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# Canadian heritage German across three generations: A diary-based study of language shift in action

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**Abstract:** It is well known that migration has an effect on language use and language choice. If the language of origin is maintained after migration, it tends to change in the new contact setting. Often, migrants shift to the new majority language within few generations. The current paper examines a diary corpus containing data from three generations of one German-Canadian family, ranging from 1867 to 1909, and covering the second to fourth generation after immigration. The paper analyzes changes that can be observed between the generations, with respect to the language system as well as to the individuals' decision on language choice. The data not only offer insight into the dynamics of acquiring a written register of a heritage language, and the eventual shift to the majority language. They also allow us to identify different linguistic profiles of heritage speakers within one community. It is discussed how these profiles can be linked to the individuals' family backgrounds and how the combination of these backgrounds may have contributed to giving up the heritage language in favor of the majority language.

**Keywords:** Heritage language, written language, language shift, ego-documents, German-Canadian

## 1 Introduction

In migration and heritage-language settings, there is a tendency for migrants to shift their language towards the majority language. Language shift, in this paper, is understood to refer to “the gradual displacement of one language by another in the lives of the community members” (Dorian 1982: 44). That is, language shift refers to changes in patterns of language use at the community or societal level. It is often seen as complementary or in opposition to language maintenance (cf. Clyne 2003, Clyne 2008; Maitz 2011; Thomason and Kaufman 1988). Different patterns have been proposed, most notably the three-generation

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pattern (first proposed by Fishman 1964); slower and more complex processes of shift have also been described (cf. Ortman and Stevens 2008; Villa and Rivera-Mills 2009; Wilkerson and Salmons 2008). It is relatively straightforward to obtain data from those speech communities currently undergoing a language shift.<sup>1</sup> Adequate data that document historical cases of language shift, however, can be more difficult to obtain. This “bad data problem” (Labov 1994: 11) can make it difficult to compare historical and current cases of language shift, thus limiting researchers’ ability to identify and describe the specific factors that trigger or promote language shift across settings.

The problem can be countered, however, if historical data cover a relevant period during which the shift occurred and if additional linguistic, meta-linguistic, and extra-linguistic sources are drawn on for background information.<sup>2</sup> A valuable source for diachronic studies of language shift are private papers, for example, diaries; they can reflect intimate and less formally controlled language use that may be more revealing of patterns of mixing and change than official and printed texts. They also provide background information about the writer’s social relationships, social activities, and socioeconomic class.

The current investigation aims to improve our understanding of long-term processes of minority language maintenance, heritage-language acquisition (cf. Polinsky and Kagan 2007; Polinsky 2018 for an in-depth treatment of heritage languages from a range of different perspectives) and the slow process of language shift in a specific community where local bilingualism was an everyday practice for over 100 years. The community as a whole shifted from German to English, with the process beginning during the second half of the nineteenth century and being largely completed by WW II (English and McLaughlin 1983; Lorezkowski 2008; Schulze and Heffner 2004). Against this backdrop, written family documents of a prominent Berlin/Kitchener, ON, family are explored regarding the choice of language (German or English) and patterns of language use, of four family members across three generations.

Thus, within this setting of documented language shift, the focus is on individual writers, taking a micro-perspective for investigating how small-scale

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<sup>1</sup> Language shift is understood here as the process in which a speech community or a population changes from using one language (primarily) to another.

It must not be confused with code shifting or language shifting, for example, in a dialect standard continuum where certain (structural and lexical) elements are taken from one variety and others from the other one.

<sup>2</sup> This approach is also referred to as “informational maximalism”, that is, “the utilization of all reasonable means to extend our knowledge of what might have been going on in the past” (Janda and Joseph 2003: 37).

processes, such as changing language choices for different domains or differences in language competence, reflect changing patterns of language behavior within the community that cumulate to result in language shift.

More precisely, this study is based on diaries from three generations of an immigrant family in southern Ontario, Canada. These documents give evidence of language shift in action, from German to English, at the turn of twentieth century. The diary writers are members of a German family in the second to fourth generation after immigration to North America. While the complete set of the diaries covers the time between 1867 and 1934, the current paper focuses on a smaller portion, ranging from 1867 to 1909. This portion covers the time span during which the family language shifted from (heritage) German to English; this shift in the family corresponds with a more general shift-in-process in their community from German-English bilingual language use to an almost exclusive use of English in all public domains.

One main research interest of this paper is to trace the changes that can be observed from generation to generation. With each previous generation providing part of the German input for the next generation, it seems reasonable to expect reflections of this transmission in form of recurring patterns across generations. Therefore, one hypothesis to be tested is that characteristic features of one writer show up in the German of the next generation. However, as the input was enriched by, for example, education in the German school (besides schooling in English) and German Bible School, other kinds of influence must be taken into account as well.

This paper addresses questions regarding language contact phenomena with respect to: lexical, structural and pragmatic aspects; matters of language change with respect to the language system, and change of language use; and individual language choice over time. These questions are embedded in a larger research context that is concerned with the matter of long-term language maintenance in a migration setting, the different ways in which the heritage language is transmitted, the process of acquiring a written standard of the heritage language in a minority setting, and the relationship between language and (heritage) identity in an increasingly monolingual environment.

In the following section, I formulate the central research questions. Next, I provide a historical overview of the language setting in question and of the writers, followed by a description of the methodology I applied for the investigation of the data. After presenting and discussing the results, I conclude with some remarks on further investigations that can be based on the insights gained from the current study.

## 2 Research questions and hypotheses

This paper is concerned with heritage speakers' profiles, choice of language and changes in language use within an overall setting of language shift that is well documented for this community as a whole. Language shift is a process that results from small changes and steps taken by individual speakers and writers and is due to a complex combination of a broad range of linguistic and non-linguistic factors.

One central research interest of this paper is to identify the small steps of language shift not only between but also within the overlapping generations of the family under consideration, based on an unusually fine-grained data set of diaries of several family members that covers several decades. I hypothesized that grammatical and lexical features were transmitted from one generation to the next. A second research interest, following from the first, is the question of whether we can observe the emergence of a specific community variety of German as a diaspora language. In a close-knit community as the one under investigation, and even more, within one family, such development can be expected.<sup>3</sup> Finally, I explore the question of intragenerational language shift by examining the written bilingual language use of one family member over a period of over 30 years. Since the community as a whole shifted from German to English during this time, I hypothesized that the shift is also reflected in this writer's changing language preferences. The real-time perspective complements the intergenerational comparisons between different writers (cf. Ortman and Stevens 2008; Stolberg 2018).

Diary texts are produced in informal settings by writers of different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. They therefore constitute a valuable resource contributing to a better and more diversified understanding of language history and language change. The diaries I analyzed are particularly interesting since the writers are educated in and aim to use an exogenous standard language (German). This variety is used then in informal writing in a heritage and minority setting, creating a tension between the formal norm and its use to fulfill informal communication needs (cf. Elspaß 2005, Elspaß 2012; Auer et al. 2015).

It is especially informative to see the written acquisition of the heritage language, with different sub-registers evolving over the years of the writer's life (i.e. from adolescence into early adulthood). These data can shed light on the

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<sup>3</sup> Note that this development would be a case of language change which can occur in language shift and language maintenance settings alike.

differentiation of registers in a minority and heritage setting. They are thus also relevant for the question of “register compression”. This term, proposed by Evans et al. (2013) and Litty et al. (2015), attempts to describe minority and heritage writers’ and speakers’ blending of registers that are typically functionally distinct in non-heritage settings, i.e. in those settings where the language in question is spoken as the majority or dominant language.

For a proper understanding of the data, some knowledge about its historical embedding is essential. The following section offers information on the general historical background as well as providing information about the writers.

## 3 Historical background

### 3.1 General

Starting in the late eighteenth century, (Pennsylvania) German-speaking Mennonites (mostly farmers) and their families migrated from Pennsylvania to Ontario and established settlements in the area of modern-day Kitchener in southern Ontario (Bloomfield et al. 1993; Hayes 1999). The county was named Waterloo County, and in 1833, the town of Berlin, located in Waterloo County, was officially founded. The population consisted, to a large percentage, of Mennonites as well as of immigrants from the German-speaking parts of Europe (immigrated directly or via the U.S.A.). The use of German, side by side with English, was wide spread and well established. Around 1870, more than 50% of the residents were of ethnic German origin (Bloomfield et al. 1993).

With World War I, a strong support of the British cause and resulting anti-German sentiments came to the fore. As a political consequence, Berlin was renamed Kitchener in a referendum in 1916. While the shift from German to English, at least in public, was by then already well underway, it was reinforced by the political climate. The public use of German came to be strongly disfavored and, as a result, reduced considerably (Coschi 2014, Coschi 2018; English and McLaughlin 1983; Schulze and Heffner 2004).

Nevertheless, German language and ethnic origin are still a salient part of the Kitchener/Waterloo area today (cf. Dailey-O’Cain and Liebscher 2011; Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain 2013; Lindinger 2016; Coschi 2018), and there is a continuing (albeit low-level) immigration of German speakers from Europe. In 2016, 22% of the population of the c. 230,000 residents of Kitchener still claimed an ethnic German origin (StatsCan 2016). In addition, German-speaking conservative Mennonites also shape the image of the area as being historically German dominant, even though

the different groups of German speakers (Mennonite/non-Mennonite) usually have little to do with each other and do not interact with each other in German.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.2 Writers

During the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, several German-origin families played an important role in the economic and political life of Waterloo County and, in particular, in the town of Berlin/Kitchener. Archival materials show that German was preserved over several generations in (some of) these families.<sup>5</sup> German was used as a family and a church language, serving as a means of communication within broader the community. It was also important in business and in education, and there were several schools where German was used as the language of instruction, at least until the end of the nineteenth century (Grenke 2018; Lorenzkowski 2008; McKegney 1970). Coschi (2014: 315) emphasizes that even “despite dwindling enrolment in German classes, the 1901 census reported that nearly 90 per cent of Berlin’s residents of German origin claimed German as their mother tongue, suggesting that many learned German in the home as opposed to the formal setting of the classroom.” The language shift to English took place during the early twentieth century, sped up by the political climate around WW I (cf. Coschi 2014; Lorenzkowski 2008, Lorenzkowski 2010).

The data examined for the current paper fall exactly into this period of language shift, making them particularly valuable for a study of the contributing micro-processes. Table 1 shows the relationships and biographical dates for the individuals relevant here, as well as information on the data available from each person. “G” refers to “generation”, the numbers indicate diachronic order.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This circumstance is due to historical, religious, and cultural reasons. German-speaking Mennonites are often among the most conservative Mennonite groups who refrain from interactions with the mainstream society as much as possible.

<sup>5</sup> These materials are held by the Dana Porter Library of the University of Waterloo that hosts several collections of private and business papers from a number of families from the Kitchener/Waterloo area (<https://uwaterloo.ca/library/special-collections-archives/collections/collections-thematic-guides/local-history-and-genealogy/local-archival-collections-families-and-individuals>). The material discussed in the current paper stems from the Breithaupt-Hewetson-Clark collection (<https://uwaterloo.ca/library/special-collections-archives/collections/breithaupt-hewetson-clark-collection>). I am very grateful to the staff of Special Collections & Archives at the Dana Porter Library for guiding me through the materials and making available the documents I was interested in.

<sup>6</sup> G1: immigrant, born in Europe; G2ff.: born in North America. Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain (2013) use, in addition, G1.5 to refer to persons who immigrated before the age of 18; this would pertain to Philip Louis Breithaupt, the husband of Catherine Hailer. Since he is not among the writers analyzed here, this category is not applied in the current paper.

**Table 1:** Breithaupt family members.

Generation	Person	Family relations	Data type(s)	Languages used
G1	Liborius Breithaupt (1797–1852/53) In 1843, migration from Allendorf, Hesse (Germany), to Buffalo, NY (USA), with wife and son Philip Ludwig/Louis Breithaupt (= husband of G2); business contacts to Berlin, ON (Canada)	Married to Catherine Barbara Goetze (1801–1887)	Diary (1843–1852), includes also business matters and business letter drafts [not analyzed for the current paper]	German, some English (for business matters)
G2	Catherine Hailer (1834–1910)	Married to Philip Louis Breithaupt (1827–1880, born in Germany, migration to USA at age 16)	Diary (1888), private letters	Diary in German, letters in German and English
G3	Louis Jacob Breithaupt (1855–1939) Emma Alvarene Devitt (1860–1925)	Son of Catherine Hailer and Philip Louis Breithaupt Married to Louis Jacob Breithaupt	Diaries (1867–1933), private letters, business letters Diary (1880–1881), private letters, autograph book (various writers)	German, English German, English
G4	Rosa Melvina Breithaupt Hewetson Clark (1888–1981)	Daughter of L. J. Breithaupt and E. A. Devitt	Diaries (1900–1934)	Mainly English, very little German

Further biographical details for G2 to G4 are given in Section 4 below. For the current investigation, only selected parts of the corpus were analyzed. It must be mentioned that, while the diaries span several decades, there are periods in which the writers made not or very few diary entries; that is, the amount of data can vary considerably for different years.

In general, these individuals can be considered educated and experienced writers. The diaries therefore do not offer data on lower class language use. For G3 and G4, college education is attested, and the family is reported to have been influential and economically successful. With respect to education, the situation

seems to have been different for Catherine Hailer (G2), however, who came from a well-off family, but appears to have received less formal education than her children and grandchildren. Her obituary mentions that she was “educated in the common schools of those pioneer days” (The Daily Telegraph, June 6, 1910: 1), which can be taken to imply that her education was not as comprehensive as one may have expected from a woman of her standing.

## 4 Methodology and data

Using written data is often the only way of accessing historical language use. In writing, language becomes fixed so that different periods are observable and can be compared over a longer stretch of time.

In order to investigate language change in the past, the method of apparent time analysis has been developed (Weinreich et al. 1968; Labov 1972). It can be applied to different types of text. Printed texts and formal written texts were (and are) usually edited before publication. They can thus be taken to represent language use that is true to an agreed norm and/or sanctioned by gatekeepers of such norms. Therefore, while they reflect norms of the day, they document only the longer-term language change occurring in a speech community; they may also be inaccurate in their depiction of how the language was used at the time of their publication. Private and personal written documents, in contrast, have been found to adhere less strictly to the official norm, or to follow a different norm with optional deviations from the codified (or otherwise agreed-upon) standard. This is true in particular for ego-documents, that is, diaries and private letters (cf. Rutten and van der Wal 2014; Elspaß 2005, Elspaß 2015; van der Wal [see Wal] 2018).

The data in the current study – diaries – come from different writers over several decades, and these writers, being family members, interacted closely with one another; they thus constituted (a part of) a micro-speech community. Furthermore, the data set offers the rare opportunity to carry out real time as well as apparent time investigations (on a small scale). Both kinds of investigation are complementary in nature (Sankoff 2006 [1993], esp. p. 114) and contribute to a more complete picture of intra- and intergenerational language change.

### 4.1 Apparent-time and real-time comparisons

For investigating language change and heritage language development and transmission, the diary entries were compared in three ways: (a) entries written



by different persons during the same year (apparent-time approach, cf. Labov 1972, Labov 1994), investigating possible effects of the community's (changing) language practices on individual language use; (b) entries written by different persons when they were at the same age (for example, during adolescence), to control for age-grading effects (cf. Eckert 1997; Sankoff 2006 [1993]),<sup>7</sup> and to investigate heritage language acquisition patterns with respect to written language; and (c) entries written by the same person at different points in time (real-time approach). Language shift and language change in these data were thus studied from three different angles, contributing to a richer understanding of the processes that are under way.

More precisely, data from the following points in time were compared:

- (a) *Same year:*  
 fiancé, LB / fiancée, ED: 1880  
 mother, CH / son, LB: 1888  
 father, LB / daughter, RB: 1900
- (b) *Same age:*  
 father, LB / daughter, RB: age 12 (1867/1900)  
 fiancé, LB / fiancée, ED / daughter, RB: age 20 (1875/1880–81/1909)
- (c) *Same person across time:*  
 LB: age 12 (1867); age 20 (1875); age 25 (1880); age 33 (1888); age 45 (1900).

The relevant sections of the diaries were transcribed and analyzed. Variation between and within writers was considered relevant for the purpose of the research question, because it offers insight into the dynamics of written (heritage) language acquisition, into the availability of input, and into the interaction of the languages available to these writers.

## 4.2 Background information on diaries and writers

Catharine Hailer Breithaupt (CH).

*Biographical notes:* CH was born in Berlin, ON, in 1834. Her parents were born in German-speaking Europe (father: Baden, mother: Alsace or Bavaria) and migrated to North America as young adults where they met and married. CH is the second child of her parents and a native speaker of German. In her obituary,

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<sup>7</sup> Age-grading in a sociolinguistic sense refers to “change in the speech of the individual as he or she moves through life” (Eckert 1997: 1).

mention is made of her apparently limited school education. Her diary shows some characteristic features that can be linked to her schooling experience.

*Diary:* CH wrote this diary during a journey through Switzerland and Germany with Canadian family members, from June to August 1888. She was 54 years old at the time. The diary is written in German, using German cursive script.<sup>8</sup>

Louis Jacob Breithaupt (LB)

*Biographical notes:* LB was born in Buffalo, NY, in 1855, and moved to Berlin, ON, with his family in 1857 or 1861. He was the eldest son of CH and Philip Louis Breithaupt. German was spoken in the home, meaning CH's German was part of LB's input during language acquisition. LB is a third generation heritage speaker of German. His schooling was in English and German, higher education in English only (college in Toronto). He had formal training in German, aside from the use of German at home, and his later diary entries and letters show him to be an accomplished writer in German as well as in English, including the fluent use of both scripts.

*Diaries:* LB started keeping a diary at the age of 12 (in 1867) and continued this practice (with shorter and longer breaks) until 1933. He uses German cursive script for the German parts and English cursive script for the English parts of his entries. The earliest diaries are written in German, then German and English alternate, and he eventually shifts to English during early adulthood.

Emma Devitt Breithaupt (ED)

*Biographical notes:* ED was born in Waterloo, ON, in 1860. She was the second child of her parents, who had also been born in Waterloo, ON. Her mother's family was from New Jersey, USA. Her paternal grandfather was born in New Jersey, USA (his parents being from Ireland and New Jersey) but at the age of 11 he was adopted into a Waterloo, ON, Mennonite family originating from Lancaster Co. (PA, USA). ED's paternal grandmother came from a Mennonite family originating in Montgomery Co. (PA, USA). Classifying ED as belonging to G3 (cf. Table 1) may be debatable because it fits at best the paternal side of her family of origin, and only with respect to Pennsylvania German. She is listed here as G3 because she is married to LB and, with respect to age, belongs to his generation.

From ED's diary it can be concluded that she knew German well and must have had formal training, since her diary is written in a variety of standard German and she uses the German cursive script. Given her family background,

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<sup>8</sup> The German cursive script used in the diaries, also referred to as *Kurrentschrift*, differs considerably from the English cursive script of the time.

her competence in (standard) German is surprising, but might be an indicator of the language's local currency at the time of her upbringing.

*Diary:* ED kept a diary in German for about one year (March 1880 to March 1881), at the age of 19 to 20. She received the diary from her fiancé LB, with his dedication on the first page encouraging her to use it.<sup>9</sup>

Rosa Breithaupt Hewetson Clark (RB)

*Biographical notes:* RB was the fourth child of LB and ED and was born in Berlin, ON, in 1888. She seems to have acquired German at least at home and possibly also at school, and she was able to write German as a child, as her father (LB) notes in a letter (cf. Stolberg 2018: 101). RB had formal training in German while attending college (D-RB 1909/01/22).<sup>10</sup>

*Diaries:* RB kept diaries for a number of years (1900 to 1934), although not continuously, beginning at the age of 11. The diaries are kept in English throughout.

## 5 Data analysis

The data examined here are special in that they allow for a real-time as well as an apparent-time approach. Since the number of writers is so low, a qualitative approach is preferred to a quantitative one.

The data were first transcribed and the choice of language (German or English) and script (German or English cursive script) was determined. Only the German sections were considered for a more detailed linguistic analysis, keeping in line with this paper's focus on heritage language use and transmission. The expectations were threefold: (1) Due to contact with English, interference phenomena from English to German were expected. (2) From a heritage language perspective, case marking, word order patterns, and pragmatic phenomena have been proven to be vulnerable to different degrees (e.g. Benmamoun et al. 2013; Evans et al. 2013; Hopp and Putnam 2015; Litty et al. 2015) and were therefore examined. (3) Finally, spelling was focused upon, since adherence to a norm in this area is most closely linked to formal transmission and can provide information on the conscious preservation of older norms. In

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<sup>9</sup> *Emma! / Möge das Führen eines / Tage-buches dir Nutzen / u. Vergnügen bringen! / Louis / March 6, 1880th Saturday* 'Emma! May keeping a diary be useful to you and give you pleasure!' (D-ED 1880/03/06).

<sup>10</sup> The notation for reference to the data is as follows: D (= diary) + writer's initials + date of entry.

general, it was hypothesized that the data would reflect a tension between the preservation of existing norms and the emergence of new norms. The following phenomena were thus considered to be relevant and were examined:

- lexical phenomena
  - cross-influence between German and English
- word order
  - position of finite verb
  - extraposition<sup>11</sup> of the adverb *heute*

*heute* ‘today’ is a high-frequency item in several of the diaries examined. It can appear in sentence-initial position, within the verbal bracket, or in extraposed position. In the current investigation, it serves as a marker for a possible increase in tendency for extraposition due to the influence of contact with English.
- morphological and morphosyntactic characteristics
  - nominal morphology: case and gender marking
  - verbal morphology
  - other phenomena (non-finite subordinate clauses, use of prepositions and case in expressions of place and direction)
- pragmatic phenomena
  - reflections of spoken language, register compression, forms of address
- spelling

Choice of script strongly coincides with choice of language in that the German sections are usually written in German cursive script while English is written in English cursive script. Only with regard to proper names and forms of address (formal and familial) does this strong tendency appear to be less rigorous: English names within a German section are written in German script occasionally, and vice versa.

Based on a detailed analysis of each writer’s data, the writers’ different profiles were described and compared to each other. In the following sections, I present the findings on the individual writers, followed by the apparent-time and real-time comparisons.

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**11** In German, adverbs tend to remain in the middle field, that is, within the verbal bracket consisting of the finite verb form and any non-finite or other verbal elements (cf. Wöllstein 2010 for details). The extraposition of adverbs and prepositional phrases beyond the right-hand verbal bracket can create a surface word order that is similar to English while the underlying clause structure may still differ. Extraposition of prepositional phrases in German has been shown to increase in close contact with English (cf. Stolberg 2015).

## 6 Findings

### 6.1 CH

The analyzed sections of CH's diary comprise 2,750 words. It is written in German, using the German cursive script.

#### 6.1.1 Lexical phenomena

CH uses only few English lexemes, and they are usually graphically integrated, e.g. *Blenkeds* 'blankets' (D-CH 1888/07/10). It is not possible to determine whether these items are nonce or established borrowings. Since CH's spelling is idiosyncratic (cf. below), graphic integration cannot be taken to indicate the established status of an English item in her German.

Evidence for semantic change is provided by CH's use of the verbs *fühlen* 'feel' and *wundern* 'wonder' without a reflexive pronoun.<sup>12</sup> This use is also attested in Pennsylvania German and is not uncommon in other Germanic heritage languages in North America (cf. Stolberg 2015; Eide and Hjelde 2015 for a similar tendency in American Norwegian) but not attested in European varieties of German.

The use of *vor* 'before' meaning *für* 'for' is an interesting case of convergence in spelling of two German items under the (co-)influence of English.<sup>13</sup> Out of 14 occurrences of *vor*, nine correspond to *für* in standard German; the remaining 5 are used according to German norms, with *vor* meaning 'before'. It seems that German *vor* is employed as a "spelling translation equivalent" for English *for* in the sense that a German spelling pattern is applied to integrate the word graphically into German. This can be interpreted as a micro-switch to English on the semantic level while the graphical surface remains German. The process is facilitated by the previous existence of *vor* in German. An example of this amalgamation is provided in (1):

<sup>12</sup> For example, *ich fühlte gar nicht müde* (D-CH 1888/06/29) 'I didn't feel tired'.

<sup>13</sup> One anonymous reviewer points out that the etymology of *vor/für* is largely shared, and that especially in the west and southwest of the German-speaking area in Europe, variation between the two forms was common. This means that the *vor/für* variation in CH's language use may be due to language-internal as well as contact-induced (language-external) dynamics.

- (1) *heute morgen 5 uhr verliesen wir Schaffhausen vor Tübingen.*  
 ‘this morning at five o’clock we left Schaffhausen for Tübingen’ (D-CH 1888/07/13).

Despite looking German, *vor* actually fulfills the function of English *for* in this reorganized argument structure of *verlassen* ‘leave’. This verb cannot be constructed with the preposition *vor* or *für* in German but would require an infinitival or subordinate clause to express the goal of the journey.

### 6.1.2 Word order: Extraposition of the adverb *heute*

CH shows rare examples of PP extraposition. This fits in with her results for *heute*: out of the ten occurrences total, seven appear in clause-initial position (cf. example [1] above, here in combination with *morgen* ‘morning’), three in the middle field, and none in the extraposed position.

### 6.1.3 Morphological and morpho-syntactic characteristics

#### 6.1.3.1 Nominal morphology

There is no deviation from the standard German use of case and gender marking. Occasionally, an attributive adjective is used in the base form, that is, without an inflectional ending (e.g. *ein Gros Seiden tug* ‘a large silk cloth’, D-CH 1888/07/08). This use may reflect an older norm; it is infrequent and not systematic in CH’s diary data.

#### 6.1.3.2 Non-finite subordinate clauses

Elspaß (2015) reports the use of non-finite subordinate clauses in a number of the nineteenth-century letters he investigated. This structure is used to express anteriority and can be used instead of a periphrastic perfect or pluperfect structure. The subordinate clause then only contains the non-finite participle while omitting the finite auxiliary. The occurrence of this pattern is, according to Elspaß (2015), a reflex of an older norm of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century but it is used by writers up until the nineteenth century. While this structure is restricted to formulaic phrases in his corpus, CH uses it in several places and side by side with finite subordinate clauses. Examples are (participles underlined):

- (2) *wo Er seinen Feind Erschossen*  
 ‘where he [has/had] shot his enemy’ (D-CH 1888/07/03)

- (3) *nach dem wir uns Gottes Schutz Empfohlen*  
 ‘after we [have/had] commended us to God’s protection’ (D-CH 1888/07/06)
- (4) *Als wir Erwacht*  
 ‘when we [have/had] woken up’ (D-CH 1888/07/08)

#### 6.1.4 Pragmatic phenomena

There are no obvious instances of register blending or compression, or of colloquial or informal features, except for a single use of the adverb *als* ‘always’, a regional non-standard element of German,<sup>14</sup> and a single extraposed subject (*hatt uns aber recht gut gefallen der Marsch* [my emphasis, DS] ‘pleased us a lot, the hike’, D-CH 1888/07/06), also an oral rather than a written phenomenon of information structuring. In order to refer to past experiences and activities, CH uses preterite throughout, rather than periphrastic present perfect forms that would be more typical of spoken language. Thus, with regard to CH’s lexical choices as well as word order and morphology, the text follows the norms of written German.

#### 6.1.5 Spelling

A striking feature of CH’s writing is her spelling, which is often idiosyncratic and differs from the standard spelling norms of German. Capitalization and spacing (between words) are used variably and unsystematically. CH’s knowledge of spelling rules is reflected throughout but it is not applied consistently. Examples are the adding of *h* or *e* to a vowel to indicate its length (correctly applied in *kehrten* ‘turned’, *stiegen* ‘climbed’, overgeneralized in *schöhn* [schön] ‘beautiful’, missing in *namen* [nahmen] ‘took’, *hiltten* [hielten] ‘held’); another example is consonant gemination to indicate that the preceding vowel is short (correctly applied in *mittag* ‘midday; noon’, *Wetter* ‘weather’, overgeneralized in *mitt* < [mit] ‘with’,<sup>15</sup> missing in *dan* [dann] ‘then’).

<sup>14</sup> besides nine instances of the subjunction *als* ‘when’, an inconspicuous item in written German.

<sup>15</sup> There are 26 occurrences of *mitt* and three occurrences of *mit* (in the same meaning and function) in the analyzed section of CH’s diary.

### 6.1.5.1 Pronunciation and spelling norm

CH exhibits various instances of norm-deviant spelling that appear to be linked to her pronunciation. Among these are the spelling of voiced vs. unvoiced stops, such as *Alben* [*Alpen*] ‘Alps’, *romandische* [*romantische*] ‘romantic’, *klöcklein* [*Glöcklein*] ‘small bell’, *gleidete* [*kleidete*] ‘dressed’. Another feature is the spelling of unrounded vowels as rounded ones, as in *klicklich* (*glücklich* ‘happy’) or the place name *Reitlingen* (*Reutlingen*, a town in southwestern Germany).

In a few cases, CH’s spelling of labiodental fricatives does not follow the norm. This sound can be represented by <f> or <v> in German. While <f> consistently represents the unvoiced fricative, <v> stands for both voiced and unvoiced sounds, depending on the word it appears in. CH’s use of <f> and <v> occasionally deviates from the spelling norm, as in *prachtfolle* [*prachtvolle*] ‘gorgeous’, *herfor* [*hervor*] ‘out (from)’, *fiele* [*viele*] ‘many’ (besides the norm-consistent spelling *viele*), and *Vürsten* [*Fürsten*] ‘sovereigns’.<sup>16</sup>

### 6.1.5.2 Reflexes of older norms

Finally, one feature of CH’s spelling appears to preserve an older norm: the spelling of the German diminutive *-gen/-chen*. The spelling difference does not encode a difference in pronunciation but only a change in norm. As Elspaß (2015) points out, these variants existed side by side but during the late eighteenth century, *-chen* became the prescribed norm. Nevertheless, a low-level use of *-gen* continued throughout the nineteenth century. CH has no occurrences of *-chen* but five occurrences of *-gen* (*Bisgen* ‘(a) little bit’, *Städtgen* (two occurrences) ‘small town’, *Schiffgen* ‘small ship’, *Steingen* ‘small stone, pebble’) and an analogous spelling of *Eichenbaum* ‘oak tree’ as *eigen baum*. This spelling seems to indicate that for her, there may be a one-to-one correspondence between the spelling *-gen* and the pronunciation [çən], independent of the morphological status of this syllable. A possible extension of this rule is CH’s spelling of word-final <g> for <ch> in some other cases; examples are *Leintug* [*Leintuch*] ‘linen cloth’ and the proper name *Heinrig* [*Heinrich*]. These could also be instances of hypercorrection, however. Since CH also uses word-final <ch> widely and appropriately, the function of this spelling irregularity is not entirely clear.

<sup>16</sup> There are 65 instances of <v>, of which only *Vürsten* is norm-deviant, aside from the nine *vor*-spellings for *für*, cf. above. Out of 230 occurrences of <f>, only 7 should be <v> according to the norm.



## 6.2 LB

The sections of LB's diaries that I analyzed comprise 1,330 words (1867), 600 words (1875), 1,300 words (1880), 1,470 words (1888), and 2,300 words (1900). The diary sections of 1867 and 1875 are written in German, the section of 1880 is partly in English and partly in German, and the diaries of 1888 and 1900 are in English. The German parts of the diaries are written in German cursive script, the English parts in English cursive script.

### 6.2.1 1867

#### 6.2.1.1 Lexical phenomena

Only very few lexical items show influence from English. There is a rare borrowing (*marbles*, D-LB 1867/03/04), one loan translation (*im Deutschen Leser* 'in the German reader', D-LB 1868/03/21, for German *Lesebuch* or *Fibel*) and one instance of possible semantic influence (*ging* 'went' for German *fuhr* or *reiste* in *Der Vater ging heute nach Bosten[sic]* 'Father went to Boston today', D-LB 1867/03/20).

#### 6.2.1.2 Word order: Extraposition of the adverb *heute*

There are 81 occurrences of *heute* 'today' three of which are in clause-initial position, 66 in the middle field, three are ambiguous (middle field or extraposed), and nine are extraposed. This amounts to an extraposition rate of 11%. Example (5) illustrates JB's extraposition of *heute*.

- (5) *Ich konnte meine Lectionen nicht sehr gut heute.*  
 'I was not very good at my homework today' (D-LB 1867/04/01).

### 6.2.1.3 Morphological and morphosyntactic characteristics

#### 6.2.1.3.1 Nominal morphology

LB exhibits three instances of zero marking for masculine nouns in the accusative singular (compared to one correct accusative marking). There is one redundant dative marking on a nominative plural noun (*Brüdern* instead of *Brüder* 'brothers'), compared to five occurrences of the correctly applied dative form and no other uses of this noun. In one case, LB uses an optional dative singular e-ending in a singular noun, a rather formal feature (*von einem oberen*

*Stockwerke* ‘from an upper story’, D-LB 1867–04–29). Aside from that, his case marking is regular.

#### 6.2.1.3.2 Verbal morphology

LB’s verbal morphology follows the German norm except for one single occurrence of a norm-deviant past tense form, namely *ließ* (instead of *las*) as the past tense form of *lesen* ‘read’ (D-LB 1867/04/28).

#### 6.2.1.4 Pragmatic phenomena

There are several reflections of spoken language in this early diary, blended with elements of a more formal style. Examples of spoken or informal lexical items are *als* (‘always’) (five occurrences) and *dreckig* ‘dirty’ (two occurrences). An example of register compression is (6), exhibiting a formal temporal genitive (*des Morgens*) combined with colloquial *als*.

- (6) *Die englische Sonntagsschule wird als des Morgens gehalten.* (D-LB 1867/03/22)  
 ‘The English Sunday School is always held in the morning.’

Another informal feature LB uses is the occasional use of determiners with proper names and familial terms (i.e. reference to parents, grandparents, aunt, uncle), a regional (southern) feature in European German. With proper names (of his siblings), there is a weaker tendency to use a determiner, while with familial terms, the determiner is more frequent. In both cases, there is some variation.

Formal forms of address can be in English or German (using the corresponding script). There appears to be a tendency to refer to teachers by English terms (e.g. *Mr Wittig* = teacher of the German classes in school, *Mrs Johnson* = music teacher) and to church members by German terms (e.g. *Prediger Thomas* ‘preacher Thomas’, *unser Bruder Bischof Escher* ‘our brother Bishop Escher’), possibly a reflex of the language used with these persons.

#### 6.2.1.5 Spelling

Aside from varying capitalization patterns, there are only few irregular spellings. There is one instance of g/k substitution (*Geuchhusten* for *Keuchhusten*, ‘whooping cough’, D-LB 1867/03/28), and a single misspelling of *Schule* ‘school’ as *Shule* (D-LB 1867/03/22), in contrast to 35 instances of *Schule*. The latter may be due to influence from the English sound-spelling correspondence but it is obviously not systematic.

Word spacing at line breaks is done between lexical stems and endings (English pattern), rather than according to syllable structure (German pattern).

This applies to verbal inflectional affixes (*hab-en* ‘have’), adjectival and pronominal inflectional affixes (e.g. *hart-es* ‘hard’, *mein-en* ‘my’), and gender endings in nouns (*Musiklehrer-inn[sic]* ‘female music teacher’).

## 6.2.2 1875

### 6.2.2.1 Lexical phenomena

*Convention* and *Committee* (related to church events) constitute cultural borrowings. Both items are morphologically integrated into German by using a feminine gender determiner.

Influence from English seems to play a role in the use of *ging* ‘went’ and *sitzen* ‘sit’ in example (7). In German, *fortging* ‘left, went away’ (for *ging*) and *liegen* ‘lie’ or, more formal, *befinden sich* ‘are (placed)’ (for *sitzen*) would be less unusual choices.

- (7) *Seitdem ich von zu Hause ging kam sehr viele Rinde – es sitzen gegenwärtig 4 große Haufen vor der Gerberei.* (D-LB 1875/08/03)  
 ‘Since I went from home, a lot of bark came – there are currently sitting 4 piles in front of the tannery.’

### 6.2.2.2 Word order: Extraposition of the adverb *heute*

The adverb *heute* appears 16 times in this diary section. There is no instance of extraposition, one instance in clause-initial position, and two ambiguous cases. The remaining 13 instances occur in the middle field.

## 6.2.2.3 Morphological and morphosyntactic characteristics

### 6.2.2.3.1 Nominal morphology

No instances of deviant case marking occur. There is one gender mismatch in an anaphoric reference, cf. example (8).

- (8) *Ich war heute Abend in der Sing-Stunde<sub>FEMININE</sub>. ES<sub>NEUTER</sub> wird jeden Donnerstag Abend gehalten.* (D-LB 1875/08/04) [my emphasis, DS]  
 ‘I went to choir practice<sup>17</sup> tonight. It is being held every Thursday night.’

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<sup>17</sup> *Singstunde* can refer to choir practice but also to a religious meeting where hymns are sung. Here, the precise meaning is not relevant for the grammatical point made.

#### 6.2.2.4 Pragmatic phenomena

There are only three (arguable) instances of informal language (*gar* in *gar kein Schnee* ‘no snow at all’; *dreckig* ‘dirty’; *etwas* in *ich hatte heute etwas Geschäfte in der Stadt* ‘I had some business in town today’).

Aside from these items, the text is stylistically coherent and shows no instances of register breaks or register compression. The occasional use of set phrases reflects LB’s familiarity with idiomatic German (e.g. *ich traf zu Hause Alles gesund und munter an* ‘when I came home, everyone was happy and healthy’).

There are no instances of *als* ‘always’ or proper names with determiners. Where there exists both an English and a German form of a proper name, the German variant is chosen.

#### 6.2.2.5 Spelling

Only capitalization and word spacing/hyphenation vary to some degree.

### 6.2.3 1880

#### 6.2.3.1 Lexical phenomena

In this diary, there is no surface interference from English. Some semantic influence is noticeable in the use of *nehmen* ‘take’ (*nahm* for *dauerte* in *es nahm eine geraume Zeit* ‘it took a considerable time’, D-LB 1880/07/06).

#### 6.2.3.2 Word order: Extraposition of the adverb *heute*

There is no extraposition of *heute*. Out of four occurrences, there are three in clause-initial position and one in the middle field.

#### 6.2.3.3 Morphological and morphosyntactic characteristics

##### 6.2.3.3.1 Nominal morphology

There is one irregular zero marking of a dative noun (*in Gottes Wille ergeben* [instead of *Willen*] ‘obedient to God’s will’).

In four instances, the optional dative singular e-ending is applied, a feature of a formal register (*zu Bette* ‘to bed’, *zum Abschiede* ‘(up)on parting’, *im Hause* ‘in the house’, *am Grabe* ‘at the grave’).

#### 6.2.3.4 Pragmatic phenomena

The style of this diary is elevated, with diverse lexical choices and morphological and syntactic structures. At one point, an almost Biblical register is used (*rief er mich nochmals bei Namen* ‘[he] called me once again by [my] name’, D-LB 1880/07/03). There is a single occurrence of the continuous form (underlined), possibly modelled on English (*sie glaube daß Pa am sterben sei* ‘she believed-SUBJUNCTIVE that Pa were dying’, D-LB 1880/07/03). This structure has an informal connotation in German.

The familial terms *Mama* and *Großmutter* ‘grandmother’ are used with and without a determiner; other familial terms as well as proper names (*Pa*, names of siblings) always appear without determiners.

Formal forms of address are in German (*Hr.* ‘Mr.’, *die Herren* ‘Messrs.’) or ambiguous (*Br.*, *Dr.*).

#### 6.2.3.5 Spelling

In this diary, apostrophized *s* appears as a new feature in LB’s writing. It is applied in different ways: to mark genitive/possessive (*den Tod meines heißgeliebten Vater’s* ‘my dearly loved father’s death’, *Pa’s Puls* ‘Pa’s pulse’, *Br. D’s Tod* ‘Brother D’s death’), to indicate a shortened determiner (*in’s Zimmer* ‘into the room’, *in’s Herz* ‘into the heart’), and graphically to separate a silent *s* that apparently was reanalyzed as a morphological element (*das Musik-Corp’s des 29ten Battalions* ‘the music corps of the 29th battalion’).

### 6.2.4 1888

The diary contains, out of 1,470 analyzed words, only 29 words in German. 28 of these make up the hand-copied text of a telegram (cf. 9 below). While the remainder of this diary section is written in English script, LB uses German cursive for this German part. The short text is completely appropriate for its formal purpose and shows no lexical, structural or pragmatic peculiarities. On a metalinguistic level, LB’s referring to Germany as the fatherland, although in quotations marks, reflects his self-positioning as a German Canadian.

(Regular font indicates English script, italics indicate German script.)

- (9) Much sorrow is felt in our town with the “Fatherland” in its heavy bereavement. As Mayor I cabled to-day as follows:  
*Berlin Canada –*  
*Ihrer Majestät der verwittweten Kaiserin*  
*Viktoria. Berlin Deutschland:*  
*Die Bürger von Berlin, Canada, erlauben sich*  
*ihr tiefstes Beileid über den Tod des Kaisers,*  
*auszudrücken.*  
*Breithaupt,*  
*Bürgermeister.*<sup>18</sup> (D-LB 1888/06/16)

Considering that LB no longer uses German to keep his diary, the telegram is an interesting indication of his continued use of German for other occasions and may be indicative of a shift in function German has undergone for him.

The only other German word in this diary section seems to constitute a cultural borrowing related to a church event; it is *Kindertag* ‘children’s day’ (D-LB 1888/06/24), an event that apparently took place regularly (once a year) and that LB has already commented on in earlier diaries. This German word is written in English cursive here.

### 6.2.5 1900

This diary is in English except for one sentence of four German words and one German name (*Fritz*, the name of a horse; D-LB 1900/01/26). The German sentence is a quotation from a church sermon (*Was fehlt mir noch?* ‘What am I still missing?’, D-LB 1900/01/28), and it is written in German cursive (while the remainder is in English cursive). It indicates that LB continued to attend German church services.

## 6.3 ED

ED’s diary comprises 3,900 words. It is written in German, using the German cursive script; English words and proper names are written in English script.

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<sup>18</sup> Translation: ‘Berlin Canada – To Her Majesty the widowed Empress Viktoria. Berlin Germany: The citizens of Berlin, Canada, permit themselves to express their deepest sympathy at the death of the Emperor. Breithaupt, Mayor.’

### 6.3.1 Lexical phenomena

ED exhibits occasional intrasentential switches to English (e.g. *bei Sarahs (for a change) [sic] ‘at Sarah’s ...’* and nonce borrowings from English (e.g. *callers, cuffs, sewing bee*). A few calques occur (e.g. *in zeit* ‘in time’ for *rechtzeitig*). On a number of occasions (mostly when listing persons), she refers to herself as *ich selbst/ichselbst* ‘myself’ for *ich* ‘I’ which would be the more appropriate form in German in the given contexts. Finally, there is one instance of *wundern* ‘wonder’, combined with *warum* ‘why’ and without a reflexive pronoun (cf. example [11] below), an argument structure uncommon in German for this verb.

### 6.3.2 Word order: Extraposition of the adverb *heute*

Out of 49 instances of *heute* ‘today’, 15 are extraposed, 15 appear in clause-initial position, and 19 are within the middle field. This corresponds to an extraposition rate of 30%. Example (10) illustrates ED’s extraposition of *heute*.

- (10) *Aggie ist wieder nach Guelph gekangen Heute.*  
 ‘Aggie went to Guelph again today’ (D-ED 1881/02/07).

### 6.3.3 Morphological and morphosyntactic characteristics

#### 6.3.3.1 Nominal morphology

ED’s case marking varies to some degree; there are several instances of zero case marking of masculine nouns in the accusative singular, but there are also numerous cases of correctly case-marked forms. Occasionally, there is a non-standard gender marking, as in *kein Schlittenbahn* ‘no sleighing/no skating’ (masculine/neuter instead of feminine) or *das kalteste tag* ‘the coldest day’ (neuter instead of masculine) [my emphasis, DS].

#### 6.3.3.2 Verbal morphology

There are three instances of a past tense form where a strong verb receives an additional e-ending that is usually restricted to weak forms ending in *-te* (*erhielte* [*erhielt*] ‘received’). The same verb also occurs with the standard strong ending (*erhielt*). These forms could result from an overgeneralization of the e-ending (in combination with the final *-t* of this verb form in particular), linked to the heritage context of language acquisition; or they could constitute the inconsistent preservation of an older norm (cf. Elspaß 2015).

### 6.3.3.3 Non-finite subordinate clauses

ED's data contain a few cases of non-finite subordinate clauses, cf. example (11).

- (11) *er wunderte warum ich ihm so lange nicht geantwortet.*  
 'he wondered why I [had] not answered him for so long' (D-ED 1880/03/17).

There is a much larger number of finite subordinate clauses, however. The non-finite clauses could reflect the (optional) application of an older writing norm (cf. Elspaß 2015).

### 6.3.3.4 Prepositional phrases expressing place, direction, and time

Out of 17 occurrences of *zu Hauß* 'at home', seven refer to direction ('homeward'), a use not consistent with the norm, while ten denote place ('at home'). *Nach Hauß* 'home, homeward', in contrast, is always used in the standard way. Regarding *zu*, inconsistency may derive from interference with English *to* (to mark direction).

With *Kirche* 'church', both *zu* and *in* are used. Place ('in church') is always expressed by *in*+dative case, consistent with the norm (11 occurrences). To mark direction, three options appear: *zu* 'to', *zur* 'to the' (contracted form), and *in die* '(in)to the'. *Zu* without a determiner, used 6 out of 13 times here, would be ungrammatical in standard German. This use may have been modelled on English *to church*. The distinction between dative vs. accusative case to mark place vs. direction (with *in*), however, is fully consistent with the norm.

*Thee* 'tea' (30 occurrences) is combined with *zu* or *nach* (usually to indicate a point in time or a social event). ED uses *zum Thee* 'for tea' (24 occurrences) with *zu*+determiner (the contracted form) in agreement with the norm but she consistently omits the determiner with *nach* in *nach Thee* 'after tea' (six occurrences) (*nach dem T(h)ee* in standard German). If compared to the determiner-less use of *zu* with *Kirche*, it can be hypothesized that in these cases, influence from English plays a role in fixed prepositional combinations when the prepositions between German and English correspond. These combinations may then be interpreted as lexicalized units with translation equivalents rather than indicators of incipient structural change.

### 6.3.4 Pragmatic phenomena

Informal elements in ED's diary include the use of *rauf* 'up' (instead of *herauf* or *hinauf*), a lexical item typical of spoken and informal language; and the use of determiners with proper names.



ED exhibits register compression to some degree. She uses formal genitive constructions and postnominal *aber* (as in *ich aber* ‘I, however’), typical of an elevated written register, in combination with informal items such as those just mentioned.

### 6.3.5 Spelling

Occasionally, ED shows d/t and g/k substitution (*dauen* [*tauen*] ‘thaw’, *begleitet* [*begleitēt*] ‘accompanied’, *gekangen* [*gegangen*] ‘gone’), possibly due to divergence between (local) pronunciation and standard spelling. Further, while there is one instance of unrounding (*heit* for *heute* ‘today’), an apparent rounding of vowels is more frequent (*Dünstag* for *Dienstag* ‘Tuesday’, *beu* for *bei* ‘with, near’, *feuerten* for *feierten* ‘celebrate’, *sogleuch* for *sogleich* ‘right away’). This feature seems to result from hypercorrection.

Additional characteristics include some variation in the use of <v> and <f> (*fiel/viel* [*viel*] ‘much’, *fier/vier* [*vier*] ‘four’) and erratic capitalization patterns.

## 6.4 RB

RB was 11 years old when she began to keep a diary in 1900. The data I analyzed cover her diaries of 1900, 1901 (in part) and 1909; they comprise 1,100 words (1900), 1,000 words (1901) and 1,800 words (1909). All of her diaries are in English.

### 6.4.1 1900/1901

At the beginning of her first diary, RB mentions that she had just received it as a present (D-RB 1900/preface). RB’s diaries are written in English throughout but when referring to parents and grandparents she uses German and German/English familial terms (*Mamma*, *Papa*, *Omma*). Some of her spelling of German family names seems to be a local pronunciation spelling (*Getz* for *Goetze*, with umlaut unrounding). There are cases of non-standard spelling of English words (*fisicul* ‘physical’, D-RB 1901/01/14), probably due to her young age and the respective stage of English spelling competence, but they do not point to interference from German.

### 6.4.2 1909

This diary contains notes on college life and on winter holidays at home (with the family) as well as a note on getting the highest grade in the class on a German exam. This comment indicates competence in German and fits in with a remark by LB in a letter to his daughter where he mentions that she was able to write German as a child (Stolberg 2018: 101).

Reference to the parents is made by *Papa* (German/English) and *mother* (English) or (rarely) *Mamma* (German/English), the expression commonly used in 1900. For her grandmother, she uses *Grandma* rather than *Omma* (used in 1900).<sup>19</sup>

A comparison with LB presents itself here, given the fact that he switched to keeping his diary in English when he started college in Toronto (shortly before turning 17, January 1872). His language choice was not final at that time, however, since he kept going back and forth between English and German for some years until he finally settled on English in his later years.

## 7 Comparisons

### 7.1 Comparison of profiles: General notes

#### *Transmission of heritage German: CH (mother)/ LB (son)*

There are only a few parallels between CH's and LB's data, and they are mainly restricted to LB's earliest diary. A possible explanation is that LB received German input from a variety of sources so that intra-family input played a prominent role only during his early years of life. This is probably particularly true for his acquisition of written German. A particularly distinct characteristic of CH's writing is her idiosyncratic spelling. This is not continued in LB's spelling which is close to the norm in all his German data, implying that he had formal training in German even before the age of 12.

CH and ED show parallels in regard to spelling patterns and the use of non-finite subordinate clauses. These features are identified as reflecting older norms by Elspaß (2015) and can indicate less formal education.

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<sup>19</sup> These naming variants may refer to different persons, however (*Omma Getz* vs. *Grandma D./Devitt* and *Grandma B.*).

### *Forms of familial address*

Regarding proper names, CH prefers to use the German forms (where there is an option), e.g. *Heinrig* [*Heinrich*], *Wilhelm*, *Johan(n)* rather than *Henry*, *William*, or *John*.<sup>20</sup> LB uses the German forms in his early diaries (1867, 1875), down to the detail of spelling his brother's name as *Esra* (vs. *Ezra* later on). In his later diaries, however, he uses the English variants of the names, not only when writing English but also in the German sections of the 1880 diary. RB uses only English names.

In ED's diary, there is no language variation with respect to proper names. All names appear consistently in the same form (English or German).

To address family members, LB refers to his parents as *die Mutter* (1867, 1875), *der Vater* (1867), *Mama* or *Ma* and *Pa* or *Vater* (1880), preferring *Ma* and *Pa* when writing English. *Mutter* and *Vater* only appear within German sections. *Mutter*, *Vater*, *Mama* and reference to grandparents (*Großmutter*, *Großvater*) are all used with a determiner, as are sometimes his siblings' first names (*der Esra*, 1867). This feature seems to have been part of the family's heritage variant of German.

RB uses *Mamma*, *Papa*, *Omma*, and *Grandma* in her childhood diary of 1900. In 1909 while RB is at college, *Mamma* has been replaced by *mother* in most cases, while *Papa* continues to be the only form of reference to her father. *Omma* has disappeared, while *Grandma* is still in use.

## 7.2 Apparent-time comparison: Same year

### *LB/ED, 1880 (fiancé/fiancée)*

ED kept her diary in German for more than a year; later diaries of hers were written in English (cf. Breithaupt-Hewetson-Clark Collection). LB kept his diary of the same year in English at first, switching to German when writing about his father's death in July, 1880. Thus, for both writers, English was an available and acceptable option for private writing. For the current purposes, only the German portions of LB's and ED's diaries are compared.

Both writers use standard German. In contrast to ED, LB shows no surface interference from English, no extraposition of *heute* (ED: 30%), and only one deviant case marking. ED shows more influence from English and more variability in German nominal and verbal morphology, and in morphosyntactic

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<sup>20</sup> *William* and *Henry* do not occur at all; *Johan(n)* is used 7 times, as compared to two occurrences of *John* (referring to the same person).

structures. Some of these features can be related to the preservation of older norms. It appears that LB's training in formal German was more current and thorough, resulting LB's writing adhering to the standard more consistently than that of ED. Comparing the two data sets gives an impression of the differences in German writing style and competence that coexisted at the same time and within the same age group in nineteenth-century Berlin, ON. Despite being from the same year, the two diaries reflect the differences in the writers' backgrounds more than they exhibit the parallels that could have been expected due to the shared time of production.

*CH/LB, 1888 (mother/son)*

For 1888, a comparison of the use of German turned out not to be possible, since LB's data from this year are all in English, except for the telegram to Empress Victoria. CH, in contrast, kept her travel diary in German during her trip to Europe. The fact that CH writes in German and her son writes in English can be understood to indicate an intergenerational shift in language choice. Note, however, that CH was in German-speaking Europe at the time, while LB was in Canada. Therefore another explanation could be that CH and LB, equally competent in writing German and English, preferred the language of their environment for keeping their diaries.

*LB/RB, 1900 (father/daughter)*

In 1900, both family members kept their diaries in English. LB's reference to attending a church service in German indicates his continued contact with, and use of, German. There are no such indications for his daughter, even though metalinguistic evidence indicates that she had some competence in German even at this point. Her use of German familial terms likely reflects a family practice and the family's continued self-association with being German, but it does not prove any competence in German beyond that.

### **7.3 Apparent-time comparison: same age**

*LB/RB, age 12 (father/daughter) (1867, 1900)*

The topics that are covered are similar between both writers; they cover school, church (RB to a lesser degree than LB), illness/health, weather, music lessons, and social interaction with the extended family and friends. The obvious difference is that LB kept his diary in German while RB wrote in English. Thus, language choice appears to be the most informative feature here, indicating an intergenerational shift between CH and LB. The only remnants of German language use in RB's diary

of 1900 are her choice of German or German/English familial forms of address for her parents and grandparents.

*LB/ED/RB, age 20 (parents/daughter) (1875, 1881, 1909)*

At age 20, LB and ED and their daughter RB show divergent language choices. Both LB and ED kept their diaries in German while RB wrote in English. ED shows some variability in her German, as described above, with some, mainly lexical, influence from English. LB exhibits slightly more influence from English than earlier on (though less than ED). Being on the verge of entering business life, he is likely to encounter an increased number of English-speaking contacts at this time. However, he returns to keeping his diary in German after having shifted to English during his earlier college years. In comparison, ED emerges as a consistent heritage language writer, and LB presents himself as attached to German despite his increased contacts with English. RB, in contrast, does not use German for private writing.

## 7.4 Real-time comparison

*LB, 1867/age 12; 1875/age 20; 1880/age 25; 1888/age 33; 1900/age 45.*

The data available from LB offer the opportunity for a real-time comparison between his earlier and his later language use. Even in his first diary, LB proves to be a competent writer of German, given his language competence and his spelling as well as his mastery of the German cursive script. At age 12, there are few indications of lexical gaps in his German, and his word spacing pattern implies that his formal training in English is more advanced than in German. His writing is occasionally characterized by the combination of different registers (formal/informal), a feature that seems to confirm the observation of register compression (Evans et al. 2013; Litty et al. 2015) in heritage language settings.

At age 20, his German (writing) competence has increased. There are very few instances of register blending. Lexically, only two cultural loans and rare instances of semantic shift can be noted, and there is only one irregularity in anaphoric gender-marking. Five years later, at 25, LB's writing is more elevated, shows a coherent use of the written register, and contains hardly any deviations from the standard norm. A characteristic feature of semantic extension under the influence of English is the use of German *nehmen* 'take' with reference to time duration (not covered by the German meaning of the word). Aside from that, there is only the spelling feature of an apostrophized *s* that points to influence from English. At this point, LB presents himself as being fully competent in written German, enabling him to express himself in a detailed and differentiated way, including the use of medical terms.

The two further diary sections (of 1888 and 1900) are in English, and therefore offer no information on LB's written German.

## 8 Discussion

The comparisons show that there are differences in style and competence even within the same year and age group. For LB, a development over time emerges from the data; between the 1867 diary and that of 1880, his competence in a written German register increases to reach a high level of mastery. There are some parallels especially between CH and LB (in the earliest diary) that point to the influence of immediate input. As LB reaches adulthood, however, the crucial difference is their diverging language choice for keeping a diary.

ED appears to be fluent in German, but her German shows more traces of a heritage language (e.g. more irregular case marking) than that of LB or CH. This may be due to her family background being partly German and partly English-speaking. In RB's diary of 1909, ED is the one referred to by an English term (*mother*) while reference to LB is made by the German/English term *Papa* (which he, in turn, also uses to sign a number of his letters to RB).

Regarding RB (G4), who uses English in writing even as a child, one has to keep in mind that oral language use might have been different from written use, and that the use of spoken German was presumably greater than the highly limited use of written German in G4. This assumption is supported by evidence from LB, who shifted to English in his diaries. He nevertheless continued writing and receiving letters in German until late in his life, as archived letters and notes in his diaries confirm. Thus, German remained available to him, although it seems to have changed its function. Likewise, the metalinguistic data imply that RB (G4) wrote in German as a child and took German classes in college, continuing her engagement with German, meaning that some transmission of German to G4 had taken place.

Interestingly, no instances of word order change were found with regard to the position of the finite verb and the asymmetry between main and subordinate clauses in any of the diaries. This finding coincides with Hopp and Putnam's (2015) observations for Moundridge Swiss German and supports the assumption that this word order pattern is robust in heritage German. More surprisingly, case marking shows only little deviation, a finding that is unexpected in a heritage language (cf. Laleko and Polinsky 2013; Montrul et al. 2015; Yager et al. 2015; Polinsky 2018 on changes in case marking in a number of heritage languages).

Due to the shift to English, the possibility for comparisons of linguistic features in German is limited for later points in time. In this regard, the apparent-time comparisons are informative mainly with respect to language choice. While all speakers seem to know German well enough to continue using it and to pass it on, there is a point in time when they no longer do so; the language shift apparently occurred at some point between LB's and RB's childhood.

Further investigations into related language material (e.g. family papers from other prominent German-origin families in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, such as the Anthes and Hailer families, also archived at the University of Waterloo) may be able to confirm the existence of a heritage/settler variety of local German. Features of regional, especially southern/southwestern, German<sup>21</sup> reflect either the settlers' linguistic origin or a levelling variety that had developed by the second half of the nineteenth century in Berlin, ON. A careful comparison with Pennsylvania German data from the same time and region<sup>22</sup> could offer insight into whether this variety may have been a source of such regional features and whether there is an indication of a more widespread variety across speaker groups (i.e. Mennonite and non-Mennonite speakers of German), as is sometimes claimed (cf. Gubitz 1995).

The Breithaupt family was a well-situated and influential family with a large number of dealings in business and trade. The original immigrants were businessmen already, but this standing was strengthened and extended over the next three generations. A comparable setting is found in the case of the Heusch correspondence (van der Wal [see Wal] 2018) by a merchant family originating in the Netherlands but having migrated to German-speaking Hamburg. While the Heusch letters were written two centuries earlier, the sociolinguistic embedding is similar. Both cases offer sound evidence for the continued use of the migrants' languages of origin for regular written use for at least three generations. At the same time, the language of the new home country became an unquestioned part of their communicative interactions, as their political and economic standing strongly implies.

## 9 Conclusion

In a study in the field of historical sociolinguistics, complementing written sources with other documentary and sociohistorical evidence is essential for

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<sup>21</sup> for example, *als* in the meaning of 'always' and the use of determiners with proper names, as in D-LB 1867 and D-CH 1888, or certain spelling patterns, as in D-CH 1888 and D-ED 1880/81.

<sup>22</sup> Such data is provided, for example, by the corpus of Mennonite letters described in Stolberg and Liebscher (2018).

understanding what the actual patterns of language use were. In the current investigation, a crucial element constituting such contextual information is the fact that all writers were members of the same family and interacted closely with each other. This constellation offered the opportunity to analyze and compare the data for the transmission of features across generations, an option rarely offered by historical data sets. This study shows how different members of a family with a migrant background contribute a variety of language experiences to the in-group communication patterns. The comparison of the different writers' profiles in German shows the range of variation with native and heritage competences side by side, a pattern that is likely to extend to the whole community.

What can be inferred from this investigation is the recognition that language shift occurred even though all family members involved were speakers of the heritage language. If there is a pressure towards shift in the environment, it seems to work first and foremost on those whose links to the original language are weaker, in this case apparently ED. The detailed study presented here shows how this mechanism can be illustrated for one specific family, and how individual family members react to a bilingual setting that tends towards language shift eventually. It also shows that the period of shift can be drawn out over more than three generations. The fact that RB uses only English in her diary turned out not to be informative of her (not) knowing German. Thus, she is the fourth generation of immigrants who is competent in the heritage/minority language (even if the level of her competence cannot be determined based on the diary data). What certainly changed are the domains in which German was used: Upon immigrating, it must be assumed that German covered all communicative functions. Regarding business, English was soon added to the repertoire (cf. Table 1 and Stolberg 2018). Via a period (G2/G3) of possibly balanced bilingualism, German ended up being a formally acquired (heritage) language that was, though originally linked to close family relations, not even used for private communication with oneself (that is, in the diary). Thus, from being a private and intimate language, it turned into a distant language. This is the point where it can be given up or replaced by any other additional or foreign language, if need be.

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Section 2.4.2–1 Diary of Catherine Hailer Breithaupt (1888/excerpt)

Section 2.5.3 Diaries of Louis Jacob Breithaupt (excerpts from 1867, 1875, 1880, 1888, 1900)

Section 2.7.2–2 Diary of Emma Alvarene Devitt Breithaupt (1880–1881)

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