

German in the United States

Introduction

German presence in the US dates back to colonial times. It is believed that the first group of German Protestants arrived with a group of French Huguenots at Port Royal, South Carolina, as early as 1562. In 1608, German craftsmen, mostly carpenters, helped create the first American settlement in Jamestown. In 1683, thirteen families of Mennonites and Quakers arrived in Pennsylvania and created Germantown, the first German settlement in the US (Faust, 1912, II, p.7). Most of the immigrants who followed in these early days came for religious reasons. They continued to settle in Pennsylvania, but also in New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina and mainly came from the western part of today's Germany. Later, they came for economic reasons or were political refugees. They all brought their faith, their belief in hard work, and also their language.

Today, more than 400 years later, the US has the largest concentration of German speakers outside of Europe. The 2000 US Census showed German as the 4th most commonly spoken non-English language in the US (Table 1), although the number of US German speakers had declined by 11% since the previous Census. This chapter presents a brief historical overview of the German ancestry and language, some demographic and recent immigration information, followed by predictions about the fate of the German language in the US.

Table 1, Top 10 non-English languages spoken in the U.S.

Ranking	% change 1990 to 2000	Ranking	% change 1990 to 2000
1. Spanish	+ 62%	6. Vietnamese	+ 99%
2. Chinese	+ 53%	7. Italian	- 23%
3. French	- 3%	8. Korean	+ 43%

4. German	-11%	9. Russian	+191%
5. Tagalog	+36%	10. Polish	- 8%

History

German, like English and Dutch, belongs to a handful of West Germanic languages which originally were mutually intelligible. By the 5th century AD, some continental West Germanic tribes (Saxons, Angles, Jutes) had invaded the English islands and replaced the Celtic languages with their own. Also, between the 3rd and the 5th centuries AD, the High German Consonant Shift began to take effect and the early Germanic languages in the south shifted away from those in the north. West Germanic dialects on the Continent largely changed into Low and High, or Upper Germanic varieties which eventually developed into Standard German, Dutch, Afrikaans, and a number of regional forms (mostly non-standardized or written) within a dialect continuum that still exists today. It spans across the political borders of countries as well as the borders of some German federal states, which before the German unification under Bismarck in 1871, was divided territory consisting of an wealth of independent principalities and feudal districts, all part of the German Empire. During the early (and later) immigration to the US, German-speaking people arrived from all parts of this empire (and from outside of it). They were a diverse group with their many local dialects and identities (Luebke, 1990, p. XIII). If this led to communication difficulties in the US, they were overcome by the use of English (Adams, 1993, p. 4). Eventually, some German dialects in the US began a process of leveling (a simplification that makes unintelligible, or partially intelligible regional dialects mutually intelligible), creating, in fact, new German dialects in the US (Eichhoff, 1985, I, p. 231).

It is difficult to arrive at an exact count of German settlers before the first official US Census in 1790. Information on this subject can be gleaned from estimates made of the white population by Congress in order to create a system of taxation to pay for the debt accrued in the War of Independence. In 1775, the number of German settlers in the 13 colonies was given as 225,000, which today is considered to be a low estimate (Faust, 1912, II, p.12). Fifteen years later, the first US Census confirmed three million Europeans in the New World, half of which were English, about 600,000 each German and Scottish-Irish, and the remaining 472,000 were mainly French, Scandinavians, Jews and Slavs (Faust 1912, I, p.24).

Unimpeded immigration to the New World started after the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. Improved rationalization and organization of immigration (Moltman 1985, I, p.14), a major crop failure in 1816-17 and a repeated potato rot in 1846 were some contributing factors for this movement. The new, large wave of emigration once again originated mainly from western Germany. Immigrants were small farmers, craftsmen, and laborers. Also, after 1830, when reactionary forces began to persecute liberals and particularly after the failed German Revolution of 1848, some 6,000 political refugees (the so-called Forty-Eighters) came to the US. They were well-educated, liberal, and often well-to-do, and did not see themselves as immigrants, but rather as asylum seekers. (Adams, 1993, p.7). Later in the 19th century, despite the German unification in 1872 and an economic boom after the Franco Prussian War, 1882 marked the highest number of German arrivals, with 250,000 persons in that year alone (Adams, 1993, p. 4). Immigrants now included those who arrived from territories which are today Austria, France (Alsace Lorraine), Switzerland, the Balkans, and from Eastern Europe (borderlands with Germany) or German ethnic enclaves and settlements in Russia (Totten, 1985, p.195). Rippley refers to the

remarks of a fourth generation pastor who still speaks German and defines himself as part of a “strange and rootless bunch ... searching for an identity”. (Ripley, 1984, 222). In this article, they all are called German or German-speaking.

The widespread immigration created the co-called “German Belt” from Connecticut to California and Washington with heavy settlements also in the South. By the beginning of the 20th century, Germans could be found in all states of the US (Moltman, 1985, I, p. 21). Later, that century experienced two world wars and unheard-of devastation. Between 1930 and 1960, Germans once more came in high numbers and the immigration of the 1950’s matched that of the 1860’s a century earlier. After 1970, German immigration to the US subsided. Table 2 (Adams, 1993, p. 6) illustrates the trends of German immigration from 1820 through 1988.

Table 2. Total German immigration into the US 1820 – 1988

Decade	Total immigration	German immigration	% of total
1820 – 1829	128,502	5,753	4.5
1830 – 1839	538,381	124,726	23.2
1840 – 1849	1,427,337	385,434	27.0
1850 – 1859	2,814,554	976,072	34.7
1860 – 1869	2,081,261	723,734	34.8
1870 – 1879	2,742,137	751,769	37.4
1880 – 1889	5,248,568	1,445,181	27.5
1890 – 1899	3,694,294	579,072	15.7
1900 - 1909	8,202,388	328,722	4.0
1910- 1919	6,347,380	174,227	2.7
1920- 1929	4,295,510	386,634	9.0
1930- 1939	699,375	119,107	17.0
1940- 1949	856,608	117,506	14.0
1950- 1959	2,499,268	576,905	23.1
1960 - 1969	3,213,749	209,616	6.5
1971- 1980	4,493,000	66,000	1.5
1981- 1988	4,711,000	55,800	1.2
Total	49,753.412	7,028.258	14.1

The concept of ethnicity and language maintenance was discussed widely by German newcomers in the 19th century, particularly after the mid 1840's. The word *Schmelztiegel* (melting pot) was first used in 1857, half a century before it became customary in English. (Conzen, 1985, I, p. 138). But the German immigrant population was quickly willing to give up its native tongue, and by doing so surprised many contemporaries and compatriots.

There were, however, those who dreamed of creating areas where the German language and way of life would be preserved. Such were the aims of the *Giessener Gesellschaft*, founded in 1833 to build “a new and free Germany in the Great North American Republic” that would be an essentially German state (Faust, 1912, II, p. 364), as well as the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia, founded three years later to “establish a colony somewhere in some portion of the United States, preferably in the Far West ... which should be characteristically German in every particular” (Bek, 1907, pg. 1). By these efforts a number of towns in Missouri came into being, among them Hermann, which is still a well-known tourist attraction due to its German heritage and quaintness. But no “new and free” Germany was erected. In 1842, when Texas still was a part of Mexico, a union of German aristocrats purchased land with the same intent as that of the above mentioned societies, and between 1845 and 1847, 5,247 immigrants landed in Galveston. By the beginning of the Civil War, Texas had 30,000 Germans (Eichhoff, 1985, I, p. 232). But the attempt to create a “new Germany” failed as well. Yet, the Texas Germans retained a German way of life quite divergent from the rest of Texan life. They adhered to their language and customs and (as did other Germans in the US) they resisted slavery and fought nativism (Olmstead, 1978). Both Kloss and Gilbert agree that German in Texas was relatively well preserved until recently. Unlike most German communities, the Texas Germans lived in a

relatively small area and were spared some of the inter-group tension caused by different ideologies in the Midwestern communities. (Kloss, 1998, p. 221, Gilbert, 1991, p. 269).

Two groups of immigrants in the US who spoke German language variants were more successful. They, indeed, were able to create lasting social and linguistic communities: the German-speaking Anabaptist groups (Amish, Hutterites, Mennonites, and others) and Yiddish-speaking communities centered mostly in New York (which will not be discussed in this chapter). Yiddish was the medieval German dialect of Jewish communities in the Rhineland which became their *lingua franca* during their migration eastward. The Rhineland is the same general territory that later sent the first and thereafter many more settlers to Pennsylvania and other areas of the US (Totten, 1983, p. 6).

As mentioned previously, Germans who came to the US in earlier centuries did not come as a homogeneous group, instead, they came from various German regions and European countries with different German dialects. Settlers in Wisconsin came mostly from northern regions speaking Low German dialects (*Plattdeutsch*). No dialect leveling took place here (Eichhoff, 1985, I, p. 233). The settlers in Texas arrived from central Germany (particularly from Nassau). The immigrants in Pennsylvania mainly came from the Rhineland. It is fascinating to discover how the leveling of German dialects in Pennsylvania and Texas developed differently. In Pennsylvania, the nominative (subject) case merged with the accusative (direct object) case, whereas in Texas the accusative merged with the dative (indirect object) case. Gilbert points out that some of these modifications here resemble those of a number of German dialects in Europe, but even more interestingly, some of the changes “have been of roughly the same type and in the same direction as those experienced by Old English in the 700

years from its beginning to the close of the Old English period (ca. 1066). The same process has simply been speeded up” (Gilbert, 1991, p. 260).

Before the introduction of mandatory public education, local groups were in charge of schooling their children. They used their own languages for two reasons: to prepare the students for life in their communities, and more often than not, because there was no one who could teach in English. German immigrants joined forces with local parishes and clergy, who performed church services in their native language to hold their congregations together, and who created German schools.

In 1856, the first German kindergarten (“children’s garden”) was founded in Watertown, WI, by Margarethe Schurz, wife of the German statesman and Secretary of the Interior, Carl Schurz. Three years later, Elizabeth Peabody introduced the first English kindergarten in Boston, modeling it after the Watertown design that was inspired by the German progressive educator Wilhelm August Froebel. Peabody later became instrumental in influencing Congress to offer free kindergartens to all American children. On the other end of the educational continuum, the German university format as developed by Alexander von Humboldt (among others) was adopted by Johns Hopkins University. The American educator, Horace Mann, supported the governor of Massachusetts in introducing the Prussian school system, and around 1900, along with German as the ‘language of poets and thinkers’, it became adopted all over America.

Early education statistics underscore the success of the German language in the schooling of this country before WWI. A 1900 *Report of the United States Commission of Education* recorded over 600,000 students of German. But the chairman of the committee of the Teachers Association, E. Dapprich, who compiled the surveys for this report, stated that instruction in

German (“had he received complete reports from the local school authorities”) far exceeded one million (Kloss, 1998, p. 93). The high prestige of German also led to children of non-German origin being taught in the language. For example, in 1898, more than half of the children who enrolled in Chicago’s German elementary schools were not German (Kloss 1998, pgs. 107, 114). But the German proficiency of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of German immigrants had dropped considerably. When German oral and written competence was assumed and instruction was given as if German were the mother-tongue, the results were unsatisfactory. In Buffalo, New York, as well as in Erie, Pennsylvania, studies were conducted suggesting that students in elementary school German classes achieved rather little, and that the content could be learned quicker and more successfully in high school (Kloss, 1998, p.115).

After 1900, large-scale German immigration to the US slowed. German was the largest immigration group between 1880 and 1890 (“when about 30 percent of the foreign born population was from Germany”), but fell to No. 11 in 2000 (Schmidley, 2001, p. 12). A booming European industry began providing satisfactory employment and offered fewer incentives to leave. More importantly, new immigration quota laws for 1924 and 1929 limited immigration in general. The entry quota for persons from the Weimar Republic came to just over 25,000, which was not changed even for the rescue of German Jews from Nazi persecution in the 1930s and 1940s (Adams, 1993, pgs. 4, 36). Among the new arrivals in the 1930s were thousands of intellectuals, writers, artists, actors, and musicians. It was one of the greatest “brain drains” Germany had ever experienced, as the US welcomed physicist Albert Einstein, architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, writer Thomas Mann, actress Marlene Dietrich, and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, among many others. After World War II, a second “brain drain”

occurred, of whom Wernherr von Braun, the missile scientist, is one of the best known.

A discussion of the history of the German language and culture in the US would be lacking without referring to the discrimination against German and the Germans in the early part of the 20th century even though (or partially because) they were the largest ethno-linguistic community in many of the large cities and states. In 1916 the National Council of Defense and numerous local council affiliates were established, including the Victoria Council of Defense in Texas, which in 1918 mandated that all persons should abandon the use of German in public and private life. German speakers were forbidden to use their language. Following suit in other parts of the country, thousands of German schools were closed, as well as many German newspapers, social centers, associations and clubs. In Findlay, Ohio, the town council asked for a fine of \$25.00 for the use of German in the streets (Kloss, 1998, p. 61). In addition to “patriotic” book burnings, the windows of German businesses and families were smashed, and citizens perceived as having only lukewarm patriotism were persecuted. This new American patriotism, à la Theodore Roosevelt (whose quote about the “polyglot boarding house” was cited in the introductory chapter to this book) now required the total assimilation of Germans into the American language and culture. Fortunately, the laws that had been enacted to limit German use were eventually rescinded. One of the more important rulings, not so much in defense of language rights, but of individual liberties was *Meyer v. Nebraska* (1923), the Supreme Court ruling that struck down as unconstitutional a Nebraska law prohibiting the spoken use of any language other than English in schools. But much damage had been done and German as a vital everyday language among the mainstream German population in the US never

recuperated. Similarities between the fate of German during WWI and today's restrictive language policies are quite obvious.

Demographics

According to Census statistics, 15.2% of all US residents (42.8 Million) claim German heritage, making it by far the largest ancestry group in the country. Comparing German ancestry in the US with the speakers of German today, the 2000 Census and the MLA list of world language speakers reveal important information.

Table 3 – Largest Ancestries in the US.

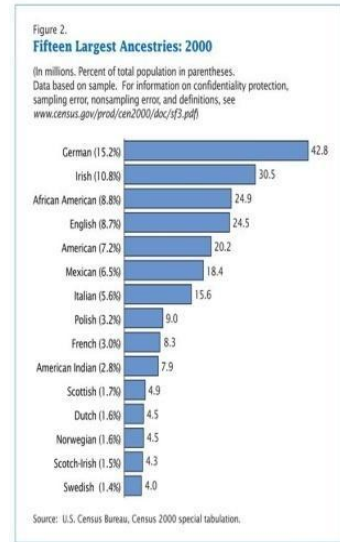
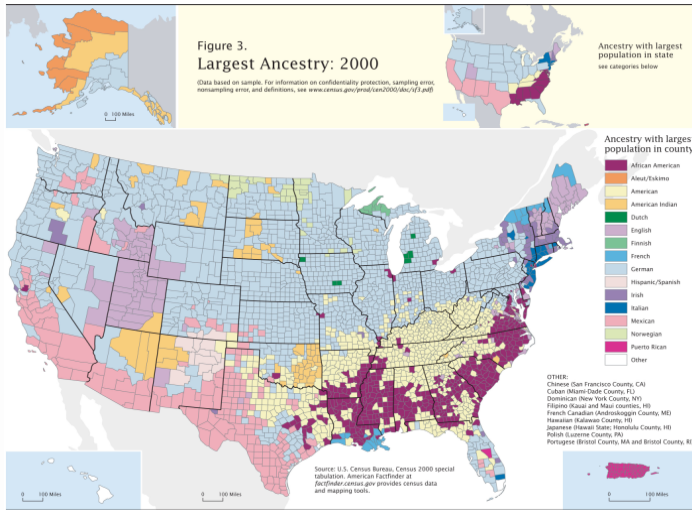


Table 4. Number of German Speakers by County

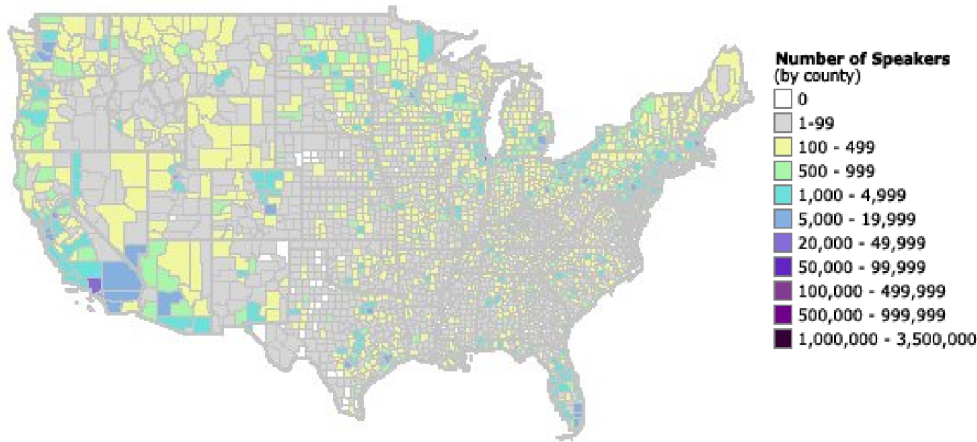
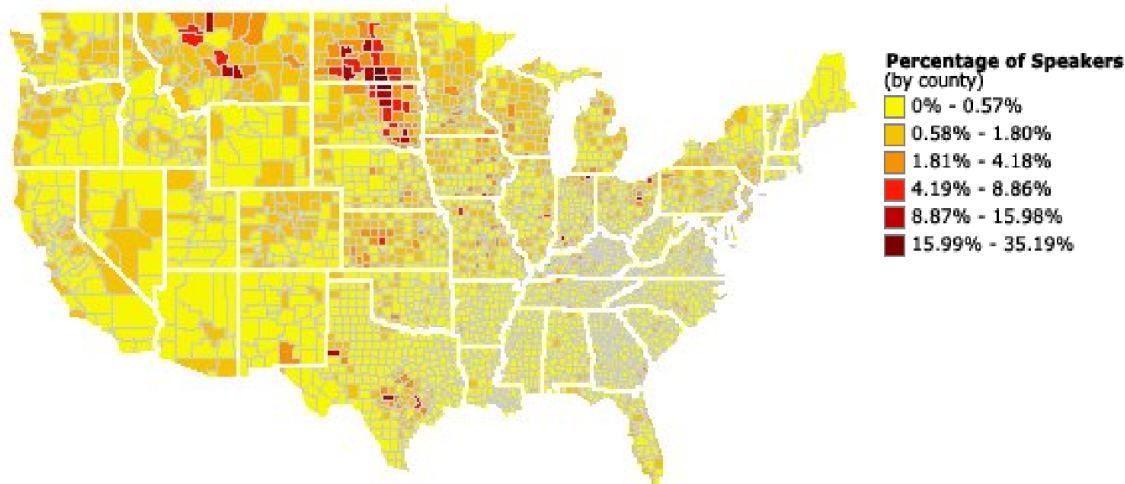


Table 5, Percentages of German Speakers by County



Two questions need to be answered: Where do the people claiming German heritage live? Do these German ancestry-claimants still speak German?

Census statistics disclose that German ancestry leads in 23 states. Table 6 catalogues the first ten of these 23 states. Were this heritage list continued, it would include Ohio, Missouri, Indiana, Colorado, Oregon, Michigan (with ancestry between 25.1 and 20.4), Illinois, Idaho, Washington, Alaska, Nevada, Oklahoma and Florida (with ancestry between 19.6 % and 11.8 %). German takes 2nd place in nine states (Utah, Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia, Delaware, Arizona, Maryland and California). It takes 3rd place in five states (New Jersey, South Carolina, New York, New Mexico and the District of Columbia, with ancestry between), 4th place in five more states (and North Carolina, Connecticut, Arkansas, Vermont and Louisiana). It comes in 5th place in the remaining seven states (New Hampshire, Tennessee, Georgia, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Alabama, and Mississippi). Only in Maine and Rhode Island, German does not count as one of the five leading heritages. German is preceded or followed mostly by English, Irish, American-African and American. Three of these ancestries are English-speaking.

While ancestry may affect life experiences ranging from food choices to preferences in music, it is not necessarily an indication of language retention. Therefore, despite the fact that German accounts for the most ubiquitous ancestry in the US today, it occupies only the 4th rank in the US of non-English language speakers, with a loss of 11 %, as noted in Table 1, and a decline from 3rd rank in the Census of 1900. Indeed, a large shift to English usage is apparent.

Table 6 . Comparison of Total Population and Percentage of German Ancestry with Total German Speakers and Percentage of Speakers in a State

	Total Population Per State (US Census)		% of German Ancestry		Total German Speakers per State (MLA Language Map)		Percentage of German Speakers
1	North Dakota	642,200	43.9	1	California	141,615	10.24%
2	Wisconsin	5,363,675	42.6	2	New York	92,680	6.70%
3	South Dakota	754,844	40.7	3	Florida	89,575	6.47%
4	Nebraska	1,711,263	38.6	4	Texas	82,100	5.93%
5	Minnesota	4,919,479	36.7	5	Ohio	72,570	5.24%
6	Iowa	2,926,324	35.7	6	Pennsylvania	68,665	4.96%
7	Montana	902,195	27.0	7	Illinois	63,355	4.58%
8	Wyoming	493,782	25.9	8	Michigan	52,320	3.78%
9	Kansas	2,688,418	25.8	9	Wisconsin	48,305	3.49%
10	Pennsylvania	12,281,054	25.4	10	Indiana	44,135	3.19%
	Etc.				Etc.		

Replying to the second question and comparing geographical distribution of German ancestry with the geographical distribution of today's German language use, another change becomes apparent. States whose populations have a high percentage of German ancestors are not states with high German language use. The ancestries of the populations of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Montana, Wyoming, and Kansas are very highly German. German-speakers, however, no longer predominate in these states, as shown by the data of the MLA map in Table 6. Under the heading 'Total German Speakers per State', Iowa occupies

position 25, Kansas 26, North Dakota 28, South Dakota 32, Montana 35, and Nebraska holds position 36. The MLA list shows Wyoming, with the 8th largest ancestry, in last place as the state with the fewest German speakers, 2,380, and merely 0.17 %. Only Pennsylvania and Wisconsin remain included in the top ten states with significant numbers of German-speakers.

Often, world language speakers in the US are not foreign-born. Indeed, the ranking of German in 4th position as a non-English language used in the US, includes many heritage speakers of second generation and beyond. But this ranking also includes people newly entering the country. From immigration statistics it becomes apparent that the number of Germans settling in the US has remained relatively stable in recent years, and is still noteworthy. For that reason, it is useful to look at such information which comes from different data sources. The 2006 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics indicates that the combined number of German-speaking legal permanent residents (LPRs) from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, from 2000 to 2006 is the highest of all Europeans with the exception of those from the United Kingdom, Poland, Yugoslavia and Russia (pg. 10). According to another US Census report, which profiles the worldwide foreign-born US population in 2000, Germany occupies 11th place as a sending country (Schmidley, 2001, p. 12). Although this number has also declined, in 2004, Germany still holds the 14th position worldwide as a birth-country of LPRs (Rytina 2006, p. 4). Comparing 1990 and 2000 Census data in a state-by-state listing of the 15 countries sending the most immigrants to the US, Mexico has replaced Germany, except in West Virginia. However, Germany is still high on the list of many states showing an increase in total immigrant population in 30 states and a decrease in only 20 states. (Carmarota and McArdle, 2003, Table 1). Additional data from the 2006 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics reveal that in addition to the

LPR's, in 2000, an additional 4,508 Germans became citizens, and there were 2,139,191 German visitors to the US (tables 21 and 27). According to a Migration Policy Institute report, half of all visitors to this country were nationals of the UK, Mexico, Japan and Germany (MPI 2004, p 4). All this goes to prove that the entry rate of Germans (not including Austrians and Swiss) into the US is still relatively high.

Although a somewhat diffuse settling pattern exists, which has implications for the ability or inability to maintain ethnicity and language, government data also disclose that Germans who come to the US to a large degree no longer choose the farms of the Midwest as destinations, but prefer the tempo and challenge of the large population centers of New York, Florida, Texas, New Jersey, and in particular California (as do immigrants and visitors from other countries).

California had early German settlements, as indicated in Table 6. Also, Los Angeles, traditionally, has been a safe haven for German intellectuals and artists fleeing Germany or seeking fame in Hollywood. California now counts the highest number of German immigrants (98,160 in 2000) and also receives the highest number of German visitors (395,999 in 2000), mostly traveling for business or visiting family and friends (California Travel and Tourism Commission). As a consequence, (and without going into the complexities of visa issues), California also has the highest number of persons applying for adjustment of their legal status from a temporary (visiting) visa to become permanent residents or "adjusts".

Cognizant of immigration trends shifting to centers of commerce and research, a recent article by the German Federal Institute for Population Research (using data from the US Census) discussed a German concern about a possible new "Brain Drain" to the US prompted by a significant percentage of highly skilled German scientists, researchers and managers entering the

US and becoming “adjusts”, many of them after only two years. Such persons now account for about half of the German-born immigrants admitted to the US annually (Diehl 2005, pg. 4).

They speak Standard German, are fluent in English, often multi-lingual and successful. They no longer see themselves as “immigrants”, instead refer to themselves as “expats” or “transplants”, and -- still consider the US a land of opportunity.

Concomitant with this relatively new situation, the traditional US German dialects are in the process of disappearing, with only a small number of older people still speaking them. Texas German, the language of the German settlers in Texas Hill Country in the 19th century, is almost extinct. Pennsylvania German or Pennsylvania Dutch, also *Pennsylvanish* or *Pennsilfaanisch-Deutsch*, a Central German dialect and the closest to Standard German, once used by one of the largest numbers of immigrants is dying in the secular community as well. Other regional versions of German are also disappearing.

On the other hand, the German language variants of the conservative religious separatist groups show more success. *Plautdietsch* or Mennonite Platt, a Low German dialect which is 50 % intelligible with other Low German dialects is still (2000) the first language of 11,974 people in Kansas, California and Oklahoma (Ethnologue). Hutterite German or *Hutterisch*, an Upper German dialect, descended from a regional German spoken in Carinthia, Austria. It is still spoken by the Hutterite colonies (see below) and some Mennonite groups. *Hutterisch* is also spoken by the *Bruderhofer*; newer communities in New York, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania, who follow some Hutterite practices and teach this language to their children. The most popular and frequently used of the German dialects, Pennsylvania German or

Pennsylvania Dutch is still the language of the numerous (60,000) Plain People in Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania (Kloss, 1998, p. 178).

Some of the more progressive sectarian communities are adopting English. As the consequences of public (English) education and the influences of the outside world (technology, transportation) become more accessible to them, the church communities have to make mindful choices. The change to English is thus seen as a chance for church renewal and a commitment to evangelism which requires the removal of a non-scriptural language barrier. Language shift here does not represent a passive occurrence of cultural assimilation, but an active choice. It also signifies a spiritual break from the Old Order congregations (Johnson-Weiner, 1998, p. 386).

Public Presence of German

Until the beginning of the 19th century, the public presence of the Germans in the US was mostly defined by their large numbers. Possibly, therefore, and also because of their heterogeneity, as a group and on a larger scale, their public presence remained politically and socially insignificant. Although German clergy bravely stood up to the issues of the day, slavery, prohibition, compulsory public school education, and neutrality in world wars, (Luebke, pg. 79); and later, Austrian, Swiss, and German personalities prominently populated the Hollywood scene, the public presence of German in the US remained without consequence. Even with the refugees from Hitler, who tried to preserve their heritage as no other group in the US, and with some of them distinguishing themselves as the leading intellectuals against MacCarthism and nuclear armament, or with Herbert Marcuse, the guru of the student movement against Vietnam (Heilbut 1985, ps. 265-272), no German public presence could be felt. Nor does the considerable financial and commercial presence of Germany in the US today change this situation. Some of

the historical reasons for this fact have been mentioned. Fishman, on the other hand, points to the church and the school as the “bed-rock” institutions of ethnicity and language (Fishman, 1985, p. 142). With this in mind, the following two paragraphs will address the presence of German in religion and education. The third paragraph will briefly describe the media.

Religion

Who are the conservative congregations and why do they hold on to their old language? They mostly descend from radical Protestantism that started the Anabaptist movement in Switzerland in 1525. By refusing to obey the church and baptize their babies, they also rejected the power of the authorities to tax and conscript. By declining to swear oaths of allegiance, believing in a “free church”, independent from state control, and in the freedom of individual conscience, they shook the foundations of civil authority at their time. They later split into the main groups of Hutterites, Mennonites, Amish, and Brethren (Kraybill, 2003, p. 6). Motivated by missionary ardor and persecution, they left Switzerland and settled in other areas of Europe (Austria, the Balkan States, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia and Ukraine) to practice their faith (Kraybill, 2003, p. 5). They later migrated to the US and Canada to acquire farmland and create communities based on their religious, social and linguistic traditions. They consider their traditional German dialect along with their life-style, dress and physical appearance to be a boundary between themselves and the world of those who do not share their beliefs. German continues to connect them to the values of the *Alte Ordnung* (Old Order). They teach it for daily communication with their children, as well as English for the necessary interaction with the world. However, “to go English” entirely would mean to want things of the English-speaking world, as stated by a young Old Order mother, “the ones who went to English

all got trucks now” (Johnson-Weiner, 1998, p. 383). It becomes clear that language here is more than a means of communication. For the Old Order communities, it constitutes a symbol of self-definition and self-preservation. They read Biblical High German and use their hymnbook, the German *Ausbund* of the 16th century, for singing in church. They also know Standard German and English, and so far, do not intend to give up their long-lived multi-lingual tradition.

The study of demographic trends and obtaining objective data is made difficult by the unwillingness of many of the Old Order residents to be counted (Johnson-Weiner, 1998, p. 376). Raber’s Almanac (based on voluntary information; German since 1930, English since 1970) gives a yearly count of the Amish districts, their leaders, and congregations. Hostetler confirms that the total number of districts of the Old Order Amish has grown from 22 in 1890 to 526 in 1979 with an estimated population of 85,783 in that year. 75 % of the settlements live in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana (1980, p. 100). The estimated population of Old Order Mennonites who use German (except in Virginia) was 24,000 in 1997 (Kraybill & Bowman, 2001, p. 67). The 116 Hutterite colonies in the US of the *Dariusleut*, *Lehrerleut*, *Schmiedleut*, organized as legal corporations, live segregated mainly in Minnesota, Montana, North and South Dakota and Washington. Typically, 90 people live in a colony (Kraybill & Bowman 2001, pgs. 23, 25). Hostetler and Kraybill both draw attention to the rapid growth of these communities with large families, a low infant mortality rate, and prohibition against birth control. The average number of live births per Amish family is 7. Amish women in Pennsylvania may give birth to 10 or more children (21.8 %), but it is a rate of only half of what is reported for Hutterites (48.2 %), which has recently declined somewhat. (Kraybill & Bowman, 2001, p. 49). Membership loss is said to be

fluctuating and an exact number does not exist. However, it is not large enough to offset the population increase which is estimated to double every twenty-three years (Hostetler, 1980, ps. 104- 107). The

New Order congregations, however, despite their communal cohesiveness, are said to have fared no better than other immigrant groups in maintaining their language (Huffines, 1996 I, p. 53) since they are adopting English, as shown above.

In addition to these Anabaptists, later settlers in the US included Catholics, Lutherans, and other Protestants. These “church” Germans all formed their congregations and maintained their language via the pulpit, as well as in the classroom, first in monolingual and later in bi-lingual schools. But as time went on, particularly after WWI, the language became English. In 1910, only one-sixth of the Missouri Synod Lutheran churches held one English service per month. By 1917 this had increased to three quarters. Still, contact with (and the language of) the homeland became apparent again when churches organized post-WWI collections for the hungry and sent food to Germany: more than one hundred thousand packages were sent from Milwaukee alone (Ripley 1985 II, ps. 224, 225). Furthermore, Luebke describes a defensive immigrant attitude through which it tried to react to the processes of assimilation as a factor that contributed to the conservatism of the Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) (Luebke 1990, p.3). In 1985, Fishman reports 196 Catholic and 65 Protestant LRU’s (Local Religious Units), and laments that these ethnic mother-tongue bastions have been little studied “of late” as centers of non-English use (Fishman et al 1985, 251).

Education

As the world’s largest exporter of goods (*Statisches Bundesamt Deutschland*, p. 917) German

companies and citizens are present in many parts of the world. The 2007 Online Membership Directory of the German American Chamber of Commerce in New York lists 1800 German firms in the US (based on voluntary membership the GACC). There are 2,111 Germans connected to these businesses in New York alone. When it comes to their children, these Germans become very interested in language and culture maintenance, for which reason the all-German private *Deutsche Schule* in White Plains, NY, was created. Additional *Auslandsschulen* (German Schools Abroad), supported financially by Germany, exist in Washington, on the West Coast and in Boston and more are contemplated. Another educational alternative for these “expats” (and others) are the so-called supplementary private German Language Schools.

As German in the US has disappeared from the public ear and declined in the American school system, parents and friends of the German language have created private solutions, namely the German *Sprachschulen*, mostly Saturday Schools. Many date from after WWII but the oldest began in 1874 (Boston) and 1892 (New York). Some of the youngest schools are barely two years old. Most (50 and increasing) have become members of an umbrella organization, the German Language School Conference (GLSC). National enrollment is estimated at 6,000 students, with larger schools (Atlanta; Boston; Stamford, CT; Washington, DC) teaching up to and above 300 students. The majority of the students from pre-school to adult are American-born including many heritage learners. The schools also include a good number of native German speakers. Students vary in language proficiency, and typically have less-developed literacy than oral skills in German. For the most part, the attainment of native fluency is not a primary goal. Instead, many students attend in order to prepare for national tests such as the AATG’s and the German AP’s, while some study German to qualify for demanding

German examinations that enable entrance to German universities, in preparation for studying abroad. Clearly, the variety of age, proficiency, learning levels and learning needs places high demands on curriculum planning, the choice and use of teaching materials, as well as on teacher selection and development. McCarthy speaks of the concerns of the German teachers in a shrinking job market (1985, I, p. 271), yet many of these community schools find it difficult to locate teachers with the necessary linguistic ability, pedagogical background, and dedication for the task of language maintenance and instruction as required by these programs. A measure of financial assistance is often available from the school authorities in Cologne, Germany, who also provide pedagogical consultants. What keeps these institutions strong is, above all, the powerful commitment and support of the parents. In addition, the schools introduce many cultural aspects of German traditions, music, literature, history and geography and foster summer visits to German-speaking countries heightening the interest of the students.

Though private language instruction in the US has a long tradition, the future of these institutions (and German teaching in general) will depend on a variety of factors, including professional, institutional, political, financial, and private support. For the first time, the GLSC has started collecting data on student and parent demographics (Mischner 2005, Opaka 2007) to highlight these schools which seldom are cited in the professional literature. (Fishman et al, 1985, p. 364 , MacCarthy, 1985, I, p. 275, Eichhoff, 1985, I, p. 248).

In addition to private ethnic community initiatives, the public and private school sector also offers German, although with reduced enrollment. For 2000, the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) reported that German high school enrollments declined again, bringing the percentage of all German students down from almost 3% to 2%

(Draper and Hicks, 2000). In postsecondary institutions, German has fared somewhat better. In contrast to the decline in the 90's, in 2002 German was able to increase its enrollment figures from 2.3 % to 3.5 % in 2006 (Furman, Goldberg & Lusin, 2002, p.14). In addition, the US centers of the Goethe Institute promote teaching German and so does *Waldsee*, an international immersion summer camp in Wisconsin. With America's first certified *Biohaus*, it also demonstrates Germany's interest in environmental preservation through a showcase example on how to reduce energy consumption in leaps, not steps. Built with a \$ 650,000 grant from *Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt*, the world's largest environmental foundation, the house does not need conventional heating systems, but uses a ground source heat pump and a ventilation system with a highly effective heat recovery system for heating while supplying 100% fresh air. In experiencing and discussing the house of 2037, students are exposed to the German language, German culture, technical advancement, food and fun.

Media

The German language press in the US was one of the pillars of language maintenance for the new settlers and assisted them in adjusting to life in their new country (Huffines, 1985, p. 241). In 1732, Benjamin Franklin was involved with the publication of the first German-language newspaper in Philadelphia. Before WWI, every American town with a high concentration of Germans had at least one German-language newspaper, often several. At their peak, there existed over 800 German daily and weekly periodicals. The *Staatszeitung*, which appeared first in 1834 with a circulation of 60,000, is still published today as the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*. In 1892 the German American Hermann Ridder bought this paper and co-started the American media empire Knight-Ridder, Inc. The Austro-Hungarian, Joseph Pulitzer, after whom the coveted journalism prize is named, began working at the *Westliche Post* in St. Louis before buying that paper and several others. From 1848 to 1880, after the arrival of the Forty-Eighters

and additional well-educated and intellectual Germans, German newspaper and book printing flourished and reached its peak by 1914 (Huffines, 1985, p. 246). But newspapers also facilitated the assimilation of newcomers, decreasing the need for these papers themselves.

In 1917, neutrality in the US came to an end and war was declared not only on Germany but also on the German language and the remaining German press. Some dailies changed into weeklies, and many disappeared. The New York German-Jewish newspaper *Aufbau*, was bought by a Swiss publisher to merge with a German-Swiss Jewish weekly, which like the *Aufbau* started publication in Berlin, Germany. In a 1985 study for the *Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität*, 16 German-American weeklies were counted. In his statistics of the same year, Fishman reports 2 dailies, 23 weeklies, 15 monthlies, 4 other and 8 with no data (Fishman 1985 I, p.258). In 2001 there were only 8 weeklies left (Baroni, 2001, Heft 1), among them the *Amerika Woche* (Chicago), the *New Yorker Staatszeitung*, the *Washington Journal*, the *Nordamerikanische Wochenpost* (Troy, Michigan), and the *California Staatszeitung* (Los Angeles). A list published by the Press Guide counts 49 publications today including those that often serve a very small, localized and special interest audience, but not publications of the religious communities. Recently, a number of newer German-English magazines with websites became available (*German Life*, *German World*). Other newspapers, e.g. the *Herald-Zeitung* which was created in 1852 as the first German newspaper in Texas under the name of *Neu Braunsfelser Zeitung*, are now published totally in English. The *Atlantic Times* (first edition in October 2004), also in English, is a free, monthly publication with articles on German-American relations, business, cultural topics, and politics. The German-language press in the US as it existed in the past, has disappeared.

Evidence of language shift to English and German maintenance

Luebke comments that there is almost no demographic, sociological or historical research on the Germans and German immigration to the US in recent history and that the "persistence of German ethnicity and culture in contemporary US society is *terra incognita*." (p.175). As language and culture are interdependent, and no up to date studies exist exploring these elements, either alone or in their present relationship, it is difficult to offer well-substantiated facts on present or future evidence of German language maintenance or language shift to English.

Language Shift

As has been shown in this chapter, language shift, or the lack thereof, depends on a multitude of historic, sociological, political, religious, regional, and private elements. In the case of the long and divergent history of the German settlement in the US, these elements are particularly complex. Although German bi-lingualism was thriving until WWI, German never had a real chance to gain importance in the US (Eichhoff, 1985 I, p. 236). The main reasons for its final decline and the shift to English have been discussed previously in this chapter, namely, the xenophobic attack on German; restrictive language policies; the subsequent almost total loss of the use of German in the home, school, churches, the press, and in public in mainstream US; and finally, the end of large-scale immigration. Therefore, viewing the current situation of the German language, it needs to be conceded that it has become a second language in the US.

German is also well known for its predilection to accept foreignisms into its language. Not only German in the US but also German in Germany is packed with Americanisms, and is creating an ambivalent reaction from experts and German citizens alike. The so-called Denglish (*Deutsch – Englisch*) is heard on both sides of the Atlantic. On the other hand, German has also

enriched this country with a wealth of expressions from food to philosophy, as the Spelling Bee of 2006 charmingly illustrated with “*Ursprache*”, “*Weltschmerz*” and more.

Language Maintenance

Although rare, long-time language retention is possible, as proven by the conservative German religious groups in the US. On the other hand, today’s lifestyle of most mainstream Germans in the US has different requirements. Determined strongly by commercial endeavors, it no longer calls for language as a force of separation. To the contrary, it needs language for connection and communication, not only locally but also across political, institutional and ethnic borders. In the case of the German speakers in the US, two trends are distinguishable. The number of Germans who have settled in the US, claim German ancestry, and still speak the language, will decline more, despite a certain renewed interest in heritage language preservation. The new German-speakers (including Austrians and Swiss), the “expats”, “transfers” or “adjusts”, will continue to arrive, typically as well-trained and, at least, bi-lingual (using Standard German) people. The distance for them to the home country, physically as well as emotionally and financially, has become short and they maintain regular contact by travel, telephone and internet. This will not only assist their own language retention, it may also aid the inter-generational continuity of the language. It could be argued that, for modern Germans, the maintenance of their language has become easier.

Conclusion

What might contribute to the continued acquisition (and teaching) of German in the US, is its international status. Globally, there are about 100 million native speakers, and another 20 million non-native speakers who use German on a regular basis. Today, Standard German is the

most frequently spoken mother tongue in the European Union and the second most frequently spoken mother tongue in Europe, after Russian. It was voted the most useful language after English in 14 out of 29 European Union nations (Special Eurobarometer 2006, p.32.). German is the official national language in Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein and the largest official language in Switzerland. It is used as an official language in Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Italy, and Poland and is a minority language in many other countries around the world. The Frankfurter *Buchmesse* (Frankfurt Book Fair) is the world's biggest international trade fair for publishing. With more than 80,000 titles published each year, Germany's international ranking is third after the US and China, which makes German one of the world's most widely read languages.

With all this said, Fishman was quite right when, in 1985, he predicted a continued role of German “when the quatercentennial of German immigration is being celebrated “ (to take place in 2008). Whether, for how long, or to what degree his additional contention is correct that there is “far more life on the German scene” in the United States than meets the eye (1985, ps. 251, 267), remains to be seen.

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