Pennsylvania German in Ohio

Steve Hartman Keiser
Marquette University

1. Introduction

Pennsylvania German is one of the success stories in immigrant language maintenance in North America. In contrast to the typical pattern of cultural and linguistic assimilation in which minority language communities shift to English monolingualism by the third generation, Pennsylvania German—also known as Pennsylvania Dutch or, in the dialect itself, Deitsch—has been continuously spoken in North America for over two centuries, many generations after meaningful immigration ceased.¹ As the twenty-first century begins, Deitsch persists and even thrives; it is the first language of more than 200,000 speakers, most of whom are members of plain (i.e., Amish or Old Order Mennonite)² religious groups and live in the Midwest far beyond the dialect’s “cradle” in Pennsylvania.

Ohio’s population of Deitsch speakers, currently estimated at 50,000 (Kraybill 2001:336), is the largest of any state or province in North America. Given that nearly all Ohio Deitsch speakers are members of rapidly growing Amish communities and that the language is moribund among the nonplain speakers of southeastern Pennsylvania,³ Ohio will continue in this leading position for the next few generations as the center of gravity of the Deitsch-speaking world shifts inexorably west. This paper reviews the history of Deitsch in Ohio (and, very briefly, in Michigan), its current status, and recent linguistic research on the language including
findings which demonstrate the development of a dialect division between the Midwest and Pennsylvania.

2. History of Deitsch in Ohio

The history of Deitsch in Ohio is by and large the history of the Mennonites and especially the Amish in the state. Though nonplain Deitsch speakers also settled in Ohio, there is little evidence to suggest that they ever established communities in which the dialect was maintained.\(^4\)

2.1. Amish and Mennonite early settlements

Deitsch speakers first arrived in Ohio at the end of the eighteenth century, joining the thousands of Euro-American settlers moving into the newly conquered territories. Mennonites from Virginia settled in Fairfield County in 1799, and many of these later moved to Allen County in 1831. The oldest continuous Mennonite settlement in Ohio was established in Columbiana County in 1801. The first Amish arrived in 1809 and settled in Holmes County, founding what has today become the largest Amish settlement in the world. Later Amish communities were established in Fairfield County in 1823 and Logan County in 1843.

The plain people moved west for the same reasons that their “English” neighbors did: more, better, and cheaper land. Most Amish and Mennonite settlers in Ohio came from frontier settlements in what is now western Pennsylvania and Maryland; relatively few came directly from the older settlements in Lancaster and Montgomery/Bucks Counties, Pennsylvania.

After 1810 a new wave of several thousand Amish and Mennonites left Europe and began to arrive in the Midwest via the western Pennsylvania settlements. The nineteenth-century
immigrants generally formed their own settlements apart from the more conservative eighteenth-century immigrants. When they did settle in established communities such as Holmes County, they appear to have assimilated linguistically by adopting Deitsch, though their more progressive religious practices may have contributed to a distinctive Midwestern identity among these Amish.

In the 1840s Ohio began serving as the staging ground for Amish and Mennonites to move on to newer lands in Indiana, Iowa, and later Illinois. The early separation from the older southeast Pennsylvania Deitsch communities, the addition of nineteenth-century immigrants, and, most importantly, the ties of family and friendship between the Midwestern Amish—all these were ingredients that served to distinguish Deitsch as it developed in Ohio from that of Pennsylvania, a point we will return to later.

2.2. Growth and change in nineteenth and twentieth centuries

During the century and a half following the arrival of the first Amish in Ohio, that is, from 1809 to 1960, seventeen Amish settlements were established in the state. Several were successful, such as the Geauga County settlement east of Cleveland, but five failed and four eventually became affiliated with the Mennonite church—so many, in fact, that the majority of Mennonite churches in Ohio have Amish origins (Stoltzfus 1969:71, Luthy 1986 and 1994).

Indications of Deitsch language attrition appeared as early as the 1860s when some members of Martins Mennonite church in Wayne County requested services in English (Stoltzfus 1969:224). The establishment soon thereafter of “Dutch Colleges”—refresher courses to help young people read the Bible in German—and the touting of the controversial innovation of Sunday school as a means for teaching German to young people (Stoltzfus 1969:114) are sure
signs that English was making serious inroads in these plain communities. By the early twentieth century, church services and Sunday schools in German were increasingly rare, and they disappeared altogether in the 1930s, about the same time Deitsch ceased being acquired by children in Mennonite communities, including those Mennonite congregations of Amish origin.7

Even as Deitsch was rapidly obsolescing in Ohio Mennonite communities in the mid-twentieth century, the language remained the primary code of daily life in the half dozen Amish settlements in the state, and its future vitality was ensured by a population explosion among this plain group. During the twentieth century, large families and retention rates of over 80% among young people have caused the Amish population in North America to double about every twenty years.8 As a result, between 1960 and 1994, twenty-five new Amish settlements appeared in Ohio, and the older settlements in Holmes County and Geauga County grew rapidly in size.

3. History of Deitsch in Michigan

Since this volume also concerns language diversity in Michigan, I briefly note here the history of the Amish in the Wolverine state. Amish from Indiana and Ohio first moved into Michigan in 1895, but of the twelve settlements established before 1960 only two survived. The end of the millennium population boom produced twenty-one new Amish settlements in Michigan between 1960 and 1994, most of them small, consisting of just one or two church districts,9 and located in the central part of the state. The oldest and largest settlements are located in the southwestern corner of the state in St. Joseph, Hillsdale, and Branch counties bordering the large Amish community in northern Indiana. Michigan continues to attract Amish from other states, and the current population of Amish in Michigan is estimated at 9,300, which
places it fifth among states and provinces after Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Wisconsin (Kraybill 2001:336).

4. Current status of Deitsch in Ohio: Domains of use and attitudes

Currently Deitsch is the first or co-first language (along with English) of all 50,000 Amish living in over thirty settlements comprising over 350 church districts in Ohio. About half of these live in the Holmes County settlement which includes parts of Wayne, Tuscarawas, Stark, and Coshocton Counties and is the largest Amish community in the world. The Geauga and Trumbull County settlement with over 10,000 persons ranks fourth in the world in size. The remaining settlements are scattered mostly west of Holmes County and across the rural southeast Appalachian foothills and have populations of between 50 and 500 (see maps in Appendix).

As different groups among the Amish choose divergent paths of accommodation and resistance to “English” cultural ways, social differentiation within some plain communities has become rather complex. In the Holmes County, Ohio area, for example, there are over a dozen groups that have their origins in or that have drawn many members from the Old Order Amish. Some groups are more strictly separated from the majority society while others have assimilated to North American culture. Table 1 breaks down Holmes County into the several major Anabaptist affiliations that include most Deitsch speakers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language use</th>
<th>Population in Holmes County, Ohio area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Order Amish</td>
<td>fluent bilingualism: Deitsch with intimates, English with outsiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Order Amish</td>
<td>fluent bilingualism: Deitsch with intimates, English with outsiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beachy Amish-Mennonite</td>
<td>fluent bilingualism among most adults; many children favor English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Mennonite</td>
<td>monolingual English. Some Deitsch speakers, mostly over 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mennonite</td>
<td>monolingual English. Some Deitsch speakers, mostly over 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Anabaptist-related</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (non-Anabaptist related)</td>
<td>monolingual English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Populations of Anabaptist-related groups in Holmes County, Ohio.¹⁰

There remains in Ohio a small and ever-shrinking number of Mennonite speakers of Deitsch—probably only several hundred—all of whom are over age seventy. Within the next two decades the only non-Amish Deitsch speakers will be those who are first or second-generation ex-Amish (having left or never joined the church).¹¹ In addition, Ohio continues to supply a steady stream of Amish to new settlements in other states, notably western New York, Kentucky, Wisconsin, and northwestern Montana.
All Amish are fluently bilingual in Deitsch and American English. This stable bilingualism is marked by early acquisition of and positive attitudes toward both languages, as well as clearly defined functional domains for each language (Louden 1988). Amish also have at least a rudimentary ability to read the archaic standard German in the Bible (Martin Luther’s translation) and in their songbook for worship. However, most use a Bible which has German printed on one page and (King James’s) English on the facing page and claim to benefit from reading both.¹²

Deitsch is the language used at home, with Amish acquaintances, and in church, that is, in the intimate and religious sphere. English is the language used with outsiders, at school, and for reading and writing. As speakers move in and out of these domains on a daily basis they adopt the complementary discourse strategies of regular code-switching between English and Deitsch, as well as borrowing lexical and grammatical structures from English in order to facilitate code-switching (Huffines 1997). Speakers have regular occasion to provide oral translations on the fly, and they are both comfortable with the task and skillful in completing it.

Children acquire Deitsch first, but most preschoolers also have passive competence in English, and those with older siblings in school (where only English is spoken—even in Amish parochial schools) are effectively fluent bilinguals by the time they enter first grade. The younger generations of Amish speak English that is indistinguishable in terms of its phonology and morphosyntax from that of their non-Amish monolingual English-speaking neighbors.

There is an emergent body of literature in Deitsch being produced in Holmes County by New Order Amish¹³—the outgrowth of Bible translation work by a Wycliffe worker native to the area. To date there exist, in addition to a New Testament translation (completed in 1995), a collection of Bible stories and assorted religious poetry. However, given that most Amish feel
that English literacy meets all their practical needs and that, as one New Order Amish printer reports, “the Amish will not buy [Deitsch literature]”, the development of widespread literacy in Deitsch appears unlikely. Furthermore, it may mark, as the same printer suggests, a change in attitude—on the part of the New Order Amish, at least—toward Deitsch as a heritage language to be actively preserved and no longer something that is simply “in the air”, that is, taken for granted.

The economies of many Amish communities are shifting away from farming and into factory work and small businesses, which makes for a dynamic situation in terms of language use in the workplace. Rural farm work is still the preferred occupation for Amish males, but in Holmes County in one generation the number of adult males employed as farmers has dropped dramatically from 71% in 1965 to 31% in 1995. The possible isolation from family and increased exposure to “English” ways when working away from home has been dubbed “the lunch pail threat” (Kraybill & Nolt 1994). Even so, Deitsch is not being squeezed out of the 9-to-5 time slot. Often Amish workers are grouped together in a single work crew, and, as a result, Deitsch is still spoken on the job even when they are the overall minority in large factories (Keiser 2003 and Kraybill 2001). In addition, Amish small businesses are booming. Amish microentrepreneurs operate bike shops, portable cold storage and catering businesses, sewing shops, and woodworking shops. The long term effect of this economic sea change on the use of Deitsch remains to be seen, but the responses of Holmes County Amish to a written questionnaire on language use and attitudes provide some clues.14
First note that for all but one speaker conversation at home is overwhelmingly in Deitsch (a.k.a., Pennsylvania German). Second, although most continue to use Deitsch for much of their conversation at work, there is a significant minority who use another language (presumably English) more than a quarter of the time. These speakers with greater exposure to English are concentrated in the clerical and “other” categories (the latter of which includes a nurse, a school cook, and a salesman)—occupations which require extensive interaction with English-speaking customers. Third, over a quarter of the respondents feel that speaking Deitsch is not a core aspect of being Amish. Even so, very few believe that there are negative attitudes toward Deitsch among young Amish people, and fewer still think that a shift to English will take place in the next three generations.

For the Amish—in particular the Old Order Amish—language maintenance is not a conscious decision, but simply falls out from the daily practices of being Old Order. 15 When

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### Table 2. Questionnaire responses by occupation (figures represent %).

*PG = Pennsylvania German, a.k.a. Deitsch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Conversation at work less than 75% PG*</th>
<th>Conversation at home less than 75% PG</th>
<th>Believe some or all young people do NOT want to speak PG</th>
<th>Predict great-grandchildren might or will speak only English</th>
<th>Believe PG is NOT “necessary” to be Amish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factory</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=21)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=55)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PG = Pennsylvania German, a.k.a. Deitsch.
asked how they feel about Deitsch, Amish typically respond not with statements of pride in their distinct heritage or with theological musings on the importance of being a people apart, but matter-of-factly: “It is our language” or “I don’t know what else we would speak”. Likewise, Amish take a utilitarian and largely positive view with respect to English, regarding it simply as a social and economic necessity and in no way a threat to their way of life (see also Louden 1993a).

This attitude stands in contrast to language attitudes in transitional groups, such as the New Order Amish and the Beachy Amish, who construct their social and religious identity in contrast to both the Old Order Amish and the so-called liberal Mennonites.

The New Order Amish, as noted above, have been involved in developing Deitsch literature. In addition, some New Order young people are initiating activities such as prison ministry which necessarily involves using English in a worship setting and in an invitational manner. These subtle shifts in language attitudes and functional domains suggest that the New Order Amish may be at the beginning of a shift to English and are in the process of negotiating a new future identity as monolingual English speaking “horse and buggy” Amish.

In a clear step to engage and welcome persons from the community at large, Beachy Amish worship services are conducted in English. However, in at least some Beachy congregations in Holmes County, Deitsch is the code of choice for most other interactions, e.g., conversation at a potluck dinner following the worship service. Beachy Amish families vary in the extent to which English is used consistently at home—especially since those of non-Amish (hence non-Deitsch) background are welcomed to membership. But increasingly, even in families in which both parents are native Deitsch speakers committed to maintaining the language as a link to their extended family and their spiritual heritage, English predominates at
home. As a result many Beachy Amish children lack native fluency in Deitsch, and a shift to English appears imminent.

5. Linguistic research in Ohio: Dialect divergence

Recent linguistic research in Deitsch has focused on the nature and extent of contact-induced change in the vocabulary and grammar, see, e.g., Louden 1988, 1993b, 1997, Huffines 1989, 1997; also Fuller 1997 which draws data from a South Carolina Deitsch community founded by Ohio and Indiana Beachy Amish. The patterns of change identified in these studies—such as the reduction of the case system, the integration of borrowed English verbs into the native grammatical system (but not of borrowed English plural nouns), the congruence of Deitsch and English verbal systems, and the shift to main clause word order in subordinate clauses (which is different in Deitsch, indeed German in general) under certain conditions—are also found in Deitsch as it is spoken in Ohio. These changes appear to be parallel patterns of grammatical convergence to English which have occurred independently in various Deitsch communities (Louden 1993a:302).

Even as Deitsch undergoes similar changes and remains mutually intelligible across all of the communities in North America in which it is spoken, data from Ohio provide evidence of an emergent salient dialect divide between the Midwest and Pennsylvania varieties.

Schlabach’s 1980 Ohio State University master’s thesis, *Some phonological aspects of the Pennsylvania German of Ohio*, is a somewhat idiosyncratic account of the author’s native Holmes County dialect, but it provides an invaluable description of mid-twentieth century Deitsch in that community (including some data from the Madison County variety of his wife). In addition, Schlabach offers some brief commentary on regional dialects, noting that

Louden (1993a, 1997) proposes a set of phonetic, grammatical, and vocabulary features that are diagnostic of a Midwestern variety (which includes Ohio) and contrast directly with usage in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (see Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Midwest</th>
<th>Lancaster</th>
<th>Earlier Deitsch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ai/ diphthong</td>
<td>[eː] monophthong</td>
<td>[ar] diphthong</td>
<td>[ar] diphthong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g., Deitsch ‘German’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/r/ in syllable-initial and intervocalic positions, e.g., Ohre ‘ears’</td>
<td>[ɾ] tapped</td>
<td>[ɾ] approximant</td>
<td>[ɾ] tapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future auxiliary verb</td>
<td>figgere and</td>
<td>zeele/zelle</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zeele/zelle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>composition of the lexicon</td>
<td>fewer English</td>
<td>more English</td>
<td>borrowings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>borrowings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Proposed features of Midwestern Deitsch (adapted from Louden 1993a and 1997).

While the adoption by Lancaster, Pennsylvania speakers of the American-English-like approximant [ɹ] (the last sound in “hear” by speakers who do not “delete their r’s”) is the feature that attracts the most overt commentary by Midwestern Deitsch speakers, the
monophthongization of /aɪ/ > /ɛ:/ (e.g., [daɪtʃ] ‘German’ > [deɪʃ]) in the Midwest is of greater interest to linguistic research, because it is an innovation that has spread across geographically and socially isolated Amish communities from Ohio to Kansas. “Monophthongization” is the process in which a diphthong (“two-sound vowel”) becomes a “one-sound” vowel; in this case, the more widespread /aɪ/ of the word “Deitsch”, which is approximately the vowel of American English “night”, becomes a simple vowel [ɛ:], which is somewhat like the American English vowel in “cake”, although it does not have the diphthongal quality that vowel usually has in English.

The data in Figure 1 graph the frequency of occurrence of the monophthong in several Deitsch-speaking communities and show clearly that the Midwestern Amish settlements of Kalona, Iowa, and Holmes County pattern in opposition to Pennsylvania where speakers of all ages retain the diphthongal [aɪ] except before sounds like /r/ and /l/ (Louden 1997 and Keiser 2003).
Furthermore, the sound change is a recent innovation on the basis of apparent time evidence as seen in Figure 2: older speakers in both Ohio and Iowa retain a high percentage of unraised diphthongal tokens. Finally, there is a remarkable similarity in the distribution of variants across age cohorts in Holmes County and Kalona. This is true in spite of the fact that these two Amish settlements were founded over 150 years ago and are over 500 miles apart—distance and time enough to allow for social separation and to predicate against this sort of parallel development.
An account of the synchronized spread of monophthongal /aɪ/ across the Midwest must return to the history of these Amish settlements. As noted in §1, throughout the nineteenth century, Ohio served as the staging ground for new Amish settlements in the Midwest—including Iowa. The Amish exhibited a high degree of mobility throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and, as a result, most Midwestern Amish have a vast network of extended family and friends in several states, though rarely in Pennsylvania. This speech archipelago, as it were, has made possible the maintenance of sufficient intercommunity contact to allow for the spread of this sound change across the far flung Midwestern settlements.20

The lexical differences which differentiate Ohio and the Midwest from Pennsylvania are few but socially diagnostic.21
Table 4. Selected lexical differences between regional Amish varieties of Deitsch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pennsylvania</th>
<th>Midwest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘the bucket’</td>
<td>der Kiwwel</td>
<td>der Eemer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the autumn’</td>
<td>der Harebscht</td>
<td>‘s Schpohtyaar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the meadow’</td>
<td>die Wiss</td>
<td>der Baschsdert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the fly’</td>
<td>die Mik</td>
<td>die Muk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the car’</td>
<td>die Machine</td>
<td>die Kaer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the lawn’</td>
<td>’s Hefli</td>
<td>der Hoch/Hof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘through’</td>
<td>darich\textsuperscript{22}</td>
<td>deich</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last proposed feature of Midwestern Deitsch in Table 3—Midwesterners’ conservation of native vocabulary—is difficult to measure with any precision, but there is considerable anecdotal evidence that in fact the opposite is true: Pennsylvania speakers conserve more native Deitsch words while Midwesterners are profligate borrowers of English. As one Pennsylvania speaker exaggerated, “In Ohio it’s a joke. All that’s left is the syntax; the words are English … It’d be embarrassing for me to have so little Dutch in my Dutch.”

Ohio Deitsch speakers are clearly identifiable as Midwesterners the minute they open their mouths. But there are also features of their speech which can identify them more specifically as Ohioans and not, say, Iowans. Some younger speakers in Holmes County produce such dramatically monophthongized versions of /ai/ that they overlap /e/, resulting in a confusion between the two, known as a “near merger” (Labov 1994). Tests with multiple tokens of words which differ only on the basis of these two sounds (so-called “minimal pairs”, e.g., geil
‘horses’ and *geel* ‘yellow’), demonstrate that native speakers are not able to consistently correctly identify the two words (Keiser 2001).

Van Ness (1992, 1995) describes a grammatical change in the Deitsch of the younger generation of Holmes County New Order Amish: human female antecedents are being marked with neuter/non-feminine pronouns rather than the expected feminine pronouns as in (1).

(1)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POS</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>human female antecedent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSS-3SG-non-F.</td>
<td><em>sei</em></td>
<td>feminine pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>haas</td>
<td>neuter pronoun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Linda’s house’

Other studies of this innovation show that it is widespread among Holmes County Old Order Amish speakers of all ages, and that it occurs—though much less frequently—in other Midwestern Deitsch communities (where it is recognized as a feature of Ohio Deitsch speakers) but very rarely in Pennsylvania (Keiser 2001, 2002 and Burridge & Enninger 1992).

6. Future study

Amish communities in Ohio and across North America are flourishing, thus ensuring the vitality of Deitsch for the foreseeable future. Given these dynamic social conditions, the broadening and deepening of linguistic research on Deitsch is not only possible, but necessary. All Deitsch-speaking communities—but particularly those in the Midwest—are understudied. Little has been done to document variation within the Midwest; it is not clear if and how innovations, such as the use of non-feminine gender for female antecedents in Holmes County described by van Ness, are spreading to other communities. Furthermore, as the many new Midwestern settlements become well-established and increasingly independent of their settlements of origin, there may emerge new linguistic reflexes of these discontinuities in social networks between settlements. The future of Deitsch studies lies in tracking language variation
and change in both the historically prominent, tourist-oriented communities and especially in the smaller new settlements.
Appendix: Maps of the Amish settlements in Ohio.

(Source: Ohio Amish Directory: Holmes County and Vicinity, 1981)
References:


Notes:

1. Pennsylvania German developed in the context of contact (and the resultant mixing and leveling of dialect features) between speakers of various southwestern German dialects—the most prominent of which were Palatinate varieties—in colonial Pennsylvania. Immigration of German speakers to Pennsylvania ended with the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in the 1770s and did not resume until the early nineteenth century by which time Pennsylvania German had gelled as a unique New World dialect. The German immigrants in the nineteenth century—more numerous and linguistically more heterogeneous than the eighteenth-century immigrants—settled, for the most part, in communities apart from Pennsylvania German speakers, and so had little influence on the later development and maintenance of the dialect. (Many of the nineteenth-century German immigrant communities in rural areas maintained their respective dialects for an exceptionally long time—often five or more generations—see, e.g., Salmons 1993 and forthcoming.) For more on the history and development of Pennsylvania German in Europe and in America see chapter 5 in Keiser 2001, also Seifert 1971 and Louden 1988 and 2001.

2. The term “plain” in this paper refers to the Amish and Old Order Mennonites: religious groups that overtly mark a clear separation between themselves and society as a whole, often by means of distinctive, plain clothing and simple lifestyle. Mennonites in general have a historic connection to the plain tradition, though most do not currently overtly mark themselves as such either by dress or by use of Deitsch. The term “sectarian” is sometimes used as a synonym for plain.

3. There are no children acquiring Deitsch as a first language among the nonplain groups, and the youngest nonplain native speakers are seventy years old. This same pattern of obsolescence holds for most Mennonite groups (though not for Old Order Mennonites) both in
Pennsylvania and elsewhere. Only a century ago in 1900 the number of nonplain speakers of Deitsch was over half a million—the majority in Pennsylvania—while the number of plain speakers was in the tens of thousands.

4. The Lutheran and Reformed churches in Holmes County, Ohio, also had German services in the nineteenth century (Stoltzfus 1969), but it is not known if these churches were begun by settlers from Pennsylvania who were Deitsch speakers. There are reports that some elderly nonplain Deitsch speakers live around Baltic in Holmes County, but it is not clear to what extent these speakers have a history independent of the very large plain settlement in that area.

5. Most of the nineteenth-century Anabaptist immigrants likely never spoke Deitsch. They include Swiss Mennonites in Wayne County (1817) and Putnam County (1830) and Alsatian Amish in Fulton County, Ohio (1834). All of these communities had shifted to English by the first half of the twentieth century.

6. Over the last half of the nineteenth century, issues concerning external relations (e.g., the holding of public office, operating large scale businesses, and pursuing more formal education) as well as internal church community practices (e.g., different forms of baptism, the introduction of Sunday school, the singing of popular English hymns) generated much discussion and dissent among the Amish (see Nolt 1992:125 passim). Though individually none of these issues can be said to have triggered a shift in language use from Deitsch to English, together they signaled a growing openness to more rapid cultural change—and with it the potential for linguistic assimilation—on the part of many Amish. Those Amish communities that ultimately accepted these changes often affiliated with the more progressive Mennonite churches. The Amish who held to traditional ways came to be referred to as the Old Order Amish, and it is their descendants who maintain Deitsch today.
7. The decline in the use of (standard) German (alongside Deitsch) in formal domains such as church services does not entail a commensurate decline in the use of Deitsch in informal domains such as the home. However, the evidence suggests that, in this case, there was a strong positive correlation between the two.

8. See Nolt 1992:284 and Kraybill 2001:16. The total number of Amish settlements in 1971 was 83; by 1992 it was 227. This rate of increase may not continue indefinitely, however, as there appears to be an increase in families with “only” five to six children, indicating birth control may quietly be making some inroads in Amish society.

9. Since church services are held in homes, the size of a church district can range considerably but usually is between 100–150 persons (including both adult members and children).

10. Thanks to Verna Schlabach at the Mennonite Information Center in Berlin, Ohio for assistance in obtaining these figures. The Total population figures (and by subtraction the non-Anabaptist figures) are from 2000 census data. The figures for Holmes County include all of Holmes County as well as eleven townships in surrounding counties: Salt Creek, Sugar Creek, Paint, and East Union in Wayne County; Wayne, Sugar Creek, Auburn, and Bucks in Tuscarawas County, and Crawford, Mill Creek, and White Eyes in Coshocton County. Of course, the Holmes County settlement is not precisely co-extensive with these townships and within the county the settlement concentrated in the eastern half.

11. The number of persons who were born and raised in Amish homes but are now not members of Amish churches can be estimated for some communities based on information in Amish community directories. However, it is not known how many of these persons continue to live in Ohio or in communities where Deitsch is spoken. In Holmes County, many persons—a
conservative guess would be one thousand—who grew up Amish have joined Beachy Amish or various Conservative Mennonite and Mennonite churches in the area.

12. The reading and formulaic quotation of (standard) German in Amish worship services has sometimes been identified as a third language—so called “Amish High German”—in use in these communities, but Louden 1993a rightly points out that this usage is more accurately characterized as a highly restricted formal register of Deitsch.

13. The New Order Amish are, like their Old Order counterparts, “horse and buggy” Amish who meet in homes for worship. In general, New Order restrictions on such things as telephone, computer, and farming technologies are more lenient than Old Orders, and New Order Amish have a stronger orientation toward personal piety in religious practice.

14. In September and October 1998 a written questionnaire was mailed to all 180 employees in the woodworking factory in Holmes County where I was employed during my fieldwork in August and September 1998. It was also mailed to 160 other persons listed in the 1996 Ohio (Holmes County) Amish Directory. These persons were selected quasi-randomly so as to have a sample with reasonable representation of the community with respect to factors such as age, sex, occupation, and geographic location. A total of 340 were mailed; seventy were returned and tabulated. In this paper only the Amish responses are tabulated. For a copy of the questionnaire see “Pennsylvania German language maintenance study: Holmes County area 1998” in the Appendix of Keiser 2001. For more results and discussion of this questionnaire, see Keiser 2003.

15. As Johnson-Wiener (1992) notes, for the Old Order Amish it is not language which establishes separateness; rather it is a theological commitment to separateness, especially a theology that does not promote proselytizing, which is a prerequisite for language maintenance.
16. The Beachy Amish (who also self-identify as Amish-Mennonite or Beachy Mennonite depending on the salient point of contrast) retain some similarities to (Old Order) Amish practices, most notably in women’s dress, but differ from the Amish in their ownership and use of cars, church meetinghouses, and most modern technologies. In Ohio there are about a dozen Beachy Amish churches with around 1,200 members; in North America there are around 100 Beachy Amish congregations with 8,000 members (Nolt 1992 and http://www.mwc-cmm.org/Directory/namerica.html).` 

17. For more discussion on language, Amish identity, and the possibility of language shift with retention of Amish identity, see Keiser 2003.

18. Data are taken from translation tasks and conversational data with over one hundred Deitsch speakers in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Iowa. For more details see Keiser 2001. English borrowings are not included in these data. The total number of tokens in each category from which percentages were calculated is: all Pennsylvania n = 352, Pennsylvania Lancaster Amish only n = 118, Kalona n = 824, Holmes County n = 906.

19 Data from Keiser 2001. The total number of tokens in each age cohort from which percentages were calculated is: for Holmes County 0–25 yrs. n = 172, 26–50 yrs. n = 473, 51–75 yrs. n = 185, 76+ yrs. n = 76; for Kalona 0–25 yrs. n = 138, 26–50 yrs. n = 340, 51–75 yrs. n = 305, 76+ yrs. n = 41.

20. For a detailed discussion on the monophthongization of /aɪ/, the patterns of social interaction across Amish speech islands, and the emergence of a Midwestern dialect of Deitsch, see Keiser 2001.
21. The occurrence of most of these lexical items is not categorical in either region. For example, in Lancaster County Amish usage *die Kaer* appears alongside the more common (and Old Order Mennonite usage) *die Machine* for ‘the car’.

22. *Darich* represents, in fact, a whole class of words which have developed differently in Pennsylvania and the Midwest. Pennsylvania preserves the (now approximant) /ʁ/, while in the Midwest /ʁ/ was lost in the environment /ɑɹ/ and the resulting /ɑi/ sequence is monophthongized. Other examples include [latvɐ̱ɪk] v. [latvɛːk] ‘apple butter’, [ʃtɐɪɡ] v. [ʃtɛːɡ] ‘fast’, and [haɻɨ] v. [hɛːɻ] ‘obey’.

23. Van Ness sees this construction as resulting from young speakers’ early acquisition of English (with its two-class system of natural gender). These young speakers then try to resolve the mismatch between the gender systems of the Deitsch and English by adopting a two-class system and selecting the “most personal category” to mark it: *es meedel* ‘the girl’ which happens to be neuter (1995:77). The neuter is then extended to other lexical items with natural feminine gender.