# Chapter 1

# The syntax of North American Norwegian: Introduction and theoretical preliminaries

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This chapter serves as an introduction to the present volume. We provide a brief background on the Norwegian language in North America, while also highlighting how research on this language variety can be situated into the wider research program on heritage languages. A secondary function of this introduction chapter is to introduce and outline the core desiderata of syntactic theory in accordance with the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995), and the basic syntactic architecture used in most of the chapters.

## 1 Introduction

Norwegian as spoken in North America has been an object of study since the early 20th century. Early accounts (e.g. Flom 1901, 1903, 1926, Flaten 1901) focused mainly on vocabulary (particularly on loanwords) and noticeably less on structural elements of the language, such as syntax.[1] In his seminal work, Haugen (1953) includes a chapter on "the grammar of loanwords", which covers grammatical gender, inflection and compounding, but there is not much discussion

[1]Flom (1903); however, considers his findings on the gender of loanwords in a wider, theoretical context.

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of phrase- or clause-level syntax, apart from a brief section stating that Norwegian word order is similar to English and that English loanwords are mostly used in Norwegian sentences "in the position to which its word class entitle[s] it" (Haugen 1953: 457–458). Other scholars have, however, continued the tradition where Haugen and his predecessors left off, and in this volume, we present some of the insights and analyses that have been reached in recent studies on the (morpho-)syntax of North American Norwegian (NAmNo), especially over the last years.

The past few decades have borne witness to a significant increase in research centered on bi- and multi-competent individuals and populations. As a result of this upsurge in research on bi/multilingualism, there has been a growing awareness and interest in the sociolinguistic conditions in which these languages are spoken, the real-time processing demands of competing languages, and the underlying mental representations that constitute these grammars. Extra-territorial varieties of particular languages, such as Norwegian in North America, are commonly considered *heritage languages*. A widely used definition of a *heritage language* is the following provided by Rothman (2009: 156) (for further discussions, see e.g. Polinsky 2018):

> ... a language spoken at home or otherwise readily available to young children, and crucially this language is not a dominant language of the larger (national) society.

The extra-territorial varieties and the conditions in which they exist today have now been grafted into a larger, more general research program on heritage languages that includes foci on language documentation, corpus linguistics, theoretical analysis, and to a more limited extent, psycholinguistic/experimental studies (Adamou 2021). More generally, research on extra-territorial Norwegian has enhanced our understanding of general tendencies exhibited by heritage varieties of Germanic languages *a priori* (Johannessen & Salmons 2015, Johannessen & Putnam 2020, Johannessen & Salmons 2021, Page & Putnam 2015). The vast majority of Germanic heritage languages spoken today are *moribund*; i.e., the final or penultimate generation of speakers represents the final one that possesses significant proficiency in said heritage language. Extra-territorial variants of Norwegian also certainly fall into this category; however, in spite of their moribund status, the research conducted on heritage Norwegian has provided unique insights into the continued development of bi/multilingual grammars in the twilight of their existence.

Echoing the significant increase of research conducted on bi/multi-competence individuals and communities over the past few decades, research focusing on NAmNo witnessed a Renaissance of sorts in the earlier 1990s with pioneering research by Hjelde (1992). Hjelde's early work focused mainly on the Norwegian dialect of *Trøndsk* in North America. It was, however, followed by a wave of more general interest for NAmNo, in which the role of Janne Bondi Johannessen can hardly be overestimated. Johannessen initiated a series of field trips to the US and Canada from 2010 onward (see, e.g., Johannessen & Laake 2012 for some early findings from this period). Speech data collected during these trips were made available for the research community in the Corpus of American Nordic Speech (CANS, Johannessen 2015).[2] CANS is a transcribed and morphologically tagged corpus of spontaneous speech which has facilitated research in a number of areas. Important works on the syntax of NAmNo that appeared recently after, or during, the creation of CANS include (to name just very few) Larsson & Johannessen (2015) and Westergaard & Lohndal (2019) on verb placement; Anderssen & Westergaard (2012), Anderssen et al. (2018), and van Baal (2020) on possessives and (double) definiteness; Riksem (2018) and Riksem et al. (2019) on syntactic patterns of language mixing, and Eide & Hjelde (2012) on expressions of modality. Nascent research has now begun on heritage Norwegian spoken in Latin America (especially Argentina, Kinn, Lund Stokka, et al. 2024, Kinn, Hjelde, et al. 2024), necessitating the distinction *Latin* and *North* American Norwegian.

Despite the rich and growing literature on the grammatical attributes of NAmNo, these findings have not yet been integrated into a collective whole. The principle disadvantage of the absence of a centralized work on elements of NAmNo is that it obfuscates continued progress on research that targets the grammar of this heritage variety – especially from a formal perspective. The main aim of this reference guide is threefold: First, most of the individual chapters provide a detailed overview of the current state of previously researched elements of the syntax of NAmNo. Second, some of the chapters explore topics that to date have not been as intensively and thoroughly researched as others, providing insights and starting points for ongoing and future research in these areas. Third, these chapters demonstrate how the formal analysis of the syntactic properties of heritage languages such as NAmNo can make important and lasting contributions to theory-building efforts. Recent works by D'Alessandro et al. (2021, 2025) have highlighted the importance of the symbiotic relationship between data and findings from (moribund) heritage languages (such as NAmNo)

[2]The first version of the corpus was called the *Corpus of American Norwegian Speech*; the change from *Norwegian* to *Nordic* reflects the fact that the corpus has been expanded several times and now includes data from Swedish heritage speakers.

and rigorous theoretical analysis. The chapters found in this volume contribute to the important ongoing research on the nature of syntax born and maintained in these settings. To wit, these findings make a strong case for overall sturdiness of heritage language syntax (Lohndal 2021) (as opposed to morphology; e.g. Putnam et al. 2021); however, there are a number of domains of syntax proper that *do* display some element of (ongoing) change. Additionally, to the best of our knowledge, this reference guide is the first of its kind to combine detailed summaries of these findings from one heritage grammar with the primary purpose of contributing to a unified treatment of its syntax.

The remainder of this introductory chapter has the following structure: in Section 2, we present our theoretical preliminaries. Section 3 maps out the basic structure of clauses and nominals in homeland Norwegian. In Section 4, we provide an overview of the empirical foundations for research on NAmNo (speakers and corpus data), as well as glossing conventions. Section 5 is an overview of the chapters in the present volume.

## 2 Theoretical preliminaries

In this section we sketch out a detailed overview of the architectural design and theoretical desiderata that guide the analyses found in the individual chapters of this volume. We collective adopt a *generative* approach to grammar, which entails formal and explicit accounts of structure. The contributions in this volume provide analyses of syntactic – including morphosyntactic – phenomena that adhere to the core principles of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995). In this section, we outline the fundamental architectural assumptions and operations germane to Minimalist analysis. Since its inception over 25 years ago, the Minimalist Program has undergone further revision and development. Although one could argue that there are different "camps", or "schools of thought", that now exist under the heterodox umbrella of Minimalism, there still exists a high degree of cohesion and congruence amongst the majority of those who make use of some version of this program. Our contributions largely embrace the concept of an "open Universal Grammar (UG)" (Lightfoot 2020), which eschews the need for a pre-determined finite set of parameters that guide the acquisition process.[3]

[3]This does not entail that parameters do not exist, but rather it interprets them as second-order objects that emerge from core principles. See also Roberts (2019).

## 2.1 Architectural considerations

A guiding principle of Minimalist syntax is that the computational capacity of syntax is to generate structures that can be interpreted phonologically and semantically. Under this condition, syntax – and Language more generally – can be understood as the optimal solution to satisfy interpretation requirements of sound and meaning. Syntactic operations construct licit and legible syntactic structures which are then interpreted by external interfaces. This operation is known as *Spell-Out*, and the external interfaces are commonly referred to as *Logical Form* (LF) and *Phonological Form* (PF) respectively. This modular model of linguistic competence is captured in the *T-model* shown in (1):

(1)


The Minimalist approach to syntax is a derivational, proof-theoretical one (as opposed to a representational, model-theoretical one); henceforth, structures are built in a piecemeal fashion. We assume a universal ordering of particular "domains" consisting of anchoring functional heads which are found in all human languages. These core heads form a "syntactic spine" of sorts (Ramchand & Svenonius 2014, Grohmann 2003, Putnam 2020). For our purposes, we focus on three particular core domains represented in the syntax, which we outline in (2) below:

(2) a. *v*P → Event semantics
b. TP → Situational semantics
c. CP → Propositions; Information structure

The domains introduced in (2) are built in a bottom-up fashion, starting with *v*P, followed by TP, and concluding with CP. Although there may be additional information (represented by formal features on syntactic projections) within these domains, these three domains are generally understood to be essential to syntactic structure cross-linguistically. Given that the Minimalist Program embraces a derivational approach to syntax, it is not uncommon that particular sub-units of structure may be selected to be interpreted from larger structures. Certain units are often held to have a privileged status as forming a completed semantic (propositional) units. These units are referred to as *Phases*. Healthy debate

continues concerning exactly which derivational units constitute a phase (and which do not), and in some respects, whether or not phases should be a part of the Minimalist Program moving forward.[4] We do not engage in this debate further here. Note that although the spine shown in (2) refers to domains found in clauses, other types of phrases will be built according to similar principles. A particularly important type of phrase is constituted by nominals. Abney (1987) is one of several authors who points out parallelisms between clauses and nominals; this work is also an important study in the debate about what constitutes the head of a nominal; the determiner, making the phrase a DP, or the noun, making the phrase an NP? Some long-standing contributions to this discussion are, e.g., Longobardi (1994), Szabolcsi (1994) and Bošković (2005). For an overview of the debate, and references to recent works, see Blümel & Holler (2022).

In addition to these basic architectural assumptions, we find it prudent to briefly mention how these impact how we conceptualize bi- and multilingual grammars. Evidence from cognitive neuroscience and psycholinguistic research on the nature of bilingual grammars abounds confirming the integrated nature of bi- and multilingual language and cognition – although the linguistic knowledge of a bi- or multilingual speaker can be conceptualized as a set of parallel grammars, these grammars exist within a single system and not in isolation (Green & Abutalebi 2013, Putnam et al. 2018 and references therein, Aboh 2015). In light of this evidence, we adopt the well-supported approach of "shared syntax", i.e., computational mechanisms; we assume, following Lohndal (2021) and others, that basic structure-building operations are largely immune to attrition and decay in heritage grammar syntax. The general consensus that has emerged in the literature on this topic is that syntactic change or attrition occurs most commonly when syntax interfaces with morphophonology, i.e., "at PF", and with semantics to a lesser extent. For further discussion of common "outcomes" in heritage language grammars, see Polinsky (2018).

## 2.2 Structuring-building and feature-valuing operations

In this section we present the basic structure-building and feature-valuing operations that are assumed in Minimalist analysis. Here we review the basic tenets of Merge (Section 2.2.1), feature valuation via Agree (Section 2.2.2), and common

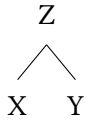
[4]For those interested in contrasting perspectives on the nature and size of phases, see Abels (2012), Epstein & Seely (2006), Stroik & Putnam (2013) and Bošković (2014). Even though these perspectives may diverge (significantly) from one another, they all highlight the importance of cyclic derivations in formal syntax.

concepts associated with realizational/late-insertion models (such as *Distributed Morphology*) at the syntax-morphology interface (Section 2.2.3).

### 2.2.1 Merge

Complex syntactic structures are composed of iterative instances of well-formed smaller units of structure. *Merge* is an operation which combines two syntactic objects, yielding a more complex one as in (3).[5]

(3)



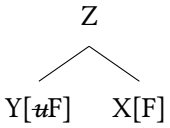

The operation Merge unifies the syntactic objects X and Y and creates a new syntactic object Z. Two additional comments are in order here: First, the variable Z in (3) should be understood as a variable that could equate with X and Y. The reason here for differentiating "Z" from "X" or "Y" is simply for ease of exposition.[6] Second, the syntax does not concern itself with the linear order of the terminal nodes of the tree structure in (3). Both orderings – [$_Z$ X Y ] or [$_Z$ Y X ] – are licit syntactic objects.

The simple Merge-operation is quite powerful, allowing for the iterative recursive structure-building of simple and complex syntactic objects. Debate persists as to the motivation of Merge, i.e., whether it applies "freely" (Boeckx 2013, Epstein et al. 2022), or whether it is constrained in some way. We do not contribute further to this debate in this introduction, but do wish to point out that both schools of thought interpret Merge as the fundamental structure-building operation in Minimalist analysis. Traditionally, Merge has be motivated and constrained by the need to check *formal features* in local configurations, i.e., sisterhood relations in syntactic trees, as in (3). In this structure, the syntactic object X is endowed with an *interpretable* feature. Its sister node, Y, has an *uninterpretable* matching feature (indicated by the *u*-diacritic). When features "match" in a local configuration (sisterhood), the interpretable feature checks, or values, the uninterpretable one. This ensures the interpretability of syntactic structures.

[5] For an easily accessible overview of the basic mechanics of *Merge*, see Adger (2003: Section 3.3).

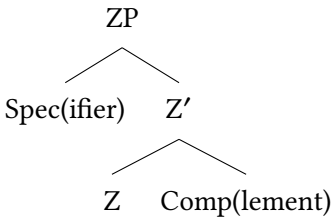
[6] We do not engage with ongoing discussions concerning the challenges associated with the projection of syntactic structure in this introduction (see e.g. Chomsky 2013 for further discussion).

(4)




Instances of "Second-Merge" (to borrow a term from Adger 2003: 109) lead to a structural configuration in which the *maximal projection* (XP) is *extended* via a bar-level projection (X′). This state of affairs is illustrated in (5), in which the domain of the maximal project includes (i) a Spec(ifier), (ii) a bar-level projection, (iii) the head (or *minimal projection*) of the phrase, and (iv) a complement. The specifier and complement are considered to be equidistant from their governing head.

(5)




### 2.2.2 Agree

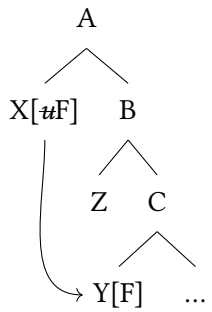
The valuing of formal features can also take place in non-sisterhood configurations. For example, in the Norwegian example in (6), the plural form of the definite determiner, *de*, is chosen in order to agree with the plural noun *prisene* 'the prices'; the present participle *økende* 'rising' intevenes between the two, and they are not sisters.

(6) de økende prisene
the.PL rising price.DEF.PL
'the rising prices'

This state of affairs forces us to formulate how feature valuing can take place beyond sisterhood relations. The operation according to Minimalist parlance responsible for this feature check is referred to as *Agree*. The tree structure in (7) illustrates how this plays out. In this structure, the syntactic head X possesses an uninterpretable feature [*u*F] and functions as a *Probe* that searches for a suitable

*Goal*, i.e., another syntactic head that possesses a matching, interpretable feature [F]. The syntactic head Y represents a licit Goal for X.[7]

(7)




Three additional comments concerning the operation Agree are in order. First, although Agree takes place between two syntactic heads that are not sisters, there is still a demand to ensure that the distance between the Probe and the Goal is not too substantial. Agree is commonly constrained by a *c-command* relationship, so long as there are no intervening syntactic heads between the potential Probe and Goal bearing an identical matching feature. In (7), the syntactic head Z is not guilty of preventing an Agree relationship between X and Y since it does not have a matching feature (the tree structure could be applied to example (6), where *økende* 'rising' does not have a number feature). Second, in addition to c-command, additional locality constraints, such as phase boundaries, may prevent an Agree relation to hold between a potential Probe and Goal. Third, Agree may be accompanied by movement of the Goal. Whether or not Agreement between certain features is accompanied by movement is a matter of cross-linguistic, parametric variation; in formal terms, this can be conceptualized as a second-order feature specification (a movement-triggering feature that may or may not be associated with the Probe, see Adger & Svenonius 2011 and references therein). Examples of movement in Norwegian are shown in Section 3. Movement of a syntactic element can be conceived of as a subtype of Merge: Internal Merge.

### 2.2.3 The syntax-morphology interface

A number of contributions in this volume adopt the stance that morphology is the result of post-syntactic operations. Such approaches separate morphology from

[7]There is healthy, ongoing debate on the exact nature of the directionality of Agree as to whether or not it should (always) take place downward (Diercks et al. 2020, Carstens & Diercks 2013, Preminger 2013, Wurmbrand 2014), upward (Zeijlstra 2012, Bjorkman & Zeijlstra 2019), or perhaps in either direction (Béjar & Řezáč 2009). In this introduction, we adopt a downward approach to Agree.

syntax, and are referred to as *late-insertion* or *realizational* models. An example of such a model is *Distributed Morphology* (Embick & Noyer 2007). Late-insertion models of morphology are compatible with Minimalist desiderata. Syntactic objects consisting of features are associated with phonological material, i.e., *exponency*, through a series of correspondence rules formally known as *Vocabulary Items*, as shown in (8):

(8) Vocabulary Item (Embick 2015: 9):

$$\underset{\textit{synsem features}}{[\alpha\beta\gamma]} \quad \longleftrightarrow \quad \underbrace{/X/}_{\textit{phonological exponents}}$$

The association of synsem features can be either one-to-one or one-to-many. A domain in which a late-insertion model has modeled findings in NAmNo is with respect to "mixed" Determiner Phrases (DPs), those consisting of an element from Norwegian and another from English (Riksem 2018, Riksem et al. 2019, Lohndal & Putnam 2021, 2024). Consider the tree structure for the mixed DP *ei field* 'a field' in Figure 1 (from Lohndal & Putnam 2021: 16), which consists of a Norwegian determiner and an English noun. Determining exponency is an additive function, with all features present in the syntax contributing to establishing a connection with the proper exponent.

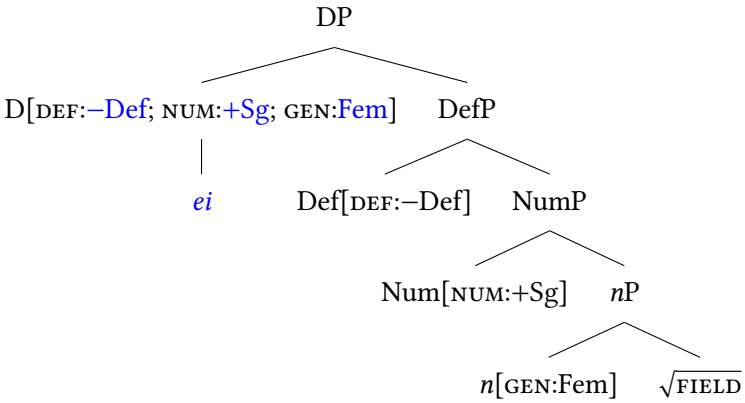



Figure 1: Mixed DP, from Lohndal & Putnam (2021).

The realization of the indefinite article *ei* 'a' is based on the cumulative feature values of DEF, NUM, and *n* (which determines GEN(der) in this configuration).

# 3 Clauses and nominals in European Norwegian: Some starting points

Studying heritage languages often involves implicit or explicit comparison to the homeland variety of the same language.[8] In this volume, the terms *European Norwegian* (abbreviated *EurNo*) and *homeland Norwegian* are used interchangeably to refer to Norwegian as spoken in Norway.[9] Importantly, many research questions require a more precisely defined baseline for comparison, as synchronic and diachronic variation in the homeland (and in the immigrant settlements) can greatly affect both the outcomes in the heritage language and how findings are interpreted (see Polinsky 2018: Chap. 1 and, for NAmNo specifically, e.g. van Baal 2025 [this volume], Eide 2025 [this volume] and Larsson & Kinn 2025 [this volume] and references therein). Still, the homeland variety can be a useful starting point, and in the present section we describe some core syntactic properties of EurNo, analyzed within the theoretical framework introduced in Section 2. We limit our attention to some of the most basic properties of clauses and nominals; clauses are treated in Section 3.1, with main focus on verb placement, while nominals are treated in Section 3.2. Further details will be given in the individual chapters; for a general overview of the syntax of EurNo, see, e.g., Faarlund (2019).

## 3.1 Verb placement in main and embedded clauses

In EurNo main clauses, the finite verb obligatorily moves out of the *v*P, via T, to a position in the left periphery of the clause; this is commonly referred to as V-to-C movement. This movement, combined with a requirement that one constituent moves to the preverbal position (see e.g. Holmberg 2015), yields the Verb Second (V2) property, which is characteristic of EurNo (and most other Germanic languages, apart from English). There has been debate as to exactly which features trigger verb movement to the left periphery; however, it is a common assumption that V2 is related to clause type. V2 is a main clause phenomenon, and the finite verb seems to occupy the same position as complementizers in embedded clauses (see further discussion below). The choice of preverbal constituent is to a

[8] This applies to heritage languages that have gained their heritage status through migration. Many indigenous minority languages can also be classified as heritage languages; in these cases, no additional homeland variety exists (Polinsky 2018: Chap. 1).

[9] The term *European Norwegian* was chosen because of its parallelism with *North American Norwegian*; both labels refer to the part of the world in which the language is spoken, and both can be easily abbreviated (*EurNo* and *NAmNo*). Admittedly, *European* is somewhat imprecise; however, more precise alternatives (such as *Norwegian Norwegian*, which is perhaps the most accurate label in theory) would introduce other sorts of complications.

great extent related to information structure, which is encoded in the CP domain (see 2).

V2 entails, informally, that the finite verb must be preceded by one – and only one – constituent. Some examples with different preverbal constituents are given in (9) (a subject in (9a); an object in (9b) and an adverbial in (9c)). The syntactic structure of (9b) is sketched in Figure 2 (positions from which an element has moved are marked by strikethrough).[10]

(9) a. Jeg leste hele boka.
I read whole book.DEF
'I read the whole book.'

b. Den boka har jeg ikke lest.
that book.DEF have I not read
'That book I haven't read.'

c. Neste uke skal jeg lese flere bøker.
next week shall I read more books
'I will read more books next week.'

As shown in Figure 2, the finite verb *har* 'have' (in this case an auxiliary) moves from the *v*P-domain, through T and to C.[11] The preverbal position is filled by the fronted object *den boka* 'that book', which also originates within *v*P. The non-finite verb *lest* 'read' remains *in situ* in a *v*P-internal position. As the tree structure indicates, the subject *jeg* 'I' has moved from its externally merged, *v*P-internal position past the negation *ikke* to the specifier of T. An important discussion in Germanic syntax has centered around whether subject-initial V2 clauses (such as (9a)) have the same structure as non-subject-initial V2 clauses. As the subject precedes the verb, subject-initial V2 clauses are linearly compatible with verb movement to T instead of C. For Norwegian, the analysis whereby the verb always moves to C in main clauses (sometimes referred to as the "symmetric" analysis of V2) has been mostwidely adopted (e.g., Faarlund 2019), although some authors have also argued for an asymmetric analysis whereby the verb stays in T in subject-initial clauses (Holmberg 2015 provides an overview of the discussion; cf. also Anderssen et al. 2025 [this volume]).

Embedded clauses have the same basic spine as main clauses (*v*P-TP-CP). However, they differ in terms of verb placement. In embedded clauses, the finite verb

[10]Thus, strikethrough is used slightly differently here from in the structure in (7), where it marks matching of features.

[11]For simplicity, we treat auxiliaries as elements adjoined to *v*P (like, e.g., Faarlund 2019), although other analyses are available.

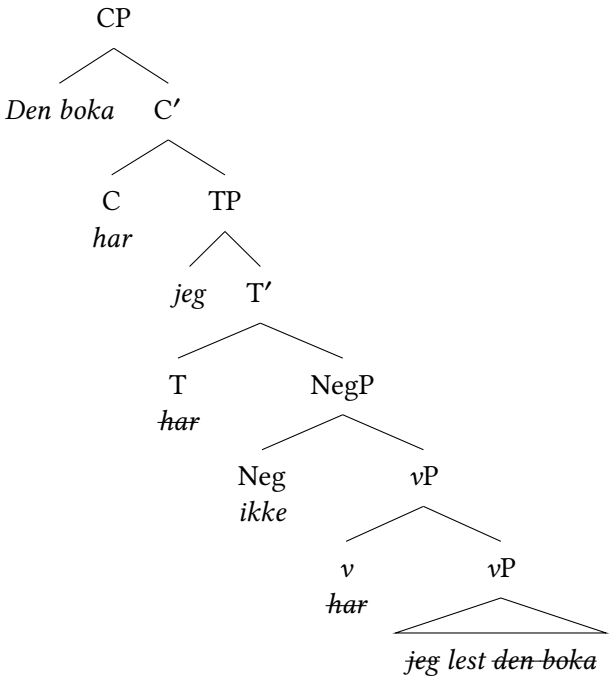



Figure 2: Syntactic structure of example (9b).

generally does not move; it remains in situ, inside *v*P. The *v*P-internal position is evidenced by the relative order of the finite verb and negation and other sentence adverbials: in embedded clauses, the verb normally follows sentence adverbials, which are taken to mark the boundary between *v*P and TP (e.g., Platzack 2011).[12] Cf. (10):

(10) a. Hvis jeg **ikke leser** boka, blir jeg ikke klok.
If I not read book.DEF become I not wise
'If I don't read the book, I will not become wise.'

[12]This is the traditional view in Scandinavian syntax; see Wiklund et al. (2009) for an alternative approach. Although V-in-situ is the general pattern in embedded clauses, certain clause types optionally allow verb movement; see Ringstad (2019) for a recent corpus study and, e.g., Julien (2015) and references therein for in-depth discussion of the conditions and structural analysis of this phenomenon. Verb movement in embedded clauses in homeland Scandinavian is often labeled embedded V2, reflecting the view that embedded clauses with verb movement are structurally similar to main clauses.

b. Jeg angret på at jeg **aldri leste** boka.
I regretted on that I never read book.DEF
'I regretted that I never read the book.'

c. Dette er boka som jeg **heldigvis leste**.
This is book.DEF that I thankfully read
'This is the book that I thankfully read.'

The structure of of the embedded clause in (10a) is shown in Figure 3.

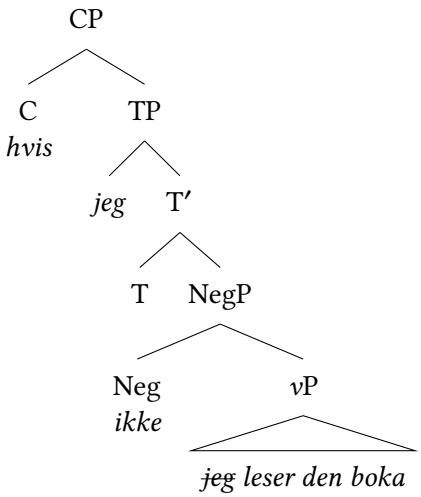


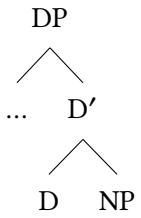

Figure 3: V-in-situ in embedded clauses in Norwegian.

The pattern whereby the finite verb moves to C in main clauses but remains in a lower position in embedded clauses is traditionally analyzed in terms of competition for the C position: in embedded clauses, this position is occupied by a complementizer, which means that the verb cannot move there (this account is often attributed to Den Besten 1983). On the most common view, EurNo is assumed not to have independent verb movement to T; i.e., the verb does not move to T unless it also moves further up to C (e.g., Faarlund 2019). However, this has not always been the case; Old Norse had V-to-T movement in embedded clauses (evidenced by the fact that the verb would precede sentence adverbials) (Faarlund 2004), and this word order is still the main rule in Modern Icelandic (Thráinsson 2007: 43).

## 3.2 Nominals

The chapters in this book adopt the DP hypothesis (Abney 1987), which implies that (argumental) nominal phrases are headed by a determiner, or more precisely, a functional projection D, which takes the further lexical and functional projections of the nominal in its complement position. A simplified sketch is given in (11):

(11)




One of the phenomena that calls for a more elaborate syntactic structure of nominals in EurNo is definiteness marking. Norwegian marks definite nouns with a suffix (*-en* for masculine nouns, *-a* for feminine nouns and *-et* for neuters). This suffix can co-occur with prenominal determiners/demonstratives (see (12)), which means that it cannot be (externally) merged in D; it must have a position further down in the structure.

(12) a. **Denne bok-a** er spennende
this book-DEF is exciting
'This book is exciting.'

b. Jeg vil ha **den** røde **bok-a**
I want have the red book-DEF
'I want the red book.'

The DP-related chapters in this volume take (versions of) Julien's (2002, 2005) analysis of nominals in Scandinavian as their starting point. Julien (2002) proposes a functional projection ArtP, which hosts the definite suffix.[13] ArtP is located below D, but above number features, the categorial feature N and the lexical root. The noun Agrees with the features in Num and Art and moves up to Art; the structure of the nominal *denne boka* 'this book' (12a) is sketched in Figure 4.[14]

[13]The terminology used for this projection varies; ArtP corresponds to DefP in Lohndal & Putnam (2021) (see Figure 1); Julien (2005) uses the label *n*P, which we will not use, as it could be confused with the nominal categorizer situated lower down in the structure.

[14]Julien (2005) and others propose that demonstratives are placed in a head higher than D; we abstract away from that here. See Kinn & Larsson (2022: n. 17) for discussion.

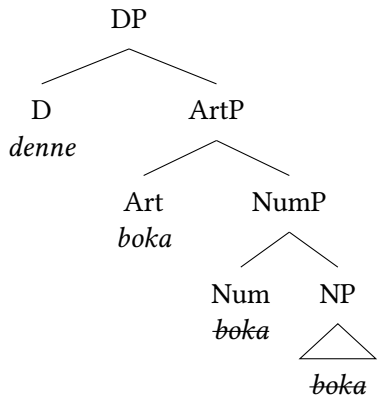



Figure 4: Syntactic structure of DP in example (12a).

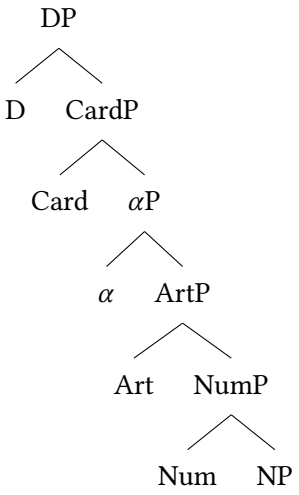



Figure 5: Overview of Norwegian nominal phrase (Julien 2005).

Further functional categories within the DP are $\alpha$P, which hosts adjectival phrases, and CardP, which hosts the indefinite article, numerals and weak quantifiers. An overview of the nominal phrase is given in Figure 5 (based on Julien 2002: 267).[15]

An important property of EurNo (and Mainland Scandinavian more widely) is that the D projection must generally be phonologically realized (Julien 2002, 2005). This requirement can be fulfilled in two ways: by insertion of an overt determiner in the D head, or by phrasal movement of material up to the specifier of D. For illustration, cf. the nominals in (13):

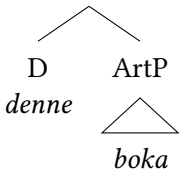
(13) a. denne boka
this book.DEF
'this book'

b. boka
book.DEF
'the book'

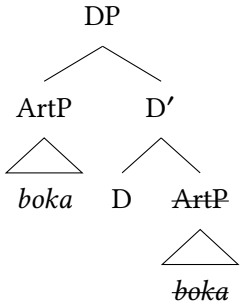
The syntactic structures are sketched in (14) (14a is a simplified version of Figure 4):

[15]Note that CardP and $\alpha$P are only present when they contain lexical material.

(14) a.




b.




In (14a), D is identified by the overt determiner *denne* 'this'; in (14b), D is identified by a phrase (ArtP with all its contained material) moving to its specifier.

Having discussed some basic properties of clauses and nominals in EurNo and how they are analyzed, we now turn to NAmNo and the available linguistic data for this heritage variety.

## 4 Speakers, corpus data and glossing conventions

NAmNo is a heritage language with a relatively long history. Many of the speakers who were recorded during the field trips in the 2010s (see Section 1) can trace their Norwegian heritage three or four generations back (this is evident from the CANS metadata). The present-day speakers have generally acquired Norwegian in the home in their childhood; on the historical context, the speakers' linguistic backgrounds and profiles as language users, see further Eide & Hjelde 2023 and Hjelde (2025 [this volume]). Norwegians moving to the US is, of course, not strictly a phenomenon of the past – there is still scattered migration, and, consequently, children being born into families where Norwegian is spoken in the home. In this volume, however, we primarily deal with with the language of speakers who have ties to the waves of migration in the 19th and early 20th century.

Most of the chapters in this volume use CANS as their main source of NAmNo data. In its current version (version 3.1), CANS comprises 729,000 word tokens of spontaneous speech produced by 246 individuals of Norwegian heritage in the US and Canada. This is considerably more than the first version described by Johannessen (2015), which included 131,000 word tokens by 36 speakers.

Most of the data in CANS was recorded in 2010 or later. However, the most recent version also includes older data collected by Didrik Arup Seip, Ernst Selmer and Einar Haugen in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as some data collected by Arnstein Hjelde in the 1980s/1990s. This facilitates diachronic studies of NAmNo as

a heritage language, and as some of the speakers in the older parts of the corpus are 1st generation speakers, it can also help establish the best possible baseline for comparison with NAmNo as spoken today. Most of the chapters in this volume mainly describe present-day NAmNo from a synchronic perspective; however, several of the authors also make use of the older data in CANS in their discussions (see in particular the chapters by van Baal, Larsson & Kinn, Eide, Riksem & Nygård and Putnam & Søfteland).

CANS has two levels of transcription; one semi-phonetic (orthophonic, using the Latin alphabet), and one orthographic (Bokmål standard). In this volume, linguistic examples are mostly rendered in the orthographic transcription unless there are particular reasons to use the semi-phonetic level (in Eide's chapter; however, the examples are generally rendered in semi-phonetic form). Short pauses are marked with #, as shown in (15); longer pauses are marked with ##.

(15) a. kanskje # e sønnen lever på farmen
maybe eh son.DEF livs on farm.DEF
'maybe the son lives on the farm' (harmony_MN_01gk)

b. vi kan gå åt E3 # med hun F1 og # og mannen hennes e #
we can go to E3 with she F1 and and husband.DEF her eh
M4
M4
'we can go to E3 with F1 and... and her husband M4'
(coon_valley_WI_03gm)

Every speaker in the corpus is identified by a code consisting of their place of residence at the time of recording, a number (01, 02 etc.) and a combination of the letters *u/g* and *m/k* (cf. 15). The letter *u* is used for speakers under the age of 50, whereas *g* is for speakers above that age. *M* means that the speaker is male; *k* means female. If the speakers refer to other people by name, these names are rendered with codes (M1, M2 etc. for male names, F1, F2 etc. for female names, E1, E2 etc. for last names); cf. (15b).

In the next section, we provide an overview of the chapters in this volume.

## 5 Overview of chapters

As stated in Section 1, the chapters in this volume aim to provide an easily accessible overview of the research that has been done on the syntax of North American Norwegian to date – in addition to some new observations that have

not been presented elsewhere before. As will become evident, some topics have been more extensively studied than others, and different authors take different angles, both in their implementation of the theoretical framework, in their reasoning about the baseline question (i.e., what the heritage variety can be most meaningfully compared to; cf. Section 3), and in their methods. This is a reflection of the state of the art and the relative diversity of approaches that exist in the field of heritage-language research, even among researchers working within the generative framework. With this as a starting point, it should be clear that there are still many avenues to explore in the syntax of NAmNo, and we hope that this volume as a whole can be a guide towards the most productive directions.

The volume is divided into four parts. The first part consists of the present introduction and a chapter by Arnstein Hjelde, who delivers an overview of emigration from Norway to North America in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the establishment and characteristics of the immigrant communities in which Norwegian has been spoken as a heritage language up until today. This chapter serves as a backdrop to the remaining chapters, and as a reminder of the conditions under which North American Norwegian speakers have lived their lives, which inevitably has had consequences for the language.

The second part of the volume concerns the nominal domain. Brita Ramsevik Riksem and Mari Nygård discuss agreement in number, gender, and definiteness within the DP. This chapter places particular emphasis on a type of nominals which has been observed in NAmNo for a long time, namely "mixed" phrases, with lexical material from both Norwegian and English. The chapter explores the theoretical implications of such mixing. Definiteness is also investigated in Yvonne van Baal's chapter, but from a different perspective: rather than examining the extent to which the elements in the DP, such as determiners, agree, van Baal considers whether determiners and suffixes expressing definiteness are present at all. Van Baal shows that the least stable contexts for definiteness marking are those which require double definiteness (both a prenominal determiner and a suffix) in EurNo. Interestingly, the most common pattern of innovation in this context is one that does not involve convergence with English. In her chapter, van Baal discusses the consequences of this and other findings regarding definiteness. The final chapter on the nominal domain, written by Kari Kinn, discusses DP-internal possessive constructions, of which (European) Norwegian has quite a large range. The distribution of some of these constructions in NAmNo has been been studied in previous research; this chapter, which is mainly empirically oriented, includes new data on additional possessive constructions and shows that most of the options for expressing possessive relations seem to have been retained in the heritage language.

In the third part of the volume, we turn to the properties of clauses and the domains of the syntactic spine, *v*P, TP, and CP (see 2). Kristin M. Eide's chapter explores morphosyntactic expressions of tense, modality and aspect, categories that are traditionally associated with the TP-domain. One of Eide's key findings is the general trend of the retention of EurNo-like patterns of tense, modality, and aspect, while illustrating ways in which NAmNo shows divergence from its European counterpart through innovation. Mike Putnam and Åshild Søfteland discuss the structure of non-finite complement clauses (infinitives and gerunds). An important question about non-finite complements regards their syntactic size – a core proposal in the chapter is that NAmNo speakers avoid bare TPs as complements, which is consistent with what is observed in other Germanic varieties, except English. Putnam and Søfteland discuss the implications of this for heritage language syntax. The chapter by Merete Anderssen, Helene R. Jensberg, Terje Lohndal, Björn Lundquist and Marit Westergaard centers on finite clauses, more specifically on verb placement in main and embedded clauses. The chapter shows that in main clauses, V2, which is characteristic for Germanic languages apart from English, generally remains robust in NAmNo. In embedded clauses, on the other hand, verb placement is considerably more vulnerable, with a strong tendency for the verb to appear in a higher position than in EurNo, before negation and adverbials. The authors discuss possible reasons for these patterns and argue that several factors interact to yield the instability observed in embedded clauses. In the final chapter in this part of the volume, Ida Larsson and Kari Kinn discuss argument placement, more precisely the position of subjects and objects relative to negation (subject shift and object shift), and the position of objects relative to verb particles. Larsson and Kinn take the position that argument placement is largely stable over time, although there are fluctuations within the limits of the baseline grammar. Notably, there is an increased preference for subject-initial clauses (also described in Anderssen et al.'s chapter) which is argued to have certain knock-on effects for argument placement further down in the clause.

The fourth part of the book comprises one chapter, written by Putnam & Kinn. This chapter includes concluding remarks and points out directions for future research on NAmNo.

## Abbreviations

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ArtP | Article Phrase | CP | Complementizer Phrase |
| CANS | Corpus of American Nordic Speech | DEF | Definite |
| | | DP | Determiner Phrase |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| GEN | Gender | NUM | Number |
| EurNo | European Norwegian | PF | Phonological Form |
| Fem | Feminine | PROG | Progressive (aspect) |
| LF | Logical Form | Sg | Singular |
| NAmNo | North American Norwegian | VP | Verb Phrase |

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