

The High German of Russian Mennonites in Ontario

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

The main focus of this study is the High German language spoken by Russian Mennonites, one of the many groups of German-speaking immigrants in Canada. Although the primary language of most Russian Mennonites is a Low German variety called Plautdietsch, High German has been widely used in Russian Mennonite communities since the end of the eighteenth century and is perceived as one of their mother tongues.

The primary objectives of the study are to investigate: 1) when, with whom, and for what purposes the major languages of Russian Mennonites were used by the members of the second and third migration waves (mid 1920s and 1940-50s respectively) and how the situation has changed today; 2) if there are any differences in spoken High German between representatives of the two groups and what these differences can be attributed to; 3) to what extent the High German of the subjects corresponds to the Standard High German. The primary thesis of this project is that different historical events as well as different social and political conditions witnessed by members of these groups both in Russia (e.g. closure of High German schools and churches in the 1920s and 1930s) and in Canada (e.g. the transition of most Mennonite churches from High German to English) have had a considerable influence upon and were reflected in their perception and use of High German.

The data for the project consist of two sets of audio-recorded interviews in High German conducted in 1976-1978 by Henry Paetkau and Stan Dueck with Russian Mennonite immigrants of the 1920s (21 interviews), and by the author of this project in the spring of 2007 with representatives of the third migration wave (19 interviews). Both

sets of interviews underwent textual and content analysis. Ten selected interviews have been transcribed following the rules of the CHAT (Codes of the Human Analysis of Transcripts) notation system and analyzed with the help of the CLAN (Computerized Language Analysis) software.

The results of the study indicate that generally the patterns of language use by both groups showed a number of important differences during their stay in Russia but were found to be very similar after each group migrated to Canada. Further, no significant differences in the use of non-standard constructions between the two groups have been discovered and the main hypothesis of the study was not supported. Finally, it has been determined that the variety of High German spoken by the Russian Mennonites departs from Standard High German in a number of respects and features a variety of non-standard constructions. While some of them can be traced back to the influence of the English or Russian languages, many other non-standard constructions were most likely present in the speech of Russian Mennonites long before intensive contact with these languages began. It has been argued that some non-standard constructions were also relatively stable in the group's High German and that they are a result of both language-internal as well as language-external processes of change.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Of all Christian denominations present in Canada today Mennonites are perhaps one of the most interesting as well as culturally and linguistically diverse religious groups. United under the name of their leader Menno Simons (1496-1561) and sharing the fundamental principles of their faith, numerous subdivisions of this group in Canada consciously exercise completely different lifestyles and have gone quite diverse paths since the onset of this movement almost half a millennium ago. As a result, in South-Western Ontario there are ultra-conservative Old Order Mennonites who live in closed rural communities and reject many of the recent technical innovations, the conservative Pennsylvania Mennonites who drive black-painted cars and reject most kinds of modern entertainment such as television, radio, dancing etc, and the progressive urbanized Mennonites, who are allowed to drive modern cars, have prestigious jobs and attend night clubs, bars and restaurants, and who generally have progressive and liberal views on many aspects of modern culture. Although historically and culturally these Mennonite groups are quite different, all of them have drawn particular attention from scholars, including from linguists. The topic of the Mennonites' languages, closely intertwined with their culture and religion, is indeed fascinating considering that each of the groups followed a unique migration path over the course of several centuries and has come into prolonged contact with various other languages.

1.1 General Overview

This dissertation deals with one of the languages used by one of the Mennonite groups residing in Ontario. In order to avoid ambiguity, I first briefly discuss the term ‘Mennonite’ and its origin and provide a short overview of Mennonites as a religious movement (Section 1.2). The two groups of Mennonites residing in Ontario are then briefly discussed, and the subjects of this study as well as their language are identified (Section 1.3). Section 2 presents an overview of the academic literature on the topic, and Section 3 contains information on the study design, objectives, and research questions. The chapter ends with a detailed outline of the subsequent chapters.

1.1.1 Origins of Mennonites as a Religious Movement

As already mentioned, what unites various groups of Mennonites in Canada (and all over the world, for that matter) is their faith, which emerged in Zürich in the early decades of the sixteenth century as a part of the radical wing of the Protestant Reformation known as Anabaptism. Stressing adult baptism as a conscious sign of willingness to follow Jesus Christ, recognizing the Bible as the only authority, abandoning most practices and mediums of worship used by the Catholic Church including sacraments, rejecting any form of warfare or violence, and refusing to swear an oath, Anabaptism became an influential and fast-growing religious movement in sixteenth-century Switzerland. However, this period of growth was not to last long. The Catholic church united with the Swiss authorities in an effort to completely root out Anabaptism from its very beginnings and condemned a tremendous number of its followers to death through most cruel means. As a result, the growth of the movement in Switzerland was stopped and “although the

authorities never quite succeeded in completely strangling the movement, they did drive it underground, and in a few years removed all possibilities of its having a large popular following” (Smith, 1981, p. 13).

Driven out of Switzerland, Anabaptists spread their ideas across the German border and soon good-sized congregations had been established in all the larger cities throughout Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, the Palatinate, Alsace, and as far north as Thuringia and Saxony (Smith, 1981, p. 18). A large number of Anabaptist congregations were also found in many parts of Moravia, Tyrol and Austria. However, despite its seeming popularity, the followers of this evangelical movement suffered severe persecution from both Protestant and Catholic authorities and within several decades became almost extinct in the above-mentioned areas and continued to linger on only in the most secluded corners of the southern German-speaking territories.

Eradicated as a mass movement in the South, Anabaptism slowly found its way down the Rhine River and already in the 1530s there were many traces of it in the Netherlands and northwestern Germany (Smith, 1981, p. 41). Here a former Catholic priest named Menno Simons joined the new movement in 1536 and became one of the most influential Anabaptist leaders in history (Dyck, 1993, p. 102). His followers were first known under the name *Mennists*, which then referred to the peaceful northern Anabaptist parties only. Later the name was extended to *Mennonists* and finally took its current form. The meaning of the term was likewise extended and now includes the Southern Anabaptist groups as well. Of the latter, two groups who have survived until today are not referred to as Mennonites. These are the Hutterites, the followers of Jakob

Hutter, and the Amish, who received their name from their leader Jakob Amman (Smith, 1981, p. 73).

The term Mennonite is a religious epithet referring to people of any ethnic and cultural background who accept the Mennonite faith as their own. Today one does not need to be of a specific ethnic background, come from a certain geographical area, or speak a certain language to be a Mennonite. In fact, most Mennonite congregations today are attended by people of different races and cultures, all of whom can be considered Mennonites in the religious sense. However, besides stating religious affiliation, the term 'Mennonite' also denotes the two above-mentioned ethno-religious groups each with their own culture, history, and traditions.¹ For the purposes of this research, I will be using the term 'Mennonite' in this latter narrower sense.

1.1.2 The Swiss and The Dutch Mennonites

As mentioned above, early Mennonites originally came primarily from two well-defined areas - Switzerland and the Netherlands - and consequently, all Mennonite groups in Canada are said to be of either Dutch or Swiss background. While the ultra-conservative and conservative Mennonites are almost exclusively of Swiss origin, the major part of progressive Mennonites in Canada is of Dutch background. The overwhelming majority of the latter group are, in turn, known as the Russian Mennonites. This name refers to the fact that most followers of Menno Simons, trying to escape severe religious persecution in the Netherlands, settled in Prussia, which their heirs left several centuries later for the south of the Russian Empire, where large Mennonite settlements survived until the middle of the Second World War. Those Mennonites who stayed in Prussia until the end

¹ More specific information about the name 'Mennonite' and the last names of Russian Mennonites in

of World War II are known as Prussian Mennonites. Because of their origins in the Netherlands and their prolonged stay in Prussia and Russia, this group has been called Dutch-Prussian, Russo-Prussian, or simply Russian Mennonites.

Although today none of the progressive Mennonite churches is restricted to people of either background, the distinction between the Swiss and the Russian Mennonites is still maintained but is of a purely cultural nature. Thus, traditional food, which has been reported to be “a very important part of Mennonite culture” (“Mennonite Historical Society of Canada,” Food section, para. 2) is, perhaps, the most pronounced of these and one Mennonites take deep pride in. Swiss Mennonites are known for their scalloped potatoes, shoofly pie and summer sausage, whereas Russian Mennonites are said especially to favour borscht, wareniki, cabbage rolls, and zwieback.

Further, Russian Mennonites share a unique linguistic situation rather different from that of their Swiss brothers and sisters. Originally speakers of Dutch and other local languages used in the Low Countries (see Section 3.1.3 for more details), their forefathers moved to Prussia in the sixteenth century. There they kept using Dutch for religious worship but soon accepted as a communal language the Low Prussian Low German, which is usually referred to as Plautdietsch. Almost two centuries later, High German slowly replaced the Dutch language in the Mennonite congregations. After their move to the Russian Empire in the late eighteenth century, it became the language of the church, the school, and of other cultural and commercial activities as well as of periodicals and literature (Goerzen, 1972, p. 22). Not surprisingly, Mennonites were exposed to the Russian language during their stay in Russia and many of them attended Russian institutions of postsecondary education and mastered Russian. Then, after about a century

in Russia, Mennonite migration to North America began. Therefore, at the time of their migration to Canada, Mennonites were using High German as the official language in schools, churches, and administration, Low German as a communal language, and the Russian language in Russian educational and government institutions and to communicate with the local Russian-speaking population. The Mennonite migration to North America took place in three large waves. The first of them took place in the 1870s, and was followed by second in the 1920s, and finally by third wave in the decades following the end of the World War II, thus adding English to their already impressive linguistic repertoire. In this dissertation, the languages of the second and the third wave immigrants after half a century in Canada are analyzed and compared.

To conclude, it can be said that the linguistic background and the present sociolinguistic situation of Russian Mennonites in Canada are quite different from those of the other Mennonite groups. Mostly of Swiss origin, the latter migrated to the United States of America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, bringing a number of High German varieties with them. With time, dialect convergence took place, and ‘gave birth’ to the language used by the Swiss Mennonites, Old Order Amish, and their descendents: Pennsylvania German, also known as ‘Pennsylvania Dutch’. The Swiss Mennonite groups do not fall within the focus of this dissertation and will not be considered further.

1.2 Existing Literature

The quite peculiar historical and cultural background of Russian Mennonites has aroused keen interest among researchers and has been extensively studied by numerous scholars at various points in time from numerous angles.² Consequently, the linguistic situation of Russian Mennonites throughout their history has also received much academic attention. Thus, various languages used in the Netherlands of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries are dealt with in detail by Frings (1944), Krogman (1957), Fromme (1942) and Foerste (1938), whereas Fischer (1896), Grimme (1922), Mitzka (1922, 1924, 1959), and Torksdorf (1985) give accounts of the local German varieties used in East and West Prussia of the time.

The Low German variety of Russian Mennonites has also been thoroughly studied at different points of its history and in various geographical locations. Thus, B. H. Unruh in his *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen* (1955) discusses Mennonite Low German in Prussia and its connection to the Dutch language. Unruh's student Johan Postma devotes a chapter in his doctoral dissertation *Das niederländische Erbe der preußisch-rußländischen Mennoniten* (1959) to the Low German language of Mennonites in Prussia. Wiens in his *Niederländische Reste in der Mundart der Mennoniten im Weichseldelta* (1916), Mitzka in *Die Sprache der deutschen Mennoniten* (1930), in *Deutsche Mundarten* (1943) and Moelleken in *Die Linguistische Heimat der rußlanddeutschen Mennoniten in Kanada und Mexiko: Sprachliche Entwicklung und diglossische Situation* (1987) also devote significant

² For the most complete general bibliographical account of works on Mennonites until 1961 please see Springer & Klassen (1977) and Kliewer (1970). For works published from 1946 to present please refer to the annual Mennonite bibliography published in April issues of the journal *Mennonite Life*, an electronic version of which can be found online at <http://raven.bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/bibliographies/>.

attention to the issue. Mennonite migration from the Netherlands to Prussia and their linguistic ties with their homeland are discussed in detail in Penner & Reimer's *Ansiedlung mennonitischer Niederländer im Weichselmundungsgebiet* (1963) and in Penner's *Die ost- und westpreußischen Mennoniten* (1978).

One of the first works dealing with Plautdietsch as spoken by Mennonites in Russia is Mitzka's *Die Mennoniten in Rußland und ihre Beziehungen zu Westpreußen* (1926). Another valuable work is a doctoral dissertation by a Russian Mennonite teacher Jacob Quiring entitled *Die Mundart von Chortitza in Süd-Rußland* published in München in 1928. In the same year another important work investigating German colonies in Ukraine by the Russian scholar Viktor Zhirmunskii appeared in Khar'kov (Zhirmunskii, 1928). Other works on the topic include Gerhard Wiens's *Entlehnungen aus dem Russischen im Niederdeutschen der Mennoniten im Rußland* (1957) and Zhirmunskii's *Deutsche Mundartkunde* (1962).

Soon after the last wave of Russian Mennonites migrated to Canada in late 1940s and 1950s, numerous studies investigating the Plautdietsch language appeared. In less than two decades four dissertations dealing specifically with Russian Mennonite Low German in North America were published. Goerzen (1952) investigated the Molotschna variety of the language, while Lehn (1957) dealt with the Rosental dialect and Dyck (1964) described the Chortitza Low German and compared languages of three Russian Mennonite Colonies in Western Canada. Plautdietsch spoken in the United States was analyzed and described several years later by Buchheit (1978).

Subsequently, numerous linguistic works on Russian Mennonite Low German in Canada appeared in print. The most prominent of these are John Thiessen's *Studien zum*

Wortschatz der kanadischen Mennoniten (1963), Auburger's *Die monophthongen Vokale des kanadischen Plautdietsch* (1977), Eichhoff's *Niederdeutsche Mundarten in Nordamerika* (1981). Also, much work on Russian Mennonite languages has been done by Jack Thiessen (e.g. 1965, 1968, 1984, 1988) and Wolfgang Moelleken (e.g. 1967, 1972, 1992, 1996).

Further, a number of dictionaries and one speaking guide of Mennonite Plautdietsch have been compiled. Most recent of such works are Rempel's '*Kjenn jie noch Plautdietsch?: a Mennonite Low German dictionary*' (1984), Neufeld's '*Plautdietsch grammar: an aid to speaking, reading, and writing Netherlandic-Mennonite Plautdietsch*' (2000) and Jack Thiessen's '*Mennonite Low German dictionary*' (2003).

Besides, there exist a number of works that deal with Russian Mennonite Low German as spoken in post-war Russia (e.g. Jedig, 1966; Nieuweboer, 1999), in the USA (Buchheit, 1978, 1988; Keel, 1994; Moelleken, 1994), and in South America (Brandt, 1993; Moelleken, 1966, 1986; Scharf, 2001).

While such significant attention has been given to the Plautdietsch of Russian Mennonites, the rather interesting question of their connection to High German and the Mennonites' use of it at different points of their history has not been explored and academic literature on this topic is extremely scarce. This is very surprising since High German has been extensively used by this group from the eighteenth century onwards and became an inseparable part of Russian Mennonite culture and identity. In fact, High German was associated with Mennonite identity to such an extent that in 1919, when the Canadian government prohibited teaching in High German in Russian Mennonite

schools, about one third of Russian Mennonites left Canada in order to be able to educate their children in High German. (Thiessen, 1963, p. 28)

From the very first works on Russian Mennonite history, such as D. Epp (1888), F. Isaak (1908) and P. M. Friesen (1911a), the issues of High German among Russian Mennonite have not been dealt with in detail. More recent historical works, such as Urry (2007) and well-known textbooks of Mennonite history, such as Smith (1981) and Dyck (1993) devote much attention to various aspects of Russian Mennonite social, cultural and religious life but contain very limited and scattered information about their use of High German. Thus, of the tremendous body of existing studies on Russian Mennonite history only a handful seem to devote any noticeable attention to this issue.

The rather difficult transition of Mennonite congregations in Prussia from Dutch to High German has been discussed by Postma (1959), who gives a brief description of this process in his above-mentioned dissertation, by Duerksen (1967), who examines histories and church records of six major Mennonite congregations in Prussia and provides a fairly comprehensive overview of the issue, and by Penner (1978), who examines the early correspondence between Mennonites in Prussia and their brothers and sisters in Christ in the Netherlands.

Of the several known attempts to describe the linguistic situation of Russian Mennonites in Canada, most are unfortunately rather superficial and sketchy for a linguist. In 1955 Neufeld drew attention to the problem of language maintenance and loss of both High German and Plautdietsch among Russian Mennonites in Canada with his article "Sprechen die Mennoniten in Kanada noch Deutsch?" A year later in "Hochsprache und Mundart in den deutschen Sprachinseln" K. Klein provided a brief

account of languages used in several German enclaves, which also included a short section on Russian Mennonites. Further in 1986 a report on a study investigating language competence among Mennonites in Canada conducted by Driedger and Hengstenberg appeared in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*. The study investigated the influence of various factors such as social domain, Mennonite affiliation, generation, place of birth and religious orthodoxy on their language competence and language use. Finally, Ediger (2001) devoted significant attention to the transition from High German to English as the language of the church among Mennonite Brethren, a sub-group of Russian Mennonites residing in Canada.

1.3 Study Design, Objectives and Research Questions

The current study concentrates on the High German variety spoken by the Russian Mennonites and draws on the data from two sets of audio-recorded interviews in High German conducted in 1976-1978 by Henry Paetkau and Stan Dueck with Russian Mennonite immigrants of the 1920s residing in Southern Ontario (twenty-one interviews), and by the author of this project in the spring of 2007 with members of the third migration wave (nineteen interviews). The first set of interviews is available at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo (reference number Hist Mss.22.2.1) , and the second set will be available there after the completion of this study.

The primary hypothesis of this project is that different historical events as well as different social and political conditions witnessed by members of these large groups both in Russia (e.g. closure of German churches in the 1920s and of the German schools in the

1930s) and in Canada (e.g. the transition of most Mennonite churches from High German to English, which had been largely completed by 1990 (Dyck, 1993, p. 409) have had a considerable influence upon and were/are reflected in their perception and usage of High German.

The primary objectives of the study are to investigate: 1) if there are any differences in spoken High German between representatives of the two groups and to what these differences can be attributed; 2) to what extent the High German of the interviewees corresponds to Standard High German; 3) language contact phenomena, such as when, with whom, and for what purposes the major languages of Russian Mennonites (High German, Plautdietsch, English, and Russian) were used by the members of the second and third migration waves; and 4) how the situation has changed today.

Although the analysis part of the project includes some numeric data, the major aim of the dissertation is a detailed description of the structural aspects of the interviewees' High German, and no attempt at generalization of the study's results is made. This dissertation is therefore a qualitative case-study.

1.4 Chapter Outline

The next chapter presents the key terms used in this study, clarifies the linguistic terminology which will recur in the subsequent chapters and presents the theoretical basis of this research. Chapter three retells the linguistic story of Russian Mennonites and follows the group from their origins in the Low Countries, through the lands of Prussia and Southern Russia up to the point when the last wave of Russian Mennonites settled in

Canada after the Second World War. The fourth chapter describes the data used for this research and presents the methodology of this study. Chapter five tests the methodology of the study and presents a detailed analysis of a selected interview from the second data set. The sociolinguistic analysis of both sets of interviews is presented in chapter six, whereas chapter seven looks at the linguistic aspects of the interviewees' High German, examines the variation within and across both groups, and presents an attempt to explain its existence. The dissertation closes with a conclusions section, which answers the main research questions and summarizes the findings of the study. With the present dissertation I intend to fill an existing gap in the scholarly research and examine the High German used by Russian Mennonite immigrants in Canada in its diachronic context.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter provides an overview of the most important linguistic terminology used in the subsequent chapters and presents a sketch of the theoretical framework adopted for this project. Section 2.1 deals with the terminology pertaining to languages as such and is divided into three parts. The first part discusses and defines such terms as ‘dialect’, ‘language’ and ‘standard language’. The second part clarifies such terms as ‘German’, ‘High German’ and ‘Standard German’, whereas the third deals with the terminology surrounding different Low German varieties in the context of Russian Mennonites. Section 2.2 introduces the key linguistic phenomena connected with language contact, such as bilingualism, diglossia, borrowing, code-switching, and convergence. The last part of the chapter (Section 2.3) presents a sketch of the theoretical framework used in this research (Construction Grammar) and discusses its advantages over other theoretical approaches to language. The chapter closes with a brief summary and demonstrates how its results are relevant to the project.

2.1 Key Terms and Definitions

2.1.1 Dialects, Languages, and Standard Languages

Because the primary focus of this dissertation is on an ethno-religious group which has migrated through various countries and continents over the course of several centuries and has been exposed to and used a wide range of languages and their varieties, I will have to rely on such terms as ‘dialect’, ‘language’, and ‘standard language’.

Determining whether a specific language variety should be considered a ‘dialect’ or a ‘language’ is difficult even for linguists and the difference between the two is at times blurry. Also of all linguistic terms, ‘dialect’ and ‘language’ are probably most often misconceived and are almost always surrounded by myths, stereotypes, or are simply completely misunderstood (or misused) by both linguists and non-linguists.

One of the most popular myths states that languages can be both spoken and written, while dialects can only be spoken. In reality, however, this distinction does not hold true, as there exist numerous written texts in many dialects, some of which possess relatively large bodies of literary prose, poetry, and numerous other written genres. At the same time, many languages even in the present-day world exist only in spoken form, such as a number of indigenous languages of the Americas, South-Eastern Asia, Australia, or New Zealand. Another popular but erroneous claim is that only languages and not dialects have grammars. This statement is far from being linguistically correct as all dialects and languages without exception have grammars³, without which it most certainly would be impossible for the speakers of the same dialect to communicate with each other. In addition, for many varieties usually referred to as dialects, just as for many languages, there exist descriptive grammar books depicting the usage of language constructions by their speakers, as well as prescriptive grammars stating which forms should be used as ‘correct’ and which are to be avoided. Next, although dialects are often considered by laymen to be subordinate varieties, or even worse, inferior or degraded forms of a language, such judgements are erroneous as they are usually made “on the

³ Since this research adopts the Construction Grammar approach to language (Section 2.4), languages are viewed as large hierarchical networks of overlapping constructions which present the full range of linguistic conventions in a particular language. Grammars, in turn, are held responsible for the speaker’s knowledge of the full range of these conventions, “regardless of whether these conventions can be subsumed under more general statements” (Langacker, 1987, p. 494).

basis of who is speaking, not on the dialect itself” (Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 24).

Moreover, since languages themselves are “collections of their dialects” (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2007, p. 409), such views cannot be true logically, as they would automatically mean the inferiority and a degraded state of all languages.

In this dissertation I adopt the view that ‘dialects’ are “mutually intelligible forms of a language that differ in systematic ways” (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2007, p. 409). They form an integral part of a language and collectively comprise it as a whole. A language is, therefore, an abstract linguistic construct resulting from the collection of its dialects. Thus, the term ‘dialect’ will be used synonymously to ‘linguistic variety’ and will include any linguistic sub-system that belongs to a given language.

This definition of ‘dialect’ also includes the so-called ‘standard’ varieties (‘standard dialects’) which enjoy a special status within a language. Usually a standard language is a variety that:

1. may be recognized for official purposes (or given a legal status)
2. is used in the media and literature
3. is promoted through the educational system
4. has the greatest prestige (Fox, 2005, p. 15)

Despite the higher level of prestige usually associated with them, standards “do not necessarily have any inherent superiority over the other forms” (Fox, 2005, p. 15) and an opinion that the standard form of a language is “its ‘original, uncorrupted state’, from which all other forms have subsequently deviated” is “a common misconception” (Stevenson, 1997, p. 10). Now that I have identified what dialects are and in what relationship they stand to a language, the question at which point a dialect becomes a

language or whether several linguistic varieties are languages or dialects of the same language needs to be answered.

Undoubtedly, one of the criteria most frequently used to answer these questions is that of mutual intelligibility. In other words, if speakers of two linguistic varieties can understand each other, they are considered to speak the same language (or dialects of the same language), and if they cannot, the varieties they speak must be two different languages. While this criterion might indeed be helpful when talking about two distantly related or even unrelated languages, the speakers of which cannot understand each other without learning the other's language (e.g. speakers of English, Greek, and Japanese not be able to understand each other and therefore they are considered to speak different languages), it becomes problematic when language varieties are typologically related and generally understandable to their speakers. For example, although speakers of Danish will be able to understand to a certain degree their Dutch and German neighbours, just like speakers of Polish will understand some Czech as well as some Ukrainian, hardly anyone will refer to these linguistic varieties as 'dialects'.

Also, a quite peculiar situation occurs when political interpretations of a language clash with the linguistic understanding of the term and several varieties of (linguistically) the same language are called separate languages for political reasons. Such situations gave rise to the sarcastic definition usually ascribed to Max Weinreich which says that "a language is a dialect that has an army and a navy" (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2007, p. 409). Perhaps one of the most recent vivid examples of such collision of the linguistic and political usage of the term is the split of Serbo-Croatian into Serbian and Croatian, when these two countries gained political independence in 1991, the varieties of Serbo-

Croatian spoken in each country became separate languages. The opposite situation – when several linguistic varieties whose speakers cannot understand each other are for political reasons forced under the umbrella of a single ‘language’ – is also quite frequent. For example, such is the case in China, where many varieties are not mutually intelligible, but are nevertheless called dialects of Chinese to instil ‘the notion of national identity across diverse communities’ (Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 22; Sihler, 2000, p. 168).

Further, the criterion of mutual comprehensibility may not always work in cases when, for political and historical reasons, speakers of some languages (dialects) may claim to understand another language (dialect) to a greater or a lesser extent than they really do. An example here would be the reported asymmetrical intelligibility between the speakers of Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian (Myers-Scotton, 2006, pp. 19-20, 23) or between monolingual speakers of Spanish and Portuguese (Sihler, 2000, p. 166).

In addition, although many other criteria for distinguishing languages from each other have been proposed, such as, for example, degree of similarity (Fox, 1990, p. 290), the question of what constitutes a dialect and what a separate language cannot be answered just by examining the linguistic forms themselves. Moreover, one might say that the linguistic means for distinguishing languages from each other play a relatively minor role in making such distinction compared to political, cultural, and historical reasons. Therefore, this distinction shall not concern us here and I will be using the terms ‘linguistic variety’ interchangeably with the terms ‘language’. At the same time, the term ‘dialect’ will be used to refer to any non-standard variety.

2.1.2 *German, High German, and Standard German*

As already mentioned, and as shown in chapter 3, the culture of the Russian Mennonites was until recently closely intertwined with the ‘German’ language. This term seems rather uncontroversial at first glance, since today for the majority of people the word ‘German’ as pertaining to a language is unequivocally associated with the primary written and spoken language of the Federal Republic of Germany and the language taught as ‘German’ at educational institutions worldwide. Thus, if someone says that he or she is studying German or that his or her parents read newspapers or write letters in German, it is usually quite clear what language is meant. Yet in the context of Russian Mennonites the word ‘German’ can become quite ambiguous. This becomes evident if one asks several first-generation Russian Mennonite immigrants something about the languages they used in the past or are using today. For example, the answer to the questions “What is your mother tongue?”, “What language did you speak with your parents?” or “What language did you speak at school?” will almost always be ‘German’. Yet it is still unclear which language is meant, as among Russian Mennonites the word ‘German’ can refer to two different languages (High German or Plautdietsch), which are so different that two speakers will have considerable difficulties communicating effectively without knowing at least some of the other’s variety.

This ambiguity results from the fact that in the linguistic sense the term ‘German’ denotes a particular group within Germanic languages - a large number of language varieties separated from other Indo-European languages by a series of consonant changes known as the First (Germanic) Sound Shift (e.g. Chambers & Wilkie, 1970, p. 99) or ‘die germanische (erste) Lautverschiebung’ (e.g. Schmidt et al., 1984, p. 42). Despite the

similar sounding name, German is not the only Germanic language, but is rather one of many Germanic languages, which also include English, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, etc. as can be seen on Figure 2-1.



Figure 2-1: Distribution of the Germanic languages in Europe (Source: Germanic Languages, Britannica Online Encyclopedia, 2009).

Today varieties of German are spoken in areas of southern Switzerland, Austria, and northern Italy, throughout the Federal Republic of Germany, Liechtenstein, and parts of Luxembourg, the territories of the present-day Belgium and the Netherlands. Although in many of these countries there appears to be some sensitivity towards referring to their languages as varieties of German, it can be attributed to the unlucky coincidence that the name of the language spoken in these countries coincides with the name ‘Germany’. In any case, the varieties of German all the way from the south of Austria and Switzerland to the coasts of the North and the Baltic Seas form a “continuity, with small changes separating neighbouring dialects” which merges into the Dutch-speaking areas and is

known as the Dutch-German ‘dialect continuum’ (Fox, 1990, p. 291; Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 20).

Linguistically, these German varieties can be subdivided into three groups depending on how strongly they were affected by the processes of linguistic change known as the Second or High German Consonant Shift (Hochdeutsche or 2. Lautverschiebung), which “began between the sixth and seventh centuries AD in the south of the German-language region, and gradually moved northward. It changed voiceless stops /p/, /t/, /k/ to voiceless fricatives /f/, /s/, /x/ [(ç) or [x)]; and affricates /pf/, /ts/, /kx/ and voiced stops /b/, /d/, /g/ to voiceless stops /p/, /t/, /k/” (Clyne, 1995, p. 27).

For example:

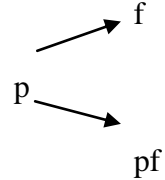
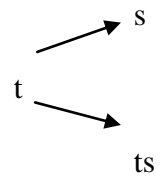
| Sound change | English | Dutch | High German |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | pepper | peper | Pfeffer |
|  | eat time | eet tijd | essen Zeit |
| k → [x] | make | maak | machen |
| d → [t] | day | dag | Tag |

Table 2-1

Thus, the dialects in the North, which were not affected by any of these changes, are termed Low German (Niederdeutsch) while the more southern varieties, which were fully affected, are designated as Upper German (Oberdeutsch). Consequently, the partially-

affected varieties between these two areas became known as Middle German (Mitteldeutsch) and are further divided into East Middle German (Ostmitteldeutsch) and West Middle German (Westmitteldeutsch). The fully and partially affected groups of dialects are collectively called High German (Hochdeutsch). This division of German linguistic varieties is illustrated on the following map (Figure 2-2):

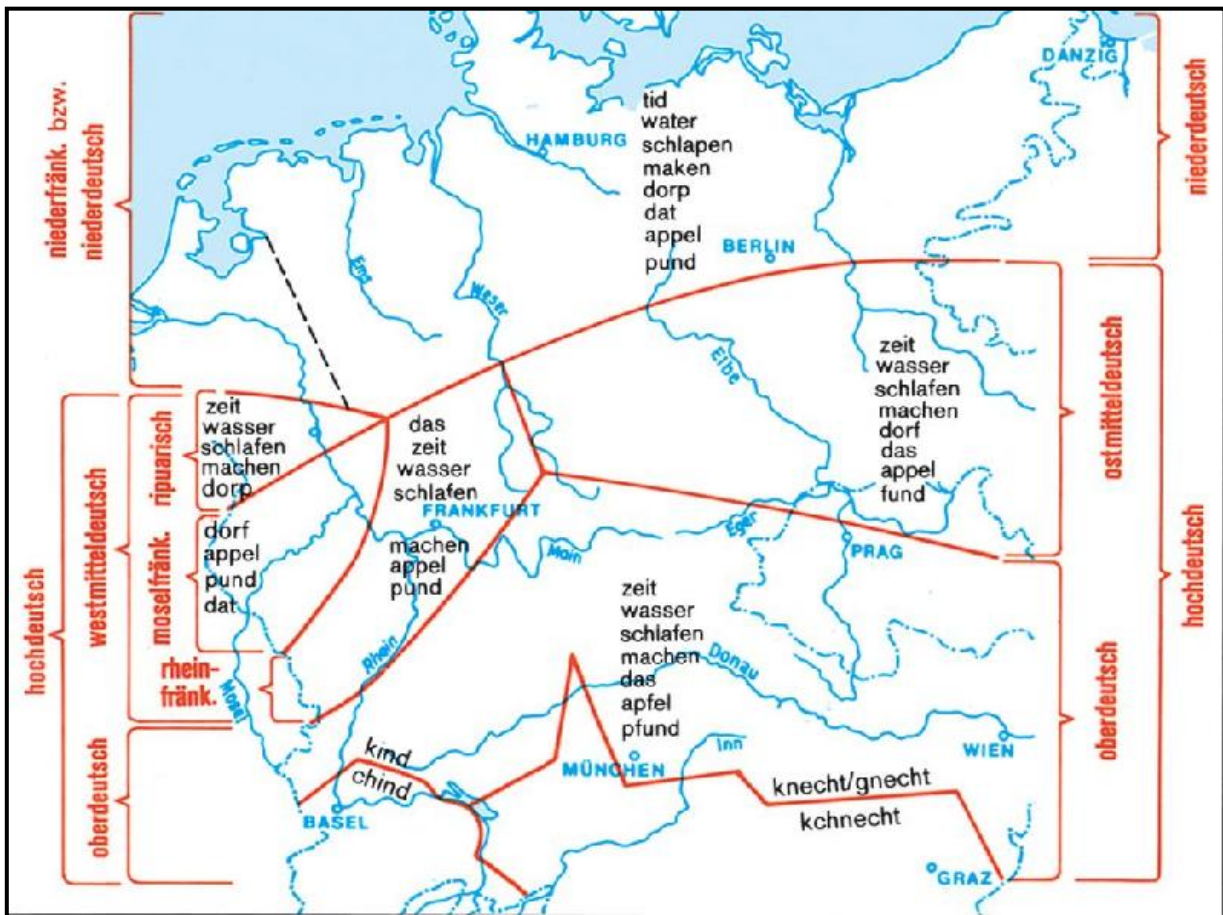


Figure 2-2 (König, 2004)

Here it is important to mention that, in contrast to popular usage, the adjectives ‘low’ and ‘high’ in the context of German dialects refer neither to the prestige nor to the amount of political, financial, or other power associated with these groups of dialects. Instead, they designate the landscape of the mountainous southern regions (which lie higher above the sea level) and the lower geographical position of the northern flatlands.

Further, despite ‘High German’ being linguistically a collective term, which includes a large number of German dialects, it is also the popular term for ‘standard German’ (Fox, 2005, p. 15; Stevenson, 1997, p. 65) and has been used synonymously with “die deutsche Standardsprache”, “deutsche Literatursprache” and contrasted to “Jargon”, “Dialekt”, “Alltagssprache” even by some respected modern German grammars (e.g. Eisenberg, 2004, p. 1). Nevertheless, to avoid ambiguity in the subsequent chapters, I will be using the term ‘High German’ (HG) in its linguistic sense i.e. denoting any non-Low German dialect including the spoken High German of Russian Mennonites. My decision to refer to this variety using the term ‘High German’ was determined to a large degree by the participants’ own consistent usage of this term to refer to their non-Low German variety. At the same time, ‘High German’ will be differentiated from the standard variety of German, which will be referred to as ‘Standard High German’ (SHG). Although, as has been shown elsewhere (Fox, 2005, p. 16), this term is also not without its problems, especially considering that German is a pluricentric language with several standard national varieties (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland) “each with their own norms” (Clyne, 1984, p. 1), for the purposes of this dissertation ‘Standard High German’ will be understood as the variety described in a series of reference books known collectively as ‘Der Duden’. This collection of reference works seems to be the most logical choice for this purpose since Duden has been overseeing and propagating the norms of standard German for over a century (Russ, 1994, p. 4) and is generally considered “the foremost authority on standard German and its use” (Epp, 1993, p. 4). The discussion of my choice of Duden and of its appropriateness for the purposes of this project are in Section 4.4.1.).

2.1.3 *Low German, Plautdietsch, and Other Related Terms*

Next, the term denoting the communal language of Russian Mennonites requires some serious attention. It is quite clear that this language belongs to a Low German (Niederdeutsch) group of dialects, which were left untouched by the Second Consonant Shift. However, similarly to the term High German, which denotes Upper and Middle German dialect groups, 'Low German' can also refer to several large groups of German dialects. Because a unified standard for these varieties does not exist, and since they were spread over geographically vast territories (Netherlands, Northern Germany, West and East Prussia), Low German dialects exhibit a great degree of variation. Similarly, when describing varieties of Low German, numerous terms have been used, many of which have multiple synonyms and equivalents in English and Standard German, or are often derived from the native pronunciation of the varieties' names in each of the aforementioned countries. Therefore, in the academic literature on Low German varieties one encounters such terms as Plattdeutsch, Plaaddüütsch, Nederdüütsch, Low Saxon, Nedersaksisch, Nether Saxon, Niederpreußisch, Westpreußisch (Thiessen, 1963), Ostniederpreußisch, Nether Prussian, Platt, Weichselplatt (Moelleken, 1992), Mennonitenplatt (Thiessen, 1963), Dietsch, Plautdietsch (Buchheit, 1978), Plautdîtsch (Epp, 1993, pp. 9-10; Goerzen, 1972), etc. Most of these terms have been used as synonyms in the context of Russian Mennonites. To make the situation even more confusing, the terminology pertaining to the Low German varieties has changed significantly over the past several centuries and different terms have been used to refer to the same variety during different historical periods.⁴ However, this shall not concern us here and only modern terminology will be discussed and used in this dissertation.

⁴ For more detailed information about the development of this terminology see Epp 1993 (p. 55).

Below I will identify and define the terms that will be used in the subsequent chapters to describe the Low German variety spoken by Russian Mennonites, which hopefully, will bring at least some clarity into this Low German terminological confusion. In doing so, I am predominantly following the usage of these terms by Reuben Epp, one of the best-known contemporary scholars of Mennonite Low German, and the author of the very influential unified Low German spelling system. Most definitions cited below are taken from his similarly well-known *Story of Low German and Plautdietsch* (1993, pp. 1-12).

As already mentioned, Low German (Niederdeutsch) is a collective term that stands for a group of linguistic varieties which developed along with the English, Frisian, and the Nordic languages in the lands bordering the shores of the North Sea (Moss, 1983, p. 661). All Low German varieties were left untouched by the Second Consonant Shift. Although today Low German dialects are primarily spoken in parts of Netherlands and Northern Germany (where the official languages are Dutch and High German, respectively), until 1945 they were also used extensively in large areas to the East of the present-day German-Polish border all the way to Russia (Kaliningrad/Königsberg), Lithuania and Latvia. After the end of the Second World War, numerous refugees from these areas took their varieties of Low German with them around the globe and continue to speak them to this day (Epp, 1993).

It is quite interesting that some five hundred years ago, Low German was not only the dominant spoken as well as written language in the aforementioned territories but also the most important and widely-used international language of northern Europe (Epp, 1993b, p. 20). Yet since the collapse of the Hanseatic League in the fifteenth century,

High German began to gain influence in most Low German-speaking areas and soon became the dominant and official language with a much higher reputation, thus practically wiping out Low German from the written page (Epp, 1993, p. 34). Nevertheless, despite its status as an inferior language (Epp, 1993, p. 26) and “an incumbrance to social culture” (Möhn, 1983, p. 155), Low German varieties “continued to be spoken by those millions of people from the Netherlands to the Baltic who had always spoken it” (Epp, 1993, p. 27).

Similarly to High German (Hochdeutsch), Low German varieties are divided into two main branches: Low Franconian (Niederfränkisch) and Low Saxon (Niedersächsisch), also known as Plattdeutsch. Low Franconian varieties, sometimes called Lower Franconian, are spoken as native tongues in Belgium and in the southern portion of the Netherlands and a bit of Germany. As one moves eastward, Low Franconian dialects gradually merge into the Low Saxon-speaking areas making it very difficult if not impossible to say with any degree of certainty where one group ends and the other begins (Epp, 1993; Stellmacher, 1983).

Low (Lower) Saxon varieties present the other branch of Low German and are spoken “in various dialects in the Netherlands and Germany from Groningen in the West to Mecklenburg and the former Pomerania in the East” (Epp, 1993, p. 3). Until the end of World War II these varieties were also used throughout East and West Prussia. The large geographical span of Low Saxon varieties together with the absence of a standard variety resulted in noticeable differences between individual dialects, according to which they have been divided into three major groups: Western Low German (Westniederdeutsch), Eastern Low German (Ostniederdeutsch), and Low Prussian (Niederpreußisch). Each of

these groups, in turn, consists of numerous subdivisions and individual varieties. For instance, the Low Prussian group alone is made up of no less than nine individual dialects (Zieseemer, 1979), of which the one spoken in the areas of Danziger Nehrung and Weichselwerder was accepted by the Mennonites emigrating there in large masses from the early sixteenth century onwards (Figure 2-3). This is the variety that became known as Plautdietsch (Epp, 1993, p. 10). There seems to be a scholarly consensus that although the original varieties brought by Mennonite immigrants to Prussia have had an influence on the language of the non-Mennonite population in Prussia (Zieseemer, 1979, p. 117), they willingly gave up their original dialects in favour of the closely related local dialect. Therefore, although Plautdietsch is the first language of most Mennonites whose forefathers emigrated to Prussia at one point, it was also spoken by the local population (Moelleken, 1987, p. 94) and therefore is not exclusively a Mennonite variety.

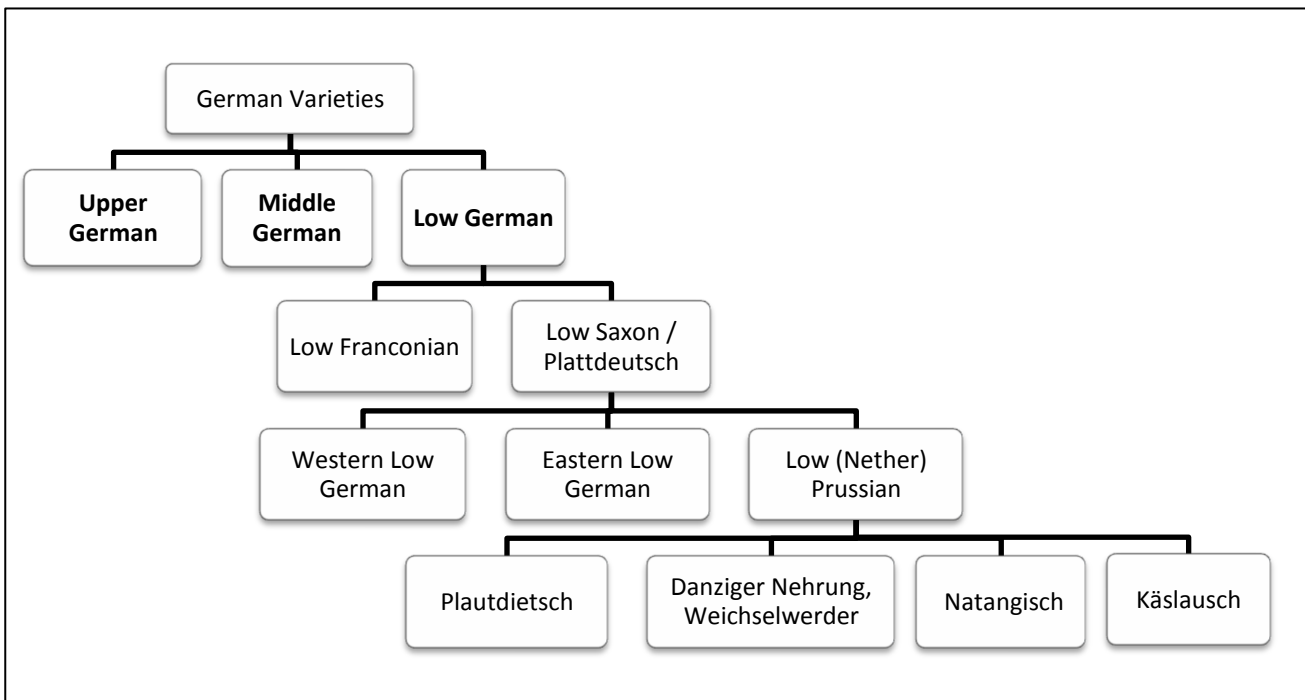


Figure 2-3

Similarly to other Low German varieties, Plautdietsch itself is not a unified homogenous variety but exists in numerous forms varying from country to country and settlement to settlement. According to Goerzen (1972), “even among the speakers of this dialect there are various forms and linguistic variations” (p. 19) reflecting the often quite intricate migration paths of the speakers’ forefathers.⁵ Today Plautdietsch is the primary communal language of many Mennonite settlements in South America and is being increasingly used in domains traditionally reserved for High German, such as writing and religious worship.

2.2 Other Linguistic Terms

Although the primary focus of this dissertation is on the High German of Russian Mennonites, it is important to remember that this variety was always only one of several languages extensively used in the Mennonite communities. Thus, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Netherlandic Mennonites were still emerging as a coherent ethno-religious group, they were using various Low German and Frisian dialects as well as some High German for informal communication, and Dutch for official, written, and religious purposes. Later, in Prussia, when the group had already abandoned their original vernacular in favour of the local Low German dialect, they were increasingly exposed to High German and Polish but were still using Dutch for religious purposes. At the end of the eighteenth century, when the Mennonite migration to Russia started, Dutch had already been replaced entirely by High German and contact with the Russian and

⁵ Dialect division of Russian Mennonite Low German is discussed in more detail by Dyck (1964, pp. 12-24), Moelleken (1967, pp. 240-251, 1972, pp. 14-15), and Quiring (1928, pp. 44-45).

Ukrainian languages began. This contact reached its apogee in the early twentieth century, when Mennonites willingly attended Russian institutions of higher education and when proficiency in Russian was necessary to succeed in one's career. This connection to the Russian language was then almost entirely lost for many during and after World War II. Having settled in North America, the group kept its Low German and High German varieties, but English slowly made its way into the Mennonite communities and after several decades became firmly established not only in the church and school, but also became the primary language of everyday communication with children and grandchildren in many families (see chapter 3). In other cases, up to this day English stands shoulder to shoulder with Plautdietsch and High German fulfilling a greater and greater range of functions. The way these languages were used by the group in various historical periods, the relationship and interplay between them, the roles and functions these languages fulfilled in Mennonite communities, as well as the attitudes towards them, make Russian Mennonites a fascinating group to a linguist's eye.

2.2.1 Bilingualism with and without Diglossia

In order to investigate and describe these phenomena, I will rely on a number of linguistic terms, some of which are not as straightforward as they may seem at first glance and require additional clarification. First of all, as illustrated above, Russian Mennonites have always used several linguistic varieties and therefore, will be referred to as **bilingual**.

Although the meaning of this term might seem quite clear at first, a look at the scholarly research on the topic reveals a surprising lack of uniformity among linguists about what the term should refer to. A large number of definitions have been proposed, with earlier

definitions relying on “distinctions on where and when languages were learned” and later distinctions on “how easy or difficult it was to engage in cognitive tasks across as compared to within languages” (Altarriba & Hereida, 2008, p. 3). On a similar note, Romaine (1995) writes “bilingualism has often been defined and described in terms of categories, scales and dichotomies such as ideal vs. partial bilingualism, coordinate vs. compound bilingual etc.” (p. 11). Further, she mentions the position of Bloomfield, who specifies ‘native-like control of two languages’ (Bloomfield, 1933, p. 56) as the criterion for bilingualism, and Haugen’s observation that bilingualism begins when the speaker of one language can produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language (Haugen, 1953, p. 7) as the two opposing ends of the spectrum of definitions with numerous other definitions in between. The major difficulty with most of them, however, results from the fact that “the point at which the speaker of a second language becomes bilingual is either arbitrary or impossible to determine” (Romaine, 1995, pp. 11-12).

In this dissertation, I am using a view of bilingualism which sees it as “the practice of alternately using two languages” (Weinreich, 1968, p. 1). This view is also represented by more recent researchers (e.g. Romaine, 1995) and understands ‘bilingualism’ to include multilingualism (e.g. Mackey, 1968, p. 555; Romaine, 1995, p. 12) or “the practice of using alternatively three or more languages” (Weinreich, 1968, p. 1).

Therefore, as Russian Mennonites were using at least two linguistic varieties throughout their entire history, and as a result were bilingual, it is possible to speak of them as a ‘bilingual community’ or a community with ‘societal bilingualism’ (Romaine, 1995, p. 23), or with ‘stable bilingualism’ (Louden, 1988), which has been defined as a

‘social, as opposed to individual situation of language contact’ (Louden, 1994, p. 74). However, societal bilingualism is not to be confused with the situation when two related linguistic varieties in the same society stand in complementary functional distribution. Such a specific linguistic relationship between two related varieties has been termed ‘diglossia’ and is a matter of extensive research, as can be seen from about 3,000 entries in a bibliography on the topic by Mauro Fernández (1993).

At this point, an important distinction needs to be made: although in a diglossic situation two linguistic varieties are used side by side in the same community, diglossia is rather different from societal bilingualism, both of which according to Hudson (2002) are “two major types of sociolinguistic arrangement” (p. 2) and are “fundamentally different in their social origins, evolutionary course of development, and resolutions over the long term” (p. 2). Consequently, diglossia does not necessarily presuppose the existence of bilingual speakers, and either phenomenon can occur without the other (Fishman, 1967). Traditionally the relationship between the two phenomena is represented as a two-by-two table of dichotomized variables:

| Bilingualism | Diglossia | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | + | - |
| + | 1 Both diglossia and bilingualism | 3 Bilingualism without diglossia |
| - | 2 Diglossia without bilingualism | 4 Neither diglossia nor bilingualism |

Table 2-2: The relationship between diglossia and bilingualism (Romaine, 1995, p. 36)

As already mentioned, diglossia presupposes an existence of two varieties in the same community: a superposed variety termed High (H), usually reserved for written and more official purposes, and a vernacular variety referred to as Low (L). Here, it is important to mention that the terms ‘High’ and ‘Low’ used in connection with diglossia

are not to be confused with the terms ‘High’ and ‘Low’ pertaining to the German language, where both adjectives refer to the geographical location of German varieties and their degree of being affected by the Second Consonant Shift. Thus, it is theoretically possible for High German to be the ‘Low’ variety and for Low German to function as a ‘High’ variety in a diglossic situation.

Further, while some authors claim that H and L have to be “mutually unintelligible” (Croft, 2000, p. 17), other scholars do not make this distinction. At the heart of diglossia lies the functional specialization of H and L – a set of situations in which only one of the varieties is appropriate. In other words, “neither H nor L can properly serve in the domains for which the other is used” (Croft, 2000, p. 92). Although there is no predetermined fixed set of such functions for H and L, an example of typical situations for each variety is presented in Table 2-3.

| | High | Low |
|---|-------------|------------|
| Sermon in church or mosque | + | |
| Instructions to servants, waiters, etc. | + | |
| Personal letter | | + |
| Speech in parliament, political speech | + | |
| University lecture | + | |
| Conversation with family, friends, colleagues | | + |
| News broadcast | + | |
| Radio soap opera | | + |
| Newspaper editorial, news story | + | |
| Caption on political cartoon | | + |
| Poetry | + | |
| Folk literature | | + |

Table 2-3: Situations for High and Low varieties of diglossia (Ferguson 1972: 236)

There is usually little if any overlap between the two sets. For example, in diglossic communities such as Switzerland, “it is typical to read out loud from a newspaper in H and discuss its contents in L” (Romaine, 1995, p. 33). Such strict functional specialization of H and L, i.e. the appropriateness of only one variety in a

given situation, is “the most important hallmark of diglossia” (Romaine, 1995, p. 33). Also, since H is typically required to fulfill a greater range of functions, it usually (but not necessarily) develops a greater morphological complexity and a more extensive vocabulary than the Low variety. Further distinctive characteristics of H are greater prestige and superiority over L assigned to it by the speakers, a greater literary heritage and a strong tradition of formal grammatical study and standardization (Romaine, 1995, p. 34).

Although in Ferguson’s original model it was assumed that the H and the L varieties must belong to the same language, there have been a number of revisions to the model, most notably by Joshua Fishman (1967), who did not see a genetic relationship between H and L as a necessary condition for diglossia. In this dissertation, I am following Hudson (2002), who writes that Fishman “goes beyond Ferguson in recognizing that both genetically related and unrelated codes may stand in a diglossic relationship to one another” (2002, p. 94), and claims that theoretically H and L do not have to be genetically related, yet restricts the term diglossia to the ‘narrow’ definition of Ferguson: “In principle at least, the codes involved in this configuration might be varieties of totally unrelated languages as readily as they might be minimally distinct isolects of the same language. In practice, however, it is no accident that these codes tend to be closely related structurally and generally to be regarded as varieties of the same language, albeit significantly different varieties” (Hudson, 2002, p. 40).

In addition, diglossia differs from societal bilingualism in two other major respects: the acquisition of both varieties by children and the degree of stability of linguistic arrangements in each situation. Thus, in diglossia “no part of the community

uses the H variety for ordinary conversation” (Hudson, 2002, p. 3) and consequently the use of H or L “is a function of solely social context, and not of social identity of the speaker. In diglossia, it is context, not class, or other group membership that controls use” (Hudson, 2002, p. 6) and therefore there is no prestige group of native H speakers. Consequently, H and L may not be exchanged asymmetrically between the interlocutors to identify social distance or “inequity of social standing in a given interactive event” (Hudson, 2002, p. 4).

As a result, “children have no opportunity to acquire H as their native variety” (Keller, 1982) and “H is not ‘native’ to anyone, being a higher cultural endowment with functions that cannot be mastered until after the period of normal first-language acquisition” (Joseph, 1987, p. 17). Further, such relationship between the two codes in the diglossic case “specifically protects the role of L variety as a natively learned variety” (Hudson, 2002, p. 7) and makes the status of L in diglossic situations extremely stable. Thus, in cases of diglossia “it is precisely the elevated or culturally prestigious variety, not the vernacular, that has been displaced” (Hudson, 2002, p. 8), whereas in cases of societal bilingualism, the general tendency appears to be for the higher-prestige language eventually to invade the domain of the home, ultimately displacing the language of lesser prestige as a first language in the community” (Hudson, 2002, p. 30).

Finally, diglossic situations are known to be very stable. Ferguson writes that “diglossia typically persists at least several centuries, and evidence in some cases seems to show that it can last well over a thousand years” (Ferguson, 1959, p. 332). Similarly, Coulmas identifies stability as “one of the most remarkable characteristics of diglossia” (1987, p. 117), and Fishman calls diglossia “an enduring societal arrangement, extending

at least beyond a three generation period” (1980, p. 3). Certain diglossic situations, such as that in the Arabic world, seem to go as far back as our recorded history of language (Ferguson, 1959, p. 240).

Both concepts (bilingualism and diglossia) are crucial for the description of the sociolinguistic arrangements of Russian Mennonites, since the group was always in contact with numerous languages, many of which co-existed in their communities for decades or even centuries, with some varieties fulfilling very specific and strictly defined separate functions. Both terms will be needed when analyzing sociolinguistic aspects of different languages and the interplay between them in Russian Mennonite communities.

2.2.2 Borrowing, Code-Switching, and Convergence

As expected, in societies with stable bilingualism, i.e. in which two linguistic varieties exist side by side and are being extensively used in the same community, both languages are maintained side-by-side over a considerable period of time, both enjoy daily use and speakers commonly switch between the two (Louden, 1994, p. 75). One of the most logical outcomes of such contact is that elements from one language start to appear in the other. Such usage of elements from another variety or “attempted reproduction in one language of patterns previously found in another” (Haugen, 1950, p. 212) will be referred to as ‘**borrowing**’.⁶ Although numerous other terms have been proposed to refer to this phenomenon, such as interference (Romaine, 2000), transference or carryover (Clyne, 2003), I shall prefer borrowing for its more neutral denotation, as has been done by other authors (e.g. Myers-Scotton, 2006).

⁶ Of course, borrowing is used here in the linguistic sense and consequently, the donor need not be aware of the loan and does not consent to it, while the recipient need not repay it (McMahon, 1996, p. 200).

More specifically, instances of borrowing individual lexemes – “the first foreign element to enter the borrowing language” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988, p. 37) – will be denoted as ‘lexical borrowings’ (McMahon, 1996, p. 200), which will be further subdivided into two types: cultural and core lexical borrowings.

Cultural borrowing will refer to “words that fill gaps in the recipient language’s store of words because they stand for objects or concepts new to the language’s culture” (Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 212). An example of cultural borrowings can be such nouns as ‘махорка’ (cheap bulk tobacco used for home-made roll-up cigarettes), ‘квас’ (a mildly alcoholic drink made from fermenting dark rye bread), or ‘макуха’ (dry product remaining after pressing oil from sunflower seeds. When poor technology was used, much of the actual seed remained in the pressed ‘cake’ making it edible for cattle and, in some situations, for humans). All of these concepts are considered cultural lexical borrowings since they are highly specific to everyday life in the Soviet Union in the pre-World War II period and do not exist in other linguistic systems.

Core borrowings denote “words that duplicate elements that the recipient language already had in its word store” (Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 215). For example, such words as ‘university’, ‘interesting’, or ‘хлеб’ (bread), ‘кино’ (movie theatre), ‘базар’ (market), used in High German discourse despite the fact that the speakers knew their equivalents in High German, will be considered core borrowings. Other examples of frequently occurring core lexical borrowings in the speech of Russian Mennonites are the nouns ‘Окопе’ or ‘Wagone’ from the Russian ‘окопы’ (‘trenches’) and ‘вагоны’ (railway cars) which have almost replaced their High German equivalent ‘Schützengraben’ and ‘Waggons’.

However, instances of lexical borrowing affecting individual lexical elements will be distinguished only from the cases when speakers change the language completely at clause boundaries – the phenomenon known as “inter-sentential switching” (Romaine, 2000, p. 57), which I will refer to simply as ‘code-switching’. Although some scholars prefer to use the term language (code) mixing, which they differentiate from code-switching (Kachru, 1978; Singh, 1985), I shall avoid using this term as it has been frequently pointed out that there is very little if any difference between them (Jones & Singh, 2005, p. 48; Winford, 2003, p. 106).

Although in the case of borrowing “the lexicon is most easily and radically affected” (McMahon, 1996, p. 209) and some researchers insist on restricting the scope of the term to lexical items only (Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 208), “no component of a natural language is totally immune to change under impression of outside languages” (Winter, 1973, p. 144) and borrowing has been shown to take place at various other linguistic levels, such as phonology, morphology, and syntax (e.g. McMahon, 1996, pp. 200-213). Therefore, in this dissertation the term borrowing will be used in the broader sense and will refer to “incorporation of foreign elements” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988, p. 21) into another language and not only to the borrowing of individual lexical items.

Further, when two or more different languages exist in the same community for a prolonged period of time, they sometimes exercise such an influence upon each other that their structures gradually “become more and more similar” (McMahon, 1996, p. 213). Such process of “making languages more similar to each other (including through

borrowing)” (Clyne, 2003, p. 79) is known as convergence.⁷ It must be noted, however, that in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis convergence also refers to “the common form of accommodation ... by which speakers shift their style of speech to become more like that of their addressees” (Llamas, Mullany, & Stockwell, 2007, p. 96). Yet, in this dissertation the term will be used in its sense of meaning “long-term dialect accommodation” (Llamas, Mullany, & Stockwell, 2007, p. 109).

It has been frequently pointed out that “convergence typically occurs in situations where ... all, or the majority of speakers must learn and use two (or more) languages” (McMahon, 1996, p. 213; also Huffines, 1994, p. 47). The most notable difference between borrowing and conversion is the fact that borrowing typically operates on the level of vocabulary, whereas convergence “has its greatest effect on the syntax and morphology” (p. 213). The most typical causes of such changes include ease of learning and communicative efficiency.

All of the above-mentioned terms will be necessary for the structural analysis of the High German spoken by Russian Mennonites, since all of the interviewed speakers without exception had good knowledge of at least two languages other than High German which, as shown in the subsequent chapters, found reflection in their High German discourse. Further, as claimed in chapter 7, particular changes that distinguish Russian Mennonite High German from Standard High German can be attributed to the processes of convergence with other linguistic systems with which the group was in prolonged contact.

⁷ This process should not be confused with conversion, “a functional shift from one category to another” which “typically involves derivation from one major class item to another” (Brinton & Traugott, 2005, p. 37), such as water (Noun) > (to) water (Verb) or essen (verb) > (das) Essen (Noun).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 *Construction Grammar: Overview*

In order to adequately describe and account for grammatical peculiarities of Russian Mennonite High German, I adopted a relatively young but influential approach to language known as Construction Grammar (further abbreviated as “CxG”). In very general terms, Construction Grammar can be defined as “a sign-based grammatical model that is organized around the notion of GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTION as the basic unit of analysis and representation” (Fried & Östman, 2004b, p. 12) and is “a family of linguistic approaches which focuses on the structure and function of constructions in grammar” (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, p. 1). This multi-dimensional theoretical model of linguistic analysis has its roots in the cognitively-oriented grammatical theories of the 1970s, such as Case Grammar (Fillmore, 1968), Relational Grammar (Keenan & Comrie, 1977; Perlmutter & Postal, 1977) and Gestalt Grammar (Lakoff, 1977). The foundations of CxG were laid in the mid-1980s and the 1990s primarily by Charles Fillmore and Paul Kay. Since then the framework has been successfully extended in various directions by Lambrecht (1994) on information structure, Goldberg (1995) on argument structure, and Kay on formal semantics (1997).

Construction Grammar is a rather unusual linguistic theory in several respects. First of all, despite of almost two decades of its existence, and quite an extensive body of publications on this theoretical approach, there is no “proper introduction to the model accessible to the general public” (Östman & Fried, 2005, p. 7) Secondly, unlike most other theories of grammar in present-day linguistics, CG does not form a single unified theory but is rather a “family of loosely connected models” (Östman & Fried, 2005, p. 1).

According to Fischer & Stefanowitsch (2006, pp. 3-4), the most well-known trends within this framework are:

- 1) the Berkeley-school (Fillmore, 1985; 1988; Kay, 1997; Kay & Fillmore, 1999) closely associated with the Frame Semantics model (Fillmore, 1982) and Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (Pollard & Sag, 1994; Sag, Wasow, & Bender, 2003);
- 2) Lakoff's and Goldberg's theory, which is strongly influenced by cognitive linguistics (Goldberg, 1995; Lakoff, 1977);
- 3) the Radical Construction Grammar approach of William Croft (2001, 2005).

Although there are minor theoretical differences between these approaches, e.g. their stance on whether or not CxG should be a generative model, what the required degree of formalisation is, in how far the theory can represent linguistic universals, or whether the framework should be concerned with the speaker's psychological processes (Fischer & Stefanowitsch, 2006, pp. 8-15), these schools of construction grammar share core theoretical assumptions and are similar enough to be considered variations of the same theoretical paradigm.

In this dissertation, I do not adhere to a particular school of CxG, but adopt the original approach common to all the trends of construction grammar which William Croft labelled "vanilla construction grammar" (Croft, 2005). Despite the absence of a single authoritative textbook on CxG, a number of comprehensive overviews outlining the main conceptual points of 'vanilla' CxG have appeared in recent years (e.g. Croft, 2001, 2005; Fischer & Stefanowitsch, 2006; Östman & Fried, 2005). Below I will briefly outline the

main overarching principles shared by all constructionalist frameworks which make these models distinct from other approaches. These are:

- 1) non-modularity of form and meaning;
- 2) the notion of grammatical construction as a basic unit of linguistic representation;
- 3) the organization of constructions in a language into hierarchical networks with overlapping constituents;
- 4) high sensitivity of constructions to frequency as well as to their respective co- and con-texts.⁸

Now let us take a more precise look at each of these principles. The first salient characteristic of CxG theories is the realisation that combining two or more forms usually does not result in a simple concatenation of the meanings those forms have in isolation (Fried & Östman, 2004a). This insight can be best illustrated by the example of idioms, which present a problematic phenomenon for the traditional componential models of language and thus are in part responsible for the rise of CxG (Croft, 2001, 2005). For example, the German noun *der Löffel* (spoon) and the verb *abgeben* (to give up) produce a combination (*den Löffel abgeben*) with a meaning very similar to that of the English expression *to kick the bucket* (to die). In both cases, the meaning of each expression can only distantly be traced back to the denotations of their individual components.

Consequently, Construction Grammar, centering around the notion of a linguistic sign, argues that the form and meaning⁹ of a given linguistic construction do not form separate

⁸ According to (Diewald & Bergs, 2006, p. 17) ‘co-text’ refers to the strictly linguistic environment of a given item, whereas ‘con-text’ encompasses extra-linguistic, communicative, and pragmatic factors.

⁹ This second constituent of linguistic constructions is sometimes identified as ‘meaning’ (e.g. Östman & Fried, 2005, p. 1), sometimes as ‘function’ (e.g. Goldberg, 2006, p. 1), and sometimes as ‘function/meaning’ (e.g. Croft, 2005, p. 275). However, since all CxG approaches generally see function and meaning (semantic, pragmatic, and discourse functional properties) as inseparable from each other (see Figure 2-4), I will refer to it simply as ‘meaning’.

independent modules, but are inseparable and stand in a complex relationship to each other.

This leads to the second underlying assumption of CxG, namely that these basic conventional associations between form and meaning are the primary units of linguistic representation. These are considered to be basic building blocks of linguistic analysis and are called grammatical constructions, which are defined as “an abstract, a representational entity, a conventional pattern of linguistic structure that provides a general blueprint for *licensing* well-formed linguistic expressions” (Fried & Boas, 2005, p. 18).

Therefore, constructions are “fundamentally symbolic units” that consist of “pairings of form and meaning that are at least partially arbitrary” (Croft, 2001, p. 18). The term ‘meaning’ in CxG subsumes all of the conventionalized aspects of a given construction including its semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-functional properties. The ‘form’ of a construction refers to and consists of its morphosyntactic and phonological/graphological properties. This is best summarized in Figure 2-4.

Further, CxG distinguishes between constructions (the abstract blueprints) and the so-called constructs (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, p. 5) or allostructions (Capelle, 2006), which are the real-life realizations, the actually occurring types of expressions. Of course, CxG does not see the linguistic blueprints and the actual expressions as separate but claims that there is a “continuum between schematic and concrete constructions” (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, p. 5) (also Croft, 2001; Tomasello, 2005). This gives CxG the potential

to account for linguistic variability (e.g. Leino & Östman, 2005), which is inextricably entwined with language change.¹⁰

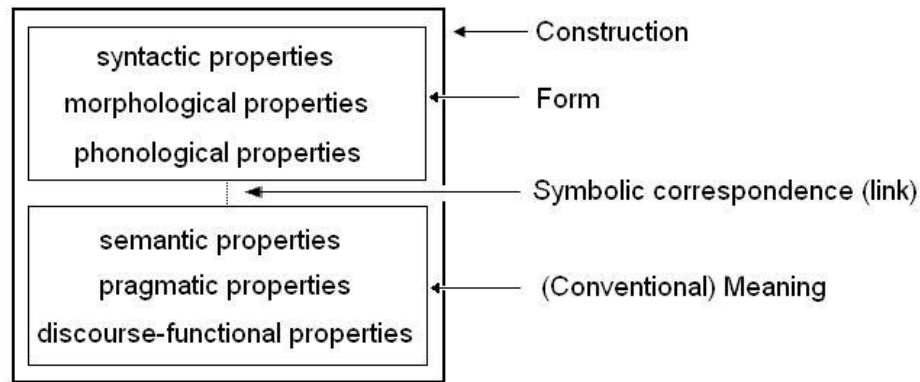


Figure 2-4 The symbolic structure of a construction (Croft 2001, 18)

At this point it is important to mention that CxG does not impose any *a priori* requirement that every construction specify a predetermined set of properties or categories. Nor is there a minimum number or type of properties that have to be specified for a particular construction. In fact, CxG approaches start with the data and “only then develop the necessary formalism on the basis of what they find and deem necessary” (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, p. 2). For example, if a certain construction is centered around its structural organization only, while its semantics is fully compositional (*im Dunkeln sitzen* [to sit in the dark] as opposed to *im Zimmer sitzen* [to sit in the room]), it does not have to be specified as a whole. However, often there is a need to include specific discourse-functional and pragmatic features among the defining properties of a construction. This becomes obvious if we recall that often two expressions seem to have exactly the same structure (e.g. *Thank you!* and *See you!*) but have different semantic and pragmatic characteristics that sanction their use (Fried & Östman, 2004a, p. 15). Thus, CxG interprets *Thank you!* and *See you!* as two different constructions.

¹⁰ In fact, as early as 1968 Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog claimed that “*Not all variability and heterogeneity in language structure involves change; but all change involves variability and heterogeneity*” (p. 187).

The last step in defining the grammatical construction is the realization that constructions can represent everything from morphemes to single-word and multiword lexemes, and to the most general syntactic and semantic rules. Thus, one can have fully morphological constructions, where the internal structure of words is presented as a construction. These can include both free and bound morphemes as well as clitic elements. On the other end, one can have larger syntactic constructions, which may be fully or partially lexically filled and may include “fully general phrasal patterns” (Goldberg, 2006, p. 5). Examples are given in Table 2-4.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Morpheme | e.g. <i>ent-</i> , <i>ver-</i> , <i>-bar</i> , <i>-los</i> |
| Word | e.g. <i>Tisch</i> , <i>Nacht</i> |
| Complex Word | e.g. <i>Unternehmer</i> , <i>Großmutter</i> |
| Complex Word (partially filled) | e.g. [N-e] (for some plurals) <i>Tische</i> , <i>Schirme</i> |
| Idiom | e.g. <i>Haus und Hof</i> , <i>mit Ach und Krach</i> |
| Idiom (partially filled) | e.g. <jemandem> <i>durch Mark und Bein gehen</i> |
| Covariable Conditional | <i>je Xer desto/umso Yer</i> (e.g. <i>je schneller desto/umso besser</i>) |
| Ditransitive | Subj V OBJ ^{DAT} OBJ ^{ACC} (e.g. <i>Er schreibt ihr einen Brief.</i>) |
| Passive | Subj aux PP _{VON/DURCH} VP _{PAST PART.} (e.g. <i>Der Text wird von dem Studenten gelesen; das Haus wird durch den Wind zerstört.</i>) |

Table 2-4: Examples of constructions, varying in size and complexity (Adapted for German from Goldberg 2006 (p. 5))

The logical consequence of representing lexical items, larger linguistic patterns, as well as regular syntactic and semantic rules as constructions, is the assertion that lexicon and grammar do not form separate components of a language and that there is a continuum between lexical unit and syntactic constructions. Words and phrasal patterns are thus treated as equal contributors to building up complex linguistic expressions” (Fried & Östman, 2004a, p. 22).

The third tenet of all Construction Grammar approaches is the assertion that the constructions of a given language do not simply form an irregular list of all patterns

possible in that language. Instead, they reflect the linguistic conventions that the speakers of the language know and form a “structured inventory” of conventions (Langacker, 1987, pp. 63-76), which is often characterised as a network structure (Goldberg, 1995; Lakoff, 1977), best described as a taxonomic hierarchy of overlapping patterns with “inheritance, polysemy, and synonymy relations” (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, p. 1). Each construction with idiosyncratic morphological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic or discourse-functional properties is presented as a separate node. For example, despite the identical syntactic structure ([ACC N *abgeben*]), *den Löffel abgeben* (‘to hand in the spoon’ = to die) and *den Aufsatz abgeben* (to hand in the essay) are different constructions and therefore occupy two related but separate nodes in the large network of constructions. Consequently, unlike generative theories, CxG does not derive one construction from another but assumes that “constructions are combined freely to form actual expressions as long as they are not in conflict” (Goldberg, 2006, p. 10). An actual expression, therefore, “typically involves at least half a dozen different constructions” (Goldberg, 2006, p. 10).

Lastly, CxG assumes that constructions are often very co-text, con-text, and frequency sensitive, i.e. linguistic change in general involves factors which can be found outside of the linguistic system as such (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, p. 7). For example, the construction ‘*weißst du*’ exists in European German but has been used much more frequently in American-German dialects under the influence of the English ‘*you know*’ and has been shown to fulfill functions similar to those of ‘*you know*’ (Salmons, 1990). Because of such differences in frequency and functions, CxG would view the German and the German-American ‘*weißst du*’ as two different constructions. Thus, CxG rejects

the notion of “the strict division between semantics and pragmatics” (Goldberg, 1995, p. 8) and, besides capturing co-textual factors through syntagmatic configurations, “explicitly calls for an inclusion of contextual factors” (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, p. 8). The importance of context for linguistic change (more specifically, grammaticalization) was shown by Himmelmann (2004) with the example of article development from demonstratives, and by Diewald (2006) with the development of modals in German. Further, in CxG frequency is viewed to be an important characteristic of constructions as such. Thus, despite the above-mentioned non-compositionality of meaning being a defining feature of a construction (e.g. Croft, 2001, p. 18; Goldberg, 1995, p. 4), high frequency of use may override this criterion and even fully compositional patterns are viewed by CxG as constructions as long as they are sufficiently frequent (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, pp. 6-7; Goldberg, 2006, p. 5; Goldberg & Jackendoff, 2004, p. 533). The sensitivity of linguistic constructions to the context and frequency in situations of language contact, including varieties of German spoken outside of Germany, is discussed and exemplified by Heine and Kuteva (2006, pp. 44-58). To conclude, it can be said that with these views CxG presents an alternative mode of grammatical organisation to a transformational theory’s system of components and rules (Croft, 2005, p. 276) and is “a particularly suitable tool for investigating and describing language change” (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, p. 2).

2.3.2 *Advantages of the Constructional Approach*

The main reason for adopting this particular approach to language was that it “provides a uniform model of grammatical representation and at the same time captures a broader range of empirical phenomena than compositional models of grammar” (Croft, 2001, p. 17). The practical advantages of this approach over the other formal theories of grammar are threefold: a) CxG is a usage (performance)-based model, b) it offers an extremely valuable tool – the notion of grammatical construction, c) it offers a variable degree of formalisation.

The major advantage of CxG over the other formal theories of grammar results from its usage-oriented nature. While Chomskyan theories of grammar generate and recognise endlessly complex sentences, they leave outside their scope many kinds of structures that speakers of a given language produce and comprehend in their everyday language use (Fried & Östman, 2004a, p. 14). CxG, in contrast, is a usage-based approach which aims to account for all constructions occurring in the language. CxG does not distinguish between the ‘core’ (basic, standard, central) and the ‘peripheral’ (exceptional, irregular, unpredictable) parts of a language and CxG seeks to describe both. CxG makes it possible, therefore, to describe constructions which in other models are treated as exceptions, with the same instruments as the regular constructions (Diewald, 2006, p. 85; Kay & Fillmore, 1999, p. 1) and can systematically link the irregular and regular phenomena not only when a construction unequivocally belongs to the lexical or grammatical domain (Diewald, 2006, p. 86).

Secondly, CxG “offers a fruitful and insightful approach to analysing language through a single conceptual tool – the notion of construction” (Fried & Östman, 2004b, p.

76). In itself, the concept of grammatical construction is “broad enough to represent every morphological or syntactic arguments/criteria/tests for identifying any syntactic category” and can be applied “to any grammatical structure, including both its form and its meaning” (Croft, 2001, p. 17). Besides, grammatical construction seems to be especially well-suited to the analysis of spoken texts. As Chafe (1994), Pawley & Syder (1983), Pawley (1987), and others have shown, we do not talk in individual words, linguistic phrases, or sentences, but rather in blocks, prosodic units, in spurts of several seconds, which can be nicely captured by the notion of construction. Also, it has been shown that very often “linguistic change does not affect only single linguistic items, like words, morphemes, or phonemes, but also syntagmatic structures up to the sentential and utterance levels. Therefore, having accepted the notion of grammatical construction as a unit of analysis, I do not have to make a choice of what to consider a piece of linguistic material: a word, a phrase, or a sentence (Fried & Östman, 2004a, p. 17).

A more practical example, in which the usefulness of ‘constructions’ becomes evident, is analysis of linguistic borrowings. Since, as already mentioned, borrowing can occur on all linguistic levels, it may affect the phonology, morphology, lexical domain, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of a given language. This classification is fairly straightforward if we are dealing with borrowings that affect one of these levels (usually grammatical or semantic). The notion of construction comes in very useful in situations when borrowing affects several linguistic levels simultaneously and changes a construction’s semantic and/or pragmatic properties, or frequency of use. Since constructions are pairings of form and meaning/function, both parts have to be considered

jointly, which allows to describe a much wider range of actually occurring expressions than traditional approaches to grammar.

Thirdly, as CxG does not have a single uniform notation for constructions, it allows structural descriptions “with varying granularity” and “provides for analytical solutions that avoid over-specified, non-provable descriptions and analyses” (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, p. 3). In practical terms, this gives the researcher an opportunity a) to leave parts of constructions unspecified; and b) to deal with syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features in a consistent manner (Diewald, 2006, p. 87).

Finally, CxG has been shown to have potential for diachronic linguistics (Bergs & Diewald, 2006; Diewald, 2006; Heine & Kuteva, 2006) and to be “very compatible and helpful for investigations in linguistic typology and the effects of language contact” (Bergs & Diewald, 2006, p. 11). Examples of such studies on the German language include Diewald, 2006, Diewald & Habermann, 2005, and Haberzettl, 2006.

3. THE LINGUISTIC HISTORY OF RUSSIAN MENNONITES

Before going into details of the Russian Mennonites' present linguistic situation, it is necessary to take a detailed look into their linguistic past. Though not very long, their linguistic history is remarkably rich and enviably fascinating. It begins almost five centuries ago in northern continental Europe with the Evangelical doctrine arriving in the Lowlands from Switzerland and southern Germany, and follows through the centuries in an ongoing series of migrations through the lands of Prussia, the steppes of Southern Russia (present-day Ukraine), to the shores of today's Canada.

Although "the epithet 'Mennonite' is really a religious term" (Goerzen, 1972, p. 20), in the light of their history Russian Mennonites are generally recognized as a separate ethnic group (e.g. Francis, 1948; Goerzen, 1972; Urry, 1989, p. 262). Therefore, it is possible to trace their ethnic heritage to the earliest known sources, as is indeed done by some researchers, such as Epp (1993), who goes as far back as the fourth century AD, before some of the Germanic tribes settled on the British Isles. Although definitely fascinating, this early history shall not concern us here as it does not deal with Mennonites as such, and I will start telling the Mennonite linguistic story in the sixteenth century with the appearance of Mennonites as a religious group in the European Low Lands.

3.1 Early Mennonites in Northern Europe

3.1.1 *The Original Homeland*

The first Mennonite congregation in Northern Europe was established in the first half of the sixteenth century in the area known as ‘Dreierfriesland’ or the ‘Frisia Triplex’ which encompasses the provinces of Friesland, Groningen, and East Friesland. Today, the first two territories are a part of the Netherlands, whereas East Friesland belongs to Germany. Although these three provinces are considered the original home of the Netherlandic Mennonites (Unruh, 1955, p. 133), there is much evidence that the geographical homeland of the northern Anabaptists was much larger and included most of the Netherlands as well as some neighbouring Belgian and German areas. For example, Smith claims that Mennonites were chiefly found in the coastal provinces of the Netherlands and, in addition to the Frisia Triplex, names Flanders, Zeeland and Holland as territories with considerable numbers of Anabaptists. In addition, he mentions small numerous groups of Mennonites “also scattered throughout the interior regions” (1981, p. 103). On a similar note, Unruh writes that the majority of Anabaptist immigrants in Prussia originated in the Dutch and North German area, primarily in the region between Brugge, Eider and Jütland (p. 133). In addition, there is evidence that a large number of Anabaptists from other parts of the Holy Roman Empire sought refuge in the Low Lands, particularly in East Friesland, where the government was much more lenient towards the reformers than in the rest of the Netherlands (Dyck, 1964, p. 2; Epp, 1993, p. 57)

3.1.2 *The Flemish and the Frisian Mennonites*

The first of the Dutch provinces to impose punishment by death on all Anabaptists, and the territory where the Inquisition worked most ruthlessly, was Flanders (Smith, 1981, p. 105). Understandably, trying to save their lives, Mennonites left Flanders in masses and escaped to the North, which brought a large number of Low Franconian-speaking refugees to the mostly Low Saxon-speaking Frisia Triplex. These refugees differed from their Frisian co-believers in ethnic traits, in language, and in religious customs and practices (Smith, 1981, p. 110). Soon after their arrival, the Flemish disagreed with the local Mennonite communities on a number of (from today's perspective) relatively small religious and cultural issues, which led to a rift between the Flemish refugees and the Frisian Mennonites. They established separate congregations, excommunicated those who intermarried with the other branch and rebaptized everyone who wished to transfer their membership. Interestingly, at the same time both groups continued to follow the same confession of faith (Dyck, 1964, p. 3). A number of attempts at reconciliation were in vain, and the split into the Frisian and Flemish branches of the Mennonite church was maintained for nearly two full centuries until they finally united in one congregation in 1808 (Smith, 1981, p. 176)

Although the terms 'Flemish' and 'Frisian' in the context of Netherlandic Mennonites initially referred to the natives of Flanders and Friesland respectively, most researchers agree that the designation of Frisian and Flemish followed religious rather than ethnic lines¹¹ (Dyck, 1964, p. 6). Naturally, after living side-by-side for several centuries, the two groups mixed and were often referred to as the 'flemo-frisians' (e.g.

¹¹ Details of particular differences in the church practices of each group are discussed by Friesen (1989a, p. 43).

Goerzen, 1972). Consequently, today hardly any Mennonite will be able to insist on his or her Frisian or Flemish heritage or even church affiliation with any degree of certainty. Thus, already half a century ago Thiessen wrote that “bei Befragungen unter den Mennoniten selbst ergeben sich keine eindeutigen Schlüsse” (1963, p. 16).

3.1.3 Languages of the Early Mennonites

Considering that the body of the first Anabaptists in northern Europe stemmed from geographically vast territories and encompassed various “ethnically heterogeneous elements” (Francis, 1948, p. 103), it is not surprising that they spoke a number of Germanic varieties, such as Low Franconian, Low Saxon, and Frisian (Francis, 1948, p. 103) as well as “other dialects depending on from what part of the Low Countries they had come” (Duerksen, 1967, p. 107). Generally, Low Franconian, Low Saxon, and Frisian are reported to be the three West-Germanic languages that contributed the most to the formation of the Mennonite dialect (Buchheit, 1978, p. 9; Unruh, 1955, p. 13).

Although some authors claim that because of the Saxonization of the Frisians in the fifteenth century, “there remained little difference in the Saxon dialect among the people of Frisia, East Frisia, and Groningen” (Buchheit, 1978, p. 10), there is a strong indication that those Anabaptists who were native to the province of Frisia (also known as West Frisia or West Friesland) at that time spoke the Frisian language (Epp, 1993, p. 53; Unruh, 1955, p. 12). It also must be mentioned that besides the Low German, Frisian, and Low Franconian varieties, there were always some “High German additions” from the neighbouring German territories as well as those who “had found their way from Switzerland and South Germany” (Dyck, 1964, p. 4).

The opinions of researchers on whether the distinction of Mennonites into the Frisian and the Flemish branch was of importance to their languages show a surprising lack of unanimity. While some scholars claim that it was of no significance to the languages spoken later by each of the groups (Buchheit, 1978, p. 9; Thiessen, 1963, p. 16), others insist that ethnic and religious origins influenced the selection and use of one dialect or another in the main Mennonite colonies in Southern Russia (e.g. Quiring, 1928, p. 45; Unruh, 1955, p. 153). As we shall see later in this chapter, the Frisians and the Flemish did have somewhat different linguistic habits and preferences, which played a role at a later stage of their history. But regardless of the varieties spoken by the first Mennonites in the Low Countries, those few of them who could write probably wrote “what one would term to be Dutch” (Epp, 1993, p. 54). Albeit in various forms, Dutch was the only language to be used regularly behind the pulpit in the Mennonite congregations and for official written communication. However, because of the strong Frisian, Low Franconian, and Low Saxon influences, the Dutch of early Anabaptists has been frequently labelled as ‘impure Dutch’ (e.g. Dyck, 1964, p. 6; Epp, 1993, p. 54) or “mengelmoes” (hodgepodge) (Buchheit, 1978, p. 14; Unruh, 1955, pp. 85, 123).

3.1.4 Languages of the Northern Anabaptists before Migrating to Prussia

The first Anabaptists in northern Europe originated in the Frisia Triplex and spoke mainly Low Saxon dialects of Low German (in Groningen and East Frisia) as well as Frisian in the province of (West) Frisia. Around the middle of the sixteenth century, a large number of Flemish (Vlaams) speaking Mennonites from Flanders settled in these areas, thus bringing Low Franconian varieties to the Frisia Triplex. In addition, there were some

refugees from the neighbouring territories speaking their local varieties, all of whom were “absorbed by the large body of Menno’s followers” (Francis, 1948, p. 103).

The sole language of religion was Dutch, which existed among Mennonites in numerous forms and showed influence from Low Saxon, Low Franconian, or Frisian, depending on the native dialect of a specific Mennonite congregation. For written correspondence, forms of Dutch were predominantly used, but there is some indication that High German speaking refugees from the surrounding German territories, as well as a few from Switzerland, Austria, and southern Germany, used their varieties for writing as well.

3.2 Netherlandic Mennonites in Prussia

3.2.1 *Migration from the Low Lands*

Until 1578, when William I, the Prince of Orange (1533-1584), conquered the Dutch provinces one after another and established a limited degree of religious toleration (Smith, 1981, p. 105), Mennonites in the Frisia Triplex suffered greatly under persistent persecution. Severe oppression started immediately after Anabaptism reached the northern lands in the 1530s and, according to various sources, put between five hundred and two thousand Mennonites to martyrs’ deaths (Smith, 1981, p. 105). Understandably, Mennonites fled for their lives first to the northern Dutch and German provinces, where they found only a temporary refuge, and then accepted the invitation of Polish landowners to settle in the Vistula-Nogat delta in West Prussia, which had belonged to Poland since the Peace of Thorn in 1466 (Goerzen, 1972, p. 21).

Although the main migration of the Anabaptists from the Frisia Triplex to the Vistula delta and Danzig began in the 1540s (Unruh, 1955, p. 32), it is known that as early as in 1534 the Danzig city council tried to prevent Anabaptists from boarding ships to the free city (Smith, 1981, p. 166). In fact, by 1547 there was a large Mennonite contingent already living near Danzig (Epp, 1993, p. 57). Menno Simons himself visited this congregation in 1549 (Smith, 1981, p. 166). The massive migration of Mennonites from the Frisia Triplex to West Prussia continued well into the seventeenth century (Epp, 1993, p. 57).

The main reason for inviting Mennonites to West Prussia and offering them religious freedom was the need to redevelop and expand agricultural production on the lands of the delta, which lay just above the sea level and were severely flooded by the river Vistula. Mennonites, who had dealt with very similar difficulties in the Netherlands and were known for their expertise in “land reclamation from sea by means of dikes and canals” (Buchheit, 1978, p. 10), gladly accepted the invitation and were greatly appreciated for their skills.

Being saved from death, Mennonites eagerly took to work and “soon became noted for their industry, for their farming production and for their transformation of the delta from swamplands to agricultural masterpieces” (Epp, 1993, p. 65), which ultimately gave the area the name ‘Prussian Netherlands’. The great success of Mennonite settlers is also evident from the way their settlements expanded: the first Mennonites in Prussia settled around the cities of Danzig and Elbing and then spread to the lowlands higher up the Vistula and Nogat in the course of several decades reaching Graudenz and Thorn (Dyck, 1964, p. 5; Geisler, 1922, p. 122; Unruh, 1955, p. 149). Although later Mennonite

settlements were also established in other parts of Prussia, the great majority of them stayed in the Vistula delta at least until the Mennonite migration to Russia was well on its way.

3.2.2 Languages of the Early Mennonites in Prussia

When the Mennonites migrated to Prussia from the Frisia Triplex, they brought along “a loosely-knitted dialect of Nether Saxon Low German” (Epp, 1993, p. 58), which, as already mentioned, contained Dutch, Frisian, and Flemish elements. The name by which Mennonites referred to this language has not been recorded but “in all likelihood it was ‘Dietsch’ ”(Epp, 1993, p. 58).

Despite the fact that the territories in West Prussia in which Mennonites established their settlements had been under Polish domination since the fifteenth century, the local population was largely German and spoke West Prussian Platt, a dialect used throughout the Vistula region (Dyck, 1964, pp. 6-7; Francis, 1955, p. 16), also referred to as Eastern Low German or ‘Ostniederdeutsch’ (Epp, 1993, p. 67). As is the case with most Low German languages, the Low German spoken in Prussia was not a unified variety but consisted of no fewer than nine different dialects (Ziesemer, 1979, p. 137).

Although Buchheit (1978) mentions “a greater urgency [for Mennonites] to adopt the dialect of this region, since communication with their non-Mennonite neighbours concerning business matters was certainly desirable, if not imperative” (p. 14), there is little doubt that the Low Prussian varieties spoken in the delta were readily understandable to the incoming Netherlanders (Epp, 1993, p. 67; Unruh, 1955, pp. 123-

124), who merely adopted the “manner of speech of their new Prussian neighbours” (Epp, 1993, p. 67). This view is further supported by Penner (1978), who claims that the Low Saxon dialect “wurde genauso in Groningen wie in Danzig gesprochen” (p. 180), and by Thiessen (1963), who further strengthens this hypothesis by arguing that in the local Low German dialect of the Vistula delta “aus früheren Zeiten noch sprachliche Reste der Flamen und Niederländer zurückgeblieben waren” (p. 19).

Although the original varieties Mennonites brought from their native lands, made a noticeable imprint on the dialectology of the entire Vistula delta (Moelleken, 1992, p. 64), they eventually abandoned the variety they had brought along from the Frisia Triplex in favour of Plautdietsch - a related local Low German dialect spoken at the heart of the Vistula delta in the areas called Werders (Danziger Werder, Großes Werder and Kleines Werder) (Epp, 1993, p. 68). Although this variety ultimately became the primary spoken language for most Russian Mennonites all over the world, it is not exclusively a Mennonite dialect and is still spoken by non-Mennonites who at one time lived in or near the Vistula delta in West Prussia.

3.2.3 The Prussian Period: The Dutch Connection

Although the transition from their native varieties to the local Low German vernacular took place relatively soon after Mennonite settlements were established in West Prussia, the Dutch language, used mainly for religious purposes and written communication with the Netherlands, survived much longer and Mennonites maintained contact with their Dutch brethren for centuries (Urry, 1989, p. 41).

It must be noted, however, that not only Mennonites in Prussia had strong ties with the Netherlands and that the existing connections were not exclusively of religious character. Lucrative trade between the major Baltic ports of Danzig and Elbing, and numerous Dutch and North German cities existed already at the beginning of the fourteenth century (Mitzka, 1932). Exporting grain and other goods transported down the Vistula in exchange for luxury items readily bought by the Polish nobility, the Hansa cities along the Baltic coast acquired great wealth and political power. According to one source, long after the collapse of the Hanseatic League, between 1585 and 1620, the number of Dutch ships in the Danzig city port rarely fell below 50% and in 1620 reached the highest point of 83%. This trade route between Danzig and the Netherlands retained its pivotal significance well into the eighteenth century (Thiessen, 1963, p. 14). The flourishing business between West Prussia and the Netherlands was further enhanced by the fact that much of the trade in the Baltic ports was controlled by Dutch merchants and Amsterdam was Danzig's major trading partner in Western Europe (Urry, 1989, p. 42).

Besides such lively commercial traffic between Prussia and the Netherlands, there were fruitful scientific and cultural connections between the two countries. For example, it was customary for many Prussian citizens to attend universities in Leiden, Groningen, and Utrecht. Similarly, Thiessen claims that of one hundred and thirty-two doctors active in Danzig in the seventeenth century, more than a third had studied in the Netherlands (1963, p. 15). Also, according to Smith (1981), "many of the sons of the Danzig Mennonites went to the Netherlands for an education in a trade" (p. 167).

Ministers of the Mennonite congregations in Prussia were also quite frequently recruited or educated in the Netherlands, and most of the Mennonite religious literature of

the time “was imported from the Old Country and written in Dutch, which remained for about two hundred years their ritualistic language” (Francis, 1948, p. 103). Thus, the Bibles used in many Mennonite congregations until the end of the eighteenth century were Dutch translations by Nikolaes Biestkens, a Mennonite publisher in Emden. His translation was the first Dutch Bible to introduce paragraph divisions in the text and was so popular that between the sixteenth century, when it was printed for the first time, and the end of the seventeenth century the book ran through more than fifty reprints (Smith, 1981, p. 126). The psalms sung during the service, the early catechisms and confessions of faith (e.g. by Tobias Govertsen, or Lubbert Gerritz and Hans de Ries), as well as the writings of Mennonite leaders Menno Simons and Dirk Philips, were available in the Dutch language. It is interesting that in addition to Mennonite ecclesiastical literature imported from the Netherlands, Dutch hymnals and prayer books were also published in Haarlem and Alt-Schottland near Danzig¹² (Thiessen, 1963, p. 27). Finally, despite the fact that “West Prussian Mennonites were as a rule not a literary people” (Smith, 1981, p. 174), *Martyrs Mirror*, a Dutch-language collection of martyrs’ stories compiled in 1660 by a Mennonite minister at Dordrecht, Thieleman Jansz van Braght, was not translated into German until 1748-9 and was widely read by the Prussian Mennonites (Urry, 1989, p. 38).

Considering these strong economic, educational, and religious ties of Prussian Mennonites with the Netherlands, it is not surprising that the Dutch language survived among them for close to two hundred years. As a matter of fact, it was so deeply entrenched there that as late as 1716 a Dutch minister, Hendrik Berents Hulshoff, brought

¹²A general discussion of religious literature among Mennonites in Prussia can be found in Friedmann (1944)

from the Netherlands a large order of religious books requested by Mennonite congregations near Schwetz, Montau, and Schönsee (Duerksen, 1967, p. 108).

A much later example of Mennonite devotedness to the Dutch language was Hans van Steen (1705-1781), a Prussian-born Mennonite minister who received his education in Amsterdam and preached as well as kept all records of his Danzig Mennonite Church exclusively in Dutch. Soon after van Steen's death, the congregation switched entirely to High German, as most other Mennonite churches in Prussia had done already.

3.2.4 Mennonites and High German in Prussia before 1800

In the majority of studies dealing with the languages of the Netherlandic Mennonites, their encounters with High German are said to have begun in West Prussia in the second half of the eighteenth century. More precisely, High German is usually mentioned as the language which Mennonites started to use for religious worship and church record-keeping, and which eventually completely drove out the Dutch language from the religious domain.¹³ This process is usually considered to have started in 1757 with Lehrer¹⁴ Bühler's unsuccessful attempt to deliver a sermon in High German in the Great Werder (e.g. Goerzen, 1972, p. 22) and is usually considered to have come to completion by the turn of the century (Goerzen, 1972, p. 22; Mitzka, 1930, p. 10; Moelleken, 1992, p. 66; Neufeld, 1955, p. 229; Thiessen, 1963, p. 27; Urry, 1989, p. 45).

¹³ Although usually Dutch or High German are seen as the languages of the Mennonite churches in Prussia, some authors mention that at times individual Mennonite congregations, especially of the Frisian branch, used Low German during their services (e.g. Epp, 1993, p. 72; Friesen, 1989a, p. 45; Penner, 1978, p. 178).

¹⁴ Lehrer (teachers) were Mennonite ministers, "whose function was to do much of the teaching and preaching in the congregation and in general to assist the Ältester [Elder] in directing the congregation" (Friesen, 1989a, p. 44).

It is noteworthy, however, that in most of the aforementioned studies High German is mentioned exclusively as the new language of the Mennonite church, and only the dates when individual congregations started to preach and/or keep church books in High German instead of Dutch are usually given (e.g. Duerksen, 1967). This usually creates impression that High German was a strange and completely unfamiliar language to the Prussian Mennonites, who never came in contact with it until the late 1750s, when it all of a sudden started to invade their congregations throughout Prussia. Consequently, the issue of High German in other domains of the Prussian Mennonites' life is either completely ignored or is not given the attention it deserves.

Below, I would like to address briefly the following three questions which may provide a different perspective on the matter:

- ~ Were Prussian Mennonites unfamiliar with High German at the time of the shift?
- ~ Was High German used in Mennonite churches before they officially abandoned Dutch as the ritualistic language?
- ~ Was High German used by Mennonites in Prussia in other domains besides religion during and before the shift?

Searching for answers to these questions, I was surprised to find out that several well-known scholars have effectively argued that High German did exist among Mennonites long before the second half of the eighteenth century in both written and spoken form, and that it was used by groups of Mennonites for religious matters much earlier than the late 1750s. For example, speaking about the languages of early Anabaptists in the Frisia Triplex, Epp mentions that “there is no reason to conclude that High German was ever nonexistent among Netherlandic Mennonites” (1993, p. 53). In fact, it has been

frequently pointed out that during the first period of the Mennonite movement, they absorbed a great number of Anabaptist refugees streaming to the Netherlands from other parts of the Holy Roman Empire (Francis, 1948, p. 103). Penner (1978) also points out that besides the Netherlands and Switzerland, Anabaptism also existed “in allen deutschen Landen” (p. 178), where the followers of the new religion were also threatened with death. It is therefore not completely illogical to assume that among these numerous refugees there were speakers of High German as well as people who were literate in it. Indeed, a number of authors also mentioned the High German speaking Anabaptist refugees joining the Mennonites in the Frisia Triplex (e.g. Dyck, 1964, p. 4; Smith, 1981, p. 112). Epp also claims that in the sixteenth century some refugees among Mennonites “could and did write in High German” (1993, p. 54), which was then called “Overlandsch” (Unruh, 1955, p. 79).

Further, although all West Prussian lands were ceded to Poland after the Peace of Thorn in 1466, “the High German legacy of the Teutonic Order remained a strong influence even under Polish sovereignty” and the chancelleries (offices of administration) of all cities except Danzig had changed to use of High German by 1500 (Epp, 1993, p. 75). Danzig, one of the most powerful Hanseatic cities, retained Low Saxon, the official written language of the League, for another half a century before also yielding to High German. Therefore, High German was the official language of the Mennonites’ new homeland at the time of their emigration from the Frisia Triplex, and the leaders of individual groups of migrating Mennonites must have had at least passive knowledge of it.

Although Epp is certainly correct in claiming that Mennonite farmers living on the land remained relatively unaffected by High German as the official language (1993, p. 71), the elders of the Mennonite church as well as those involved in the administration of their settlements must have developed some knowledge of High German over the years. Mennonites constantly had to reinsure their charters and continuously fought for their religious rights with the local rulers, who were “strangely inconsistent through the centuries in their policies toward the Mennonites” (Smith, 1981, pp. 169-170).

When we consider the shift to High German as the language of worship, two generally accepted tendencies must be mentioned: firstly, in the rural Mennonite churches High German was accepted sooner than in the urban congregations (e.g. Smith, 1981, p. 167); secondly, the switch to High German as the language of religion took place earlier among the Frisians than among the Flemish (Epp, 1993, p. 72). The first tendency might be explained by the fact that urban churches were able to maintain contact with the Dutch congregations longer than the churches in the countryside (Duerksen, 1967, p. 109). The eagerness of the Frisians to accept High German was most likely caused by great numbers of High German speaking refugees, referred to as the ‘Upper Germans’ (‘die Oberländer’), who joined them soon after emigrating to West Prussia (Penner, 1978, p. 178).

The issue of High German in the Frisian congregations was also dealt with by Penner (1978), who examined a number of letters from the elders of the Frisian churches in Prussia to their sister churches in Amsterdam written between 1671 and 1678 in the High German language. In one of them, the elders of the Orloffersfeld congregation ask their Dutch brethren for help after extensive flooding they had suffered. This leads

Penner to conclude that High German was the primary written language in the Frisian churches already then, since the elders of the Danzig church would not have written a petition to Amsterdam in High German if they could also write in Dutch (p. 179). Epp (1993) also shares this view (p. 72). Moreover, according to a contemporary author, in the early seventeenth century during their services the Frisians sang “Psalmen und andere lutherische Lieder” (Hartwick, 1719, p. 290 f.), which at that time were available in German only (Penner, 1978, p. 179).

The historical events surrounding this shift in the language of worship among the more conservative Flemish congregations are well documented (e.g. Duerksen, 1967; Mannhardt, 1919) and the following dates are usually mentioned in this regard:

- 1757 – Lehrer Bühler delivers a High German sermon in the Great Werder. The attempt is ill-received by the congregation;
- 1762 – A guest speaker from the Elbing Mennonite church requests permission to preach in High German in a Flemish church in Danzig because of his insufficient knowledge of Dutch;
- 1767 – Another High German sermon is delivered in Danzig by a guest speaker from the Heubuden church;
- 1767 – The first High German hymnal is printed in Königsberg;
- 1768 – The Danzig Flemish church stops using Dutch for entries in the church record books;
- 1771 – A Danzig preacher uses High German for the first time;
- 1781 – Hans von Steen, the last pro-Dutch elder of the Danzig Flemish church, dies. Three years later the congregation switches entirely to High German.

Although the above-mentioned dates are facts of history, it must be kept in mind that they designate events in relation to the urban Flemish Mennonite congregations, which are known to have held on to the Dutch language much longer than the other Mennonite congregations in Prussia. Considering that at the end of the eighteenth century the total number of Mennonites in the Vistula and Nogat deltas of West Prussia was around twelve thousand persons (Smith, 1981, p. 179) and that at its peak the total Mennonite population in Danzig numbered slightly over one thousand (p. 176), it can be said that more than 90% of Prussian Mennonite congregations had already switched to High German by that time.

Yet even in the case of urban Flemish churches, there is evidence that High German started to make its way into their congregations already in the seventeenth century. Thus, it is known that several religious texts intended to be frequently used by the Mennonite congregation had been written in High German already then. Examples of these are the High German catechism and confession of faith written in 1671 by Georg Hansen, an elder of the Flemish Mennonite church in Danzig (Smith, 1981, p. 174). Since Hansen was also proficient in Dutch and authored several books in this language (Smith, 1981, p. 174), it can be argued that he would not have written the above-mentioned religious texts in High German if everyone in his congregation preferred Dutch. This view is supported by Duerksen (1967), according to whom Hansen wrote in the same year that “the young people of the Heubuden Mennonite church could write German better than Dutch” (p. 108). This is quite peculiar since, as already mentioned, the Flemish branch of Mennonites is considered to have switched to High German significantly later than the Frisian congregations.

On a similar note, Penner gives an account of entries in a Danzig Flemish family Bible, in which the records made in the 1730s were written “mit deutschen Beimischungen in holländischer Sprache” (1978, p. 180). Yet a decade later the same speaker wrote in New High German (Neuhochdeutsch), which Penner considers his vernacular and claims that “es war damals bei den Flamen ein Übergangszustand” (p. 180). Hence, according to this scholar, the process of transition to High German among the Flemish Mennonites was already well on its way in the 1730s-1740s.

Further, there is evidence that individual Flemish churches started using High German in their services before the second half of the eighteenth century. For example, it is reported that when Gerard Wiebe, an elder at the Elbing Mennonite church, was invited to preach in the Flemish Mennonite church in Danzig in 1762, he requested permission to deliver the sermon in High German because of his insufficient command of Dutch (Mannhardt, 1919). This incident has been interpreted as evidence that “the Elbing congregation had been using the German in worship services for quite some time” (Duerksen, 1967, p. 108).

Lastly, after the first partition of Poland in 1772, when almost all Mennonites along the Nogat and Vistula rivers found themselves under Prussian rule, High German became the default language of school instruction (Friesen, 1989a, p. 45,) and this clearly contributed to the general process of assimilation “to the uniform German culture” (Francis, 1948, p. 104) which eventually made Mennonites “not culturally distinct from other groups of West Prussian Germans” (Francis, 1948, p. 104). Hence, by the end of the eighteenth century, High German became the Mennonites’ official, school, and church language (Moelleken, 1992, p. 66). Undoubtedly, some Mennonites, especially those with

university education or tradesmen active in the Prussian towns and cities, were using High German for everyday communication already then. Discussing these times, Postma mentions that after 1772 Mennonites in Prussia felt more and more German and that the afflictions of the Napoleonic wars “brachten die Gemeinden zueinander und machten die Mennoniten in Preußen zu völlig deutschbewussten Menschen” (1959, p. 170).

Therefore, considering these arguments, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Forms of High German were always present among Mennonites, albeit to a moderate degree compared to the other varieties, and were used for both spoken and written purposes at least by a part of the group.
2. Although the process of transition from Dutch to High German **came to completion** in urban Flemish churches in the final decades of the eighteenth century, it probably began about a century before that. It is also quite possible that members of the Frisian congregations always used High German alongside other languages for a wide range of purposes including written communication and religious services.
3. High German was the administrative language of almost all Prussian lands at the time when Mennonites migrated there from the Frisia Triplex. Since then it has been slowly gaining importance, ultimately becoming the sole language of culture, religion, commerce, and education for all Prussian citizens, including Mennonites.

3.2.5 *On the Way to Russia*

When in 1772 Poland was partitioned by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, and most Mennonites of the Vistula-Nogat delta and the surrounding areas came under the reign of Frederick the Great (1740-1786), they were very pleased (Smith, 1981, p. 177). Having a

more liberal set of mind than his predecessors, Frederick gave Mennonites complete religious freedom, permitting a possibility to engage in any trade or pursue any kind of business, and rights equal to those of other citizens of Prussia. In exchange, Mennonites had to pay an annual sum of five thousand thaler as compensation to the Military Academy at Culm. Although restrictions on buying new land had been imposed on Mennonites by an earlier regulation, they were not enforced during Frederick's reign (Smith, 1981, p. 177) and Mennonites in the delta "prospered despite all adversities" (Klippenstein, 1989, p. 15).

These relatively peaceful and, for many, favourable times were not to last long. Relations with the government worsened steadily, especially after Frederick's son Frederick William II succeeded to the throne in 1786. A number of new regulations against Mennonites were issued concerning exemption from military service and strengthening of the existing restrictions on purchasing and selling land. As Urry states, these policies did not only challenge Mennonite faith but also "threatened the continuance of Mennonite communities and their preferred mode of life" (1989, p. 48). As a result, in the early 1780s many Mennonites were already willing to emigrate, especially "the landless and the poor" (Epp, 1993, p. 77) who would not be able to improve their economic situation in Prussia.

It was approximately at this time that the invitation from the tsarina of Russia Catherine the Great (1729-1796) to settle in her empire reached the Prussian Mennonites. Herself of German descent, Catherine was driven by the desire to populate the steppes of the newly acquired territories to the north of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov with industrious farmers. Thus, the Tsarina offered prospective settlers "most liberal

inducements such as free land in abundance, free transportation and support until such time as the settlers would be established in their own homes, tax exemption for a limited time, exemption from military duty and certain civil obligations, religious toleration, and wide liberty in establishing such educational and local political institutions as best suited for their needs” (Smith, 1981, p. 251). Seeing it as an answer to their prayers, many Mennonites accepted this generous offer and during the following fifty years close to half of the entire Mennonite population of the delta migrated to the steppes of Southern Russia.

3.2.6 Summary of the Prussian Period

Mennonite refugees from the Netherlands and parts of Belgium and northern Germany started to find their way to the West Prussian lands in order to escape religious persecution in the 1530s, with the major part arriving between the 1540s and the early seventeenth century. They established numerous settlements in the Vistula-Nogat delta and were very successful farmers, craftsmen, and traders. The local population among which Mennonites settled in Prussia spoke a Low Prussian variety of Low Saxon Low German, which was easily understandable to the Mennonite settlers. After some time they accepted the local Low German variety called Plautdietsch as their informal language.

Although Dutch held in the Mennonite churches for much longer, and extensive contact with the Netherlands was maintained for almost two centuries, High German started to be used increasingly by Mennonites for official and religious purposes. In the second half of the eighteenth century it permanently drove out the Dutch language from

the last Mennonite congregations to use it for worship and became the sole language of religion and culture.

Around the same time, economic conditions in Prussia became very unfavourable for Mennonites and their religious freedom was also threatened by militaristic Prussian rulers. Having received an invitation from Catherine the Great, the Tsarina of Russia, to settle in the newly acquired territories in the South of the Russian Empire, Mennonites began to emigrate from Prussia in large numbers.

3.3 Mennonites in Russia

3.3.1 *The Migration Process*

The migration of Mennonites from Prussia to the Russian Empire took place during three roughly delineated periods of time: 1788-96, 1804-40, and 1855-73 (Rempel, 1974, p. 6). The way to the new homeland was pioneered by the poorest members of the Prussian Mennonites, for whom acquiring land in Prussia was impossible and the emigration, therefore, was most desirable. Although originally Mennonites made an agreement with the Russian government to settle in a more southern location near the present day city of Kherson, upon arrival they were ordered to stay on the right bank of the Dnieper River some 350 kilometres north from the entrance to the Black Sea. This is where the first two Mennonite villages in the Russian Empire, Chortitza and Rosenthal, were founded in 1789. The settlement initially consisted of about four hundred families and by 1824 had developed into eighteen villages which became known as the 'Chortitza' or the 'Old Colony' for its pioneering character (Moelleken, 1992, p. 66). Since the first migrants belonged exclusively to the Flemish part of the church (Goerzen, 1972, p. 26), which was

more hesitant to accept High German, and because most of the first settlers were uneducated tradesmen leaving Prussia before a general shift to High German as a vernacular took place, few of them had more than a rudimentary knowledge of it (Rempel, 1974, p. 3). For this reason, in the first years of the settlement, Plautdietsch was primarily used for school instruction and religious worship (Epp, 1993, p. 75).

Meanwhile, the remaining Mennonites in Prussia were facing further restrictions of their religious freedom and were experiencing significant worsening of economic opportunities. Having heard about a new decree granted to the Chortitza colonists by Catherine's successor Tsar Paul, in which he guaranteed "for both old and new settlers all the exemptions and privileges granted the original colonists"¹⁵ (Smith, 1981, p. 257), Mennonites left Prussia in even greater numbers. Settling on a tract of land of about three hundred thousand acres around the river Molotschna, just over 100 kilometres south-east of Chortitza, in 1803 Mennonites established the 'New Colony', also known as 'the Molotschna'. The emigration lasted almost four decades and in just half a century the colony grew to fifty-seven villages. Unlike the first Mennonites to leave Prussia, most of the new settlers were well-to-do farmers from the regions of Merienburg and Elbing (Smith, 1981, p. 258) and were of a higher social standing than the Chortitza Mennonites (Dyck, 1964, p. 9). They also left Prussia at least a decade and a half later than the first group and along with Plautdietsch brought with them High German, which by then had become "the language of the church, the school, and of other cultural and commercial activities" (Goerzen, 1972, p. 22).

The last period of Mennonite migration to Russia took place around the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Prussian government finally refused to grant

¹⁵ These privileges are in detail discussed by Rempel (1974, pp. 24-28).

Mennonites military exemption on religious grounds. Two settlements were founded in the province of Samara east of the river Volga: the 'Am Trakt' colony in 1853, and Alexandertal, also known as Old Samara, in 1859. By the 1870s the colonies consisted of ten and eight villages respectively. Although Mennonites of these two colonies were mostly spoke High German, most of them were repressed, exiled or deported to remote parts of the USSR and hardly any of them came to Canada. Therefore, their contribution to the overall Mennonite migratory and linguistic developments was rather insignificant (Moelleken, 1992, p. 66) and they will not be further considered in this study.

3.3.2 Economic and Cultural Development

How successful Mennonites were in Russia is evident from the fact that by 1915 the number of Mennonites swelled to over 100,000 (Dyck, 1964, p. 12) and comprised 20% of the entire German population in the country (Goerzen, 1972, p. 23). As the Mennonite population grew, additional stretches of land were purchased by the primary (mother) colonies for the younger generations, and numerous daughter colonies, such as Bergthal (1836), Borsenko (1870), Fürstenland (1864), and Karassan (1862) sprang up. In the late nineteenth century the total number of Mennonite villages in Russia numbered approximately four hundred (Rempel, 1974, p. 2).

Further, according to several accounts, of all the foreign colonists brought to Russia by Catherine the Great, the Mennonites were "the most successful in every field of farming and industry, and perhaps also in commerce" (Rempel, 1974, p. 18). Thus, as Francis writes, "nine factories in Southern Russia with nearly 2000 labourers, whose output in agricultural machinery amounted to as much as seven percent of Russia's total

production, were owned and managed by Mennonites” (1955, p. 194). Another highly favourable account of Mennonite colonies belongs to a German traveller, Lindeman, who visited the Mennonite settlements at the end of the nineteenth century and published his experiences under the title *Von den deutschen Kolonisten in Rußland* (1924).

One reason for this great success was the privileged position of Mennonites as model farmers and the near autonomous status of their settlements regarding internal affairs (Moelleken, 1992, p. 68), which has led some scholars to refer to the Mennonite colonies in Russia as “a state within a state” (Smith, 1981, p. 284). Closed and semi-closed villages thus became not only local administrative units (Friesen, 1989b, p. 11) but also the social setting in which almost every Mennonite in Russia grew up, and which to a large extent determined the Mennonite identity of an individual (Urry, 1989, pp. 57-58). It is the world of villages and colonies that allowed Russian Mennonites to live completely independently of the local population and “to maintain separate minority identity not only against their Russian neighbours but also against the German colonists, be they Lutheran or Catholic” (Rempel, 1974, p. 5).

The educational system established by Mennonites in Russia was another great success. Even the first Mennonite settlers in Russia, who stemmed from the lower social class and lacked educated leaders, were strongly committed to perpetuating schools for their children’s basic education. Within the first year or two they established elementary schools in every village (Ens, 1989, p. 75). With time, the Mennonite school system was expanded and underwent a number of reforms, most notably under the influence of Johann Cornies (1789-1848), and resulted in an “excellent school system of elementary schools, high schools for boys and girls, business schools, and three year normal schools”

(Dyck, 1964, p. 13). Towards the end of the nineteenth century it was also not unusual for Mennonites from Russia to pursue graduate studies at prestigious Russian and West European (especially German) universities and teacher training institutions (Epp, 1993, p. 76). Thus, around the year 1900, 1.5% of all Mennonites in Russia had a university education, which was a very high percentage in comparison with the Russian population (Smith, 1981, p. 271).

3.3.3 High German among Mennonites in Russia in the 19th century

As mentioned in the previous section, the majority of Mennonites in Prussia were quite hesitant to accept High German in religious services, especially so the Flemish branch of the church. Therefore, for a few decades after the Old Colony was established in 1789, the first settlers, exclusively of the Flemish affiliation, lacked qualified teachers who were able to teach or preach in High German. The schools therefore used Plautdietsch as the medium of instruction and religious texts in High German as teaching materials (Ens, 1989, p. 75). Church services were initially held in Low German as well (Epp, 1993, p. 75).

Yet relatively soon Frisian Mennonites from Prussia, who had a much higher High German-speaking contingent, and who had switched to High German as the language of the church at least several decades before the Flemish wing, also settled in the Chortitza Colony and established their own villages and congregations. According to Urry, by 1800 Frisians accounted for almost 25% of all Mennonites in Russia (1989, p. 67). Since throughout their entire history both Frisian and Flemish parties frequently banned and excommunicated their own members and at the same time accepted (often by

rebaptizing) those who left the other branch, a few Frisians proficient in High German must have come to the Flemish villages and schools then.

The Mennonites who formed the Molotschna settlements in 1803 had been more exposed to the Prussian education system and, consequently, to the High German language. They removed “some of the mistrust of higher education” (Ens, 1989, p. 77) and serious efforts to teach High German to the Mennonite children and uses it as the primary language of instructions were made in both colonies in the 1820s (Epp, 1993, pp. 76, 82). The fact that High German was held in extremely high esteem among Mennonites in Russia is demonstrated by the fact that they not only requested trained Mennonite teachers proficient in High German from Prussia, but in the early nineteenth century started to engage for this purpose local High German speakers of other faiths, usually Lutherans possessing more or less adequate qualifications (Epp, 1993, p. 82; Urry, 1989, p. 156). This detail is much more important than it might seem at first. Since even minor technical differences were felt by the Mennonites to be serious enough to keep them split into Frisian and Flemish for more than two centuries, allowing non-Mennonites to educate their children just so that the education could be conducted in High German, can have only been caused by the importance associated with the language.

The teaching materials used in the Mennonite schools also show how their usage of High German increased through the years. While in the first several decades in Russia the only textbooks used by the Mennonites were religious texts, such as the Luther Bible and a catechism, in addition to a simple primer (Ens, 1989, p. 75), in the 1820s textbooks were imported from Germany (Urry, 1989, p. 262). Towards the end of the century

Mennonites started to produce their own books, sometimes even together with other German colonists, for example Unruh & Wilhelm's *Deutsches Lesebuch für mennonitische und lutherische Elementarschulen in Russland* (1895), printed in a Mennonite publishing house in the Molotschna. Thus in the first half of the nineteenth century High German had replaced Low German wherever it was still used in instruction among Mennonites in Russia, and although the majority of them were "not entirely competent in High German" (Urry, 1989, p. 71), with time it became gradually embraced "as 'their' written language" (Epp, 1993, p. 86).

Another tendency - namely using High German as the official medium of administration - arose soon after the first Mennonites came to Russia. By 1800, all official correspondence between Mennonites and the Russian government agencies was to be conducted in "the 'dialect' of the colonists which for the Mennonites meant High German" (Urry, 1989, p. 71). This practice, as Rempel notes, "much to the annoyance and frequent anger of many Russian officials" (1974, p. 4) was not generally abandoned until the late 1860s. It was during these years that High German firmly established itself as the default language of the internal Mennonite administration.

Another strong factor contributing to the status of High German as the prestigious language of culture was the large number of High German-speaking families belonging to the Groningen Old Flemish congregation who in 1834 moved to the Molotschna colony and founded the village of Gnadenfeld. Urry also mentions a number of "wealthy, cultured families" representing the leading Mennonite merchant dynasties in Prussia, who immigrated to Russia from the 1820s onward, "married only among themselves and spoke only High German" (1989, p. 142).

In terms of printed culture, it must be mentioned that in Russia High German always remained the dominant language of the written page. Already around 1850 Mennonites did not only subscribe to but also contributed articles and figured prominently in many German-language periodicals published in Russia, such as the *Unterhaltungsblatt für deutsche Ansiedler im südlichen Russland*, or the *Odessaer Zeitung*, both published in Odessa. In addition to other periodicals published by Germans in Russia such as the *St. Peterburger Zeitung*, Mennonites also “subscribed to journals from abroad and purchased practical and religious books from dealers in the Baltic ports of Revel and Riga or through agents in Odessa” (Urry, 1989, p. 167).

Besides secular literature, the reading of which was often discouraged by church leaders, Mennonites were interested in religious matters and “purchased many religious texts, especially the sermon collections of German and English evangelical preachers” (Urry, 1989, p. 270), such as Eduard Hofacker. Study groups, which discussed a wide range of religious literature of both Mennonite and non-Mennonite traditions were usually organized around Mennonite ministers and existed in both colonies. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Mennonites in Russia also started to produce their own publications, mainly discussing their religion and history, such as Hildebrand (1888), Epp (1889) or Jacob Toews’s German translation of Alexander Klaus’s account of German colonies in southern Russia *Unsere Kolonien* (1887).

3.3.4 *Russian Mennonites and the Russian Language*

It can be said that the Russian Mennonite exposure to the Russian language began with an attempt to russify “all foreign elements in the country, especially the German colonists

near the Black Sea” (Buchheit, 1978, p. 16) as a part of the reforms undertaken by the Russian government between 1861 and 1881.

The need for the russification of the Mennonites was caused by the fact that for about a hundred years after the first Mennonites settled in Russia their contact with the local Slavic population was very limited and was usually that of “master or boss to a labourer” (Rempel, 1974, p. 5). Consequently, Russian played a relatively minor role in the lives of most Mennonites at least until the closing decades of the nineteenth century. According to P. M. Friesen (1911b), for example, as late as 1874 Mennonites understood of the Russian language “only a very tiny little piece and that only of the profane market dialect. Of the Russian literature or indeed its ethical value or theological treasures they knew about as much as we do about the literature of the Armenians or Georgians” (pp. 593-594).

According to the new policy, Mennonite schools were now to be overseen by the Russian Ministry of Education, and the Russian language was to be introduced as the main medium of instruction. Luckily, these policies were fully implemented only for a short period of time and generally gave the Mennonite educational system a strong impulse to improve with a number of long-term benefits (Ens, 1989, pp. 84-85). Nevertheless, as a result of the proposed reforms, approximately “30 per cent of the total Mennonite population in the Ukraine” (Francis, 1955, p. 28), or 15,000 to 18,000 Mennonites, left Russia for Canada and the United States in the mid-1870s. Despite of this, the results of the Russification policy were far-reaching and have positively affected the Mennonites remaining in Russia. Mennonite secondary schools took the ukase very seriously, and already in 1888 in all three of the Molotschna secondary schools all

disciplines except for German and religion were taught in Russian (Friesen, 1911b, p. 745). Also, from the 1870s onwards a number of Mennonites were sent to Moscow and St. Petersburg to improve their Russian, and native Russian teachers were appointed to the secondary schools (Urry, 1989, pp. 244-245). Russian was also adopted as a subject in most Mennonite village schools in 1874, and in some of these schools arithmetic and other subjects were taught in Russian between 1884 and 1896 (Friesen, 1911b, p. 806; Moelleken, 1992, p. 70). But despite this, Russian still remained “an elusive subject to all but a few Mennonites” (Moelleken, 1992, p. 70) until 1938, when it became the default language of school instruction, and all texts in German were confiscated and usage of German even for informal purposes was forbidden and prosecuted.

Another direct outcome of the reforms was a certain degree of Russian patriotism noticeable among the Mennonites towards the end of the nineteenth century. For example, according to Urry, after 1870 Mennonites “developed a more sophisticated understanding of the Tsar, his government, the Russian state, and the concept of being a citizen of a modern nation-state. The Mennonite leadership came to see themselves as loyal subjects of the Tsar and citizens of Russia” (1989, p. 256). In this connection, it is interesting to note that in 1889, in a speech presented during the celebrations of the hundredth anniversary of the Chortitza colony, my own great-great-grandfather, Peter Johann Penner, a teacher in the Chortitza village school, “emphasized the importance of learning Russian, for it was the language in which the “spirit of the people” (Geist des Volkes) was to be found, and Mennonites needed to become more aware of the genius of the Russian people” (“Koloniales Hundertjähriges Jubiläum der Chortitzer Mennonitenkolonien,” 1889; Urry, 1989, p. 268).

3.3.5 *High German in the Early 20th Century*

Another remarkable outcome of the Russification policy of the 1870s was the fact that a large number of the Mennonites began to view the Russian language as an immediate threat which put the existence of their communities and the preservation of Mennonite culture in question. Thus, Mennonites started to put “more emphasis on [High] German to preserve their non-Russian identity” (Epp, 1993, p. 82) and it was in response to the reforms that “a cultural German consciousness developed among these Flemo-Frisians” (Goerzen, 1972, p. 22). Thus, by the time the first wave of Mennonites left Russia, High German had already become the language firmly associated with Mennonite faith and was considered both “the language of their forbears” (Moelleken, 1992, p. 78) and something “necessary for their survival as the church” (Dyck, 1993, p. 409). These feelings indeed became stronger with each subsequent wave of Mennonite emigration from Russia.

Although Plautdietsch continued to be the primary spoken language of the majority of Mennonites, “there was a general tendency to achieve a refinement suggested by High German” (Dyck, 1964, p. 14) and its usage was “fostered actively by the Mennonite authorities” (Moelleken, 1992, p. 69). In the 1920s, approximately one in ten Mennonite families was using High German as an everyday language (Quiring, 1928, p. 47).¹⁶ The Plautdietsch speaking families, however, also used High German in the home

¹⁶ When stating the percentage of High German speaking Mennonite families in Russia, Quiring writes it down as “1/10 %”. Interpreting this number as ‘one tenth of a percent’ does not seem reasonable, as it would indicate that only one in a thousand Mennonite families was speaking High German. If this were true, such a negligible number would most likely not even be mentioned. Reading it as ‘one tenth’ seems much more realistic, and I believe this is the number Quiring was trying to convey.

“in the reading of the Luther Bible, and of periodicals and literatures, and in prayer”
(Goerzen, 1972, p. 22).

3.3.6 Emigration from Russia

As had already been the case with the Mennonites in Prussia, in less than a century the government changed its attitude towards them and started to disregard some of its own earlier resolutions. Thus, in the 1870s the Tsarist government made a serious attempt to gain control over Mennonite schools, to introduce the use of Russian, and to put an end to their exemption from military service. As a result, almost all Mennonites immediately expressed a desire to emigrate. Yet several weeks later, when a reasonable agreement with the Adjutant-General Totleben, who had been delegated by the government “to forestall any possible mass exodus by seeking a compromise with the Mennonites” (Epp, 1993, p. 84), was achieved, two thirds of them were persuaded to stay. The other third, or between 15,000 and 18,000 Mennonites, consisting of the most conservative elements of the Chortitza and two of its daughter colonies, emigrated to North America. Of this number, approximately 7,500 Mennonites came to Canada, where the government granted them “special privileges in setting up semi-autonomous colonies with their own schools and village administration” in the prairie provinces (Moelleken, 1992, p. 77).

The remaining Mennonites in Russia continued to prosper for the next four decades, but with the October Revolution in 1917 their position became at best uncertain, and some years later outright hopeless. As wealthy colonists of non-Russian ethnicity, most Mennonites were robbed of most of their possessions, Mennonite villages were raided and plundered, and their inhabitants were murdered in great numbers, especially

during the chaotic years of the Civil War (1917-1923). Of the surviving Mennonites, 21,000 escaped to Canada and 4,000 to South America between 1921 and 1930.

The story of those Mennonites who stayed in the Soviet Union after 1930 is a rather depressing one. Most men were sent into exile or arrested and executed during the Stalinist repressions of the 1930s. Churches had been closed and forbidden in the late 1920s already, and in the late 1930s it became illegal and dangerous even to speak German in public. A temporary relief came in 1941, when they were overrun by the German Wehrmacht, but this ended two years later with the advance of the Soviet Army. Approximately 36,000 Mennonites left their villages and fled to the West with the retreating German Army. Two thirds of these Mennonite refugees either perished during the war or were captured by the Soviets and exiled to Siberia and Central Asia soon after. Only about 12,000 Mennonites found their way from the Allied zones of Germany to Canada and South America in the decades following the end of World War II, with approximately the same number of Mennonites coming to each continent. However, some of those Mennonites who migrated first to South America eventually settled in Canada a decade or two later.

3.4 Mennonites in Canada

3.4.1 *The First Migration Wave*

The first group of Mennonites came to Canada between 1873 and 1876 and was about 7,500 people strong. It consisted of the most conservative elements of the Old Colony, and two of its economically weakest daughter settlements, Bergthal and Fürstenland.

These first migrants settled almost exclusively in the prairie province of Manitoba, in the valley of the Red River, where they tried to recreate the rural lifestyle they were used to from Russia. Two decades later, the first daughter settlements were established in the province of Saskatchewan. By 1901 their numbers had increased to 19,530 (Goerzen, 1972, p. 57).

Hardly any of the first-wave Mennonites had any knowledge of English, and contact with Canadians was discouraged and usually kept to a minimum. As a result, during the first several decades English was practically non-existent among the Mennonites. High German was still, just like it had been in Russia, the official language of the church and the school and “remained their clear H variety” (Moelleken, 1992, p. 78). It must be added, though, that because of the conservative religious views of the first settlers, education above the elementary level was discouraged and little attention was paid to literature and popular culture.

Following the same pattern as the Prussian rulers between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and the Russian Tsarist government in the nineteenth century, after several decades the Canadian authorities disregarded their initial agreement with the Mennonites and in 1914 started a process of general Anglicization of the Canadian school system (Moelleken, 1992, p. 78). By 1919 school instruction in High German was forbidden and all schools which did not abide by the government’s decrees were closed down.

Since for many Mennonites “Vaterglaube und deutsche Sprache waren ... zu einem Begriff zusammengewachsen“ (Thiessen, 1963, p. 28), the denial of their right to use High German to educate their children was taken extremely seriously, especially so

by the more conservative Mennonites. Starting in the same year, approximately 8,000 Russian Mennonites left the Canadian prairies for Mexico, where the local government once again promised them complete religious freedom and a great degree of cultural autonomy.

The remaining Mennonites in Canada conformed to the demands of Canadian authorities and accepted English as the language of school instruction. Since Canadian Mennonites themselves did not have knowledge of the English language and, unlike Mennonites in Russia, had not established a system of teacher preparatory schools, there were far more Canadian-trained than Mennonite instructors, and the young generation of Mennonites soon accepted the alternative of English as the primary language. Thus, the displacement of High German from its superior position as the H-variety had begun.

3.4.2 The Second Migration Wave

At roughly the same time a new influx of Mennonites from Russia arrived in Canada, this time some 21,000 strong. Approximately 3,000 of these people stayed in Eastern Canada, predominantly in Southern Ontario (Goerzen, 1972, p. 60). A large part of this group of immigrants settled in the cities (Dyck, 1964, p. 21) and brought a much more positive attitude toward education than was common among the first-wave Mennonite immigrants. The second-wave Mennonites had enjoyed close to half a century of education in well-prepared Mennonite primary and secondary schools in Russia; they “stood out in their mastery of the [High] German and Russian languages” (Epp, 1993, p. 85), and were generally more “sophisticated” (Dyck, 1964, p. 21) than their Canadian co-believers.

Many aspects of the first-wave Mennonites' and their descendants' culture seemed strange to the newcomers from Russia, who referred to the earlier Mennonite immigrants as 'die Kanadier' (the Canadians), and, in their turn, received the name 'die Rußländer' (the Russians). Cultural differences between the groups were so significant that each group tended to live in clusters of its own people and "die Kanadier and Russländer, in general, have hardly influenced each other's language" (Dyck, 1964, p. 72).

The second-wave immigrants, who had been already exposed to a foreign culture and increased contacts with non-Mennonites, were quite eager to acquire English and sent their children to Canadian public schools (Moelleken, 1992, p. 79). Being fluent in Plautdietsch, they at the same time maintained the highest regard "for High German as the vehicle of a greater cultural heritage which they considered their own" (Dyck, 1964, p. 96) and continued the use of High German in their churches. As previously mentioned, many more families of the second-wave immigrants were now using a form of High German as the main language of their families. The high prestige attributed to High German manifests itself in the fact that the older generation of the second-wave immigrants often spoke Plautdietsch to each other but would use only High German when talking to their children (Moelleken, 1992, pp. 79-80).

3.4.3 The Third Migration Wave

The last group of Russian Mennonites to reach Canada came to the North American continent after the end of World War II. This was the group that had been exposed to the most bitter Russification under Stalin and had transferred their resentment to the Russian

language (Moelleken, 1992, p. 80). All eight thousand of the third-wave immigrants to Canada had lived under the German military government since 1943 and stayed in Germany for several years at least. All of them were fluent in High German, while many were using Plautdietsch for informal communication. Having suffered much from anti-German feelings in Russia, and usually having been looked down upon because of their Russian refugee status in Germany, the last group of Mennonites was most willing to assimilate to mainstream Canadian culture, to the extent that many first-generation immigrants have now adopted English as the primary family language.

High German, strengthened through the new wave of immigrants, survived as the only language of the Mennonite church in Canada for another several decades until the young generation of Mennonites, which had acquired some High German in the Sunday schools but was more fluent in English, introduced some English services.

Understandably, with time, English took precedence and ultimately replaced High German in the church. The process of transition from German to English is said to have been largely completed by 1990 (Dyck, 1993, p. 409). Today there are still occasional High German services offered by some Mennonite churches here and there, but considering the increasing difficulty finding German-speaking ministers and the rapid aging of the German-speaking Mennonites (almost exclusively first-generation immigrants), the Mennonite connection to the High German language in Canada will end permanently in the course of the next few years.

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the major methodological procedures used in this project. It starts by describing the two sets of spoken data and the interviewees and briefly compares the two groups to each other. Section 4.3 provides information on the software and the notation system used for transcribing the data and linking the transcriptions to the digitized interview recordings. The next section (4.4) describes how the categories for structural and sociolinguistic analysis of the data were developed and how the data were subsequently coded and analyzed. Sections 4.5 and 4.6 provide details about the structural and sociolinguistic analysis of the interviews. The chapter closes with a brief summary.

4.1 The Data

4.1.1 *Data Set I*

The primary data used in this study consist of two sets of audio-recorded interviews with Russian Mennonites of the second and the third migration waves, who immigrated to Canada from the southern parts of the Soviet Union during the two decades following the end of World War I and World War II respectively. In its entirety, the first set is a compilation of eighty-two interviews in English, Plautdietsch, and High German conducted between 1976 and 1978 by Henry Paetkau and Stan Dueck, at the time graduate students of history at the University of Waterloo. The interviews were conducted as a part of an oral history project under the supervision of Walter Klaassen. Both interviewers are descendants of Mennonite immigrants from Russia; both are fluent

in English, Plautdietsch, and High German and were recognized by the participants as a part of the group.¹⁷ While the interviewers knew some of the participants personally, they located the majority of the interviewees through the ministers of local Mennonite congregations, who are traditionally held in very high regard.

In the summer of 2007 I digitized these audio-taped interviews, which are stored at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College. Each recording is accompanied with a biographical sketch of the interviewee(s), a brief summary of the interview with a time stamp in minutes, and additional information, such as the date and place of the interview, the language(s) in which the interview was conducted etc. An example of such an accompanying sheet is presented in Figure 4-1

From this set of eighty-two interviews, thirty-seven were conducted in English, twenty in Plautdietsch, and twenty-five in High German. Of the last, twenty-one interviews conducted in Southern Ontario (thirteen by Henry Paetkau, and eight by Stan Dueck) are considered in this study. The other four interviews conducted in High German with participants in Manitoba were excluded from this study because the conditions of Russian Mennonites in Manitoba differed significantly from those of the other Russian Mennonite enclaves in Canada (mostly British Columbia and Ontario) (Moelleken, 1994, pp. 307-308) and the linguistic situation of the last “cannot be equated with the one prevailing in Manitoba” (Moelleken, 1992, p. 81). This decision also made the two sets of data more comparable to each other since all participants in the second set were located in Southern Ontario.

¹⁷ Today Henry Paetkau is the President of Conrad Grebel University College. In an informal meeting in March 2008 Mr. Paetkau provided me with much background information on the interviews as well as the methodology of his project.

minutes to two hours and the number of participants in each interview did not exceed two persons.

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Number of interviews: | 21 |
| Number of participants: | 21 (female: 4; male: 17) |
| Year of birth: | 1884-1907 |
| Year of immigration: | 1924-1930 |
| Interview length: | 42-121 min. |
| Total number of interview minutes: | 1966 min. (37 hours 46 minutes) |
| Place of residence in Russia: | |
| Colony: | <u>Chortitza (total of 2)</u> |
| Villages of: | Chortitza (1) |
| | Osterwick (1) |
| Colony: | <u>Molotschna (total of 16)</u> |
| Private estates: | (5) |
| Villages of: | Mariewohl (Gnadenfeld) (3) |
| | Fischau (2) |
| | Neuenstiess (1) |
| | Nikolaidorf (1) |
| | Rückenau (1) |
| | Schoenbrunn (1) |
| | Schoenfeld (1) |
| | Tiegerweide (1) |
| Colony: | <u>Schlachtin-Baratov (total of 1)</u> |
| Village of: | not specified |
| Colony: | <u>Zagradovka (total of 1)</u> |
| Villages of: | Reinfeld (1) |
| Colony not specified: | Neuenstiess (1) |
| Place of residence in Ontario: | Kitchener-Waterloo (5) |
| | Leamington (6) |
| | New Hamburg (1) |
| | Niagara-on-the-lake (1) |
| | St. Catharine's (7) |
| | Vineland (1) |

Table 4-1: Summary of the High German interviews in the 1976-1978 interviews set

All interviews are semi-structured and were conducted in the residences of the interviewees in an informal, almost conversational manner, which was also the intention of the interviewers (personal communication with Henry Paetkau, March 2007). As both interviewers were proficient in English, High German, and Plautdietsch, the choice of the interview language was left to the participants.

Although this set of interviews presents a lot of valuable information on Russian Mennonite immigrants of the second wave and certainly sheds much light on their spoken language, the interviews do not directly deal with matters of interest to a linguist and concentrate primarily on historical events and religious matters. Typically, each interview in this set covered the following topics:

- biographical data;
- World War I;
- October Revolution of 1917;
- economic and religious life after the revolution;
- emigration and arrival in Canada;
- religious life after immigration.

4.1.2 Data Set 2

The second part of the primary data is a set of interviews in High German conducted by the author of this study between February and May 2007. It consists of nineteen interviews with twenty-four Russian Mennonites (fourteen men and ten women), who were born between 1918 and 1938 in Mennonite Colonies in Southern Russia and

immigrated to Canada in the years following World War II (1946-1967). The length of the interviews varied from twenty-eight minutes to two hours.

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Number of interviews: | 19 |
| Number of participants: | 24 (male: 14, female: 10) |
| Year of birth: | 1918-1938 |
| Year of immigration: | 1946-1967 |
| Interview length: | 28-120 min. |
| Total number of interview minutes: | 1159 (19 h. 19 min.) |
| Place of residence in Russia: | |
| Colony: | <u>Chortitza (total of 7)</u> |
| Villages of: | Chortitza (2) |
| | Einlage (1) |
| | Kronstal (1) |
| | Neuendorf (2) |
| | Osterwick (1) |
| Colony: | <u>Fürstenland (total of 1)</u> |
| Villages of: | Michelsburg (1) |
| Colony: | <u>Krim (total of 1)</u> |
| Villages of: | Karasan (1) |
| Colony: | <u>Molotschna (total of 13)</u> |
| Villages of: | Friedensdorf (1) |
| | Hamberg (2) |
| | Halbstadt (2) |
| | Gnadenfeld (1) |
| | Ladekopp (2) |
| | Ohrloff (1) |
| | Rudnerweide (1) |
| | Schönsee (1) |
| | Wernersdorf (2) |
| Colony: | <u>Schlachtin-Baratov (total of 1)</u> |
| Villages of: | Steinfeld (1) |
| Colony: | <u>Zagradovka (total of 2)</u> |
| Villages of: | Neuschönsee (2) |
| Place of residence in Ontario: | Kitchener-Waterloo (21) |
| | Cambridge (1) |
| | Toronto (2) |

Table 4-2: Summary of the 2007 interviews set

Unlike the first set of interviews that aimed at collecting primarily historical information, this set was conducted specifically for a linguistics project. Thus, the primary goal while conducting the interviews was to elicit linguistic data reasonably characteristic of the speakers' normal language behaviour. However, the presence of an unfamiliar interviewer and a voice-recording device are known to make the participants nervous and to cause them to alter their linguistic behaviour, and speak more 'correctly', and therefore, more formally (McMahon, 1996, p. 234). This phenomenon has long been noticed by linguists and has always been one of the central concerns of field linguistics (Wei, 1994, p. 83). It has been termed Observer's Paradox by William Labov, who summarised it as follows: "the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain this data by systematic observation" (Labov, 1973, p. 209).

"The problem is of course not insoluble" (Labov, 1973, p. 209) and there exist various ways to overcome the paradox. In this project, a combination of the 'friend of a friend method' and semi-structured interviews were employed to cope with this challenge.

The "friend of a friend" technique to locate and recruit participants has been widely applied in anthropology (Boissevain, 1974) and was successfully employed in linguistic fieldwork by Milroy (1980) and others. The core of the method lies in the notion that "friends of friends' in most societies are extremely important people" (Milroy, 1987, p. 46) and that if a stranger is identified as a friend of a friend, "his chances of observing and participating in prolonged interaction will then be considerably increased" (Milroy, 1987, p. 53). Applying Milroy's technique, I was introduced to each

interviewee by one of my personal friends from the third-wave immigrants whom the participants have also known personally for a number of years. This had “the effect of guaranteeing good faith” (Milroy, 1987, p. 66) and besides gaining me access to the participants who otherwise might not have been willing to be interviewed, this technique allowed me to assume a role “rather different from that of a researcher” (Milroy, 1987, p. 66), and consequently, to have longer conversations in a more informal manner. My own Mennonite roots and personal connections, knowledge of High German and Russian, a personal family story very similar to those of the interviewees, as well as my familiarity with the area where most of the participants came from, have undoubtedly assisted me in taking the role of a friend and an interlocutor interested in the interviewees’ personal stories (which I most certainly was) as opposed to that of a researcher only collecting linguistic data.

Next, in order to elicit more informal speech, which would be closer to the participants’ natural language behaviour, the semi-structured type of interviews was chosen. Unlike fully structured interviews in which “the agenda is totally predetermined by the researcher who works through a list of questions in a predetermined order” (Nunan, 1992, p. 149), the interviews in the second set resembled an informal dialogue or discussion and were based around a framework of the following six topics:

- biographical data;
- languages in the family and in the village;
- schooling, cultural life in the village;
- World War II;
- coming to Canada and life in Canada;
- the present use of languages.

Fragen für Interviews mit Rußland-Mennoniten

A. Geburtsdatum und Ort

1. Wo und wann sind Sie geboren?
2. Wo liegt der Ort?
3. Was für ein Ort war das (районный центр usw.)?
4. Wer wohnte in Ihrem Dorf? (gemischtes/geschlossenes Dorf?)
5. Gab es große Fabriken, Mühlen, Schulen oder so etwas in Ihrem Dorf?

B. Sprachliche Situation in der Familie und im Wohnort

7. Welche Sprachen wurden in dem Dorf gesprochen?
8. Welche Sprache sprachen Sie mit Ihren Eltern?
9. Welche Sprache sprachen Ihre Eltern miteinander und mit ihren Verwandten/Freunden?
10. Konnten Ihre Eltern Russisch/Ukrainisch?
11. Haben Sie auch Plautdietsch verstanden?
12. Gab es in Ihrem Dorf Leute, die Hochdeutsch als Muttersprache gesprochen haben?
13. Gab es andere Deutsche in der Gegend? (nicht Mennoniten)

C. Schulung

14. Gab es einen Kindergarten oder etwas Ähnliches?
15. Wann haben Sie die Schule angefangen?
16. Welche Sprache wurde in der Schule gesprochen?
17. Welche Sprachen haben Sie in der Schule gelernt?
18. Gingen nur Mennoniten zu Ihrer Schule oder studierten alle zusammen?
19. Hatten Sie nicht-mennonitische Freunde?
20. Erinnern Sie sich an Ihre(n) Lehrer/Lehrerin?
21. Wissen Sie, wo er (sie) studiert hat?
22. Wann haben Sie die Schule abgeschlossen?
23. Wo haben Sie danach studiert?
24. Haben Sie russische (ukrainische) Lieder gelernt?
25. Haben Sie in der Schule Gedichte auswendig lernen müssen?
26. Was denken Sie über die russische Sprache? War sie schwer zu lernen?

D. Kultur im Dorf

27. Sind sie als Kind zur Kirche gegangen?
28. Welche Sprache wurde in der Kirche benutzt?
29. Hatten Sie ein Radio?

30. Sind Sie ins Kino gegangen? Was haben Sie gesehen?
31. Haben Sie zu Hause Bücher gehabt?
32. Gab es eine Bibliothek im Dorf?
33. Haben Sie (Ihre Eltern) Zeitungen gelesen? In welcher Sprache?
34. Hatten Sie Kontakt mit West Preußen, Deutschland oder Kanada?
35. Wo haben Sie nach der Schule gearbeitet?
36. Kennen Sie Leute, die nicht in mennonitischen Dörfern blieben?
37. Würden Sie sagen, dass alle Mennoniten Russisch verstanden?

E. Der Zweite Weltkrieg

38. Was passierte, als der Krieg ausbrach?
39. Wie wurde Ihr Dorf besetzt?
40. Wurden dann die deutschen Schulen wieder eröffnet?
41. Gab es wieder Kirchen?
42. Haben Sie noch Ihr Russisch benutzt?
43. Gab es dann deutsches Radio, Kino, Zeitungen usw.?
44. Wie haben Sie Rußland verlassen?
45. Wo haben Sie bis zum Kriegsende gewohnt?
46. Wie sind Sie der Roten Armee entkommen?
47. Was haben Sie in Deutschland nach dem Krieg gemacht?

F. Reise nach Kanada

48. Wie sind Sie zur Entscheidung gekommen, nach Kanada auszuwandern?
49. Haben Sie Verwandte in Kanada gehabt?
50. Wurden Sie gesponsert? Wenn ja, von wem?
51. Wie sind Sie gekommen?
52. Sind sie allein oder in einer Gruppe gekommen?
53. Wo sind Sie angekommen?
54. Was haben Sie in Kanada gemacht?
55. Wie wurden Sie von den anderen Mennoniten empfangen?
56. Haben Sie viel Kontakt mit den anderen Mennoniten gehabt, die früher ausgewandert sind?
57. Zu welcher Kirche gingen Sie?
58. In welcher Sprache waren die Gottesdienste? Und jetzt? Was denken Sie darüber?

G. Die heutige Situation

59. Sprechen Ihre Kinder Deutsch? Plautdietsch?
60. Wie oft und mit wem sprechen Sie Englisch?
61. Welche Sprachen benutzen Sie heute?
62. Kennen Sie viele russische Autoren? Lesen Sie noch russische Bücher?
63. Wann haben das letzte Mal ein russisches Buch gelesen?
64. Lesen Sie viel auf Deutsch?

Figure 4-2: Questions for interviews in the second data set.

Although the interviewees usually preferred to discuss these themes in chronological order, there was neither a preferred order of topics nor constraints on the extent to which the participants could expand on a given subject. The discussions usually took their own course around the aforementioned topics. While every attempt was made to keep the interviews as conversational as possible, in order to elicit information relevant to the project and to make sure that as little as possible was left out, a list of sixty-four questions exploring in more detail the themes mentioned above was composed. The questions were used by the interviewer as guiding questions to keep the conversation going as opposed to a checklist where each item has to be answered. In these two aspects the interviews in the second set also differed from fully unstructured interviews, which are usually “guided by the responses of the interviewee rather than by the researcher” (Nunan, 1992, p. 149).

Besides shifting the style of the discussion towards an informal dialogue, employing semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity to engage the participants in a discussion on approximately the same topics, which made the interviews comparable to each other and allowed the interviewer to ask questions spontaneously arising in the course of the discussion.

Finally, although the interviews were primarily linguistically and culturally oriented and focused on various issues of language use and language contact, most topics connected with the personal history of all participants without exception happened to involve life-threatening and emotionally significant experiences. Thus, almost all participants had family members sent into exile, arrested, or taken away by the NKVD,¹⁸ all were subject to the forced evacuation eastward in 1941, many had family members

¹⁸ Народный Комиссариат Внутренних Дел (People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs) was the Soviet secret police organization which operated during the Stalinist Era.

who perished during the war, and all without exception had to hide from the Soviet authorities in the years following the end of WWII, when forced repatriation (exile to Siberia or Central Asia) of all refugees born on the territory of the Soviet Union took place. In fact, such emotionally painful experiences prevented many potential participants from being interviewed and caused some of those who initially agreed to take part in the project to refuse at a later stage. Nevertheless, having the participants speak about such experiences during the interviews was extremely important since “involving the subject in questions and topics which recreate strong emotions he has felt in the past” is one of the most successful techniques in overcoming the Observer’s Paradox (Labov, 1973, pp. 209-210).

The interviews in this set were recorded at the residences of the interviewees with the help of a digital voice-recording device and will be accessible at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario after the completion of this study. Although there is no way of testing whether the techniques to avoid the paradox employed in this project were effective and to what extent the recorded speech is typical of the subjects’ normal language behaviour, it was felt that the interviews flowed smoothly and that the participants felt comfortable with the interviewer on a personal level. Therefore, I believe that the second set of interviews represents the informal speech of the participants adequately.

But in order to be compared to each other, the Mennonite immigrants considered in this study must satisfy two important conditions: they have to be different enough to constitute two separate homogenous groups, and at the same they have to be similar enough to be compared to each other. When it comes to the differences between Russian

Mennonite immigrants of the second and third waves, it must be mentioned that they have been identified as the second and the third major ‘subgroups’ of Russian Mennonites in Canada in academic literature on the subject (e.g. Moelleken, 1992, p. 80). Indeed, members of both groups clearly belong to different generations who left the Soviet Union under very different circumstances, went by different paths to reach North America, and settled in Canada almost thirty years apart. But most importantly, the historical events and social conditions they experienced and witnessed first-hand in Russia were radically different. Based on Smith’s list of six “particular turbulent times unleashing themselves upon the Mennonite settlements of Russia” (Smith, 1981, p. 340), and adding several other dates which had much influence on the Mennonite communities in Russia, I have compiled the following table illustrating the differences in historical events experienced by each of the groups:

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Interview set: | 1976-1978 | 2007 |
| Year of birth: | 1884-1907 | 1917-1938 |
| Immigration to Canada: | 1923-1930 | 1945-1967 |
| Historical events witnessed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WWI (1914-1917) ▪ The October Revolution (1917) ▪ The Civil War (1917-1922) ▪ The War Communism (1918-1921) ▪ The New Economic Policy (1921-1928) ▪ Creation of the USSR (1922) ▪ The famine of 1921-1922 ▪ Elimination of churches (1928). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The liquidation of kulaks & collectivisation (1928-1933) ▪ The famine of 1932-1933 ▪ Stalinist purges of 1936-1940 ▪ Elimination of German schools (1938) ▪ Evacuation eastward at the beginning of WWII (1941) ▪ Evacuation westward by the German Army (1943-1945) ▪ Repatriation by the Red Army (1945-1946) |

Table 4-3

Nonetheless, despite these significant differences, both second- and third-wave Mennonite immigrants clearly represent the same ethno-religious group. In fact, with only several exceptions, all of the third-wave immigrants were able to immigrate to Canada only because of their Mennonite relatives who had settled there with one of the previous two waves. As a result, the inventory of last names in both groups is virtually the same, and while members of each migration wave and the descendents of the previous wave immigrants often married each other, marriages with non-Mennonites were discouraged and until a few decades ago were quite rare (Thiessen, 1963, p. 17). Further, in addition to religion and ethnic background, the members of the two groups are speakers of the same two ‘insider’ varieties: Plautdietsch and High German, and to varying degrees of the two ‘outsider’ languages: Russian and English.

Further, members of both groups were born and spent their childhood and at least a significant part of their teenage years (and often much longer) in the same closed and semi-closed Mennonite villages in Southern Russia. They are undoubtedly a part of the same culture, most vividly represented in traditional Russian Mennonite food which has always been not only “a very important part of Mennonite culture”, but also “in ethnic Mennonite culture tends to be connected with its emphasis on community” (“Mennonite Historical Society of Canada”). In addition, at the time of the interview members of both groups had spent close to fifty years in Canada and were over seventy years of age.

4.2 Data Transcription

4.2.1 *The Software*

For the analysis of both sets of interviews I am using software which constitutes a part of the CHILDES (Child Data Exchange System) project (McWhinney, 2000). Founded in 1984 at the Department of Psychology at Carnegie Mellon University for the purpose of investigating child language development, the project has expanded into a fully-functional computerized exchange system for language data and has also become a powerful computational tool for the analysis and sharing of transcribed data with potential for second-language learning, analysis of language disorders, sociological content, as well as adult conversational interactions (McWhinney, 2007, p. 6).

Ten selected interviews (five from each set) were transcribed following the rules of the CHAT (Codes of the Human Analysis of Transcripts) notation system, which provides “a standardized format for producing computerized transcripts of face-to-face conversational interactions” (McWhinney, 2007, p. 6) and is the default notation system of CHILDES. The interview analysis was carried out with the help of the CLAN (Computerized Language Analysis) software (McWhinney, 2008, p. 7) which also constitutes a part of CHILDES.

My choice of CLAN as the main software for structural analysis was influenced by its accessibility (it is a freeware downloadable from <http://chilides.psy.cmu.edu/>), the simplicity and intuitiveness of the notation system, and its extensive functionality: CLAN supports multiple scripts, including the Cyrillic alphabet, and features an extensive number of analytical commands which make it possible to specify numerous search conditions and ways of displaying the results, thus giving almost endless possibilities for

the analysis of linguistic data. It can also perform operations across a number of files, which is crucial for comparing two sets of interviews first individually and then to each other. Finally, besides making it possible to link the text of a transcription with the corresponding segment of a specified audio file, CLAN also allows the user to change the text of the transcription after the linking has been done.

Although an online database of transcriptions is the final “leg of a three-legged stool” (McWhinney, 2007, p. 8) in the CHILDES project, the transcriptions of the data considered in this dissertation will not be added to the database and will not be shared online since the conducted interviews do not present language acquisition data but instead are more suitable for oral history projects dealing with Russian Mennonites. Therefore, the oral data collected for this project will be stored together with the other interviews in the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College and will be available there to all interested parties after the completion of this study.

4.2.2 *Organisation of the Transcripts*

Each interview has been transcribed in a separate file, which, according to the CHAT requirements, began with a series of “header lines” providing the information which remains constant throughout the interview, such as the names of the interviewer and interviewee, the languages used in the interview, and the name of the transcriber. Each ‘header line’ obligatorily began with an @ sign.

| |
|--|
| @Begin |
| @Languages: de, en, ru |
| @Participants: NKP Nikolai_Penner Student, GUE Guenther_Enns Adult |
| @ID: Nikolai Penner interviewer, Guenther_Enns interviewee |
| @Coder: Nikolai Penner |

Example 4-1: Header lines in the transcriptions

All spoken discourse has been entered on the so-called “main tiers” (McWhinney, 2007, p. 35), beginning with an asterisk and followed by a three-letter code composed of the first characters of participants’ names, e.g. *HAB for Harry Braun or *AGN for Agnes Niebuhr. I have changed the names of all participants in the 2007 interview in order to ensure the subjects’ anonymity and have used other typical Russian Mennonite names instead. This has been done solely with the purpose of preserving the interviewees’ Russian Mennonite identity and any associations with persons bearing those or similar names in reality should not be made.

The project was reviewed by the Office of Research Ethics and received ethics clearance on January 17th 2007 (ORE #: 13634).

All High German discourse was transcribed using standard German spelling. However, since in the CHAT system all capitalized words are identified as proper nouns (McWhinney, 2007, p. 21), capitalization has not been used where it is usually required by the Standard German spelling rules, e.g. for the polite forms of pronouns, for all common nouns, and for the first words of sentences (see Example 4-2)

| | |
|----------|--|
| 31 *AGN: | die mutter war hausfrau also die, die musste auch. |
| 32 *AGN: | ich weiss nicht ob du davon was weisst, die wurde, tat brot ausfahren. |
| 33 *AGN: | also sie kriegten brot und da hatte sie ein wagen. |
| 34 *AGN: | ich hab ihr mal geholfen. |

Example 4-2: Main tiers

4.2.3 *Transcribing Elements from Other Languages*

Since all interviewees in both sets of data are multilingual, lexical elements from languages other than High German (English, Plautdietsch, and Russian) were used quite frequently. In cases when the source language of the borrowed lexical elements was

obvious, they were attributed the following “special form markers”(McWhinney, 2007, p. 35):

@e for borrowings from English;

@r for borrowings from Russian;

@pd for borrowings from Plautdietsch.

Standard German spelling was used to transcribe Plautdietsch words or morphemes, all English words and utterances were transcribed using Canadian English spelling (following the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*), and all borrowed Russian words were transcribed using the Cyrillic alphabet (see Example 4-3).

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 68 | *HAB: | na, well@e, der covx03@r, wo mein vater arbeitete, das waren alles russen. |
| 163 | *MTO: | ... ich hatte keinen coat@e, kein gar nichts, und keine schuhe, nur schlorren@pd. |

Example 4-3

Such instances of speakers using individual lexical elements from another language (the phenomenon referred to as lexical borrowing in Chapter 3) were differentiated from cases when complete clauses or syntactically connected strings of words from a different language were used (the phenomenon referred to as code-switching in Chapter 3).

Instances of the latter were transcribed using underscore symbols instead of spaces between individual words and attributed a special case marker indicating the source language. Doing this has allowed the computer to treat instances of code-switching as phrasal elements (McWhinney, 2007, p. 44) as opposed to a number of independently used words. For example:

| | | |
|----|-------|--|
| 18 | *GUE: | das ist history@e history@e wird geschrieben wie es passiert ist, nicht dass man eine seite bevorzugt oder die andere. |
| 19 | *GUE: | von jede seite gibt es gute und schlechte seiten. |
| 20 | *GUE: | lets_put_it_that_way@e. |

Example 4-4

Thus, in the above example the lexeme ‘history’ on line 18 will be treated by the computer as a lexical borrowing of a single element from English and, since it was used twice by the speaker, will be attributed the count of two. The phrase ‘let’s put it that way’ in utterance 20, on the other hand, will be considered as a single phrasal element borrowed from English and will be attributed the count of one. At the same time, none of the individual lexemes from this utterance will be considered separately by the computer.

4.2.4 Utterances

Since CHAT requires that each main tier contain only one utterance, all stretches of speech that presented grammatically and semantically complete clauses and were surrounded by audible pauses were considered to be separate utterances, such as in Example 4-2. Grammatically and semantically complete clauses that were not surrounded by audible pauses were split into several utterances and, consequently, were recorded on separate main tiers a) when the speaker changed topics, or b) at clause boundaries when the utterance became longer than several consecutive lines. For example:

| | | |
|----|-------|---|
| 27 | *APK: | nicht alle auf einem platz aber und mein vater hatte die wirtschaft angefangen ein bißchen wollte sich da einrichten wurde dann krank und konnte dann dann ging er in die industrie bei Lepp und Wallman. |
| 28 | *APK: | da war er hauptbuchhalter. |

Example 4-5

Since putting grammatically and semantically incomplete clauses on separate main tiers would significantly affect the readability of the transcripts, they were recorded on the same main tier unless they were separated from the rest of the speech by pauses or the topic of the utterance changed. For instance, in Example 4-6, the incomplete clauses in utterance 182 are treated as one utterance because they are connected semantically and

there are no significant pauses between them. Similarly, semantically connected clauses in utterance 183 were also recorded as a separate utterance.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 182 *HAB: | und die kühe, well@e, als, zuletzt dann haben wir auch die kühe von all die. |
| 183 *HAB: | die kühe wurden da im dorf zusammen, wurden genommen. |

Example 4-6: Incomplete clauses as utterances

4.2.5 Punctuation Marks and Other Symbols

Since in the CHAT system punctuation marks are used differently from in regular written texts, besides the three default utterance terminators required by CHAT at the end of each utterance (an exclamation mark, a question mark, or a period), commas were used to indicate pauses and to separate clauses if the meaning or structure of the utterance would otherwise be ambiguous. For instance, the utterance in Example 4-7 features the verb in the third position and therefore violates the rule of Standard German that in regular statements the first element must be immediately followed by the finite verb:

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| 3 *GUE: | und sonst man kam damals... |
|---------|-----------------------------|

Example 4-7

However, in the recording, there is an audible pause between “und sonst” and “man kam damals” which is not long enough to suggest that these should be treated as two separate utterances but which indicates that “und sonst” and “man kam damals...” may be two separate constructions and, therefore, the word order of the second construction is not necessarily violated:

| | |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| 3 *GUE: | und sonst, man kam damals ... |
|---------|-------------------------------|

Example 4-8: Usage of commas

Using commas in such situations has significantly increased the readability of the transcripts and helped to avoid similar misinterpretations.

Other symbols used in the transcriptions are:

<text> [?] indicating the transcriber's best guess at a word or group of words.

This symbol was used when a particular word or phrase could not be clearly identified, but the transcriber could make a reasonable guess which made reading the transcript easier, e.g.:

118 *GUE: und der sagte die jüngere die haben <viel> [?] unterschrieben.

Example 4-9

xx and **xxx** were used to transcribe unintelligible words and groups of words, respectively. These symbols were necessary to identify segments of the interviews which due to various reasons (e.g., laughing, mumbling, talking from another room, external noise, such as from an air conditioner, dehumidifier, refrigerator etc.) the transcriber could not understand or make a reasonable guess at. Thus, “xx” in Example 4-10 represents a single word and will be treated as such by the software, whereas “xxx” in Example 4-11 stands for a string of consecutive unintelligible words and will be ignored by the computer when performing various analysis commands, such as word frequency counts, etc.

265 *NFZ: und bei dem garten gab es ein xx.

Example 4-10: Single Unintelligible Word

99 *APK: ja sag ich xxx..

Example 4-11: A Stretch of Unintelligible Words

www indicated material not transcribed for various reasons, e.g. when the interviewer

was answering an interviewee's question. This symbol was always provided with an explanation on a dependent %exp tier, such as in Example 4-12:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 132 *GUE: | xx sagte er konnte тракторист@r werden aber xxx nicht lehrer, keine, keine, keine, xxx. |
| *NKP: | www. |
| %exp: | the interviewer is telling a personal story. |

Example 4-12: Untranscribed material

4.2.6 *Phenomena Not Indicated in the Transcriptions*

Although the CHAT notation system possesses means of indicating various elements of spoken discourse, the following phenomena were not transcribed: intonation patterns, phonetic and phonological characteristics, interruptions, self interruptions, break-offs, repetitions, overlaps, latches, and repairs. Including these phenomena in the transcriptions would drastically slow down the transcribing process and at the same time significantly decrease the readability of the transcripts, and would hardly bring any benefits to this study as the aforementioned phenomena are not directly relevant to this research.

4.2.7 *Linkage with the Recordings*

Each transcription was linked to the digitized recording of the corresponding interview. This was done in the CLAN program by inserting at the end of each utterance a “sound marker” (McWhinney, 2008, p. 25) which associated the given utterance with a particular part of a specified audio file. Such sound markers in CLAN have the following form:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 321 *HAB: | zu die mutter nicht. %snd:"interview19_harry_braun"_9915_17984 |
|-----------|--|

Example 4-13

However, by turning on a corresponding option in CLAN, such sound markers were “closed” (McWhinney, 2008, p. 25) and displayed as bullets:

| |
|----------------------------------|
| 321 *HAB: zu die mutter nicht. • |
|----------------------------------|

Example 4-14

Linking the transcripts with the audio recordings made it possible to replay each specific utterance without manually looking for the required interview segment. Besides replaying utterances individually, CLAN can also function in the “continuous playback mode” (McWhinney, 2008, p. 25) in which the program replays the interview after a specified point, highlighting each transcribed utterance as it is being pronounced. The possibility to play back the needed utterance(s) quickly turned out to be especially helpful when eliminating unclear parts of the interviews, and continuous playback was invaluable while searching for linguistically interesting phenomena.

4.3 Coding the Data

4.3.1 *The Methodological Framework*

The major strategies for the analysis of the interviews were borrowed from the methodological framework known as Grounded Theory. Initially formulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) this method was further developed in 1978 (Glaser) and in 1987 (Strauss). The next publication by Strauss & Corbin (1990) met with very sharp criticism from Glaser (1992) and eventually led to the split between the researchers. The differences between the Glaser and the Strauss & Corbin versions of Grounded Theory need not concern us here, as only the core methodological strategies of the method were borrowed and adapted to the specific needs of this project.

The methods of Grounded Theory were originally developed for use in the social sciences and are highly suitable for the analysis of textual data such as interview transcripts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 14f.; Strauss, 1987, p. 56). In their volume on methods of textual analysis, Titscher et al. (1998) also state that the “prominentestes Anwendungsgebiet der GT dürfte ... jedenfalls Textanalyse sein” (p. 93).

At the heart of the method lies the “general method of comparative analysis” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1), which includes “scrutinizing the fieldnote, interview, or other document very closely; line by line, or even word by word” (Strauss, 1987, p. 28) with the purpose of systematically working out conceptual categories and their properties “in relation to the data” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 6). At this, categories are defined as conceptual elements of the theory and properties as conceptual aspects or elements of a category (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 36). As the research proceeds, the codes and sub-codes are ‘categorized’, i.e. “zueinander in Verbindung gesetzt, in eine Ordnung gebracht, z.B. hierarchisiert“ (Titscher et al., 1998, p. 97). In both versions of Grounded Theory the process of generating categories is referred to as ‘coding’, and, consequently, categories with their properties (sub-categories) are called ‘codes’ and ‘sub-codes’.

Creating such a hierarchical system of codes and sub-codes to be inserted into the transcripts especially suited the purposes of the project, as working with such sets of codes is one of the main functions and strengths of the CLAN software used for the structural analysis of the transcripts.

The categories, codes, and sub-codes used for the content analysis of the interviews in this project were taken from the discipline of sociolinguistics, which is “the study of language in relation to society” (Hudson, 1996, p. 1). Although usually three

major social characteristics – class, sex, and age – are considered to have the most effect on one’s linguistic behaviour, these three factors are considered to be “enormously complex, subsuming a host of social factors” (Chambers, 2003, p. 7), such as education, occupation, type of housing, etc. Although most social variables considered in this project were specific to the Russian Mennonites and resulted from the unique historical and social settings in which both groups lived (e.g. attitude or participation in the *Selbstschutz*), most social variables considered in this study were taken from the Chamber’s description of the domains of sociolinguistics (Chambers, 2003, pp. 1-10).

4.3.2 Sets of Categories and the Tier System in CHAT

During the course of the project, two core categories for the analysis of the data have been developed:

- 1) Categories for structural analysis. These categories captured linguistically interesting grammatical phenomena (as understood in Construction Grammar, i.e. including discourse and pragmatic functions) which occurred in the interviewees’ speech. The same set of codes was used for both data sets;
- 2) Categories for sociolinguistic analysis. These categories focused on various historical and social factors which may have influenced the participants’ proficiency in usage of, and attitude to various languages they spoke and came in contact with. Because of the completely different historical and social settings of the events discussed in each set of interviews, different categories were needed for each set.

4.3.2.1 Categories for Structural Analysis

According to CHAT and CLAN conventions, all developed codes and categories for structural analysis were incorporated into the transcripts on the so-called “dependent tiers” (McWhinney, 2007, pp. 76-84). These tiers are additional lines bound to a particular main tier and reserved for coding and commentary regarding what was said (McWhinney, 2007, p. 20). Dependent tiers always began with a percent sign followed by a three-letter code for the dependent tier type. In this project, three types of dependent tiers were used: coding tiers (%cod) containing the codes for observed peculiar linguistic phenomena, commentary tiers (%com) containing the researcher’s field notes, and explanatory tiers (% exp) used predominantly for content analysis (sociolinguistic phenomena). Thus, in Example 4-15 all three of the dependent tiers are assigned to the same main tier:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 147 | *GUE: | nein <u>die russisch sprache</u> ist ganz leicht zu lernen, und lesen und schreiben noch viel leichter. |
| | %cod: | \$ADJ |
| | %exp: | opinion about the russian language |
| | %com: | it seems like the main verb after schreiben is missing |

Example 4-15: Main and dependent tiers

4.3.2.2 The Internal Structure of Codes.

According to the rules of CHILDES, the beginning of each individual code was marked with a \$ sign followed by the name of the code consisting of a set of capital letters. For example, non-standard noun form were marked as: \$NOUN. Further, codes requiring additional specification were provided with sub-codes, thus making it possible to give a more detailed description of a certain linguistic feature. For instance, the \$NOUN code was given the sub-codes :PLUR indicating a non-standard formation of plural and

:COMP marking a non-standard formation of a compound noun. Because in CHAT all codes are arranged hierarchically, if several sub-codes are located on the same level (such as **:PLUR** and **:COMP** in Figure 4-3), only one of them can be used within the same code:

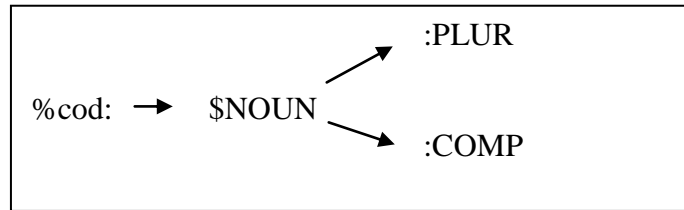


Figure 4-3: Schematic representation of a code's structure

Thus, in order to indicate non-standard construction in both noun compound as well as plural formation, the same main code needs to be used twice but with different sub-codes:

%cod: \$NOUN:PLUR \$NOUN:COMP

Example 4-16

The same coding tier can contain as many different codes as needed to describe all linguistic phenomena located on the specified main tier. Although CHAT allows the nesting of an unlimited number of sub-codes under the same code name, the codes in this project never had more than three levels (the code name and two levels of sub-codes), as in the following example:

%cod: \$DAT:PRE:PLU

Example 4-17

4.3.3 *The Code System for Grammatical Phenomena*

The basis of the coding of grammatical phenomena has been developed during the course of the pilot study by printing out and examining the transcription of one interview from the 2007 interviews set and by making annotations in the printouts, which in Grounded Theory is called ‘open coding’. During the process of annotating the transcription, the main goal was to create a system of codes, which would facilitate the classification and description of most linguistically interesting elements that occurred in the interviewee’s speech. Once a preliminary set of codes was developed, they were entered into a single file required by CLAN to insert the codes consistently throughout the transcripts (McWhinney, 2008, pp. 33-34) and then integrated into the transcription of the same interview. Then the transcription was printed out and examined again with the purpose of modifying the system of codes in order to give it a logical hierarchical structure and to eliminate major overlaps between individual codes. This step was repeated several times until a logical and hierarchical system of codes was developed (see Table 4-4).

| | |
|---------------|---|
| \$ACC | Accusative: non-standard usage of the accusative case |
| \$ADJ | Adjective: non-standard adjective form or an adjectival phrase |
| \$CONS | Construction: items larger than a word that require special attention |
| :DET | Determiner construction: non-standard combination of determiners |
| :INF | Infinitive construction: non-standard usage of infinitival construction |
| :PR+DE | Usage of a preposition in a combination with “de”, a form closely resembling a definite article |
| :POSS | Possessive construction: non-standard possessive construction |
| :UM+ZU | Non-standard usage of the um+zu construction |
| :MISC | Miscellaneous construction: items larger than a word that do not fit into other categories |
| \$DAT | Dative: non-standard usage of the dative case |
| :IND_OBJ | Indirect Object: not assigning the dative case to an indirect object |
| :TIM | Time: not assigning dative in a construction expressing time |
| :LOC | Location: not assigning dative in a construction expressing location |
| :PRE | Preposition: not assigning dative after a dative preposition |
| :SIN | Singular: not assigning dative - singular form |
| :PLU | Plural: not assigning dative - plural form |

| | |
|---|--|
| \$GEND :RUS :ENG :DEV | Gender: various issues connected with the usage of grammatical gender Russian: assigning gender to a Russian noun English: assigning gender to an English noun assigning a non-standard gender to a German noun |
| \$NOUN :PLUR :COMP | Noun: non-standard noun form Plural: non-standard formation of plural Compound: non-standard formation of a compound |
| \$PREP :YEAR :MISC | Preposition: non-standard usage of a preposition Year: Non-standard usage of a preposition with a year Miscellaneous: all other cases of non-standard preposition usage |
| \$GENE | non-standard usage of the genitive case |
| \$PRO: :REL :MISC | non-standard pronoun usage Relative pronoun Miscellaneous |
| \$SYN :WO :MISS :SUBJ :PZII :MVER :OBJ | Non-standard word order Missing: a missing element Subject: a missing subject Partizip II: a missing past participle Main verb: a missing main verb Object: a missing object |
| \$VERB :AUX :CONJ :PAST :PZII | Verb: non-standard usage of a verb or verb form Auxiliary: non-standard usage/formation of an auxiliary Conjugation: non-standard conjugation of a verb Past tense: non-standard usage/formation of a past tense form Partizip II: non-standard usage/formation of a past participle |
| \$VOC | Vocabulary: usage of a non-standard lexical item |

Table 4-4: The system of grammatical codes in alphabetical order

Although a large number of grammatical categories describing linguistically interesting elements of the interviewee's speech were initially generated, only those phenomena which occurred systematically in the interviewee's speech were selected and incorporated into the final hierarchy of codes used for tagging the rest of the interviews.

In addition, some of the initially coded phenomena that occurred only once in the pilot study interview were added to the final system of codes at a later stage if they were

found in other interviews as well. Similarly, phenomena frequently found in interviews other than the one used for the pilot project were also attributed codes and integrated into the coding system at a later stage.

4.4 Structural Analysis of the Data

4.4.1 *Words of Caution and Using the Duden*

At this point, some words of caution are necessary. The spoken data produced by the Russian Mennonites considered in this study is compared to the norms of modern Standard High German, which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, I equate with the Duden grammar. An obvious problem with this approach is using the grammar of written German to describe the speakers' spoken performance. Although I am aware of this discrepancy, I will have to rely on the norms listed in the Duden grammar because there exist no grammars or other reference works containing the acceptable constructions of spoken High German.

A further problem is the fact that the constructions typical to the High German of Russian Mennonites who had acquired the language at the end of the nineteenth century or in the first half of the twentieth are being compared to the norms of modern Standard High German. Since norm is defined as “a set of patterns in speech which are usual across a community but are not seen as constrained by a language system”, (“norm”, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics) most likely different sets of norms existed among Russian Mennonites of each group. Further and most importantly, since norms are linguistic conventions accepted by the speakers of a variety, the norms of language among Russian Mennonites do not have to be identical with those of the modern Standard

High German. Although this is a limitation, it must be mentioned that I am not enforcing the norms of Standard High German on the High German spoken by Russian Mennonites but rather use them as a reference point to describe constructions specific to this variety.

Finally, as a non-native speaker of German, I would like to avoid relying on my intuition when locating and describing the non-standard constructions of the interviewees' High German and would like to be able to look up the acceptable constructions in a reputable widely-used book. Hence, Duden presents the most logical choice.

It also goes without saying that the norms of modern Duden German cannot and must not serve as a measurement of correctness of the High German variety spoken by Russian Mennonites and are only taken as a reference for the description of the speakers' performance. Therefore, although the elements of the interviewees' High German performance contrasting with the norms of Standard High German will be referred to as 'deviations' [from Standard High German] or as non-standard, this term is to be read only as a descriptive and not as an evaluative term. I am aware that the term 'deviation' carries certain negative connotations and I have considered using a number of other terms, such as 'differences' or 'non-standard constructions'. However, for the sake of brevity and for the lack of a better term, I chose to use the term 'deviation', attributing to it no negative meaning whatsoever and viewing it as strictly as a descriptive term.

Further, the categories listed below have been developed for the purposes of structural analysis to highlight only grammatical specifics of the interviewees' spoken High German, since all constructions conforming to the norms of Standard High German have already been described in the grammar books and are of no academic interest in this

study. The analysis undertaken in this study and everything I intend to say in this dissertation should by no means create an impression that if a speaker's performance differs from the norms of Standard High German, his or her speech is incorrect, deficient or in any respect inferior to Standard High German.

The subsequent section presents brief explanations and typical examples of the individual codes used during the interview analysis process. For the ease of reading, individual codes presented below were grouped into 'deviations by case', 'deviations by part of speech', and 'other types of deviations'.

4.4.2 *Deviations in Case*

Noticeable deviations in the usage of accusative, dative, and genitive cases were given the codes **\$ACC**, **\$DAT**, and **\$GENE** respectively. Deviations in the accusative case were relatively simple and did not require additional sub-codes, e.g.:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 213 | *GUE: | eigentlich kenne ich <u>mein</u> vater nicht. |
| | %cod: | \$ACC |
| 239 | *GUE: | ... wir hatten nur <u>ein</u> lautsprecher. |
| | %cod: | \$ACC |

Example 4-18

The deviations in the usage of the dative case were much more frequent and diverse, so that four additional categories of sub-codes were developed:

:DVER to denote usage of any case other than dative after a dative verb, e.g.:

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 898 | *GUE: | ... wenn du <u>mich</u> so wenig <u>traust</u> , dann komm ich nicht mehr. |
| | %cod: | \$DAT:DVER |

Example 4-19

:TIM to refer to deviations in the constructions of time, such as:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 710 *GUE: | wie es, das war <u>in die sechszige jahre</u> . |
| %cod: | \$DAT:TIM |

Example 4-20

:LOC to mark deviations in dative in constructions expressing location, e.g.:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 897 *GUE: | sagte, man weiß nicht was <u>in die wäldchen</u> passieren kann. |
| %cod: | \$DAT:LOC |

Example 4-21

:PRE to indicate usage of all cases other than dative after dative prepositions:

| | |
|----------|---|
| 30 *HAB: | well@e <u>mit die cousins</u> , meine cousins, die schwester, die sprachen nur platt. |
| %cod: | \$DAT:PRE |

Example 4-22

Further, since deviations in the usage of the dative case were numerous and quite diverse, it was decided to add another level of sub-codes distinguishing whether the deviation affected plural or singular forms (**:SIN** for singular and **:PLU** for plural):

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 710 *GUE: | wie es, das war <u>in die sechszige jahre</u> . |
| %cod: | \$DAT:TIM:PLU |
| 24 *GUE: | das war ganz nördlich <u>in die kolonie Molotschna</u> . |
| %cod: | \$DAT:LOC:SIN |

Example 4-23

Finally, the code **\$GENE** was used to mark constructions where the genitive case was required in Standard High German but not found in the analyzed interview:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 876 *GUE: | das muss am <u>ende jahr</u> gewesen sein. |
| %cod: | \$GENE |

Example 4-24

4.4.3 Deviations by Parts of Speech

The code **\$ADJ** has been used to label deviations in the usage of adjectives or adjectival phrases. The deviations of this type were fairly similar and did not require additional subcodes:

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 229 | *HAB: | ... die wussten doch alle wo <u>die deutsche</u> dörfer in russland waren, denke ich ja. |
| | %cod: | \$ADJ |
| 446 | *GUE: | kamen <u>die deutsche</u> rein. |
| | %cod: | \$ADJ |

Example 4-25

The code **\$NOUN** with sub-codes **:COMP** and **:PLUR** designated deviations in the formation of noun compounds and in the formation of the plural form of a noun, respectively:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 25 | *GUE: | und unsere stadt das war ein <u>russe+stadt</u> |
| | %cod: | \$NOUN:COMP |
| 260 | *GUE: | oh das waren immer die selben <u>films</u> . |
| | %cod: | \$NOUN:PLUR |
| 274 | *GUE: | oder anderthalb <u>stund</u> |
| | %cod: | \$NOUN:PLUR |

Example 4-26

Non-standard usage of prepositions was marked by the code **\$PREP**. Since non-standard prepositional constructions quite often included specific year numbers, it was decided to mark such instances with a sub-code **:YEAR** and group all the other instances of deviations in the prepositional usage under the sub-code **:MISC**:

| | | |
|----|-------|-----------------------------|
| 87 | *GUE: | <u>am</u> sechdunddreissig. |
| | %cod: | \$PREP:YEAR |

Example 4-27

To mark deviations in the usage of pronouns (**\$PRO**), two sub-codes were used: **:REL** to mark non-standard usage of relative pronouns (Example 4-28) **:MISC** which represented all other types of deviations (Example 4-29).

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 697 *GUE: | na das war die erste arbeit <u>was</u> wir haben |
| 418 *GUE: | haben wir löcher geblasen und gesehen dass die kommissaren mit <u>seine</u> männer kamen. |
| %cod: | \$PRO:MISC |

Example 4-29

The usage of verb forms not corresponding to the rules of Standard German was labeled with the code **\$VERB**, which was given the following four sub-codes:

:AUX to refer to non-standard usage/formation of an auxiliary, such as:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 262 *GUE: | ... wie sie mit dem пулемѐт@r <u>gefahren haben</u> . |
| %cod: | \$VERB:AUX |

Example 4-30

:CONJ to designate deviations in the verb conjugation:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 241 *GUE: | und du <u>konntschje</u> den lautsprecher einstellen oder abstellen aber zu setzen was du horchen wolltest, nein das gab es nicht. |
| %cod: | \$VERB:CONJ |

Example 4-31

:PAST to label non-standard usage/formation of a past tense form:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 181 *GUE: | es <u>kommt</u> darauf an. |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PAST |
| 29 *GUE: | ... da <u>gingte</u> der могылы@r way@e . |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PAST |

Example 4-32

:PZII to denote a non-standard formation of a past participle form (Partizip II):

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 143 | *GUE: | und das hat nicht <u>geschaht</u> mit vier jahre... . |
| | %cod: | \$VERB:PZII |
| 119 | *GUE: | ... sie haben dann nicht <u>untergeschrieben</u> |
| | %cod: | \$VERB:PZII |

Example 4-33

4.4.4 Other Types of Deviations

Various issues connected with grammatical gender were coded as \$GEND. Instances when gender was assigned to borrowed Russian or English nouns were given the sub-codes **:RUS** and **:ENG** respectively. Deviations in noun gender from Standard High German were assigned the sub-code **:DEV**:

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 269 | *GUE: | ... und haben den noch <u>den quarter</u> @e hingelegt |
| | %cod: | \$GEND:ENG |
| 328 | *GUE: | nur wenn sie <u>vom район</u> @r kamen . |
| | %cod: | \$GEND:RUS |
| 141 | *GUE: | aber <u>der schulwesen</u> war gut. |
| | %cod: | \$GEND:DEV |

Example 4-34

The code \$VOC (vocabulary) indicated usage of a non-standard lexical item, e.g.:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 44 | *GUE: | und dann kam eine anlage die, wo die arbeiter waren und der hirte waren und dampfmühle und windmühle waren. |
| 45 | *GUE: | so, so war das <u>verlebt</u> . |
| | %cod: | \$VOC |
| 163 | *MTO: | ... ich hatte keinen coat@e, kein gar nichts, und keine schuhe, nur <u>schlorren</u> |
| | %cod: | \$VOC |

Example 4-35

Non-standard syntactic patterns have been attributed the code **\$SYN**, with the sub-codes **:WO** for word order and **:MISS** for missing element. To specify the details of the latter, **:MISS** was provided with further sub-codes **:SUBJ** (missing subject), **:PZII** (missing past participle), **:MVER** (missing main verb), **:OBJ** (missing object). Schematically, the structure of **\$SYN** is represented in Figure 4-4

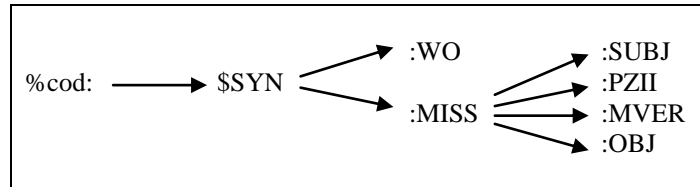


Figure 4-4

Typical examples of the phenomena coded by **\$SYN** are:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 153 | *GUE: | ... <u>für jedes wort du hast</u> eigentlich eine buchstaben im russischen. |
| | %cod: | \$SYN:WO |
| 297 | *GUE: | ... dann gingen wir rein und <u>auf die tafel hat das angemalt.</u> |
| | %cod: | \$SYN:MISS:SUBJ |
| 138 | *GUE: | zwei stunden in der woche <u>wurde dann deutsch als fremdsprache.</u> |
| | %cod: | \$SYN:MISS:PZII |
| 152 | *GUE: | sagte sie, das ist einfach, <u>das schreiben nur.</u> |
| | %cod: | \$SYN:MVER |

Example 4-36

Finally, the code covering the widest range of linguistic phenomena was called **\$CONS** (construction) and was used to code items larger than a word that require special attention.

Seven sub-codes for **\$CONS** were developed:

:DET marked a non-standard combination of determiners in a construction, such as:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 143 | *GUE: | ... mit vier jahre ein bißchen viel mehr von die nur vier jahre gehen, <u>die welche</u> hier die hochschule rauskommen. |
| | %cod: | \$CONS:DET |
| 130 | *GUE: | <u>mein ein</u> cousin der war |
| | %cod: | \$CONS:DET |

Example 4-37

:PR+DE referred to combinations of a preposition and “de”, a form closely resembling a definite article:

| | | |
|------|-------|--|
| 324: | *HAB: | <u>an de dreiundvierzig</u> schon. |
| | %cod: | \$CONS:PR+DE |
| 216 | *GUE: | und ich sag immer das war der beste mann <u>in de ganze welt</u> . |
| | %cod: | \$CONS:PR+DE |

Example 4-38

:POSS marked a non-standard construction expressing possession, such as:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 129 | *GUE: | ... <u>ein kulaker sohn</u> , |
| | %cod: | \$CONS:POSS |
| 311 | *AGN: | die kamen nach <u>meinem mann sein bruder</u> . |
| | %cod: | \$CONS:POSS |
| 286 | *HAB: | ... <u>den ihr platt</u> ... mit der zeit lernte einer das. |
| | %cod: | \$CONS:POSS |

Example 4-39

:UM+ZU designated deviations in um ... zu constructions:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 324 | *GUE: | und <u>um nach hause fahren</u> |
| | %cod: | \$CONS:UM+ZU |

Example 4-40

:MISC was used as a sub-code covering all other items larger than a word requiring additional attention. For example:

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 315 | *GUE: | <u>da war auch niemand nicht zu hause</u> . |
| | %cod: | \$CONS:MISC |
| 201 | *GUE: | ... die buchstaben die kann man, gotisch und leteinisch, <u>der ist nicht solche große unterschied</u> . |
| | %cod: | \$CONS:MISC |

Example 4-41

As it was impossible to completely avoid overlaps between certain codes (e.g. \$SYN and \$CONS) and because certain expressions may be described by several categories (e.g. “an de siebenunddreißig” could be classified as either \$CONS:PR+DE or \$PREP:YEAR), specific attention was paid to consistently assigning the same code to a specific category of deviations. As already mentioned, often multiple phenomena were coded on the same coding tier, e.g.

| | | |
|----|-------|--|
| 29 | *GUE: | die wenn die durchzogen die nomaden oder wie die waren <u>gingte</u> der <u>МОГЫЛЫ@Г way@e.</u> |
| | %cod: | \$VERB:PAST \$GEND:ENG |

Example 4-42

4.4.5 Commentaries

Those forms which did not fit into any of the above categories, or which were noticed but which have not been described or classified adequately, were provided with a dependent “%com:” tier drawing attention to the given phenomena. For example:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 175 | *AGN: | da ging ich auch zur schule aber, weisst du später <u>habe</u> ich schon gar nicht mehr ein ganzes jahr auf einer stelle zur schule <u>gegangen</u> weil wir sind dann mal wieder weiter gereist. |
| | %com: | haben gegangen - maybe she just forgot what she was saying before? |

Example 4-43

Commentary tiers in CHILDES can only contain notes and remarks associated with a particular main tier. They draw the researcher’s attention to a specific tier and contain his/her commentaries to him or herself. Therefore, they do not follow a pre-determined format and are not used for building and running commands.

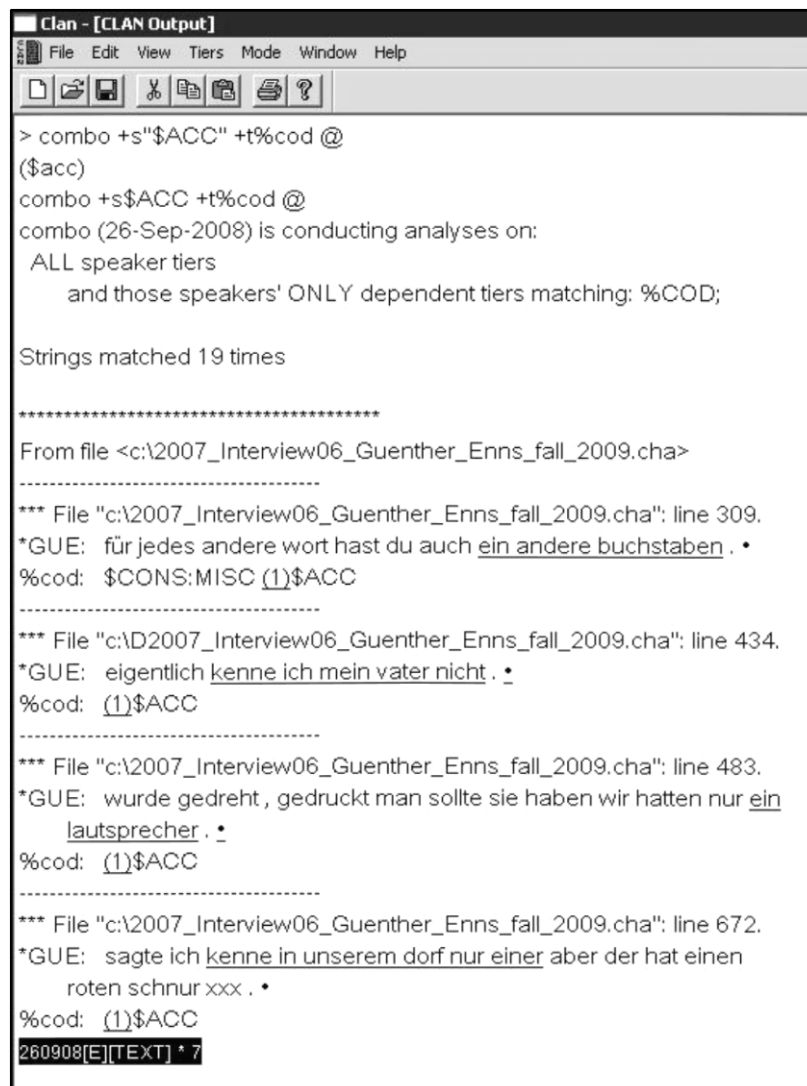
4.4.6 The Process of Analysis

After the transcription was coded, it was analyzed in the CLAN software mainly with the help of the commands COMBO and FREQ.

The command COMBO launches a search for all instances or combinations of symbols, codes, or both, which satisfy specified conditions. For instance, the command in Example 4-44 looks up all instances of non-standard usage of accusative in a specified range of files and prints out the main tiers and coding tiers associated with them:

```
combo +s"$ACC" +t%cod @
```

Example 4-44



```
Clan - [CLAN Output]
File Edit View Tiers Mode Window Help
[Icons]
> combo +s"$ACC" +t%cod @
($acc)
combo +s$ACC +t%cod @
combo (26-Sep-2008) is conducting analyses on:
  ALL speaker tiers
    and those speakers' ONLY dependent tiers matching: %COD;

Strings matched 19 times

*****
From file <c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha>
-----
*** File "c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha": line 309.
*GUE: für jedes andere wort hast du auch ein andere buchstaben . •
%cod: $CONS:MISC (1)$ACC
-----
*** File "c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha": line 434.
*GUE: eigentlich kenne ich mein vater nicht . •
%cod: (1)$ACC
-----
*** File "c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha": line 483.
*GUE: wurde gedreht , gedruckt man sollte sie haben wir hatten nur ein lautsprecher . •
%cod: (1)$ACC
-----
*** File "c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha": line 672.
*GUE: sagte ich kenne in unserem dorf nur einer aber der hat einen roten schnur xxx . •
%cod: (1)$ACC
260908[E][TEXT] * 7
```

Figure 4-5: COMBO output in CLAN

COMBO can also perform quite complex searches for combinations of symbols on the main tier and for a specific set of codes on a dependent tier. For example, the following command (Figure 4-6) searches for only those occurrences of dative prepositions (specified in a file called dat_preps.cha) on the main tier, which coincide with codes indicating deviations in the usage of the dative case on the dependent tier:

```
combo +s"@dat_preps.cha^*^$DAT*" +t%cod @
```

Figure 4-6

```

> combo +s"@dat_preps.cha^*^$DAT*" +t%cod @
combo +s"@dat_preps.cha^*^$DAT*" +t%cod @
combo (26-Sep-2008) is conducting analyses on:
  ALL speaker tiers
    and those speakers' ONLY dependent tiers matching: %COD;

Strings matched 53 times

*****
From file <c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha>
-----
*** File "c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha": line 10.
*GUE: und sonst , man kam damals , man durfte damals niemals irgendwohin
      fahren aus die dörfer raus . •
%cod: (1)$DAT:PRE:PLU
-----
*** File "c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha": line 33.
*GUE: von jede seite gibt es gute und schlechte seiten . •
%cod: (1)$DAT:PRE:PLU $CONS:MISC
-----
*** File "c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha": line 120.
*GUE: so so war das leben und mit die russen desto das waren gute leute .
%cod: (1)$DAT:PRE:PLU $CONS:MISC
-----
*** File "c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha": line 174.
*GUE: das ging da , die nahmen von sechs bis acht jahre weil nicht genug
      kinder um eine volle klasse waren . •
%cod: (1)$DAT:PRE:PLU $CONS:UM+ZU
-----
*** File "c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha": line 218.
*GUE: als mein , eine von meine onkels , der hat . •
260908[E][TEXT] * 27

```

Figure 4-7: COMBO output in CLAN

The command can be easily modified to search and display all those occurrences of dative prepositions which are not associated with deviations in the dative case:

```
combo +s"@dat_preps.cha^*^!$DAT*" +t%cod @
```

Example 4-45

In order to locate words with special case markers (e.g. *@e), FREQ was used.

Although COMBO can also be used for the same purpose, the results of FREQ are more concise and easier to read. Besides, FREQ also displays a count of the total occurrences of each specified combination of symbols or codes. For example, the following command was used to print out a list of all lexical borrowings from Russian with an indication of how many times each individual word was used:

```
FREQ +s"*@r" @
```

Example 4-46

```
Clan - [CLAN Output]
File Edit View Tiers Mode Window Help
freq +s*@r @
freq (26-Sep-2008) is conducting analyses on:
ALL speaker tiers
*****
From file <c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha>
1 базар@r
1 вагоны@r
1 ивановцы@r
1 колхоз@r
1 малограмотный@r
1 мажорка@r
1 могыл@r
3 могилы@r
3 молоко@r
1 нквд@r
3 политрук@r
4 правление@r
1 пулемет@r
3 район@r
1 семилетка@r
1 советс@r
3 совхоз@r
1 тачанка@r
2 яйцо@r
-----
19 Total number of different word types used
33 Total number of words (tokens)
0.576 Type/Token ratio
```

Figure 4-8: FREQ output

FREQ has been also very useful for counting the frequency of specific codes. The following command found all combinations of the \$CONS code and its various sub-codes and printed out the list with the total number of occurrencea of each of the combinations:

```
FREQ +s"$CONS*" +t%cod @
```

Example 4-47

```
Clan - [CLAN Output]
File Edit View Tiers Mode Window Help
[Icons]
> FREQ +s"$CONS*" +t%cod @
freq +s$CONS* +t%cod @
Mon Oct 19 19:30:59 2009
freq (26-Sep-2008) is conducting analyses on:
  ALL speaker tiers
  and those speakers' ONLY dependent tiers matching: %COD;
*****
From file <c:\2007_Interview06_Guenther_Enns_fall_2009.cha>
 4 $CONS:CODE
13 $CONS:DET
22 $CONS:MISC
10 $CONS:POSS
 4 $CONS:PR+DE
 3 $CONS:UM+ZU
-----
 6 Total number of different word types used
56 Total number of words (tokens)
0.107 Type/Token ratio
```

Figure 4-9: FREQ output II

4.5 Sociolinguistic Analysis

4.5.1 Categories for Sociolinguistic Analysis

The categories capturing various sociolinguistic and historic factors relevant to the project were determined entirely by the content of the interviews and usually centered on the topics mentioned during the interview. Thus, for the first set of data the following six categories were used:

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Subcategory</i> |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. Biography: | Name Date of Birth Place of Birth Colony |
| 2. Life in Russia: | Village Population School Work Other Germans Army Service (WWI) Army Service (Civil War) Occupation (WWI) Selbstschutz Makhno Hungersnot Self-identification Attitudes to Russians |
| 3. Emigration: | Left Russia Came over as Relatives in Canada Came Through |
| 4. Life in Canada: | Settled in Church Community During WWII Job Adjusting Heimweh Relatives in Russia |
| 5. Languages: | 1st language Knowl. of R. Plautdietsch Learning E. Kids & Grandkids |

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | About other languages |
| 6. Other comments: | |

Table 4-5

Since the second set of interviews was conducted specifically for this project, the categories for its sociolinguistic analysis were almost identical to the questions asked during the interview:

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Subcategory</i> |
|-------------------------|---|
| Biographic data: | Name Date of Birth Place of Birth Colony |
| Languages in the USSR: | First language Languages in the village Languages with parents Languages between parents Interviewee's Plautdietsch Opinion on Plautdietsch/Hochdeutsch Connection to High German High German-speaking villagers Parents' Russian Interviewee's Russian Opinion of the Russian language |
| Schooling: | Kindergarten Years of German school Years of Russian school Languages studied Non-Mennonite children Teacher |
| Life in Russia: | Village population Non-Mennonite friends Self-identification Relations with the Russians Other Germans Job |
| Culture in the village: | Church Radio Cinema German books Russian books Library |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| | Newspapers |
| World War II: | Occupied by Job in the USSR Miscellaneous Repatriation after the War Place of residence in Germany Job in Germany |
| On the way to Canada: | Left Germany (year) Came through (country) Relatives in Canada Trip |
| In Canada: | Immigration year Job Community Other Mennonites Switch to English |
| Languages today: | Russian High German English Family in Russia/Germany Languages with children and grandchildren |
| 10. Linguistic comments: | Various categories |

4.5.2 *The Process of Analysis*

For the purposes of sociolinguistic analysis, an Excel table for each set of interviews was created. Each interview was listened to very carefully and was paused every time any significant information relevant to the project was mentioned in order to allow careful note-taking and to minimize the possibility of missing important information. During these pauses, the information was entered into the corresponding fields of the Excel tables. The entries were usually (especially so in the case of linguistic phenomena for the untranscribed interviews) provided with a timestamp to enable lookup at a later stage. Although initially it was planned to enter codes for sociolinguistic analysis on separate dependent tiers, this turned out to be impractical since the answers to many questions

were located on a number of lines and needed to be condensed into meaningful keywords or brief descriptions. Entering the necessary information into Excel tables provided an excellent overview of the key information in many categories, and made an information search much easier since all the entries were located on the same page next to each other. Finally, not including sociolinguistic information in the interview transcriptions increased their readability and made it possible to analyze all interviews, regardless of whether they were transcribed or not.

4.6 Summary

The main data for the project comes from two sets of audio-recorded interviews: twenty-one interviews with the Russian Mennonite immigrants of the second wave conducted between 1976 and 1978 by Henry Paetkau and Stan Dueck, and nineteen interviews with Russian Mennonite immigrants of the third wave conducted in the summer of 2007 by myself. Only the first generation immigrants who were born in Mennonite colonies in Southern Russia and currently reside in Ontario were considered. Participants in both sets of interviews undoubtedly represent the same cultural and ethno-religious group but at the same time form two clearly defined sub-group which makes it possible to compare individual interviews within each set, and both sets of interviews to each other.

A total of ten interviews (five interviews from each set) has been transcribed using the CHAT notation system, and a system of codes marking various grammatical and sociolinguistic phenomena has been developed and inserted into the transcripts. Then the transcriptions have been analyzed and compared to each other with the help of the CLAN software which allows searches for various combinations of pre-inserted codes in individual files as well as across a number of files. The last feature was especially useful

for comparing the two sets of transcriptions to each other and for displaying the portions of transcription associated with the individual codes. The main purpose of the analysis was to locate and describe those elements of participants' speech that contrast with the norms of Modern Standard High German and are typical for the High German spoken by Russian Mennonite immigrants in Ontario.

5. PILOT STUDY

At an early stage of the project, shortly after data collection began but before a significant amount of time was invested in transcribing the interviews, a pilot study based on one selected interview from the 2007 set was conducted. Out of six interviews available at that point, the one felt to exhibit the greatest number of linguistic phenomena of interest to the study, and therefore the one considered to be most suitable for the project, was selected. The pilot study served the following major purposes:

- 1) to determine on the example of the selected interview if a sufficient amount of linguistic material required for answering the main research questions of the project would be found in the interviews;
- 2) to locate and categorise the linguistic specifics deviating from Modern Standard High German present in the interviewee's speech with the purpose of developing a logical and hierarchical system of codes which would represent these grammatical phenomena and would be used in the project as the basis for tagging further transcriptions;
- 3) to test the methodology of the project, including the suitability and reliability of the transcription system and the appropriateness of the analytical software.

Consequently, the information presented in this chapter is largely descriptive. The main conclusions, based on the analysis of the entirety of the interviews in both sets, as well as their interpretation, are presented in chapters six and seven.

5.1 Data Description/Content Analysis

The speaker considered in this study is Guenther Enns,¹⁹ born in 1928 in a Russian Mennonite village in the northern part of the Molotschna colony. The village was situated within walking distance of the Russian settlements across the river but was populated entirely by Mennonites and was primarily Plautdietsch-speaking. The only non-Mennonites in the village were members of the Russian-speaking family of the village shepherd. It is interesting to note that while the speaker remembers Jewish villagers speaking High German to the Mennonites, he claims that the Russian shepherd and his wife developed a passive knowledge of Plautdietsch. Moreover, he claims that the shepherds' children were completely fluent in Plautdietsch and even attended the same school as the Mennonite children, where the instruction was entirely in High German until 1938.

Mr. Enns claims he could speak Russian as a child, which he believes he picked up from Russian children in the neighbouring villages and Russian-speaking contractors working for the Mennonite families. He holds a very positive view of the Russian language and states that it is a very easy language to learn and especially to write, since “every sound has a corresponding character.” While Guenther remembers his father having an excellent command of the Russian language, he claims that his mother had barely enough proficiency in Russian to conduct simple everyday activities, such as buying groceries or selling produce at the market.

¹⁹ All participants in the 2007 set of interviews are referred to by pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. In order to preserve the sense of the participants' Russian Mennonite identity, names common among Russian Mennonites were selected. In examples of textual data taken directly from the transcription, all names and references to persons who could lead to identification of the speaker have been replaced with 'xx' signs.

Despite the fact that marriages with non-Mennonites were not preferred, he describes the relationship between the Mennonites and the Slavic population as very good. Mr. Enns says that he had Russian friends as a child and does not remember serious conflicts between the ethnic groups. The relationship of the Mennonites with the High German-speaking ethnic Germans of Lutheran and Catholic denominations present in the area, who Mr. Enns referred to as ‘die Hochdeutschen’ or ‘die Kolonisten’, was somewhat cooler as each group formed its own distinct settlements and tried to keep their everyday lives separate as much as possible. However, he also states that it was not uncommon for non-Mennonite Germans to become teachers in Mennonite schools, as was the case with the four-year village school Mr. Enns attended himself.

Although his first language is Plautdietsch and he claims to have learnt High German in school, in all likelihood Guenther was exposed to it from early childhood, so that by the age of seven, when he started to attend the local village school, he already had at least passive knowledge of it. This assumption seems reasonable for several reasons: first of all, since High German was the only language of Mennonite faith, which, like most protestant denominations, places a heavy emphasis on personal interpretation of the Bible, Guenther was exposed to Bible readings and religious hymns as a child. Secondly, the speaker remembers his father reading to him and his siblings books in High German which he had ordered from abroad. Obviously, the father would not have done so, if the interviewee and his siblings did not understand High German. Lastly, in 1935, when Mr. Enns started his education in a Mennonite village school, High German was still the only language of instruction as well as the default language of all printed materials in Mennonite schools. If Mr. Enns indeed had no knowledge of High German, starting

school in this entirely new language would have resulted in serious difficulties, which he does not mention in the interview.

In 1938, after Mr. Enns completed three years of schooling in High German, the Soviet government issued a law according to which Russian became the primary language of instruction as well as of the school materials in all schools in the Soviet Union. High German was then offered for two hours a week as a foreign language. At this time, most Mennonite teachers had to leave the school and Russian-speaking teachers with little or no knowledge of High German took their place. The remaining Mennonite teachers had to use only Russian with the students. Thus, Guenther completed grades four and five in the Russian language before his education was interrupted by the Second World War. Although Plautdietsch remained the primary language in the village, prior to the summer of 1941 in addition to school instruction Guenther and his classmates were exposed to the Russian language in a number of ways. As a part of their school program, they were required to go to the Russian cinema (which he states they understood without difficulty), at home they had to have a loudspeaker broadcasting a Russian-language radio station, and finally, his family was obliged to subscribe to the Russian-language newspaper *Pravda*. In addition, Mr. Enns reports that he knew and eagerly sang Russian and Ukrainian songs together with other young Mennonites from their village.

In the summer of 1941 the Wehrmacht attacked the Soviet Union and the interviewee's village was overrun by the German army. He did not report ever attending school since. In 1943 Mr. Enns was drafted into the German army. During the war, he was taken prisoner by the Allied forces and spent two years in a prisoner of war camp. He was released in 1946 and lived in Austria until 1948, when he immigrated to Canada.

For the first several years in Canada, the interviewee lived in Manitoba on a farm of Plautdietsch-speaking Russian Mennonite immigrants of the first wave. During this time, he spent one winter in Winnipeg, during which he claims to have learnt the English language from High German-speaking Jewish merchants. The speaker also claims to have hardly ever spoken Russian after he left the Soviet Union in 1943.

In the early 1950s, Mr. Enns moved to Kitchener-Waterloo, where he resides today. The Mennonite church to which he belongs was using High German as the language of worship, of the Sunday school, and of the summer camps until the middle of the 1970s, when it switched to English. Today the interviewee remembers his regret about abandoning High German as the main language of religious service at the time of the switch, and reports that he actively supported the High German language in the church partially because of his mother, for whom English always remained a foreign tongue. However, now he has changed his views on the topic and believes that the switch to English was a natural and positive event in the life of his church. The speaker attends occasional High German services still held in his church about once a month.

Although with his wife and friends the interviewee always spoke predominantly Plautdietsch, their four children were raised with High German, which Mr. Enns sees as a more useful language. The interviewee reports that while the oldest child is also able to speak High German as well as some Plautdietsch, the youngest child has only limited knowledge of High German. All of the children are now married to English-speakers and use only English in their families. When they come to visit the interviewee and his wife, they usually speak English.

The interviewee remembers that he often spoke High German with non-Mennonite Germans in Kitchener-Waterloo in the past decades but admits that he does not use it regularly any more. Until very recently Mr. Enns had been communicating occasionally in High German with his relatives in Russia and Germany, primarily through written correspondence. Today, Mr. Enns reports that he does not speak, read, or write much in High German, but enjoys speaking Plautdietsch with his wife and friends and browses Low German pages on the Internet.

5.2 Structural Analysis - Constructions Contrasting with Those of SHG

While the constructions found in the interviewee's speech generally conform to the rules of Standard High German, a number of them were found to contrast with SHG. Below I will outline, exemplify, and briefly discuss these constructions. It must be mentioned, however, that almost all of the forms scrutinised below are not the only forms used by the interviewee but co-exist with constructions of the same meaning entirely conforming to the rules of Standard High German.

5.2.1 *Case government*

5.2.1.1 *The Genitive Case*

Throughout the sixty-seven minutes of the interview, Mr. Enns hardly used the genitive case at all. In fact, only one overtly-marked genitive form (which, however, morphologically is identical with dative) was observed at the very beginning of the interview (Example 5-1), when the interviewee was talking about the attitude of the German army to the Mennonites:

| | |
|----------|---|
| 11 *GUE: | und dann die befreundness der deutschen armee. |
|----------|---|

Example 5-1

Prepositions requiring the genitive case were also used very scarcely and were never followed by genitive forms. Instead, ellipsis (Example 5-2) or accusative case forms (Example 5-3) were found:

| | |
|----------|---|
| 69 *GUE: | wenn die russen frauen suchten oder männer dann sind sie außerhalb gegangen. |
| %cod: | \$PREP:MISC |

Example 5-2

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 711 *GUE: | so unsere kinder die haben deutsche eingeschrieben sagten nur wegen dich oma. |
| %cod: | \$GENE |

Example 5-3

The last example is especially interesting since in German-speaking countries genitive prepositions such as ‘wegen’ and ‘trotz’ are increasingly being used with the dative case, resulting in phrases such as ‘wegen dir’. At the same time ‘wegen dich’ is still considered ungrammatical.

Further, on two occasions, nouns in indefinite constructions of time which should be marked by genitive case endings (e.g. *am Ende des Monats*, *am Ende des Jahres*), appeared in the interview with no case marking and without a determiner like in Russian ‘в конце года’ (in end-PREPOSITIONAL year-GENITIVE):

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 876 *GUE: | das muss am ende jahr gewesen sein. |
| %cod: | \$GENE |
| 928 *GUE: | am ende monat kam der bill@e, haben sie zu mcc hingeschickt. |
| %cod: | \$GENE |

Example 5-4

Finally, genitive was also not found in constructions expressing possession. Instead, alternative grammatical means were used which are discussed in detail in section 5.2.8.4.

5.2.1.2 The Accusative Case

Although the speaker's usage of the accusative case generally conformed to the rules of Standard High German, a number of instances failed to show accusative case markings or exhibited cases other than the accusative. Of the nineteen such instances found in the interview, fifteen featured indefinite articles or other *ein*-words (*mein*, *kein*, etc.) in the nominative case, for example:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 154 *GUE: | für jedes andere wort hast du auch ein andere buchstaben. |
| %cod: | \$ACC |
| 399 *GUE: | und da gab es so ein krach. |
| %cod: | \$ACC |
| 517 *GUE: | der eine ist dann weg, der hat sein bruder da gefunden. |
| %cod: | \$ACC |

Example 5-5

It is quite interesting that while the speaker produced forms with clear-cut accusative markings on numerous occasions (Example 5-6), he showed inconsistency in assigning accusative case to the same noun in two adjacent constructions (Example 5-7), and at times assigned different cases to two direct objects within the same utterance (Example 5-8).

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 342 *GUE: | und dann hat mein vater ihn ausgekauft ihn und noch einen . |
| 449 *GUE: | ... und wir brauchten einen polizisten, der wird das machen. |

Example 5-6

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 239 *GUE: | ... man sollte sie haben, wir hatten nur ein lautsprecher. |
| %cod: | \$ACC |
| 240 *GUE: | ... jedes haus hatte einen lautsprecher. |

Example 5-7

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 338 *GUE: | sagte ich kenne in unserem dorf nur einer aber der hat einen roten schnur. |
| %cod: | \$ACC |

Example 5-8

However, it must be mentioned that some constructions coded as deviations in accusative (\$ACC), such as the one presented in Example 5-7, may not be instances of the nominative case used instead of accusative, but rather a syncope of the final unstressed vowel resulting in the nominative-like realizations of masculine accusative forms.

Also noteworthy is the fact that in the entire interview not a single instance of an accusative-marked form of possessive adjectives or of the negative article *kein*²⁰ was used. When fulfilling the syntactic role of an object, both possessive adjectives and *kein* were usually assigned the nominative case:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 213 *GUE: | eigentlich kenne ich mein vater nicht. |
| %cod: | \$ACC |
| 817 *GUE: | aber no@e wir haben kein briefverkehr mit den. |
| %cod: | \$ACC |

Example 5-9

Further, accusative was often not assigned in definite constructions of time where it is obligatory in Standard High German:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 373 *GUE: | und es muss vor weihnachten sein, da kam mein vater nach hause mal eine abend mit dem schlitten und sein pferd, hat uns alle xx. |
| %cod: | \$ACC |
| 920 *GUE: | er kam, er war bei uns da ein monat in xx. |
| %cod: | \$ACC |

Example 5-10

Interestingly, at the same time the definite article never failed to show the accusative when necessary, including definite expressions of time:

²⁰ Here only the singular masculine accusative form is meant, since this is the only accusative form that does not coincide with nominative.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 266 *GUE: | als sie in fünfte klasse gingen, da mussten wir ich weiß nicht mehr jeden monat oder jede zweite woche mussten wir ins kino gehen. |
| 602 *GUE: | und durch solchen rotten_apple@e bin ich hier gekommen. |
| 648 *GUE: | da fragte ich den bauer ob ich zurück kommen kann. |

Example 5-11

5.2.1.3 *The Dative Case*

Deviations in using the dative case undoubtedly present the largest category of deviations in the interviewee's speech and by far outnumber all other types. Altogether, seventy-three instances of failure to assign or to form a dative case where it is required in Standard High German were found in the interview.

More than half of these instances, forty-seven to be precise, occurred after prepositions which always require the dative case. Instead, nominative (Example 5-12) and accusative (Example 5-13) were used on several occasions. In the majority of instances, however, the case was impossible to determine as the nominative and accusative forms coincide for feminine, neuter, and plural forms (Example 5-14).

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 493 *GUE: | wußte von kein . |
| %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:SIN |
| 926 *GUE: | da hatte ich ein auto gerent mit ein fahrer . |
| %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:SIN |

Example 5-12

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 694 *GUE: | ja und dann ging zu einen holzhändler der zu trocken, trockenholz. |
| %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:SIN |
| 764 *GUE: | dann wollte sie mit mich fahren und ich sagte ich nehme kinder nicht. |
| %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:SIN |
| 859 *GUE: | unsere kinder sprechen noch dies außer den jüngsten ja. |
| %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:SIN |
| 860 *GUE: | er hat nicht viel mitbekommen |

Example 5-13

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 19 | *GUE: | von jede seite gibt es gute und schlechte seiten. |
| | %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:SIN |
| 159 | *GUE: | und da haben wir mit die verkehrt. |
| | %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:PLU |
| 192 | *GUE: | und die kinder haben sicher bei meine mutter dann gesessen. |
| | %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:SIN |

Example 5-14

It is interesting to mention that unlike the deviations in accusative case, which affected mostly indefinite articles and *ein*-words, both definite and indefinite articles, as well as other words following their declension pattern appeared in this category:

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 851 | *GUE: | wenn wir zu hause sind ... mit die frau und unsere freunde das alles ist plattdeutsch. |
| | %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:SIN \$DAT:PRE:PLU |
| 969 | *GUE: | die arme frau xxx gesagt zu solche kirche gehe ich nicht. |
| | %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:SIN |

Example 5-15

After dative prepositions case seemed to be assigned arbitrarily and the speaker fluctuated between dative and other cases in the same expressions quite frequently:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 159 | *GUE: | und da haben wir mit die verkehrt . |
| 856 | *GUE: | ... mit den sprechen wir hochdeutsch ja. |
| 588 | *GUE: | ... durfte er nicht kommen und dann haben sie ihm nach ein jahr , an de zweiundfünfzig, haben diese durchgeben |
| 638 | *GUE: | ... nach einem jahr bin ich im herbst ... im herbst dann nach einem jahr bin ich nach winnipeg. |

Example 5-16

Although such deviations affected both singular and plural forms, the grammatical number of the complement after dative prepositions did not seem to have significant influence on case assignment as only slightly over half of such deviations affected plural forms (27 out of 47).

Another category of instances where the dative case was frequently not assigned are indirect objects and objects of so-called *dative* verbs (e.g. *helfen*, *trauen*), which

require their direct object to take the dative case. In all instances of such deviations, the accusative case was used consistently:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 335 *GUE: | ich sage ich kann dich beschreiben wie die ausgesehen haben. |
| %cod: | \$DAT:IND_OBJ:SIN |
| 597 *GUE: | wie die die menschen geholfen haben. |
| %cod: | \$DAT:IND_OBJ:PLU |
| 905 *GUE: | dann sagt der mann zu xx wenn du mich so wenig traust dann komm ich nicht mehr. |
| %cod: | \$DAT:IND_OBJ:SIN |

Example 5-17

At the same time, just as is the case with most other types of deviations in the interview, on numerous occasions the speaker used the same verbs with well-formed dative objects, assigning dative-case markings to indirect objects, for example:

| | |
|----------|---|
| 12 *GUE: | no er sagte fünfzig prozent sollte ich geben und ich gebe ihm keine. |
|----------|---|

Example 5-18

Occasionally he assigned different cases to indirect objects within the same utterance. For example:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 604 *GUE: | da hat er dem gesagt er sollte mich schreiben wie ich dass geschafft habe dass ich nach kanada kam. |
| %cod: | \$DAT:IND_OBJ:SIN |

Example 5-19

A further sub-category of deviations in using the dative case are the so-called two-way prepositions (e.g. *in, an, auf, hinter, neben, etc.*), whose complements must take the dative case in constructions expressing location (static state), and accusative in those expressing direction (dynamic state). The speaker did not seem to pay much attention to this difference and usually did not use the dative case in constructions of location (Example 5-20). It is quite interesting that in all instances of such deviations, only

feminine or plural nouns were used (e.g. *Schule, Straße, Kommission, Gemeinde, Kirche, Bedingung, Staaten*), whose nominative and accusative forms are identical.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 24 *GUE: | das war ganz nördlich in die kolonie Molotschna |
| 615 *GUE: | das wird vom mcc verwaltet aber steht unter deutsche flüchtlingsregierung. |
| 626 *GUE: | als ich vor die kommission war |
| 953 GUE: | und dann sagte der xx ja wir bezahlen die schulden unter eine bedingung . |

Example 5-20

Finally, plural nouns almost always lacked the obligatory dative plural marker–n (for those nouns whose plural form does not end in –n or –s (Example 5-21):

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 124 *GUE: | ... da kamen von actually@e von vier dörfer . |
| 177 *GUE: | ich mein mit uns kinder ja. |
| 143 *GUE: | mit vier jahre wissen viel mehr von die ... die welche hier die hochschule rauskommen. |

Example 5-21

5.2.2 Verb Forms

5.2.2.1 Verb Conjugation.

All verbs in the interview were conjugated in full correspondence with the norms of Standard High German with only a few exceptions, all of which seem rather arbitrary:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 241 *GUE: | und du konnt sche den lautsprecher anstellen oder abstellen |
| 251 *GUE: | ich weiß ich war auf dem baum da kam die von der правление@r. |
| 252 *GUE: | ich weiß nicht wieviel da waren... . |
| 659 *GUE: | wenn du von chortitz kommst du sprechst dann anders als die molochna. |

Example 5-22

Also, on several occasions in passive constructions the auxiliary verb *werden* dropped the final consonant of the third person plural ending *-en*, for example:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 332 *GUE: | sagte ich schon, ich war drei jahre als wir aus dem haus getrieben wurde . |
| 501 *GUE: | ... die haben, andere wurde entlassen aber die ss wurde nicht entlassen. |

Example 5-23

5.2.2.2 *Simple Past Tense Forms.*

While almost all simple past tense forms fully corresponded with the norms of Standard High German (*konnten, wusste, musste, sprach, sangen, etc.*), several deviations were detected. All of them involved strong verbs, which in the interviewee's speech partially or fully followed the weak verb construction (Example 5-24), and mixed verbs, which sometimes did not undergo a stem vowel change (Example 5-25).

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 29 *GUE: | die wenn die durchzogen die nomaden oder wie die waren da gingte der МОГЫЛЫ@r way@e. |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PAST |
| 181 *GUE: | es komnte darauf an. |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PAST |

Example 5-24

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 409 *GUE: | das nennten sie ording wie nennte man das in Rußland? |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PAST \$VERB:PAST |
| 410 *GUE: | ording nennten sie das. |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PAST |

Example 5-25

5.2.2.3 Past Participles and Auxiliary Verbs.

The *Perfekt* and *Plusquamperfekt* constructions as well as other constructions featuring past participles also did not show frequent or consistent deviations from the standard. Nevertheless, in rare cases, past participles of weak verbs appeared with no past participle suffix *-(e)t* (Example 5-26) and sometimes featured an elision of the consonant in the suffix (Example 5-27):

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 926 *GUE: | da hatte ich ein auto gerent mit ein fahrer |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PZII \$DAT:PRE:SIN |

Example 5-26

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 769 *GUE: | und dann hatte mein schwager meine schwesters verheirate in die staaten. |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PZII |

Example 5-27

Also, on a number of occasions forms of past participles were used which in Standard High German would be considered ungrammatical, e.g.:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 119 *GUE: | ... sie haben dann nicht untergeschrieben |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PZII |
| 143 *GUE: | und das hat nicht geschaht |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PZII |
| 417 *GUE: | da sind sie morgens aufgestunden |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PZII |
| 588 *GUE: | ... an de zweiundfünfzig haben diese durchgeben |
| %cod: | \$VERB:PZII |

Example 5-28

Further, the choice of an auxiliary verb in perfect constructions did not always correspond to the Standard High German grammar and featured, for example, use of *haben* with a verb of motion, use of the auxiliary *sein* with a verb requiring *haben*, and both auxiliaries in the same construction:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 262 *GUE: | und die, militärisch meistens wie sie mit dem пулемет@r gefahren haben. |
| %cod: | \$VERB:AUX |
| 766 *GUE: | ja und dann bin ich hier gearbeitet aber die löhne waren so niedrig |
| %cod: | \$VERB:AUX |
| 275 *GUE: | ... dann sind wir um fünf uhr nach hause gekommen haben. |
| %cod: | \$VERB:AUX |

Example 5-29

5.2.2.4 Reflexive Verbs

It was noticed that the speaker occasionally attributed the reflexive particle *sich* (in an appropriate case) to verbs which are not reflexive in SHG, e.g.:

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>When talking about Mr. Enns's mother:</i> | |
| 76 *GUE: | ... aber sie konnte ihr alles kaufen und hinfahren raus wo sie waren. |
| 176 *GUE: | wir kennen uns nicht dass die deutschen grüßten da sich untereinander |
| 802 *GUE: | ja und ich habe internet da horch ich mir deutsche musik dann in plattdeutsch. |

Example 5-30

5.2.3 Nominal Paradigm

5.2.3.1 Plural Forms

Besides various Standard High German ways of forming noun plurals, which the speaker used quite extensively (e.g. *die arbeiter, die krankenhäuser, die dinge, die klassen* etc.), a number of non-standard forms were produced. Some nouns were marked with a plural ending where it is not required in Standard High German (Example 5-31). Others took a non-standard plural ending (Example 5-32), while the third were lacking a plural ending altogether, in rare instances together with apocope of the final vowel (Example 5-33).

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 96 | *GUE: | die lehrern waren meistens mennoniten |
| | %cod: | \$NOUN:PLUR |
| 115 | *GUE: | als mein, eine von meine onkels , der hat. |
| | %cod: | \$NOUN:PLUR |

Example 5-31

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 260 | *GUE: | oh das waren immer die selben films . |
| | %cod: | \$NOUN:PLUR |

Example 5-32

| | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 275 | *GUE: | oder anderthalb stund |
| | %cod: | \$NOUN:PLUR |
| 918 | *GUE: | ... und alle seine sünde wurden abgewaschen |
| | %cod: | \$NOUN:PLUR |

Example 5-33

It is noteworthy that while some of the above-mentioned nouns occurred in free variation with the standard plural forms (Example 5-34), others, such as *onkel*, are consistently used with a non-standard plural morpheme, and some, such as *sünde*, never took a plural morpheme.

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| 138 | *GUE: | zwei stunden in der woche wurde dann deutsch als fremdsprache. |
| 265 | *GUE: | ich kann mich nicht mehr erinnern an all die dinge aber die filme die waren ... waren immer die selbe. |

Example 5-34

5.2.3.2 Noun Gender

Although the grammatical gender of certain nouns used by the speaker occasionally deviated from that of Standard High German, no noun was assigned the same non-standard gender consistently and almost all deviant nouns also occurred with standard marking for grammatical gender at some point during the interview:

141 *GUE: aber **der schulwesen** war gut.
 145 *GUE: **das schulwesen** das war gut das lernen war gut sehr gut ja.
 185 *GUE: ich kann mich nur an **die kirche** zwei mal kann ich mich nur **ans kirche** denken.

Example 5-35

Further, while very few nouns in this category were given a clear-cut deviating gender and were never attributed standard gender (e.g. *die buchstabieren, den Russland*), in the majority of instances in this category the noun modifiers were missing the final phoneme indicating gender and case. The speaker himself did not seem to differentiate such forms from complete ones and they usually appeared in free variation. Although this is especially noticeable with feminine nouns (Example 5-36), masculine nouns also exhibited such behaviour (Example 5-37).

25 *GUE: und **unsere stadt** das war **ein russe_stadt** das Bol'shoi Tokmak.
 385 *GUE: **mein mutter** ging zu dem xx sagte schau mal der vater von diese kinder.
 394 *GUE: eigentlich **unsere mutter** hat die gesagt.

Example 5-36

153 *GUE: für jedes wort du hast eigentlich **eine buchstaben** im russischen.
 201 *GUE: der ist nicht **solche große unterschied**.
 571 *GUE: ich weiß nicht was **der unterschied** ist.
 215 *GUE: als **mein, eine** von meine **onkels**, der hat.

Example 5-37

5.2.3.3 Gender of Borrowed Nouns

Since in High German nouns are usually preceded by articles, pronouns, or modifying words which must agree with the noun in case, number, and grammatical gender, the speaker often assigned gender to English and Russian nouns which he frequently used while speaking High German.

English nouns were usually marked with gender of their German equivalents, e.g. *der way@e* (der Weg), *die torture@e* (die Qual), *ein egg@e* (ein Ei), *eine flag@e* (eine Flagge), *der bill@e* (der Schein). The situation with borrowed Russian nouns was slightly more complicated, since, unlike English, Russian has three grammatical genders. While in numerous instances the gender of the Russian nouns the speaker used corresponded to that of the German equivalent (Example 5-38), in others it was impossible to determine what language the noun gender stems from because of the coinciding article forms for masculine and neuter nouns in indirect cases (Example 5-39).

The noun пулемёт (das Maschinengewehr) is masculine in Russian but neuter in German:

262 *GUE: und die, militärisch meistens wie sie mit **dem пулемёт@r** gefahren haben.
%cod: \$VERB:AUX

Example 5-38

Nouns that are masculine in both languages:

79 *GUE: wenn wir nach Tokmak gingen **zum базар@r**. (*базар=der Markt*)
%cod: \$GEND:RUS
294 *GUE: **der политрук@r**, he_was_a@e малограмотный@r.
(*политрук=a person responsible for political education of students*)
%cod: \$CONS:CODE
329 *GUE: nur wenn sie **vom район@r** kamen. (*район=der Bezirk*)
%cod: \$GEND:RUS

Example 5-39

In other instances, High German clearly took the upper hand in determining noun gender, as some Russian nouns whose gender was different from that of their High German equivalents were unmistakably assigned gender of the latter:

The noun *правление* (*die Verwaltung*) is neuter in Russian but feminine in German:

244 *GUE: ... da kamens **von der правление@r** alle hin.
 %cod: \$GEND:RUS

249 *GUE: und **die правление@r** wusste auch nicht besser.
 %cod: \$GEND:RUS

252 *GUE: ich weiß nicht wieviel da waren aber xxx **von der правление@r**.
 %cod: \$GEND:RUS

Example 5-40

5.2.3.4 Compound Nouns

Another noticeable element of the interviewee's usage of nouns is the absence of linking morphemes (Fugenelement) in many compound nouns, e.g.:

25 *GUE: und unsere stadt das war ein **russe_stadt** das Bol'shoi Tokmak.
 %cod: \$NOUN:COMP

81 *GUE: das war die nächste **handel_stelle** wo sie wirtschaftszeuge und
 sowas kauften
 %cod: \$NOUN:COMP

116 *GUE: er war auch repressiert an de **sieben_dreißig**.
 %cod: \$NOUN:COMP

276 *GUE: und **tag_über** gab es kein essen.
 %cod: \$NOUN:COMP

317 *GUE: die kamen by@e **sonn_aufgang@s** to@e sundown@e.
 %cod: \$NOUN:COMP

318 *GUE: und das war die **arbeit_zeit**.
 %cod: \$NOUN:COMP

Example 5-41

5.2.4 Pronoun Usage

Very often relative pronouns (which in Standard High German must agree with the antecedent noun in number and gender and are case-marked based on their syntactic function in the relative clause they introduce) were substituted by the indeclinable relative pronoun ‘was’, which in SHG it is used with indefinite antecedents such as ‘etwas’, ‘nichts’ and with demonstratives such as *das* and ‘dasselbe’, but not with a noun antecedent. In the interviewee’s speech, however, ‘was’ often appeared instead of plural and feminine nouns (Example 5-42), and sometimes was used in the combination of a preposition and a relative pronoun (Example 5-43).

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 47 *GUE: | nur die einzige russen was bei uns gewohnt haben |
| %cod: | \$PRO:REL |
| 697 *GUE: | na das war die erste arbeit was wir haben |
| %cod: | \$PRO:REL |

Example 5-42

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 8 *GUE: | ich weiss nur die zeit was wir aus dem haus gejagt wurden. |
| 784 *GUE: | man muss mehr sprechen und die zeit in dem winter was ich im winnipeg war. |

Example 5-43

Noteworthy is Example 5-44, in which the interviewer produces a phrase in SHG and the interviewee repeats it but uses a different relative pronoun, gives the adjective a non-standard ending *-e*, and attributes a non-standard grammatical gender to the noun *Russland*, which in SHG is usually used without an article:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 565 *NKP: | das waren die ersten die russland verlassen haben. |
| 566 *GUE: | die erste was den russland verlassen haben, ja. |

Example 5-44

The speaker frequently formed relative clauses introduced by the plural relative pronoun ‘*die*’ and sometimes by the pronoun ‘*welch-*’ (Example 5-45). However, he very often used a combination of both (‘*die welche*’) where either pronoun would be sufficient in SHG (Example 5-46).

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 65 *GUE: | ... und mit die russen desto das waren gute leute welche wir da hatten, wir kamen sehr mit aus mit denen. |
| 83 *GUE: | die weiter, welche weiter nach dem süden wohnten, die konnten sehr wenig russisch auch die kinder nicht. |

Example 5-45

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 161 *GUE: | ja und nein die welche im dorf waren nur oder im nachbardorf. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:DET |
| 568 *GUE: | die welche mit vierundzwanzig kamen nur die haben uns heute noch nicht. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:DET |
| 856 *GUE: | nein aber diese hier wohnen viele deusche hier mit den sprechen wir hochdeutsch ja. |
| 857 *GUE: | die welche von deutschland kommen. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:DET |

Example 5-46

5.2.5 Adjectival Declension

The declension of adjectives in the interviewee’s speech often but not always deviated from the norms of Standard High German. The majority of deviations in adjectival endings affected plural adjective forms which occurred after the definite article *die* in the nominative case. In all of these instances, adjective forms showed apocope of the final consonant of the ‘weak’ adjective ending *-en*, e.g.:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 47 *GUE: | nur die einzige russen was bei uns gewohnt haben |
| %cod: | \$ADJ |
| 312 *GUE: | wenn wir morgens aufwachten die grössere waren zu schule |
| %cod: | \$ADJ |
| 731 *GUE: | ... wir sind die absterbende , das sind die neue die da kommen. |
| %cod: | \$ADJ |

Example 5-47

Interestingly, all the adjective declension deviations in the dative case involved singular adjective forms only. Here the adjectives were preceded by the definite article and were missing the final *-n* of the ‘weak’ adjective ending, e.g.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 103 *GUE: | und die waren in Halbstadt die beim fluss an der andere seite. |
| %cod: | \$ADJ |
| 453 *GUE: | der war in der russische armee gewesen |
| %cod: | \$ADJ |
| 854 *GUE: | ja wenn wir gehen zur deutsche andacht. |
| %cod: | \$ADJ |

Example 5-48

Similarly, it was noticed that all adjectives which occurred in constructions modified by a preposition in combination with ‘*de*’ were also given the ending *-e* instead of the final *-en* obligatory in SHG. Interestingly, all of these instances included singular feminine nouns only:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 193 *GUE: | die frauen waren an de rechte seite. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:PR+DE \$ADJ |
| 194 *GUE: | und die männer an de linke seite. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:PR+DE \$ADJ |
| 216 *GUE: | und ich sag immer das war der beste mann in de ganze welt. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:PR+DE \$ADJ |

Example 5-49

Also, adjectives that appeared without an article or a *der-* or *ein-* word, and which would have to be given a ‘strong’ ending showing the gender, number and case of the associated noun in SHG, were sometimes lacking the final consonant. Surprisingly, in all such instances the adjectives were missing the masculine nominative or feminine dative ending *-r*:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 358 *GUE: | und der hatte mehr kraft als deutsche kommunist. |
| %cod: | \$ADJ |
| 401 *GUE: | und zu damalige zeit mussten drei kläger sein. |
| %cod: | \$ADJ |
| 587 *GUE: | kam xx aus russische gefangenschaft |
| %cod: | \$ADJ |

Example 5-50

5.2.6 Indefinite Article

Several times during the interview the speaker used a form of an indefinite article which does not exist in SHG. In addition to the standard three singular forms (masculine, neuter, and feminine), the form ‘eine’ was found to modify or refer to plural nouns and pronouns, e.g.:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 8 *GUE: | ich weiss nur die zeit was wir aus dem haus gejagt wurden. |
| 9 *GUE: | und dass wir eine schlechte zeiten hatten. |
| 97 *GUE: | wir hatten mennoniten da. |
| 98 *GUE: | und eigentlich noch eine wir nannten die kolonisten, ja, das waren die hochdeutschen xxx. |
| 349 *GUE: | nu wir waren eine von die letzte, da waren schon mehrere, die waren schon früher ausgesiedelt als wir. |

Example 5-51

5.2.7 Prepositions

While the prepositions in the interviewee’s speech were usually used in full correspondence with the norms of SHG, several deviations occurred in the interview. Some constructions in which a preposition is required in SHG were lacking a preposition altogether (Example 5-52), and others occasionally featured non-standard prepositions (interestingly, all of these examples are connected with the noun ‘Seite’ (Example 5-53).

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 416 *GUE: | ... aber unsere eltern wußten welche tage die kamen. |
|-----------|---|

Example 5-52

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 103 *GUE: | und die waren in Halbstadt die beim fluss an der andere seite. |
| %cod: | \$PREP:MISC |
| 183 *GUE: | wenn wir mit den ивановцы@r zank hatten dann waren die russen an unsere seite |
| %cod: | \$PREP:MISC |

Example 5-53

The speaker's use of the preposition 'an' in the constructions shown in Example 5-52 may be attributed to the English or Russian influence as both languages have constructions [on + modifier + side] and [на + modifier + стороне], in both of which the prepositions correspond to the SHG 'an'.

Further, the preposition *zu*, especially when modifying such nouns as *Kirche* or *Schule*, was frequently used without a definite article (or featured *an* –*r* elision), which is required in SHG:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 791 *GUE: | ich ging zu schule und dann auch noch auf die straÙe. |
| 966 *GUE: | ich bin eigentlich nur einmal da zu kirche gegangen. |

Example 5-54

Further, constructions in which a specific year was named more often than not deviated from the standard. In some of these constructions a variety of non-standard prepositions occurred (Example 5-55).

| | |
|--|---|
| 86 *NKP: | und wann haben sie die schule angefangen? |
| 87 *GUE: | am sechsunddreiÙig. |
| %cod: | \$PREP:YEAR |
| <i>When talking about the wave of immigrants who came to Canada in 1874:</i> | |
| 568 *GUE: | die welche mit vierundzwanzig kamen nur die haben uns heute noch nicht. |
| %cod: | \$PREP:YEAR |
| 890 *GUE: | ... an neunundvierzig kam einer von Winnipeg. |
| %cod: | \$PREP:YEAR |

Example 5-55

Nevertheless, in the majority of instances, specific years were preceded by the combination of the preposition ‘*an*’ followed by the form ‘*de*’ (Example 5-56). This combination occurred seventeen times during the interview.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 476 *NKP: | und wie haben sie dann russland verlassen? |
| 477 *GUE: | an de vierunddreißig. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:PR+DE |
| 478 *GUE: | an de dreiundvierzig, ja. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:PR+DE |
| 561 GUE: | das sind mennoniten die sind hergekommen an de achtzehnvierundsiebzig. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:PR+DE |
| 587 *GUE: | an de achtundvierzig und an de neunundvierzig kam xxx aus russische gefangenschaft |
| %cod: | \$CONS:PR+DE |

Example 5-56

It is interesting that the form ‘*de*’ also occurred several times during the interview and clearly fulfilled the role of a definite article modifying an adjective, which in each instance was also assigned a ‘simplified’ ending not showing the number, gender, or case of the modified noun (Example 5-49).

5.2.8 Other Types of Deviations

5.2.8.1 Multiple Negation.

Although constructions involving more than one negation are not preferred in SHG, the interviewee produced such constructions on several occasions:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 316 *GUE: | da war auch niemand nicht zu hause. |
| 458 *GUE: | und dann haben wir die nächste paar jahre haben wir überhaupt keine deutsche soldaten nicht gesehen. |

Example 5-57

While double negations are also not preferred in modern English, such constructions are standard in Russian, e.g. [никого дома не было] (no one was not at home), or [не видели никаких немецких солдат] (did not see none German soldiers).

5.2.8.2 'Um ... zu' Constructions

In constructions of purpose which in SHG are introduced by *um ... zu*, various parts were often missing in the interviewee's speech, or the entire construction was simply omitted where it is required in SHG, resulting in an ungrammatical statement (Example 5-58):

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Missing 'um': | |
| 886 *GUE: | sagt du warst alt genug mit dem gewehr zu schlafen. (SHG) <i>um mit dem gewehr zu schlafen.</i> |
| %cod: | \$CONS:UM+ZU |
| Missing ,zu' + verb: | |
| 90 *GUE: | das ging da, die nahmen von sechs bis acht jahre weil nicht genug kinder um eine volle klasse waren. (SHG) <i>waren, um eine volle klasse zu haben.</i> |
| %cod: | \$CONS:UM+ZU |
| Um ... zu missing altogether: | |
| 297 *GUE: | er hatte ein ding aufgestellt eine granate reinwerfen. (SHG) <i>um eine granate reinzuwerfen.</i> |
| %cod: | \$CONS:UM+ZU |

Example 5-58

5.2.8.3 *Determiner Accumulation*

Although in rare instances in SHG multiple determiners (e.g. definite and indefinite articles, quantifiers, possessive, and demonstrative pronouns, etc) may appear (Eisenberg, 2004, p. 149), they are usually in complementary distribution. The speaker, however, frequently used several determiners together, producing constructions that would be considered ungrammatical in SHG (Example 5-59).

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 130 *GUE: | mein ein cousin , der war so gut im malen... . |
| %cod: | \$CONS:DET |
| 734 *GUE: | aber solange die unsere eltern da waren, zu den war das fremd... . |
| %cod: | \$CONS:DET |

Example 5-59

Also, the speaker often used these multiple determiners in combination with relative clauses introduced by the relative pronoun ‘*welch-*’, which is not preferred in SHG:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 818 *GUE: | die eine diese tante welche da gestorben ist |
| %cod: | \$CONS:DET |
| 874 *GUE: | ... ich sagte von dem einen welcher mich aus dem lager jagen wollte. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:DET |

Example 5-60

5.2.8.4 *Constructions of Possession*

As the genitive case was only used once during the entire interview (Example 5-1), the speaker used alternative grammatical means to express possession. One of them was the postnominal ‘von + dative’ construction, which is fully acceptable in SHG:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 887 *GUE: | das war das ende von dem interview |
|-----------|---|

Example 5-61

Since, as already shown, the interviewee did not consistently assign the dative case to the complements of dative prepositions, a variant of this construction with von followed by nominative/accusative was also produced:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 385 *GUE: | mein mutter ging zu dem xx sagte schau mal der vater von diese kinder. |
| %cod: | \$DAT:PRE:PLU \$CONS:POSS |

Example 5-62

Another possessive construction that the speaker used quite often is a variant of the combination of the possessor noun in the dative case with a possessive pronoun agreeing with the possessed noun in gender and number (Example 5-63). Marked as ‘im höchsten Maße ... umgangssprachlich’, this construction is considered incorrect in SHG by Duden (“gilt standardsprachlich als falsch”) (“Genitivattribut”, 2001).

| |
|---------------------------|
| Meinem Vater sein Freund. |
|---------------------------|

Example 5-63 (“Genitivattribut”, 2001)

The speaker, however, used this construction a number of times but never assigned the dative case to the possessor noun, e.g.:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 377 *GUE: | ... mein vater sein bruder war da. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:POSS |
| 526 *GUE: | und zu der zeit kam Roosevelt seine frau. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:POSS |
| 846 *GUE: | genauso meine schwester ihre kinder die kamen als kinder nach russland hin. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:POSS |

Example 5-64

A further construction was used to convey the meaning of what in Standard High German would take the form of “*der Sohn eines Kulaken*”²¹ (Example 5-65).

²¹ The word *der Kulak*, from the Russian *кулак*, is a historic term which was used in the early years of the Soviet Union to refer to a person, predominantly among peasants, who was wealthier than regular citizens.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 129 *GUE: | etliche durften auch nicht weil ein kulaker sohn , hat er schwer woanders hinzukommen. |
| %cod: | \$CONS:POSS |

Example 5-65

The noun *Kulak* in this example was used as a denominal adjective and, similar to geographical names, indicated possession by adding the suffix –er.

5.2.9 Lexical Domain

5.2.9.1 Non-standard Usage of High German Lexemes

The speech produced by the interviewee clearly reflects his knowledge of Russian and English. In addition, his usage of a few High German lexemes can be considered non-standard. For example, the verb *horchen* was consistently used instead of *hören* (Example 5-66), the noun *Großkinder*, presumably formed by analogy with such kinship terms as *Großmutter*, *Großvater* (most likely formed by analogy with the English [grand+son/daughter/children]), seems to have replaced the SHG *Enkel* (Example 5-67).

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 241 *GUE: | und du konntsche den lautsprecher anstellen oder abstellen aber zusetzen was du horchen wolltest nein das gab es nicht. |
| %cod: | \$VOC |
| 802 *GUE: | ja und ich habe internet da horch ich mir deutsche musik dann in plattdeutsch. |
| %cod: | \$VOC |

Example 5-66

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 709 *GUE: | und darum ging es so auch unsere kinder auch so ihre großkinder xxx unterschrift |
| %cod: | \$VOC |
| 852 *GUE: | wenn die kinder und die großkinder kommen dann ist es Englisch. |
| %cod: | \$VOC |

Example 5-67

Only a few other lexemes were clearly given a very different meaning than they have in SHG (Example 5-68) or were not a part of SHG vocabulary:

| | |
|----------|---|
| 42 *GUE: | es [<i>das Dorf</i>] war geteilt in vollwirtschaften halbwirtschaften. |
| 43 *GUE: | und dann kam eine anlage die, wo die arbeiter waren und der hirte waren und dampfmühle und windmühle waren. |
| 44 *GUE: | so so war das verlebt . |
| %cod: | \$VOC |

Example 5-68

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 416 *GUE: | ich weiß noch wie es gewindig kam ich weiß nicht grade an welchem tag das war ... |
| %cod: | \$VOC |

Example 5-69

5.2.9.2 *The Influence of the Russian Language*

The influence of the Russian language on the interviewee's speech was felt to be limited to a number of cultural borrowings, all of which were used in the first half of the interview when the interviewee was talking about his life in the Soviet Union. Almost all of the borrowed Russian nouns refer to objects and realities of everyday life specific to Soviet Ukraine of the time and usually do not have equivalents in German or English. Some of these borrowings include:

| <i>Russian word</i> | <i>Definition</i> |
|---------------------|---|
| НКВД | NKVD (<i>People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs</i>), the predecessor of the KGB. |
| махорка | Cheap tobacco used for rolling home-made cigarettes. |
| малограмотный | An illiterate person. Since illiteracy was a widespread phenomenon in the pre-WWII Soviet Union, this was a very common word at the time. |
| семилетка | A school for grades 1-7. A rough equivalent of an elementary school in Ontario. |
| тачанка | A horse-drawn cart or an open wagon with a machinegun installed at the back. |
| колхоз | A collective farm, a unit in the Communist agricultural system. |

Example 5-70

Although the interviewee perceives the Slavic language he spoke as a child as Russian, some of the core borrowings he used, e.g. яйко@r (an egg) or могилы@r (graves), are not standard lexemes of the Russian language and might be the traces of an intermediate variety between Russian and Ukrainian spoken in the area.

5.2.9.3 *The Influence of the English Language*

The influence of English on the interviewee's language was much more evident. While borrowings from Russian consisted exclusively of nouns, the speaker relied on constructions of the English language much more frequently and, in addition to nouns, borrowed lexemes from a wide range of word classes. These included discourse markers (*well, actually*), a conjunction (*then*), prepositions (*with, by*), and interjections such as *yes* and *no*. The majority of the English nouns Mr. Enns used in his speech were usually nonce borrowings and had German equivalents, e.g. *history, bill, mine, pipe, flag, square, separator, etc.*

Further, besides borrowing English lexemes into High German discourse, the speaker incorporated English morphemes into High German words on several occasions:

11 *GUE: und dann die **befreundness**@s der deutschen armee.

317 *GUE: die kamen by@e **sun_aufgang**@s to_sundown@e.

Example 5-71

Further, English influence also manifested itself in a construction which is clearly a translation from English and does not exist in SHG:

646 *GUE: daran bin ich aus geld gelaufen.
then I ran out of money.

Example 5-72

Finally, while the speaker never code-switched into Russian, he frequently produced complete utterances in English. While doing so, he always spoke not from the perspective of someone who grew up with the Russian language, but rather from the perspective of an English-speaker. Thus, when talking about a large network of ancient barrows typical to the steppes of Southern Ukraine where Mr. Enns grew up, he referred to it several times by a combination of a Russian and an English word:

| | |
|----------|---|
| 29 *GUE: | die wenn die durchzogen die nomaden oder wie die waren da gingte der МОГЫЛЫ@r way@e. |
| 30 *GUE: | maybe_you_know_about_that@e? |
| 31 *GUE: | МОГЫЛ@r МОГЫЛЫ@r da waren. |
| 32 *NKP: | oh, МОГЫЛЫ! |
| 33 *GUE: | ja, von strecke zu strecke da waren grosse erdhaufen von einem bis zu nächsten konnte man sehen wenn man aufging. |
| 34 *GUE: | und das war die strecke von wenn sie von Mariupol vom Kaukas die die traders@e kamen. |
| 35 *GUE: | und in Tokmak da da haben die sich getroffen. |
| 36 *GUE: | we_called_it МОГЫЛЫ@r way@e. |

Example 5-73

It is interesting that Mr. Enns does not only switch to English before quoting himself as a child in utterance 36 but that he also claims to have used a half-Russian, half-English name, which is impossible because he possessed no knowledge of English as a child and therefore had to use German or a Russian phrase (or a combination of both).

5.3 Conclusion

The pilot study successfully fulfilled its initial objectives. It has shown that the selected interview contains a wealth of linguistic data needed to answer the research questions of the study that concern the grammatical specifics of spoken High German of Russian Mennonites in Canada. Further, the pilot study has shown that in the interviewee's speech

there are a number of constructions which are not a part of SHG, and that at times deviations from the norms of SHG are quite significant. Having such a large number and variety of linguistic specifics in the pilot interview was especially useful for categorizing the grammatical phenomena exhibited by the interviewee and for creating the system of codes to be used for further transcriptions. However, some of the codes discussed in chapter 4 were added at a later point to cover the grammatical specifics that systematically occurred in further interviews. Finally, the pilot study determined that both the CHAT transcription system and CLAN (the analysis software) selected for the project are very suitable for the purposes of this dissertation and provide all necessary means to answer the main research questions of the dissertation.

The analysis conducted in this chapter will also serve as the basis for the analysis carried out in chapters six and seven. Thus, the next chapter contains content analysis of the interviews in each set and compares them to each other, focusing mainly on various sociolinguistic issues, while chapter seven expands the grammatical analysis conducted in this pilot study and concentrates on those categories which are typical to both interview sets. The results of the analysis of each set are then compared to each other. Although the pilot study considered an interview from the second set of interviews only, the system of codes that resulted from this analysis was later found to be fully applicable to the interviews of the first data set.

6. SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the results of the comparative content analysis of the two interview sets. While the main focus is on the Russian Mennonites' patterns of language use and on how these patterns have changed with time, the chapter also examines and compares various sociolinguistic factors surrounding language use by each of the groups. Thus, the primary goal of this chapter is to examine when, how, with whom, and in what settings each of the languages from the Russian Mennonites' repertoire was used in Russia, and how the situation has changed in Canada since their immigration. This chapter also discusses the speakers' attitudes towards their languages and examines issues of language maintenance and of the shift to English as the language of religion. A structural analysis of the interviews is presented in the next chapter.

Since the information contained in each interview set covers a different historical period, which nevertheless overlap to a certain degree (e.g. the 1920s in Russia or the years in Canada after the arrival of the third wave until 1976), it was decided to subdivide the chapter into three sections which follow the group's migration path in chronological order. Thus, section 6.1 examines the years both groups spent in Russia, section 6.2 covers the time the respondents spent in Germany and South America (for some participants) prior to their immigration to Canada, and section 6.3 analyzes the respondents' experiences in Canada. Further, because the data contained in both interview sets can be conveniently grouped around similar core topics, the information in each section is not presented in strict chronological order but instead is organized around a number of categories for sociolinguistic analysis (as presented in chapter 4), in most of

which the two groups are compared to each other. This comparative analysis provides the necessary basis for the discussion of the linguistic characteristics of the group's High German variety presented in chapter 7.

At this point it is necessary to stress that the first set of interviews was conducted for a historical as opposed to a linguistic project, and therefore the data relevant to this dissertation contained in set one are less extensive than those obtained from the second set. As a result, it was not always possible to compare both groups in every single category. Also, many topics relevant to the project were mentioned by the respondents of the first set only indirectly, and therefore certain conclusions about the linguistic behaviour of the second-wave immigrants had to be deduced on the basis of other information found in the interviews. Lastly, unlike in the second set, where an attempt was made to elicit respondents' opinions on the same topic or answers to the same question from as many participants as possible, information on the questions of interest to this dissertation in the first set was sometimes fragmentary and was often provided only briefly and incidentally. Considering this, I have deliberately tried to avoid making generalizations based on insufficient information.

6.1 In Russia

6.1.1 *The Village World*

A reasonable point at which to start the discussion seems to be the well-known 'world of villages' which Mennonites established in Russia and which is known have enabled them to foster their culture in almost complete isolation from the other speech communities (as pointed out in section 3.3.2). The lifestyle Mennonites had in Russia in the early twentieth century, described by the second-wave immigrants, perfectly fits this classic

picture of the village world. Of the twenty-one participants of the first set, six were born and grew up on private Mennonite estates (*auf einem Gut*) and one participant on a Mennonite a collection of a small number of individual farmsteads (*xymop*), all of which were populated entirely by Mennonites and were located a considerable distance from other settlements. The farmstead owners and their families were usually quite wealthy and because of the remote location of their property became a prime target of robbers and bandit groups during the Civil War (1918-1922). As a result, almost all of the estate inhabitants fled to the larger Mennonite villages soon after 1917.

Most of the villages to which these wealthier Mennonite families fled from their estates can be classified as 'closed' Mennonite villages. The residents of some of these villages (for example, Mariewohl in the Gnadenfelder district of the Molotschna) were not only exclusively Mennonite, but were also carefully selected by the village authorities. As several respondents mentioned, not only was it illegal for non-Mennonites to own property in their villages, but even Mennonites interested in acquiring property in the village had first to be approved by the village council. Despite such strict selection and the fact that all the property in the village was owned by Mennonites, it is very likely that there was always some, possibly even a significant presence of the local Slavic population in the Mennonite villages and, until the Civil War, on the Mennonite estates. First of all, because of the Mennonites' tremendous economic success, especially in the agricultural and industrial sector, they were selling their products to non-Mennonites from the neighbouring settlements. Further, numerous respondents from the first group mentioned having Russian servants, labourers, and contractors. Since Russian women were usually employed in the household as cooks, maids, or servants, it is very likely that

they stayed with their Mennonite employers all year round. The Slavic men, by contrast, mostly worked on the land. A few of them were reported to work for Mennonites all year round, but the number of Russian workers usually increased drastically during the summer period. Taking into account the description by one interviewee of the poor conditions provided by the Mennonites for the Russian workers, which included accommodation, it can be concluded that at least a part of the Russian workers stayed in the Mennonite villages for the season, if not longer. While it is very difficult to estimate numerically how significant the presence of Slavic workers was in the Mennonite villages, it can be said with confidence that having a number of local workers did require the Mennonites who dealt with them to have some rudimentary knowledge of the workers' language. Also, even though definitely not all Mennonites were wealthy enough to hire Russian workers, it seems quite logical that having a considerable number of Russian speakers in the village for prolonged periods must have exposed the other Mennonite villagers to the Russian language. Although no second-wave immigrants were asked whether they learned any Russian from the Slavic workers, several participants of the second interview set reported this to be the case for their parents, who in terms of age were relatively close to the second-wave immigrants considered in the study.

Quite different, however, was the case of those Russian-speaking families who usually were the village shepherds. While hiring workers from the local Slavic population must have stopped among Mennonites during the 1920s (none of the participants in the second interview set reported any such cases among their generation), the custom of hiring a Russian-speaking family to live in the Mennonite village and to fulfill the role of the shepherds survived until World War II reached the Soviet Union. Interestingly, unlike

the other Slavic workers, who most likely caused Mennonite employers to acquire some knowledge of their language, the families of the village shepherds acquired the languages spoken in the village (Plautdietsch, High German, or both) and their children usually attended the local school together with the Mennonites. Although this scenario was very frequently reported by the third-wavers, but was mentioned by only one respondent of the first set, it is very likely that this situation was already well established before the turn of the century, as it was reported to be typical by one of the oldest speakers in the sample, born in 1888.

The situation of the third-wave immigrants was already somewhat different. Slightly more than half of the second set participants (thirteen out of twenty-four to be precise; two of these respondents were from the same village) characterized the village where they grew up as a ‘*geschlossenes deutsches/mennonitisches Dorf*’ (a closed German/Mennonite village).²² However, this description turned out to include one or sometimes several Russian families living among Mennonites with one of them inevitably being the village shepherds, who, as mentioned above, learned the German varieties spoken by the Mennonites and whose children attended Mennonite schools. In fact, only three of these thirteen respondents did not mention having Russian-speaking shepherds in their village. It is also interesting to mention that many second set participants reported that the children of the shepherds were completely fluent in the German variety spoken in the village, whereas their parents usually developed mostly receptive abilities.

²² The adjectives ‘German’ and ‘Mennonite’ were often used interchangeably by the interviewees in both sets with no clear preference of one term over the other unless the context involved non-Mennonite speakers of German. A more detailed discussion of this issue is located in section 6.1.3 of this chapter.

However, this situation was slowly changing in some villages, as two participants (both born in 1923) claimed that their villages were ‘closed’ at first (excluding the Russian shepherds, of course), but that later members of other speech communities started to move in:

“Am Anfang waren nur Mennoniten da, aber dann kamen Russen und Kazapen²³ und die kamen da alle hin und die wohnten da alle.”

(At first there were only Mennonites there but later the Russians and the Katsaps came; they all moved there and they all lived there.)

Finally, as many as six respondents (twenty-five percent of the sample), two of whom lived in the same village, reported that besides Mennonites their villages were inhabited by significant numbers of Russians and Ukrainians, and sometimes by Germans of other denominations, as well as by some Jewish families.

Further, an interesting pattern becomes noticeable if one compares the respondents’ year of birth with their classification of the villages in which they grew up. The two respondents who remember their villages to be exclusively Mennonite at first but later witnessed a number of Russian speakers move there were both born in 1923. At the same time, all six participants who reported to have other ethnic groups in their villages were three to ten years younger (three of them were born between 1926 and 1929 and three between 1931 and 1933). Considering the fact that all participants were born in the settlements that were once established by Mennonites with no other ethnic groups

²³ Although it is not clear what ethnic group the speaker referred to by the term ‘Kazapen’ (which derives from ‘кацан’, a derogative Ukrainian term denoting ‘a Russian person’), but when used by the speakers in the second set of interviews in all likelihood it referred to Ukrainians. It is quite interesting that ‘хохол’, the Russian derogatory term for ‘a Ukrainian’, appeared in High German speech of Russian Mennonites as ‘chocholsch’ and referred not to the Ukrainian language but to the intermediate variety between Russian and Ukrainian spoken by the uneducated part of the local population.

present, it can be said with confidence that the five settlements classified as ‘mixed’ had already undergone the change when the respondents were growing up.

| Village type: | ‘Closed village’ | ‘Closed’ changing to ‘Mixed’ | ‘Mixed’ | Not specified |
|---|------------------|------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| # of respondents (out of 24) (set 2) | 13 | 2 | 6 | 3 |
| Respondents’ date of birth | 1918-1934 | 1923 | 1926-1933 | 1924-1938 |

Table 6-1: Respondents’ native villages

Further, looking at the geographical location and the economic conditions of the ‘mixed’ and ‘closed’ villages did not reveal any special patterns, except for confirming the obvious observation that the larger, centrally located and economically better developed villages (e.g. Chortitza-Rosenthal in Chortitza, Ohrloff or Gradenfeld in the Molotschna), were more likely to have speakers of other languages living among the Mennonites than the smaller, more remote villages.

The other two important events which brought all Mennonites in southern Ukraine (including those from the completely ‘closed’ villages) into more intensive contact with Russian speakers must also be mentioned here. The first is the implementation of the collective farm system from the late 1920s onward. The administration of these collective farms was usually Russian-speaking and since all Mennonite farmers were forced to join a ‘колхоз’ (a collective farm), most of them came into direct or indirect contact with the administration, even if the members of the collective farms were sometimes Mennonites only (this was also reported as typical in the south of the Molotschna colony, where often no other settlements existed). The second is the obligatory complete switch of all Mennonite schools to the Russian language in 1938, which brought some Russian-speaking teachers to most Mennonite villages. Although the respondents in the second group claim that some Mennonite teachers were allowed to stay in the Mennonite schools

and teach in Russian after 1938, they were always in the minority compared to the Russian and Ukrainian teachers.

To summarize, it can be said that the world of isolated Mennonite villages that Mennonite settlers established in southern Russia at the end of the eighteenth century has partially survived for as long as Mennonites lived there but underwent significant transformation between the 1920s and the Second World War. Although before the second wave of Mennonite emigrants left Russia most Mennonite villages were populated entirely by Mennonites, most likely there were always some Russian speakers in the Mennonite villages, whether they were servants, labourers, or came there to trade. Speaking about the further development of these villages, we can identify two opposite tendencies. On the one hand, some villages, usually larger and economically developed, were subject to increasing contact with Russian speakers and saw a number of non-Mennonite families move in. On the other hand, because of the Soviet economic policies and the general impoverishment of the population, it was no longer possible for Mennonites to hire local workers, and consequently some Mennonite villages became even more secluded than before. The last point is consistent with the fact that all three respondents in the second set who claimed that their parents might have picked up some Russian from the Russian workers classified their own villages as 'closed'.

6.1.2 Education

The schooling system created by Mennonites in Russia is in itself a fascinating topic, especially in the context of the languages the group used. Since the Mennonite education system in general has already been discussed in Chapter 3, it should suffice to mention here that High German was firmly established as the language of instruction in the Mennonite schools in southern Russia from the early nineteenth century and that, except for several brief attempts by the tsarist government to russify the Mennonites at the end of the nineteenth century, High German enjoyed the status of the sole school language until 1938, when it became illegal to use any language other than Russian in all schools in the USSR. In this section, I will first take a brief look at the education of the second- and the third-wave immigrants, and then will devote specific attention a) to the role the Russian language played in the education of the former and b) to the switch of Mennonite schools to Russian in 1938 and how it was perceived by the Mennonites.

First of all, it should be mentioned that the participants of the first set of interviews usually had significantly more years of formal education than the third wavers considered in this project. Thus, all twenty respondents from the first set whose level of education was mentioned in the interviews had completed primary schools, which as a rule consisted of seven years for boys and six years for girls. Eighteen of these participants studied in Mennonite secondary schools (*Zentralschulen*), with only two respondents not completing it for various, mostly economic reasons. Finally, as many as eight respondents (forty percent of the sample) studied at post-secondary educational institutions either in the Mennonite colonies (usually trade and commerce schools or teacher academies) or in the Russian cities (for degrees in teaching, agriculture,

technology, etc.). In addition, at least three more participants mentioned their intention to study at a Russian university, which for many was no longer possible after the Revolution because of the Civil War and the subsequent emigration. A brief summary of the first set participants' education is presented in Table 6-2.

| Total # of respondents with known level of education (set 1): | Completed primary school: | Studied at a Mennonite secondary school: | Attended a Mennonite institution of higher education: | Attended a Russian institution of higher education: |
|---|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| 20 | 20 | 18 | 5 | 3 |

Table 6-2: First set participants' education level

Further, although none of the participants discussed above studied in Germany, one of them mentioned several Mennonite acquaintances of his who attended universities in Germany, and one participant worked as a design engineer (Konstrukteur, Zeichner) in Ilmenau (Thüringen) before World War I.

How drastically the situation has changed in just two decades becomes noticeable if we take a look at the education Russian Mennonites received in the 1930s. Unlike the participants in the first set, the education of all third-wavers considered in this study was interrupted by World War II and was significantly affected by their subsequent flight to the West, and then by their emigration from Germany (as will be discussed later, a number of the second set respondents left Germany for South America and immigrated to Canada at a later stage). As a result, the education of many second set participants was broken, incomplete, and usually scattered between several educational systems. Thus, only four of the second set participants (born between 1918 and 1924) were old enough to have graduated from high school (which included ten school years) before the summer of 1941. The remaining twenty respondents were not able to finish their schooling before 1941 and had to continue their education under the German occupation (between 1942

and 1943), in Poland (1944), Germany (1945 and later) and then in some cases in South America and/or Canada.

It needs to be stressed that this situation was very typical among the younger third wave immigrants, who received their education in the 1930s, whereas the education of the older members of the third wave (born before 1920) must have been very similar to that of the first set participants. It is interesting that while many respondents in the second set had older relatives who had received post-secondary education in the USSR, they mentioned that it was becoming difficult for their older siblings to be accepted into Russian universities because of their German ethnicity and their refusal to join the Komsomol (the Young Communist League) or the Communist Party.

Very interesting is the fact that while the schooling the third-wavers received before 1938 was conducted entirely in High German, the education of most second-wavers considered in this study usually involved quite a bit of instruction in the Russian language. Thus, one of the participants (born in 1897) mentioned that two languages (Russian and High German) were regularly used in Mennonite primary schools after grade two and that there was an obligatory exam in the Russian language. Another second-waver (also born in 1897), who worked as a teacher in the Molotschna, said that two-thirds of his teaching was done in Russian.

Further support for this was found in the second set of interviews. Thus, a participant born in 1924 mentioned that when his mother went to school “*die Lehrer waren alle darauf bedacht die Schüler auch in Russisch zu lernen. Früher vielleicht mehr wie nach der Revolution*”. The same respondent also mentioned that while working as a teacher one of his relatives “*hat sogar das Russische extra eingeführt, die Kinder sollten*

Russisch lernen. ... Das ist noch vor der Revolution.” Another two participants (born in 1926 and 1924) also mentioned that their parents had most if not all of their education in this language:

- E. Dridger: *Unsere Eltern ... als die zu Schule gingen, die hatten bloß Russisch. Meine Mutter hat Russisch gelernt, ich weiß nicht wann das ins Deutsche übergang.*
- J. Driedger: *Ja, das war noch unter den Zaren. Mein Vater auch. ... Die hatten dann nur Russisch in der Schule eine Zeitlang.*
- E. Dridger: *Ja, die sprachen perfekt Russisch. Meine Mutter war eine Lehrerin.*
- J. Driedger: *Wenn mein Vater rechnete, dann rechnete er immer in Russisch.*

Such claims clearly indicate that before the Revolution of 1917 Mennonites indeed made a serious attempt to introduce their youth to the Russian language through schools.

Interestingly, as many speakers from the second set indicated, this initiative was completely abandoned soon after the Revolution; and High German again became the only language of school instruction until 1938.

Further, it is quite noteworthy that although a significant part of the Mennonite education in pre-revolutionary Russia was conducted in the Russian language, not a single participant from the first set expressed dissatisfaction or any negative feelings about it. This is indeed surprising, especially if one takes into account the fact that using Russian as a language of instruction was not initiated by the Mennonites themselves but was imposed on them by the tsarist government as a part of its reforms.

It is quite interesting to compare this to the experiences of the second-set participants. Unlike the second-wavers, who willingly agreed to receive a significant part of their education in the Russian language, the education of the third-wavers seems to have concentrated much more on making the Mennonite children proficient in High German only. Thus, Russian was clearly not given much attention before 1938 and was

usually taught only as a foreign language (one hour a week) or sometimes was not taught at all. High German, on the other hand, was the only language to be used in school both by the teachers and the students. Furthermore, several participants also reported that their schools insisted that the students use High German for informal conversations with each other in the school yard (while for the majority it was natural to switch to Plautdietsch in informal situations) and that it was forbidden to speak Plautdietsch on the school grounds.

Such disregard for the Russian language backfired on Mennonites in the fall of 1938, when the Bolsheviks determined that German should only be taught as a foreign language starting in grade five (Moelleken, 1992, p. 70). Most German-speaking teachers were now replaced with Russian and Ukrainian teachers, and High German was taught as a foreign language for one hour a week only starting in grade five. The switch occurred abruptly and resulted in complete frustration for many Mennonite children, whose abilities in Russian were not sufficient to successfully continue the program in a different language. Four second-set participants explicitly mentioned how difficult it was for them to adjust to the language switch, and how their marks suffered because of it. For example, E. Toews (born in 1923) remembers: *“in der Schule wir haben viel auswendig gelernt. Wir wussten gar nicht was wir sagten. ... Als es [Russisch] Fremdsprache war, war es nicht so schwer aber als alles in Russisch war und die russischen Schriftsteller und die langen Geschichten kamen, wir mussten es alles durchlesen, das war schwer.”* Also, one of the participants, who had finished grade six of the German school, reported that after his school switched to Russian, he stopped attending it because he did not understand anything.

That said, however, the switch of Mennonite schools to Russian did not ruin the education of all the Mennonite children and teenagers who were affected by it. For example, two speakers in the second set, who were born in 1923 in the Ohrloff and Gnadenfeld villages of the Molotschna colony, finished grade seven of the Mennonite school when the switch to Russian took place in 1938. Although one of the participants remembers having some difficulties in the Russian school initially, both were planning to attend a Russian university after school.

The principal difference between the education of the two groups of participants, however, is not the length, level, or continuity of their education, but rather their attitude to the language of school instruction. Thus, the speakers of the first set willingly accepted Russian alongside High German as a language of instruction for some disciplines in their schools, despite the fact that generally they had less contact with the Russian-speaking population than Mennonites in the 1930s, and that their contact was usually of the employer-to-workers character. The education of the second set participants, in contrast, usually concentrated heavily on raising the Mennonite youth with High German as the primary language and typically left very limited space in the academic curriculum for teaching the Russian language. Therefore, it becomes evident that something had changed in the Mennonites' attitude to the Russian language between the time when the two groups received their education. The factors that might be held responsible for this change are presented and discussed in the next section.

6.1.3 *Self-identification, Patriotism and Attitudes to the State*

It is interesting that participants in both sets viewed themselves as ‘*Deutsche*’ (Germans) and used this term interchangeably with the term ‘*Mennoniten*’ (Mennonites), despite the religious connotation of the latter. Thus, almost every speaker in the sample referred to him- or herself as ‘*Deutsch*’ at some point of the interview. For example, when talking about a specific way Mennonite households were set up in Russia, Maria Toews (born in 1905), asked the interviewer: “*wissen Sie, was eine Sommerstube im deutschen Heim war?*” Later she frequently referred to herself as German, for example, when talking about the times when she did not know enough English to communicate with her employers in Canada: “*na ja, eine deutsche Frau weiß das ohne das ihr das gezeigt wird*”. Another first-set interviewee, Johann Wichert (born in 1897), when explaining the set up of the colony where he lived, said “*wir waren unter mennonitischer Verwaltung, wir waren bloss Deutsche*”. A wealth of similar examples can be drawn from almost every interview in the sample, including the second set: [Interviewer:] *Und das waren Mennoniten?* – [Horst Rempel, born in 1926:] *Ja, das waren die Deutsche*” or Peter Pauls (born in 1931) when commenting on the German occupation of the Mennonite colonies during World War II: “*Die deutschen Soldaten freuten sich natürlich auch mitten in Russland auf einmal deutsche Leute anzutreffen*”.

On the other hand, the Mennonites’ usage of the term ‘*Deutsch*’ was significantly wider than ‘*Mennonit*’ and encompassed all German speakers regardless of religious affiliation. For example, when talking about the way land in Russia was given to the foreign colonists but not to the native population, Abram Wall (born in 1902) mentioned: “*damals, der durchschnittliche mennonitische, lutherische, katholische, deutsche Bauer,*

der wusste ja nicht was hinter den Kulissen vorging”. Similarly, William Andres (born in 1902), when telling the story of his trip to Moscow from the Molotschna, said: *“und so versammelten wir uns dort im Norden zwölf Tausend Deutsche, meist alles Mennoniten, kleiner Prozent Lutheraner und Katholiken”*.

Interestingly, in those situations when it was necessary to distinguish between the Mennonites and the other groups of ethnic Germans, besides the religious description (*die Lutheraner, die Katholiken*, etc.) speakers in both sets often used the language criterion by forming deadjectival nouns, such as ‘die Hochdeutschen’ (e.g. Guenter Enns, born in 1928: *“und es gab noch eine [einige Deutsche in der Gegend], wir nannten die Kolonisten, das waren die Hochdeutschen*) or ‘die Plattdeutschen’ to refer to themselves (e.g. Abraham Klassen, born in 1893: *“das sind Plattdeutsche aus Russland”*).

At the same time, Mennonites obviously did not perceive Germans residing in the Russian Empire as different from Germans living in Germany and felt connected to the country. Approximately half of the first group of participants never set foot on German soil ,and most of the other half stayed in Germany only for a brief time, such as several hours (e.g. J. Driedger, born in 1901) or several months (e.g. W. Andres, born in 1902) on their way to Canada. Nevertheless, Germany was identified several times as *‘unsere alte Heimat’* (interestingly, by the same J. Driedger and W. Andres). Similar attitudes were sometimes expressed when the first-set participants talked about the occupation of their colonies by the German army during World War I. For example, Henry Reimer (born in 1899) mentioned:

“die deutsche [Soldaten] wurden von uns Mennoniten sehr gut aufgenommen, die russische Bevölkerung, die meinten wir nahmen sie zu gut auf. Aber nur war das

einmal, dass es Deutsche waren, wir sprachen Deutsch alle. Und dann, die machten uns frei von die Bolschewiken, von die Mörder, die uns so terrorisierten. ... Sie wurden sehr gut aufgenommen, dann wurde ein sehr gutes Essen vorgestellt. Und dann die Jugend, die sang deutsche Lieder. Wir konnten ja auch die deutsche Lieder, grade die, die Deutsche konnten, und wenn die Deutschen anstimmten, sangen wir mit. Und das war ihnen interessant, dass wir all die Lieder auch konnten”.

The majority of the other participants also mentioned their positive experiences and highly positive attitude towards the German army occupying their colonies.

However, such strong self-identification with all things German often coincided with the first group’s patriotic feelings towards Russia and their self-identification as good Russian citizens. The extent to which Mennonite identity in the 1920s was torn between Germany and Russia becomes evident if we compare the above quotation from Henry Reimer with an account provided by J. Driedger (born in 1901):

“Wir waren gute Bürger des Landes. Wir waren patriotische Bürger. Der Krieg war gegen Deutschland und wir waren selber Deutsche. Und unsere Kultur war eigentlich auch sehr deutsch, wir haben vieles von Deutschland übernommen. Aber trotzdem wir waren gute Bürger und wir hörten nicht gerne, dass Russland so an den Fronten verlieren tat. Wir hätten lieber gesehen, wenn Russland gewonnen hat. Das war unser Vaterland. Ja, dem Kaiser, dem hatten wir so vieles zu verdanken. Wir waren so aufgebracht.”

Similar attitudes regarding World War I were in fact expressed by most participants, e.g. *“wir waren Russländer, wir gingen mit Russland mit”* (Gerhard Enns, born in 1885) or *“Wir liebten unser Vaterland, wir wollten gar nicht Deutschland”*. A similar view was also expressed by Nikolai Driedger (born in 1893): *“at the beginning of the First World War we were Russian patriots up to the top, da hat keiner von uns Mennoniten irgendwie Deutschland begrüßt”*.

Indeed, Mennonite’s patriotism towards Russia and, first of all, towards the Tsar, was mentioned by at least a third of the first set participants. Most Mennonite families had portraits of the Tsar at home as a sign of solidarity (e.g. *“nicht dass wir ihn [den Zar] sehr verehrten aber es zeigte eine Art Patriotismus”*, Nick Franzen, born in 1907) and grieved when the Tsar was overthrown and eventually executed (e.g. *“Wir liebten das russische Kaiserhaus. Wir ehrten den. Und dann als die Kaiserfamilie wurde nach Sibirien geschickt und ermordet, ach wir haben alle sehr getrauert”*, Gertruda Reimer, born in 1884).

It must be mentioned, however, that before World War I there were very few negative feelings towards Mennonites as Germans from the Russian government as well as from the local population. The situation drastically changed during and after World War I, when the Mennonites, who enjoyed a privileged status under the German occupation, began to be associated with the enemy. It was then that the Mennonites undertook an unsuccessful attempt to avoid being identified as ‘Germans’ and tried to receive official recognition as Mennonites of Dutch origin. An interesting description of this process is provided by Cornelius Martens (born in 1892):

“Die Regierung war gegen uns, feindlich gesonnen schon. Und da im Parlament wir wollten uns auch noch wehren und wir haben und wollten uns protekten. Im Parlament haben wir dafür geschoben, wir wären holländische Deutsche, nicht? Holländer. Sie haben uns das gar nicht angeglaubt. Sie sagten wir kennen euch, ihr seid nicht Holländer, ihr seid rein Deutsche. Und wir werden euch das Land auch konfeskieren”.

It is interesting that very few participants of the first set and none from the second mentioned any tension or negative attitude towards them as Germans from the local population. In fact, almost all interviewees from the second set and most interviewees of the first characterized their Russian neighbours very positively and their relationship with them as very good, e.g. *“Die Verhältnisse zwischen uns und die Russen waren gut. Sehr gut, muss ich sagen”* (William Andres, born in 1902). At the same time, absolutely all participants considered in this study mentioned the hostile attitude of the Soviet government that was progressively restricting their freedom and making their lives extremely difficult. Thus, already after the Revolution of 1917, and especially during the years of the Civil War (1917-1923), when the Mennonites in southern Ukraine were subjected to most brutal terror by the anarchist bands of Nestor Makhno, their patriotic feelings towards Russia began to disappear and completely vanished soon thereafter. Most likely, these negative experiences and the Mennonites’ resentment of the actions of the Soviet government were then transferred onto the Russian language in general, and Mennonites no longer devoted much attention to it in their schools.

Such a change of attitudes towards their country of birth could not, of course, leave the Mennonites’ identity unaffected. Since they no longer viewed themselves as

loyal Russian citizens, it became more German. Thus, the third-wavers did not show a comparable range of attitudes towards the German occupying forces to those of the second-wavers, but often greeted German soldiers as their saviours and liberators, and unmistakably identified themselves as Germans: e.g. “*sie [die deutschen Soldaten] haben uns gar nicht gestört, sie haben uns viel, viel gegeben weil wir Deutsche waren*” (Franz Koop, born in 1928), or “*wir standen an der Straße und haben gesagt: wir sind Deutsche!*” (Katharina Kehler, born in 1932). Furthermore, unlike the first set participants, who at one point tried to receive official recognition as Dutch to avoid being persecuted as Germans, the third-wavers wanted be recognized as *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans) by the German government and even had to prove their German ancestry to become German citizens during World War II. The third-wave Mennonite immigrants to Canada were also viewed as ‘more German’ by the second-wavers, as is discussed in section 6.3.2. To what extent such attitudes and self-identification had other effects the Mennonites’ use of their languages in Russia is discussed below.

6.1.4 Language Use Patterns in Russia

As previously mentioned, most Mennonites in Russia (with a few exceptions discussed below) knew and were regularly using two Germanic varieties: Plautdietsch as the communal language and High German mostly for official purposes. In addition, during their stay in Russia, some of them also acquired the Russian language. This section discusses how, with whom and for what purposes these three languages were used by the Mennonites in Russia, in what relationship they stood to each other, and also examines the Mennonites’ perceptions of them.

6.1.4.1 Knowledge of Russian

First of all, it must be mentioned that since the first set participants were not asked directly about their proficiency and usage of Russian, most of the conclusions regarding their knowledge and usage of it had to be based on other factors, such as whether they switched to it during the interview, used it to quote someone, or on other information about their experiences, such as education, employment, or military service. As may be predicted, such additional information was not always provided by the speakers of the first set, and it was not always possible to make a decision regarding their knowledge and use of Russian. Nevertheless, it was felt that more than half of all first-set participants (at least thirteen out of twenty-one) must have had a good command of the Russian language, whereas only one person clearly did not.

Knowledge of the Russian language among the second set participants was much easier to determine as they were directly asked whether they could speak Russian before World War II. Although such self-reported assessments are not always reliable, they nevertheless give an approximate indication of the speakers' abilities in the language. Thus, of the twenty-three participants who were old enough to remember their childhood in Russia, only five had no or very poor knowledge of Russian, thirteen claimed to have spoken it well or very well, and five claimed to have limited knowledge of it. Also, it is quite striking that of the twenty-two second set participants who provided this information, fourteen reported that both of their parents spoke Russian or Ukrainian quite well, and eight (more than a third of the sample) mentioned only one of their parents (almost always the father) being proficient in Russian. This imbalance may be explained

by the fact that traditionally Mennonite women were more likely than men to stay at home and work in the household and usually did not have much contact with Russian-speakers even if they were present in the village, e.g.:

“zum Beispiel, meine Mutter. Die hat fast kein Russisch gekannt – die ältere Frauen, die zu Hause waren. Aber wir пацаны [us boys] wir haben und gemischt mit die Jungens” (H. Lehn born in 1924).

Mennonite men usually received a better education than women and often found positions in Russian cities or large settlements. However, precisely because of their better education, for the Soviet secret service these Mennonite men were prime targets among ethnic Germans to be exiled to remote parts of the Soviet Union, where they would have to reside in Russian settlements. Many such exiled Mennonites were able to visit their original villages from time to time in the early 1930s, and sometimes did not return to the place of exile. Thus, some second set participants claimed that their fathers knew Russian well precisely because of being in exile, e.g. *“der Vater konnte [Russisch], ja - er war überall in Verbannung gewesen”* (E. Toews, born in 1923).

Further, it has also been found that in addition to some older Mennonite women who usually stayed in the household and did not communicate much with the local Slavic population, it was not uncommon to know very little or no Russian for those Mennonites who lived in distant and isolated parts of their colonies where no Russian speakers lived. An example of such area would be the southern villages of the Molotschna colony:

“unsere Dörfer waren die höchst am Norden gleich überm Fluss, das waren beim Russen da. Die weiter, welche weiter nach dem Süden wohnten, die

konnten sehr wenig Russisch, auch die Kinder nicht.” (G. Enns from set two)

Very interesting is the Mennonites’ perception of the Russian variety some of them spoke. While there is very little doubt that in their schools Mennonites learned the standardized literary Russian, they usually spoke a regionally coloured variety showing a strong influence of the Ukrainian language outside of the school limits. The first indication of this was given by the first set participant Nikolai Dridger (born in 1893), who claimed that after finishing school he worked in a Russian bank, which helped him learn *“richtig Russisch, nicht Ukrainisch.”*²⁴ Further evidence for this provide the borrowings, which the interviewees used during the interviews. Many of these words are not standard Russian lexical items, e.g. “яйко” (яйцо, egg) , “ясла” (ясли, nursery), “церква” (церковь, church), “могылы” (могилы, graves), “иди до дому” (иди домой, go home). It is interesting that the speakers were usually aware that the variety of Russian they spoke had a regional colouring, as is evident, for example, from the following statement by A. Loewen (born in 1924): *“wir sprachen was immer die Sprache, Ukrainisch oder Russisch war, vielleicht auch viel durcheinander, das weiss ich nicht, aber das haben wir gesprochen“*. Another participant from the second set identified the variety of Russian they spoke with the local population as *“Khokholsch, ... nicht richtig Russisch und nicht richtig Ukrainisch”*²⁵ and remembers that their Ukrainian teacher forbade them to use the Ukrainian words they picked up on the streets. At the same time, most second-set participants reflected very positively on Russian as a language.

²⁴ It is interesting that Ukrainian was usually perceived by Mennonites to be an inferior and less prestigious language than Russian.

²⁵ As previously mentioned, this name derives from ‘хохол’ a derogatory Russian word for ‘a Ukrainian’. The speaker, however, did not seem to give this word any negative meaning and specified that this was how they referred to the language they spoke with the local Slavic population.

6.1.4.2 *Usage of Russian*

As already mentioned in the previous section and Chapter 3, Mennonites usually used their knowledge of the Russian language to communicate with the local Slavic population, as well as at the places of work in the Russian cities or in large settlements for some Mennonites. However, it would be incorrect to think that this was the only function the Russian language fulfilled in the Mennonite colonies.

Thus, in addition to communicating with the Russian workers, it was very typical for the more educated participants from the first set to be familiar with and appreciate works of Russian literature, some of which they usually had at home. Further, Russian-language newspapers (e.g. *Московские Ведомости*) were gaining popularity and reportedly were read by many Mennonites before the Revolution. It is known that before World War I there was even a serious discussion among Mennonites about the need for a Russian-language newspaper (personal correspondence with Dr. James Urry).

The situation with Russian-language reading materials among the second set participants was somewhat different. Thus, while the more educated interviewees usually also knew and treasured masterpieces of Russian literature, their attitude towards Russian-language newspapers was very skeptical, if not negative. For example, while almost every third-wave immigrant considered in this study had to subscribe to *‘Правда’*, the official newspaper of the communist party, and although more Russian-language reading materials were available at the small local communist libraries called *‘красный уголок’* (red corner), only one participant remembers reading Russian newspapers. The rest of the interviewees remember having no interest in them whatsoever because of the strict censorship and the communist propaganda contained in them. Ironically,

Mennonites did use the local newspapers for all kinds of purposes other than reading: to obtain slips of paper for writing or drawing (the unused white borders), to start a fire, or to make roll-up cigarettes.

In addition to communicating in Russian with the local Russian speakers, the second set participants were exposed to the Russian language in at least three ways the first set participants were not: first of all, Russian was the only language of the cinema, which was eagerly attended by the Mennonite children. In fact, as many as sixteen of the second set participants remember frequently seeing Russian movies. Further, most of the second set participants also had a loudspeaker installed in one of the rooms, which transmitted the local Russian-language radio station. Although their attitude toward it was somewhat similar to that toward the communist newspapers, most participants remember listening to the news or to music transmitted over the radio. Finally, most of the third-wave immigrants considered in this study were forced to join the local collective farms administered by Russian-speakers. Consequently, all communication with the management as well as the paperwork had to be conducted in the Russian language.

To summarize, it can be seen that in the 1930s, despite the significant change in the Mennonites' attitude to the Russian state, which in turn had drastically decreased their enthusiasm about learning the Russian language, Russian was fulfilling a much larger number of functions and was used in more ways by the Mennonites in the 1930s than by the second wave immigrants during their time in Russia.

6.1.4.3 Language(s) of Early Childhood

When trying to determine the first language(s) of the first set participants, I faced very similar difficulties to those described in section 6.1.4.1. As none of the first set participants happened to mention directly what languages they spoke at home, the only conclusion that could be drawn based on other information provided by the first set interviewees is that the overwhelming majority of the group was very comfortable using Plautdietsch. Nevertheless, despite of this the first language(s) of the second-wave immigrants considered in this study could not be determined with any degree of certainty. Therefore, only the data collected from the second set of interviews is discussed in this section. The summary of it is presented in Table 6-3:

| Language(s) of early childhood: | Plautdietsch | Plautdietsch & Russian | High German & Plautdietsch | High German |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| # of participants (out of 24): | 15 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Table 6-3: the first language(s) of the second set participants

As the table shows, the majority of the interviewees in the second set grew up speaking Plautdietsch with their families. For almost all of these speakers, Plautdietsch was also the default language to be used in their village, especially if there were no or few Russian-speaking residents. The only two exceptions to this were a speaker who was born in a Plautdietsch-speaking family in the predominantly High German-speaking village of Gnadenfeld (Molotschna), and a speaker in whose native village of Ladekopp (Molotschna), Russian and Ukrainian were also used alongside Plautdietsch: “*es wurde alles durcheinander gesprochen*”.

Further, the two participants who spoke Plautdietsch and Russian since early childhood deserve special attention and present rather unusual cases among Mennonites. The first of them was born from a mixed marriage and spoke Plautdietsch with one parent

and only Russian with the other. Nearly simultaneous acquisition of Plautdietsch and Russian of the second participant in this category was necessitated by his father's exile to Siberia, where only Russian-speakers were around. This case is rather unusual because the families of exiled Mennonites often stayed in the colonies and did not join the exiled parent. This speaker, however, was taken to Siberia as a baby and lived there for nine years. He remembers that prior to his family's return from exile, his parents spoke Plautdietsch to him and his siblings and he usually answered in Russian. The speaker mentioned certain difficulties among the Mennonite children upon his return to the Mennonite colonies, because of his poor knowledge of both Germanic varieties Mennonites used.

Further, three speakers in the sample grew up speaking both High German and Plautdietsch. Two of them (H. Braun, born in 1928, and P. Bergen, born in 1924) lived in predominantly Plautdietsch-speaking villages and usually spoke Plautdietsch outside of the home. It is quite interesting that in both cases the switch to High German in the respondents' families happened because their mothers came from the more educated Mennonite families (usually those of teachers or church elders) who had already adopted High German as their communal language. The third participant in this category claims to have always spoken both languages to the parents.

Finally, four participants in the sample grew up speaking only High German. Two of them were born in partially non-Mennonite German families, and one or both of their parents spoke only High German. Both of these speakers lived among the Mennonites from very early childhood, both acquired knowledge of Plautdietsch at a later stage, both married Mennonites, and linguistically were felt not to be any different from the other

participants. Hence, the two interviewees were not excluded from the sample. The other two participants spoke only High German at home and mentioned that their mothers came from educated Mennonite families and were both teachers.

6.1.4.4 High German among Plautdietsch-speakers

As previously mentioned, most of the first set participants seemed to be fluent in Plautdietsch and the majority of the second set interviewees grew up with it as at their first language. At the same time, the first set interviewees were proficient enough in High German to choose it as the language of the interview (they were offered to a choice between English, Plautdietsch, and High German more than forty years after their arrival in Canada). Unlike the interviewees of the first set, the second set participants were not given such a language choice, but they felt comfortable enough to converse with the interviewer in High German and to conduct the interview in this language after also having stayed in Canada for more than forty years. This section looks in detail at the following three questions: 1) where and how the Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonites acquired their knowledge of High German, and when they used it; 2) what their perception of High German and High-German speaking Mennonites was; and 3) how both languages were used by the Mennonites and what functions they fulfilled in the Mennonite communities.

First of all, it must be mentioned that the acquisition of High German by the Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonite majority is usually considered to have taken place in Mennonite schools. Indeed, most of the second set participants inevitably gave this answer when asked where they learned High German. Yet a closer look at the interviews

reveals interesting discrepancies between this answer and some other information the interviewees provided. For example, one participant born in 1931 started his schooling in 1938 with Russian as the only language of instruction and initially claimed to have started to learn High German in school only under the German occupation:

[Interviewer]: *Und wo haben Sie das Hochdeutsche gelernt?*

[Johann Gossen]: *in der Schule.*

[Interviewer]: *Sie gingen noch in die deutsche Schule?*

[Johann Gossen]: *Während der deutschen Zeit, einundvierzig bis dreiundvierzig.*

However, later in the interview, when the speaker mentioned completing grades four and five under the German occupation, when High German was the only language of instruction, he was asked how he could do it without knowing the language. Then Mr. Gossen changed his opinion: *“na, höchstwahrscheinlich haben wir auch schon Hochdeutsch gesprochen, weil unsere Vorfahren kommen ja von Holland, dann sind sie in Ostpreußen gewesen”*. Further, in the interview Mr. Gossen also mentioned that German soldiers were stationed in their village and that he remembered talking to them in High German since they did not understand Plautdietsch:

[Interviewer]: *Und haben Sie die deutschen Soldaten angesprochen?*

[Johann Gossen]: *Oh ja, die sind bei uns einquartiert gewesen.*

[Interviewer]: *Und konnten die auch Plattdeutsch verstehen?*

[Johann Gossen]: *na, so wie ich sage, höchstwahrscheinlich haben wir auch Hochdeutsch gesprochen.*

A very similar discrepancy was shown by another second set participant who initially claimed to have spoken only Plautdietsch. Born in 1933, this interviewee did not attend school until the German occupation during World War II, and consequently should not have had any knowledge of High German before 1941. Yet the same participant remembered speaking High German with German soldiers when they were stationed in their village. Similarly, another participant, who was born in 1934 and also did not start

his education in High German until 1941, also claimed that they understood High German already as children.

The existence of these discrepancies could be attributed to the not always reliable self-evaluation of one's language knowledge, if not for the evidence provided by those Mennonites in the sample who did not speak any Plautdietsch. There were two participants who were both born in High German-speaking families but lived in Plautdietsch-speaking villages. One of them was only seven years old when her family left the USSR and did not have many memories about her life in Russia, yet she was positive that neither she nor her siblings spoke any Plautdietsch as children. She mentioned that most likely the other children spoke Plautdietsch to them but they answered in High German. Although this statement is only an assumption, it nevertheless shows that the speaker considered it reasonable that the Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonite children had receptive abilities in High German. The other participant who also lived among Plautdietsch speakers but did not know any Plautdietsch as a child was born in 1926 and clearly remembered that the other Mennonite children in Russia always spoke High German to her and her siblings. Based on this evidence, the conclusion can be drawn that at least a part of the Plautdietsch speakers (and maybe even a significant part) had some abilities in High German before they started to attend German school. But how and where would these speakers acquire their knowledge of High German before learning it at school? Below I will present and discuss five ways other than school in which Mennonite children in the 1930s were exposed to High German.

The first, and possibly one of the earliest ways in which Mennonite children in Russia started to acquire High German was reading. Plautdietsch was a spoken language

at the time and none of the second set participants ever considered using it for writing: all personal communication as well as much reading and writing in Russia was done entirely in High German (which included literature, poetry, and various other types of written texts).

Although some literature was written in Plautdietsch, consisting mostly of plays and short stories, was also by such authors as J. H. Janzen (1878-1950) or A. Dyck (1889-1970), this did not happen until the 1940s in Canada. Consequently, none of the second set participants ever considered using Plautdietsch for writing and took it rather as a form of entertainment, since, as many of them stated “*Plattdeutsch war eine Sprache, die man sprach und nicht schrieb. ... Einer schreibt so, der andere schreibt so, da ist nichts einheitliches in Plattdeutsch*” (J. Driedger, born in 1924) or “[schreiben auf] *Plattdeutsch geht ja fast nicht, da gibts da keine Grammatik*” (H. Wiens, born in 1938).

Therefore, all personal correspondence with their relatives in North America as well as in the other Mennonite colonies was in High German. The letters were probably read, re-read, and discussed in the families. This is evident from the fact that many participants remember these letters and claim that their parents wrote “*in der gotischen Sprache*”, undoubtedly referring to one of the several old handwritten German scripts (*Kurrentschrift, Sütterling, or die deutsche Volksschrift*) which differs substantially from the handwritten script officially used for writing since 1941. Further, besides the written correspondence with their relatives, which must have been rather slow from the late 1920s because of increasing censorship, at least eight native Plautdietsch speakers in the second set said that they had access to German-language print materials. Although, most Mennonite children obviously learned to read after they started school, several

Plautdietsch speakers remember their parents reading German books to them as children. In fact, reading German books to Mennonite children was mentioned by one participant as the reason why he thinks Plautdietsch speakers also know High German:

“Höchstwahrscheinlich haben wir auch Hochdeutsch gesprochen, weil wir gelesen haben, wenigstens unsere Eltern.” (J. Gossen from set two).

Further, while none of the second set participants mentioned ever seeing any German-language newspaper before World War II, it was mentioned several times that most of the old German books they had at home had been ordered from Germany because *“da war reger Verkehr [mit Deutschland] vor dem Kommunismus”*. Although the first set participants were not asked about their reading materials in German, some of them mentioned having many German-language newspapers and magazines in Russia. Therefore, it can be concluded that although the quantity of German reading materials had declined significantly, reading in High German was still common among the Mennonites in Russia in the late 1920s and 1930s, and was one of the ways in which Mennonite youth was exposed to it.

Obviously, after learning how to write in High German, the Mennonites would also use this language to write letters themselves. Writing letters in High German is far more important than it may seem at the first glance because there were hardly any Mennonite families in the second group who were not separated or did not lose track of some of their family members or extended relatives during World War II. Most of them found each other again through the Red Cross organization, with the help of the Mennonite Central Committee, or through Mennonite newspapers. Despite the fact that some participants mentioned receiving letters from their relatives in the USSR in the

Russian language several decades after World War II, this was usually an exception and almost all written correspondence among Mennonites was always conducted in High German.

Another domain which has been traditionally reserved for High German among Mennonites is their religion. Although this has changed today (as discussed in section 6.3.3 below), prior to their emigration to Canada and for several decades thereafter, High German was the variety exclusively used in the religious domain. However, all Mennonite churches were abolished in the Soviet Union in the 1920s as a result of the Soviet anti-religion campaign and of the ruthless physical elimination of those who protested against it. Therefore, only a few second set participants remember attending church services, and an even smaller number had a copy of the German Bible at home. Despite of this, many participants were taught how to pray by their parents, and, especially in the closed villages, by their kindergarten and school teachers. Needless to say, the only language of prayer was High German. Further, although open religious celebrations were strongly discouraged and children were subjected to severe anti-religious propaganda at school, several participants remember their families retelling stories from the Bible during family gatherings on such days. Similarly to praying, talking about religion, and especially interpreting the Bible, the corner stone of Mennonite beliefs, was always done only in High German.

Thirdly, it was discovered that singing was an extremely popular activity among Mennonites. As already indicated by the first set participant Henry Reimer in section 6.1.3, Mennonites knew and eagerly sang many German folksongs. This statement was also supported by many second set participants, who also claimed to have sung these

songs regularly and to have impressed the German soldiers as well as visitors from Germany with their knowledge of them. As stated by several participants, all the German songs Mennonites sang were only in High German, although Russian songs had also already entered the repertoire for some respondents in the 1920s and 1930s.

Fourthly, although in the late 1930s, High German was replaced by Russian as the language of Mennonite education and the religious domain altogether was reduced to a minimum and practically driven underground, the language was still used in situations of an official character. Thus, it was typical for Mennonites to speak Plautdietsch among themselves, for example, on the way to an official meeting (the village council, or a meeting with a former teacher or church minister), but then to switch entirely to High German during the event, and then back to Plautdietsch afterwards. For example, when comparing the functions of Plautdietsch to those of High German, one participant mentioned: “*Plattdeutsch ist so unter sich, zu Hause, wenn es irgendetwas offizielles war, war das nur Hochdeutsch*”. This perception of Plautdietsch as the informal language was very typical to all interviewees in the second set, who often expressed very similar views, e.g.: “*die plattdeutsche Sprache, das war so nebenbei, das sprichst du zu Hause*” (H. Lehn, born in 1926).

Further, as my data shows the knowledge of High German by all Mennonites born in Russia was not only nothing special, but was assumed and expected. Thus, although there were some Mennonites in the sample who had little or no knowledge of Plautdietsch, many second set participants mentioned that absolutely all Mennonites in Russia knew High German: “*alle, alle, alle konnten Hochdeutsch sprechen*” (H. Willems, born in 1938) or “*Es konnten alle Hochdeutsch. Ich mein’, es war kein Problem für sie*

von Plattdeutsch auf Hochdeutsch und von Hochdeutsch auf Plattdeutsch” (P. Pauls, born in 1931). Further, it is interesting that switching to High German when speaking with someone who did not know Plautdietsch or was not very comfortable in it also seems to be have been expected and accepted by Plautdietsch speakers without question or negative feelings.

Fifthly, and lastly, it was found that in many Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonite villages there were some people who spoke only High German and with whom consequently, Plautdietsch speakers would have to switch to High German. Often, these were isolated families of ethnic Germans of Lutheran or Catholic denominations, or a number of Jewish families, who were also reported to speak High German to the Mennonites. Also, in addition to some entirely High German-speaking Mennonite villages such as Gnadenfeld in the Molotschna, in many other villages there were Mennonite families who used High German for informal communication. Usually these High German speakers came from more educated families of teachers, bankers, accountants, pharmacists, former church ministers, etc. An interesting account was provided was provided by H. Rempel (born in 1926), resident of Ladekopp (Molotschna), when he was asked whether there were High German-speaking Mennonites in his village:

“da waren etliche, zum Beispiel diese Familie. Er war ein конторщик [office employee], er hat im Büro gearbeitet und sie war Lehrerin. Und die waren von die, ein bisschen bessere Klasse. Nicht das sie reich waren, aber sie haben sich diese Sprache gleich als Hochdeutsch angenommen. Und sie sprachen nicht Plattdeutsch, überhaupt nicht. Und da waren auch welche die, der Apotheker zum Beispiel, solche Leute sprachen dann nur Hochdeutsch.”

The observation that Mennonites with better education often insisted on using only High German in their families was frequently confirmed by many second set interviewees. For example:

“Ich hatte auch eine, eine Kusine, no, eine Tante die, die waren beide Lehrer gewesen und die sprachen nur Hochdeutsch mit ihren Kindern. Plattdeutsch konnten die auch, aber die erste Sprache war Hochdeutsch”. (A. Niebuhr, born in 1933)

In addition, it has been found that the mothers of four out of seven second set participants, who spoke High German in their families, were teachers. It is quite interesting that for the participants considered in this study, the switch to High German in the family was usually initiated by women. When talking about why their mothers spoke High German, many participants reported the same pattern: the parents would speak Plattdeutsch among themselves but would use only High German with the children. An interesting account of the switch in his village was provided by Peter Pauls (born in 1931):

“Ich glaube, in Chortitza-Rosental mein Jahrgang hat Hochdeutsch gesprochen. Mit den Eltern wurde Hochdeutsch gesprochen, unter sich haben die Eltern und ihre Freunde und so weit Bekannte haben Plattdeutsch gesprochen. Deutsch und Plattdeutsch, es kommt darauf an, wie alt du bist.”

While the switch to High German as the communal language in other Mennonite villages was certainly not as common as the one reported above for Chortitza-Rosental, my data demonstrate that a number of the interviewees parents' families had already switched to High German, which means that the switch was already underway in the first two decades

of the twentieth century. Thus, while some interviewees were the first generation of Mennonites whose parents brought them up with High German as the communal language, one of the interviewees (E. Dridger, born in 1926) mentioned that already her Plautdietsch-speaking grandparents used only High German when speaking to her mother. This pattern was also found to be very typical among the families of the second and third wave Mennonite immigrants in Canada.

The switch to High German as the family language seems to have been a conscious attempt on the part of some Mennonite parents to teach their children a more prestigious variety (“*eine richtige Sprache*”), as is evident, for example, from such statements as “*Die Eltern wollten doch wohl immer nur Hochdeutsch*“ (A. Niebuhr, born in 1933, when talking about why some Mennonite families spoke High German), or “*wenn die Kinder schon Deutsch lernen sollen, dann soll es alles Hochdeutsch sein*“ (H. Lehn, born in 1926). Most likely, such pressure from the parents to teach their children High German was caused by the higher prestige of High German, which is often viewed by Mennonites as a more practical language, e.g. : “*... ich denke das ist so viel praktischer* [referring to some Mennonites speaking High German to their children], *weil alles wurde in Hochdeutsch geschrieben und getan*“ (H. Rempel, born in 1926).

Now let us take a look at the relationship in which High German and Plautdietsch stood to each other in the Mennonite colonies in Russia. First of all, there is much evidence that before a number of Mennonite families began switching to High German as the communal language, Mennonites’ linguistic situation in Russia can clearly be characterized as stable bilingualism with diglossia. Thus, we see the fulfillment of all three conditions of stable bilingualism outlined by Loudon (1994, pp. 74-75):

- 1) Both languages are acquired sufficiently early and completely (i.e. in childhood) such that individual speakers are reasonably fluent in both;
- 2) Both languages are appropriate in substantial and productive domains of use, such as there is a functional need for both languages in the daily lives of speakers;
- 3) Both languages enjoy more or less equivalent (though not necessarily equal) prestige among speakers.

Indeed, before the beginning of the twentieth century, all Mennonites in Russia grew up with both Plautdietsch and High German, which they acquired in their childhood, and both languages played a vital role in their everyday lives. It may seem that the third condition is not fulfilled, because, as has been shown above, High German had significantly higher prestige than Plautdietsch. Yet it should not be forgotten that both Plautdietsch and High German were the Mennonites' insider-varieties, which gave both languages a roughly similar status compared to Russian. Despite the significant degree of patriotism shown before the Revolution of 1917, among other ways, in learning the language, Russian was still not used by the Mennonites for informal communication and was largely considered an outsiders' variety.

Similarly, until a number of Mennonite native speakers of High German appeared in their colonies, the socio-linguistic arrangement of Mennonites in Russia was also clearly diglossic. First of all, let me summarize and repeat here the six crucial conditions of diglossia presented in section 2.2.1:

- 1) Diglossia presupposes the existence of two varieties in the same community: a superposed variety (H) usually reserved for written and more official purposes and a vernacular variety (L).

- 2) There has to be a functional specialization of H and L – a set of situations in which only one of the varieties is appropriate. Neither H nor L can be used in the domains reserved for the other.
- 3) The H variety must have greater prestige and superiority over L, a greater literary heritage and a strong tradition of formal grammatical study and standardization.
- 4) The choice of H or L is determined entirely by the social context and is not a marker of social identity of a speaker.
- 5) There is no prestigious group of native H-speakers and children have no opportunity to acquire H as their native variety.
- 6) The functional distribution between the two varieties protects L against H, which is more likely to be displaced by L than the other way round.

As has been shown above, the first three conditions have been fulfilled in the Mennonite communities ever since they accepted High German and the language of religion and official matters in Prussia at the end of the eighteenth century. Although conditions four, five, and six were also initially fulfilled, they were not necessarily true for some speakers born in the twentieth century. Thus, as has been demonstrated above, in the twentieth century in many villages there were some Mennonites who used High German as the communal language. Because of their better education and usually more prestigious jobs, these Mennonites also were perceived by the Plautdietsch speakers to have a higher social standing. Further, as I have shown, because of the greater prestige of High German, many Mennonite parents made a special effort to raise their children with High German as their native language. Consequently, it can be assumed that the number of native High German speakers among Mennonites was increasing, which could eventually have put

Plautdietsch at risk had the Mennonite colonies not been depopulated during World War II. Therefore, it can be concluded that although the initial linguistic arrangement of the Mennonites in Russia could be characterized as stable bilingualism with diglossia, this situation was slowly changing as High German was gaining more prestige and more and more Mennonite families were using it for informal communication.

6.1.4.5 Summary

This section has examined the knowledge, acquisition, and the usage patterns of Russian, Plautdietsch, and High German by the Mennonites in Russia before they left their colonies in 1943. It has been established that the majority of the participants in both sets most likely had a good command of the Russian language. While more than half of the second set participants reported that their parents could speak Russian well or very well, it was noticed that interviewees' fathers were more likely to have good knowledge of Russian than their mothers. This may be explained by the men's better education and job placements outside of the Mennonite villages, as well as by the fact that men were more likely than women to be exiled to remote parts of the USSR, where they usually had to reside and work among Russian speakers. Further, it has been pointed out by several interviewees that in the 1930s, it was not uncommon for older Mennonite women, who mostly worked around their households, as well as for Mennonites living in remote parts of their colonies not to know much Russian. In this respect, my results contradict the information provided by other researchers, e.g. Moelleken (1992), who stated that all third-wave Mennonite immigrants were fluent in Russian (p. 80).

Further, my data have suggested that because of the high prestige associated with the High German language, individual Mennonite families were increasingly accepting it as the communal language. Thus, although the majority of the interviewees in the second set spoke Plautdietsch as the first language, more than a quarter of all participants used High German (often alongside Plautdietsch) for ordinary conversation in their families, which was traditionally fulfilled by Plautdietsch. Finally, it has been shown that Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonites most likely acquired High German at a relatively early age as they were exposed to it in a number of ways, which included being read to by their parents, praying, singing religious or folk-songs, reading and writing (at a later age), communication with other Mennonites in official settings, with Mennonites of higher social status, as well as with some non-Mennonites. Plautdietsch, on the other hand, was found to fulfill a very limited number of functions, namely informal communication with the insiders. A summary of functions fulfilled by Russian, Plautdietsch, and High German among Mennonites in Russia before World War II is presented in the following table:

| | PD | High German | Russian |
|---|-----------|--|------------------------|
| Oral communication with insiders (informal context) | + | + | - |
| Oral communication with insiders (formal context) | - | + | - |
| Communication with outsiders | - | + (e.g. other ethnic Germans, Jewish families) | + |
| Reading/writing | - | + | + (to a lesser degree) |
| Praying | - | + | - |
| Singing (religious) | - | + | - |
| Singing (non-religious) | - | + | + (to a lesser degree) |
| Radio (2 nd set participants only) | - | - | + |
| Cinema (2 nd set participants only) | - | - | + |

Table 6-4: Domains of language use among Mennonites in Russia before WWII

6.2 On the Way to Canada

An interesting difference between the two groups of Mennonites considered in this project concerns the amount of time they spent in Germany. For the majority of the second wave immigrants, the process of immigration to Canada usually did not involve a stay in Germany, whereas all of the third wave immigrants spent between three and six years there. For example, those first set participants who left Russia between 1924 and 1927 (fourteen out of eighteen participants who provided this information) usually went from Moscow to Riga, and then through Belgium or England to Quebec or the Maritime provinces of Canada. The only exception to this was one participant who also came to Riga but had to travel to Hamburg in an attempt to receive his medical approval. At the same time, a relatively short stay in Germany was typical for those second wavers who left the USSR between 1927 and 1930. There were four such participants in the first interview set, all of who spent several months in Hammerstein (today's Czarne) before going to Canada.

On the other hand all third-wave immigrants considered in this study lived in the territory occupied by Germany after the summer of 1941 and resided on the territory of present-day Germany from the end of 1944. The experiences of the third-wavers in Germany were very different and ranged from those who felt completely at home there (e.g. *“die Bauern wollten mich sogar adoptieren. Ich habe mich wie zu Hause gefühlt”*, L. Winter) to those who felt much less comfortable, for example: *“Ich persönlich hatte das Gefühl wir waren Russen zu denen. ... Zu Hause haben wir uns dort nicht gefühlt”* (H. Wiens) or *“Wir haben da mit die Deutschen gearbeitet aber keine Gemeinschaft und keine Gemeinde. Und keine Freunde waren da”*. Interestingly, several participants

mentioned that they spoke High German differently from the Germans in Germany (e.g. “*unser Deutsch war den komisch*”), and one interviewee mentioned being laughed at because of it by her peers at school.

Further, it must be mentioned that all third-wave immigrants in the sample were very afraid of being repatriated (i.e. deported back to the Soviet Union), and all of them went through very stressful times and had to hide from Soviet officials looking for them and their families. Being repatriated was one of the reasons why many participants used the first opportunity to leave Germany and immigrate to Paraguay. Thus, a total of ten participants went there between 1947 and 1948.

The life-style in Paraguay, according to these interviewees, was very similar to that in pre-revolutionary Russia, with the exception that Russian was no longer needed or used by the Mennonites. All participants lived in closed Mennonite villages, went to Mennonite schools with High German as the only language of instruction, attended church services also conducted only in High German, and subscribed to the German-language Mennonite newspapers ‘Der Bote’ and ‘Die Rundschau’. Considering that there was very little contact with the Spanish-speaking population, the linguistic situation in Paraguay could be considered as diglossia with stable bilingualism, although some participants also reported an attempt by some Mennonites to use High German as the communal language, for it was held in an extremely high regard, as can be concluded from the following example:

“Wie wir noch in Paraguay in die geschlossene Dörfer gewohnt haben, wenn da mal etliche Familien mit ihren Kindern Deutsch gesprochen haben, [dann haben

die anderen gesagt]: *oh, der ist so eingebildet, der spricht mit die Kindern
Hochdeutsch!*” (H. Wiens)

However, despite full religious freedom, the economic conditions in South America were less than favourable and those Mennonites who had relatives in Canada used this opportunity to emigrate. Thus, all second set participants who left Germany for Paraguay came to Canada between 1954 and 1967.

The Mennonites who stayed in Germany usually received an opportunity to immigrate to Canada if they had living relatives there or if they signed a contract to come to Canada as farm-workers or lumbermen. Thus, all remaining second set participants immigrated to Canada between 1947 and 1950.

6.3 In Canada

6.3.1 Language Use among the Second Wavers

When the second wave immigrants arrived in Canada, many of them went through Ontario to Manitoba or Saskatchewan, where they usually had relatives who had come to Canada during the first migration wave. While many of the newcomers stayed in the prairies, some of them eventually moved to Ontario and settled together with other second wave Mennonite immigrants. Thus, more than half of the first set interviewees spent some time in Manitoba and Saskatchewan before moving to Ontario, whereas the rest settled there soon after their arrival. It is interesting that four of the first set participants, who were among the first to come to Ontario, were initially hosted by the Pennsylvania Mennonites in Waterloo. Yet because of the linguistic and cultural differences, the second wavers soon formed their own congregations and settled with the other immigrants from Russia.

It is interesting that although the second wave immigrants usually settled in English-speaking areas, many of them characterized themselves as “*eine geschlossene Gruppe*” and mentioned the “*Gruppengefühl*” they had:

“wir aus Russland Geflüchtete, wir nannten uns erst die Flüchtlingsgemeinde und wir gehörten zusammen. Die Lebenserfahrungen - alle gleiche, wenn auch von Altkolonie oder Molotschna oder Sibirien, wir fanden uns hier zusammen und hatten das Gefühl wir müssten zusammen halten“ (Jacob Janzen, born in 1895).

Consequently, for several decades after the arrival of the second wavers in Canada, there usually was little contact with English speakers, who were often referred to as ‘*die*

Englischen’ or *‘die Engländer*’. The extent to which contact with non-Mennonites was discouraged is evident from the deep disappointment still felt by some participants at the time of the interview about “*Verenglischung*” of most community members, “*Verwischung der Grenzen zwischen uns und den Engländern*”, or marrying non-Mennonites: “*Mixed marriages sind kein Wunder mehr!*” The result of these factors was usually perceived to be quite severe: “*we are losing our identity!*” Considering that such attitudes still existed among the second wave immigrants close to half a century after their immigration, one can only imagine how negative the original reaction to contact with English speakers was.

In terms of language use, the initial situation of the second wave immigrants in Ontario must have been very similar to that in Russia, with two major differences. Firstly, while Plautdietsch was most likely used by the majority as the language of the home, High German was still fostered in the community, and was the only language of the church, written communication, and official business. However, although knowledge of it was usually encouraged by parents, who almost without exception sent their children to a Saturday or Sunday school to learn High German, the main language of regular school for Mennonite children was now English. Secondly, Russian was now not used at all, as it was no longer seen by most Mennonites to be ‘their language’. Therefore, Mennonites no longer wanted to be identified as Russians or to be associated with Russia:

“die [Kanadier] wollten uns immer Russen nennen. Und so schlecht ich auch Englisch konnte, ich hab immer gesagt I am not a Russian, I am a German. Hier nannte ich mich German, nicht? In Russland nannten wir uns Holländer. Richtig gesagt sind wir holländischer Herkunft. Aber hier habe ich immer gesagt I am a German, nicht? Denn ich war proud of Germany.” (William Andres, born in 1902).

Having come to a country with a language they did not know, and no longer feeling connected to Russia, Mennonite immigrants felt very close to other German speakers. Thus, Maria Toews (born in 1897) remembers that her father, who did not know much English, always looked for German names on the store signs (assuming that it would mean that they also spoke High German) to do his shopping. Furthermore, it is interesting that in the early years Mennonites usually eagerly identified themselves with the German nation and the country of Germany, but were quite hesitant to do the same with Canada:

[Interviewer]: *Nun in Kanada, wie lange dauerte das bis die Immigranten Kanadier wurden?*

[N. Franzen]: *Das dauerte eigentlich ziemlich lang. Wir geben uns vor dass wir deutsches Blut in uns haben. Aber ob das ist, weiss ich nicht. ... Ich sage immer unser Kultur ist deutsch, ich habe auch durch die Zeit des Krieges hindurch immer gesagt wenn sie mich fragten und ich musste unterschreiben, what nationality? Also damals meinte mal, was für ein Volk du bist. Da schrieb [ich] immer German. Unsere Leute waren eigentlich holländisch. Mir gefällt das nicht, ich kenn so wenig von Holländern. Ich sage, Plattdeutsch ist nicht Holländ. Also ja, unser Kultur unser Sprache und ich weiss, mein Grossvater ist in Deutschland geboren, ich hab immer in mir German. Aber wir sind auch deutsche Patrioten. Ich weiss zum Beispiel in ersten Jahren wir verschrieben uns viel von Deutschland: Stahlwaren, Tischbesteche, Gabel, Messer und so was. Das ärgerte unsere englische Nachbarn.*

In addition, for many second wave immigrants it was very typical to stay in their own community and, as a result, not to know much English. Thus, at least seven participants of the first set reported that they did not learn any English for many years in Canada

because they had too little contact with English speakers. Several participants also reported that they were still not fluent in English at the time of the interview. Considering the Mennonites' above-mentioned self-identification as Germans and their usually poor abilities in English, it is understandable that during World War II they became associated with the enemy, and some of them remember threats and from confrontation with the local Canadian population on the streets.

Surprising, however, is the fact that throughout World War II and for some years thereafter High German remained the only language of the Mennonite church despite some reported attempts from the Canadian government to force Mennonites to replace it with English. In fact, Jacob Janzen, the first minister at the Leamington Mennonite Church, said that *“if the government says you have to preach in English, you might as well lock the churches.”* Another first set participant from the same congregation, Nikolai Dridger, also mentioned that it would have been impossible to hold church services in English at the time because *“keiner konnte Englisch predigen und keiner konnte Englisch verstehen”*.

In fact, the (High) German language was perceived to play such a crucial role in keeping the Mennonites together as a group that the Mennonite church elders in the 1930s insisted that Mennonites switch to High German in their families to bring their children up in it:

[Interviewer]: *Wie ist es mit der Sprache, war das schon in den dreißiger vierziger Jahren ein Problem oder gab es die Frage Englisch-Deutsch?*

[N. Franzen]: *Eigentlich kam das später auf. ... Man sah ja, wie es so mit der Sprache gehen würde schon Anfang dreißiger Jahre. Da sprachen die Sonntagschullehrer, wir sollten die Leute encouragen, beeinflussen, in den Familien Hochdeutsch zu sprechen. Denn wir werden auch nicht länger*

Plattdeutsch, Hochdeutsch und Englisch sprechen. English müssten sie in der Schule lernen. Hochdeutsch wollen wir im Gottesdienst und in der Sonntagschule. Und danach Plattdeutsch. Das wird nicht gut schaffen. Und dann wurde von der Sonntagschule aus auch sehr betont und gebeten die Leute möchten Hochdeutsch sprechen.

Therefore, High German seems to have been perceived by the Mennonites to act as a protective barrier from the outside world, and its loss among the younger generation, and consequently contact with English speakers was felt by some first set participants to be a significant threat to Mennonites as a group. For example, when asked whether the Mennonite youth in the pre-war period in Canada kept among themselves or spent time with their English-speaking peers, N. Driedger replied: *“Die hielten sehr zusammen. Einmal hat die Sprache uns zusammen gehalten.”* A similar opinion is provided by one of the second set participants:

“Das ist was hält zusammen, Mennoniten sind Deutsch. Und es ist egal wo du lebst, die Menschen hatten in Russland jahrelang gelebt, sie haben Deutsch gesprochen, wir haben in Polen gelebt und haben Deutsch gesprochen, warum können wir nicht in Kanada, wo die Freiheit da ist?”

Nevertheless, despite the extremely important role attributed to the High German language and the conscious attempts made by Mennonite parents to give their children a good knowledge of it, the next generation of Canadian-born Mennonites, who had gone through the Canadian school system, was already more proficient in English than in High German and wanted to see more of the former in their church services. However, such requests were usually answered quite negatively by the older generation, for whom using any language other than High German in a church service was a sacrilege.

6.3.2 *Language Use among the Third Wavers*

Around the time when the issue of English in Mennonite churches in Ontario started to become quite sensitive, the third wave of Mennonite immigrants began to arrive in Canada. Like the second wave immigrants, many newcomers first spent some time in the prairie provinces and often in British Columbia before settling in Ontario.

However, unlike the first set participants, only a few of whom spent more than a few months in Germany, all third wavers became German citizens during the war and spent between three and six years in Germany. Thus, fourteen of the twenty-four second set participants came to Canada directly from Germany between 1947 and 1950. The other ten, as already mentioned in section 6.2, left Germany for Paraguay between 1947 and 1948 and immigrated to Canada from South America in the late 1950s (seven participants) and 1960s (three interviewees).

Being exposed to the High German spoken in Germany (which, as will be shown below, Mennonites perceived to be a ‘better’ German) and having no knowledge of English, the third-wavers coming directly from Germany were considered to be ‘very German’ by the Mennonites already living in Canada. This is evident, for example, from an observation by Nikolai Driedger (born in 1893), who mentioned in relation to the Mennonites keeping up High German in Canada: “*wir haben hier noch zu viel Alte und zu viel diese Neueingewanderten, die noch viel deutscher sind als wir.*” The remaining second set participants coming from Paraguay were almost exclusively native Plautdietsch speakers (nine out of ten interviewees), who usually finished their education entirely in High German in

Mennonite schools in South America, were used to High German as the only language of the church, and associated great prestige with it.

The linguistic situation of the third-wavers upon their arrival in Canada usually strongly resembled that of the second wave immigrants: Russian was not used at all, the children attended English schools but usually spoke High German with their parents and attended German Saturday schools, as well as German church services. However, the pressure exercised by the church authorities to encourage Mennonites to switch to High German as the family language had some effect on the second wavers, and many families have raised their children in it. Thus, some of the Plautdietsch-speaking second set participants mentioned that upon arrival in Canada, they often spoke High German with Mennonites of the second wave because the latter wanted to speak only High German with the children.

Interestingly, the same process took place in the families of almost all Plautdietsch-speaking third-wavers considered in the sample. Thus, while one participant never spoke German in his family since he was married to a native English-speaker, only one couple reported that they spoke more Plautdietsch than High German with their children. All the other participants who had children spoke High German with them even if both parents were more comfortable in Plautdietsch. However, it would be wrong to assume that this switch to High German took place only because for some Mennonites it was inseparable from the Mennonite beliefs, although such opinions still existed among the Mennonites: *“Wenn wir nicht mehr Deutsch sprechen, sind wir nicht mehr Mennoniten, wurde gesagt. Ist Quatsch natürlich.”* (P. Pauls). While religious factors definitely played a role and may have given the Mennonites the initial stimulus to keep

up High German, the reasons reported by the interviewees were much more utilitarian. Thus, High German was mainly considered to be a more useful and prestigious language than Plautdietsch. In fact, Plautdietsch was usually not even considered a language by many participants, for example: “*die Leute haben es [Hochdeutsch] angesehen, das ist die Sprache. Plattdeutsch ist nur ein Dialekt, ist keine schriftliche Sprache*” (P. Pauls), “*Plattdeutsch ist keine Sprache, es ist ein Dialekt. Man kann hier damit nix anfangen, wenn du [Hoch]Deutsch sprichst, das ist jetzt eine Sprache*” (L. Winter), “*Plattdeutsch ist ja eigentlich keine Sprache, damit fängt man nicht viel an. Hochdeutsch ist doch besser. Wenn wir lieber Hochdeutsch gesprochen hätten mit den Kindern!*” (A. Niebuhr), “*Das hilft denen [den Kindern] weiter in den Schulen*”.

However, despite such high status and the parents’ attempts to maintain High German, all second set participants reported that English was the primary language in their children’s families (regardless of whether both spouses were Mennonite or not) and the only language of the grandchildren, some of whom take German language courses in high schools or universities to the great pleasure of their grandparents. Therefore, all interviewees from the second set who have grandchildren communicate with them in English only.

Nevertheless, eight of the twenty-four third wave immigrants considered in this study spoke only High German with their spouse, two used English, and the rest Plautdietsch. Interestingly, since almost all participants have relatives residing in Germany,²⁶ all of the interviewees reported using only High German when speaking with them on the telephone, even if they spoke only Plautdietsch to each other before they

²⁶ These are the Mennonites who were exiled or evacuated by the Communist government before World War II or who were deported to the USSR from Germany after the war. The majority of these Mennonites were able to immigrate to Germany in the 1970s and later.

were separated. Lastly, it must be mentioned that the Plautdietsch speakers in the second set mentioned that they always switch to High German if they are in company of a Mennonite who is not very proficient in Plautdietsch. Interestingly, absolutely no negative feelings were expressed about it, which may be caused by the greater prestige associated with High German, as well as by the fact that all Mennonites, despite of their first language, consider High German to be their ‘*Muttersprache*’ (mother tongue), as was frequently mentioned in the second set of the interviews.

6.3.3 *The Shift to English as the Church Language*

While English decisively gained the upper hand over High German in the Mennonite churches in Ontario only in the 1970s and 1980s, the language question was already a serious issue in the 1950s: “*in den fünfziger Jahren war in der Mennonitenkirche großer Streit - das war der deutsche Sprachenstreit*” (P. Pauls). The information contained in the analyzed data allowed me to divide the process of the shift into three phases.

The first phase took place in the 1950s, when most Mennonite churches had a large number of young people who were more comfortable in English than High German, and wanted to introduce the former church services. As previously mentioned, the older generation, reinforced by the recent and ongoing arrival of Mennonites with a good knowledge of High German, was very slow and quite unwilling to accept such requests. Nevertheless, some compromises had to be made in order to keep the youth in the church. Initially, such concessions usually consisted of minor adjustments only, as is evident, for example, from the following description of this process in the Vineland Mennonite congregation:

“Das Problem fing erst in den fünfziger Jahren an. Im Jahre neunzehnsiebenundfünfzig haben wir zum ersten Mal eine englische Einleitung gehabt in dem Gottesdienst. Etwas vorher haben wir gesprochen und in unserem Gemeinde-file liegen Protokolle vor, wie sie das gemacht haben. Denn damals beschloss die Gemeinde im Jahre siebenundfünfzig, es ist der Gemeindeführung überlassen je nach Bedarf eine kurze englische Einleitung zu haben. Dann fingte es an sehr wenig, nur ab und zu mal. Dann sagten wir bald wenn das Bedürfnis da ist, dann ist einmal ab und zu nicht genug, wenn wir brauchen, dann brauchen wir das jeden Sonntag. Und dann ich weiß nicht wie lange das gedauert hat”. (N. Franzen born in 1907).

The second stage usually took place in one of the following two ways, or sometimes both, one after the other. Thus, in some churches an English sermon was added to the service alongside the High German one, and hymns were sung in both languages.

This situation was mentioned, for example, in the Leamington Mennonite church by a first set participant, Nikolai Driedger. Reportedly, this was the case there at the time of the interview, i.e. in 1978. Alternatively (or following the first scenario), the German and the English services split and were conducted separately at different times. Often, the Sunday school classes were also divided into a German and an English one.

Understandably, use of English in the church often frustrated the recent Mennonite immigrants, who usually did not know much English at the time. For example, H. Wiens, who came to Canada from Paraguay in 1958, mentioned his experience in the Mennonite church in Niagara-on-the-Lake:

“Obwohl die beides hatten, Englisch und auch Deutsch, aber die schon in meinem Alter waren, ein bisschen älter, so wie die rausgingen aus der Kirche, untereinander reden – das ging nur alles in Englisch. Und dann bin ich einen Sonntagmorgen, wie wir aus der Kirche rausgingen, und alles rum mir spricht

alles Englisch, dreh' ich mich um und so richtig laut hab' ich gesagt: 'Und ihr wollt Deutsche sein?!' ”.

As one would expect, the number of High German-speaking preachers and Sunday school teachers steadily decreased, as did the number of children willing to attend German services and Sunday schools. A good account of such a situation in Kitchener-Waterloo was provided by the same H. Wiens:

“Jeden Sonntag war eine deutsche Andacht und [eine] englische. Weil wir nicht gut Englisch damals konnten, ich ging zu deutschen Andacht. Sogar die Sonntagschulen, die waren in Deutsch, aber das war das Problem mit die Sonntagschullehrer. Wenn das jüngere waren, sie waren schon nicht so fließend, weil die haben ihre Schulbildung alle in Englisch schon gehabt, nicht? So, wenn die Sonntagschullehrer sollten die Kinder unterrichten, sie waren nicht fließend genug in der deutschen Sprache nicht mehr”.

As the children were growing up, most parents usually started to attend the English services for the benefit of the younger generation. This was the case among almost all second set participants, e.g.: *“Wir wollten haben, dass die Kinder zur Kirche gehen, aber die verstehen nichts!”* (P. Pauls), *“Wir hatten keine Auswahl - das musste rübergehen in Englisch, wegen den Kindern und Großkindern”* (J. Gossen). At the same time, adherents of High German in the church were having increasing difficulties finding German-speaking preachers, and services were attended predominantly by the older members of the church. Naturally, attendance at German services also was decreasing with time.

The final stage of the switch is the gradual discontinuation of German services, which today has been completed in most but definitely not all Mennonite churches in Ontario. The attendees of German services today are almost exclusively first generation Mennonite immigrants. Interestingly, many of the second set

participants reported not attending the German services any more. It is interesting that the attitude of the speakers toward the switch to English today is mostly very positive, although several participants mentioned their regrets about it, e.g. *“Der liebe Gott hat uns als Deutsche gemacht”* (P. Kehler), *“Zu mir eine englische Andacht ist nicht wie eine deutsche Andacht”* (P. Bergen), *“Für die Alten sollen sie noch das Deutsche behalten”* (F. Koop), *“Ich würde noch gerne Deutsch, das verstehe ich besser, ich verstehe Englisch auch, aber im Deutschen ist es einem irgendwie mehr heimisch”* (A. Niebuhr), or *“Uns war das Deutsche immer näher als das Englische und das ist auch jetzt so”* (E. Toews).

The rest of the second set interviewees showed much understanding for the necessity of the switch and usually considered it as a positive event in the life of their churches, even though some of them would prefer to have church services in German, e.g.: *“wir sind sehr für die deutsche Sprache, aber unsere Kinder sind schon alle Englisch. ... Wir müssen so mit dem Strom mit, nicht?”* (H. Lehn), *“für uns ist es lieber Deutsch. Aber wir müssen auch denken an die nächste Generation. So, wir sind in Kanada und die Sprache ist Englisch. Und so können wir nicht verlangen, dass es alles Deutsch bleibt”* (M. Duerksen) or *“Wir wohnen jetzt im Lande, wo die Sprache Englisch ist. Es ist sehr gut, wenn die Kinder und Enkel noch Deutsch können, das ist sehr gut. Aber die Landessprache und überall, wenn du einen Beruf oder was hast, die Sprache ist Englisch”*(H. Wiens).

Similarly, most speakers were very aware that the German language (both High German and Plautdietsch) is being lost by the Mennonites and soon will not be spoken by them at all. Interestingly, not much regret was shown about it, e.g.: *“Das*

Deutsche werden wir nicht retten. Wir sprechen noch Deutsch aber unsere Kinder sprechen schon nicht mehr Deutsch” or “*So, die Zukunft ist, das Deutsche wird wegfallen, ältere Leute, also eine Generation, wenn die abgestorben ist, dann ist das Deutsche weg, unbedingt*” (H. Wiens). Possibly, this attitude, which probably would be unimaginable among the second wave immigrants, could be caused by the fact that English has now replaced High German as the language of the Mennonite church, yet has not eliminated Mennonites as a group or as Christians. Therefore, it is no longer perceived as a threat and fewer negative feelings are associated with it today than there were several decades ago.

6.4 Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has shown that the patterns of language use by both groups in Russia were very similar, despite a clear tendency for High German to replace Plautdietsch as the communal language in a number of families. This tendency had already begun in Russia, probably around the turn of the nineteenth century, and was already clearly noticeable in the 1920s and 1930s. Therefore, while the linguistic arrangement of the majority of both groups in Russia can be characterized as stable bilingualism with diglossia, both were shown to be ‘leaking’ in the twentieth century because of the increasing numbers of High-German speaking Mennonites, for whom there was no need to switch to Plautdietsch or to acquire it in order to carry on their daily chores.

Further, it has been established that although the Mennonites’ attitude towards their country of birth has significantly changed since pre-revolutionary times, the attitude of most speakers towards Russian as a language nevertheless remained quite positive and

most participants showed or claimed to have good command of it. At the same time, because third-wave Mennonite immigrants no longer had any patriotic feelings towards their fatherland, Russian was clearly considered to be an outsiders' language by most of them. Interestingly, Ukrainian enjoyed a rather low status among the Mennonites, who viewed it as a dialect or an incorrect form of Russian, which, of course, linguistically is not true.

Also, it was found that after coming to Canada the second wave of Mennonite immigrants realized that while their children would have to acquire English, it would be impossible for them to maintain Plautdietsch as the informal language and at the same time raise children proficient in High German, which was still seen as the sacral language. Recognizing this threat, a conscious attempt to replace Plautdietsch with High German as the communal language was made by the Mennonites, and most Plautdietsch-speaking families indeed raised their children in the High German language. The same pattern was also seen to have taken place in the families of the third-wave immigrants. Finally, it has been shown that despite attempts to maintain High German even at the expense of Plautdietsch, High German has been entirely lost by the Mennonites within "the three generational time frame typical to the general immigrant population" (Born, 2003, p. 158). The interviewees in the second interview set were very aware of this, and usually did not show much regret about it, as today most of them associate themselves with Canada and no longer consider English as a threat to the Mennonites as a group.

7. STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the results of the comparative structural analysis of the two interview sets and examines the non-standard linguistic constructions typical of the High German spoken by the second- and the third-wave Mennonite immigrants in Ontario. Besides presenting the similarities between the High German of the two groups, and providing an attempt to explain their existence in the variety spoken by the Mennonites, this chapter also examines the variation in the frequency of the deviations within and across the two groups and consists of three parts. The first part discusses the non-standard constructions shared by the participants of both interview sets and presents a detailed description of those constructions which have not been already discussed in the pilot study. The second section looks at variation in the usage of such constructions between the speakers and examines whether their frequency is connected to the speakers' socio-demographic characteristics, such as education, first language, attitude toward language in the church etc. The third part tries to explain the existence of the deviations (whether they have been caused by external or internal factors) and to determine when these deviations appeared in Russian Mennonite High German. The chapter closes with a conclusion section presenting the summary of the results.

Although the analysis presented below was conducted in the spirit of Construction Grammar and relied on my understanding of it, I was not able to theorize the full potential of this theory and relied mainly on the central terminology of this theoretical framework, which is significantly further in the way it could describe the data than my application of it in this chapter shows.

7.1 Non-standard Constructions in Russian Mennonite High German

This section presents non-standard grammatical constructions found in the speech of the interviewees. At this point, it must be stressed that the non-standard constructions presented in this chapter are by no means the only forms found in the interviewees' speech. For absolutely all speakers, these constructions co-exist with their standard equivalents and often they seem to be in free variation. It also must be pointed out that although for the ease of presentation the deviations have been grouped into several sections (case-marked constructions, constructions with verbs and special constructions, lexical constructions), none of these deviate constructions should be considered in isolation from the other ones, as they always appear hand-in-hand and hardly ever occur in isolation.

Further, while the examples presented in this section are taken from all interviews in the sample regardless of whether they have been transcribed or not,²⁷ the numeric evidence has been calculated for the transcribed interviews only (a total of ten selected interviews, five from each set). Finally, while it was possible to make a detailed analysis of deviate forms found in the interviews, the tremendous amount of data and its conversational character (as opposed to a concise questionnaire form, for example) made it impossible to compare the non-standard constructions to the standard ones numerically. Nevertheless, despite the great amount of variation found between individual speakers, it

²⁷ This was possible because during the content analysis stage, when each interview was listened to and paused to record the information about the socio-linguistic categories, information pertaining to the linguistic characteristics of the participants' language (i.e. examples of the deviate constructions produced by the speakers) was also entered into the corresponding section of the analysis table.

was felt that all types of deviate constructions were less numerous than their standard counterparts for all interviewees.

7.1.1 Case-marked Constructions

Deviations in case assignment present the largest and the most abundant type of deviation found in the interviews of all participants in both sets and are one of the most salient characteristics of the High German spoken by the group. Thus, there was not a single participant in the entire sample who did not produce at least some of the deviate constructions presented in this section. This is hardly surprising considering that variation in case assignment and reduction in case markings are very typical of numerous other German language varieties around the world and in North America (e.g. Born, 2003; Costello, 1986; Enninger, 1986; Fuller & Gilbert, 2003; Louden, 1994; Nicolini, 2004; Rosenberg, 1994; Salmons, 1994).

While standard case markings for dative and accusative, and to a much lesser degree for genitive, were exhibited by all speakers, case-assignment often departed from the rules of SHG. A numerical summary of the deviations in this category found in the transcribed interviews is presented in the following table:

| | Set 1 | | | | | Set 2 | | | | |
|------------------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|---------|-------------|----------|---------|------------|
| Speaker: | C. Martens | A. Klassen | M. Toews | W. Andres | N. Franzen | M. Esau | M. Duerksen | H. Braun | G. Enns | A. Niebuhr |
| Year of birth: | 1892 | 1893 | 1897 | 1902 | 1907 | 1922 | 1926 | 1928 | 1928 | 1933 |
| Dative deviations: | 12 | 4 | 10 | 63 | 4 | 25 | 19 | 8 | 73 | 8 |
| Accusative deviations: | - | 1 | 3 | 15 | 5 | 13 | 10 | 6 | 19 | 8 |
| Genitive deviations: | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 3 | - |

Table 7-1

As the table suggests, the most frequent type of deviation was lack of dative case markings, followed by deviations in accusative, and finally, in the genitive case. The low

number of the last should not be considered an indication that genitive was usually formed by the interviewees in compliance with SHG rules. Instead, the low frequency of deviations may be attributed to the fact that genitive was used very infrequently by the participants and was usually avoided and replaced with alternative constructions featuring other grammatical cases.

7.1.1.1 Constructions Marked for Accusative and Dative in SHG.

Constructions requiring accusative marking, on the other hand, usually showed SHG accusative morphology but were replaced occasionally with nominative and sometimes with dative forms. The breakdown of accusative deviations is shown in the following table:

| | Set 1 | | | | | Set 2 | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|----------|-------------------|------------|---------|-------------|----------|---------|------------|
| Speaker: | C. Martens | A. Klassen | M. Toews | W. Andres | N. Franzen | M. Esau | M. Duerksen | H. Braun | G. Enns | A. Niebuhr |
| Accusative deviations (total): | - | 1 | 3 | 15 | 5 | 13 | 10 | 6 | 19 | 8 |
| Nominative for accusative: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ein-words (48) | - | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 18 | 7 |
| Def. article (1) | - | - | - | | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other (1) | - | - | - | 1 (junger Mensch) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Dative for accusative: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal / demonstrative pronoun (18) | - | - | - | 10 | 2 | 3 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Def. article (12) | - | - | - | 3 | - | 4 | 3 | 2 | - | - |

Table 7-2

As the table suggests, nominative was more likely than dative to replace accusative-marked forms, and the words following the declension pattern on the indefinite article were more likely than other parts of speech to appear without accusative-case marking. Further, it is interesting that accusative was always replaced by nominative if a non-standard construction featured an indefinite article, a possessive pronoun, or the negation

word ‘*kein*’ (grouped under ‘Ein-words’ in Example 7-1) but almost never by dative,²⁸ for example:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| D.Thiessen (born in 1894): | ich ging in ein Wald |
| J. Epp (born in 1888): | er wollte sein Bruder besuchen. |
| K. Kehler (born in 1932): | nur ein Onkel hat sie da! |
| A. Loewen (born in 1929): | er hatte von sein Halbbruder ein Brief gekriegt. |

Example 7-1

At the same time, if a construction was lacking SHG accusative marking and featured a personal or demonstrative pronoun, or a definite article, it was almost always replaced by a dative case-form, such as in the following example:

| | |
|------------|---|
| H. Braun: | aber zuletzt holten wir noch dem Wagen . |
| W. Andres: | irgendwas wurde gegen ihnen ausgefunden. |

Example 7-2

Although replacing accusative with dative forms was not as common as using nominative for accusative and was not found in the speech of all speakers, those participants who used dative instead of accusative usually showed a number of such constructions during the interview, e.g. William Andres (as shown in Table 7-2) or H. Lehn from the second interview set (born in 1926):

| |
|--|
| Ich bin dort in der Schule gegangen Einer überredete dem anderen da zu bleiben. Wir sind hier in der Schule gegangen. |
|--|

Example 7-3

²⁸ However, one exception to this was found among the untranscribed interviews: P. Bergen (born in 1924): Da bin ich mal **in einem Laden** gegangen.

As is evident from the last example, numerous instances of dative for accusative forms seem to be connected with the notion of motion (and consequently, with such verbs as ‘gehen’, ‘fahren’, ‘laufen’), which in SHG requires the accusative case only:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| W. Winter (1934): | Ich bin in der zweiten Klasse schon gegangen. |
| W. Andres: | eh’ wir in in der Schlacht dahingingen. |
| M. Duerksen: | und abends, dann fuhren wir in der Stadt mit dem Schlitten. |
| M. Esau: | einmal sind wir durch die Fenster durch und im Wald gelaufen. |
| M. Esau: | dann und dann werden die Russen wieder hier sein und dann [sind] wir schnell im Wald gelaufen. |
| N. Diredger: | wenn irgendwer in dem waschroom ging. |

Example 7-3

Deviations in the dative case were usually much more frequent and affected most contexts in which dative is obligatory in SHG: indirect objects (*Ich gebe **meinem** Bruder das Buch*), dative verbs (*Ich traue **ihm***), constructions expressing location (*Wir wohnen **in der Stadt***) or time (*an **einem** Tag, in **drei Jahren***), and complements of dative prepositions (*mit, nach, aus, zu, von, bei, seit, etc.*). The numeric breakdown of the deviations in dative is presented in the following table:

| Speaker: | Set 1 | | | | | Set 2 | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|---------|-------------|----------|---------|------------|
| | C. Martens | A. Klassen | M. Toews | W. Andres | N. Franzen | M. Esau | M. Duerksen | H. Braun | G. Enns | A. Niebuhr |
| Deviations in dative by type: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Indirect objects & dative verbs (33): | 1 | 1 | 1 | 14 | - | 1 | 2 | - | 13 | - |
| Constructions of location/time (43) | 4 | 1 | - | 18 | 1 | 5 | 2 | - | 12 | - |
| After dative prepositions (singular) (49) | 4 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 20 | 3 |
| After dative prepositions (plural) (100) | 3 | 1 | 7 | 20 | 2 | 15 | 12 | 7 | 28 | 5 |

Table 7-3

As the table indicates, deviations in the dative case were not only numerous but were also very typical for the speech of both groups. Although, as shown in Table 7-3, the total number of dative deviations exhibited by the second set participants in the transcribed interviews was somewhat higher (133 vs 92), this could not be confirmed when considering all interviews in both sets.

In any case, it was typical for the majority of speakers to occasionally assign nominative or accusative (to a lesser extent) instead of dative case marking in constructions of time or location (Example 7-5), or to the indirect objects and the objects of dative verbs (Example 7-5):

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| H. Reimer (born in 1899): | Der Beamte da, auf die Grenze in die Kriegszeit . |
| N. Driedger (born in 1893): | ... als der kam und dann unter die Arbeiter agitierte. |
| W. Andres (born in 1902): | ... und versprochen uns den Himmel auf die Erde . |
| A. Loewen (born in 1929): | Das muss wohl in die sechziger Jahre gewesen sein. |
| H. Lehn (born in 1926): | Die Farmer sitzen auf ihr Land . |

Example 7-5

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| G. Toews (born in 1894): | Sie gaben ein keine Antwort . |
| J. Wichert (born in 1897): | Konnte vielleicht mit der Ration die Kinder helfen. |
| Henry Reimer (born in 1899): | Wir trauten die nicht mehr richtig. |
| R. Wuerfell (born in 1898): | Das Brot war so weich, dass es klebte zwischen die Finger . |
| H. Franzen (born in 1923): | ... schrieb ich meine Tante. ... schließt euch die Gemeinde an. |
| F. Koop (born in 1923): | Wir haben doch kein Mensch was gemacht. |
| J. Goerzen (born in 1931): | Ich kann mich gar nicht denken. |

Example 7-6

However, the vast majority of dative deviations affected plural forms following prepositions which in SHG always require dative. Almost always, such deviations featured the definite plural article ‘die’, a personal pronoun or a possessive pronoun and/or a plural form of a noun, which often was lacking the dative plural marker *-n*:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| A. Barg (born in 1895): | die waren so gut zu die Arbeiter . |
| H. Reimer (born in 1899): | Nicht von unsere Leute . |
| L. Winter (born in 1936): | ... nach vierzig Jahre . |
| E. Toews (born in 1923): | Und dann kamen die auch dazu von den anderen Dörfer . |

Example 7-7

It is very interesting that even those speakers who produced few deviations (of all kinds) and assigned mostly SHG case morphology often did not mark some elements of plural dative constructions. For example:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| P. Pauls (born in 1931): | ... haben wir uns gefunden mit andere Mennoniten. |
| E. Driedger (born in 1926): | alle deutschen Männer, von sechzehn Jahre ab; ... die Leute mit den Wagen und Pferde . |
| G. Enns (born in 1885): | ... eine von meine customers. |
| A. Barg (born in 1895): | Er traut solche Menschen. |

Example 7-8

7.1.1.2 Reduction in Case Marking of Adjectives and Deadjectival Nouns

As the first construction in Example 7-8 indicates, in addition to nouns and determiners, which were frequently not assigned SHG case marking by the participants, adjectives, and deadjectival nouns also did not always follow the standard declension pattern (which is quite extensive in SHG!) and were often used with the simplified ending *-e*. For

example, in SHG, if a noun is modified by an adjective without a definite article or a word following the same declension pattern (e.g. demonstrative pronouns), the adjective is required to carry the information about the grammatical case, number, and gender of the noun, and its endings are, therefore, identical with those of the definite article. For example:

| | Mennonite HG | SHG: |
|-------------|---|---|
| Nominative: | Ich ging als Gefangene bei meine Kaserne. | Ich ging als Gefangener <u>er</u> bei meiner <u>er</u> Kaserne. |
| Genitive: | Batallion deutsche Kolonisten | Batallion deutscher <u>er</u> (der deutschen) Kolonisten |
| Dative: | ... mit Deutsche in Verbindung sein. ... bloss bei deutsche Zeit ... kam mein Bruder aus russische Gefangenschaft | ... mit (den) Deutschen <u>en</u> in Verbindung sein. ... bei deutscher <u>er</u> (der deutschen) Zeit. ... aus russischer <u>er</u> (der russichen) Gefangenschaft |

Example 7-9

Further, it was also found that often adjectives were assigned the inflectional ending *-e* by the majority of the participants, regardless of the type or presence/absence of a modifying word:

| | Mennonite HG | SHG: |
|-------------|---|--|
| Nominative: | und der war selber ein Deutsche ... die russische passagierwagone ... die arme menschen, die haben dann gebettelt | Ein Deutscher <u>er</u> ... die russischen <u>en</u> Passagier <u>waggons</u> ... die armen <u>en</u> Menschen ... |
| Dative: | der war aber in der französische Zone ... wenn wir gehen zur deutsche Andacht ... mit der deutsche armee | ... in der französischen <u>en</u> Zone ... wenn wir gehen zur deutschen <u>en</u> Andacht ... mit der deutschen <u>en</u> Armee |

Example 7-10

The frequency count of deviations in adjective endings in the transcribed interviews is presented in the following table:

| | Set 1 | | | | | Set 2 | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| Speaker: | C. Martens | A. Klassen | M. Toews | W. Andres | N. Franzen | M. Esau | M. Duerksen | H. Braun | G. Enns | A. Niebuhr |
| Year of birth: | 1892 | 1893 | 1897 | 1902 | 1907 | 1922 | 1926 | 1928 | 1928 | 1933 |
| Deviations in adjective endings: | 1 | 3 | 10 | 14 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 35 | 1 |

Table 7-4

Therefore, it can be seen that the system of adjectival declension in Russian Mennonite High German shows less gender/number/case distinction and moves away from the SHG toward the common ending *-e*.

7.1.1.3 The Form 'de'.

A similar tendency (i.e. moving away from greater variety of inflections/carrying more grammatical information toward a simplified common ending system) has been seen to take place with the definite article, instead of which sometimes the form 'de' was used. 'De' fulfilled the same function as the definite article and seemed to be an article form not marked for gender or number:

| Participant: | Mennonite HG | SHG |
|---------------------|--|---|
| H. Reimer (1899): | vor de Sonnenaufgang | Vor dem Sonnenaufgang |
| M. Toews (1897): | zu eng mit de Luft war das ... | ... mit der Luft ... |
| C. Martens (1892): | ja er zog von de Dörfer zurück | ... von den Dörfern ... |
| P. Kehler (1929): | einmal kamen dreiundzwanzig Personen in de Haus, von diese Banditen. | ... in das (ins) Haus, von diesen Banditen. |
| H. Franzen (1923): | behandelt wurde von de Verwandten | ... von den Verwandten |

Example 7-11

The form 'de' was also found frequently to modify English or Russian borrowings, which allowed the speakers to avoid assigning a grammatical gender to the borrowed nouns, e.g.:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| C. Martens: | aber in de factory@e , wo ich ich in de schoe_shop@e geschafft hatte... . |
| P. Kehler: | nach de баня [sauna]... . im Uhrwald mit de Munchetta |
| N. Driedger: | wir waren am tag bloss in de office und von de office gab man uns identification card. |

Example 7-12

This form most likely has its origin in the Plautdietsch language, where it is the definite article for masculine nominative and feminine, as well as plural in the nominative and the object case (similar to the High German ‘die’). It is interesting, however, that in Example 7-11, ‘de’ modified a neuter noun, the article for which in Plautdietsch is ‘daut’. The assumption of the Plautdietsch origin of ‘de’ is supported by the fact that the form rarely occurred in the speech of those participants who spoke High German as the first language, and even when it did, it could possibly be attributed to the elision of the final consonant in the feminine dative article ‘der’ typical for spoken High German:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| E. Driedger: | ich bin von de Molotschna. |
| A. Loewen: | ich de Schule, in de Schule wurde das gemacht. |

Example 7-13

On the other hand, unlike the oblique form of the definite article, ‘de’ was very frequently used by almost all participants in the sample in combination with the preposition ‘an’ in constructions of time featuring a specific year. Examples of such constructions have been presented in the pilot study (section 5.2.7) and are discussed further in the next section.

7.1.1.4 Constructions of Time Indicating a Year

It is noteworthy that almost all participants in both interview sets often used a construction [AN + DE] when talking about a specific year. This construction looks somewhat similar to the SHG adverb ‘anno’, which derives from the Latin ‘Anno Domini’ (A.D.) and means ‘in the year of the Lord’. ‘Anno’ is marked as ‘veraltet’ (archaic) by Duden (“anno”, Duden - Das Große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache, 2000), and, with the exception of several colloquial humorous constructions, such as ‘Anno Tobak’ or ‘Anno dazumal’ (both meaning “very long time ago”), is hardly used in spoken German. However, while in several instances the participants clearly used [ANNO] as opposed to [AN + DE], in the overwhelming majority of instances it was clearly the latter, e.g.:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| M. Toews: | geboren bin ich an de 1897 im Dorf Osterwick |
| A. Klassen: | und dann zusammen wir drei fuhren wir nach Russland im November an de achtzehn |
| N. Franzen: | und dann wurde er an de siebenundzwanzig als Prediger gewählt |
| N. Driedger: | an de dreiundzwanzig kamen die Altkolonier, an de vierundzwanzig die Molotschnaer |
| H. Lehn: | an de dreiundvierzig sind wir schon geflüchtet. |
| G. Enns: | das war an de einunddreißig , im herbst einunddreißig . |
| H. Braun: | an de zweiundvierzig , no@e einundvierzig kam der Deutsche rein und dann war ich zwölf Jahre alt. |

Example 7-14

While it is very difficult to determine where this construction comes from, it can be argued that it could be a result of folk etymology, when the Mennonite speakers reinterpreted the structure of ‘anno’ as a phonetic assimilation of ‘an dem’, and then transformed the definite article into ‘de’. In any case, the only thing that can be said with certainty about [AN + DE] is that it was used quite frequently by most participants and for

many speakers has completely replaced the construction [im Jahr(e) + YEAR]. In fact, the latter was found only in one of the transcribed interviews. The other participants in the transcribed interviews usually used the SHG construction [YEAR], which has the same meaning as [im Jahr(e) + YEAR]. The frequency of these constructions in the transcribed interviews is presented below:

| Speaker: | Set 1 | | | | | Set 2 | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|---------|-------------|----------|---------|------------|
| | C. Martens | A. Klassen | M. Toews | W. Andres | N. Franzen | M. Esau | M. Duerksen | H. Braun | G. Enns | A. Niebuhr |
| [AN DE + YEAR] | - | 1 | 7 | 7 | 11 | - | 1 | 2 | 12 | - |
| Other non-standard constructions | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 7 | - |
| [im Jahr(e) + Year] | - | - | - | - | 26 | - | - | - | - | - |
| anno | - | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Table 7-6

7.1.1.5 Possessive Constructions

In SHG, the role of possession is often expressed through the genitive case (e.g. der Hut meines Vaters, das Auto der Tante), which competes with several other constructions (“Genitivattribut”, 2001). Of these, the one of particular interest in this project is the construction that can be described as ‘pre-nominal dative + possessive pronoun’, e.g. :

Das ist der Mutter ihre Schwester.

Example 7-15

As already mentioned in chapter 5, section 5.2.8.4, this construction is considered incorrect in SHG but is nevertheless quite popular in modern colloquial German and a number of dialects. In terms of CxG, this construction can be presented as follows:

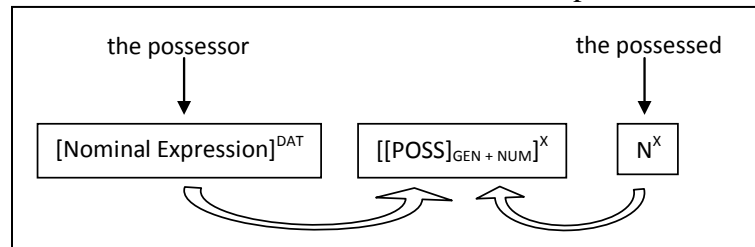


Figure 7-1

As the figure indicates, the construction consists of three parts: 1) a referential nominal expression stating the possessor in the dative case 2) a possessive pronoun, which is selected by the preceding nominal expression and which must agree in gender and number with the following noun; The X-case of the possessive is dictated by the following noun as well; 3) a noun stating the possessed object in case X required from outside the construction. Thus, in Example 7-15 the stem of the relative pronoun “*ihre*” is determined by the noun “*Mutter*”, whereas the ending *-e* (feminine, singular nominative) is dictated by the noun “*Schwester*”, which itself is required to be in the nominative case by the copula verb “*sein*”.

My data have shown that variations of the construction were quite numerous among the interviewees in both sets and featured various types of possessors: a noun (Example 7-17), a proper noun (Example 7-18), and a demonstrative pronoun (Example 7-19):

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| G. Enns (born in 1885): | unserem Administrator Wiens seine Mutter |
| W. Winter (born in 1934): | meinem Vater seine Schwestern. |

Example 7-17

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| J. Wichert (born in 1897): | Tante Marie ihr Onkel |
| G. Enns (born in 1928): | Roosevelt seine Frau... |

Example 7-18

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| G. Reimer (born in 1884): | den ihre Kinder |
| A. Loewen (born in 1929): | den ihr Deutsch |

Example 7-19

However, in addition to the above-mentioned constructions, I have encountered expressions which can be considered as variations of this construction, especially in terms of the first part not following the obligatory dative case (Example 7-20):

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| G. Enns (born in 1885): | meine Frau ihr Onkel |
| E. Driedger (born in 1926): | meine Mutter ihre Tante. |

Example 7-20

This construction was also found to be used as an adjunct modifying the ‘possessed’ noun, as in the following example:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| M. Duerksen: | ich hab mir den mein Bruder seinen Anzug angezogen. |
|--------------|--|

Example 7-21

In this case, the construction can be treated as a complex determiner consisting of a determiner “*seinen*” and a determiner phrase “*mein Bruder*.” Further, the ‘possessed’ noun part of the construction also frequently failed to take the case required by the sentence in which it appears. For example:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| A. Niebuhr: | die kamen nach meinem Mann sein Bruder . |
|-------------|---|

Example 7-22

A further variation of the construction seems to be its combination with the prenominal ‘von + dative’ expression. Although in Standard German this construction usually appears in post-nominal position, the dative preposition ‘von’ was found to modify the ‘possessor’ nominal expression, which almost always took the dative case and appeared in the pre-nominal position, such as in the following example:

| |
|--|
| M. Duerksen: ... vom Vater seine Eltern starben an Typhus |
| M. Esau: und dann hatte meine, von meinem Mann seine Nichte , hatte es dann in englisch übersetzt. |

Example 7-23

It is noteworthy that the constructions exemplified above almost never co-existed with regular attached genitives, i.e. those speakers who formed standard possessive expressions with genitive hardly ever used any type of such periphrastic detached constructions. A great deal of personal variation must also not be overlooked. Finally, none of the participants was found to use more than two non-standard variations of the detached genitive constructions, with the most frequent variation being presence or absence of the dative case in the ‘possessor’ nominal expression and failure to follow the case required by the sentence in which a specific construction appeared.

7.1.1.6 Case-marked Constructions: Conclusions

The information about case marked constructions in the High German of Russian Mennonites presented in this section shows that we can hardly speak about case loss or case coalescence, which has been shown to have taken place in numerous other German varieties in North America, such as Texas German, sectarian Pennsylvania German, or Frankenmuth German. Instead, most speakers exhibit predominantly SHG case morphology with significant variation in case-assignment, which shows several visible trends.

First of all, the general direction of the case variation is clearly moving in the direction from more markedness (and consequently, clearer gender/number/case distinction) toward less markedness. Thus, the speakers considered in this study were

more likely to prefer a construction that is not overtly marked for case/number/gender than the ones with such marking. This is consistent with the results of the study of Texas German by Salmons (1994), which shows that this pattern of variation in case assignment fits nicely with the theory of Natural Morphology, which predicts that the change in a language usually proceeds “toward less markedness/more naturalness” (Wurzel, 1989, p. 13).

Further, besides the direction toward less overt markedness, it was noticed that: a) dative was more likely than accusative to appear without overt case marking and was more likely to be replaced with nominative or those accusative forms which are morphologically identical with nominative; b) accusative was more likely to be replaced with nominative than dative forms. This sequence is consistent with the Regression Hypothesis proposed by R. Jakobson (1969) and extended to language loss among immigrants by de Bot & Weltens (1991). This hypothesis states that the loss of case distinction occurs in the inverse order of the acquisition sequence exhibited by children (therefore, genitive should be lost first, followed by dative and then accusative) and has been successfully applied to the language of Frankenmuth Germans in Michigan by Born (2003). My finding that the indefinite article and the *ein*-words were more frequently not assigned SHG case marking is also consistent with this hypothesis.

Finally, it is very interesting that no significant differences in case assignment were found between the two sets of participants. Although the interviews were only conducted twenty-five years apart, the fact that the participants belonged to different generations and were exposed to very different social and historic conditions both in Russia and in Canada (as described in the previous chapter) was expected to play a role.

Nevertheless, the lack of major differences in case-assignment between the groups suggests that this variation was rather stable among the first-generation immigrants and was common to at least several generations of immigrants born in Russia or could simply result from the fact that both groups spent close to have a century in English-speaking Canada.

7.1.2 *Verb Constructions and Special Constructions*

7.1.2.1 *[tun + inf]*

Although considered incorrect in SHG as “überflüssige Erweiterung des Prädikats” (superfluous extension of the predicate) (“tun”, 2001), constructions consisting of a conjugated form of the verb ‘tun’ followed by an infinitive of another verb were produced by the speakers both of the first (Example 7-24) as well as of the second interview set (Example 7-25) and showed both present, simple past, as well as subjunctive mood forms:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| C. Martens (1892): | Wenn wir jetzt so reisen täten. |
| W. Andres (1902): | Hatte Korrespondenz mit meinen Freunden da bei Amur, was da helfen taten. Aber wann du in Ängsten warten tust... . In Moskau taten die uns in drei Klassen einteilen. |
| A. Barg (1895): | er tat mir den Revolver vom Kopf halten; Verstehen Sie, was ich Ihnen erzählen tue? |

Example 7-24

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| M. Esau (1922): | Ich tu das mit dem Englischen verwechseln schon |
| M. Duerksen (1926): | Hier in unserer Kirche wir tun Wasser drauf gießen. |
| H. Braun (1928): | Du tust manchmal auch ein bisschen Platt sprechen. |
| F. Koop (1929): | Sie haben die Kinder gefragt, tuen eure Eltern noch beten? |
| P. Kehler (1929): | Ich tue nur mit den Händen arbeiten. |
| K. Kehler (1932): | Ich tu lieber sprechen. |
| A. Niebuhr (1933): | ... die tat Brot ausfahren. |

Example 7-25

Although produced by many participants in both sets, such constructions were found to be especially numerous in the speech of some first set participants, such as W. Andres (17 instances) or A. Barg (15 instances). Interestingly, both participants came from the Molotschna colony and had a high level of education as both finished a trade and commerce school, which was very prestigious among Mennonites.

Interestingly, very similar patterns (however, affecting only the present tense) were found to be typical in Texas German (e.g. Guion, 1996, p. 459; Nicolini, 2004, p. 147) and are common in the south of the European German-speaking area. The existence of these constructions in the HG of Mennonites, however, can hardly be traced to Southern German varieties. Also, it is not very likely to be caused by English, which is considered as a possibility by some authors (e.g. Nicolini, 2004, p. 147), since ‘tun’ is used as a general agreement auxiliary in my data, whereas the English equivalent ‘do’ is used only in questions (e.g. ‘Where **did** you buy that?’), negations (e.g. ‘I **do** not speak German’), or emphatic constructions (e.g. ‘I **do** like it’).

7.1.2.2 *Constructions of Intention and Purpose*

An interesting construction featuring the infinitive form of the verb ‘haben’ followed by a subordinate clause introduced by the conjunction ‘dass’ or by another main clause was found among several second set participants. Although a colloquial construction [etwas nicht haben können] (‘can’t stand something’) exists in SHG, it is always used with a negative sense. Three second set participants who produced this construction during the interview, however, used it positively to indicate a desire/intention. Although it is impossible to determine the origin of this construction at this stage, there is very little evidence that it comes from contact with English or Russian:

- A. Loewen (1929): Er wollte zuerst gar nicht haben, dass sie mich schreiben soll.
- J. Gossen (1931): Wir wollten haben, sie sollen dies auch lernen.
- P. Pauls (1931): Unsere Eltern wollten haben, dass wir sollten mehr Hochdeutsch verstehen.
Wir wollten haben, dass die Kinder zur Kirche gehen.

Example 7-26

Further, the particle ‘zu’ was frequently found to be missing from infinitival constructions where it is obligatory in SHG:

- G. Enns: ... die Personen ohne noch mal taufen aufnahm.
- J. Janzen: ... half ich Listen aufstellen.
- R. Wuerfell: Mennoniten brauchten nicht in den Krieg gehen.
- A. Rempel: der war ein Ukrainer geschickt hier arbeiten
- P. Kehler: du brauchst mir nichts geben
- A. Loewen: wir mussten uns verpflichten ein Jahr arbeiten

Example 7-27

Finally, the construction [zum + infinitival noun] was found to be very productive in the speech of many participants, and was often used instead of the SHG [um ... zu + infinitive] construction:

| | Mennonite HG | SHG |
|--------------|--|---|
| R. Wuerfell: | zum nach Alberta Fahren | um nach Alberta zu fahren |
| M. Toews: | jemand gab uns ein Stückchen zum Gartenmachen er müsste das halten zum bisschen was Eintauschen | um Garten zu machen um etwas einzutauschen |
| J. Driedger: | zum die 400 Acker Bearbeiten | um die ... zu bearbeiten |

Example 7-28

7.1.2.3 *Präteritum*

Two opposing trends were found to affect the simple past tense of the High German spoken by the Mennonites. On the one hand, some regular ('weak') verbs, for example 'arbeiten', showed lack of the past-tense suffix *-t-* and thus became morphologically identical with the present tense, for example:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| M. Toews (1897): | aber im Haus wenn ich arbeite , die Frau zupfte mich am Rock. mein Bruder arbeite , er war Ingenieur und dort arbeite er dort war er noch zwei Jahre. |
| M. Duerksen (1926): | von Beruf waren sie [die Eltern] im колхоз@r , arbeiten sie. so dann , nachher arbeite ich in Moosejaw, auch in einem Krankenhaus. |

Example 7-29

Interestingly, this form was sometimes used interchangeably with the regular past-tense form 'arbeitete', and both sometimes occurred in the same utterance:

| | |
|-------|--|
| *MAD: | und als ich im Altenheim arbeitete , dort arbeite ich zwölf Stunden am Tag. |
|-------|--|

Example 7-30

On the other hand, many participants added the past tense suffix *-t-* to the irregular ('strong') verbs which form the simple past tense by stem vowel change only (Example 7-31) and used a number of hypercorrected past tense forms of strong verbs which featured the past-tense suffix *-t-* in addition to the change in the stem vowel (Example 7-32).

N. Franzen: Bei den Nachbarn da war ein junger Mann, der **gehte** zur Brüdergemeinde aber die Familie nicht.
W. Andres: die hatten ja eine Kammer, wir **nennten** das eine Kammer.
M. Duerksen: dann **klingte** es drei mal und wurde es ausgemacht.
G. Enns: es **kommt** darauf an.
das **nennten** sie Ording wie **nennte** man das in Russland
Ording **nennten** sie das.

Example 7-31

A. Klassen: Dann saßen wir irgendwo in eine Stadt auf der Station und warteten bis der Zug **kamte**.
N. Franzen: und dann **schlieften** wir.
Er sprachte so wenig
M. Duerksen: ja dann **liessten** sie uns auch herein.
G. Enns: da **gingte** der **могылы@r way@e**.

Example 7-32

The most frequent of the latter was the past tense form of the verb 'anfangen' (to start):

N. Franzen: dann **fungte** der Selbstschutz gerade an.
und die Weintraubenernte **fungte** im Oktober an
und dann **fungte** in dem Jahr neunundzwanzig Immigration nach Westen an.
dann **fungte es** an sehr wenig nur ab und zu mal.

Example 7-33

7.1.2.4 Multiple Negation

Many participants in both sets frequently employed constructions featuring multiple negation, which is not found in SHG. Usually, such constructions involved negating both the noun and the main verb in the same clause, and therefore featured both ‘kein’ (or its pronominal form ‘keiner’) and ‘nicht’. Such constructions were usually used to give the negated element(s) a special emphasis and were very typical of the first (Example 7-34) as well as of the second set participants (Example 7-35).

N. Driedger: die hatten **keinen** vote **nicht**.
C. Martens: von unsere Jungen ging **keiner nicht** mit.
ich hatte dann **kein** Geld **nicht** for a while.
es waren **keine** Proteste **nicht**.
wir hatten da **keine** Zeitung **nicht**
M. Toews: ... weil meine Eltern **keine nicht** hatten.
W. Andres: da war **kein** Fenster **nicht**.
sonst durfte **keiner nicht** Flinten halten.
weil du **kein** Prediger **nicht** bist.
hätte **keiner nicht** gedacht aus Russland rauszugehen.

Example 7-34

H. Rempel: ich habe **keine** Chance **nicht** nach Kanada zu kommen.
A. Rempel: hier wird **keiner nicht** mehr fahren.
A. Loewen: **keiner** hatte mich **nicht** aufgehalten.
H. Lehn: **keine** plattdeutsche Bücher hatten wir **nicht**.
H. Franzen: wir haben **kein** Radio **nicht** gehabt.
sie hatten **keine** Lehrer **nicht**.
ich kenne **kein** Namen **nicht**.

Example 7-35

| | |
|------------|--|
| W. Andres: | wo bleibt meine frau? ich finde sie niemals nicht mehr in diese grosse Stadt. |
| H. Lehn: | ihre Familie hatte niemand nicht . |
| A. Loewen: | ... hat uns niemand nichts gesagt. |
| G. Enns: | da war niemand nicht zu Hause. |

Example 7-36

The existence of the constructions in these examples can most likely be attributed to the influence of the Russian language, which has very similar constructions consisting of an indefinite pronoun or an adverb ‘никто’ (no one), ‘ничто’ (nothing) or ‘никогда’ (never) in combination with the negative particle ‘не’ (not):

| | Mennonite HG: | Russian: |
|------------|---|--|
| W. Andres: | Sprich niemals nicht das Wort Moskau! [Say never not the word Moscow] | Никогда не говори слова Москва! [Never not say word Moscow!] |
| | die Russen werden einem niemals nicht sagen. [The Russians will to one never not say] | Русские никогда не скажут! [Russians never not say!] |

Example 7-37

Very similar constructions were also found to be characteristic of the language of Germans in the USSR and were also traced back to the influence of the Russian language (e.g. Frank, 1992, p. 163). At the same time, while constructions with double negation do exist in Plautdietsch, the frequency with which they appeared in the interviewees’ speech nevertheless is related to the speaker’s knowledge of Russian, which, of course, does not necessarily mean causation. Thus, C. Martens and W. Andres from the first set finished a secondary educational institution (agricultural and commercial college respectively) in Russia, which was conducted entirely in the Russian language. H. Franzen of the second,

who was shown to use double negation frequently, completed grades eight to ten in the Russian language and still spoke it very well at the time of the interview.

7.1.2.5 Relative Pronouns

Further drifting away from the number/gender/case distinction can be seen in the frequent substitution of various forms of the SHG relative pronouns with the form ‘was’ (what).

Although ‘was’ can be an interrogative pronoun in SHG, as a relative pronoun it refers to inanimate objects and can be used with indefinite antecedents such as ‘etwas’

(something), ‘nichts’ (nothing) and with demonstratives such ‘das’ (this) and ‘dasselbe’ (the same). At the same time, ‘was’ never occurs with a noun antecedent in SHG. Thus,

phrases such as ‘Da gibt es nichts, was ich tun könnte’ (There is nothing that I could do here) are considered grammatical in SHG, as opposed to constructions like ‘der

Computer, was ich gekauft habe’ (the computer that I bought). Interestingly, the

participants in both groups frequently extended the usage of ‘was’ to both singular and plural antecedents (Example 7-37) and even to animate antecedents (Example 7-38).

| | Mennonite HG: | SHG: |
|--------------|--|-------------|
| C. Martens: | ... die Greuelthaten, was da waren. | die (plur.) |
| N. Franzen: | Ich lies die Blätter, was er geschrieben hat. | die (plur.) |
| W. Andres: | Das ein Dorf, was nicht die Gewehre ablegte. | das |
| | | |
| G. Enns: | ... die Zeit, was wir aus dem Haus gejagt wurden. | in der |
| E. Driedger: | das Getreide, was da war. | das |

Example 7-37

| | Mennonite HG: | SHG: |
|--------------|---|-------------|
| D. Thiessen: | die Prediger, was noch in Russland waren. | die (plur.) |
| M. Toews: | die Arbeiter, was für Vater arbeiteten. | die (plur.) |
| | auch dieser Bruder, was in Deutschland ist. | der |
| | da war Prediger, was in Winnipeg ist. | der |
| A. Rempel: | Makhno war dieser gewesen, was schreckliche Räubern tut. | der |
| A. Loewen: | meine Kusine, was in Deutschland ist. | die (sing.) |

Example 7-38

7.1.2.6 Verb Constructions and Special Constructions: Conclusions

As this section indicates, there are a number of non-standard constructions in the High German of Russian Mennonites. Some of them are shared by other German varieties, such as the [tun + INFINITIVE] construction or absence of the simple past tense suffix *-t-* in some verbs, and can be interpreted as a general development from synthetic towards analytic structures. Other constructions, such as increased use of ‘was’ in place of a SHG relative pronoun marked for case, number, and gender, add to the evidence that the Mennonites’ variety of High German is moving towards less overt morphological markedness. Finally, some constructions, such as double negation, may be attributed either to convergence with the Russian language, which this variety must have undergone when the group was still living in Russia, or could be a feature of an older stage of High German. Hardly any of these developments can be attributed directly to the influence of the English language and hardly any differences between the two sets have been detected, which, again, indicates the relative stability of these constructions in Russian Mennonite High German.

7.1.3 Lexical/Semantic Domain

7.1.3.1 Discourse Markers

Borrowing key English discourse markers ('well', 'you know', etc) and the parallel loss of the German modal particles ('doch', 'mal', 'wohl' etc.) have been documented as a common feature of German varieties in long-term contact with English from Texas to Australia (e.g. Clyne, 1972; Clyne, 1987; Goss & Salmons, 2000; Salmons, 1990).

Consequently, most speakers, especially those from the second interview set who today speak High German or Plautdietsch with their spouse but English with children and grandchildren (and, consequently, have to code-switch often), were expected to have lost the bulk of native German discourse marking system and to use a number of English discourse markers. Surprisingly, my analysis revealed that although some English discourse markers (most of all 'well') were used by many participants in both interview sets, all the speakers considered in the sample relied mostly on the SHG system of modal particles and used the English discourse markers as borrowings. The frequency breakdown of the German and English modal particles found in the transcribed interviews is provided in the following table:

| | Set 1 | | | | | Set 2 | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|---------|-------------|----------|---------|------------|
| Speaker: | C. Martens | A. Klassen | M. Toews | W. Andres | N. Franzen | M. Esau | M. Duerksen | H. Braun | G. Enns | A. Niebuhr |
| Year of birth: | 1892 | 1893 | 1897 | 1902 | 1907 | 1922 | 1926 | 1928 | 1928 | 1933 |
| doch | 5 | 6 | 23 | 17 | 38 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 14 |
| wohl | 2 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | 9 |
| nämlich | 2 | - | 4 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| eigentlich | - | 17 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 16 | 12 |
| also | 7 | 7 | 49 | 8 | 63 | 22 | 24 | 4 | 21 | 43 |
| mal | 1 | 5 | 16 | 27 | 49 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 11 | 7 |
| well | 5 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 6 | 2 | 56 | 3 | 1 |
| actually | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| you know | 9 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - |

Table 7-5

As the table indicates, although most participants used some English discourse markers, in the speech of all speakers except H. Braun and C. Martens they were far less numerous than the native High German ones. Interestingly, German discourse markers similar to the English ‘you know’ or ‘you see’ (‘weißt du’, ‘weißt du’, ‘siehst du’ etc.) were not found in any of the interviews.

However, despite this lack of English discourse markers, the speakers’ knowledge of English has manifested itself in at least two other ways, namely, in the extension of the meaning of existing words, and in the calquing of English idioms.

7.1.3.2 *Semantic Extension of SHG Lexemes*

One of the most obvious and probably most frequent examples of extending the meaning of HG vocabulary under the influence of English is the preposition ‘nach’, which in SHG indicates direction and is used with geographical names (e.g. ‘nach Kanada’) or in set expressions only (‘nach Hause’). However, in the speech of most participants ‘nach’ was given the meaning of the English preposition ‘to’ and resulted in the speakers producing constructions which are considered ungrammatical in SHG. For example:

| | |
|-------------|--|
| W. Andres: | da ging ich nach die zweite Stelle. Then I went to the second place. |
| J. Janzen: | sein Vater kam nach uns. His father came to us. |
| A. Niebuhr: | da gingen wir nach meine Mutter ihre Geschwister. Then we went to my mother’s siblings. |
| K. Kehler: | Da kamen wir nach dem Schiff. Then we came to the ship. |

Example 7-39

Another preposition meaning has been extended beyond the contexts allowed in SHG is the preposition ‘an’:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| F. Koop: | und die hatten ein kleines Haus an de andere Seite. |
| J. Gossen: | ein russisches Dorf war gleich an der andere Seite vom Fluss. |
| A. Loewen: | hier Hauptstrasse, waren an beide Seiten Häuser. |
| K. Kehler: | standen wir an der Straße. |

Example 7-40

However, while the usage of ‘nach’ by the Mennonites clearly parallels the meaning of the English preposition ‘to’, the usage of ‘an’ in a non-standard way can be traced back to either English ‘on’ or the Russian preposition ‘на’, which in both languages can be used with the nouns for ‘side’ (сторона) or ‘street’ (улица).

A somewhat similar case of semantic extension is presented by the HG lexeme ‘horchen’ (to eavesdrop), which in SHG implies listening carefully in a secret manner. The speakers in both samples, however, used this verb with the meaning of the English ‘to listen to’, which in English besides ‘listening’ can also have a meaning of ‘obeying, listening to orders or guidance’. This is especially evident from the following examples:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| W. Andres: | Aber wir junge Menschen horchten nicht nach den Vätern. But we, young people, did not listen to the father. Aber wir gingen und wir horchten gar nicht nach denen. But we went and did not listen to them. |
| F. Koop: | Da haben die deutschen da gesessen [in der Kirche] und zugehorcht . The Germans sat there and listened . |
| G. Enns: | ... haben wir bis nach Mitternacht gesessen, er hat gelesen wir haben ihn gehört . We sat until midnight, he read and we listened . |

Example 7-41

Another interesting example in this category is the verb ‘verspielen’, which in SHG means ‘to gamble away’ but is also a direct translation of the Russian verb “проиграть”, which besides gambling away also means ‘to lose’. Interestingly, the verb was clearly used with the meaning of its Russian equivalent in connection with World War I and the Civil War:

| |
|---|
| <p>J. Driedger: ... als der Krieg für Russland ungünstig verlief, als Russland immer mehr verspielte an den Fronten. Deutschland verspielte hier den Krieg und diese mussten zurück.</p> <p>G. Thiessen: Also, den Krieg hatte Russland verspielt, gegen Deutschland.</p> |
|---|

Example 7-42

Furthermore, this verb was found only in the speech of the three above-mentioned participants from the first set, all of whom knew Russian very well and had much contact with Russian speakers before immigrating to Canada.

Further, the German verb ‘meinen’ which has a meaning similar to that of the English ‘to mean’ but in SHG can only be used with animate subjects in the context of ‘expressing someone’s opinion/thought’ but not to describe the meaning of something, appeared in the speech of many participants precisely in this context:

| |
|--|
| <p>N. Driedger: земский союз, das war so ein Verband aller counties von ganz Russland. Земский das meint also земская управа, das meint also so wie, na so wir hier die counties, zum Beispiel.</p> <p>H. Lehn: weisst du was das wort MCC meint?</p> <p>F. Koop: weißt du was das meint председатель?</p> <p>L. Winter: Ich weiß noch einen Weihnachten, das ging immer кукла und кукла und кукла und кукла. Dann war ich zu Mama: was ist кукла? Ah, das ist ein Name. Da bin ich zu einem anderen Herrn gegangen: Herr Warkentin, was meint кукла? – Eine Puppe!</p> |
|--|

Example 7-43

The final example in this category are compound nouns calqued from the English kinship terms with ‘grand-’, such as ‘Großkinder’, ‘Großsohn’, ‘Großtochter’, which were used by almost all participants in both interview sets.

7.1.3.3 *Calqued Idioms*

Further, a considerable number of English idioms were found to be calqued by the participants in both groups. These include (but are not restricted to) the following constructions, which were felt to be fairly typical for most speakers: [to be well off] (Example 7-44), [to take x years] (Example 7-45), and [x years ago] (Example 7-46):

| | |
|--------------|--|
| N. Driegder: | wir waren besser ab. |
| M. Toews: | die sind sehr gut ab. |
| N. Franzen: | wir wussten ja, einige Familien waren besser ab. |
| F. Koop: | wir waren sehr gut ab. |

Example 7-44

| | |
|--------------|---|
| J. Driedger: | das nahm mir fünf Jahre bis ich alles das loswurde. |
| H. Wiens: | Es hat mich ein bisschen mehr wie ein Jahr genommen |

Example 7-45

| | |
|----------|-----------------------|
| G. Enns: | vierzig Jahre zurück. |
| F. Koop: | sechs Jahre zurück. |

Example 7-46

It is interesting to point out that the constructions in Example 7-46 could also be borrowed from Russian, which has a very similar construction, e.g. ‘сорок лет назад’ (forty years ago).

7.1.3.4 Lexical/Semantic Domain: Conclusions

This section has shown that spending half a century in English-speaking Canada has resulted in the adoption of numerous constructions formed by calquing English idioms and individual lexemes, as well as in extending the meaning and grammatical contexts of some SHG prepositions and verbs. At the same time, it has been shown that the influence of English on the High German variety spoken by the group was mostly limited to borrowing English constructions or some of their semantic or syntactic properties. Also, similar to the other types of constructions, hardly any notable differences between the two sets were detected.

7.2 Discussion and Explanation

7.2.1 Variation Between the Groups

As previously mentioned, no significant differences in the use of non-standard constructions between the two groups have been found. This, however, does not mean that these differences never existed. In fact, most likely, the speech of the third-wave immigrants at the time of their migration differed from that of the Mennonites already in Canada but these differences have disappeared in the fifty years since their arrival. For example, numerous Russian borrowings have been mentioned by Moelleken (1992, p. 80), and several second set participants also pointed out that they used many Russian words which the other Mennonites did not know. For example, E. Toews from the second set remembers: “*Wie wir hierher kamen, wir sprachen von - wie hieß es? - Чемодан! Wir alle hatten чемоданс (suitcases). Und пальтос (rain coats).*” Another second set participant also claimed that they used many Russian borrowings in High German even

under the German occupation during World War II and remembered (after the actual interview) one of his relatives asking a German soldier who did not know any Russian to bring “*eine Banka mit Warenje*” (a jar of jam). Therefore, since Mennonites were using these words in Russia, even when talking to non-Mennonites, it is very likely that they kept using them for at least some time after they left Russia. However, most of these borrowings were very short-lived and most likely disappeared soon after their arrival in Canada, if not before that. In a similar way, since the third-wave Mennonite immigrants spent several years in Germany, their High German must have been influenced to some extent by the contemporary European German. Yet my method, i.e. looking for deviations from SHG in the interviewees’ speech, did not identify any.

Besides a certain leveling between the HG of the two groups, which to a certain extent must have taken place in Canada, the following reasons can be given for the lack of significant linguistic differences between the participants of the two sets. First of all, all interviewees were first generation immigrants, which means that all of them without exceptions grew up with the Standard High German (Dachsprache), and had at least a large part of their schooling in High German. Secondly, all participants showed strong self-identification as Mennonites and had a very strong feeling of belonging together as a group. These common factors seem to have had a much more profound effect on the Mennonites as a group, and consequently, on their language, than the different historical events or social conditions each group faced throughout their history.

7.2.2 Variation within the Groups

However, much more interesting is the variation in the frequency of non-standard constructions shown by the participants in each group. Thus, while the deviations presented in section 7.1 were fairly typical to all interviewees (i.e. there was not a single participant who did not exhibit at least several types of non-standard constructions), some speakers exhibited significantly fewer deviations than others, as shown in the following table:

| | Set 1 | | | | | Set 2 | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| Speaker: | C. Martens | A. Klassen | M. Toews | W. Andres | N. Franzen | M. Esau | M. Duerksen | H. Braun | G. Enns | A. Niebuhr |
| Year of birth: | 1892 | 1893 | 1897 | 1902 | 1907 | 1922 | 1926 | 1928 | 1928 | 1933 |
| Interview length (min.) | 105 | 87 | 77 | 98 | 117 | 36 | 49 | 33 | 67 | 38 |
| Non-standard constructions: | | | | | | | | | | |
| types of codes | 17 | 16 | 21 | 23 | 19 | 20 | 26 | 15 | 36 | 13 |
| # of occurrences | 48 | 21 | 108 | 211 | 84 | 82 | 90 | 50 | 317 | 36 |

Table 7-6

Some of the non-transcribed interviews were also found to contain very few non-standard constructions, while others showed an abundance of them. But what can account for such tremendous difference between individual speakers? When trying to answer this question, I have considered a number of factors, such as age, level of education, first language, the language spoken in the family, the amount of time spent in Germany, the speakers' profession, and their involvement in the church.

First of all, no relation between the speakers' age and the number of the deviations exhibited has been found. Thus, younger speakers in each interview set did not necessarily produce more or fewer deviations than the older participants. The level of speakers' education or the language of school instruction was not connected with the number of non-standard constructions in their spoken High German. For example, the participants in the second set who had graduated from high school did not always show

fewer deviations than those who had only six or seven years of formal education. Similarly, some of the first set participants, who besides high school had finished a secondary educational institution (such as W. Andres, who had completed five years of an agricultural college after high school), showed more deviations than some participants with a much lower level of education (e.g. Maria Klassen, born in 1905, who did not study beyond grade seven).

Surprisingly, the first language of the participants was also not found to be a predictor of the number of deviations in the speaker's High German. Thus, the participants who grew up speaking both Plautdietsch and High German at home were not felt to be linguistically different to predominantly Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonites. Similarly, some of those participants who spoke only High German with their parents in Russia showed a high number of non-standard constructions. Nevertheless, the first language might have played a role since three out of four interviewees who spoke only High German as children, produced somewhat fewer deviations than the other participants. This, however, contradicts the fact that the interviewees who spoke only High German in their own families in Canada (usually because one of the partners was either a non-Mennonite German or did not speak good Plautdietsch) did not necessarily show fewer non-standard constructions than those who spoke mainly Plautdietsch with their spouse but High German with their children.

Further, although the three first set participants who spent a number of years in Germany for various reasons (A. Klassen, G. Reimer, and G. Toews) showed somewhat fewer deviations than the other speakers in the first sample, the amount of time spent in Germany did not seem to have influence on the deviations exhibited by the speakers in

the second set. Finally, although teachers or church ministers as well as participants coming from teachers' or ministers' families also seemed to rely on non-standard constructions to a lesser degree than the other participants (e.g. J. Wichert & J. Epp from set one), this was not always the case (for example, J. Thiessen or J. Janzen from set one).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the number of non-standard constructions in the interviewees' High German was most likely not determined by a single factor but by a combination of them. Thus, a hypothetical Russian Mennonite, who theoretically would show very few deviations typical of the High German of the other Mennonites, would most likely have one or all of the following characteristics: he or she would come from a High German-speaking family in which at least one of the parents was a teacher or a church minister. He or she would speak only High German as a child, would be a teacher or a minister himself, and would have spoken only High German in his/her own family. He or she would have spent a number of years in Germany with limited contact with other Mennonites. Finally, as my data suggests even partial fulfillment of these requirements almost certainly required a good command of Russian, and therefore a Mennonite who showed fewer deviations from SHG would also possess a good knowledge of the Russian language.

Having described the non-standard constructions typical of the speech of most Russian Mennonite speakers considered in the two interview sets, and having identified the sociolinguistic factors which usually co-occurred with the absence of these deviations, I will attempt to explain the existence of these phenomena.

7.2.3 *Explaining the Existence of Non-standard Constructions in RMHG*

Usually, linguistic changes affecting German language islands outside of Germany are attributed either to the process of convergence with other languages (i.e. by language-external factors) or the tendency of Germanic languages to change in a certain direction (i.e. by language-internal factors). As will be shown below, in the case of Russian Mennonites' High German both factors are clearly at work.

Thus, as has been shown above, each of the languages with which Mennonites came in prolonged contact contributed something to their linguistic variety. For example, calquing English idioms or semantic extension of HG prepositions or other lexemes according to patterns typical for the English language can hardly be caused by anything else other than the process of convergence with English. Constructions featuring double negation and using the verb 'verspielen' in its Russian meaning are most likely motivated by the influence of Russian. Finally, some constructions, such as [AN DE + YEAR] or the usage of 'de' instead of a definite article can probably be attributed to the influence of Plautdietsch.

At the same time, language-internal factors, namely, the general tendency of Germanic languages to develop in a certain direction, for example, from synthetic toward analytic constructions, could explain some of the other deviations, such as replacing possessive genitive phrases like '*meines Vaters Bruder*' with constructions featuring dative and a possessive pronoun ('*meinem Vater sein Bruder*') or using the auxiliary verb '*tun*' in a construction with the infinitive of the main verb (e.g. '*Verstehen Sie, was ich meinen tue?*' instead of '*... was ich meine?*').

However, explaining the main body of deviations in the interviewees' speech, namely the significant variation in case assignment and a reduction in explicit case/number/gender markedness with either language-internal or language-external factors, is quite difficult.

On the one hand, it is tempting to attribute these developments to the influence of another language (convergence hypothesis). But what language, of the ones that the Mennonites came in contact with, could cause such developments? As has been shown by a number of authors, although such morphological developments are also typical of German varieties which were spoken in the USSR by the Volga Germans (e.g. Berend & Jedig, 1991; Rosenberg, 1994), they cannot be caused by convergence with Russian because of its elaborate system of six grammatical cases and have been explained by "internal factors not external linguistic interference" (Keel, 1994, p. 100). Therefore, if the process of convergence with Russian indeed affected the case system of the Mennonite High German, it should have become more but certainly not less complex.

Further, if the reduction in case marking is indeed caused by Russian, German varieties that never came in contact with it, such as Texas German or Pennsylvania German, should not exhibit similar features, but they do (Fuller & Gilbert, 2003; Gilbert, 1965; Guion, 1996; Huffines, 1994; Loudon, 1994).

Another language that has already been shown to affect the Mennonites' High German is English. However, it can also hardly be held responsible for these developments. Although a number of authors attributed similar changes in other German varieties in North America to English influence (e.g. Eikel, 1949; Loudon, 1994; Nicolini, 2004), the same developments have also been shown to be caused by language-internal

factors (e.g. Born, 2003; Fuller, 1996; Keel, 1994). In the case of Russian Mennonite immigrants in Canada, I would argue that English cannot be held responsible for the exhibited variation in case assignment and the tendency to move away from overt case/gender/number marking for the following reasons:

- 1) The majority of patterns exhibited by the Mennonites do not match patterns of Canadian English, which should approximate them if the latter has indeed caused these changes. This is especially evident from the indirect-case pronominal forms, which are still marked for case in modern English (e.g. ‘We did not really trust **them** anymore’) but were not always marked for case by the interviewees, e.g. “Wir trauten **die** nicht mehr richtig”.
- 2) Most participants in both interview sets have acquired English as adults, and most never acquired it fully. Thus, several participants who showed much variation in case assignment stated during the interview that they never used English in their families and that they were not very fluent in it.
- 3) Some of the second set participants who have switched to English as the family language showed less variation in case assignment than some of those who today speak mostly High German or Plautdietsch. If deviations in case assignment were indeed caused by convergence with English, those participants who today speak mostly English should show significantly more inconsistency in case markings.

Therefore, if the deviations in case-marked constructions in Russian Mennonite High German are indeed caused by convergence, it is clearly not convergence with Russian or English. The only other language which most Mennonites know quite well is Plautdietsch. Attributing the above-mentioned developments to convergence with it is

also especially tempting since Plautdietsch, unlike SHG, does not have a strict pattern of assigning dative or accusative cases. Nevertheless, although this hypothesis does seem highly plausible, it cannot explain why very similar changes affect the German varieties of those above-mentioned German varieties, which have never been exposed to Plautdietsch (or any other Low German variety, for that matter), such as Texas German or Pennsylvania German.

On the other hand, claiming that these changes are caused by “the general Germanic drift toward two-case systems” (Born, 2003, p. 151) and result only from language-internal processes would explain why the other above-mentioned German varieties show very similar features, but at the same time it would mean completely ignoring the fact that the majority of Mennonites spoke a language which had very similar constructions to the deviations found in their High German. Also, if one accepts the hypothesis of internally-motivated change being responsible for the signs of case coalescence in their High German, it would be very difficult to explain why Mennonites’ High German would not converge with Plautdietsch if it did to some extent converge with English and Russian.

However, what may bring some clarity into this question is the fact that the variation in case assignment in German language island varieties usually increases after the removal of SHG as the language of school instruction (e.g. Born, 2003; Salmons, 1994). Although I do not possess the data which would allow me to trace how these case deviations developed among younger generations of Mennonites who had their education entirely in English, it is striking that such deviation was already present in the speech of several generations of Russian Mennonites who grew up and lived most of their lives

with the SHG roof. Therefore, if the variation in case assignment in Mennonite High German was not caused by English but was present in the speech of several generations of speakers born in Russia, where Plautdietsch was extensively used ever since the first Mennonites arrived from Prussia, several important conclusions can be drawn. First of all, this would indicate that the above-mentioned features must have appeared in the Mennonite High German before their emigration from Russia, and, since the linguistic situation in Russia was very stable before the late 1930s, such deviation in case assignment may have been present in their High German for many decades. In this instance, the evidence for converging with Plautdietsch is simply too strong to be overlooked.

Therefore, it seems very likely that the existence of significant deviations in case-marked constructions in Russian Mennonite High German is the result of both internally and externally motivated processes of language change. It can be claimed that precisely because of the tendency of Germanic languages to move towards a two case system, the High German of Russian Mennonites was extremely likely to converge with Plautdietsch, which had already completed the case-merger. Furthermore, both convergence with Plautdietsch and the independent change hypothesis do not contradict each other and can account for the general direction of case variation mentioned above (namely that the dative case is more likely to be replaced with nominative and accusative, and that accusative is more likely to be replaced with nominative than the other way round) because both processes have been shown to occur in the reverse order of the acquisition sequence (Born, 2003).

Most likely, the beginning of this process can be traced back to the end of the eighteenth century in Prussia, when High German started to become the language of the Mennonite church, and can be attributed to the incomplete acquisition of High German by the primarily Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonites. Convergence with Plautdietsch then continued in Russia, where the need to use High German in official and religious settings increased, but an opportunity to learn it beyond the several years of limited education in the village schools remained a privilege of the wealthier Mennonite elite who could afford to send their children to Western universities, or to hire well-trained private teachers. Thus, at least until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the system of Mennonite education was reorganized and significantly improved, most Mennonites in Russia did not have an opportunity to acquire High German fully despite being exposed to it in the churches, schools, official settings, and in a number of other contexts discussed in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, perceiving High German to be a more prestigious language, and being forced by the social norms to use it in certain contexts, Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonites must have heavily relied on Plautdietsch constructions when speaking High German for a number of decades in Russia. Therefore, it is possible that by the end of the nineteenth century, when the system of Mennonite education had significantly improved and most Mennonites had better opportunities to learn SHG, Plautdietsch constructions were already firmly established in the High German of most Mennonite speakers.

At this point, it is possible to speak of two High German varieties present among the Mennonites in Russia. One of them would be the SHG used in Mennonite schools and churches, as well as spoken by a few Mennonites, such as teachers or church ministers,

who would intentionally try to approximate the norms of SHG as closely as possible because of the high prestige associated with it and because their own social status in the community required them to speak ‘better’ German than the rest of the community. As mentioned above, such speakers would have had a better opportunity to learn SHG during their education and would be significantly less likely to use non-standard constructions in their language than the other Mennonites.

The other High German variety, which can be called Russian Mennonite High German (RMHG), would be the High German spoken by the majority of the Mennonite population which contained a number of established non-standard constructions in it.²⁹ Although Mennonite speakers themselves did not distinguish between the two and referred to both as ‘Hochdeutsch’, many, in fact, almost all of them, nevertheless characterized the High German variety they spoke as ‘*mennonitisches Hochdeutsch*’ or ‘*ein sehr plattes Hochdeutsch*’, and contrasted it to the ‘*Reichsdeutsch*’ or ‘*königliches, literarisches Hochdeutsch*’ spoken in Germany as well as by a few Mennonites. The assumption that many of the non-standard constructions exemplified in section 7.1 were quite stable in RMHG at least since the end of the nineteenth century is supported by the insignificant amount of variation in non-standard constructions found between the interviewees in the two sets, despite the fact that the participants belonged to different generations and the interviews being recorded twenty-five years apart. Further, the fact that almost all speakers in the sample, even those who reported speaking High German in their families, showed some of these constructions during the interview also suggests that

²⁹ In his 1992 article, Moelleken calls this variety a “standardized form of High German”, “Mennonite Standard German”, and an “intermediate form of a language” (p. 69). The first two terms seem problematic to me because we can hardly speak about the process of standardization of this variety, and the third seems to be somewhat inaccurate because the variety described in this dissertation is clearly High German, albeit with some non-standard features.

these deviations were very widespread among Mennonites. Furthermore, I believe that while SHG was the prerogative of only a few well educated Mennonites, who certainly stood out because of their proficiency in it, usage of RMHG was possibly even perceived to be a part of the Mennonite identity. This assumption is supported by the fact that even some of the more educated speakers (e.g. N. Driedger or C. Martens from set one) used a number of non-standard constructions, although they must have learned in school that many of these constructions are inappropriate in SHG.

7.3. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

In retrospect, it can be said that besides the already mentioned lack of support for the main hypothesis of the study, which may be attributed to the methodology used in this project, avoiding the Observer's Paradox was most likely not as successful as it was thought at the early stage of the project. Thus, it was noticed that after the actual interview, when the digital recording device was stopped and I engaged in an informal conversation with the participants (usually over a cup of tea or coffee), I had the impression that they spoke less formally and usually showed a higher frequency of salient non-standard constructions than during the actual interview.

In addition, despite my own Russian Mennonite background, which was very helpful in approaching and recruiting the participants for this study, the fact that as a non-native speaker of German, I have learned only the standard variety of it most likely caused the participants to speak more formally and consequently to show fewer non-standard constructions. For example, one of the participants claimed that he found it difficult to speak High German with me in the same way as he would speak it with his Mennonite relatives because "I spoke a different High German than the Mennonites."

Further, the very broad scope of this study did not allow me to concentrate more specifically on several issues which need to be researched further and given a closer look. Thus, despite my initial intentions and inclusion of the corresponding tags to code the syntactic phenomena in the transcribed interviews, such interesting issues as position of the modal verbs or the placement of the conjugated verbs in main and subordinate clauses were not analyzed in this study. Similarly, various issues of code-switching as well as the morphological accommodation of English and Russian borrowings, including patterns of gender assignment, were not devoted the amount of attention they deserve. Also, while this study has only considered the first generation immigrants, all of whom grew up with the SHG Dachspache, investigating the High German of the second generation Mennonite immigrants who grew up in Canada could provide an excellent source of data to be compared to the results of this study and could yield new insights into the language change among Mennonites specifically, as well as into issues of English-German language contact.

Finally, the theoretical framework of Construction Grammar was not used during the structural analysis to the extent it was initially intended to be used, and therefore the major advantages of this approach were not fully implemented. Applying Construction Grammar to the analysis of the High German spoken by Russian Mennonites seems to be an interesting and promising project I intend to conduct in the future.

7.4. Conclusions

The main goals of this dissertation were to investigate the High German variety spoken by the second- and the third-wave Russian Mennonite immigrants in Ontario, to examine the patterns of language use by each group in Russia and how they have changed in Canada, and to determine in how far this High German variety corresponds to Standard High German. The primary hypothesis of the project was that different historical events as well as different social and political conditions witnessed by members of each group both in Russia and in Canada have had a considerable influence upon and were/are reflected in their High German.

The results of the study indicate that generally the patterns of language use by both groups in Russia were very similar but nevertheless showed two important differences. First of all, members of the second wave tried to show their patriotic feelings toward their fatherland in several ways, one of which included instruction in the Russian language in Mennonite schools. At the same time, although the attitude of the third-wave immigrants to the Russian language was largely positive, they usually learned Russian out of necessity and exhibited no patriotic feelings whatsoever. At the same time, despite the increased necessity to learn and use the Russian language, it was not used by the Mennonites for communication within the group and was not likely to replace Plautdietsch as the L or High German as the H-variety. Secondly, High German was found to be perceived by the Mennonites as a much more prestigious language than Plautdietsch and was clearly on the rise as the communal language in the twentieth century, when a number of Mennonite families started using it for informal communication. This rise of High German as the communal language violated to some

extent the stable bilingualism with diglossia which had existed in the Russian Mennonite colonies since their establishment in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The usage of High German for informal communication was found to have increased in Canada among both groups as a part of a conscious attempt of the Mennonite church to save High German as the language of religion. However, despite this, High German has been entirely lost by each of the groups within a three generation period and has eventually been replaced as the religious language by English. Interestingly, independent of their earlier opinion on the matter, most Mennonites today view this switch as a positive event in the life of the Mennonite church and no longer consider English to be a threat to the Mennonite religion. Most speakers have also completely come to terms with the loss of the German varieties by their grandchildren and no longer consider either knowledge of Plautdietsch or High German as a vital condition for 'being Mennonite'.

Further, although a significant difference in spoken High German between the two groups was expected, comparing the non-standard constructions found in the High German speech of both groups did not yield any significant results. While this lack of results may have been caused by the methodology of the study and can be considered a limitation, it is also possible that these differences have disappeared from the language during the fifty years each group spent in Canada prior to being interviewed.

Finally, it has been determined that the variety of High German spoken by the Russian Mennonites significantly differs from Standard High German in a number of respects and that it shows a variety of non-standard constructions. While some of them can be traced back to the influence of the English language and therefore entered the

Mennonite High German after the group immigrated to Canada, the other non-standard constructions were most likely present in their speech already in Russia. It has been argued that these constructions were also relatively stable in the group's High German, and possibly were even considered a part of their Russian Mennonite identity. This, for example, could explain why the first set participants, who could choose the language of the interview and therefore would not decide to use High German if they were not proficient enough in it, still showed a large number of deviations in their speech. The relatively high frequency of the non-standard constructions, as well as the fact that they were found in the speech of almost all interviewees, allows one to call this High German variety a 'Russian Mennonite High German' which is perceived by the speakers to be '*schlechtes*', '*mennonitisches*' or '*plattes Hochdeutsch*', and to contrast it to Standard High German, which was taught in Mennonite schools and was spoken by a few Mennonites with significantly better education and higher social status than most other members of the community. In fact, one of the participants, who spoke only High German since birth, claimed that he never learned Standard High German until he came to Germany but always spoke Mennonite High German.

Finally, it has been shown that RMHG has been subject to both language-internal as well as language-external processes of language change, and that it is not always possible to determine where the first end and the second begin. Thus, a significant deviation in case assignment as well as a certain reduction in the explicit case/number/gender markedness found in the speech of most participants are the results both of convergence with Plautdietsch as well as of the independent development of RMHG towards a two-case system typical of all Germanic languages. In fact, the

combination of the two may explain why these developments have been present in RMHG before SHG was removed as the roof language, which is usually the major trigger for such changes.

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APPENDIX

The Name 'Mennonite' and Mennonite Names

The radical reformation of the sixteenth century gave rise to numerous Anabaptist groups in Northern Europe, such as the Melchiorites, the Obbenites, and the Dirkites, to name a few (Smith, 1981, p. 72). However, only the peaceful branch of the movement became known as Mennonites, after the name of their most influential leader Menno Simons. It must be stressed, however, that Menno Simons was not the founder of the new church but rather a leader who had converted to the new faith when the movement was already well on its way (Smith, 1981, p. 72).

The fact that the first followers of Menno were called 'Mennisten' is evident from a 1544 edict by Duchess Anna of East Frisia, who used this name to distinguish them from the revolutionary Anabaptist parties (Goerzen, 1972, p. 10). Nevertheless, many scholars agree that they were not generally known under this name until somewhat later in West Prussia (e.g. Buchheit, 1978, p. 9; Epp, 1993, p. 65). There, the first Mennonite refugees were mentioned in the documents of the Danzig city archives as early as 1534, but were referred to as 'Wiedetäufer' (Anabaptists) or the 'Holländer' (the Dutch) (Thiessen, 1963, pp. 18, 19)³⁰. Yet, as Smith suggests, Mennonites were strongly opposed to being called 'Wiedertäufer' ('Wederdooper' in Dutch) since "the word implied an earlier baptism" (1981, p. 72), the rejection of which was a tenet of their faith. In addition, this name was commonly used to designate the so-called 'Münsterites', a violent group of Anabaptists who in an attempt to establish the Kingdom of God in the

³⁰ Thiessen further suggests that these first Anabaptists in West Prussia must have been Mennonites since "verschiedene Namen der ersten Kolonisten nur bei den Mennoniten vorzufinden sind" (p. 19).

North German city of Münster caused much bloodshed and mayhem, giving all Anabaptist groups a bad name.

About thirty years later, around 1572, a somewhat longer form, ‘Mennonisten’, was found in Prussian documents for the first time (Quiring, 1928, p. 3). This name was still in use until the second half of the twentieth century, as can be seen from the Russian census and church records. In all probability, the current version of the name was formed somewhat later, but most likely before the first Mennonites left Russia for North America in the 1870s.

In itself, the term Mennonite is a religious epithet that can refer to people of any racial and cultural background who share the Mennonite faith. Yet since Mennonite settlements in the Vistula delta and in especially in Southern Russia were self-sufficing and self-contained (Peters & Thiessen, 1987, p. 15; Smith, 1981, p. 172) and marriages with non-Mennonites were discouraged,³¹ “the religious epithet had almost taken on ethnic significance” (Goerzen, 1972, p. 21). Therefore, even today it is quite “possible for one to be a Mennonite but yet not to be a member of the Mennonite church” (Francis, 1948, p. 104).

One of the most pronounced attributes of Russian Mennonite ‘ethnicity’ is their family names, mainly of Flemo-Frisian origin with a few insignificant external additions (Postma, 1959, p. 106). Despite the long history of netherlandic Mennonites as a coherent, semi-closed, ethno-religious group, there are not even four hundred typical Mennonite surnames, with the vast majority of them including only one or two isolated families (Smith, 1981, p. 172). For example, a study of typical last names among

³¹ Even in 1963 Thiessen mentioned that “Mischehen mit Nichtmennoniten kommen bis heute selten vor” (p. 17).

Mennonites of West Prussia conducted in 1912 indicated that “West Prussian Mennonites consisted almost exclusively of the descendants of the first Dutch settlers who came there in the sixteenth century” (Smith, 1981, p. 172). The following twenty-one surnames were found to embrace nearly one-half of all the West-Prussian Mennonite population:

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Penner | 8. Janz | 15. Fast |
| 2. Wiens | 9. Froese | 16. Franz |
| 3. Dyck | 10. Regehr | 17. Friesen |
| 4. Klassen | 11. Harder | 18. Reimer |
| 5. Wieb | 12. Ewert | 19. Epp |
| 6. Janzen | 13. Pauls | 20. Fieguth |
| 7. Enns | 14. Neufeld | 21. Albrecht |

Another interesting study has been conducted by Peters and Thiessen (1987), who compiled the following list of the twenty most common Russian Mennonite family names in Canada based on the telephone directories:

- | | | |
|------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. Friesen | 8. Derksen | 15. Hiebert |
| 2. Dyck | 9. Peters | 16. Töws |
| 3. Wiebe | 10. Thiessen | 17. Sawatzky |
| 4. Klassen | 11. Giesbrecht | 18. Janzen |
| 5. Penner | 12. Löwen | 19. Harder |
| 6. Reimer | 13. Enns | 20. Fehr ³² |
| 7. Neufeld | 14. Hildebrand | |

Other research on Russian Mennonite names has been conducted, most notably by Horst Penner (1978), Benjamin Unruh (1955), and Karl Stumpp (1972).

³² Peters & Thiessen, 1987, p.143

Today in North America the name Mennonite also applies to the southern branch of peaceful Anabaptists whose forefathers escaped from southern Germany, Alsace, Switzerland, and Austria in search of religious freedom. The most well-known of these groups in Canada and the United States include the Pennsylvania Mennonites, the Amish, and the Old Order Mennonites. As already mentioned, these groups of South German ancestry, despite the same name and almost identical faith, do not fall within the scope of this study.