The Resilient Word: Linguistic Preservation and Innovation among Old Colony Mennonites in Latin America

Christopher Cox, *University of Alberta*

Language presents a central issue in the Old Colony Mennonite communities in Latin America. Prevalent in both Russian Mennonite history and contemporary Latin American Old Colony communities, the intergenerational stability of societal multilingualism is in keeping with common perceptions of Old Colony cultural practices. An implicit emphasis on 'preservation' aligns well with narratives of historical constancy of tradition in the Old Colony (cf. Hedges, 1996; Warkentin, 2010), and fits with a general expectation of change-averse behaviour on the part of groups to which the label 'conservative' is applied. This perspective on the maintenance of multiple in-group languages, which associates sociolinguistic stability with a degree of linguistic stasis, has perhaps contributed to language use as an aspect of Old Colony cultural practice receiving somewhat less scholarly attention than either material-cultural or social-organizational aspects of these communities. Yet, concentration only on the conservation of specific functional niches for in-group languages belies considerable linguistic

diversity within and between Old Colony communities, and leaves out of focus notable innovations in the less normatively constrained of the languages maintained in these communities. Whereas the schematic assignment of community languages to particular domains of use may have remained essentially unchanged over the past two centuries, the substance and structure of these languages decidedly has not, with sometimes subtle, sometimes pronounced linguistic differences between individuals and settlements within the Old Colony running along migrational, economic, and gender lines.

The present paper explores processes of linguistic preservation and innovation within Old Colony society, concentrating in particular on the structural consequences of continual contact between linguistic varieties that preservation engenders in a multilingual community. It further considers the potential relevance of the Old Colony situation to a broader understanding of language maintenance, variation, and change. Observations concerning the distribution of linguistic varieties across domains of use, attitudes and practices concerning linguistic preservation and innovation, and the consequences of these norms on the languages maintained in the community are based primarily upon my experiences in several Bolivian Old Colony Mennonite communities in mid-2007. This included both shorter visits to settlements in the area of Santa Cruz and longer stays in Old Colony households in the colonies of Las Piedras II, established in 1984 as a branch of the earlier Canadian Mennonite settlement of Las Piedras (Bowen, 2004), and Riva Palacios, established by Mexican Mennonite colonists in 1967. Schartner and Dürksen de Schartner (2009) and Schroeder and Huebert (1996) present further information on the development and geographical distribution of Mennonite settlements in Bolivia. Although relatively little has been written concerning the linguistic practices of the Old Colony Mennonite communities in Bolivia, studies involving Old Colony groups elsewhere, particularly in Mexico (e.g., Moelleken, 1966, 1986, 1987; Brandt, 1992; Hedges, 1996; Kaufmann, 1997), provide points of comparison for discussion in the following sections.

Mennonite multilingualism and language maintenance

The development of multilingualism in Latin American Old Colony Mennonite communities has historical roots in the Mennonite migration to northern Poland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the first waves of Mennonite migration into northern Poland served to establish what has often been considered a triglossic arrangement: a situation in which there

is stable, intergenerational multilingualism involving three languages, each occupying largely distinct domains of use within the speech community. Abstractly, this triglossia can be represented as involving a 'high' variety (H), which is restricted in use to 'prestige' contexts within the community (e.g., education, religion, written communication). This variety is superordinate to a 'low' variety (L), which serves as the means of communication in common, less formal contexts within the community (e.g., day-to-day in-group communication). Both of these community-internal varieties, maintained through local institutions and in-group acculturation, are distinguished from one or more community-external varieties (E), which serve in communication between members of the community and outsiders, with competence in these languages varying across individuals.

In the case of these early Anabaptists and their descendants in the Latin American Old Colony, the development of the varieties which co-exist in this sociolinguistic arrangement was not immediate, but rather gradual, coming to its present form over several centuries of further emigration and resettlement. Table 1 summarizes the historical development of this arrangement of languages as it pertains to Old Colony communities in Latin America. For Old Colony Mennonite groups in Bolivia, contact between three or more languages in the form presented below remains typical, and involves a core ensemble of at least three languages: Mennonite Standard German (*Huagdietsch*; see Brandt, 1992; Moelleken, 1992; and Hedges, 1996 on Huagdietsch as compared to Standard German), Mennonite Low German (*Plautdietsch*), and one or more external languages such as Spanish or English.

Dutch Plautdietsch	Polish, German	Huagdietsch Plautdietsch	Russian, Ukrainian
ca. 1650-1789		**1789-1874**	
Huagdietsch Plautdietsch	English	Huagdietsch Plautdietsch	Spanish, English
1874-1922		**1922-present**	

Table 1. Historical development of triglossia in Russian Mennonite communities and their Old Colony descendants in Latin America, ca. 1650-present, with H-varieties (top left), L-varieties (bottom left) and languages of significant external contact (right) for each time period.

The maintenance of societal multilingualism in this form over several centuries in Old Colony communities is noteworthy, especially

in the minority contexts in which Old Colony communities have found themselves, where language maintenance beyond three generations of separation from a larger speech community is generally atypical (Fishman, 1991). However, the stability of this arrangement underscored by the labels 'diglossia' and 'triglossia' cannot be easily attributed to tradition alone, nor even to the force of religious conviction within which linguistic preservation among Old Colony Mennonites has often been cast. If religious conviction were itself sufficient to maintain internal linguistic diversity, then other Russian Mennonite groups who are heir to the same arrangement of languages might be expected to have had similar success in language maintenance. Yet, this has not always been the case, with ideologies concerning language and identity in some Mennonite denominations actually contributing to processes of language shift (cf. Moelleken, 1994). Rather, as Hedges (1996) argues in the context of Old Colony Mennonite settlements in northern Mexico:

> [...] the key to explaining language maintenance among certain Anabaptist groups and certainly among the Old Colony Mennonites of Chihuahua has little to do with a certain degree of 'conservatism' or 'traditionalism' as an independent factor. Nor can language maintenance be viewed as a natural artifact of Mennonite theology. Instead, the maintenance of the two varieties and of the linguistic ideology which dictates their norms of use must be viewed as the result of specific processes of maintenance efforts situated in a specific social, economic, and political context. Like any cultural artifact, the dominant uses of and attitudes about certain language varieties continue not through the weight of their own inertia or because they are bogged down by 'tradition', but through the workings of institutions, individuals, and factions. (pp. 335-6)

If, as Hedges argues, 'conservatism' and 'tradition' themselves cannot be treated as causal factors in the maintenance of internal linguistic diversity in Old Colony Mennonite communities, then explanations for the observed success of intergenerational language maintenance must be sought elsewhere. It is clear that these distinctive linguistic practices contribute to group identity, presenting one means by which members of Old Colony communities identify themselves as sharing certain cultural norms under the ethnic and linguistic label *Dietsch* (literally 'German'). This aspect of community identity is further bolstered through the importance of particular linguistic norms in 'core' social activities, such as the practice of *spazieren* 'visiting', which most often takes place in Plautdietsch.[1] Likewise, the maintenance of an

autonomous Old Colony educational system provides the foundation for continued use of Huagdietsch in domains of 'Sunday-like' (*sinndöagsch*; cf. Hedges, 1996) communication. Institutional support of this kind is made possible in large part by the economic self-sufficiency of Old Colony settlements, allowing community linguistic norms and supporting institutions to be maintained without negative economic consequences for community members.[2] Language maintenance is further supported through the geographical concentration of speakers in colonial settlements, allowing Old Colony speech communities to maintain internal cohesion and avoid marginalization of their linguistic practices in relation to those of external linguistic majorities (cf. Buchheit, 1988; Moelleken, 1986 on geographical settlement density as a factor in language maintenance in other Mennonite communities). These factors in concert contribute substantially to the viability of community-internal language maintenance in Latin American Old Colony settlements, providing cultural, institutional, and economic safeguards against potential language shift and loss.

Linguistic preservation and innovation

As noted above, the maintenance of both Plautdietsch and Huagdietsch as community-internal linguistic varieties is common among Old Colony Mennonite communities in Latin America, with distinctive norms of use associated with each of these varieties. In the case of Huagdietsch, preservation of the traditional domains of use, centred around written communication and functions in the *sinndöagsche* realm, has been and continues to be the focus of considerable normative attention in these communities. Hedges (1996) suggests the maintenance of the functional differentiation that associates Huagdietsch with written communication and prestige domains in Old Colony communities relates to that language's role within the dominant ideology of constancy with tradition. From this perspective, the preservation of Huagdietsch in these capacities subserves the larger purpose of "creating a collective memory of the past and connecting it with the future" (p. 294), an assessment which appears in line with similar observations by Warkentin (2010) on the construction of community memory and identity in Old Colony communities in Bolivia.

Such an ideological basis provides motivation for language preservation efforts to focus on maintaining not only functional associations between Huagdietsch and particular domains of use, but also certain linguistic features of this variety in as constant a form as can be related to a collectively envisioned past. On this view, the substance of *sinndöagschet* Huagdietsch is codified around much the same

narratives of permanence of tradition and separation from the world that are noted elsewhere as part of Old Colony cultural identity. Indeed, questions concerning the validity or preferability of particular variants of Huagdietsch present within Old Colony communities, perhaps most prominently around the normative pronunciation of orthographic *a* as either /a/ or /aw/ (cf. Redekop, 1969, pp. 206-7, 271-2; Peters & Thiessen, 1990, pp. 125-6; Moelleken, 1993b; Hedges, 1996, pp. 303ff.), have centred not around the 'correctness' of these variants or their probable historical origins within Old Colony linguistic practice, but rather have sought to ground justifications concerning the selection of one variant over the other in narratives of cultural permanence and separateness. In the case of *a*, detractors of the diphthongal pronunciation have reportedly viewed use of this variant as being indicative of a general decline in competency in Huagdietsch, and thus also a collective diminishment of the community's ability to maintain constancy in this regard. Conversely, proponents of this variant have noted its distinctiveness from norms of pronunciation for Standard German found outside of the community, and this distance is cited as a further point of separation between Old Colony and non-Old Colony society. In both instances, the codification of Huagdietsch extends without question beyond its domains of use to the content of the language itself, which would not appear open to elaboration within the *sinndöagsche* realm.[3]

Despite the apparent importance given to the maintenance of Huagdietsch in both its traditional forms and functions within Old Colony communities in Latin America, similar ideological emphasis on exact preservation does not extend in the same way to Plautdietsch. Historically conservative linguistic features are indeed identifiable in Latin American Old Colony Plautdietsch varieties. This is the case with the retention of an English-like approximant pronunciation of /r/ in certain syllabic contexts. This distinctive variant has been argued to have been preserved as a relict feature of the dialect landscape of northern Poland in the late 18th century, rather than adopted more recently from contact with English (cf. Moelleken, 1966, 1993a; Brandt, 1992, p. 37). Although the distribution of this particular feature outside of Old Colony Plautdietsch speech communities remains to be investigated further (cf. Brandt, 1992), its preservation in contemporary Latin American Old Colony Plautdietsch appears to lack the ideological motivation that has preserved certain distinctive linguistic characteristics of Huagdietsch. While certainly 'conservative' from an historical linguistic perspective, the maintenance of such features in Plautdietsch is qualitatively different, having been kept without substantial social markedness or explicit connection to 'tradition' or stated community practice.

In contrast to the heavy codification of *sinndöagschet* Huagdietsch, linguistic innovations in Plautdietsch are well attested and without comparable societal stricture, in Old Colony communities as elsewhere (cf. Wiens, 1957; Thiessen, 1963; Moelleken & Moelleken, 1997, p. 371; Kaufmann, 2003; a.o.). As Hedges (1996, pp. 317-8) observes in northern Mexico, although occasional sermons are preached against 'excessive' use of Spanish, few such restraints are placed on individuals' use of Plautdietsch, which may demonstrate considerable variation between speakers and settlements. Closer attention to the extent and character of these innovations in Bolivian Old Colony Plautdietsch varieties might be hoped to provide insight into the relationship between languages and language ideologies in these communities. The following sections consider such linguistic developments in greater detail, taking up innovations from sources within the community and from contact with other speech communities.

Community-internal linguistic developments

A considerable number of linguistic developments in Latin American Old Colony varieties of Plautdietsch cannot easily be attributed to contact between languages. These 'internal' innovations are readily seen in Plautdietsch neologisms concerning contemporary products and technologies. In both Canadian and Mexican-founded colonies in Bolivia, terms such as *Breeftje* 'blister pack (of medicine; literally 'little letter')', *Headingj* 'hearing aid (literally 'hearing thing')', *Rannstoohl(tje)* 'child's seated scooter (literally '(little) running chair') are noted, as is *Fia* 'electricity (literally 'fire')', a lexical development shared with Mexico (cf. Hedges, 1996), though perhaps less expected in the Canadian-founded colony of Las Piedras II where it was also encountered in 2007. While seemingly not as common as the preceding category of neologisms, adaptations to reflect features of the natural world are also found, as in *Feebagrauss* 'lemon balm' (literally 'fever grass', referring to its reported effectiveness as a treatment for fever when prepared as a tea) and *Bloomensuua* 'hummingbird' (literally 'flower-sucker'). Both of these words may have already been present in source varieties of Plautdietsch, though they are not given in current dictionaries.

Community-internal linguistic developments also include recategorization and shift in the meaning of existing Plautdietsch words and phrases. In some Latin American Old Colony Plautdietsch varieties, the adjective *intressaunt* 'interesting' attested in other Plautdietsch varieties has been recategorized as a noun, *Intressaunt* 'an interest' (e.g., *Intressaunt haben* 'to have an interest, be interested in some-

thing'), and the corresponding adjectival form shifted to *intressauntig*. Semantic narrowing is noted in *Drinkj* 'pop, soda, other sweetened, flavoured cold beverage', from the more generic *drinkjen* 'to drink'. Such innovations may present points of divergence between individual Old Colony communities. This is the case with the term *Mexa* (literally 'Mexican'), with Canadian-founded colonies in Bolivia commonly using the term to refer to Mennonites from Mexico, while Mexican-founded colonies instead apply the same label to Hispanic, non-Mennonite Bolivians. Lexical differences such as this appear to be comparatively minor and do not impede mutual comprehension, although members of Old Colony communities report an awareness of distinctions between communities' respective forms of speech.[4]

Perhaps more pronounced than these lexical developments are apparent differences in the vowel systems of Plautdietsch in Canadian- and Mexican-founded Old Colony settlements. This affects the realization of the diphthong *ee* (e.g., *meed* 'tired', *audee* 'goodbye'), which appears to be closer to [ɔj] in Mexican Mennonite communities than the centralized [əj] encountered in Canadian colonies. Although realizations of *ee* similar to those found in Mexican-Bolivian communities are attested elsewhere in the Plautdietsch diaspora (e.g., in western Siberia; cf. Jedig, 1966; Nieuweboer, 1999), [ɔj] appears characteristic of many Plautdietsch varieties in the Americas with an historical association with Mexico (Moelleken, 1966; Brandt, 1992). As such, it is not likely an independent development among Mexican Old Colony Mennonites in Bolivia. Additionally, there are further differences in the realization of low-back vowels: reduction of *au* (e.g., *Bauss* 'boss') to [ɒ:] is not uncommon in Mexican colonies, whereas diphthongal [ɑw] remains well attested in Canadian colonies. Further investigation is required to determine which, if any, of these developments are particular to the communities considered in this study.

Community-internal linguistic innovations also include developments due to contact between varieties maintained within the community. As Moelleken & Moelleken (1997, p. 368) observe, contact between these varieties present potential insights into the linguistic norms of Mexican Old Colony settlements, with influences from Huagdietsch on Plautdietsch being particularly evident in areas related to church, school, and the written word. Similar observations can be made in the Bolivian context as well, where lexical items borrowed into Plautdietsch from Huagdietsch would appear especially common within the *sinndöagsche* sphere. Oral sermon commentaries, offered in Plautdietsch in the course of worship to complement and expand upon the read Huagdietsch text, present extensive examples of contact between community-internal varieties. Unambiguous instances of lexical borrowing in this context include *bereien* 'to regret' (< Hd.

bereuen), *erkjannen* 'to recognize (especially introspective recognition of a trait or behaviour)' (< Hd. *erkennen*), *bussfoadig* 'penitent' (< Hd. *bußfertig*), *sikj priefen* 'to examine or test oneself, engage in critical introspection' (< Hd. *sich prüfen*) and *Priefung* '(spiritual) examination, testing' (< Hd. *Prüfung*), and *mootwellig* 'willful, wanton' (< Hd. *mutwillig*). An admonition to congregants that *eena sull en sikj gohnen un sikj unjaseakjen un priefen* 'one should enter into, examine, and test oneself' brings these Huagdietsch loans into an unmistakeably Plautdietsch sentential context. These loans appear to be generally adapted to Plautdietsch phonology according to the pronunciation norms of Huagdietsch (Moelleken, 1992), while some elements not present in Plautdietsch (e.g., the prefix *er-* in *erlangen*, *erkennen*, etc.) remain unmodified.

While influence from Huagdietsch is apparent in areas of the Plautdietsch lexicon, little grammatical influence is noted. In rare cases during sermon commentaries, Huagdietsch grammatical structures may appear in Plautdietsch utterances, albeit with little indication of leaving any permanent mark on the structure of Plautdietsch. Thus, occasional Huagdietsch genitive constructions found in fixed phrases (e.g., *des Herrn* '(of) the Lord's', *(das Buch) des Lebens* '(the Book) of Life') are incorporated into Plautdietsch commentaries, but as the possessum in a Plautdietsch possessive construction (e.g., *des Herrn siene X* 'the Lord's *X*'). This redundant marking of the possessive suggests that the case system of *sinndöagschet* Huagdietsch, as with other aspects of its grammatical structure, has not transferred entirely into Plautdietsch.

Linguistic influence from Huagdietsch on Plautdietsch, particularly in *sinndöagsche* contexts, is notable both in its extent and in the forms of phonological and morphological adaptation which often accompany it. Indeed, the typological closeness of both community-internal varieties to one another and the general familiarity of the community with the linguistic norms of each variety present conditions under which such borrowing may take place without significant structural changes to either variety. As a result, it is sometimes difficult to conclusively identify contact-induced features when the available linguistic evidence is ambiguous. Brandt (1992, pp. 274-6) comments on the occasionally blurred boundary between Huagdietsch and Plautdietsch in Mennonite settlements in Mexico, where he notes the ready 'transposition' of various Huagdietsch terms into Plautdietsch in religious contexts. The closeness of this prolonged historical contact between Huagdietsch and Plautdietsch, at least in certain contexts, has also left its mark on the lexicon of the latter variety, with a significant segment of 'higher-register' Plautdietsch vocabulary having roots in Huagdietsch terminology. This contact has effected a layering of

the Plautdietsch lexicon between 'every-day' or *auldöagsche* areas of vocabulary (where little influence from Huagdietsch is noted) and the more *sinndöagsch* and abstract (where lexical and constructional influence from Huagdietsch is more prevalent). That this contact should have had such an extensive impact on the lexicon of Plautdietsch offers not only additional evidence of the sociolinguistic position of Huagdietsch within these communities, but also of demonstrated interchange between Huagdietsch and Plautdietsch that appears considerably more open than a strictly diglossic assessment would suggest.

Community-external linguistic developments

Similar innovations in the lexicon and phonology of community-internal varieties are observed as a result of contact with community-external varieties, as well. Whereas contact between Huagdietsch and Plautdietsch and its linguistic consequences are common to all Old Colony communities in which both varieties are maintained, the degree of contact with community-external varieties varies not only historically between particular colonies, but also between individuals according to their educational, economic, and personal experiences and attitudes. Discussing contact-related innovations in Old Colonists' linguistic repertoires at the level of individual settlements attempts to compromise between clear community norms of usage, in which contact-induced features from community-external varieties are common, and individual variation around those norms, which reflects the individual agency of Old Colonists and the heterogeneity of their linguistic experiences and attitudes (cf. Hedges, 1996, p. 313). As the following sections describe, such differences between individual Old Colonists in their experiences with community-external languages, particularly between generations of speakers, may be critical to the diachronic development of Old Colonists' shared linguistic repertoire and to the renegotiation of what falls within the boundaries of the community's linguistic norms.

Community-external linguistic innovations in Plautdietsch related to contact with Spanish are frequently observed in Mexican-founded Mennonite colonies in Bolivia. The prominence of terminology from non-Mennonite society in Table 2 relating to medicine (*recetas* 'prescriptions', *antibiótico* 'antibiotic'), law (*jues* 'judge', *sentencia* 'sentence'), and commercial services (*gas natural* 'natural gas') is notable, with less influence apparent in references to the natural environment (*tigre* 'tiger', *burra* 'donkey'). The relative scarcity of influences from Spanish outside of these limited contexts has been

noted in previous research (cf. Moelleken & Moelleken, 1997, p. 371). Nevertheless, a considerable number of common discourse particles and multi-word expressions drawn from Spanish (*no sé* 'I don't know', *no credo* 'I don't believe (it)', *bueno* 'good, fine') are attested in Plautdietsch varieties in these settlements, which suggests closer contact with conversational Spanish than the remaining items would lead one to conclude.

Category	Examples
Civil society and goods	sentencia '(legal) sentence', jues 'judge', recetas '(medical) prescriptions', antibiótico 'antibiotic', veterinario 'veterinarian', gas natural 'natural gas' (alongside pdt. Gauss)
Natural environment	tigre 'tiger', burra (pl. burras) 'donkey', mandarina (pl. Mandarinen) 'mandarine orange'
Discourse	si 'yes', no 'no', bueno 'good, fine', porque 'why', vayamos 'let's go!' (as imperative, not subjunctive), no credo 'I don't believe (it)', no sé 'I don't know' (also introducing clauses with auf 'whether', waut 'what', or without complementizer)
Other	Wratsch (f., -en) 'sandals' (also Wratschtje (n., -s)), borracho 'drunk (adj.)', pan 'bread' (alongside pdt. Broot), chile 'chili peppers'

Table 2. Innovations from Spanish in Mexican-descended Mennonite colonies in Bolivia.[5]

Lexical influence from Spanish is relatively limited, especially given the uninterrupted presence of Spanish around Bolivian-Mexican Old Colony Mennonites since their immigration to Latin America in the 1920s, and those items which have been borrowed generally show few signs of significant adaptation to Plautdietsch. Exceptions to this trend are noted, however, e.g., *mandarina* 'mandarine orange', which is acceptably pluralized to *Mandarinen*;[6] and *Wratschtjes* 'sandals', an adaptation of Spanish *huaraches* (cf. Hedges, 1996). Interestingly, reanalysis of the latter borrowing as containing the Plautdietsch diminutive suffix *-tje* has also led to the back-formation *Wratsch* (f., *-en*) 'sandal' now found in these communities. Outside of these few examples, contact-induced innovations from Spanish are not common. While it is possible that influence from Spanish is underrepresented in the present sample due to individuals' linguistic accommodation to the author, no increased use of Spanish elements among Mex-

ican-descended Old Colony Mennonites in Bolivia was noted with other interlocutors in the community.

By comparison, a more extensive set of innovations from English is encountered in the same settlements, albeit across a different range of semantic domains and communicative contexts. While non-Mennonite society again presents a prominent source of English lexical influences in Table 3, this category appears to extend more prominently to finance (*share*, *tax*), with other clusters of borrowings also occurring around transportation and electricity. With transportation, linguistic influence extends as much to technologies outside of the traditional order of Old Colony society (*jet* 'jet, airplane', *Helikopta* 'helicopter') as to accepted agricultural implements (*Trakta* 'tractor', *Trock* 'truck', *Träla* 'trailor') and even preferred modes of local transportation (*Bogge* 'buggy', *Top* 'top, cover (of a buggy)', *Baks* 'box (of a buggy)'). With electricity, by comparison, a technology whose accepted patterns of use remain a matter of contention in some Bolivian Old Colony settlements, English borrowings cover a range of associated technologies and actions, but do not include the word 'electricity' itself, for which the term *Fia* (literally 'fire') is employed.[7] Additionally, while discourse particles and phatic expressions from Spanish are common in these varieties of Plautdietsch, equivalent examples from English are sparse, at best: apart from one recorded instance of *bye-bye* /bɛj bɛj/ being said playfully towards an infant, these influences were essentially unattested.

Unlike Canadian-founded Mennonite settlements in Bolivia, English lexical influence in these Mexican-descended communities has not necessarily been the result of recent contact with English. While families or individuals may maintain commercial or familial ties to parts of English-speaking North America, there is evidence that some of these borrowings may have already been common in Plautdietsch at the time of Mennonite emigration to Mexico. Terms such as *feiten* 'to fight', *Kottalöag* 'catalogue', and *fonnig* 'funny, strange, unusual' are also attested to in Thiessen (1963, 2003) and in the works of Canadian Mennonite authors.

It is possible that this long-standing integration of English words into Plautdietsch, coupled with the similar grammatical structure of both languages, has supported the higher degree of linguistic adaptation noted in English borrowings here. Both borrowed nouns and verbs are regularly recategorized into equivalent Plautdietsch classes. English verbs are incorporated into Plautdietsch as regular, weak-inflection verbs, with associated particles (e.g., *up* in *charge up*, *in* in *plug in*) typically reclassified as separable prefixes where cognates are available (e.g., *oppchargen*, *enploggen*). The degree to which English nouns are integrated into native Plautdietsch categories can sometimes be less clear, with borrowings found to take both the

Category	Examples
Food and drink	Pietsch (f., -en) 'peach', Pienats 'peanuts' (also Pienatsbotta 'peanut butter'), Seda /sɛɾʌ/ 'soda, cola, sweetened lemonade', catsup /kætsʌp/
Civil society and goods	share 'share (in a business)', tax /tɑks/ 'tax', Koat (also Kort) 'court (of law)', Pliess, Plietz (m., -en) 'police officer'
Tools and technologies	ponschen 'to punch (metal)', Ponsch '(metal) punch', chip 'microchip'
Vehicles and transportation	Trock (m., -s) 'truck', pickup 'pick-up (truck)', Trakta (m., -sch) 'tractor', jet (-s) 'jet, airplane', Beisikjel (-s) 'bicycle', Helikopta (-sch) 'helicopter', Träla 'trailor', Heiwä 'highway', Moota 'engine, motor', Brick (f., -s) 'brake', Filta 'filter (on an engine)' (alongside pdt. Säw), Alternäta 'alternator', Bogge /bɔgə/ 'buggy', Baks 'box of a buggy', Top 'top of a buggy'
Electricity	(opp)chargen /(t)ʃɑɹdʒən/ 'to charge (up) with electricity' (also Oppcharga 'electrical charger'), Battrie /bɑtɾi/ 'battery', enploggen 'to plug in (to an electrical socket)', Plant /plænt/ (f., -en) 'generator', Transforma 'transformer'
Other	roff 'rough', fonnig 'funny, strange, unusual', never (nich) 'never (at all)'; feiten 'to fight', Offits 'office', Tank /tæŋk/ (f., -en) 'tank', Reifel 'rifle', Kottalöag /kɔtʌleɔɣ/ 'catalogue'

Table 3. Innovations from English in Mexican-descended Mennonite colonies in Bolivia.

plural endings *-s* (e.g., *Beisikjels* 'bicycles') and *-en* (e.g., *Tanken* 'tanks (containers)', *Plietzen* 'police officers'). English nouns ending in *-er* or *-or* are commonly reassigned to Plautdietsch *-a* (e.g., *Helikopta* 'helicopter', *Transforma* 'electrical transformer'), with the resulting words most often receiving the masculine gender and *-sch* plural forms associated with the Plautdietsch agentive suffix *-a*. Lexical influence from English has also resulted in a class of neologisms which involve elements from both English and Plautdietsch, as with *Pleiholt* 'plywood' (a partial calque containing the adapted form *Plei-* (not attested outside of this word, unlike Plautdietsch *Schicht* 'layer, ply') and Plautdietsch *Holt* 'wood') and *Powersöag* /pɑʊəɹzeɔɣ/ 'chain saw' (a similar hybrid of English *power* and Plautdietsch *Söag* 'saw').

Comparable contact-related innovations are found in Canadian-descendant Old Colony communities in Bolivia, as well. As with some

English loan words found in Mexican-descended Mennonite communities in Bolivia, there is reason to believe that some of the lexical items from English presented in Table 4 were already entrenched in Canadian Old Colony Plautdietsch varieties well before the point of emigration to South America. Forms such as *enniwä* 'anyway', *Kende* 'candy', *Pienatsbotta* 'peanut butter' (also attested in Mexican-descendant communities), and *Bonsch* 'bunch (of people, children)' (see Driedger, 2011, p. 46 for discussion of this term's use in Saskatchewan Old Colony communities) are also noted in non-Old Colony Plautdietsch varieties in Canada (Thiessen, 1963). For other items, however, incorporation into Plautdietsch appears to be more recent, to the point of being potential nonce borrowings introduced by individuals who have maintained competence in English. Adaptations of English *-er* and *-or* to Plautdietsch *-a* are less robustly attested, with partially or non-adapted forms such as *Honters* 'hunters', *brakes*, and *sprayers* occurring alongside adapted forms such as *Auga* 'auger' and *Trakta* 'tractor'. Corresponding verbal forms are still generally reclassified into Plautdietsch weak verb paradigms (e.g., *augen* 'to operate an auger'), even when pronunciation is not immediately adjusted to follow suit (e.g., *sprayen* 'to spray' realized as /spɹejən/ rather than */ʃpɹejən/).

While unadapted English forms appear more prevalently in the Canadian sample than in the Mexican sample (e.g., Canadian *brakes*, Mexican *Bricks*), other forms show signs of more extensive integration into Plautdietsch linguistic structures. This is the case with singular *Pist* (f., *-en*) 'piston', where the final syllable of the English word has been reanalyzed as the Plautdietsch plural ending *-en*. Likewise, the use of *lotsa* 'lots of, much' as an adjective in both attributive (e.g., *wi ha'n noch lotsa Tiet* 'we still have lots of time') and, somewhat more unexpectedly, predicative (e.g., *wi ha'n noch lotsa* 'we still have lots') contexts is an idiosyncratic development in Canadian-Bolivian Old Colony Plautdietsch varieties, particularly among younger speakers.

Innovations from Spanish and other community-external varieties are considerably less common in Canadian-descendant Old Colony communities in Bolivia, with few of the Spanish discourse particles and phrases common in Mexican-descendant communities noted with significant frequency here.[8] In their place, a range of English discourse particles and function words are attested (albeit of a different kind than other communities' Spanish borrowings) among even the youngest generation of Bolivian Plautdietsch speakers who have little exposure to English. Whereas little borrowing of function words from either English or Spanish is noted in Mexican-descendant communities, conjunctions such as '*cause* and *because* are common in Canadian communities. Likewise present among lexical innovations from English, but seemingly absent among comparable innovations from Spanish

Category	Examples
Food and drink	Kende 'candy', Pienatsbotta 'peanut butter', Breila (m., -sch) 'broiler hen', Bons 'buns, dinner rolls', Bar (-s) 'chocolate bar, candy bar', Lontsch 'lunch', barbecue, chocolate (also Schacklits, Schackeltjes) 'chocolate(s)'; catsup, ketchup, pudding, frosting, jam, cake
Vehicles and transportation	Trakta 'tractor', Karburäta 'carburator', oppbecken 'to back up (a vehicle)', Pist (-en) 'piston', shaft, crank shaft, valves, hydraulics, sleeve (of engine), ignition switch, gears, brakes
Tools and technologies	dozer '(bull)dozer', dosen /dozn̩/ 'to bulldoze', Auga '(grain) auger', augen 'to use an auger', sprayer /sp-/, sprayen /sp-/ 'to spray (a field)', short 'an (electrical) short', shorten 'to (cause or experience an electrical) short', switchen /svɪtʃən/ or /swɪtʃən/ 'to (activate a) switch', welden 'to weld', batteries, gauge, pulley
People and relationships	Bonsch 'a bunch, group (of kids)', niece, nephew, cousin /kʌzn̩/, king
Discourse, phatic, and function words	enniwä /'ɛnɪve/ 'anyway', fe' sure, excuse me (after burping) some, lotsa 'lots, much', 'cause /kɔz/, because /bi'kɔz/, even, especially
Other	Veraunda 'veranda, open-air patio', Honters 'hunters', honten 'to hunt', Hommingbird (alongside pdt. Bloomensuua) 'hummingbird', Reifel 'rifle', bails, pistols, jail, skates, ponytails, combination 'combination (of clothing)', flu, temperature, antibiotics, Potty gohnen 'to go potty', aufwiesen 'to show off (in order to receive attention)', goot (schlaicht, prost) auf sennen 'to be well (badly, poorly) off'

Table 4. Innovations from English in Canadian-descended Mennonite colonies in Bolivia.

in Bolivian Mennonite communities, are phrasal calques such as *Potty gohnen* 'to go potty (child-directed speech)' and *goot auf sennen* 'to be well off (financially)'. Taken together, these factors suggest a different relationship between English and Plautdietsch in Canadian communities compared to Spanish and Plautdietsch in Mexican ones, perhaps pointing to the substantial contact which existed between many Canadian Old Colonists and English-speaking individuals and institutions before immigrating to Bolivia.

Contact between community-external varieties and community-internal varieties may result not only in the kinds of lexical changes seen above, but also in possible phonological changes. The treatment of non-native vowel sounds in words incorporated into Plautdietsch presents one such example of potential phonological influence. English /æ/ appears to have been preserved in several loans common to both Canadian and Mexican-descendant communities in Bolivia (e.g., *Tank* (f., *-en*), [tʰæ̃ŋk] 'tank'), even where other characteristics of these words (e.g., assignment to the class of words which take *-en* plural forms) suggest deeper integration into Plautdietsch. It remains to be seen whether or not vowels in such loans represent the first stages of new vowel categories in affected varieties of Plautdietsch, or if these vowels are being reassigned to existing Plautdietsch vowels whose realizations encompass the English targets. Whatever the case, it appears that these innovations are being treated much the same as any other Plautdietsch word, at least in the speech of younger Bolivian Old Colonists, whose exposure to English is limited compared to first-generation Bolivian Mennonites from Canada and Mexico.

Such variation in the community-external linguistic experience of individuals within Old Colony communities in Bolivia presents one vector for intergenerational language change in local varieties of Plautdietsch. The linguistic repertoires of the oldest, "pioneer" generations of Mennonite Old Colonists from Canada still often include knowledge of English, as do those of some Mexican Mennonite immigrants to Bolivia who have economic or migrational ties to English-speaking society. This community-external linguistic experience is often reflected among speakers of this generation in code-mixing and nonce borrowing in Plautdietsch. These influences are then acquired as part of the core vocabulary of individuals of subsequent generations, whose own linguistic repertoires may not include commensurate exposure to English, and who gradually come to treat these common items as part of basic Plautdietsch vocabulary. This appears to be the case with lexical items such as *Pietsch* (f., *-en*) 'peach', which at least some second and third-generation Bolivian Old Colony Plautdietsch speakers view as a native Plautdietsch lexical item, to the extent of the question now being raised *woo heet 'ne Pietsch opp Enjelsch* – what a *Pietsch* is called in English. Such instances indicate the degree of nativization to which some community-external linguistic innovations have already been subjected, and suggest a possible mechanism of language change in cases of considerable linguistic admixture where little social markedness is attached to the resulting innovations.

The same processes that may lead to linguistic change when competencies in community-external linguistic varieties vary

across generations may also produce distinctions between colonies and even individuals of different linguistic experiences. Given the degree of differentiation already observed between Mexican and Canadian-descendant communities in Bolivia, such processes of linguistic divergence, as well as potentially opposing processes of convergence brought about by close contact between communities (e.g., through intermarriage), bear further observation in their potential to influence Old Colony linguistic practices. A view of these Old Colony communities as being essentially culturally and linguistically homogeneous, however, is challenged as much by variation between individual communities as by significant differences in Old Colonists' individual linguistic repertoires along generational, gender, and migrational lines (cf. Moelleken, 1986, p. 68; Moelleken & Moelleken, 1997, p. 370). Social factors such as these are critical for a general understanding of processes of language maintenance and change in Old Colony communities in Latin America.

Discussion and conclusions

Stable intergenerational language transmission patterns in Latin American Old Colony settlements have maintained multiple community-internal linguistic varieties and their associated functional differentiations with remarkable success throughout two hundred years of migration. As the preceding sections have sought to demonstrate, however, the functional stability of this arrangement has not come without formal consequences for the languages involved. Heavy codification of the *sinndöagsche* uses of Huagdietsch has admitted only slight linguistic shifts which have been the cause of considerable internal debate, as with the *a-au* controversy. By comparison, extensive linguistic innovation is seen in *auldöagsche* uses of Plautdietsch, both in developments not traceable to linguistic contact and those stemming from contact with other community-internal and community-external linguistic varieties. In the case of Latin American Old Colony Mennonites, sociolinguistic stability has not been accompanied by linguistic stasis; rather, the strict conservation of one community variety from outside influence has been met with seemingly contradictory unmarkedness of widespread variation in another.

The extent of innovations in Plautdietsch, and their apparent lack of stigmatization in Latin American Old Colony communities, raises certain questions about the sociolinguistic situation that renders such developments possible. Why should innovations in Plautdietsch be on the whole socially unmarked, given decidedly prescriptive attitudes towards the proper use of the other community-internal variety?

Similarly, what allows such extensive contact-related innovation in Plautdietsch to occur without favouring an eventual shift to one or another of the other 'donor' languages? Despite the considerable influence exerted by both community-internal and community-external varieties on Plautdietsch and the prevalence of multilingualism in these other varieties in Old Colony society, a transition from Plautdietsch to one of these other varieties would nevertheless not appear to be inevitable. The maintenance of Plautdietsch would, at first blush, appear unexpected, particularly in a pervasively multilingual context and given the presence of another community-internal variety already serving as a marker of group identity.

It is clear that societal anchors for Old Colony linguistic practices exist in the economic, educational, and religious institutions that afford stability to other distinctive aspects of Old Colony society, as well. These same societal structures, it might be argued, further bolster and perpetuate linguistic norms that establish Huagdietsch, a fixed and normatively constrained community-internal variety, in the important *sinndöagsche* sphere, and thus in an essentially unassailable position within the larger narrative of constancy within tradition. This prestige position in turn prevents comparable valorization of the remaining community-internal or community-external varieties in Old Colonists' linguistic repertoires, effectively curtailing widespread language shift. Collective focus on the preservation of Huagdietsch in exactly those forms and domains taken to have been its historical norm thus leaves these critical prestige contexts in Old Colony society filled and inaccessible to encroachment by other varieties within speakers' competence, whether other forms of Huagdietsch, elaborated varieties of Plautdietsch, or community-external varieties which might otherwise be enlisted to serve similar functions.

Normative constraints on the societal distribution and forms of Huagdietsch in the *sinndöagsche* realm not only accord with Old Colony ideologies of constancy and prevent a shift towards other available linguistic varieties in culturally-central domains, but, as the focus of normative attention, further exempt Plautdietsch usage from becoming similarly codified and socially marked. This exemption from comparable circumscription in turn permits innovations in Plautdietsch to serve communicative functions not afforded by either community-internal variety, and thus lessen the functional advantage of a wholesale shift to a community-external language. In this sense, the maintenance of Plautdietsch as a socially-unmarked variety effectively counterbalances the rigid markedness of Huagdietsch as a closed 'prestige' variety, providing the capacity for Old Colony communities to maintain symbolic control over their linguistic practices while still bringing linguistic variation 'into the fold' – without incurring either

the censure of individual linguistic innovators or undermining the permanence of the larger linguistic order.

This capacity to maintain sociolinguistic control over almost all of the most culturally significant domains of language use within the community (through the preservation of a normatively constrained variety, Huagdietsch) while allowing innovation from external and potentially competing linguistic norms to be brought into the speech community and co-opted for internal communicative purposes (through a largely socially unmarked variety, Plautdietsch) is both a consequence of linguistic ideologies of Latin American Old Colony communities and a side-effect of the preservation of the aforementioned H-L-E 'triglossia'. While almost all socially significant domains of language use are thus kept within the normative control of the community, the domain of commerce outside of the colony system remains an important exception, over which the community maintains only partial control. Inasmuch as the Old Colony model of settlement relies upon commercial exchange with partners outside of the colony to maintain economic stability, community members involved in trade (most often men) are required to gain some ability in community-external linguistic varieties. While there exists some capacity to naturalize these external influences on local communicative practice in the Old Colony system, processes of economic integration that increase the relative importance of competency in community-external varieties have been observed in other Russian Mennonite communities to have lasting consequences for language maintenance, essentially tipping attitudinal scales in favour of a shift to community-external varieties (cf. Peters & Thiessen, 1990, p. 272). While it may be possible for Old Colony settlements to limit dependencies from employment outside of the community (e.g., through efforts in several Bolivian colonies to limit the hiring of Mennonite men by non-Mennonite employers and to discourage Mennonite men from employing non-Mennonites), this in itself is not sufficient to eliminate the reliance of Old Colony agrarian economy on external markets, and thus to eliminate this vector for sociolinguistic change.[9]

This sociolinguistic situation also raises questions about the unified status of 'Old Colony Plautdietsch' in countries such as Bolivia. Given the degree of linguistic differentiation between varieties of Plautdietsch maintained in Bolivian Old Colony settlements, it could be debated whether or not 'Old Colony Plautdietsch' represents a single speech community or multiple ones, each maintaining its own particular variety. While all Latin American Old Colony settlements continue to maintain a similar arrangement of community-internal varieties at some level of abstraction, both phonological and lexical differences nevertheless set the linguistic practices of individual colonies apart. As it stands, the argument could already be made that distinctive varieties

of Old Colony Plautdietsch exist within Bolivia, albeit as a result of immigration of groups whose varieties of Plautdietsch had already begun to diverge prior to immigration. It remains to be seen whether or not such divergences between individuals and colonies will continue to develop, or if other social processes will serve to level them over time. Linguistic convergence and divergence in Old Colony communities presents open questions which require the growing demographic importance of the Old Colony in the global population of Plautdietsch speakers to be reflected in continued linguistic research in order to be adequately addressed.

Not only the status of individual Old Colony settlements as distinct speech communities might be called into question, but also the description of the present sociolinguistic arrangement as a straightforward instance of diglossia or triglossia, as it has often been termed in the literature (cf. Brandt, 1992; Moelleken, 1986; but see Hedges, 1996 for a critical reassessment). While the relationship between Huagdietsch and Plautdietsch in most Latin American Old Colony communities might arguably be considered diglossic, that observation alone does little to provide a sense of the apparent permeability of the boundary between Huagdietsch and Plautdietsch in certain social contexts. *Sinndöagschet* Huagdietsch exerts considerable influence on Plautdietsch in the more 'Sunday-like' contexts of oral commentary on sermons, and Plautdietsch substratal influence is readily apparent in the *auldöagschet* Huagdietsch of private letters and informal public writing. The relationship between these two varieties is not one of strict separation, even in those domains traditionally considered reserved for one variety or the other, and points of contact between languages at the borderlines of domains are not immediately apparent under the label of diglossia. Furthermore, as Hedges (1996, p. 226) points out, characterizing Old Colony linguistic practices as essentially diglossic in nature risks overlooking the prevalence of competence in languages other than Huagdietsch and Plautdietsch in many Old Colony communities. Even when this situation is recast as triglossia, this terminology does not entirely capture the uneven distribution of external language experience within most Old Colony communities. Observations of language use beyond the schematic arrangement of community-internal varieties thus raise issues as to how these other languages, whose influence on the linguistic development of community-internal varieties has been shown, are to be incorporated under the label of 'triglossia' typically reserved for stable societal trilingualism when such competencies are neither universal nor intergenerationally stable in the Old Colony.

Old Colony settlements in Latin America also present a potential test case for theories of language change and variation in relation to

social structure. As a rare example of a contemporary multilingual western society with limited occupational stratification, the Old Colony presents possible challenges to aspects of current variationist sociolinguistic theory that posit that socioeconomic differentiation correlates significantly with linguistic variation. On such models, the selection and social evaluation of linguistic variants would, in general, be expected to proceed along the lines of such societal distinctions. As Dorian (2010) notes, however, the lack of significant occupational diversity or social stratification within a society may admit extensive linguistic variation in vernacular usage without significant correlation with common sociolinguistic categories such as age, gender, or class. While this remains a matter for further exploration, on this hypothesis, the relatively limited occupational diversity and comparatively flat hierarchical structure of many Latin American Old Colony communities may play a role in admitting vernacular linguistic variation without widespread social stigmatization, even within the present arrangement of community-internal varieties, and thus present a situation of relevance to current models of language variation and change.

Finally, it bears emphasizing that the conservatism with which Old Colony communities in Latin America are often associated does not extend unproblematically into the realm of language, where, beneath the initial appearance of sociolinguistic stability, lies considerable linguistic contact, innovation, and change. Such continual and prolific linguistic variation within stable, societal multilingualism presents a situation of potential relevance not only to studies of Mennonite linguistic practices and to current models of language variation and change, but also to understandings of language shift and loss more generally. The singular success of Old Colony societies in the maintenance of their traditional linguistic varieties in the face of persistent linguistic contact bears not only upon Mennonite studies, but also serves as a substantive contestation of norms of replacive bilingualism and societal monolingualism common to other societies with which the Old Colony is often in contact, offering one model of intergenerational language maintenance in a minority context. Given historically unprecedented rates of decline in global linguistic diversity observed at present (cf. Hale et al., 1992), the example to be found in Old Colony language maintenance and innovation, when understood in its distinct historical and institutional context, might be of broader relevance in offering practical strategies to counteract language shift and loss in smaller speech communities. Coming to a clearer understanding of language preservation and innovation in the Latin American Old Colony may prove relevant not only for appreciation of the centrality of language within these communities in its own right, but also for the development of strategies to address this larger pattern of global language loss.

Acknowledgments

This study would not have been possible without the guidance and hospitality of many members of the Old Colony and other Mennonite communities in Bolivia. Among these, special acknowledgment is due to the families of Henry B. Friesen and Ben Elias (Las Piedras II), Abram F. Klassen (Riva Palacios), Peter Friesen (Milagrosa), Peter Friesen (Santa Clara), Henry Loewen (Sommerfeld), Abram Rempel (Chihuahua), and Abram Braun (Leoncito) for generously sharing both their hospitality and their experiences of Bolivia. For their assistance in arranging visits to colonies and for their own contributions to this work through encouragement, advice, and shared reflections, the author wishes to thank Dick and Kathy Braun (Osler, Saskatchewan) and the staff at Centro Menno (Santa Cruz), including Hans and Elma Schroeder, Horst and Judith Braun, Jerry and Irina Hiebert, and Kristina Toews. The financial support of the Trudeau Foundation, the Killam Trusts, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the University of Alberta is gratefully acknowledged here.

References

Bowen, D. S. (2004). To Bolivia and back: Migration and its impact on La Crete, Alberta. *Journal of Mennonite Studies, 22,* 59-82.

Brandt, C. (1992). *Sprache und Sprachgebrauch der Mennoniten in Mexiko*. Schriftenreihe der Kommission für Ostdeutsche Volkskunde in der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde e.V. 61. Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag.

Buchheit, R. H. (1988). Language shift in the concentrated Mennonite district of Kansas. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 69*, 5-18.

Dorian, N. C. (2010). *Investigating Variation: The Effects of Social Organization and Social Setting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift*. Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.

Hale, K., Krauss, M., Watahomigie, L. J., Yamamoto, A. Y., Craig, C., Jeanne, L. M., & England, N. C. (1992). Endangered languages. *Language, 68*, 1-42.

Hedges, K. L. (1996). *Plautdietsch and Huuchdietsch in Chihuahua: Language, Literacy, and Identity among the Old Colony Mennonites in Northern Mexico* (Doctoral dissertation). Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Jedig, H. H. (1966). *Laut- und Formenbestand der niederdeutschen Mundart des Altai-Gebietes*. Sitzungsberichte der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Phil.-histor. Klasse 112 (5). Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.

Kaufmann, G. (1997). *Varietätendynamik in Sprachkontaktsituationen: Attitüden und Sprachverhalten rußlanddeutscher Mennoniten in Mexiko und den USA*. VarioLingua 3. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag.

Kaufmann, G. (2003). Des Plattdeutschen Wanderjahre oder die lexikalischen Folgen der mennonitischen Flucht nach Amerika. In J. K. Androutsopoulos & E. Ziegler (Eds.), *'Standardfragen': Soziolinguistische Perspektiven auf Sprachgeschichte, Sprachkontakt und Sprachvariation,* (pp. 139-160). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag.

Moelleken, W. W. (1966). Low German in Mexico. *Publications of the American Dialect Society, 46,* 31-39.
Moelleken, W. W. (1986). Spracherhaltungsfaktoren in den mexikanischen Siedlungen der rußlandeutschen Mennoniten. *Germanistische Mitteilungen, 24,* 61-81.
Moelleken, W. W. (1987). Die rußlanddeutschen Mennoniten in Kanada und Mexiko: sprachliche Entwicklung und diglossische Situation. *Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik, 54,* 145-183.
Moelleken, W. W. (1992). Das Standarddeutsch der Altkolonier Mennoniten in Mexiko (Lexikologische, Semantische, Grammatische und Syntaktische Aspekte). *Germanistische Mitteilungen, 36,* 89-96.
Moelleken, W. W. (1993a). Retroflexes r im Niederdeutsch der mexikanischen Altkolonier Mennoniten. *Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik, 60*(1), 21-38.
Moelleken, W. W. (1993b). Die Aussprache des *a* im Standarddeutsch der russlanddeutschen Altkolonier Mennoniten in Mexiko. *Niederdeutsches Jahrbuch, 116,* 170-177.
Moelleken, W. W. (1994). The demise of Mennonite Low German in Reedley, California. In N. Berend & K. J. Mattheier (Eds.), *Sprachinselforschung: Eine Gedenkschrift für Hugo Jedig,* (pp. 303-317). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag.
Moelleken, W. W., & Moelleken, M. A. (1997). Kontaktlinguistische Forschung bei den mexikanischen Mennoniten. In W. W. Moelleken & P. J. Weber (Eds.), *Neue Forschungsarbeiten zur Kontaktlinguistik. Plurilingua, 19* (pp. 365-375). Bonn: Dümmler Verlag.
Nieuweboer, R. (1999). *The Altai Dialect of Plautdiitsch. West-Siberian Mennonite Low German.* Munich: Lincom Europa.
Peters, V., & Thiessen, J. (1990). *Plautdietsche Jeschichten: Gespräche, Interviews, Erzählungen.* Schriftenreihe der Kommission für ostdeutsche Volkskunde in der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde e.V. 47. Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag.
Redekop, C. (1969). *The Old Colony Mennonites: Dilemmas of Ethnic Minority Life*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.
Rempel, H. (1995). *Kjenn Jie Noch Plautdietsch: A Mennonite Low German Dictionary* (2nd rev. ed.). Rosenort, MB: PrairieView Press.
Schartner, S., & Dürksen de Schartner, S. (2009). *Bolivien: Zufluchtsort der konservativen Mennoniten.* Asunción: n.p.
Thiessen, J. (1963). *Studien zum Wortschatz der kanadischen Mennoniten.* Deutsche Dialektgeographie Bd. 64. Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag.
Thiessen, J. (2003). *Mennonite Low German Dictionary / Mennonitisch-Plattdeutsches Wörterbuch.* Madison, WI: Max Kade Institute.
Warkentin, K. (2010). *'So Ha' Wie Daut Emma Jedohne' (That is How We Have Always Done It): The Collective Memory and Cultural Identity Of The Old Colony Mennonites in Bolivia* (Master's thesis). University of Manitoba / University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, MB.
Wiens, G. (1957). Entlehnungen aus dem Russischen im Niederdeutschen der Mennoniten in Rußland. *Niederdeutsches Jahrbuch,, 80,* 93-100.

Notes

[1] An exception to this general pattern of Plautdietsch serving as the language for in-group daily communication is noted when children return from school, when brief greetings are exchanged with adults in Huagdietsch before transitioning back into Plautdietsch.

[2] This was the case for Old Colonists and other Mennonites in Canada in the early twentieth century, for instance, after provincial legislation disbanding the

Mennonite private school system imposed fines to discourage noncompliance with mandatory attendance in English-language public schools.

[3] However, this is not the case for the use of Huagdietsch in 'every-day' or *auldöagsche* contexts, where it is still actively produced in written communication, albeit often with significant influence from Plautdietsch and other linguistic varieties within the community (see Hedges, 1996, pp. 274-297 for examples and discussion). While certainly divergent from the norms of Standard German maintained outside of the Old Colony, it would seem difficult to argue, *pace* Moelleken (1986) and Brandt (1992, p. 15, 23) that Huagdietsch in this context represents either a "Dummy-High" or a "dead language." In these contexts, Huagdietsch does not appear subject to the same constraints on the reproduction of its historical form as in the religious sphere, as evidenced in the contents of both public announcements and private letters (e.g., hand-lettered advertisements encountered by the author in the colony of Las Piedras II in 2007 offering the services of a "Fridge auffixer").

[4] This sociolinguistic awareness is reflected in comments made by individuals in Las Piedras II, for instance, on their perception of an increased use of Spanish words (even in contracted form, e.g., *gravador* 'recorder' becoming *grava*) in the Plautdietsch of nearby Mexican-founded colonies, accompanied by a self-awareness of their own reputation among neighbouring settlements as speaking 'half English' in their own Plautdietsch.

[5] Where possible, nominal borrowings that have been adapted to Plautdietsch morphophonology are listed with their Plautdietsch pronunciation (e.g., *Wratsch*), gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter), and plural inflection (*-en*, *-sch*, *-s*, etc.). Items presented in other orthographies maintain the pronunciation of their source language.

[6] It would be possible to argue lexical influence from Standard German *Mandarine*, *-en* in this instance, as well, except that final /ə/ in Mennonite Standard German is typically preserved as /əɪ/, which would lead to an unattested form (cf. Moelleken, 1992).

[7] For their part, Rempel (1995) and Thiessen (2003) list *Lakjtrischetät* and *Elektrischität*, respectively, as Plautdietsch terms for 'electricity', with the latter source also giving *Fia* as a regional variant attested in Mexico and Paraguay.

[8] Among the few exceptions noted are *colla* /kolja/ 'indigenous Bolivian' and *silo* /silo/ '(agricultural) silo'. Some contact with non-Hispanophone Bolivian communities is also noted, with some Mennonite men indicating that they have learned numerals and basic phrases in Quechua from interactions in public markets, although this does not appear to have resulted in any linguistic innovations in Mennonite Plautdietsch to date.

[9] Historically, there is some evidence in the patterns of lexical borrowing in Plautdietsch to suggest that commerce has served as a repeated point of incursion of external linguistic influence into community language norms (cf. Kaufmann, 2003; Thiessen, 1963), presenting a significant locus of linguistic and cultural exchange within an otherwise largely self-contained linguistic system.