

1. INTRODUCTION

LINGUISTS READILY ACKNOWLEDGE today that all languages undergo change and that many language varieties in contact with other varieties eventually undergo obsolescence and die out (see, e.g., Wolfram 2002, 764). Researchers of linguistic contact phenomena have worked to determine exactly what processes lead to language variety change and obsolescence, but the stages through which obsolescing varieties actually pass on their way to extinction are still not completely delineated or understood. Nevertheless, with the exception of cases in which a language dies “intact” because all its speakers are killed off by disease or warfare, language variety obsolescence typically involves two processes, namely (1) simplification at various linguistic levels and (2) restriction in the domains of life in which that language variety is used by a community of speakers as they shift their allegiance from one language to the other. In most communities where language contact takes place, at least one generation becomes bilingual in both the minority language and the dominant language before the final community shift to the dominant language occurs; eventually, however, the original language of the community “dies” (at least for that community). Thus, speech community-wide bilingualism is really a sort of penultimate stage before a language embarks on its final decline toward extinction (Wolfram 2002, 764–65). Most of the studies undertaken to date on this kind of obsolescence have involved language shifts in immigrant speech communities from a shared L1 to the L2 of the larger community into which immigrants have settled (e.g., Dutch migrants in New Zealand [Hulsen, de Bot, and Weltens 2002] or Spanish immigrants in America [Kirchner 1995]). In such language shifts, the scenario often proceeds like this:

As the first generation speakers use their L1 less, the model they provide for the second generation may be a different version in some sense from what they acquired. Not surprisingly, some of its structures may show convergence to the dominant language in the community. For example, while they still speak Spanish fluently, first generation Puerto Ricans in New York may begin to use calques from English (English phrases they translate word for word into Spanish words). Or, they may drop certain grammatical constructions (e.g., the subjunctive). When their turn comes, the second generation may not even acquire the version of the L1 of their elders’ generation because of domain loss and attitudinal factors. The result is attrition in the second generation and a new version that is transmitted to the next generation. [Meyers-Scotton 2002, 180]

However, Meyers-Scotton (2002) cautions,

[T]he reality or details of a second- or third-generation shift away from the L1 is not necessarily due ONLY to having a reduced model to follow—even though this is the scenario many researchers sketch. [2002, 180; emphasis mine]

In other words, the processes involved in the demise of a language variety can be significantly more complex than mere attrition in use of language features by individuals in the speech community, and unexpected linguistic outcomes can manifest themselves in the interim period between a community's development of bilingualism and the final demise of the minority language variety. Such is the case for Pennsylvania Dutchified English (PDE), a little-studied dialect spoken today in south central Pennsylvania. (South central Pennsylvania in general encompasses the counties of Adams, Berks, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Northumberland, Perry, Schuylkill, Snyder, and York.) The unique dialect spoken in this region is now in the last decades of its life cycle as the speech community shifts to a regional standard of English, South Central Pennsylvania English (SCPE). As PDE obsolesces, two particular unexpected outcomes have surfaced: First, younger generations of speakers are not simply using dialectal features less and less frequently; they are using those features in different ways, with different linguistic constraints and different manifestations of what it means to "speak PDE." (This phenomenon will be referred to in this work as dialect "unraveling" based on its metaphorical similarities to the unraveling of a rope: just as a rope is no longer a rope after a certain point as it is disentangled strand by strand, so PDE has become unstable in feature after feature to the point where it is impossible to be transmitted as a viable dialect to the next generation.) This monograph explores the unraveling of the PDE dialect through an investigation of a number of PDE phonological variants and their use by a small set of PDE speakers from two and sometimes three generations. Tracking individuals' use of these dialectal features across the generations and within each generation will serve to highlight the extreme degree of variability for PDE among its last generation of speakers. All this contributes to the basic question of what it means in this speech community to "speak Pennsylvania Dutchified English" in the face of dialect shift.

The second unexpected outcome is the emergence of a population of individuals who have not merely shifted from the L1 to the L2 (here, from PDE to SCPE), but who have instead become self-proclaimed bidialectals. By presenting quantitative data on one speaker's use of certain phonological features of PDE, this monograph is able to show the extent of that speaker's bidialectalism—an important contribution given the paucity

of literature on bidialectals, but also a vital part of addressing the issue of what it means to “speak PDE” in the current state of the dialect’s unraveling. By presenting qualitative data on the attitudes and motivations of that speaker and a supplementary small set of self-proclaimed bidialectals who speak both PDE and SCPE, this work also suggests how bidialectalism can arise in the last phase of a language variety’s life cycle.

STUDY INFORMANTS, PROCEDURES, METHODOLOGY

The descriptions and analyses in this work are based on observations of members of the south central Pennsylvania speech community. Data were gathered from informal interviews of PDE speakers in 1993–95 and 2005–9 and of SCPE speakers in 2005–9, all in northern Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. PDE speakers recorded in 1993–95 represented three age groups: the then-oldest generation (over 65, born before 1920), the middle-aged generation (roughly 45–65, born in the 1930s–1940s), and the youngest generation (below 40, those born after 1950). Speakers recorded in 2005–9 included three monodialectal PDE speakers in their 60s (middle-aged, born in the 1940s) and three each of monodialectal PDE and SCPE speakers in the 30–40-year-old age range (born in the 1960s–1970s), this last age range corresponding to the ages of the youngest speakers of PDE found in the speech community. The informants included both males and females; all grew up in rural, working-class, PDE-speaking households in Lebanon County, and all have some tie (either through residence, church networks, or having grown up there) to the mountain hamlets of the northern part of the county. These informants were all recruited from personal acquaintances and relatives of area residents known to the researcher. All but one of the oldest speakers recorded in 1993–95 are/were bilingual in both PDE and Pennsylvania German; all informants recorded from 2005–9 are monolingual in English. Recording was done via cassette tape with a handheld recorder in 1993–95 and via a CD recorder with a condenser microphone in 2005–9. Data collection during these periods was subject to IRB approval, and authorized consent forms were obtained from the informants before they were recorded. Recording sessions consisted of open-ended casual conversation guided by general questions about the history of northern Lebanon County. Unless otherwise indicated (as in the study of acoustic measurements in chapter 4), all data were coded by impressionistic analysis of whether a PDE feature was being used by a speaker or not.

Table 1.1 lists the informants, with their ages at the time of the data collection and the age group they were assigned for the pertinent parts of this

study. All the informants recorded in 1993–95 are speakers of PDE; nearly half also speak Pennsylvania German. Note from the initials that some informants (LM, DK, and LK) likewise participated in the 2005–9 data collection, along with three new PDE speakers. Also recorded in 2005–9 were three SCPE speakers who had grown up in PDE-speaking households.

Three self-proclaimed bidialectal speakers also participated to varying degrees in this study. Only one of them (Rachel) was able to finish out the study, and consequently only her recorded data were used for analysis, but the other two shared their views on their use of PDE versus SCPE before they had to withdraw for personal and family reasons, and their input

TABLE 1.1
Study Participants

<i>Informant</i>	<i>Bilingual/ Monolingual</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Sex</i>
PDE Speakers, 1993–95				
BZ	bilingual	over 75	oldest	F
JK	bilingual	over 70	oldest	F
CT	bilingual	over 70	oldest	M
LT	bilingual	upper 60s	oldest	F
EY	monolingual	upper 60s	oldest	F
EK	bilingual	upper 50s	middle-aged	F
LM	monolingual	56	middle-aged	M
WM	monolingual	59	middle-aged	M
BK	monolingual	upper 40s	middle-aged	M
DK	monolingual	27	youngest	M
LK	monolingual	27	youngest	F
PDE Speakers, 2005–9				
LM	monolingual	upper 60s	middle-aged	M
DG	monolingual	upper 60s	middle-aged	M
LG	monolingual	mid-60s	middle-aged	F
DwK	monolingual	30s	youngest	M
DK	monolingual	30s	youngest	M
LK	monolingual	30s	youngest	F
SCPE Speakers, 2005–9				
JL	monolingual	40s	youngest	M
EL	monolingual	30s	youngest	F
RK	monolingual	30s	youngest	F
PDE-SCPE Bidialectals				
Rachel	monolingual	30s	youngest	F
WC	monolingual	30s	youngest	F
SH	bilingual	40s	youngest	F

informs some of the discussion on attitudes and motivations of bidialectal speakers in chapter 7.

This volume presents details about PDE and its unexpected developments in the following manner: chapter 2 sets the stage by discussing the development of Pennsylvania Dutchified English from its Pennsylvania German roots; it then presents a view of how the study of the development and demise of Pennsylvania Dutchified English fits into the larger body of work on dialect contact. Chapter 3 provides more background on the linguistic climate in south central Pennsylvania by presenting a short description of the South Central Pennsylvania English dialect and discussing its connection to (and distinctions from) the bordering regional dialects of Philadelphia English (spoken in southeastern Pennsylvania) and Pittsburgh/Southwestern Pennsylvania English. Chapter 3 also describes Pennsylvania Dutchified English by providing detailed lists of the phonetic, phonological, morphosyntactic, semantic, and supersegmental features that make up this obsolescing dialect and by discussing areas where PDE and SCPE overlap.

Chapters 4 and 5 specifically address the unraveling of the PDE dialect with regard to certain highlighted phonological features, both consonantal and vocalic. This unraveling is illustrated by frequency data for PDE feature use across generations of speakers and within generations of speakers. These chapters also reveal changes of phonological constraints over the generations in the use of a subset of those features for which such data are available.

Chapter 6 turns to a discussion of bidialectalism in the literature and its relevance in a climate of dialect obsolescence. Chapter 7 presents data from the self-proclaimed bidialectal speakers of PDE and SCPE mentioned above; by delineating how one of those bidialectals compares to her monodialectal peers, the chapter shows how the linguistic situation in south central Pennsylvania could lead to the development of bidialectalism in the last generation of PDE speakers. Chapter 8 finally ties all this together by discussing the processes that have led to the shift from PDE to SCPE in south central Pennsylvania.

Language variety shift and obsolescence is occurring today in many places besides south central Pennsylvania, and it is overly simplistic to assume that it is powered merely by speakers across the generations using dialect features less and less frequently. Through the discussion of the changes in linguistic norms involved in dialect unraveling and the scrutiny of linguistic behavior of a bidialectal, this look at Pennsylvania Dutchified English contributes much-needed insight into the processes that make that shift happen.