb-second or verb-final ordering takes place.

Two of the seventeen finite subordinate clauses headed by the complementizer *dass* ‘that’ exhibited verb-final order of the finite verb as in (5) (data from Hopp and Putnam 2015: 195-6):

- (5) Ich denk, dass sie auch da net viel was Schweitzer [_{v-fin}reden]
 I think that they also there not much what Schweitzer speak
 ‘I think that they do not speak much Schweitzer there, either.’

The remaining fifteen *dass*-clauses displayed verb-second order as in (6):

- (6) ...dass da lieber Gott [_{v-fin}hot] uns auch net alles genomm wie
 dat in Oklahoma
 that the dear God has us also not everything taken like
 there in Oklahoma
 ‘that the dear God hasn’t taken everything away from us like in Oklahoma.’

A similar pattern is observed with subordinate clauses that begin with *weil* ‘because’; eight of the nine examples beginning with the *weil*-complementizer also exhibit verb-second ordering:

- (7) weil ich du net Hochdeutsch [_{v-fin}redde].
 because I do/can not High German talk
 ‘because I can’t speak standard German.’

In contrast to subordinate clauses headed by the complementizers *dass* and *weil*, verb-last ordering is predominant in both temporal subordinate clauses headed by *wenn* ‘when’ (ex. (8)) and relative clauses (ex. (9)), headed by the generic relative pronoun *wo* ‘that’:

- (8) wenn mir erscht geheirat [_{v-fin}henn]
 when we first married have
 ‘When we first got married.’

- (9) die wo in die Schul jetzt [_{V-fin} sin(d)]
 those there in the school now are
 ‘those that are in the school currently.’

Similar to other Palatinate-based diasporic Sprachinseln, the extraposition of adverbial prepositional phrases to the right of the verbal bracket (Ausklammerung) is quite common (cf. Fitch 2011; Stolberg 2014) and should not be misconstrued as a change instituted through contact with English.

4.2 Verb clusters and IPP

MSG has maintained modal infinitive pro participio (IPP) constructions as two-verb clusters:

- (10) mir [_{AUX} hen]immer [_{MOD} misse] [_V mache]
 we have always must do
 ‘we always had to work’

Joo (to appear) investigated verb order variation of these constructions and conducted an acceptability judgment task. She found that the verb order in MSG modal IPP structures is strictly a modal verb followed by a lexical verb (MOD-V) and that the informants categorically rejected the Standard German V-MOD order. Some flexibility with regard to the placement of the direct object (DO) exists though. While the canonical position of the direct object appears to be between MOD and V with 72.2% acceptance rate, (11), informants also accepted word orders where the direct object has scrambled out of the verb cluster with 41.7% acceptance, (16).

- (11) Mir hen [_{MOD} misse] [_{DO} die Kieh] [_V melke]
 we have must the cow milk

- (12) Mir hen [_{DO} die Kieh] [_{MOD} misse] [_V melke]
 we have the cows must milk
 both: ‘We had to milk the cows.’

The verb order MOD-V is the same in main and subordinate clauses of MSG as example (13) illustrates.

- (13) Ich war froh, immer wenn ich hen net
 [_{MOD} misse] die [_{DO} Milch]

I was happy always when I have not
must the milk
[_vhole] get

‘I was happy whenever I didn’t have to get the milk.’

Table 4.3 summarizes the differences in permissible verb orders in Standard German, West Central German (to which the source dialect of MSG, Eastern Palatinate, belongs), and MSG main clauses.

Table 4.3 Summary of modal IPP verb order in main clauses.

Standard German (Wurmbrand 2004)	West Central German (Dubenion-Smith 2010)	MSG (2011, 2013 recordings)
V-MOD	V-MOD (42.1%)	
	MOD-V (57.9%)	MOD-V (100%)

The most preferred verb order in West Central German¹ is MOD-V, however, canonical V-MOD is also accepted. According to Dubenion-Smith (p.c.), in modern Palatinate modal IPP constructions the Standard German V-MOD order is only accepted 36% of the time. Based on this information and considerations about dialectal differences in urban versus rural areas and dialectal change due to contact with Standard German in continental Palatinate, Joo hypothesizes that the MOD-V order in MSG modal IPP constructions indicates a conservation of its source dialect.

4.3 Structure of complex clauses

An interesting property of the syntax of MSG concerns the fusion of multiple clauses, especially those involving infinitival clauses. Examples abound in our fieldwork recordings the union of multiple clauses (examples (14) - (18)):

- (14) Er will der Grott probiere catche
 he wants the frog try catch
 ‘He wants to try and/to catch the frog.’
- (15) Mein Grossvater is kumme helfe
 my granddad is come help
 ‘My granddad has come to help.’

- (16) a. Er hot's Haus gefinisht painte
 he has.the house finished painting
 'He finished painting the house.'
- b. Er is fertig mit dem Haus painte
 he is finished/done with the house painting
 'He finished painting the house.'
- (17) Sie waren dreckich von ins Wasser falle
 they were dirty from into-the water falling
 'They were dirty from falling into the water.'
- (18) Sie henn die Kinder gefragt for heraus geh
 they have the children asked for out go
 'They asked if the children, if they wanted to go out(side).'

Examples (14) - (16a) indicate that infinitival clauses can be fused with the matrix event structure exhibiting a control predicate (14) or a regular event (15) without the presence of an infinitival marker *zu* 'to.' Examples (16a) and (16b) show that the finite verb in these fused clauses may be underspecified as to whether they are exclusively infinitives or gerundives (see also ex. (17)). Lastly, examples (17) and (18) demonstrate that the lack of the infinitival marker extends to more complex purposive clauses (see Börjars and Burridge 2011 for a treatment of similar constructions in Pennsylvania German spoken in Ontario, Canada). These structures appear to be a vestigial remnant from their continental source grammar when compared with dialectal structures from their region of origin (see e.g., especially extensive work by Schallert 2014).

In spite of these similarities, Judy, Putnam, and Rothman (to appear) tested whether or not both subject and object control - structures that are commonly used in spoken English - existed on equal footing in MSG. A total of 16 informants participated in a translation task in which the informants were given an English stimulus - consisting of subject and object control predicates - and were asked to translate the given stimulus into MSG. Examples (19) and (20) show that although subject control predicates were easier to translate from English to MSG (ex. (19)) with 87.5% accuracy, certain lexical restrictions - such as the predicate *expect* in (20) - proved to be much more difficult (success rate of 26.67%). Overall, the informants were able to translate the English stimuli at a success rate of 71.78% (117/163) for the subject control predicates, but they encountered much difficulties in this task with object control predicates with a low rate of success at 24.3% accuracy (37/152). Example (21) below shows an unfaithful target response

by one of the informants (NB: This particular stimulus was only translated 12.5% in a corresponding target form in MSG).

Stimulus: He stopped smoking.

- (19) Er hat ufgeheert [_{INF}schmoke]
 he has stopped smoke
 'He stopped smoking.'

Stimulus: He expects to buy a new cow.

- (20) Er denkt, er wird eine neie Kuh [_{INF}kaufe]
 he thinks, he will a new cow buy
 'He thinks he will buy a new cow.'

Stimulus: I asked the kids to give me the book.

- (21) Ich han die Kinder gefragt, ob sie mir das Buch [_{INF}gebe]
 I have the children asked whether they me the book give
 'I asked the kids if they would give me the book.'

Judy et al. (to appear) hypothesize that the difficulty with object control structures is due to performance-based constraints on the grammar (i.e., the requirement to switch the grammatical function of the linked argument across clauses).

4.4 Loss of passive voice

Putnam and Salmons (2013) draw attention to the observation that the final generation of MSG speakers appear to be losing passive voice distinctions. The procedural passive (*werden* 'to become' + past participle) has given way to periphrastic constructions that are either stative passives (*sein* 'to be' + past participle) or impersonal passives, which consist of a generic, unspecified agent *ebber* 'someone' with a verb inflected for present tense:

- (22) Ebber hot mich gesieht
 someone has me seen
 'Someone has seen me.'

The example (22) illustrates the impersonal passive which has become the common form in MSG.

5 Lexicon

The lexicon of MSG is characterized by relatively few borrowings from English due to the rapid shift in the previous generation to this generation from German to English as the dominant language. The community did not experience a long transition period between the two languages that would have allowed extensive structural borrowing to occur in situations of more intense contact as defined by Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) borrowing scale. Instead, the previous generation used almost exclusively German, and the current generation uses almost exclusively English, creating a situation that can be most accurately described by what Thomason and Kaufman define as language death. Overwhelming cultural pressure has led to "loss of domains of uses, that [led] to loss of stylistic resources and, ultimately, to loss of grammatical structures, as new generations of speakers [failed] to learn forms their elders never or rarely use" (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 101).

On the individual level, we could describe the situation today as casual contact, as German is not used frequently in the community. As a result, we observe lexical borrowings or insertions but structural maintenance of MSG. Therefore, the remaining proficient speakers of MSG speak fluently, and fluidly incorporate English lexical items in their speech. This can range from individual lexical items to entire clauses in an utterance. The speakers do this with ease, and in many cases adopt German phonology, morphology and syntax, even maintaining the German verbal bracket. Despite the mixed picture, we can say that MSG speakers are proficient code-switchers, both alternational (between phrases or utterances) as shown in (23) and insertional (single words) as shown in (24), as defined by Muysken (2000) and Matras (2009). Examples (23) and (24) are excerpts from interviews with MSG speakers that demonstrate these concepts.

- (23) das is ei grosse karrich, it was built for six-hundred n sixty-five
that is a big church, ...
'That is a big church, it was built for 665.'

- (24) un de grot guckt mit seine auge like:
'was in aller welt
and the frog looks with his eyes like:
what in all-the world
ist das?'
is that
'and the frog looks like: "What in the world is that?"'

It is possible that some instances of insertional code-switching are actually borrowings (items integrated diachronically into the lexicon, Matras 2009), because interviews with our informants have revealed that they are sometimes aware they are using an English word, and sometimes unaware. An example of this can be seen in (25), where the informant comments on the use of English because of a lexical gap in their MSG. In example (26), the informant uses the prepositional phrase 'from each other' without any indication that insertion of this English lexical item is due to dysfluency.

- (25) un sie hen ge-waved am grot...
 das is auch net
 and they have PART.PREF-wavedto-the frog that
 is also not
 recht aber ich weeiß net was es is
 right but I know not what it is
 ‘and they waved to the frog...that is also not right, but I don’t know what it is’
- (26) die buben wohn ibber de weg von each others
 the boys live over the way from each others
 ‘the boys love across from each other’

Of course, lack of comment does not equal lack of awareness, but our recordings of MSG are the only source of information we have on this dialect. Nevertheless, in the many conversations we have had with our informants, we have witnessed numerous examples of English lexical items being incorporated seamlessly into the German sentence structure, see examples (27)-(29).

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|---------|--------|----------|-------|-------|---------|
| (27) | any | wer (?) | of | us | will | komme | helfe |
| | kann | komme | | | | | |
| | any | who(?) | of | us | wants | come | help |
| | can | come | | | | | |
| | und | dano | sollen | sie | net | uns | bezahle |
| | aber | geve | a | donation | | | |
| | and | then | shall | they | not | us | pay |
| | but | give | a | donation | | | |

‘any of us who wants to help, can come help and then they shouldn’t pay us, but give a donation’

- (28) die bube hen doch sure ball gespielt
 the boys have AFFIRM.PART sure ball played
 'the boys definitely played ball'
- (29) jetz sin mer ziemlichlow an junge leit
 now are we quite low on young people
 'at the moment we are quite low on young people'

English is observed in MSG in just about every word class. Examples of nouns include animals that were not part of their daily farm life, e.g., 'squirrel', 'beehive', 'deer'. Farming vocabulary is almost exclusively in English, such as 'grain', 'dairy', 'beans', 'farm', and English verbs with German morphology, such as 'ge-bale-*t*' (baled, as in hay). This incorporation of English verbs with German morphology is a common phenomenon. Other examples include 'watch-*e*' (to watch) and 'uf-speed-*e*' (to speed up), and 'ge-order-*t*' (ordered). English adverbs, adjectives and discourse markers such as 'well' or 'anyway' are also easily incorporated individually or as chunks into the German.²

One point to highlight is how structurally fluent the MSG speakers can be. They are not just capable of incorporating individual lexical items seamlessly into their utterance, they are also capable of building compound nouns out of German and English parts (*Schulteacher*, *Grandkinder*) while maintaining German phonology and syntax. This is not to say that breakdown does not occur. There are certain domains in which German words are lacking for the speakers, and where the speakers will switch to English when they cannot speak on a topic in German. There are also situations in which the speakers switch completely to English due to an asymmetry in proficiency.

The situation in MSG, an immigrant language, is similar to that of Flathead, an Interior Salishan language spoken in Montana and discussed by Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 101-102). Flathead was undergoing language shift over the course of a few generations due to intense pressure from English. All the speakers were fully fluent in English and the Flathead as spoken by younger speakers showed structural simplifications but relatively few lexical borrowings and no structural borrowings from English. As was the case in Flathead, MSG has been under intense contact from English and the shift to English will be complete after this final generation of speakers with above average proficiency. While MSG has borrowed both content and function words from English characteristic of category 2 on Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) borrowing scale, other characteristics of intense contact such as extensive structural borrowing are lacking. This is a result of the rapid shift experienced by the community due to cultural pressure from and a desire to integrate into Anglo-American culture.

6 Conclusions

The phonology, morphosyntax, and lexicon of MSG is similar in structure to many Palatinate-based German dialects spoken in the Americas and elsewhere. In the realm of phonology, there are no front rounded vowels; there is not a robust contrast between a voiceless and voiced series of obstruents, and epenthesis is common in *r*+consonant clusters, e.g., *karrich* ‘church’, cf. German *Kirche*. We also see evidence of a low-back vowel merger in the speech of at least some MSG speakers although the speakers do not have a low-back merger when speaking American English. In the area of morphosyntax, subordinate clauses maintain the V-last order except for *dass* ‘that’ and *weil* ‘because’ where V2 order is preferred. As for verb clusters the order of modal verb + infinitive is preferred. In all areas of the grammar, we see relatively little influence from English but evidence of the loss of grammatical structures. For example, the remaining MSG speakers no longer produce the procedural passive, which is still found in Pennsylvania Dutch.

In summary, MSG is a moribund language. There are approximately 30 remaining speakers and all are age 65 or older. Although MSG is the first language for most, if not all of the current speakers, they do not currently use the language more than an hour per week and have not spoken it on a daily basis for decades. In spite of the rather limited usage of MSG, it is remarkable that some can still hold full conversations in MSG. The awareness of their language heritage displays a certain togetherness-feeling for their community and language, expressed for example in events such as the annual Fall Fest held at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas, where they use MSG even in a playful manner.

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Notes

¹ An exception is Rhine Franconian which prefers the Standard German V-MOD order (Dubenion-Smith 2008).

² As demonstrated in the previous section discussing the loss of passive voice in MSG, example (26) displays another common trend in the morphological formation of past participles in moribund heritage varieties of German; namely, the reduction in ablaut class discussions accompanied by a reduction in the inventory of strong verbs in the grammar (MSG: *ge-sieh-t* vs. standard German: *ge-seh-en*) (see e.g., Gross 2000 for a treatment of these processes in the Matrix Language Frame-model; also Myers-Scotton 1993; Myers-Scotton & Jake 1995).

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