4

The Great Change and the shift from Norwegian to English in Ulen, Minnesota

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4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines social and economic changes in the NorwegianAmerican town of Ulen, Minnesota, changes of the like we argue throughout this book contributed to the shift to the majority language, English, from a minoritized community language, or heritage language (see Rothman 2009; Benmamoun et al. 2013) – in this case, Norwegian. This analysis follows previous work on language shift and bilingual social structures (Lucht 2007; Salmons 2005a; 2005b; Wilkerson and Salmons 2008; 2012; Frey 2013), all of which draw on Warren's (1972) analysis of "horizontal" and "vertical" community patterns, i.e., whether institutions tend to be internally or externally oriented, respectively.

Because language shift is the result of the loss of a speechcommunity (Brown and Salmons, Chapter 1 in this volume), greater reliance on larger societal relationships and connections, both for individuals and for the community as a whole, is a core component of the verticalization model of language shift. As Warren (1972: 62) explains, communities become interdependent not as an autonomous whole, but within a broader national framework. These more robust relationships to the broader society come at the expense of community cohesion, which in turn disrupt the social patterns that contribute to community language maintenance and transmission. Several interrelated economic and social patterns demonstrate a community's shifting orientation toward external systems. Warren (1972: 52ff.) refers to this as the "Great Change," and describes it with the following seven features:

(1) Division of labor
(2) Differentiation of interests and association
(3) Increasing systemic relationships to the larger society
(4) Bureaucratization and impersonalization
(5) Transfer of functions to profit enterprise and government
(6) Urbanization and suburbanization
(7) Changing values

By applying the framework developed in the previous studies on language shift to Ulen, and supplementing their methodologies with local history and agricultural records, I provide another case study in support of the verticalization model of language shift. Ulen is a community that was never completely horizontal in orientation, and one that adopted English-language institutions and domains early. For instance, the local newspaper, which was established in 1886, the same year that Ulen was incorporated, was always printed in English. However, available evidence indicates that the community supported English-Norwegian bilingualism for five to six decades. The social and economic disruption brought on by the Great Depression, and the subsequent revitalization efforts of the New Deal, along with increased mechanization of agriculture that allowed for participation in broader economic markets, had the consequence that the community increasingly relied upon externally oriented community structures. This reorientation contributes to the "structural differentiation within American communities" (Warren 1972: 58) that positions "community

people and community units of various kinds to systems extending outside the community" (Warren 1972: 62). Consequently, the changing labor patterns and workforce feed differentiated associations and facilitate the transfer of those functions to profit enterprise. This is particularly evident in the local agricultural economy. All these factors contribute to increased systemic relationships to the larger society. The result of these more diffuse community associations and relationships is a weakening of social ties between individuals, ties that previously supported the maintenance of Norwegian as a community language in a bilingual setting.

The core of this model of language shift is that changes from internally facing community orientations to externally facing ones profoundly impact the relationships that individuals and groups of individuals have with each other (Brown and Salmons, Chapter 1). Frey (2013) illustrates how these processes influence changes in personal relationships from those characterized by multiplex ties, where individuals are connected in multiple ways, to uniplex ones, where individuals interact in a singular capacity (Milroy 1987). Multiplex ties support the maintenance of minority languages because the same set of people fulfill multiple social roles for each other and foster strong, interdependent relationships. Uniplex ties and the weaker social networks they promote, on the other hand, contribute to linguistic changes, including language shift, i.e., through weakened local social cohesion and solidarity. These shifts in the strength and complexity of network ties are, in Warren's (1972) terms, differentiations of interests and associations. As individuals are increasingly oriented toward people and structures from outside the community, they become susceptible to majority language practices because "the level of integration of any given group into wider society is likely to be inversely related to the extent to which it maintains a distinctive vernacular" (Milroy and Milroy 1992: 4). Although not itself a theory of language shift, social network theory is a means for understanding how verticalization at the level of the community affects individuals and their social ties with each other, and how those ties influence language use.

Another characteristic of the Great Change is the outsourcing of local powers to entities that exist outside the community. It is not, however, always the case that speakers of minority languages will choose to use those languages in a given domain even when they have the power to do so. For example, Norwegian-Americans tended not to establish primary schools with primary instruction in Norwegian. In this regard, Norwegian-language newspapers greatly shaped Norwegian Americans' attitudes toward both English and Norwegian (Moquin 2019). Even editors of these newspapers pleaded for English-language education: There was abundant evidence that such advice [for English education] was heeded, for the Norwegians did not maintain any attitude of aloofness to the American public school. The efforts that were made from some quarters to establish Norwegian day schools were almost wholly unsuccessful (Haugen 1969: 38).

Ulen and the surrounding areas seem to have followed the tendency to promote English-language education by establishing English-language primary schools before integrating into the broader public school districts. Although the language of instruction of the earliest schools in Ulen is not known, the decision to use English as the language of instruction seems to have been a local decision, consistent with a horizontal pattern. This decision,

however, connected the school system and community members to the larger society, with English facilitating access to regional and national systems (see Section 4.3).
Various institutions verticalized at distinctive times, and Norwegian ceded to English in numerous independent social and economic domains at different times and at different rates in Ulen (see Hoffman and Kyto¨ 2018 for similar outcomes in American Swedish). For example, Ulen-area churches, being associated with different Norwegian American synods, underwent a series of mergers during the 1920s. These consolidations paralleled broader patterns within the Norwegian American Lutheran Church at the time, and as the church leadership shifted their focus from a Norwegian American congregation to an American Lutheran one, local churches followed suit (see Section 4.3). On the other hand, the consolidation of Ulen-area country schools into larger school districts took place approximately 20 years later. These mergers connected children from different areas and brought curriculum and instruction decisions under the auspices of school boards outside the local community.

The most pronounced shifts in economic orientation in Ulen began in the 1930s, as the community adapted to the hardships of the Great Depression and underwent a period of increased reliance on the US Federal Government for employment and skills training. Parallel changes occurred in the outlying rural areas following World War II, as farming shifted from human to mechanized labor. Farms became more independently operated, depended less on a human workforce, and integrated more into external markets. New workers entered a wider labor market in a more specialized economy, contributing to a higher demand for, and utilization of, the emerging vertical structures. The confluence of these changes toward outward-facing systems and interactions created social pressure for language shift, eventually affecting family and home language use by the 1940s. These patterns were likely highly variable, and individual families certainly made their own choices depending on their priorities andparticipationinparticularsocialandeconomiccircles.Ofcourse,thesesocial and economic systems were, and are, bounded within the structure of the community at a particular time. It was not until externally oriented community patterns reached a critical mass that these Norwegian-speaking families began to replace Norwegian with English as a home language. Bousquette (2020 and Chapter 3 in this volume) argues that integration into external labor markets is the crucial driving force for language shift, at least in the United States. This chapter, particularly discussions in Sections 4.4 and 4.5, supports this perspective. I now turn to a description of data processing and analysis of census material for investigating community language patterns over time.

4.2 Census data

Language and occupational data come from the 1910–40 US Federal Censuses. These are taken from two enumeration districts: Ulen Village, which is the incorporated town, and Ulen Township, which consists of the rural areas surrounding the Village. The language-related questions in the US Federal Censuses from 1900 to 1940 are shown in Table 4.1. Because these questions are phrased differently from one census to the next, positive data for Norwegian use varies from decade to decade. Norwegian may be listed as the mother tongue of an American-born citizen in 1920, but only listed for Norwegian immigrants in 1940. As possible Norwegian heritage speakers are further removed from their immigrant ancestors as immigration to Ulen decreases over time, it becomes increasingly difficult to

discern Norwegian-proficient bilinguals who report English knowledge. Furthermore, English use is in general considered to be over-reported (e.g., Labov 1998; Bousquette and Ehresmann 2010), which results in the under-representation of the heritage language household categories. Because the language question in1940doesnotincludeAmerican-bornresidents,itdoesnotallowforaviable comparison of household language use with the 1910–30 data. It is therefore likely that English monolingualism is increasingly over-represented compared to each previous decade. Therefore, the census data – and the inferences about household language use to which they contribute – are not compared for statistical correlations with social factors. Rather, they serve primarily to show the general stability and persistence of the Norwegian language in Ulen from its founding until the 1930s.

Table 4.1 Language-related census questions from 1900 to 1940

Year	Census question and location
1900	"Can speak English" (column 24)
1910	"Whether able to speak English; or, if not, give language spoken" (column 17)
1920	"Mother tongue" (column 20); "Whether able to speak English" (column 25)
1930	"Language spoken in home before coming to the United States" (column 21); "Whether able to speak English" (column 24)
1940	"Language spoken in home in earliest childhood" (Supplementary Questions, column 38)

Wilkerson and Salmons (2012: 8–9) present five categories of households based on reported language use, ranging from monolingual heritage language to monolingual majority language households. Their methods alleviate some of the difficulties in determining language use from census data by focusing on household patterns based on reported language use, kinship, and family immigration information. The household categories I use consist of the relative use of Scandinavian languages (Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish), English, or other languages (mostly German) for a given household. The Scandinavian languages are for the most part mutually intelligible, and Swedish and Danish speakers, although fairly few in number, likely contributed to the maintenance of Norwegian as a community language through their abilities to understand and communicate with Norwegian speakers. I adopt this, and adapt it to fit the censuses from 1910 to 1930 by applying it to the particular language categories present in Ulen, using the following six categories.

- "Monolingual Scandinavian" is a household in which all members report knowing only Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, or a combination;
- "Scandinavian-Speaking" is the category in which adult members only had a Scandinavian language as a common language, usually in twoperson households with one monolingual speaker; to this group, I add any household with a monolingual Scandinavian-speaking child;
- "Presumed Scandinavian-English Bilingual" describes the situation where at least one at least one household member reported Scandinavian monolingualism;

- “Possibly Scandinavian-English Bilingual” households have no monolingual Scandinavian speakers, but a Scandinavian language was likely spoken based on familial relationships with monolinguals; and
- “Presumed English Monolingual” represents households where all adult members were monolingual English speakers.
- “Non-Scandinavian Language Spoken”. This group is primarily a handful of German-speaking households that may be monolingual or have relative degrees of German and English use in the home.

This final group, “Non-Scandinavian Language Spoken,” is relatively small in comparison to Norwegian/Scandinavian- and English-speaking households: one household in both 1910 and 1930, and three in 1920, with the village and township combined. Therefore, dividing the non-Scandinavian group into granular categories is unlikely to yield great insights into language-use patterns in Ulen during the first half of the 20th century. Census records also provide information on individuals’ positions in local economies based on their professions, which are also important indicators of horizontal and vertical orientations. Different types of employment influence different types of social networks, and increasing degrees of labor specialization are consistent with greater differentiations of associations (Warren 1972: 58). Similarly, Milroy and Milroy (1992) argue that Life-Mode categories, introduced by Højrup (1983) and developed in Højrup (2003), provide a cohesive basis for evaluating social and economic networks of individuals (see also Frey 2013; Bousquette, Chapter 3 in this volume; and Johnson; Chapter 2 in this volume). Højrup (1983, 2003) distinguishes three Life-Modes: Life-Mode I consists of selfemployed individuals with close family ties and little distinction between work and leisure (e.g., subsistence farming and the domestic sphere); Life-Mode II comprises wage-earners, who sell their labor as a commodity in order to support themselves, with some leisure activities; Finally, Life-Mode III comprises managers and professionals. For present purposes, Life-Mode I is difficult to ascertain from census records. Most of the early farmers and women without listed occupations are likely in this category, but farming changed substantially in practice and orientation in the 20th century (Bousquette, Chapter 3). Farmers listed as working on their own account, then, are classified as Life-Mode I, whereas those with designations as an employer are Life-Mode III. The bulk of these changes occurred in Clay County after 1940, so I assume that earlier farmers tended to belong to this group. The distinction between Life-Modes II and III, then, consists of whether an individual is a hired laborer for the former or owns their own business for the latter.

Certainly, changes from Life-Mode I to Life-Mode II (or Life-Mode III) are consistent with a verticalizing pattern. They reflect shifts from interdependent relationships with multiplex ties to greater differentiations of associations and uniplex ties. Furthermore, the organization of occupations into these categories provides a consistent means of classification across time-periods, as well as in comparison with other studies of language shift in this framework (e.g.,Frey2013;Bousquette,Chapter3;Johnson,Chapter2).Patternsofhousehold language use and changes in Life-Modes over time are discussed further in Sections 4.4 and 4.5. First, I describe Ulen’s settlement history, demographics, and local institutions (newspapers, schools, and churches) that provide the backdrop for the community-wide economic changes that led to shifts in language use in and around the community.

4.3 Ulen's early history, newspaper, churches, and schools

Around 1871, Norwegian Ole Ulen arrived in Clay County, Minnesota. Clay County is located in the northwestern portion of the state, approximately 40 miles northeast of present-day Fargo, North Dakota. Nearly 20 years prior, Ole, his wife, Torgunn, and their daughters left their home in Flå, in the mountainous region of Hallingdal in central Norway, and made their way to southern Minnesota, before moving northwest and establishing the community that would bear the name "Ulen" (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 12–13). This region of Minnesota became a destination for other Norwegian immigrants from Hallingdal (Hallingdøler), Trøndelag (Trøndere), and other rural areas in central and northern Norway (Natvig 2016; Cederström 2018). Ulen Township was founded in 1881 and Ulen Village was incorporated in 1886, after the Duluth and Manitoba Railroad came through, which facilitated the movement of both people and commercial goods to and from the community (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 42–3; Cederstro¨m 2018). Dale Holman, President of the Ulen Museum, explains:

When the railroad came through, they built […] they started building up closer and the town, [which] was actually incorporated in 1886, although there were people here before then […] But that really gave the impetus for them to getting going and settlers started building houses in town and they started some businesses and stuff and they got a post office and it grew to about 550 to 575, 580. That was the biggest it's been, and it's maintained that population since then. (Holman 2016)

The railroad provided the conditions for Ulen to become a permanent community. It brought Norwegian and other immigrants approximately 550 and 650 miles from the Midwestern port cities Milwaukee and Chicago, respectively. It provided a way into and a way out of northwestern Minnesota for both people and goods. However, it was not the presence of the railroad, and the physical and geographical connections to outside communities that it offered, that solely contributed to language shift. It was the infrastructure provided by the railroad that facilitated human mobility, participation in secondary and tertiary markets, and other connections to external systems as an effect of later verticalizing community orientations.

Ulen and the neighboring areas of Clay County have strong connections to Norway and Scandinavia. According to the 1900 US Federal Census, approximately 27% of the population of the village and the township was of Scandinavian origin (193 from Norway and 11 from Sweden). Furthermore, more than half of the American-born population had at least one Scandinavian parent, resulting in a combined percentage of 78% of Ulen residents withScandinavian(primarilyNorwegian)background(seeFigure4.1).Theremaining quarter of the residents were migrants from other parts of the United

States whose lineage is either non-Scandinavian or unknown, immigrants from Germany, Prussia, and Switzerland, and two immigrants from Canada. In spite of strong Scandinavian heritage in Ulen, and a population that has supported the maintenance of the Norwegian language for generations, it appears that the people moving to and staying in Ulen – whether from the United States or Europe – learned English, at least as a second language. Furthermore, they appeared to have learned English early – a striking contrast with many

other immigrant communities with comparably high degrees of household monolingualism in the heritage language (e.g., Wilkerson and Salmons 2008; 2012). According to the 1900 Census, only 120 individuals (75 from the township and 45 from the village) reported not being able to speak English, amounting to 16.8% and 14.2% of the township and village populations, respectively. Although no direct language information is provided, based on immigration patterns, most of these individuals likely spoke Norwegian. Over 80% of the population reported knowing English by 1900. Language data in censuses from the following decades indicate a high degree of bilingualism in the community almost from its very beginning.

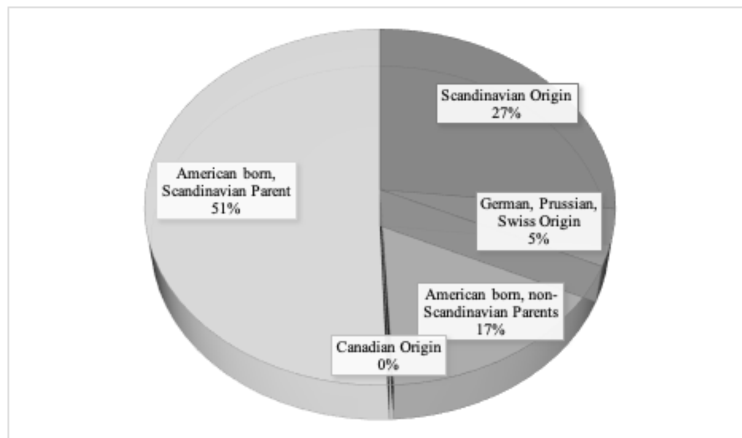

Fig. 4.1. Combined Ulen village and township population demographics, 1900

English-language institutions in the community were established early. The local newspaper, The Ulen Union (now the Clay County Union), was founded in 1896 and published exclusively in English (Chronicling America). Norwegian-language newspapers, however, were readily available in Ulen. In linguistic and ethnographic interviews (see Cederstro¨m 2018), Norwegian heritage speakers today report having issues of the Decorah-posten, a Norwegian newspaper printed in Decorah, Iowa, in their homes as children. Although a Norwegian-language domain, Decorah-posten was a part of a system located outside of the local community. The residents of Ulen may have had access to Norwegian-language newspapers, but they had little to no autonomy in determining their content, including the language in which they were printed. For Norwegians, like many immigrants, religious institutions were a central social structure (see also Brown, Chapter 5 this volume). Norwegian immigrants brought many of the struggles that the Lutheran Church in Norway was enduring to the United States. Chief among these was a split between the Church of Norway, with which the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America (Norwegian Synod) was associated, and popular reformists often referred to as Haugeans, after the popular Norwegian revivalist Hans Nielsen Hauge (Pederson 1992: 117–19). Individual congregations' orientations toward either the Norwegian Synod or reformers spurred doctrinal battles that were often exacerbated in the American context. New churches sought to establish and maintain their presence in the new county: "the squabbling created major schisms in the Norwegian Synod, divided the Norwegian-American congregations, and spawned several independent Norwegian Lutheran synods" (Pederson 1992: 120). One of these new synods was the United Synod, which sought a middle ground between the two positions in the hope of unifying Norwegian American Lutherans. This strategy appears to have been successful, as the Norwegian Synod, the United Synod, and the Hauge Synod joined in 1917, creating the

Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (Pederson 1992: 123). Inevitably, such mergers among individual congregations brought previously distinct groups of worshippers together, reinforcing hierarchical organization of the church. Although church organization represented a vertical structure from the beginning, these mergers consolidated decision-making power over church doctrine and practices for Norwegian American Lutheran churches under the leadership of one synod, moving the locus of that power even further away from the small, local congregations.

Shortly after the creation of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, leaders battled over proposals to unite with English Lutheran congregations in order to increase membership and remove foreign associations with a Norwegian, and Norwegian-speaking, church (Haugen 1969: 274–5). They changed the language of documentation to English in 1928, and in 1946, the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America became the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Haugen 1969: 275–6), distancing the church from its Norwegian character and origin. While the downstream effects of these policies likely varied from church to church, by the late 1920s, there was no longer an official requirement for Norwegian-speaking clergy. Church leaders sought to bring Norwegian American Lutheranism fully into an American Lutheran fold, and those policies and orientations pushed toward the use of English as a language of church affairs and worship.

With respect to Ulen and the neighboring areas, most of the churches were founded in the late 1800s and early 1900s, holding services in homes and schoolhouses before the congregations could secure permanent church buildings (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 159–70). Over time, these more geographically isolated churches were forced to either close, move, or merge with existing congregations in the area. For example, Syre Lutheran Church, founded in 1904, closed in November 1966 due to dwindling membership (Centennial Book Committee 1985:159). Jevnaker Lutheran Church, organized by some of the first Norwegians in the Ulen area in the 1880s, joined with two nearby congregations in Borup and Fenton in 1918 (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 160). Soon thereafter, they began incorporating English services and religious education: "The congregation moved from the use of Norwegian language and by 1928, the first group of confirmands received instruction in the English language" (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 160). This change in practice coincides with the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America's policy to use English in official documents.

Ulen itself boasted three churches: the Ulen United Church (est. 1876), the Calvary Lutheran Church (est. 1878), and the Ulen Congregational Church (est. 1900; Centennial Book Committee 1985: 160–5). Ulen Congregational was the smallest of these churches, with 26 members in 1920. What is more, it was the English-language church in town: "The membership was never large, but then it must be remembered that there were two other churches in town and they were mainly Norwegian" (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 163). This church continued well into the 20th century; it was decided on November 29, 1957 that it would close, and that the congregation would sell the building (Centennial Books Committee 1985: 164).

The two other churches, Calvary Lutheran and Ulen United, belonging to the Norwegian Synod and United Synods, respectively, represent the split between Norwegian American

Lutheran churches, later reconciled in the early 20th century. Although these synods officially merged in 1917, talks of merging these two congregations in Ulen did not occur until December 1920, when the reverend of the United Church resigned (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 160). On February 10, 1921, representatives of the congregations voted unanimously to merge and become Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 160). A month later, a meeting was set to discuss the organization of outlying church congregations as well; Syre Lutheran Church joined the Bethlehem charge and three neighboring congregations – Atlanta, Keene, and Salem — merged into a distinct congregation (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 168), and were fully incorporated into the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.
Through local and national congregational mergers and consolidations, and a shift in the church's official focus from "Norwegian" to "Lutheran," the communities that these churches served were subsequently adjusted. As the priorities of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, later the Evangelical Lutheran Church, changed between the 1920s and 1940s, churches in Ulen followed suit and gradually adjusted their programming to accommodate more English speakers (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 165–70). Brown (Chapter 5) finds similar trends and effects among Old Order Amish in Pennsylvania, where a decentralized tradition of worshipping in houses gave way to the hierarchical organization of national Amish-Mennonite fellowships. For the Ulen-area churches, these are based on a set of decisions from church officials that represent congregations' changes in orientation, from serving small, local groups of Norwegian Americans adhering to one of several interpretations of Lutheran canon to making the church attractive to a relatively more heterogeneous group of worshippers. As a consequence of the shift in orientation from Norwegian to American, persuaded by national church leaders to appeal to larger and more varied populations, Ulen-area churches gradually abandoned the use of Norwegian in favor of English.

Like the churches, schools are another example of the consolidation of local institutions. Many schools in the Norwegian-American communities in northwestern Minnesota were conducted in English. For Ulen, most of the records from the earliest country schools have been lost or are presently unavailable (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 126). However, a teacher, Ina Anderson from Ada, Minnesota, describes her experience from 1886 teaching in a school in Twin Valley – approximately 13 miles directly north of Ulen – in Norman County, Minnesota:

The [County Superintendent] and his wife could speak English, some of his family and most of the pupils spoke only Norwegian, very little English, and I had never heard Norwegian spoken before. But we got on finely. […] I am proud to say that the children learned to speak pretty fair English before I left. (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 133)

The extent to which the country schools in and around Ulen established their own curriculum and educated their pupils in English or Norwegian – or both – is not clear. Because many of their records no longer exist, most of the information about them consists of approximately when they were established and by whom. The general educational trend, though, was that pupils were educated in homes and then in local country schools until the 1940s and 1950s (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 126). In 1910, only one of the five teachers living in Ulen was in a household classified as "Presumed Monolingual English,"

suggesting that teachers at the earliest schools had strong ties to local community members and Norwegian speakers. Even if English-language education was a preferred practice in the schools, it is likely that some accommodation for Norwegian-speaking pupils was possible, and second-language speakers conducted some of the English-language instruction. By 1940, however, there were two school teachers listed in the Ulen census, neither of whom was living in Ulen in 1930, consistent with a decrease in the inward orientation of the local school system. Today's Norwegian heritage speakers, having gone to school in Ulen in the 1930s and 1940s, report exclusive English-language instruction.

Because the language of instruction was likely English, country schools represented dual community patterns in this setting. Although they connected the community to the broader American society via English-language education, they served the families in the immediate area as locally controlled institutions for socializing and educating children. Schools were social domains where Norwegian could still be spoken outside of the classroom. Such a dual alignment still contributes to the maintenance of the heritage language by supporting community cohesion and establishing distinct domains of language use (Bousquette and Ehresmann 2010).

Despite the early presence of these, and likely other, English-language domains in Ulen, Norwegian persisted throughout the community and was a first language learned in the home well into the 1930s and 1940s, especially on the farms of Ulen Township (Natvig 2016; Cederstro¨m 2018). Contemporary Norwegian heritage speakers born within this time period typically report not learning English until attending school, and speaking primarily Norwegian with their parents, neighbors, and local business owners and shopkeepers. These heritage speakers are the last generation of American-Norwegians in Ulen to have learned Norwegian as a home language. The break in Norwegian transmission occurs at least 40 years after the founding of the only local newspaper (written in English), at least 30 years after the establishment of some English-language education, and a decade or two following the official adoption of English for church records. The mere presence of English in the community did not in and of itself establish a community norm that promoted English over Norwegian as the primary mode of communication. Rather, Norwegian–English bilingualism in Ulen appeared to be a fairly stable phenomenon from the town's inception, enduring for more than three generations. Therefore, exposure to the majority language did not induce the loss of Norwegian as a socially viable community language. It was not until approximately the 1930s and 1940s, when social patterns rapidly changed to a more outwardly directed and dependent set of systems, that Norwegian–English bilingualism in Ulen began to become an untenable social practice.

Using the local schools as an example, it is not necessarily majority language instruction, but a school's incorporation into extra-community systems, that disrupts the social patterns that previously supported the community language. As in many rural areas, country schools in and around Ulen were consolidated into larger districts:

In the years from 1940 to 1950, most of the rural schools closed and children were sent to school in town by bus. This began a whole new era and the horizons of education expanded – not all for the best as some will tell you. Nevertheless, the schools changed and when it became apparent that the existence of small town schools was threatened, another process

of consolidation began and now the elementary pupils in the area attend school in Hitterdal through the sixth grade and the high school is housed in Ulen. (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 126)

Subsequently, the Ulen and Hitterdal districts merged in 1969 into the presentday Ulen–Hitterdal district (Cederstro¨m 2018). In these larger school districts, teachers would have likely taught pupils a curriculum vetted at the county and state levels of government, removed from the direct decision-making powers of the local community.
This period of school consolidation in the 1940s coincides with the time in which Norwegian begins to lose traction and starts to give way to English. This process disrupts social patterns and individual relationships, and these effects in the school system target children specifically. They know and become friends with children from a variety of nearby communities, not just their siblings or the children with whom they work and play on neighboring farms. The consolidation of the school system that took place during the 1940s and 1950s widened children's social networks and fostered a change in their relationships to those with weaker social ties. The social categories "classmate," "friend," "neighbor," "coworker," and "sibling" may all consist of different individuals in the broader school district, whereas classmates in the small, local country schools likely functioned in most of these roles. As a result, this weakening of dense and interconnected social ties contributes to diminishing social pressure to maintain Norwegian-language domains among school-aged children. These types of changes reflect the "differentiation of interests and association" (Warren 1972: 54), an aspect of the Great Change that greatly affects how individuals organize and interact with one another. These differentiated associations result in fewer, or weaker, Norwegian-language social networks for children, while the locus of Norwegian as a language domain retracts more toward family and household contexts.

4.4 Household language and division of labor in Ulen Village

Even though the local newspaper and the schools were English-medium institutions, Norwegian was a mode of communication for decades throughout the local economy. For example, David Hilde, a volunteer at the Ulen Museum, recounts going to a grocery store as a child in the late 1930s or early 1940s, hearing patrons order products from the shopkeeper in Norwegian (Hilde 2016). US Federal Census data suggest that the percentage of monolingual English-speaking households in Ulen Village held steady between 1910 and 1930 at around or slightly above 50% (see Figure 4.2). Members of approximately half of the households, therefore, were likely able to speak Norwegian – or another mutually intelligible Scandinavian language such as Swedish – over a period of five and a half decades. Prior to the collection of concrete records of language use in 1910, it appears that the people of Ulen Village maintained a stable bilingual community.

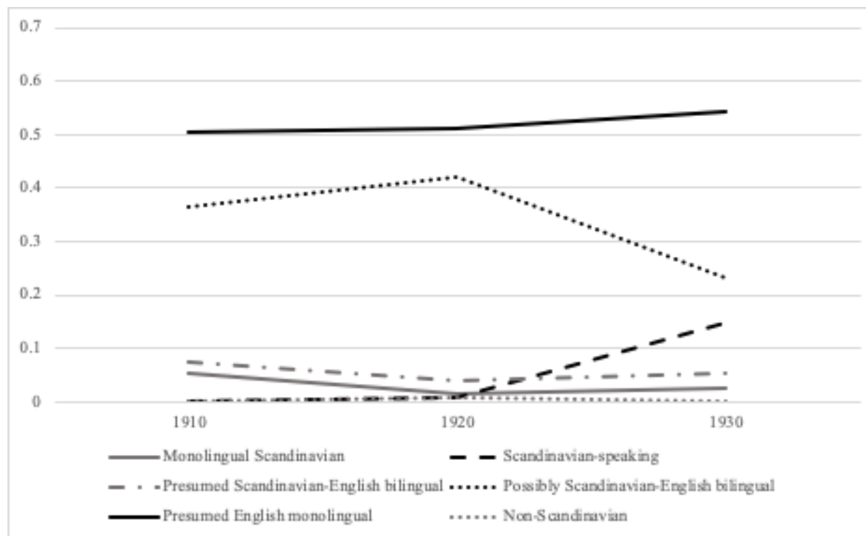

Fig. 4.2. Language categories as a percentage of households in Ulen Village (1910–1930)

Further evidence of a strongly bilingual community is that in 1910, only 17 individuals (out of 313 reports) indicate knowing only Norwegian. These numbers are in stark contrast to communities like Hustisford and Kiel, Wisconsin, where over 20% of the population was monolingual German in 1910 (Wilkerson and Salmons 2012; Frey 2013, and Chapter 6; Bousquette, Chapter 3). Of course, it is unclear what knowing English precisely entails, and reports of English ability on censuses likely skew high. The low number of monolingual Norwegian speakers in 1910 and the relative stability of bilingualism over the next 20 years shows that linguistic isolation is a poor metric for predicting language maintenance over time. These findings are contrary to, e.g., Kloss (1966), who considers the presence of language islands as one factor contributing to language maintenance. Although a majority of Ulen's early population had direct connections to Scandinavia, the data indicate that Ulen was not a monolingual Norwegian community. The continuation of social patterns and institutions that sustained Norwegian-language domains provided a means by which monolingual Norwegian individuals could participate in their local societies. These structures further supported the use of the immigrant language as a meaningful communicative tool. Although the 1910 US Census lists only three monolingual Norwegian speakers with an occupation, one of them – Gulleck Moe – was a retail merchant at a grocery store. In the 34 years since he emigrated from Norway in 1876, it appears that Mr. Moe did not need to learn English to succeed at a business in Ulen. Like the shopkeeper David Hilde describes, Gulleck Moe would have taken in-person grocery orders and packaged them for his customers. The fact that he reports knowing only Norwegian suggests that he was able to conduct his business, from possibly purchasing agricultural products to interacting with local villagers, solely in Norwegian. Furthermore, he is the only grocer listed in the 1910 census. At that time, then, it appears that some level of Norwegian was necessary, or at the very least advantageous, for access to food and daily goods on the market. That a Norwegian-speaking grocer continued operation until the mid-20th century further underscores the stability of Norwegian as a community language in Ulen.

The village of Ulen and its surrounding farm communities supported relatively stable bilingual Norwegian/Scandinavian–English domains and institutions for decades, eventually

giving way to English, the primary language in Ulen today. The shift to English at the expense of Norwegian is marked, in both the village and township of Ulen, by institutions and individuals increasingly developing and depending on systems and relationships from outside the local community. As in Ulen schools and churches, occurring earlier and more quickly in the former than in the latter, the labor force in the Village verticalized during the 1930s. The Works Progress Administration, later Work Projects Administration, (WPA) programs introduced the US Federal Government as a major source of employment and, with it, changes in labor practices characteristic of the Great Change (Warren 1972; Bousquette, Chapter 3). Ulen Township experienced changes in agricultural practices as farming became more mechanized and less dependent upon human labor (see Section 4.5). Not only do these changes connect local farmers to external markets and economic interests (see Bousquette, Chapter 3), they contribute to the weakening of social networks that had supported the heritage language. The results for both Ulen Village and Township suggest that people became increasingly reliant on social and economic connections that increasingly extended beyond their neighbors.

Table 4.2 Life-Modes in Ulen Village by number and percentage from 1910 to 1940

	1910		1920		1930		1940	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Life-Mode I	11	8.0	22	10.7	6	4.7	4	1.9
Life-Mode II	89	64.5	139	67.8	93	72.1	167	75.9
Life-Mode III	38	27.5	44	21.4	30	23.3	49	22.2

Shifts in labor patterns from 1910 to 1940, reflected through changes in LifeModes of listed occupations, for Ulen Village (Table 4.2) show that during this period, work in town primarily falls into the category of Life-Mode II. The percentage of wage labor was between 64% and 68% in 1910 and 1920, increasing to over 72% in 1930 and to over 75% in 1940. Farmers residing in Ulen Village are considered as Life-Mode I here, although it is difficult to determine the extent to which these individuals engaged in subsistence farming or farming within the broader market economy. Because Ulen has consistently had a largely agrarian economy, it is likely that Ulen Village farmers produced goods for both purposes. In each decade, the number of farmers in the village was fairly low and shows a sharp decrease, from 13 reported "farmer" occupations in 1920 to only two in 1940. The general trend by which Life-Modes II and III increase at the expense of Life-Mode I reflects a change in outwardly oriented labor practices and, as Bousquette (2020 and Chapter 3) argues, the critical domain for language shift. These changes in occupation appear to have been a fundamental driving force for differentiation of people's relationships and social networks that connect them and their communities to external systems at the expense of the strong local ties that support heritage language maintenance.

After Ulen saw its population decline from 590 in 1920 to 452 in 1930, a decrease of 23.4%, people began to move into the village – mainly from surrounding rural areas of Clay County – after 1935. Of the 535 individuals who reported their 1935 residence in the 1940 census, 171 of them (31.9%) had a different residence in 1940 than in 1935, 108 of those living in rural Clay County. In a period of five years, Ulen experienced an influx of people likely seeking new and better economic opportunities during the Great Depression at a time when

farming in the area was undergoing early stages of mechanization and, therefore, depended less on human labor for its operation.

One of the principal causes for the increase in both population and wagelabor occupations for Ulen in 1940 was the implementation of New Deal works projects after 1935. Of the 211 occupations listed in the 1940 Census, 63 of them (29.8%) were designated as "Wage or salary worker in Government work." Most of these occupations (54) are classified as Life-Mode II, primarily consisting of manual labor for the development of Ulen's infrastructure – mainly plumbing and road-building. Slightly less than half (28, 44%) of workers employed in government work resided outside of Ulen in 1935. These individuals, as well as the new Ulen residents engaged in private work, brought their spouses and children and contributed to new social networks and relationships. A substantial portion of Ulen's earlier population increases came about through Norwegian immigration, which supported Norwegian language domains in the town's social and economic spheres. However, the more recent demographic shift reflects not only more individuals for whom Norwegian was likely not a common language, but also a marked uptick in the town's reliance on extra-community systems for employment, and accordingly a strengthening of English-language domains, via the influence of the US federal government in the local labor market. There is surely considerable variation regarding the extent to which this newer labor force in Ulen integrated into the existing social groups of the community or established their own newer social structures. What is clear, however, is that at this time and afterwards, the language of both the community and the home shifted almost exclusively to English.

WPA projects in Ulen illustrate the verticalization of its work environments, which contributed to a division of labor. These infrastructure-building projects introduced new jobs that prioritized the specialization of specific skills and tasks. These occupations include "Grubber," "Ditch Digger," "Electric Digger," "Road Graveller," and "Road Maintainer," among others. Although these jobs likely did not continue after the completion of these projects, nor after the end of the New Deal, they indicate that workers were equipped with specialized sets of skills in order to complete a compartmentalized portion of a broader project. The division of labor into ever more narrowly defined functions is a key process of the Great Change. It marks a change in community patterns:

People become united through this complex interdependent network of specialized effort on which they are jointly dependent, united as functionally interrelated parts of a complex system, rather than by virtue of sharing the same type of occupational skills, problems, and points of view. (Warren 1972: 56)

This expansion of individualized functions takes over the role of the family as the center of economic, recreational, and service functions (Warren 1972: 57), and disperses individuals into larger, yet weaker, social networks. People and the community are then increasingly dependent upon regional and national economic systems to manage and distribute the products of this ever more specialized labor force.

Driving the labor specialization process, a National Youth Administration (NYA) school was established in Ulen as part of the WPA, providing this type of training for unemployed youth aged 16–35 (Roosevelt Institute). This education could not only serve the students as

workers on local WPA projects but also provide the means for them take advantage of those skills for opportunities outside of their local farming communities and small towns. These opportunities offered workers access to external systems and communities, contributing to more diffuse and weaker social associations. By 1940, Ulen had become more reliant on external systems not only for employment but also for education. Along with the NYA school, the government supported 16 teacher and teacher's assistant positions (an increase from 11 in 1930), 14 of which were occupied by people residing in Ulen Village and two from Ulen Township. Ten of these individuals did not live in Ulen in 1935. Although schools around Ulen had probably been instructing in English for decades and had drawn from outside the area for teachers early on, they underwent further changes as additional instructors from outside of the community came between 1935 and 1940, even prior to the widespread consolidation of country schools.

Of course, these trends continued after the 1940s and up to the present day, with roads, interstates, and highways replacing the railroad as the major transportation network and conduit for external social and economic orientations. Dale Holman, reflecting on the changes he has experienced in Ulen during his lifetime, describes social changes after the 1940s:

It used to be when I was growing up as a young kid, Saturday night was a big night in Ulen, because there was a movie going on at the theater, the stores were open, there were a lot more people, the farms were smaller, so you had a lot more people living in the country. We have townships now that don't have many much more than hundred people and they used to have four or five hundred people in a township. So and back then, even in in the late fifties and early sixties, people didn't go to Fargo-Moorhead every week like they do now for groceries or doing things there. Maybe [they] went to the Twin Cities once a year, if that, you know. And back then we had a bus that came through here twice a day. We had two passenger trains that came through town, so it was things going on like that and we don't have that anymore. (Holman 2017)

From his account, up into the 1960s the people of Ulen maintained closer contact with other members of the community for both entertainment and economic purposes. Ulen hosted local businesses that served the needs of the community and allowed its members to maintain some level of decisionmaking power over their institutions. Although most of these institutions had undergone the shift to English by this time, this was the period with the latest evidence of institutional support for Norwegian: Occasional church services were held in Norwegian for the last regularly attending Norwegian-speaking parishioners (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 164). Furthermore, Mr. Holman describes the declining population of the surrounding townships and, accordingly, the decrease in the number of individuals able to make a living farming, either through the operation of the farms themselves or as farm laborers. This trend is the product of systemic changes in agricultural practices that affected farming throughout the United States. Farmers integrating into the market economy became more reliant on machines at the expense of human and animal labor. As farming became more mechanized and individualized, populations of farming communities dwindled, contributing to looser-knit personal and economic relationships that increasingly extended to wider geographical areas. Since its founding in 1886, the village of Ulen and its surrounding farms enjoyed a symbiotic relationship that maintained Norwegian as a language of commerce and work in the agricultural area. As their connection and the

personal relationships it fostered became less interconnected under verticalization pressures, the support for Norwegian as a viable communicative tool in these interactions waned. I now turn to an analysis of the changes in farming practices and their effects on individuals' relationships and social networks in detail.

4.5 Farming and language in Ulen Township

Like the rest of the United States, farming in Ulen underwent dramatic changes due to increased mechanization and a shift from subsistence farming to cultivating and producing agricultural goods for larger economic markets (see Bousquette, Chapter 3). The community that solidified around the railroad which facilitated the transfer of people and goods saw grain elevators as a major source of employment, and they were fundamental to Ulen's occupational landscape. Grain elevators too underwent a period of consolidation. At the beginning of the 20th century, Ulen had between three and four grain elevators. Currently there is one, West Central AG Services, formed in 2000 through the merger of Ulen's Tri-County Coop and Fenton Farmers Coop Elevator in Fenton, Minnesota, located 250 miles south of Ulen.

The Norwegians who farmed in the American Upper Midwest continued to do so using customs from their homeland. In particular, the Norwegian farmers practiced communal work, a concept known in Norwegian as dugnad, where everyone was expected to assume an equal portion of the labor (Pederson 1992: 147). Community-oriented farming and labor practices are certainly not unique to Norwegians. For example, Finnish-Americans in Wisconsin's cutover practiced small-scale yeoman farming (Johnson, Chapter 2). The Cherokee organization of labor, ᎦᏚᎩ (gadugi), discussed in Frey (2013, and Chapter 6) closely parallels dugnad, which fostered strong relationships within the community, solidifying Norwegian as a mode of communication with which Norwegian farmers continued the farming techniques they learned in the old country.

Regarding language use, these community-wide farming practices provide insight into the types of relationships people had and maintained with each other. The vertical pattern represented by the shift to a commercialized agricultural market puts pressure on farmers to increase their yields and move toward a greater reliance on heavy farm machinery at the expense of human labor (see details below). Therefore, interdependent, communal farming gives way to agribusiness. The shift to mechanized and individualized farming marks the opposite community response to what Johnson (Chapter 2) finds for the Finnish-American communities in northern Wisconsin, where co-ops were established for the benefits of all farms as a collective. Contrary to the coops serving a language maintenance structure for Finnish, the shifting of Ulenarea farmers toward integration into regional and national farming economies led to a reduction in size of a previously strong Norwegian-language network. As individual farmers realign their labor within the boundaries of their own farms, the strong social ties that existed over several acres of neighboring farmsteads weaken, resulting in the decline of one of the last Norwegian-language domains in the community. That is, when farmers no longer participated in dugnad-style farming, the importance of Norwegian as a socially and economically viable communicative tool to disseminate farming knowledge and its practices decreased accordingly.

Many of the contemporary heritage Norwegian speakers in the area grew up in farming communities outside of Ulen, and range in year of birth from 1923 to 1941 (Natvig 2016: 255). Based on the speakers' birth years, the 1930s–40s are critical for the investigation language shift in Ulen-area agricultural communities. This is the last known time-period in which children learned and spoke Norwegian at home, and at this time English use was variable. When comparing his family to that of his aunt and uncle, a heritage speaker recounts in a Norwegian-language interview: "Det var en blanding. De lærde ungan sine en blanding av norsk og engelsk. Vi lærde ekte norsk vi. Og vi lærde ekte engelsk på skula" [It was a mixture. They taught their kids a mixture of Norwegian and English. We learned real Norwegian. And we learned real English at school]. By the late 1930s and early 1940s parents were making a conscious decision about home language, with variation regarding what languagechildrenspokeathome.USFederalCensusdatashowsasharpdeclinein "Possibly bilingual Scandinavian" between 1910 and 1930, dipping under 30% from over 50% of the township's households (Figure 4.3). Furthermore, the percentage of assumed monolingual English households increased markedly, especially in comparison to the corresponding trends in Ulen Village. In the township, monolingual English speakers accounted for approximately 30% of households in 1910, rose to 50% in 1920, and finally increased to over 60% in 1930.

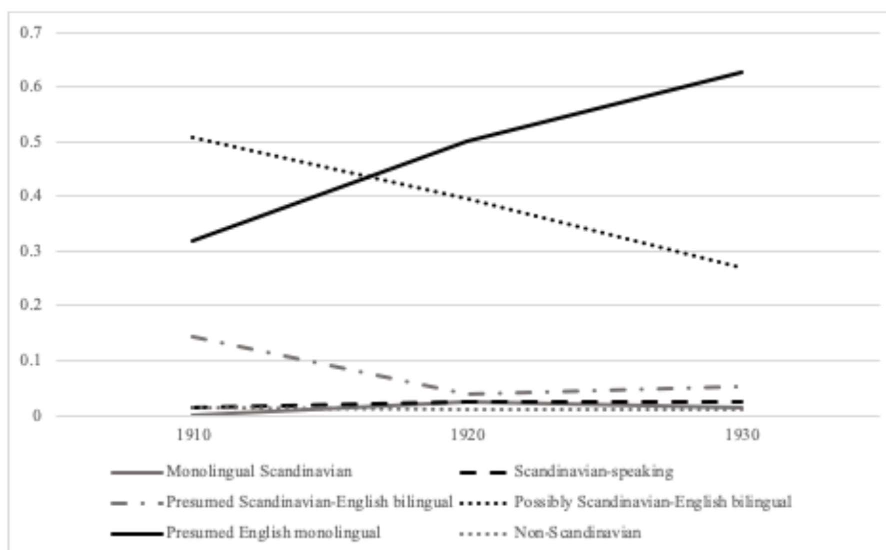

Fig. 4.3. Language categories as a percentage of households in Ulen Township (1910–1930)

The census data suggest that Norwegian as a mode of communication for continuing agricultural practices was beginning to become a practice of a minority of farmers by the 1930s and 1940s, although contemporary heritage speakers report speaking Norwegian on the farms they grew up on at this time. It is between the 1930s and 1940s that farmers in Ulen Township also started seeing a shift from subsistence farming to farmer-employers. In 1930, 67 farmers in the township were farming on their "Own Account," considered here to be Life-Mode I, whereas there was only one farmer listed as an employer (Life-Mode III). In 1940, however, only 31 farmers were working on their own account compared to 19 listed as employers. These changes indicate shifts toward Life-Mode III among farmers, which contributes to the weakening of social network ties that were established through the

communal subsistence farming practices – the networks that supported Norwegian for approximately 60 years.

The changes marking the shift from subsistence farming to increased participation in larger, broader commercial markets are parallel to additional demographic indications and outcomes for verticalizing farming patterns. Here I take up changes in the types of farm operators (i.e., "Tenure") and the density of tractors on farms – as a metric for the mechanization of farm labor – to investigate indications of the proliferation of commercial farming markets that put economic pressure on individual farms to increase the yield of products available for sale. These data come from the USDA Census of Agriculture Historical Archive, records for Clay County, Minnesota, from the years 1900–1950.

The USDA Census of Agriculture shows a steady decrease in full ownership of farms from 1900 to 1935 (Figure 4.4). Even taking partial owners into consideration, the percentage of farm operators with some ownership in the farms on which they work falls from 85.7% to 54.3% during those decades. The fall in farm operator ownership corresponds to a rise in tenant farmers, increasing from 13.4% in 1900 to 45.3% in 1935. The complementary shifts in farm ownership and farm tenancy result from both an increase in the number of farms in Clay County (Figure 4.5) – from 1,738 in 1910 to 2,207 in 1935 – and a reduction in ownership totals – from 1,709 in 1900 to 1,198 in 1935 (including full and partial owners in the latter). However, the number of owners rises from 1940 to 1950, but with a gradual decline in total number of farms and a sharp drop in the number of tenant farms, which fell from 940 in 1940 to 630 in 1945 and finally to 411 in 1950.

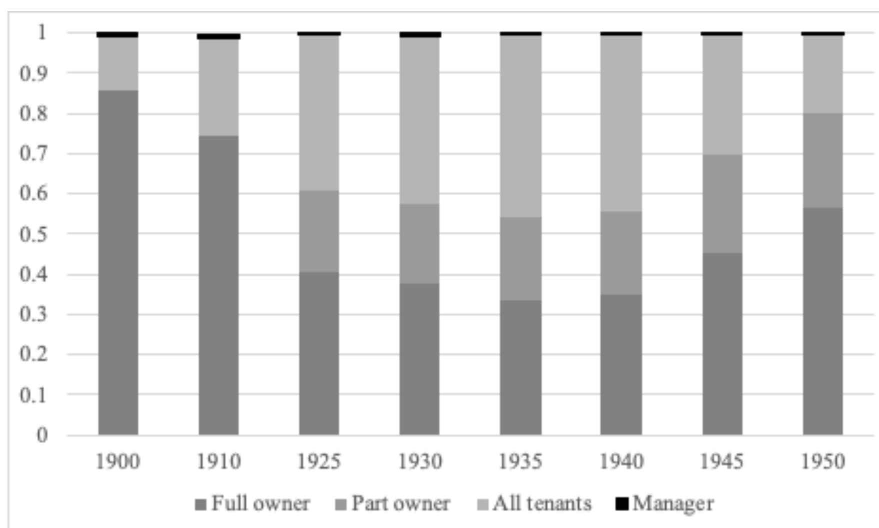

Fig. 4.4. Percentage of farms by tenure of operator in Clay County, MN (1900–1950)

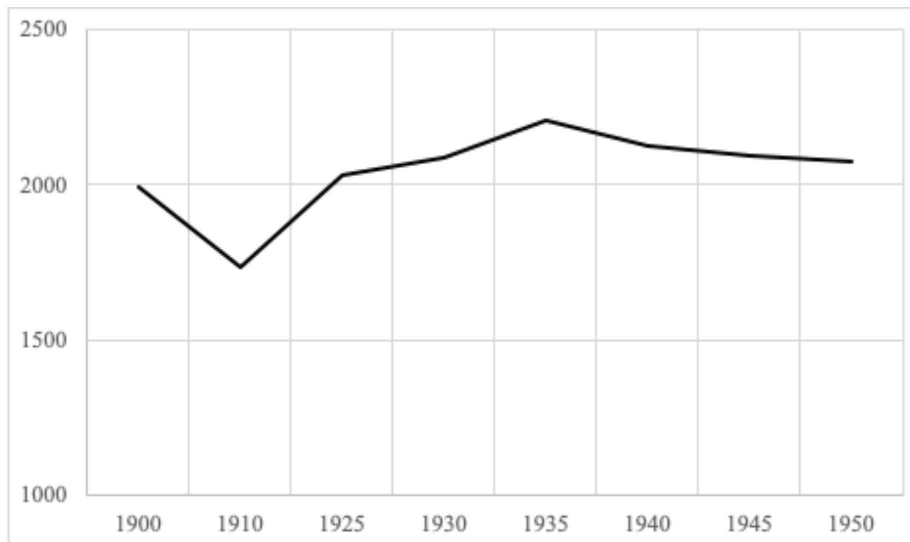

Fig. 4.5. Number of farms in Clay County, MN (1900–1950)

Tenant farmers grew in number from 1900 to 1935, coinciding with an increase in farms. However, the trend from 1940 to 1950 – increased ownership (in raw numbers and by percentage), coupled with a considerable reduction in tenancy – corresponds with the increased mechanization of farm labor throughout that period of time. This reliance on tractors and other heavy farm machinery was available to farmers with the means to purchase them (or offer collateral for loans), likely an insurmountable hurdle for many tenant farmers.

In 1940, approximately 57% (1,248 out of 2,128) of farms reporting in Clay County owned at least one tractor. Five years later, tractor ownership was almost 81% (1,692/2,097) of farms, and in another five years it would reach approximately 85% (1,767/2,075). Not only were tractors used on more and more farms in postwar Clay County, but farmers were often purchasing more than one, demonstrating a shift from cooperative farming to more individualized enterprises. Changes in technology, and its more pervasive use, influence core industries to move away from their previous community centers, but also disrupt the labor force by demanding new and different worker skills (Warren 1972: 363). After World War II, farmers in Ulen were increasingly participating in more independently structured farming.

The number of tractors in all farms in Clay Country increased from 0.68 (1,438/2,128) in 1940 to 1.47 (3,054/2,075) in 1950. Taking into consideration only the farms with tractors, there were 1.73 (3,054/1,767) tractors per farm by 1950, an increase from 1.15 (1,438/1,248) in 1940. Finally, by 1950 only 286 farms in Clay County (fewer than 14%) relied only on horses or mules for work power, and 823 (almost 40%) used tractors exclusively. Tallies of farm equipment are not available before 1940 (farm machinery was recorded based on value); however, it is clear that the period 1940–50 saw dramatic shifts toward the mechanization of farm labor. Accounts of the history of grain harvesting in Ulen-area farms confirm that there was sporadic use of combine harvesters and threshing machines after World War I. It was not until after 1940 that “the old binder reluctantly gave way to the first crude, clumsy, and slow-moving combines” (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 80).
In her analysis of Norwegian-American farmers in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, Pederson (1992) shows parallels with farming in Clay County, Minnesota. Specifically, that changes in

farming practices resulted in a loss of interdependent and community farming practices. That is, farmers worked their own farms with their own machines. She elaborates:

Technology and the complete integration of the farm household into the market have eliminated the functional interdependence of these communities which once characterized their work and social environment. The former intimacy associated with the tradition of [dugnad] disappeared, and the rhythm and texture of work is now structured not by the human landscape of families and communities but by the machines which have replaced the rigs and community crews. Interaction between neighbors has declined as their interdependence declined. (Pederson 1992: 156)

These changes in farming practices and in how farming communities interact through communal labor are echoed in Ulen: “No longer does it take 10 to 12 men, a couple of dozen horses, and the cooperation of a whole neighborhood, to get the threshing done. One man, one machine, and with the assistance of a grain hauler, can do the work of a whole threshing crew” (Centennial Book Committee 1985: 80). These observations are supported by the USDA Censuses. In 1939, 208 farms in Clay County, Minnesota, report 1,033 hired farm laborers, whereas only 676 hired workers are reported for 307 farms in 1949 – a decrease from an average of approximately five hired laborers per farm to just over two over the course of a decade. As the market for farmhands shrank, these workers likely sought employment elsewhere, either in other locales or in other sectors, such as through NYA programs and WPA projects, which attracted individuals who were out of work.

Agricultural goods were increasingly produced for external markets or purchased by non-local buyers. Population censuses for Ulen show a decrease in the number of local grain buyers, from four in 1930 to zero in 1940, although there are still local grain elevator managers. During this time, acreage of corn (the grain with the highest production in the county) increased from 23,430 to 35,712. Even though grains were still produced locally, even more so in 1940 than in 1930, data suggest that their purchase and sale was managed or facilitated externally. By 1950, when corn acreage increased yet again to 42,534, over 30% (599/1,972) of farmers in Clay County report traveling over 10 miles to the trading center they visited most frequently, with an average distance of seven miles traveled. As farming in Clay County intertwined more extensively with external commercial markets, farmers extended their business networks further away from their local communities. These networks are characteristic of more uniplex, rather than multiplex, social relationships.

These changes both in farming practices and in the markets in which agricultural products were ultimately sold contributed to more diffuse sets of social networks among farmers and those with whom they interacted. New markets and agricultural practices disrupted the social environments sustained by communal farming, including strong interactions between neighboring farmers, local farm laborers, and local grain buyers/merchants. These local social network changes facilitated patterns of language change (Milroy 1987; Milroy and Milroy 1992). In this case, changes were characterized by the shift to English, the socially dominant language of the people and systems, toward which the people and systems of Ulen increasingly oriented themselves. After all, the contemporary Norwegian speakers from Ulen, all of whom have childhood connections to farms and farming during the 1930s and 1940s, are the last group of Norwegian heritage speakers in Ulen. Therefore, the

generationslong practice of speaking Norwegian as a home language on the farms outside of Ulen came to a close following this period of vertical integration of the agricultural sphere.

In spite of early externally oriented structures in the church, schools, and print media, the shifts in work and economy in both Ulen Village and Ulen Township affected community social structures, coinciding with the disruption of Norwegian transmission to the subsequent generation of children. These changing social patterns further demonstrate the interconnectedness of the characteristics of the Great Change. Division of labor, for example, results not only in the specialization of the labor force but also in differentiation of interests and associations as individuals' work environments become increasingly detached from their households and local communities. Furthermore, the mechanization of farming and the shrinking of the farm labor force that follows further contributes to division of labor, as previous farm laborers seek training and employment in an ever more specialized labor force. Both the compartmentalized work structures and the ability of farmers to produce higher crop yields feed into the transfer of agriculture and work in general to profit enterprises. In the 1930s and beyond, village and township citizens were more integrated in, and dependent on, market economies that extended beyond Ulen. These economies and supply chains supported stronger connections to the larger society, including the US federal government, which brought both employment for infrastructure development and NYA training programs to the area. Finally, the distribution of the labor force both occupationally and geographically furthers urbanization and quasi-suburbanization processes. Although Ulen is not a large city, changing social patterns in the mid-20th century meant that more people were seeking work and opportunities outside the community. All of these patterns and their cumulative effects result in weakening cohesion of local social units, wider and less dense social networks, and the displacement of community patterns that fostered Norwegian–English bilingualism for more than half a century.

4.6 Conclusion

Although Ulen, Minnesota, was founded by Norwegian immigrants, a group that made up the majority of its population during its early and premechanized periods, the town was never isolated from external social structures. It was, in fact, the railroad that facilitated the town's initial population growth and provided economic opportunities for individuals to create businesses in Ulen, including pool halls, hotels, and restaurants. The railroad aided trade to and from Ulen; farmers could sell and export their grains to wider Minnesotan and American markets. In spite of these early outward-facing structures, however, the community of Ulen maintained local institutions and social patterns that supported domains for heritage language use throughout the society. Even though both the newspaper and schools were Englishlanguage domains, this appears to have been a conscious decision made by community members; the schools were not consolidated until the 1940s and 1950s, and the newspaper remained local until 2001, when it moved to nearby Hawley, Minnesota, and was renamed the Clay County Union (Chronicling America). While the churches consolidated before the schools, they (at least initially) contributed to continued Norwegian language use in social environments. Of Norwegian churches, Einar Haugen says: "The organization of the Norwegian Lutheran churches under the leadership of Norwegian clergyman developed an inner cohesiveness which obviously made for the preservation of the mother tongue. The pastors saw it as a practical matter of the preservation of their

religious faith" (Haugen 1969: 39). This commitment to the use of Norwegian as an ecclesiastical language waned during a period of consensus-building and reconciliation between previously antagonistic synods. Accordingly, the churches adjusted their language policies and began conducting their business and services in English. As the focus of Norwegian American parochial education generally shifted from Norwegian language and culture to exclusively religion after the Great Depression (Pederson 1992: 132), the church ceased to be a stronghold for the Norwegian language. For a short period in the 1940s, the surrounding farms were the last mainstay of spoken Norwegian; but this, too, declined as farming became more mechanized and individualized and farmers became more dependent upon markets further away from their homes. As the economies changed for villagers and farmers in the 1930s and 1940s, the new realities of the labor and production markets influenced the people of Ulen to strengthen external connections, resulting in diminished community autonomy and social cohesion. The social patterns that had supported Norwegian–English bilingualism since the establishment of the community in the late 1800s had all but disappeared.

The Great Change affected – and still affects – social, economic, and governmental domains variably in Ulen. Their convergence after World War II ultimately produced a situation where Norwegian use within the community waned relative to English in the everyday interactions of individuals. Both Norwegian and English were viable modes of communication early on and in a large number of public and private spaces. However, pressures to engage in the market economy, and its resultant shift to more individualized farming practices, along with Ulen's increased dependence on the US federal government for education and infrastructure through the New Deal, contributed to a weakening of social ties that supported Norwegian language use and transmission. Consequently, English became the everyday language in a vast majority of domains, and parents stopped teaching Norwegian to their children at home, marking the completion of the language shift process in Ulen.

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