Chapter 9

Argument placement in North American Norwegian: Subject shift, object shift and verb particles

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This chapter discusses argument placement, in particular the position of subjects and objects relative to negation and sentence adverbials, and the position of objects relative to verb particles. These are areas in which European Norwegian (EurNo) displays complex variation, involving factors such as information structure, semantics and prosody in addition to syntactic conditions in the stricter sense. The chapter argues that North American Norwegian (NAmNo) overall displays a remarkable stability. There are, however, some patterns that may seem surprising from a present-day EurNo perspective. The chapter argues that cross-linguistic influence (CLI) plays a certain, but limited, role in explaining these patterns, and that some of the properties of NAmNo argument placement can be traced back to a baseline of older, rural Norwegian dialects, which is not necessarily identical to EurNo as spoken today. It thus highlights the importance of carefully establishing a baseline in heritage language studies, and of studying the developments of heritage languages over time when this is possible.

1 Introduction

European Norwegian (EurNo) is a V2-language, allowing (and requiring) one constituent before the finite verb in declarative main clauses. As is shown in

Anderssen et al. (2025 [this volume]) and references therein, the V2-property is generally robust in North American Norwegian (NAmNo) as well, although some interesting variation is found. The preverbal position is often occupied by the subject, but it can also be filled by objects or other constituents. The preverbal element is fronted to Spec-CP (see Kinn & Putnam 2025 [this volume]);[1] EurNo examples with a subject and an object in Spec-CP are given in (1).

(1) a. (Subject in Spec-CP)
         Gutten leste den boka   i går.
         boy.DEF read that book.DEF yesterday
         'The boy read the book yesterday.'

     b. (Object in Spec-CP)
         Den boka   leste gutten   i går.
         that book.DEF read boy.DEF yesterday
         'The boy read the book yesterday.'

Fronting vs. non-fronting does not exhaust the options for subject and object placement; non-fronted arguments display more fine-grained variation. Non-fronted subjects can either precede or follow negation and other sentence adverbials, as shown in (2):

(2) a. (S-Neg)
         Den boka   har **gutten ikke** lest.
         that book.DEF has boy.DEF not   read
         'The boy hasn't read that book.'

     b. (Neg-S)
         Den boka   har **ikke gutten**   lest.
         that book.DEF has not   boy.DEF read
         'The boy hasn't read that book.'

The pattern in (2a) (S-Neg) is referred to as *subject shift*, implying that the subject has shifted past negation. Subjects following negation (like in (2b)) are referred to as *unshifted* (see, e.g., Lundquist & Tengesdal 2022 and references therein).

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[1]Throughout this chapter we assume a symmetric analysis of V2 whereby the verb moves to C both in subject-initial and non-subject-initial clauses. The preverbal element (subject or non-subject) is thus in Spec-CP; see, e.g., Holmberg (2015: 362ff) and Anderssen et al. (2025 [this volume]) for discussion of this and alternative proposals. We do not reject more fine-grained approaches to the C-domain in Scandinavian (see Larsson & Kinn forthcoming); however, a simple CP is sufficient for the purposes of this chapter.

Non-fronted objects can also either precede or follow negation and other sentence adverbials, as shown in (3):

(3) a. (O-Neg)
      Han leste **den ikke**.
      he   read it   not
      'He didn't read it.'

   b. (Neg-O)
      Han leste **ikke boka**.
      he   read not book.DEF
      'He didn't read the book.'

   c. (O-Neg)
      * Han leste **boka**   **ikke**.
        he   read book.DEF not
      (Intended:) 'He didn't read the book'

   d. (Neg-NonFinV-O)
      Han har **ikke** lest **den**.
      he   has not   read it
      'He hasn't read it.'

   e. (O-Neg-NonFinV)
      * Han har **den ikke** lest
        he   has it   not   read
      (Intended:) 'He hasn't read it.'

The pattern in (3a) is referred to as *object shift* (Holmberg 1986). As illustrated in (3b–c), object shift across negation only applies to unstressed (weak) pronouns. It does not apply to non-pronominal objects (3c) or stressed pronouns in EurNo (see further Section 4.1); these objects must follow negation. Furthermore, object shift only applies when the main verb has moved out of the vP (Holmberg's generalization, e.g., Holmberg 1986, 1999). Thus, in practice, object shift is limited to main clauses with a single, finite main verb and no auxiliaries.[2] In (3d), object shift does not apply, as the main verb is non-finite and remains in situ. Shifting the object past a non-finite verb and negation, as in (3e), is unacceptable.

Non-fronted objects display variation along one further axis: EurNo is a satellite-framed language (Talmy 2000), making wide use of verb particles to

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[2]Recall that the verb generally stays in situ in EurNo embedded clauses, see Kinn & Putnam (2025 [this volume]) and Anderssen et al. (2025 [this volume]); thus, object shift does not apply there.

express path or result. A non-fronted object can either precede or follow a verb particle, as shown in (4):[3]

(4) a. Vi kastet **{søppelet}   ut   {søppelet}**.
        we threw rubbish.DEF out rubbish.DEF
        'We threw out the rubbish.'

    b. Vi kastet **{det} ut   {%det}**
        we threw it   out it
        'We threw it out.'

Non-pronominal objects can either precede or follow particles; see (4a). Pronominal objects generally precede particles, but not categorically in all dialects (Larsson & Lundquist 2014); some further details are given in Section 5.1; see also Aa (2020) and references therein.

As the data above suggests, the variation in argument placement in EurNo is complex (this also goes for the other homeland Scandinavian languages). Further conditions involving, e.g., information structure, semantics and prosody will be discussed in the sections to come. Moreover, the patterns are often not categorical, and there is variation between dialects and speakers (see, e.g., Larsson & Lundquist 2014, Lundquist & Tengesdal 2022). The complexity of argument placement in EurNo provides an interesting starting point for studies of NAmNo – what happens to this subtle variation in a context of reduced input and use of Norwegian?

This chapter builds on the research on argument placement in NAmNo that has been done to date, which mainly focuses on subject shift and object shift (Anderssen & Westergaard 2020, Larsson & Kinn 2021, forthcoming). Additionally, new data and observations on particle constructions are offered (but see also Larsson & Kinn 2021).

In the following, we take an approach to subject shift and object shift whereby interaction between *all three positions* for subjects and objects (the preverbal position in addition to the shifted and unshifted positions) is taken into account, i.e., the shifted and unshifted positions are not studied in isolation (see Andréasson 2010, Lindahl & Engdahl 2022). Previous research has observed an increase of subject-initial clauses in NAmNo (e.g., Westergaard et al. 2021; see also Anderssen et al. 2025 [this volume]); the present chapter argues, following Larsson & Kinn (2021, forthcoming), that this has some knock-on effects on the positions

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[3]Curly brackets are used when examples show two (or more) alternative word orders. The percent sign % means that the acceptability of the indicated position varies between speakers.

further down in the clause. In addition, we observe certain limited effects of cross-linguistic influence (CLI) from English, consistent with the findings of Anderssen & Westergaard (2020). Apart from this, however, it is argued that the complex variation of argument placement remains remarkably stable in NAmNo.

Since argument placement is an area of intra- and interspeaker variation in EurNo, we need to be particularly careful when establishing a baseline to which NAmNo can be compared (e.g., Polinsky 2018; see also discussions in van Baal 2025 [this volume] and Eide 2025 [this volume]). In our treatment of argument placement, the baseline will be established using older, rural Norwegian dialect recordings which can approximate the language of the emigrants, which is not necessarily identical to EurNo as spoken today.

The chapter has the following structure: In Section 2, we discuss the question of the baseline. Section 3 is concerned with subject shift. In Section 4, we discuss object shift, and in Section 5 we turn to particle constructions. Section 6 considers the theoretical relevance of the findings, and Section 7 concludes the chapter.

2 Comparing NAmNo to baseline data

In many previous studies of NAmNo, NAmNo is compared to present-day EurNo dialects or urban present-day varieties; for example, Larsson & Johannessen (2015), van Baal (2020) and Lykke (2020) use the Nordic Dialect Corpus (Johannessen et al. 2009), while Anderssen & Westergaard (2020) use corpora from the cities of Oslo and Tromsø. As is acknowledged by several of these authors, differences between present-day homeland varieties and the heritage language can have two main causes: they can either depend on changes in the homeland after the period of emigration, or changes in the heritage variety. Without historical data, it can be hard (if not impossible) to determine which is the most likely cause. However, historical studies of heritage languages are rarely possible, due to limitations in the available data. For Norwegian, though, we are now lucky to have precisely the corpora needed, CANS (Johannessen 2015) and LIA (see further below).

The appropriate baseline in heritage language studies depends on the research questions (e.g., Polinsky 2018: 11). As NAmNo is a heritage language with a long history (see, e.g., Hjelde 2025 [this volume]), and as we are interested in stability and change *over time* in NAmNo, the optimal baseline for comparison is, in our case, the language in relevant dialect areas in the homeland at the time of emigration. In this respect, we use the term "baseline" slightly differently from some other authors, who place more emphasis on the linguistic input of present-day heritage speakers (e.g., van Baal 2025 [this volume] and Riksem & Nygård

2025 [this volume]). The input of present-day speakers of NAmNo will typically be the language of speakers who themselves grew up as heritage speakers in North America. We are instead concerned with the language that the first emigrants brought with them (typically in the late 1800s/early 1900s); this is the diachronic "starting point" of NAmNo, in the sense that it served as input for the first generation of heritage speakers. These speakers, in turn, provided input for the next generations, including present-day NAmNo speakers. Of course, since we do not have direct access to the input of the first heritage speakers, our notion of baseline will still be an approximation – although we actually do have access to recordings of some of the emigrants who left Norway during the mass emigration (see further below).[4]

In the case of argument placement in Norwegian, it is important to consider which dialects should be included in the baseline. In present-day urban Eastern Norwegian, pronominal subject shift tends to be categorical, object shift of weak pronouns with nominal antecedents is also nearly categorical, and pronominal objects almost always precede particles (see Lundquist & Tengesdal 2022). However, other dialects show more variation: unshifted pronouns are particularly common in Trøndersk (spoken in central Norway, also known as *Trøndsk*), and also Western Norwegian shows more variability in argument placement (e.g., Østbø Munch 2013, Bentzen 2014a,b, Larsson & Lundquist 2014). In short, there is both inter- and intraspeaker variation in argument placement in present-day homeland Norwegian. With respect to Norwegian dialects at the time of emigration, much less is known, and the study of argument placement the history of NAmNo should therefore ideally involve new investigations of the older Norwegian dialects. The studies presented in this chapter use the recently developed LIA corpus for this purpose. The LIA corpus (*Language Infrastructure made Accessible*) is a collection of old dialect recordings which have been digitized and tagged; the corpus includes speakers born as early as the late 1800s (see Hagen et al. 2021 and further works referenced there, as well as Hagen & Vangsnes 2023).

The data sets used for the studies in this chapter are summarized in Table 1. In the sections on subject shift and object shift (Sections 3 and 4), the data and results are the same as in Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming). In the discussion of particle placement in Section 5, we carry out a new investigation using the same

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[4]The questions of which groups of speakers (or texts) to compare is known also in other types of diachronic studies, where the available data is often more limited. However, whereas we tend to expect a higher degree of stability across generations in most types of historical studies, we might expect rapid change in heritage languages (see Kupisch & Polinsky 2022). This might make the baseline question more urgent in heritage language studies, although not different in principle.

datasets. The two first rows (LIA and Emigrant Norwegian) constitute the baseline. In the rest of this section, we discuss the properties of the data sets, and how they were selected and delimited, in further detail.

Table 1: Data sets (Larsson & Kinn forthcoming, their Table 1).

	Dialect area	Num. of speakers	Year of birth	Corpus size (tokens)
LIA	Eastern Norwegian (Oppland)	27	1889–1926, 1955	57,900
Emigrant No	Eastern, Western and mixed backgrounds	13	1849–1903	17,400
Older NAmNo	Mostly Eastern Norwegian	75	1862–1927	61,100
Modern NAmNo	Eastern Norwegian (Oppland)	11	1918–1946	73,100

Not all dialects are equally relevant for the development of NAmNo; it is known from previous studies that dialects in the interior of Eastern Norway (and in particular the Gudbrandsdalen valley) have a special position; many of the present-day NAmNo speakers exhibit traits from this area (see, e.g., Hjelde 2025 [this volume]). In the studies below, the investigations of the LIA corpus have been restricted to speakers in the former county of Oppland in Eastern Norway (which includes Gudbrandsdalen), and data for present-day NAmNo only includes speakers with a dialect background from this county. This limitation is important, as the aim is to uncover whether there is change in NAmNo that has not been inherited from the baseline, or if NAmNo shows stability with regard to subject shift, object shift and particle placement.

The studies to be presented in this chapter also include some of the language of the first emigrants in the baseline (*Emigrant No* in Table 1). As pointed out by Polinsky (2018: 14), the emigrant language might already differ from the homeland variety in some respects (as the emigrant speakers are bilingual, and no longer part of the same speech community as the homeland speakers). Therefore, the language of the emigrants is the best approximation we have of the input of the first heritage NAmNo speakers. The emigrant data (recorded by Einar Haugen, Didrik A. Seip and Ernst W. Selmer in the 1930s and 1940s, and available in CANS) is more mixed with respect to dialect background than the data from LIA. Although most of the speakers have a background in Eastern Norway, some have a Western Norwegian background; we might therefore expect more variability

in argument placement. We have not attempted to distinguish speakers of different dialect backgrounds in the emigrant data set, in part because the available data is quite limited, and in part because, despite a tendency for clustering of dialects (Hjelde 2025 [this volume]), speakers of other dialect backgrounds could conceivably represent part of the linguistic input of speakers born of Eastern Norwegian parents in the Norwegian settlements. The emigrant data set used in the studies includes all speakers currently available in CANS (version 3.1) who are 1st generation, according to the corpus metadata.

Older NAmNo in Table 1 consists of data from heritage NAmNo speakers recorded in the 1930s and 40s (by Einar Haugen, Didrik A. Seip and Ernst W. Selmer). In the studies below, all available heritage speakers from this period have been included (more precisely, all speakers in CANS, v. 3.1, recorded in the 1930s/1940s who are *not* 1st generation speakers according to the corpus metadata). The majority of these speakers have an Eastern Norwegian dialect background (see further in Larsson & Kinn forthcoming). Finally, the data set labelled as *Modern NAmNo* includes heritage speakers (2nd–4th generation) with a dialect background in Oppland. To make the investigation manageable, the study of Modern NAmNo has been restricted to recordings made in 2010; although the speakers are fewer, the Modern NAmNo data set is still larger than the other three.

We follow Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) in dividing the heritage speakers according to time of recording ("older" vs. "modern" NAmNo), rather than generation since emigration (there are, for example, 3rd generation speakers in both groups). This choice is motivated by the characteristics of the Norwegian communities, in particular regarding the status of the heritage language at different points in time. Many of the older NAmNo speakers are expected to have lived at least part of their lives in communities where Norwegian was more widely used than today, e.g., in church and other local institutions (see, e.g., Natvig 2022, Eide & Hjelde 2023, Hjelde 2025 [this volume]). For present-day speakers, Norwegian is largely restricted to the family, and speakers might go years (or even decades!) without speaking Norwegian. It is therefore expected that heritage speakers in the Modern NAmNo data set are more dominant in English than the older NAmNo group, independently of generation since emigration, and the present-day speakers most likely received less Norwegian input when they were children, than the older NAmNo speakers did (see Larsson & Kinn forthcoming for further discussion).

3 Subject shift

This section is concerned with subject placement in NAmNo, compared to EurNo. Although the focus is on subject shift, i.e., the ordering of subjects and negation/sentence adverbials, we also include the clause-initial position. As we will argue in Section 3.2, this can help us understand changes in the incidence of shifted subjects in NAmNo.

3.1 Subject shift in EurNo

As mentioned in Section 1, subjects are often placed in the preverbal position in Norwegian; this applies to around 70% of all declarative main clauses in EurNo (Olsen 2019; see also Westergaard & Lohndal 2019: 96, Westergaard et al. 2021: 3 and references therein).[5] An example was given in (1a), repeated in (5) for convenience:

(5) **Gutten** leste den boka   i går.
boy.DEF read that book.DEF yesterday
'The boy read that book yesterday.'

Postverbal subjects can be either shifted or unshifted; factors influencing the distribution include the form of the subject (pronominal vs. non-pronominal), information structure, and clause type (see, e.g., Svenonius 2002, Westergaard 2011, Bentzen 2014a and references therein). Unstressed pronominal subjects tend to be shifted, while non-pronominal subjects display more variation, as illustrated in (6):

(6)   a. Derfor   leste **han ikke** boka.
         therefore read he   not book.DEF
         'Therefore he didn't read the book.'

      b. Derfor   leste **{gutten} ikke {gutten}** boka.
         therefore read boy.DEF not boy.DEF book.DEF
         'Therefore the boy didn't read the book.'

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[5]As argued in detail by Lindahl & Engdahl (2022), the clause-initial position serves a double function. It links the utterance to the previous discourse, either by maintaining the same topic (topic-chaining) or by introducing a switch topic (focus-chaining); see further Section 4 below. In addition, it serves as a starting point for the utterance, often by introducing an aboutness topic (frequently the subject).

Westergaard (2011) observes that in spontaneous speech, non-pronominal subjects in the shifted position (6b) are very rare, although they are not perceived as ungrammatical.

Non-initial pronominal subjects that are topics are generally shifted; thus, (6a) above, with a shifted pronoun (*han* 'he'), would be natural in a context where the antecedent of the pronoun was the topic of the utterance (for a more detailed discussion of the notion of topic, see Section 4). Pronominal subjects that are focused and/or contrastive, on the other hand, are often found in the unshifted position. This is illustrated in (7), where the subject pronoun is focused and follows negation:

(7) (Unshifted subj.)
Derfor   leste **ikke HAN** boka,   men de andre gjorde det.
therefore read not   HE   book.DEF but the others did   it
'Therefore HE didn't read the book, but the others did.'

Clause type also plays a certain role for subject placement. In most types of embedded clauses, only the postverbal subject positions are available; the C-position is filled by a complementizer and fronting to Spec-CP is unavailable (with certain exceptions, e.g., Julien 2015, 2020 and references therein; Ringstad 2019). Westergaard (2011) notes, based on spontaneous speech data, that there is a clear preference for the shifted position in embedded clauses, both for pronominal and non-pronominal subjects; see (8). This is different from main clauses, in which non-pronominal subjects are rarely shifted.

(8) Hun visste at   **gutten/han ikke** leste boka.
she   knew that boy.DEF/he not   read book.DEF
'She knew that the boy/he didn't read the book.'

In the basic clausal structure sketched for Norwegian in Kinn & Putnam (2025 [this volume]), negation and sentence adverbials mark the left border of the verb phrase (vP). The position of the verb relative to negation can therefore serve as a diagnostic for verb placement; in (8), the verb remains in situ in the verb phrase. The position of negation/sentence adverbials can, however, not be used to diagnose unshifted subjects in Norwegian as vP-internal, even though unshifted subjects follow these elements. In (9) below, the subject is unshifted, and follows negation, but it is still clearly vP-external, as it precedes the sentence adverbial *allerede* 'already' and the (vP-internal) non-finite verbs.

(9) Derfor   må   ikke **elevene**   **allerede** ha   lest boka   før
    therefore must not   pupil.PL.DEF already   have read book.DEF before
    timen.
    class.DEF
    'Therefore the students are not obliged to have read the book already
    before class.'

It appears, therefore, that there is more than one vP-external subject position in Norwegian, and that a more elaborate structure than the basic architecture given in Kinn & Putnam (2025 [this volume]) is required. Different analyses have been proposed in the literature (see, e.g., Westergaard 2011: 302 for an overview); while some authors have proposed that all subject positions are located in a (split) C-domain, we assume for simplicity that the two postverbal positions are in the T-domain, intercepted by a position for negation/sentence adverbials.[6] The distribution of subjects described above suggests that the unshifted position might be associated with focus, but as argued by Lundquist & Tengesdal (2022), information structure cannot fully account for the variation in subject placement.

Before we move on to subject placement and subject shift in NAmNo, we should highlight that the patterns for subject placement in EurNo are not entirely categorical, even considering the placement of unstressed pronouns. As mentioned in Sections 1 and 2, there is some dialectal variation (see, e.g., Østbø Munch 2013, Bentzen 2014a), as well as individual variation that in some cases crosscuts the tendencies described above. As discussed above, this makes it important to be particularly aware of the baseline question, and to take older dialect data/emigrant data into account as a part of the investigation.

3.2 Subject placement and subject shift in NAmNo

As mentioned above, previous studies have observed an increase of subject-initial clauses in NAmNo (see also Anderssen et al. 2025 [this volume]). Westergaard et al. (2021: 14) investigate 50 speakers of modern (i.e., present-day) NAmNo and find that 18.5% of all declaratives are non-subject-initial; in EurNo, the corresponding number is around 30% (see above). Moreover, Anderssen & Westergaard (2020) observe a change in subject shift: considering the placement of non-

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[6]This leaves some important questions open, for which a full account is still needed. There are differences between negation and other sentence adverbials with regard to subject placement: non-pronominal subjects shift across sentence adverbials like *alltid* 'always' more often than across negation (Lundquist & Tengesdal 2022). Subjects can also occupy different positions in between a combination of adverbials (cf. (9)). Börjars et al. (2003) argue for a flat structure of the middle field, and that the linear variation in subject placement is determined by OT constraints.

initial subjects, there is a higher proportion of unshifted pronominal subjects (i.e., negation-subject) in present-day NAmNo than in present-day EurNo. Larsson & Kinn (2021, forthcoming) suggest that these two changes – the change in the proportion of SV, and the change in the proportion of subject shift – are connected.[7] In the rest of this section, we look closer at their results.

Larsson & Kinn observe that the frequency of SV order increases already in older NAmNo, at the expense of the shifted subject position; see Table 2. In declarative main clauses with negation, the frequency of SV order is around 75–80% in the baseline (LIA and emigrant No),[8] whereas in older NAmNo, it has increased to 88.3%. In modern NAmNo, 93.8% of the declaratives have SV order.

Table 2: Three subject positions in declarative main clauses with negation; pronominal subjects. (Larsson & Kinn forthcoming, their Table 6).

	Spec-CP	Shifted	Unshifted	Total
LIA	435 (76.9%)	118 (20.8%)	13 (2.3%)	566
Emigrant No	92 (82.1%)	15 (13.4%)	5 (4.5%)	112
Older NAmNo	257 (88.3%)	27 (9.3%)	7 (2.4%)	291
Modern NAmNo	783 (93.8%)	32 (3.8%)	20 (2.4%)	835

Considering all three subject positions, there is a significant increase in initial subjects over time, and a corresponding, significant decrease in the proportion of shifted subjects. There is, however, no statistically significant change in the frequency of *unshifted* subjects in declarative main clauses (see Larsson & Kinn forthcoming for details and discussion). Larsson & Kinn conclude that the growing preference for fronting subjects to Spec-CP particularly has consequences for the shifted position. This is not completely surprising, since the initial position and the shifted position have in common that they generally contain topics; as we have seen, the unshifted position is largely dedicated to focused subject pronouns. Compare the emigrant example in (10a) to modern NAmNo in (10b). In (10a) an object pronoun is fronted to Spec-CP,[9] and the postverbal topical sub-

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[7]Anderssen & Westergaard (2020) also note that the increase in SV (subject-initial clauses) has consequences for the contexts for subject shift; however, they do not link the two phenomena directly to each other in the way that we will argue for below.

[8]This might appear slightly higher than expected, but see Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) for further discussion.

[9]Or more precisely, a predicate pronoun, but this distinction is not of crucial importance to the point we are making here. The pronoun is extracted from an embedded clause; it is a question for future research whether NAmNo in any way differs from the baseline with respect to extraction.

ject pronoun precedes negation. In the heritage language, the topical subject is instead fronted to Spec-CP, as in (10b).[10]

(10) a. å   nei **det** trur   jeg ikke han var
         oh no that believe I   not   he   was
         'oh no, I don't believe that he was' (emigrant, blair_WI_19um)

      b. nei **jeg** trur   ikke det
         no I   believe not   that
         'no, I don't think so' (modern NAmNo, westby_WI_03gk; Larsson & Kinn forthcoming, ex. 14–15)

Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) argue that the change in the proportions of shifted and unshifted subjects noted by Anderssen & Westergaard (2020) can be explained when all three subject positions are taken into account: It is a direct consequence of the stronger preference of SV order (subject-initial clauses) in NAmNo – the increase in SV "steals" subjects from the shifted position, but not from the unshifted position, which results in a higher proportion of unshifted subjects when the two postverbal positions are compared. The stronger preference for SV, in turn, has been attributed to CLI from English in the previous literature (Westergaard et al. 2021). However, it might rather be a consequence of a general pressure to ease processing in heritage languages. We return to the question of CLI and ease of processing in the discussion in Section 5.2.[11]

There is one case where it seems clear that CLI must be involved, namely in a certain type of V1-question, tag questions. As noted by Anderssen & Westergaard (2020), NAmNo has more cases of unshifted subjects in V1-questions than EurNo. Similarly, Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) observe that there is 93.3% subject shift in V1-questions in LIA, but only 23.9% in present-day NAmNo. Unlike the increase in SV order in declaratives, this change can only be seen in the last generation of speakers, and it involves tag questions, but not other types of interrogative clauses. Tag questions are not very widespread in EurNo, and we have not found them in our homeland (LIA) or emigrant data, but they are found in modern NAmNo, just like English. Compare the example in (11) to the English translation – both have the pronominal subject after negation. Tag questions are, as mentioned, not very common in EurNo and would generally (at least in Eastern Norwegian) have a shifted pronominal subject.

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[10]The transcriptions are given with the standardized orthography provided in the corpora. Note that while CANS uses the *Bokmål* standard, examples from LIA are in *Nynorsk*.

[11]Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) also note a drop in the proportion of shifted subjects in embedded clauses in NAmNo, where fronting to Spec-CP is generally not an option. They conclude that subject placement in different types of embedded clauses still needs to be investigated in more detail, both in NAmNo and EurNo.

(11) du kan klare   det, kan **ikke du**?
      you can manage it   can not   you
      'you can manage it, can't you?' (modern NAmNo, coon_valley_WI_07gk;
      Larsson & Kinn forthcoming, ex. 13a)

Importantly, none of the changes discussed thus far introduces completely new syntactic patterns in NAmNo. Rather, the changes involve shifts in the preferences for different available options (with different pragmatic functions). Although tag questions are rare in EurNo, questions with unshifted pronominal subjects do occur, as in, e.g., *Kan ikke du komme?* 'Can't you come?' (see further Section 6.2 below). In declarative main clauses, the increase in SV order in NAmNo lies within what the baseline grammar allows (disregarding sporadic examples involving V2-violations; see Anderssen et al. 2025 [this volume]).

Crucially, subject placement is not categorical in the baseline. Most obviously, there is generally a choice in declarative main clauses to front either the subject or a non-subject. In addition, Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) note that there is variation in the placement of postverbal unstressed pronouns in the baseline. Although unstressed pronouns generally shift across negation in Eastern Norwegian, they are on occasion unshifted in the LIA data, as in (12); shifting appears to be less categorical in the older dialect recordings than in present-day urban Eastern Norwegian. Similar examples can be found in NAmNo; see (13). Although examples like (13) might sound odd to modern urban Eastern Norwegian speakers, they appear to be inherited from the baseline, as shown by (12), rather than introduced in North America. Recall that the data from LIA here only include speakers from Oppland in Eastern Norway.

(12) så var eg nå i mine beste år   eg au men e da   tente **ikkje eg**
      so was I now in my   best years I too but eh then earned not   I
      meir enn to   kroner dagen.
      more than two crowns day.DEF
      'I was now in my best years, me too, but then I didn't earn more than two crowns a day' (LIA, oeyer_uio_0201, Larsson & Kinn forthcoming, ex. 11a)

(13) ja de   kommer ifra alle steder e siste #siste åra   har **ikke**
      yes they come   from all places eh last last   year.PL.DEF have not
      det vært så mye   men...
      it   been so much but
      'Yes, they come from all places. During the last years, it has not been so much, but...' (modern NAmNo, coon_valley_WI_06gm; Larsson & Kinn forthcoming, ex. 12c)

To sum up this section, we have seen that there is a change in the proportion of shifted postverbal subjects in NAmNo compared to the baseline, which, on our account, can be explained as a knock-on effect of the strong preference to front subjects to Spec-CP in NAmNo. We have argued that the preference for SV affects the shifted position, since both this position and Spec-CP typically contain topics; the unshifted position is not affected. Whereas the growing preference for SV order arguably is due to pressure to ease processing (perhaps rather than CLI, see further discussion in Section 6.2), there is evidence for CLI in a pragmatically well-defined context, namely tag questions. Finally, we have observed that subject shift of weak subject pronouns is not completely categorical in NAmNo, nor, in fact, in the baseline.

4 Object shift

In this section, we turn to the placement of pronominal objects relative to negation/sentence adverbials. Section 4.1 gives an overview of object shift in EurNo, and in Section 4.2 we turn to object shift in NAmNo, compared to the baseline. As with subject shift, we will argue that there is variation in the baseline, even when only speakers from Oppland are considered. This variation is maintained in NAmNo, but, again, the changed preferences for the clause-initial position can affect the placement of arguments further down in the clause.

4.1 Object shift in EurNo

As in the previous section on subjects, we start this section on object shift with a brief discussion of the preverbal position. We noted above that subjects in the preverbal position are often topical; this is true also of objects, but some further details should be mentioned. Lindahl & Engdahl (2022) show that one of the typical functions of (pronominal) objects in the preverbal position in Swedish is that of *switch topic*, i.e., a topic which refers back to the *focus* of the preceding utterance (see also Bentzen & Anderssen 2019). A switch topic is not new information, but its status as a topic is new; this sets switch topics apart from *continued* topics, which refer back to the topic of the preceding utterance; see also Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007). Lindahl & Engdahl's description of Swedish can essentially be extended to EurNo; thus, an object-initial sentence with preceding context could typically be something like (14):

(14) Jeg vil ikke ha   pizza til middag. Det spiste jeg i går.
      I   want not have pizza for dinner it   ate   I   yesterday
      'I don't want pizza for dinner. I had that yesterday.'

In the first sentence in (14), *pizza* is the focus. In the next sentence, it is a switch topic, expressed by the pronoun *det* 'it', which is fronted to the preverbal position (Spec-CP). Note, however, that this fronting is not obligatory; objects that are switch topics may also occur further down in the clause. Lindahl & Engdahl distinguish between two pragmatic strategies: focus-chaining (fronting of a switch topic), and topic-chaining (fronting of a continued topic); cf. fn. 5 above.

Turning now to the postverbal positions, the basic rules for object shift in EurNo were given in Section 1: pronominal objects shift past negation when the verb has left the vP; non-pronominal objects do not shift (see (3)). However, there is further and rather systematic variation (see Bentzen & Anderssen 2019). A well-known observation is that object pronouns with certain types of antecedents often remain unshifted. This applies to object pronouns that refer back to *types* of referents rather than individuated tokens, and also to objects with non-nominal antecedents, i.e., a vP or a whole clause (CP). Examples are given in (15):

(15) a. Nesten alle hadde blå   sykkel, men Lisa hadde **ikke det**.
          almost all had   blue bike   but Lisa had   not it
          'Almost everyone had a blue bike, but Lisa didn't.'

      b. Nesten alle syklet til jobb, men Petter gjorde **ikke det**.
          almost all cycled to work but Petter did   not it.
          'Almost everyone cycled to work, but Petter didn't.'

      c. Værmeldingen   sier at det blir   snø, men jeg tror **ikke**
          weather.forecast.DEF says that there will.be snow but I   think not
          det.
          it
          'The weather forecast says that there will be snow, but I don't think so.'

In (15a), the object pronoun *det* refers back to *blå sykkel* 'blue bike', which is a bare noun (Borthen 2003) denoting a type of referent rather than a specific, individuated token.[12] In (15b–c), the antecedents are a vP (*syklet til jobb* 'cycled to work') and a whole clause (*at det blir snø* 'that there will be snow'). In all three cases, the object pronoun *det* follows negation.

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[12]Note that the object pronoun *det,* formally a neuter form, does not agree with *blå sykkel* 'blue bike', which is masculine. This is typical of bare nouns with type reference.

Another recurring observation is that information structure affects the position of object pronouns. Object pronouns that are focused and/or stressed do not undergo object shift. This is illustrated in (16):

(16)   a.   (O-Neg)
            Han leste **den ikke**.
            he   read it   not
            'He didn't read it.'

      b.   (Neg-O)
            Han leste ikke **DEN**, men han leste de andre bøkene.
            he   read not that but he   read the other book.PL.DEF
            'He didn't read that, but he read the other books.'

In (16a), the object pronoun is unstressed and shifted; in (16b), it carries contrastive focus and is stressed, and therefore appears in the unshifted position; object shift would be unacceptable.

Moreover, different types of topics behave differently. Also in this case, the distinction between switch topics and continued topics is relevant: while continued topics are generally shifted, switch topics often remain unshifted (if they are not fronted to the preverbal position) (e.g., Bentzen & Anderssen 2019, Lindahl & Engdahl 2022). Consider the example in (17).

(17)   Skal du se den nye Marvel-filmen   i kveld igjen? Så   du ikke
       shall you see the new Marvel-movie.DEF tonight again saw you not
       den i går?
       it   yesterday?
       'Are you watching the new Marvel movie again tonight? Didn't you see it yesterday?'

Here, the first question introduces the new Marvel movie as focus. In the second question, *den* ('it', referring to the movie) is a switch topic, and it is unshifted, although it is not focused. Spec-CP is not available in the question in (17). In a declarative clause, the switch topic can be fronted to Spec-CP, as in (18a), or remain unshifted, as in (18b), where it follows the modal adverb *jo*.

(18)   a.   Skal du se den nye Marvel-filmen   i kveld igjen? Den så   du
            shall you see the new Marvel-movie.DEF tonight again it   saw you
            jo   i går!
            MOD yesterday
            'Are you watching the new Marvel movie again tonight? You saw it yesterday!'

b. Skal du se den nye Marvel-filmen   i kveld igjen? Du så jo
shall you see the new Marvel-movie.DEF tonight again you saw MOD
den i går!
it   yesterday
'Are you watching the new Marvel movie again tonight? You saw it
yesterday!'

Information structure interacts with antecedent type. As mentioned above, object pronouns with vP or CP antecedents tend to remain unshifted – these pronouns also commonly function as switch topics (Bentzen & Anderssen 2019, Lindahl & Engdahl 2022). Notably, if an object pronoun with a vP or CP antecedent is used multiple times, the first instance is often unshifted, while following instances tend to be shifted (Bentzen & Anderssen 2019). This pattern can be straightforwardly explained by information structure: when the pronominal object is used the second time, it has been established as a continued topic; cf. (19):

(19) Nesten alle syklet til jobb, men Petter gjorde **ikke det**. Og Anne gjorde
almost all cycled to work but Petter did   not it   and Anne did
det ikke, hun   heller.
it   not   either
'Almost everyone cycled to work, but Petter didn't. And Anne didn't
either.'

The formal analysis of object shift has been a topic of debate for a long time, with accounts ranging from purely syntactic ones to analyses placing object shift in prosody/phonology; see e.g. Erteschik-Shir et al. (2021) for a prosodic analysis. There is still no consensus on the issue (see, e.g., Lyskawa et al. 2022 for arguments against the phonology-based view). As with subject shift, it should be noted that there is some dialectal and individual variation concerning shifted and unshifted objects (e.g., Lundquist & Tengesdal 2022). Much like subject shift, object shift of pronouns with nominal antecedents appears to be more categorical in present-day Eastern Norwegian than in Western Norwegian dialects (e.g., Østbø Munch 2013, Bentzen 2014b). Again, this is important to keep in mind when studying NAmNo, which we turn to in the next section.

4.2 Object placement and object shift in NAmNo

Contexts for object shift are very rare in spontaneous speech (recall that object shift is restricted to pronominal objects in clauses with one single, finite verb

which has moved out of vP), and it can therefore be difficult to investigate the phenomenon in corpora. Still, corpus data shows that NAmNo exhibits object shift of weak pronominal objects across negation and other sentence adverbials, just like EurNo; see the examples in (20). In (20a), an object pronoun (with a nominal antecedent) precedes negation, and in (20b), an object pronoun (with non-nominal reference) precedes the modal adverb *jo* 'of course'.[13]

(20)   a. men jeg kjenner **henne ikke**
           but I   know   her   not
           'but I don't know her' (sunburg_MN_12gk)

       b. ja jeg forstår   **det jo**
           yes I   understand it   MOD
           'yes, I do understand it' (harmony_MN_02gk)

Only weak object pronouns shift in NAmNo, as in EurNo. Other types of objects therefore follow negation and other clause-medial sentence adverbials, unless they have been fronted to the clause-initial position; examples with nouns and demonstratives are given in (21).

(21)   a. da   snakker vi jo   **ikke norsk**
           then speak   we MOD not   Norwegian
           'then we don't speak Norwegian' (wanamingo_MN_04gk)

       b. jeg forstår   **ikke dette**
           I   understand not   this
           'I don't understand this' (blair_WI_04gk)

Moreover, as in EurNo, object shift does not seem to be possible across an intervening, vP-internal verb (Holmberg's generalization); object pronouns therefore follow negation in sentences with an auxiliary, as in (22).[14]

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[13]The examples in (20–22) come from a search for negation and sentence adverbials in the entire Norwegian part of CANS, v. 3.1. The data from Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) in Table 3 is more restricted (see Section 2 above) and only includes potential object shift across negation. The examples cited in (20–22) were all recorded in the 2010s.

[14]NAmNo sometimes has verb movement (V-to-T) in embedded clauses where verb movement is not licit in the homeland variety (see Anderssen et al. 2025 [this volume] and references therein). Object shift is therefore expected to be possible in embedded contexts, as long as the main verb has moved out of the vP. Since object shift is very infrequent in spontaneous speech, this is, however, difficult to investigate.

(22) a. han far   # ville **ikke** svare **oss**
            he   father   would not   answer us
            'father would not answer us' (coon_valley_WI_07gk)

    b. jeg kan **ikke** huske   **henne**
           I   can not   remember her
           'I can't remember her' (hatton_ND_03gm)

Anderssen & Westergaard (2020) investigate the placement of object pronouns relative to negation in clauses where object shift would be possible in the baseline. They show that object shift is less common in present-day NAmNo than in present-day EurNo: 61% (25/41) of the pronouns with nominal reference shift in their study, whereas studies of present-day EurNo report higher proportions (e.g., 87.6% in Bentzen 2014a, based on the Nordic Dialect Corpus; 95% in Lundquist & Tengesdal's 2022 experimental study).

NAmNo object shift across negation is also investigated by Larsson & Kinn (2021, forthcoming), who compare present-day NAmNo to older NAmNo and a baseline of old dialect recordings (cf. the study on subject shift discussed above). Results from Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) are given in Table 3 below; only clauses where object shift would be possible in the baseline are included, and pronouns with different kinds of reference are distinguished. The data sets in Table 3 are identical to those in the subject shift study discussed above; see Section 2 for an overview. This means that only speakers from Oppland are included in the LIA data, and only speakers with a family background in Oppland are included in modern NAmNo.

Table 3: The proportion of object shift across negation in relevant clauses, including cases with shifted or unshifted object pronouns (but not topicalized objects) (based on Larsson & Kinn forthcoming, their Table 7).

	Nominal	Reflexive	Non-nominal	Total	
LIA	4/6	4/4	3/14	11/24	(45.8%)
Emigrant No	1/3	-	0/1	1/4	(25.0%)
Older NAmNo	4/7	3/3	3/19	10/29	(34.5%)
Modern NAmNo	11/17	1/1	2/33	14/51	(27.5%)
Total	20/33	8/8	8/67	36/108	
	(60.6%)	(100%)	(11.9%)	(33.3%)	

Despite the restriction to speakers from Oppland, the studies by Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) show that there is more variability in the baseline than in present-day (urban) Eastern Norwegian. Whereas reflexives always seem to shift in all speaker groups, there is variation in the placement of pronouns with nominal reference; examples of unshifted weak pronouns with nominal reference can be found in the different speaker groups; examples from LIA and older NAmNo are given in (23). In both (23a) and (23b), the object pronoun *meg* 'me' is a continued topic, and it is unstressed (as can be heard from the sound files accessible through the corpus interface).

(23) a. eg kom der heilt   uforløyves   så han såg **ikke meg**
         I came there completely without.permission so he saw not me
         da
         then
         'I came there completely without permission so he didn't see me then'
         (LIA, biri_uio_0202; Larsson & Kinn forthcoming, ex. 31)
      b. … han # kom på meg uvitende   og # så **ikke meg**
            he   came at me unknowingly and   saw not me
         'he came at me unknowingly, and didn't see me' (older NAmNo,
         blair_WI_23um; Larsson & Kinn forthcoming, ex. 32a)

The results show that object shift is not categorical either in the older EurNo dialects or in NAmNo. In fact, given the variability in the baseline, the stability of NAmNo object shift is quite remarkable.

As in the baseline, object pronouns with non-nominal reference are often unshifted – particularly when they are switch topics. An example is given in (24), where *det* refers back to a CP introducing the focus in the previous utterance.

(24) ja vi visste **ikke det**
      yes we knew not   it
      'yes, we didn't know it' (modern NAmNo, coon_valley_WI_07gk; Larsson
      & Kinn forthcoming, ex. 34b)

As noted above, switch topics are generally unshifted in EurNo – when they are not fronted to Spec-CP (see (17) and (18) above). This is true also in NAmNo – with the difference that objects are much less often clause-initial. Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) show that while almost 10% of all declarative main clauses (with negation) are object-initial in the baseline, there is less than 1% object-initial clauses in the present-day NAmNo sample; as we saw above, NAmNo has a

strong preference for SV order. While not all these declaratives provide a context for object shift (many include auxiliaries), it seems quite clear that the preference for SV order affects the proportion of unshifted objects. Consider again the examples in (11), repeated below. In the baseline, the switch topic pronoun is fronted to Spec-CP, whereas in NAmNo, where SV order is preferred, the object is instead in the unshifted position. This is precisely what is expected from the patterns for object shift in the baseline.

(25)   a. å nei **det** trur   jeg ikke han var
             oh no that believe I   not he   was
             'oh no, I don't believe that he was' (emigrant, blair_WI_19um;
             Larsson & Kinn forthcoming, ex. 14a)

        b. nei jeg trur   **ikke det**
             no I   believe not   that
             'no, I don't think so' (modern NAmNo, westby_WI_03gk; Larsson &
             Kinn forthcoming, ex. 15a)

Summing up, we have seen, first of all, that NAmNo has object shift, and that it follows the same principles as in EurNo. However, compared to present-day urban, Eastern EurNo, the proportion of shifted objects in NAmNo is somewhat lower, i.e., there is more variation. We have observed that this variation can at least in part be traced back to variation that was already present in the baseline. We have also argued that it is to some extent a by-product of the increased preference for subject-initial clauses in NAmNo, and the concomitant decline of object-initial clauses: the objects that are typically fronted to the initial position in the baseline are the same type of objects that remain unshifted when not fronted (notably switch topics).

5 Objects and verb particles

In this section, we present a new study of the order between verb particles and objects in NAmNo, using the same data set as in the studies of subject shift and object shift above. Section 5.1 gives an overview of verb particle placement in EurNo, and Section 5.2 is concerned with NAmNo as compared to the baseline.

5.1 Objects in verb particle constructions in EurNo

Verb particles (as in *sign **up**, give **in***) have sometimes been analyzed as intransitive prepositions (see, e.g., Faarlund 2019: 137). In the typical case, a preposition

locates one entity (the Figure) in relation to another (the Ground): In *put the food in the fridge, the food* is Figure, and related to the Ground, *the fridge*. In a verb particle construction, the Ground is often implicit, as in *take the dog out*. While the verb and the particle syntactically behave like two independent words, the combination often has idiomatic, non-compositional meaning; it is then generally less clear what is Figure and Ground (consider for instance *she gave up*, *I found it out*). The particle often, but not always, introduces a result (as in *go out*) or modifies a result introduced by the verb (*open up*). Particles also frequently change the argument structure of the verb (cf. *give somebody something* and *give up*). Verb particles have been much discussed in the literature; see Åfarli (1985), Svenonius (1996), Ramchand & Svenonius (2002), Toivonen (2003), Larsson & Lundquist (2014, 2021), Aa (2020) and many others.

EurNo verb particles have many properties in common with their English counterparts. In EurNo, as in English, transitive particle combinations can be distinguished from combinations of verb + PP through constituency tests: unlike a preposition + complement, the particle and the object do not form a constituent. Consider (26) below, which shows that a particle + object cannot be topicalized together.

(26)   a.   * Ut   hunden slapp jeg.
              out dog.DEF let   I
              (Intended:) 'I let the dog out.'

       b.   Hunden slapp jeg ut.
            dog.DEF let   I   out
            'I let the dog out.'

One important characteristic of transitive verb particle constructions in both English and EurNo is word order: an object can either precede or follow the particle; consider the Norwegian examples in (27) and their English translations, which show the same word order variability.[15]

(27)   a.   Hun slapp hunden ut   (i skogen).
            she let   dog.DEF out in forest.DEF
            'She let the dog out in the forest.'

       b.   Hun slapp ut   hunden.
            she let   out dog.DEF
            'She let out the dog.'

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[15]Norwegian particle constructions are also characterized by specific prosodic properties. The verb and the particle are often realized with so called compound accent; compound accent is otherwise not found outside words (see Tengesdal et al. 2024 for discussion).

In EurNo, the order particle-object in (27b) is much preferred when the object is non-pronominal; the order NP-particle in (27a) is more frequent when the particle is followed by a directional PP (see Lundquist & Tengesdal 2022). Pronominal objects and reflexives, on the other hand, generally precede the particle, as in (28a); the order particle-pronoun is not accepted by all speakers, as indicated by the % sign in (28b).

(28) a. Hun tok   den med.
          she took it   with
          'She brought it with her.'

      b. % Hun tok   med den.
          she   took with it
          'She brought it with her.'

Again, EurNo resembles English, where the order particle-pronoun is generally unacceptable; see (29b).[16] Unlike in EurNo, though, the distribution of non-pronominal objects is more even; in present-day American English, there is only a slight preference for the particle-object order (Haddican et al. 2020: 215 report a proportion of 53% particle-object order in corpus data from US Twitter users).

(29) a. She let the dog/him out.
      b. She let out the dog/*him.

The variation in object placement in particle constructions resembles subject shift and object shift, as there is a clear difference between pronominal and non-pronominal arguments. Also, EurNo reflexives precede both particles and negation more consistently than pronouns (Lundquist & Tengesdal 2022). However, unlike in particle constructions, the difference between the two types of arguments is categorical in object shift – non-pronominal objects cannot shift. In the case of subject shift, there is variation with non-pronominal subjects, but a preference for the position following negation. Another difference between subject placement and object placement in particle constructions is that the former depends partly on clause type (see Section 3 above).

There is some dialectal variation in EurNo with regard to the frequencies of the two word orders (see Larsson & Lundquist 2014, Lundquist & Tengesdal 2022). All dialects seem to distinguish between pronouns and non-pronouns, but Trøndersk (spoken in central Norway) has a higher frequency of particle-pronoun

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[16]However, as mentioned by Toivonen (2003), particle-pronoun order can on occasion be found also in English.

order than other areas (and also less pronominal subject shift and object shift; see Østbø Munch 2013). Outside of Trøndersk, the order particle-pronoun and particle-reflexive is very infrequent in the present-day dialects; in a study based on the Nordic Dialect Corpus (Johannessen et al. 2009), Larsson & Lundquist (2014) find a single example from Northern Norwegian, and only a handful from the south. Larsson & Lundquist also observe that the variation in the placement of non-pronominal objects is restricted; younger speakers in Finnmark (Northern Norway) have a stronger preference for the order particle-NP (94%) than older speakers (74%). The younger Finnmark speakers resemble speakers (of all ages) in Buskerud (Eastern Norway), who produce the order particle-NP in around 90% of the cases.

In the next section, we investigate object placement in particle constructions in NAmNo, as compared to the same baseline that was used for subject and object shift, i.e., older homeland dialect speakers (LIA) and emigrant speakers. Again, we will see that there is some variability already in the baseline.

5.2 Objects in particle constructions in NAmNo

To investigate object placement in particle constructions in NAmNo, we have, as mentioned, used the same data set that was used for the study of subject and object placement in Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming); cf. Table 1 above for details. Recall, again, that this data set includes four groups of speakers: homeland Norwegian dialect speakers born in Oppland around the time of mass emigration (the LIA corpus), emigrants (1st generation immigrants recorded in the 1930s/1940s), older NAmNo (heritage speakers recorded in the 1930s/1940s) and modern NAmNo speakers with ancestral ties to the county of Oppland (recorded in 2010).

The same type of verb particle combinations can be found in NAmNo as in EurNo (e.g., *vokse opp* 'grow up', *gå ut* 'go out', *rente ut* 'rent out', *lese opp* 'read out'). We have searched for the particles *opp* 'up', *ned* 'down', *ut* 'out', and *inn* 'in'. All hits were manually tagged and irrelevant hits disregarded; we only include transitive verb particle combinations where there is a possibility for word order variation in EurNo. Cases where the object is fronted (topicalized, relativized or questioned) were excluded, as were a couple of unclear cases. Relevant hits were annotated for word order (particle-object or object-particle), type of object (pronoun, reflexive or NP), and the presence of a directional PP. We also included a rough semantic annotation, distinguishing between directional and non-directional particles (cf. also Larsson & Kinn 2021).

Table 4: Word order in transitive verb particle constructions with the particles *opp* 'up', *ned* 'down', *ut* 'out', *inn* 'in'.

	Particle–pronoun	Particle–reflexive	Particle–NP	Total
LIA	7/40 (17.5%)	0/11 (0%)	75/78 (96.2%)	82/129 (63.6%)
Emigrant No	2/20 (10.0%)	0/6 (0%)	23/26 (88.5%)	25/52 (48.1%)
Older NAmNo	3/33 (9.1%)	0/8 (0%)	52/57 (91.2%)	55/98 (56.1%)
Modern NAmNo	5/42 (11.9%)	0/2 (0%)	40/41 (97.6%)	45/85 (52.9%)

The results are presented in Table 4. As expected, there is a clear difference between lexical NPs and pronouns – the former are with few exceptions placed after the particle, whereas pronouns tend to precede particles. A couple of examples are given in (30).

(30) a. du renter **han ut**, eller?
          you rent   it   out or
          'you rent it out, right?' (modern NAmNo, blair_WI_01gm)

      b. jeg har renta **ut åtti acre**
          I   have rented out eighty acres
          'I have rented out eighty acres' (modern NAmNo, blair_WI_01gm)

The number of reflexives is small overall, but reflexives always precede the particle in our data; this is expected from what we know about reflexive placement in present-day EurNo. Examples with reflexives from the baseline and older NAmNo are given in (31).

(31) a. før   enn han begynner i heile   tatt å bikke **seg ned**
          before that he   begins   in the whole taken to tip REFL down
          'before he starts to tip down at all' (LIA, sel_uio_0301)

      b. de   kledde **seg ut**
          they dressed REFL out
          'they were dressing up in costumes' (older NAmNo,
          springdale_WI_01gm)

Furthermore, all speaker groups prefer the order object-particle with pronominal objects and the order particle-object with non-pronominal objects. The word

order preference is clearly independent of the semantics of the verb particle combination: pronouns generally precede both directional and non-directional particles, as in (32), and non-pronominal objects follow both types of particles, as in (33).

(32)   a.   henge **den opp** og   plukke av løva
            hang it   up   and pick   off leaves.DEF
            'hang it up and pick off the leaves' (Modern NAmNo,
            coon_valley_WI_02gm)

       b.   ja   en   kan ikke figure **det ut**
            yes one can not figure it   out
            'yes, one can't figure it out' (Modern NAmNo, blair_WI_01gm)

(33)   a.   kråka   eter **opp alt sammen**
            crow.DEF eats up   all together
            'a crow will eat up everything' (Modern NAmNo,
            coon_valley_WI_02gm)

       b.   så djup at   en   kunne grave **ned**   # **en hest   eller ei ku**
            so deep that one could bury down   a   horse or   a   cow
            'so deep that you could bury a horse or a cow' (Modern NAmNo,
            coon_valley_WI_03gm)

However, there is also some variability with both pronouns and NPs. Pronouns on occasion follow particles, as in the examples in (34).

(34)   a.   så   # tok eg utor den kjuka og sila   mysa   ned i att
            then   took I   out that curd and filtered whey.DEF down in again
            og # og kokte **opp henne** og så   slo   ned fløyten
            and   and boiled up   it.FEM and then poured down cream.DEF
            'then I took the curd out and filtered the whey and poured it back
            down and boiled it poured down the cream' (LIA, lesja_ma_01)

       b.   du   plukka **opp det** fra   dem
            you picked up   it   from them
            'you picked it up from them' (Modern NAmNo,
            coon_valley_WI_06gm)

Interestingly, the incidence of particle–pronoun order is higher in LIA than in the other three samples, and considerably higher than expected from studies of present-day EurNo dialects (cf. above). However, rather than representing

change (towards less word order variability), the frequency differences might reflect intra-individual variation. Four different speakers produce the order particle-pronoun in LIA. Three of these speakers also produce the order pronoun-particle; the fourth has only one example with a particle and a pronominal object. The examples from modern NAmNo are produced by two different speakers; both speakers produce both word orders. Notably, there is no statistically significant difference between the four speaker groups with respect to the ordering of pronouns and particles.[17]

In all four speaker groups, there is variability also in the placement of non-pronominal objects, and there are cases where an NP precedes the particle, as in (35).[18]

(35) a. ja   det var å gå og bere **ei svær bør opp** att
          yes it   was to go and carry a big   load opp again
          'Yes, one would have to carry a big load back up again' (LIA,
          brandbu_ma_01)

      b. får   # **plantene opp** til å plante ut   på fielda
          gets # plants.DEF up   to   plant out on field.DEF
          'gets the plants up so they can be planted out on the field' (Modern
          NAmNo, coon_valley_WI02gm)

There is perhaps more variability with directional particles than with non-directional verb-particle combinations; there is only one example of a non-pronominal object preceding a clearly non-directional particle in our sample; see (36).

(36) og de   fant **dette ut** på omtrent   en to vinter etter at…
      and they found this   out on approximately on to winter after that
      'and they found this out in about a winter or two after …' (Older NAmNo
      blair_WI_16um)

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[18]*Att* (as in (35a)) is an element that occurs in some of our examples. We analyze it as an adverb; its meaning can be paraphrased as 'again' or 'back' (*Nynorskordboka*, Language Council of Norway and University of Bergen 2023). We treat *att* as an independent word, consistently with the LIA transcriptions. An alternative analysis whereby *att* forms a compound with certain particles (e.g., *oppatt*) is mentioned in *Norsk ordbok* (Grønvik et al. 2009). Importantly for our purposes, the presence of *att* in (35a) cannot fully explain the word order NP-particle. The order NP-particle is attested without *att* (cf. (35b)); moreover, *att* occurs with various word orders in LIA in addition to NP-particle-*att* (as in (35a)): We have found particle–*att*–NP (*bar ned att NP* 'carried down again NP') and particle–NP–*att* (*bygge ut NP att* 'build out NP again').

However, it is even more striking how limited the variation is in all speaker groups (even considering directional particles). Recall that Larsson & Lundquist (2014) found that present-day dialect speakers produced around 90% particle-NP order, and that older speakers in some areas had more variation. Our samples suggest that the strong preference for particle-NP order is not a recent phenomenon; LIA has 96.2% particle-NP order. Again, there is no statistically significant difference between the speaker groups – the restricted variability seems to be retained over time in NAmNo.

The investigation of argument placement in particle constructions shows stable variability both with respect to pronouns and NPs. As was the case with subject shift and object shift, there is more variability with respect to pronoun placement relative to particles in these corpus samples than in most present-day EurNo varieties. In the case of NP placement the variation is, on the other hand, more limited in our study, if anything. However, compared to a baseline of older dialect speakers and emigrants, there is no evidence of word order change in NAmNo. As mentioned, English has a strict order pronoun-particle (*take it out,* not *take out it) but a more even distribution in non-pronominal objects (cf. *take the garbage out, take out the garbage*). If the word order in NAmNo had been affected by CLI from English, we would have expected less variability in the placement of pronouns and rather more variation in the placement of non-pronominal objects.

6 Theoretical relevance

The investigations of argument placement in NAmNo as compared to baseline homeland Eastern Norwegian dialects and emigrant Norwegian reveal systematic variation, which is largely stable across generations in the heritage variety. One important observation is that there is variation already in the homeland (even when we only consider speakers from Oppland), both with respect to the ordering of subject pronouns and negation, and concerning the order of objects and negation/particle. In all three environments, we can observe more variation in the old dialect recordings from Oppland than in present-day (urban) Eastern Norwegian. Thus, the study of argument placement highlights the importance of establishing an appropriate baseline for comparison with the heritage variety (see, e.g., Polinsky 2018: 33).

Despite variation in the baseline, we have observed that the general patterns of subject shift, object shift, and particle placement remain remarkably stable across time. There are some shifts in frequencies, which we largely analyze as

a byproduct of the stronger preference for SV order in NAmNo, and to some extent perhaps also a reflection of inter- and intra-individual variation. We see some effects of cross-linguistic influence, but this is limited to particular contexts and does not seem to affect the underlying syntax of NAmNo (see further below in Section 6.2).

In the remainder of this section, we discuss stability, variability, and change, and reflect on some of the theoretical consequences of our findings. Section 6.1 is concerned with stability and variability, and Section 6.2 discusses factors that might lead to change in the heritage language.

6.1 Stability and variability

In the discussion of subject shift and object shift above, we made the case that the postverbal subject and object positions (shifted and unshifted) should not be discussed in isolation; the clause-initial position must also be considered (as pointed out for homeland Scandinavian by Andréasson 2010). We argued that the growing preference for SV order in NAmNo affects the proportion of postverbal subjects in the *shifted* position (which decreases, while unshifted subjects are largely unaffected), as well as the proportion of *unshifted* object pronouns (which increases, while shifted pronouns remain stable). The data from NAmNo in this respect provides additional information about the pragmatic functions of the different argument positions; for instance, it is clear that switch topic object pronouns are either clause-initial or unshifted both in EurNo and NAmNo (cf. Bentzen & Anderssen 2019). Moreover, the initial position can be used for either topic-chaining or focus-chaining. The difference between the two pragmatic strategies does not appear to be syntactically encoded, either in EurNo or NAmNo (see Lindahl & Engdahl 2022 for further discussion).

There are some categorical patterns for argument placement in both EurNo and NAmNo; in particular, non-pronominal objects cannot shift across negation, and reflexives shift across both negation and particles. However, the effects of factors like information structure and prosody are generally non-categorical in both the baseline and the heritage variety. There are, for instance, examples of the order negation-pronoun and particle-pronoun in all investigated speaker groups. The variation is retained across generations in the heritage context. This is particularly remarkable considering that we are dealing with low-frequency phenomena such as object shift. It seems clear, then, that the variable patterns can be learnt and maintained even with the restricted input and use in the heritage language context.

Previous work on heritage languages has shown that core syntax is generally stable (see, e.g., Lohndal et al. 2019 and references cited there). Prosody has not been investigated to the same extent; however, given that it is a domain to which children are sensitive at a very early stage of L1 acquisition (de Carvalho et al. 2018) it seems likely that general prosodic patterns are also among the more stable domains (though Lleó 2018 points out cases of interaction between the different languages in simultaneously bilingual L1 aquisition; see also Polinsky 2018: 147ff. for some discussion).

For object shift, it seems quite clear that syntax (as we generally understand it) is involved – there is a categorical difference between pronominal and non-pronominal objects, and there is also a clear difference between objects and subjects (see Lyskawa et al. 2022 for further arguments). Prosody can also to some degree be involved, since only weak pronouns shift. However, the patterns of variation between shifted and non-shifted pronominal objects cannot, as far as we can see, be understood fully in terms of syntactic or prosodic principles. For subject shift and particle placement, it is even less clear that syntax determines word order (but see Westergaard 2011 and references therein for suggestions along those lines); the variation we observe is hardly syntactically determined. Precisely what the structural analysis should be is still an open question (and the clausal structure presented in Kinn & Putnam 2025 [this volume] cannot account for the variation in argument placement).

As we have seen in previous sections, argument placement correlates with information structure (although the patterns are not categorical): subject placement depends on whether the pronoun is topic or focus, and object placement depends on whether the pronoun is a switch topic or a continued topic. It has sometimes been argued that phenomena at the interface between two linguistic domains (e.g., syntax and information structure) are particularly susceptible to change in bilingual settings; this has been referred to as the Interface Hypothesis (e.g., Sorace & Filiaci 2006, Sorace 2011). From the point of view of the Interface Hypothesis, the stability observed here is even more striking. We return to the Interface Hypothesis in the next section, where we consider the growing preference for SV order in NAmNo.

Previous studies of verb particles in heritage languages have suggested that these constructions can be vulnerable (see Polinsky 2018: 52ff and references therein). Idiosyncratic properties of verb-particle combinations might be affected in the heritage language contexts. It has also been observed that the order particle-pronoun can appear in the heritage language when it is unacceptable in the baseline; this has been observed for instance in heritage English. Polinsky (2018: 56) suggests that the particle is analyzed as an adverb by the heritage

speaker, leading to more flexibility in word order. Larsson & Lundquist (2021) suggest that particles in older Swedish and present-day Norwegian are light phrasal modifiers which can branch either to the right or to the left; that pronouns tend to precede particles can be analyzed along the same lines as object shift. The stable (though not categorical) preference for particle-NP order in EurNo and NAmNo should then be considered in connection to the preferences for linearization of modifiers in Norwegian more generally. If the account proposed by Larsson & Lundquist (2021) is on the right track, particles are adverbs even in the baseline, and the word order flexibility is maintained in the heritage language.

6.2 Change: CLI and processing

As we have argued, argument placement in NAmNo is, overall, characterized by remarkable stability. There are, however, some examples of change, which we turn to in this section.

First, there is a growing preference for SV order (subject-initial clauses) in NAmNo (compare Anderssen et al. 2025 [this volume]), which, on our analysis, has consequences for the placement of arguments further down in the clause. It should be noted that a preference for SVO has been observed in a number of heritage languages (see e.g. Laleko 2021 and references therein), so this development is not unique. As discussed by Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming), there are two possible (and possibly interacting) explanations for the preference of SV in NAmNo. The first is processing: Heritage speakers are known to prefer structures that are easier to process (e.g., Polinsky 2018: 36), and this would plausibly favor SV order over XVS order (see, e.g., Bickel et al. 2015, Hörberg 2016, and references therein). In syntactic terms, ease of processing can be related to the length, and nature, of dependencies within the clause: fronting of subjects to Spec-CP involves shorter syntactic dependencies than fronting of, e.g., objects, and heritage speakers are known to prefer shorter dependencies (e.g. Benmamoun et al. 2013, Hopp et al. 2019). Relatedly, fronting to Spec-CP is A´- movement, a type of movement that often displays restrictions, typically favoring the highest structural constituent (i.e., the subject) in heritage languages (see e.g. Polinsky 2018: 241ff). Another possibility is cross-linguistic influence from English; as English has SV in the vast majority of declarative clauses, CLI would also lead to more SV in NAmNo (see Westergaard et al. 2021). With English as the dominant language, it is hard to evaluate the two options (see also discussion in Polinsky 2018: 273ff). However, an exploratory study by Melvær (2023) suggests that the preference for SV increases also in a different heritage language context where Norwegian is

involved: Latin American Norwegian, where Spanish is the dominant language. SV order is not as frequent in Spanish as in English (e.g., Zagona 2002, Arús 2010, Lavid 2010), and CLI is therefore perhaps a less likely explanation. This invites us to consider factors other than (or interacting with) CLI.

Regardless of the explanation of the increase in SV order in NAmNo, it should be noted that there is no reason to assume that the frequency change corresponds to a change in underlying clausal structure. Underlying syntactic change would be unexpected in the context of previous studies indicating that syntax is a stable domain in heritage languages (see Section 6.1 above); also, it would falsely predict additional effects which we do not see, e.g., a higher amount of V2 violations. The increase of SV is better explained as a change in the speakers' choice between different options already available in the baseline grammar. This choice lies at the interface between syntax and pragmatics, and given the Interface Hypothesis (see above), it is perhaps not surprising that we see (frequency) change in the heritage language. However, we noted above that the information-structural patterns in subject shift and object shift remain stable, and it might seem surprising that we do not see any clear effects here. Plausibly, this is related to the fact that fronting to Spec-CP is different from subject shift and object shift in several respects. First, it has a double pragmatic function: it connects the utterance to the previous discourse (through focus-chaining or topic-chaining) and it also (often) introduces the aboutness topic of the utterance (e.g., Lindahl & Engdahl 2022 and references therein). Moreover, the choice between focus-chaining and topic-chaining is not only a question of individual preferences on a general level – it depends on individual choices in particular utterances in specific contexts. The placement of postverbal subjects and objects is considerably less free: there is a strong preference to shift topical subjects and leave switch topic objects unshifted, across utterances and individual speakers. The fact that the choice in fronting to Spec-CP is pragmatically complex but free A´-movement, and the fact that fronting of non-subjects leads to longer syntactic dependencies, might conspire to make the fronting patterns to Spec-CP more susceptible to change. Importantly, the frequency of the different patterns seems to have very little to say; fronting of objects to Spec-CP is for instance considerably more frequent in the baseline, than the contexts for object shift.

The second change we have noted is that tag questions are introduced as a common discourse strategy in present-day NAmNo, most likely due to influence from English (see also Anderssen & Westergaard 2020). As with SV order, the introduction of tags does not necessarily involve change the underlying structure. Tag questions are not found in our baseline data, but questions with the order negation-subject do occur in EurNo (*kan ikke du…?* 'can't you…?'; see, e.g.,

Urbanik & Svennevig 2019). In NAmNo, but not in our EurNo baseline data, tags are used with a specific discourse function, which seems to correspond to the English function: they make the addressee participate in the interaction or have a confirmatory or attitudinal function (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006, see also Larsson & Kinn forthcoming). Thus, CLI from English affects the discourse function, but not the underlying syntax. Discourse markers have been shown to be sensitive to CLI (see Moquin & Salmons 2020 and Søfteland & Hjelde 2021 on NAmNo), and this seems to be the case also for tags. However, as noted by Larsson & Kinn, the effect seems to be restricted to modern NAmNo; there are no examples of tags in the older NAmNo data.

The studies of argument placement overall show limited effects of CLI. For instance, we do not see a growing acceptance of the order non-pronominal object-particle (as in English *throw the garbage out*), or a lower tolerance for particle-pronoun order (English *throw out it), as would be expected if CLI from English was involved.

Importantly, as mentioned above, none of the changes observed here seem to affect the underlying syntax of NAmNo. Instead, we see evidence of variable patterns that are maintained across generations. The effects of CLI are very limited, and the increase in SV order may plausibly be a consequence of a more general pressure to ease processing.

We take the position that any theory of cross-linguistic influence must be restrictive enough, as not to over-generate. The stability observed in argument placement lends little support to direct syntactic influence from English. Beyond argument placement we also do not see clear evidence of syntactic borrowing, where structures from English (which are not identical to structures already present in the baseline), are incorporated into the grammar of NAmNo.[19]

7 Concluding remarks

This chapter has discussed argument placement in NAmNo as compared to a baseline of old EurNo dialect recordings and recordings of the first-generation emigrants. We have built on previous studies of subject placement and object placement relative to negation/sentence adverbs (i.e., subject shift and object

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[19]Riksem (2017) and Riksem & Nygård (2025 [this volume]) discuss the use of English functional items in NAmNo, in particular the plural marker *-s,* which could possibly be interpreted as syntactic borrowing. However, the plural *-s* seems to be largely restricted to language mixing contexts (combined with an English noun); with Norwegian noun stems, it only occurs sporadically (Riksem & Nygård 2025 [this volume] report to have found this in "a handful of examples" in CANS).

shift), and we also presented a new study of object placement relative to verb particles. The investigations of subject shift and object shift included three positions: one clause-initial and two postverbal. We have argued that including all three positions is important: the shifting preferences for the initial position have knock-on effects on the postverbal positions, but in different ways for subjects and objects. Fronting of subjects bleeds the shifted subject position and also leads to more unshifted object pronouns. The investigations also revealed that there is more variability in pronoun placement in the baseline than might be expected from studies of present-day (urban) Norwegian; this applies to both subject shift, object shift and particle placement. The variability in the placement of non-pronominal objects relative to particles is, on the other hand, quite restricted in all speaker groups. Overall, the variation remains remarkably stable across generations, and the general patterns of argument placement remain the same. This is an important result, both with respect to our understanding of heritage languages (considering e.g. the limited effects of cross-linguistic influence), and for the analysis of subject shift, object shift and particle placement.

Abbreviations

CANS	Corpus of American Nordic Speech
CLI	cross-linguistic influence
DEF	definite
FEM	feminine
EurNo	European (=homeland) Norwegian
LIA	Language Infrastructure made Accessible
MOD	modal
NAmNo	North American Norwegian
PL	plural

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