

## Ethnographies of Language and Music in Language Shift

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In line with the conference theme of *comparative research*, this presentation will compare language shift in two different communities: Swedish immigrants to the American Midwest and Amish-Mennonites in Central Pennsylvania. In turn, this comparison will also be interdisciplinary by looking at “language in music,” specifically religious hymns and hymnals as performative, ritualized aspects of the heritage language communities. Traditionally, the language studied in shift situations is everyday communication, but these analyses fail to account for the more blurred genres of talk. They fail to account for ritualized and performative aspects of language in heritage language communities. Our presentation will uncover how language and music as social practices shift over time and what parallels can be drawn between the two.

Early on, Roman Jakobson (1932) noted that language and music are fundamentally similar as semiotic systems that fit well into a structuralist paradigm. On the most basic level, notes and phonemes function as the building blocks of each system. Since then, comparisons involving language and music have largely been carried out by ethnomusicologists (Bright 1963; Feld 1974; Feld & Fox 1994).

There remain unexplored ways that the fields intersect. Language and music are both social practices and they share discursive resources “salient to ethnographic understanding of the production of both material and intellectual culture” (Samuels 2015: 346). Linguistics and musicology have progressed in similar ways—through incorporating discursive approaches—such that the value of doing comparative and interdisciplinary work in both fields would be mutually beneficial. Our research questions engaging with these discursive resources are the following:

- For communities of faith that printed hymnals: When and how is language shift perceptible?
- If the editors of the hymnals use visual space on the pages to demarcate the heritage language from English, how do they do this?
  - through parallel editions, in which verses in one language are accompanied by verses in the heritage language (e.g., interlinear contents or side-by-side presentations)?
  - through the use of appendices, in which the names of the hymns in the heritage language are provided, or through some other textual practice?

By looking at both communities, we will share how they experienced language shift in ritualized, performative heritage language use in hymns and hymnals and, by extension, in the socialization function of community. Using the verticalization model, we show how music in these communities is socialized and contributes to narratives of cultural identity. When musical aspects and the language of the music were incorporated from extra-community sources, these performative aspects of the heritage languages shifted.

Data:

*Amish-Mennonites in Central Pennsylvania*

Amish: hymns of martyrs, acapella, slow, no musical accompaniment, no musical notation, archaic German

Amish-Mennonites: introduction of new hymns, incorporation of original hymns in German in appendix, shaped notes, four-part harmony singing through external singing schools

Mennonites: no German hymns, unison singing (non-gender segregation in worship), full musical accompaniment

*Swedish-American communities in the Midwest, mainly Illinois and Kansas*: historical descriptions of Swedish pioneer singing practices. Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant hymnals published ca 1909 to 1950. Swedish-American Evangelical Lutheran hymnals published ca 1884 to 1978.

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