

# A reference guide to the syntax of North American Norwegian

Edited by

Kari Kinn

Michael T. Putnam

Open Germanic Linguistics 11



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# Preface

When an area of scientific inquiry warrants the creation of an edited volume, this volume usually comes into existence for one of two reasons: First, the volume brings together cutting-edge research on a particular topic that scholars are actively engaged with. Second, the volume functions as a capstone of sorts for excellent research that has been carried out on a topic by well-established scholars. We're of the opinion that this volume before you speaks to both of the reasons. We intentionally chose to refer to this as a reference guide rather than a handbook, because although we, as a community of scholars, have made sizeable gains in our collective and individual research to better understand the structural properties of North American Norwegian, much important research remains to be carried out (as we outline and mention in the Epilogue to this volume).

One of the primary motivations behind the creation of this reference guide is to celebrate the continuation of research on the Norwegian language in North America. The pioneering research of Prof. Einar Haugen, in particular his two-volume work entitled *The Norwegian language in America: A study in bilingual behavior* (1953, 1969), has had a profound and lasting impact on both of us, both at the early stages of our careers into our current positions. It is an honor, and an equally ardent responsibility, to continue this tradition, as we are approaching the 200th anniversary of the departure of Restauration from Stavanger, which marks the beginning of Norwegian emigration to North America. The important research on North American Norwegian was rekindled in the late 1980s and early 1990s by scholars such as Arnstein Hjelde and later on by Janne Bondi Johannessen. It cannot be overstated how much we, as researchers of this variety of Norwegian, owe to both of them. Unfortunately, Janne is no longer with us, but we are confident that those who read this and were fortunate enough to know (of) her and her research will sense how she inspired us all. In addition to contributing to Haugen's legacy, the contributions in this volume also contribute to ongoing research in theoretical syntax, most notably, in the Minimalist framework. In this respect, we hope this work serves as an addendum to Jan Terje Faarlund's *The syntax of Mainland Scandinavian* (2019) and related works.

Since the 1990s, the study of North American Norwegian has benefited from detailed research from myriad perspectives. The creation of the Corpus or Amer-

ican Nordic Speech (CANS) at the University of Oslo, under the direction of Janne, has now enabled anyone anywhere with the opportunity to both enjoy this language, as well as research its structural traits. In addition to the creation of CANS, our understanding of the properties of North American Norwegian have increased due to the numerous theses, dissertations, book chapters, and articles that have focused on properties of this language. The contributors to this reference guide are individuals who have researched, and continue to research, aspects of North American Norwegian. We are thankful for their hard work and patience with us throughout the revision and publication process.

To the best of our knowledge, this volume is the first of its kind to take a detailed look at various aspects of the syntax of a diasporic heritage variety such as North American Norwegian. We, alongside the contributors to this volume, believe that we have reached a point in the collective research on this variety to take stock, and, in some respects, to celebrate how far we've advanced our understanding of not only the syntactic properties of this heritage variety, but also how these findings have been instrumental in theory-building efforts. As we transition into a new and exciting era of research on the structural aspects of heritage Norwegian spoken in Latin America, the experience and knowledge gained thus far through our individual and collective efforts on investigating the North American variant will undoubtedly aid these efforts. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Research Council of Norway, grant 301114, which has enabled us to expand the geographical scope of research on heritage Norwegian, and also to delve deeper into the diachronic dimension of North American Norwegian by including recordings by Einar Haugen in CANS. As will be evident from several of the chapters in this book, the older recordings can provide new insights as to the interpretation of the findings from the present-day North American Norwegian speakers. The findings discussed in detail in this volume constitute our current understanding of many of these phenomena. However, discussions continue, and much exciting work is yet to be carried out.

Kari Kinn & Mike Putnam  
Bergen, Norway & University Park, PA  
April 2025

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## **Part I**

# **Introduction and background**



# 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>Flom (1903); however, considers his findings on the gender of loanwords in a wider, theoretical context.



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).<sup>2</sup> 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)

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<sup>2</sup>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

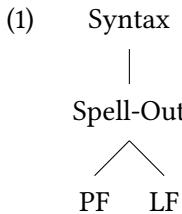
In this section we sketch out a detailed overview of the architectural design and theoretical desiderata that guide the analyses found in the individual chapters of this volume. We collective adopt a *generative* approach to grammar, which entails formal and explicit accounts of structure. The contributions 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.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>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):



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.  $vP \rightarrow$  Event semantics
  - b.  $TP \rightarrow$  Situational semantics
  - c.  $CP \rightarrow$  Propositions; Information structure

The domains introduced in (2) are built in a bottom-up fashion, starting with  $vP$ , 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.<sup>4</sup> 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

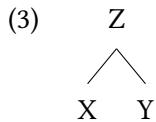
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<sup>4</sup>For those interested in contrasting perspectives on the nature and size of phases, see Abels (2012), Epstein & Seely (2006), Stroik & Putnam (2013) and Bošković (2014). Even though these perspectives may diverge (significantly) from one 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).<sup>5</sup>



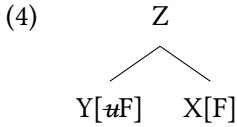
The operation Merge unifies the syntactic objects X and Y and creates a new syntactic object Z. Two additional comments are in order here: First, the variable Z in (3) should be understood as a variable that could equate with X and Y. The reason here for differentiating “Z” from “X” or “Y” is simply for ease of exposition.<sup>6</sup> 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 been 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.

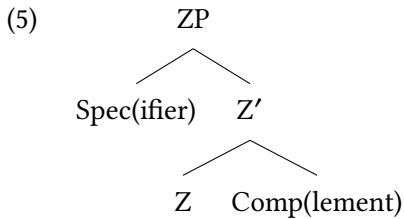
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<sup>5</sup>For an easily accessible overview of the basic mechanics of Merge, see Adger (2003: Section 3.3).

<sup>6</sup>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).



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.



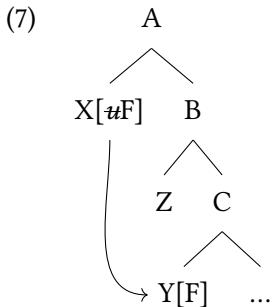
## 2.2.2 Agree

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’ intervenes 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 [uf] 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.<sup>7</sup>



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

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<sup>7</sup>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):

$$\begin{array}{ccc} [\alpha\beta\gamma] & \leftrightarrow & /X/ \\ \text{synsem features} & & \text{phonological exponents} \end{array}$$

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.

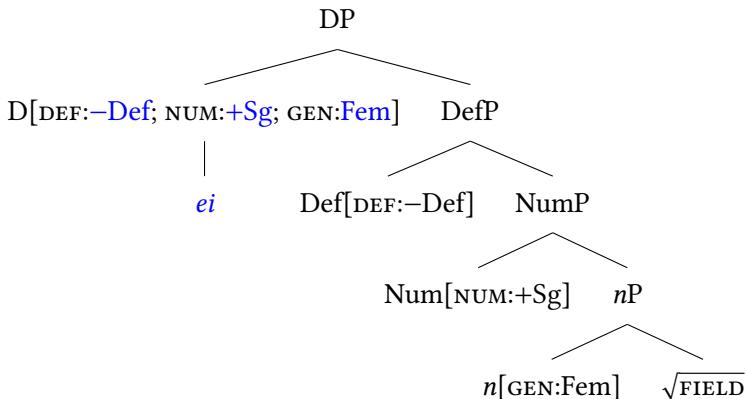


Figure 1: Mixed DP, from Lohndal & Putnam (2021).

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.<sup>8</sup> In this volume, the terms *European Norwegian* (abbreviated *EurNo*) and *homeland Norwegian* are used interchangeably to refer to Norwegian as spoken in Norway.<sup>9</sup> 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 vP, 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

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<sup>8</sup>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).

<sup>9</sup>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).<sup>10</sup>

- (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 vP-domain, through T and to C.<sup>11</sup> The preverbal position is filled by the fronted object *den boka* 'that book', which also originates within vP. The non-finite verb *lest* 'read' remains *in situ* in a vP-internal position. As the tree structure indicates, the subject *jeg* 'I' has moved from its externally merged, vP-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 (vP-TP-CP). However, they differ in terms of verb placement. In embedded clauses, the finite verb

<sup>10</sup>Thus, strikethrough is used slightly differently here from in the structure in (7), where it marks matching of features.

<sup>11</sup>For simplicity, we treat auxiliaries as elements adjoined to vP (like, e.g., Faarlund 2019), although other analyses are available.

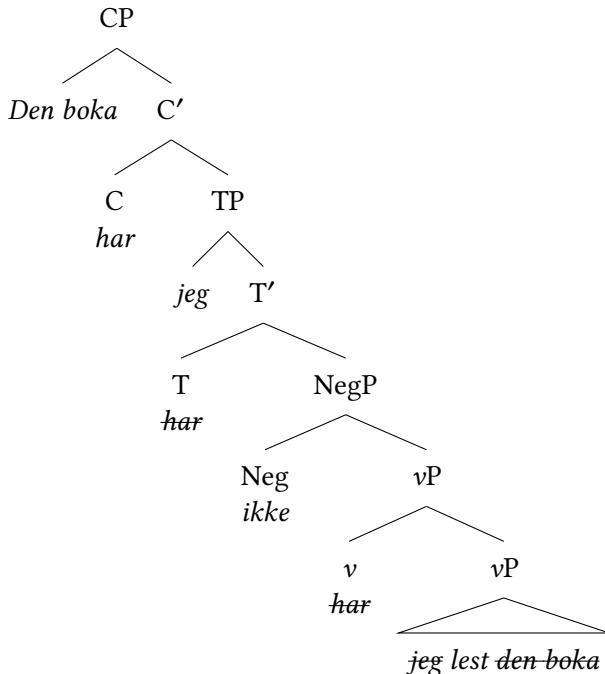


Figure 2: Syntactic structure of example (9b).

generally does not move; it remains in situ, inside vP. The vP-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 vP and TP (e.g., Platzack 2011).<sup>12</sup> 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.'

<sup>12</sup>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 the embedded clause in (10a) is shown in Figure 3.

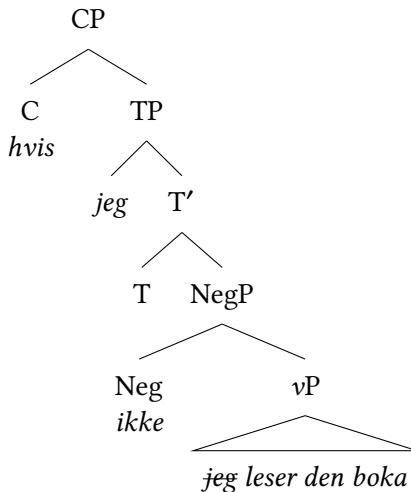
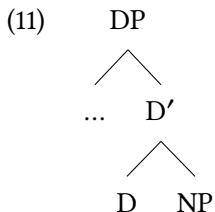


Figure 3: V-in-situ in embedded clauses in Norwegian.

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):



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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

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

<sup>14</sup>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.

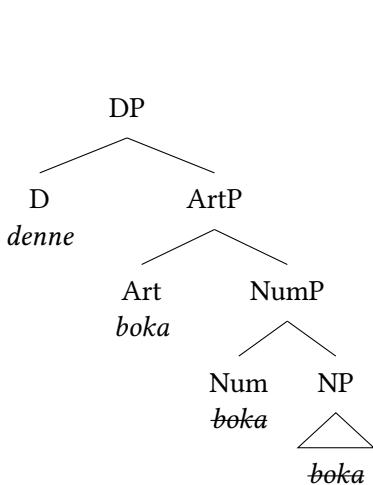


Figure 4: Syntactic structure of DP in example (12a).

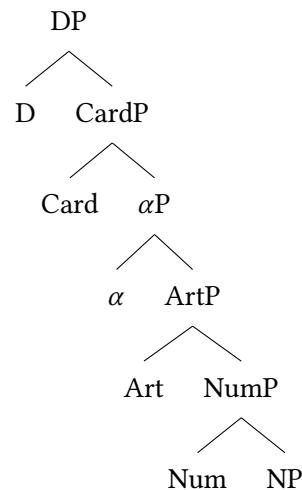


Figure 5: Overview of Norwegian nominal phrase (Julien 2005).

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).<sup>15</sup>

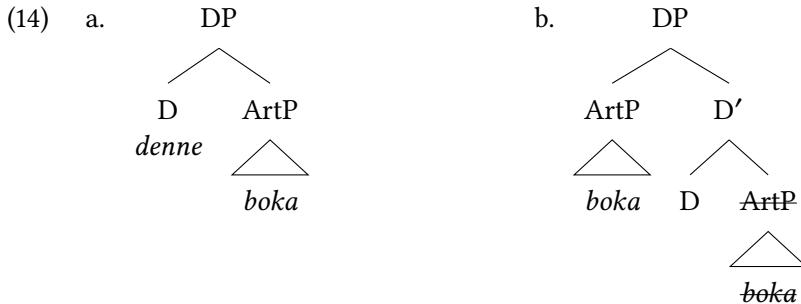
An important property of EurNo (and Mainland Scandinavian more widely) is that the D projection must generally be phonologically realized (Julien 2002, 2005). This requirement can be fulfilled in two ways: by insertion of an overt determiner in the D head, or by phrasal movement of material up to the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

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<sup>15</sup>Note that CardP and  $\alpha P$  are only present when they contain lexical material.



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 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 Arnestein 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 lives 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 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, vP, 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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# Chapter 2

## Norwegian emigration and language

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This chapter aims to provide a historic overview of Norwegian emigration to America and the establishment of immigrant communities in the New World, and thereby give some background to the society in which Norwegian as a heritage language has been spoken up to the present. Norwegian-Americans showed a strong tendency to settle down in rural communities where people from the same region in Norway often clustered. Thereby the “old” Norwegian dialect could continue to be the favored language among neighbors for several generations. They also established several institutions, like the church and the press, which for a long time played an important role in maintaining the heritage language. The decline of Norwegian started around the First World War, and accelerated during the following years, when most churches rapidly shifted to English, the newspapers closed, and an America-born generation of Norwegian-Americans who favored English became influential in the immigrant communities. Today there are only a few Norwegian heritage speakers left. Since the majority of Norwegian emigrants settled in the Upper Midwest, the focus of this chapter will be on this geographic area.

### 1 Background

The 1800s and first decades of the 1900s represented a radical change in Norwegian society. Around 1800, Norway had a population of about 880,000, 90% of whom lived in rural areas and made a living from fishing and farming. However, improved public health and nutrition caused the population to triple between 1800 and the First World War, passing 2.5 million in 1916 (Statistics Norway 2025b). During this time, Norway became industrialized, resulting in a surplus



of working hands in rural areas, while cities and towns were in search of a labor force for industry, a combination that caused many to move to urban areas in search of a livelihood. Parallel to this, prior to 1930 around 850,000 people left Norway in search of better opportunities on the other side of the Atlantic, and during the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only Ireland had a higher emigration rate than Norway. Thus, the number of Norwegian-Americans today equals the whole population of Norway, with 4.3 million Norwegian-Americans in the USA<sup>1</sup> and approaching 500,000 people in Canada,<sup>2</sup> compared to about 5 million in Norway.

Emigration had a dramatic effect on local communities in Norway as families became divided and large parts of the local population left. Yet, emigration has not gained general interest among Norwegian historians, at least if we look at major works of history. Aschehoug's nine-volume series *Vårt folks historie* (*Our people's history*, Dahl et al. 1961–1964) hardly mentions emigration at all; Cappelen's *Norges historie* (*Norway's history*, Mykland 1975–1979) in 15 volumes has a short chapter covering emigration (about 25 pages out of a total of 7,000). Samlaget's six-volume *Norsk historie* (*Norwegian history*, Homlung 1999) has two short chapters (approximately 10 pages) dealing with emigration. This omission of the impact emigration had on communities in Norway, not to mention the fate of the Norwegian diaspora in America, is striking. There are, however, a few works by Norwegians in a similar format which are devoted solely to Norwegian emigration to America. The most thorough is probably Ingrid Semmingsen's *Veien mot vest 1–2* (*The road to the west*, Semmingsen 1941, 1950), while the most recent is Sverre Mørkhagen's (2009–2014) 3-volume series on Norwegian emigration. That being said, studies on local and regional emigration to America are numerous and far too many to mention here.

Most studies on Norwegian history in America have been carried out in America by Norwegian-Americans. Central here is The Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA), founded in 1925 with the purpose of documenting and publishing scholarly works on the subject. So far, more than 100 volumes have been published by NAHA and the association has served as an institutional "home" for many prominent scholars, like Theodor Blegen, Odd Lovoll and David Mauk, just to mention a few.

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<sup>1</sup>US Census Bureau (2020).

<sup>2</sup>Statistics Canada (2016).

## 2 Emigration from Norway

The first group of 53 Norwegian emigrants in the tiny vessel *Restauration* left Norway in 1825. It took some years until a second group followed; in 1836 two ships left Stavanger with 167 emigrants (Lovoll 1984: 11), and this represents the start of a yearly emigration from Norway. From then on, the number of emigrants grew steadily; it approached 4,000 in 1849, reached 6,000 in 1853, and temporarily peaked at 8,900 in 1861. The outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, paired with news of the US-Dakota War in 1862, dramatically reduced eagerness to cross the Atlantic, thus in 1863 only 1,100 Norwegians emigrated, the lowest number in over 20 years.

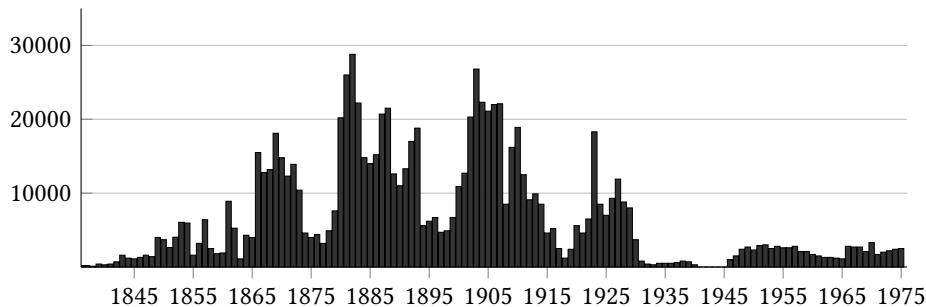


Figure 1: Emigration from Norway, 1836–1975. Departementet for sociale saker (1921), Statistics Norway (2025a) and Central Bureau of Statistics of Norway (1969: Table 20).

However, when the American Civil War ended in 1865, we see the first significant surge of emigration from Norway, which was boosted by the Homestead Act of 1862 – granting the family head access to 160 acres (64 hectares) of surveyed public land for a minor filing fee. This period of increased emigration lasted until 1873, when America was hit by an economic crisis. At this time the infrastructure for mass emigration was much improved as steamers replaced sailing ships, and the rapid expansion of railroad networks made the Midwest more easily accessible. During these eight years, 110,000 Norwegians emigrated, an annual average of almost 14,000, which deprived Norway of almost two-thirds of its natural increase in population (Lovoll 1984: 16).

The second and largest surge of mass emigration from Norway took place between 1880 and 1893, when 256,000 emigrated, giving a yearly average of 18,900. The two peak years were 1881 and 1882, when 26,000 and 29,000 Norwegians respectively left for America. The emigration during these two years resulted in a decline in Norway's population, the only other time since the Napoleonic wars

when the Norwegian population decreased. In 1893, a new economic depression hit America, causing the number of emigrants to fall to an average of less than 6,000 a year between 1894 and 1899.

The third period of extensive emigration started in 1900 and was halted by the First World War; between 1900 and 1914 about 242,000 left Norway, which equates to a yearly average of 16,000 emigrants. Since the US, like Norway, was neutral during first years of the war, around 5,000 people a year took the risk of crossing the Atlantic. However, when the Americans entered the war in 1917, emigration all but stopped, and in 1918 only 1,200 emigrated, the lowest number of emigrants since 1842, apart from 1863.

It is possible to argue that there was a fourth surge of emigrants in the 1920s, as 89,000 emigrated during this decade, but in the 1920s the US started to impose restrictions on immigration through a system of national quotas, making it much harder to gain entry to the US. And even if this system favored immigrants from northern Europe, it represented the beginning of the end of Norwegian mass emigration to America. In 1929 the annual quota for Norwegians was set at 2,377 (Lovoll 1984: 29), but the Great Depression that hit the same year meant that emigration from Norway ceased, and that this modest immigrant quota was not even filled.

In the decades after the Second World War we see some movement of people from Norway to the States but limited to only a couple of thousand a year, and the *Immigration and Nationality Act*, which took effect in 1968 – in addition to improved standards of living in Norway – stabilized the number of emigrants to America and removed the possibility of a new outbreak of “America Fever”. At the end of this period, the number of people moving to the US was balanced by the number of people moving from US to Norway.

### **3 Emigration from the different regions of Norway**

The first emigrants who went to America with the sloop *Restauration* in 1825, came from the southwestern parts of Norway, the area around Stavanger and the nearby Tysvær. For the early emigrants, religion played an important role as a motive for leaving. They were associated with Quakers and Haugeans, two Christian denominations which were met with skepticism and even persecution by the Norwegian civil and church authorities. These pioneers’ decision to leave Norway was not an act out of impulse – the existence of America and European emigration there were known in southwestern Norway. This was especially due to the wreck of the Dutch vessel *De Zee Ploeg* outside Bergen in 1817, which forced about 500 German emigrants to spend a year in Norway while waiting for alternative transport to America (Rieber-Mohn 2014). It is very likely that there was

contact between this stranded group and the Norwegian sloopers (Semmingsen 1976: 136). In 1821, Cleng Peerson, who has been called the “father of Norwegian emigration”, went as a scout for the sloopers to investigate what America had to offer, and when he returned three years later, his positive reports strongly influenced the group’s final decision to leave. When the party arrived in New York in 1825 on what would later become *Leif Erikson Day* (October 9), American Quakers waited for them and helped them to claim land and settle down outside of Rochester, NY.

Even if there were a few individuals who went to America in the decade to follow, it was not until 1836 that a new group of Norwegians emigrated, as two ships left Stavanger, again mostly people from Stavanger and Rogaland County (13).<sup>3</sup> From that time on, “America Fever” spread rapidly to other Norwegian regions as well, and every year from this point, groups of Norwegians embarked on a vessel with the hope of a better future on the other side of the Atlantic. During the decade between 1836 and 1845, Rogaland (13) and Hordaland (6) continued to send a steady stream of emigrants, but the inland valleys in Buskerud (3) and especially Telemark (16) also started to show a high rate of emigration. During this period, 18% of Norwegian emigrants came from Buskerud (3) and 45% from Telemark (16), while the area north of Møre og Romsdal (7) had not yet been affected by emigration at all.

During the following years leading up to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, emigration from Norway gained momentum, and “America Fever” spread to the whole country. Of the 70,000 Norwegians who emigrated between 1846 and 1865, 13,700 left Oppland (10), making it the county with most emigrants, followed by Telemark (16) and Sogn og Fjordane (14), both with 10,300 emigrants. Buskerud (3) was also an epicenter for emigration during this period with 9,100 emigrants. Hordaland (6) and Rogaland (13) continued to be high on the list with 7,500 and 6,600 emigrants respectively. But “America Fever” did not strike all regions with the same intensity: 200 left Østfold (12) and only 80 emigrated from Møre og Romsdal (7) during this period.

These pre-1865 immigrants constituted less than 10% of the total number of emigrants from Norway; still they played an important role in defining what was to be some of the core areas for Norwegian emigrants, and in many ways paved the road for those to follow. After some fumbling, these pioneers chose to settle down in the upper Midwest, making this part of the USA the heartland of Norwegian emigrants. The fact that they succeeded as settlers in general and after some hardships were able to establish a relatively prosperous way of life compared to what could be expected in Norway, motivated others back home to follow their example.

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<sup>3</sup>The numbers in parenthesis in this paragraph are referring to the map in Figure 2.

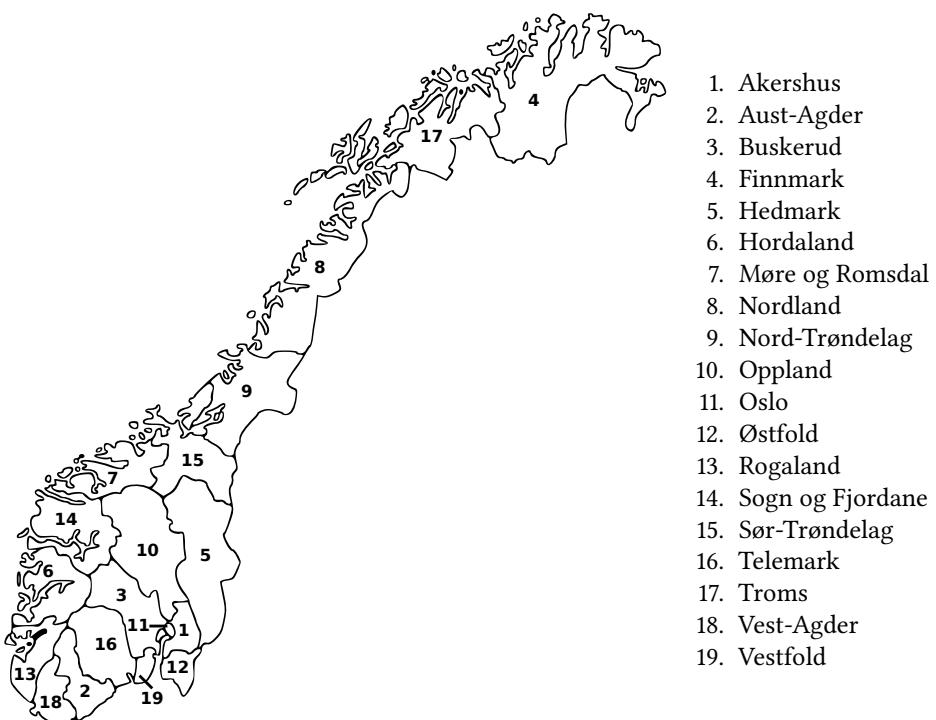


Figure 2: Counties in Norway as before 2018. Prior to 1918, most of these counties were known by other names, but in this presentation the 1918–2017 names are used. Base map CC-BY-SA Jon Harald Søby.

When the American Civil War ended, a large wave of emigrants left Norway for America. Close to 700,000 Norwegians emigrated to America between the Civil War and the First World War.

In the mid-1800s, Oppland was the county in Norway with the highest population, and it was also the county with the highest number of emigrants, as 72,000 left during this period. Besides having a large population from which to lose inhabitants to emigration, this county also showed the highest tendency to emigrate, with 12.7 per 1,000 inhabitants per year. Oppland is followed by Oslo,<sup>4</sup> with 55,000 who left. It is perhaps surprising that Oslo had such a high rate of emigrants, but during this period, Oslo grew dramatically due to migration from the rural districts to the Oslo area. This is seen, for example, in the fact that of those who married in Oslo in 1856, only 4% of couples were made up of pairs in which both individuals were born in Oslo; likewise, for 69% of these couples, both

<sup>4</sup>Before 1925 the name of the capital Oslo was Christiania or Kristiania.

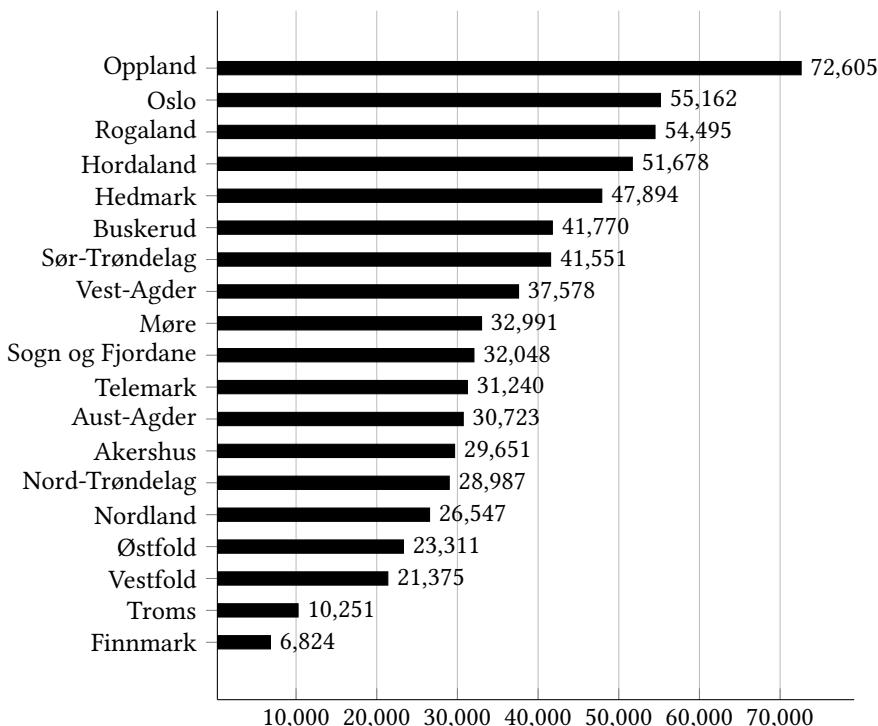


Figure 3: Emigration from Norwegian counties, 1866–1915 (Departementet for sociale saker 1921)

bride and groom were from outside Oslo. And for those Oslo dwellers who were 29 years old in the 1875 census, 78% were not born in Oslo (Myhre 1990: 206). Of the 300 Oslo families who emigrated to the US in 1880, Østrem & Rinnan (1979: 155ff.) were able to identify 82 in the 1875 census, and of them, 80% of the listed adults were born outside Oslo. Furthermore, the fact that they were able to identify only about one-fourth of these emigrants might be because a large portion of them did not live in Oslo in 1875, but moved there after the census was taken. Thus, even if there are no available statistics on how many emigrants from Oslo were born and raised there, it is fair to assume that a high proportion of those registered as emigrating from Oslo, originated from other places.

Third and fourth place for counties with the highest number of emigrants were held by Hordaland and Rogaland, respectively, both with more than 50,000. At the other end of the list, with the fewest emigrants, we find Østfold, Vestfold, Troms and Finnmark, none of these exceeding 25,000 emigrants.

## **4 Settling patterns in America and locations for linguistic fieldwork**

Emigration in the 1800s can in many ways be seen as a conservative movement. Many of the emigrants had a rural background and were used to making a living from the land. But the population of Norway grew steadily during the 1800s as improved nutrition and health care reduced child mortality. At the same time, mechanization of agriculture and lack of arable land made it harder for the upcoming generation in rural areas to make a living, making the American prairie an obvious option. Importantly, in America they could continue a way of life they were familiar with, more so than if they chose to move to a city in Norway and find work in industry. And Norwegian emigrants as a group are considered to have been the most rural of all coming to America (Østrem 2019: 62). This is confirmed in census data from 1910, which reveals that among foreign-born heritage speakers, 64% of Norwegian speakers lived in rural areas, compared to 33% of German speakers, 43% of the Swedish, 48% of the Danish and only 1% of Yiddish speakers (Labov 1998: 387).

The first groups of Norwegian immigrants did not have too much success in their search for farmland, as the landscape, climate, and conditions were quite different from what they were used to, and the tell-tale signs of fertile soil they knew from Norway did not apply to the land in America. Those who came in 1825 settled down in Kendall in the state of New York and close to Rochester and Lake Ontario. However, a decade later most of them left and continued westwards into Illinois, where they settled down around Fox River in La Salle County in 1834. For years, Fox River served as a mother settlement and a bridgehead for newcomers in their search for available land, and it opened the way for new Norwegian settlements in the Upper Midwest.

In 1836, the Wisconsin Territory<sup>5</sup> was established, and in 1839, the Norwegians started to settle down within the borders of what we today know as Wisconsin. First, they established the so-called Jefferson Prairie settlement and Rock Prairie (also called the Luther Valley settlement) near Beloit on the border with Illinois, followed by Muskego west of Milwaukee and Koshkonong southeast of Madison. This last one in particular grew rapidly and served as a mother settlement

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<sup>5</sup>Wisconsin Territory was much larger than what we today know as Wisconsin: it roughly included what today is Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and eastern parts of the two Dakotas. Wisconsin was incorporated into the Union as the 30<sup>th</sup> state in 1848, this time with state borders as we know them today.

for many other Norwegian settlements in Wisconsin. The Mississippi valley became a focal point where many Norwegians settled. Thus, there is a belt from Crawford County in the south to St. Croix County and Dunn County in the north with a substantial Norwegian population. In Waupaca County in north-central Wisconsin we also find what Qualey describes as “(t)he largest single area of settlement by Norwegians in Wisconsin, aside from those in the south and west” (Qualey 1938: 66). This settlement, located close to the village Iola, has often been referred to as “Indilandet”, *the Indian land*, and was established in 1850. However, at that time most of the good land in the vicinity of existing Norwegian settlements was taken, which motivated new masses of immigrants to continue further west (Qualey 1938: 98).

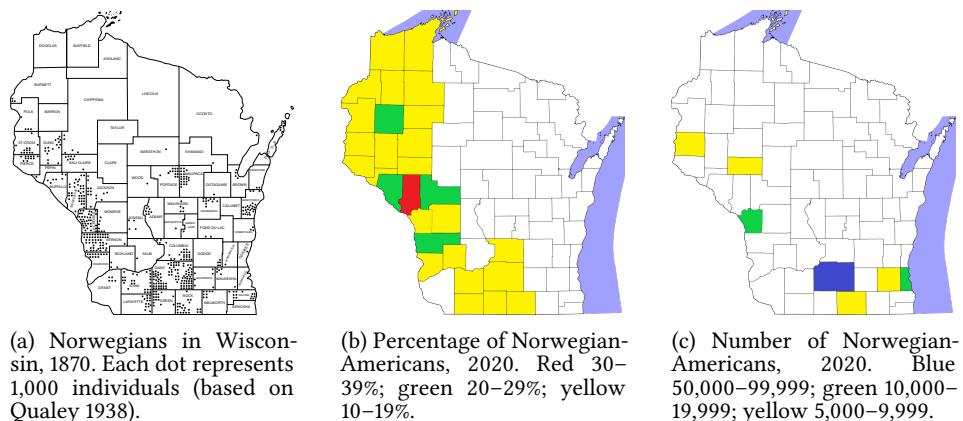
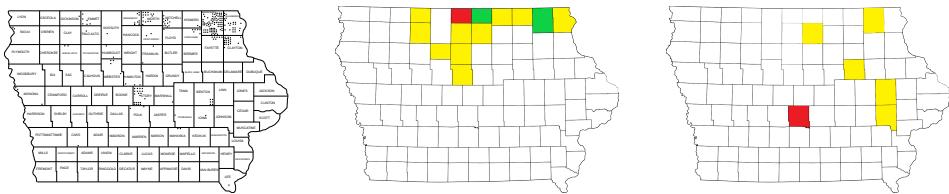


Figure 4: Concentration of Norwegian-Americans in Wisconsin 1870 and 2020

The Norwegians crossed the Mississippi at an early stage, with the first group in 1839 under the leadership of the well-known character Hans Barlien,<sup>6</sup> who established the rather unsuccessful Sugar Creek settlement at the southeastern tip of Iowa. Shortly after Iowa was formed as a state in 1846, larger groups of Norwegians started to flow in; a substantial settlement was established in the middle of the state, around Story City, but in the late 1840s a large Norwegian settlement started to grow in and around Winneshiek County, and here Decorah would later become an important center for Norwegian-American culture, with Luther College and the newspaper *Decorah-Posten* as two prominent institutions.

<sup>6</sup>Hans Barlien (1772–1842) was an entrepreneur and politician in Norway. He was known as a radical and came into conflict with the establishment, and in 1837, at the age of 65, he chose to emigrate.



(a) Norwegians in Iowa, 1870.  
Each dot represents 1,000 individuals (based on Qualey 1938).

(b) Percentage of Norwegian-Americans, 2020. Red 30–39%; green 20–29%; yellow 10–19%.

(c) Number of Norwegian-Americans, 2020. Red 20,000–49,999; yellow 5,000–9,999.

Figure 5: Concentration of Norwegian-Americans in Iowa 1870 and 2020

In 1851, the first Norwegians entered the Minnesota prairie – seven years prior to the formation of Minnesota as a state in 1858. They first settled down in the southeastern corner of the state, in Fillmore, Houston, and Goodhue Counties, before they continued westward, into the west-central Minnesota and the Red River Valley, on the border shared with the Dakotas (cf. Figure 6a). As the American Civil War broke out in 1861, and paired with the insecurity created by the US-Dakota War in Minnesota in 1862, few Norwegians were eager to emigrate and have their fate tested. However, when the war ended, Norwegians came in the thousands. The Homestead Act of 1862, which granted the immigrants the right to claim 160 acres of land, caused a rush westward on the prairie, and in just a few years, most of the desirable land in Minnesota was claimed and taken.

In 1861 the Dakota territory was established, and immigrants started to arrive, even though a few Norwegians had arrived earlier. In 1859, a small group of families left Koshkonong in Wisconsin with their belongings on wagons and traveled 37 days until they arrived in what today is Clay County in the southeastern corner of South Dakota. More Norwegians continued to come; by 1880 the Norwegians had settled in a belt along the Red River Valley, from the border to Nebraska in the south and all the way up to the border to Canada in the north (cf. Figures 6a, 7a and 8a).

Up to around the turn of the century, Norwegians continued to settle in these areas. North and South Dakota were established as states in 1889, and North Dakota in particular attracted many with a Norwegian background, making them the largest ethnic group there up until around 1920, when the Germans surpassed them. Today they are still the second largest ethnic group in this state.

The Norwegian emigration was primarily driven by the search for farmland, but not everyone ended up as farmers. Many emigrants found their new home in urban environments as well. There were large Norwegian communities in sev-

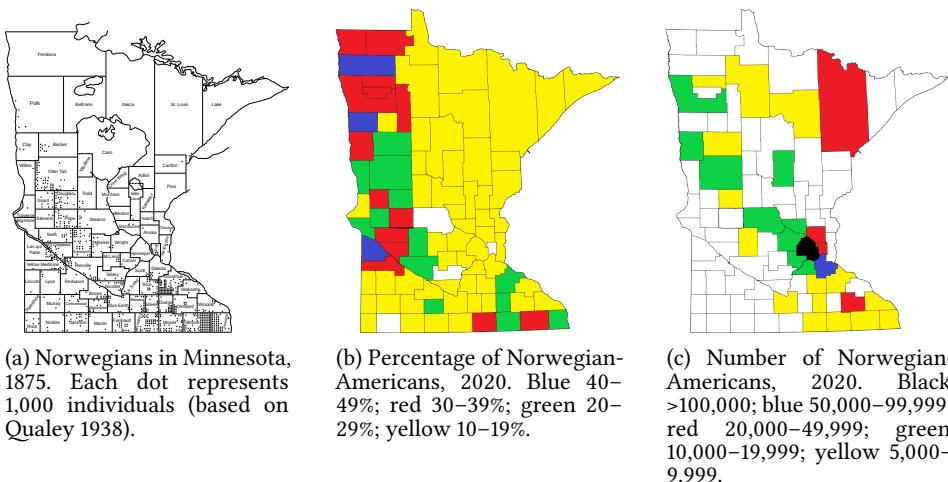


Figure 6: Concentration of Norwegian-Americans in Minnesota 1870 and 2020

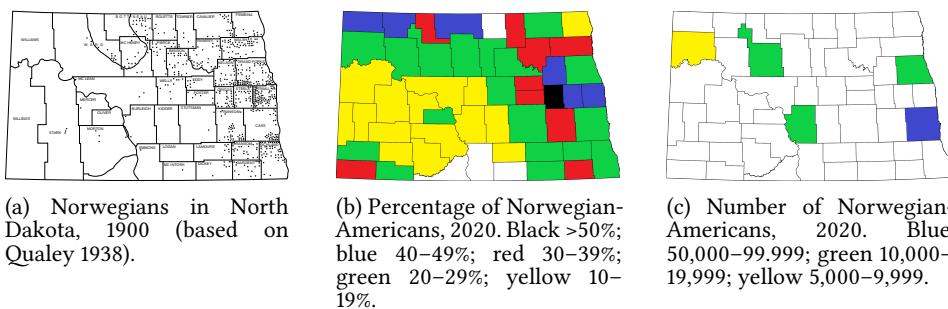


Figure 7: Concentration of Norwegian-Americans in North Dakota 1900 and 2020

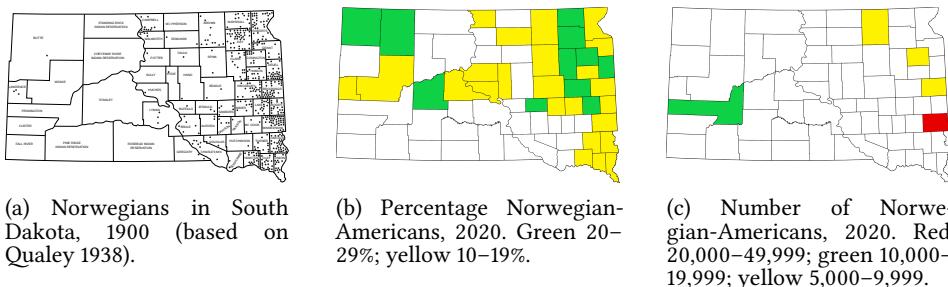


Figure 8: Concentration of Norwegian-Americans in South Dakota 1900 and 2020

eral Midwestern cities, including Chicago (Lovoll 1988), Minneapolis and St. Paul (Mauk 2022), Madison, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Duluth, Alexandria, Fergus Falls, Fargo, Minot, and Sioux Falls. Similar large urban Norwegian communities were also established outside the Midwest, notably in New York (Brooklyn) (Mauk 1997), and Seattle (Ballard). In addition, many in the Midwest became town and village dwellers, living in interaction with the surrounding farming communities (Lovoll 2006).

The emigration pattern formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century is still visible today, and most Norwegian-Americans are still living in the Upper Midwest states, even if there has been movement to other states as well. There were many who emigrated to the state of Washington, and over time many found a new home in states like California, Florida, and Texas (cf. Table 1). In Minnesota and the Dakotas, Norwegian-Americans constitute more than 10% of the total population.

Table 1: States with more than 100,000 claiming Norwegian ancestry according to US Census Bureau (2020); ranked according to rate of total population.

State	Norwegian ancestry	
	Norw.-Am. population	% of total pop.
North Dakota	180,000	23.7
Minnesota	780,000	13.9
South Dakota	111,000	12.6
Wisconsin	410,000	7.1
Washington	356,000	4.7
Iowa	147,000	3.7
Oregon	142,000	3.4
Colorado	121,000	2.1
Arizona	120,000	1.7
Illinois	145,000	1.1
California	355,000	0.9
Florida	123,000	0.6
Texas	146,000	0.5

A closer look at the five Midwestern states, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, reveals that even at the county level, we still find traces of the settling pattern established during the 1800s. If we compare Figures 4–8a with Figures 4–8b, we see that in areas heavily populated by Norwegians 120–150 years ago, the proportion of Norwegians is still high. In Wisconsin, there

is a high rate of Norwegians in the west towards the Mississippi River, an area heavily populated by Norwegians before 1860. In Iowa, they are well-represented in the north along the border with Minnesota. In Minnesota, there are only four counties with less than 10% Norwegians, but they are especially well-represented in the southeastern part and along the Red River Valley. In North Dakota they are, as it was in 1900, relatively numerous along the eastern border towards Minnesota. However, we also see that today people of Norwegian descent constitute at least 20% of the population along the border with Canada; the northeastern part of the state was settled in the early 1900s, thus not registered in Qualey's (1938) study. Likewise, in South Dakota, they are a high share of the population today along the Red River in the east, an area where many Norwegians settled down. A change from 1900 to 2020 is that they now show a high rate in some of the counties further west as well.

If we look at the actual number of individuals, on the other hand, the picture that emerges is quite different. The Norwegian immigrants were very rural, but that has changed over time. Figures 5c–8c show that, today, they are most numerous in urban areas. The highest number of Norwegian-Americans in the five states is currently found in Madison, Des Moines, Rochester, Duluth, Sioux Falls, Fargo, and in and around the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul).

It seems like a contradiction that the settlement pattern is still seen in the percentage of Norwegian-Americans in the rural counties at the same time as the modern Norwegian-Americans show a strong tendency to settle down in urban areas. This can be explained by a general urbanization process, partly driven by mechanization and industrialization of agriculture. The size of the farms has grown, while the number of farms has been dramatically reduced. The average farm in Minnesota today is about 370 acres,<sup>7</sup> a substantial increase from the standard 160 acres when the land was first claimed and settled.

Figure 9 shows a typical excerpt of a so-called plat book from 1896, a compilation of township maps showing land ownership in each of the township's 36 sections (a section is 640 acres and was typically divided into four quarters of 160 acres, which constituted a typical farm). In this particular sample, the average size of the farm is around 125 acres, a bit smaller than the "standard" 160 acres.

The decline in population within rural counties has been dramatic in many places, as Table 2 illustrates. It is also worth noting that the reduction is more prominent on the Minnesota and Dakota prairies; here all but one of those counties listed have suffered a dramatic reduction in population, typically by half or

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<sup>7</sup>United States Department of Agriculture (2022).

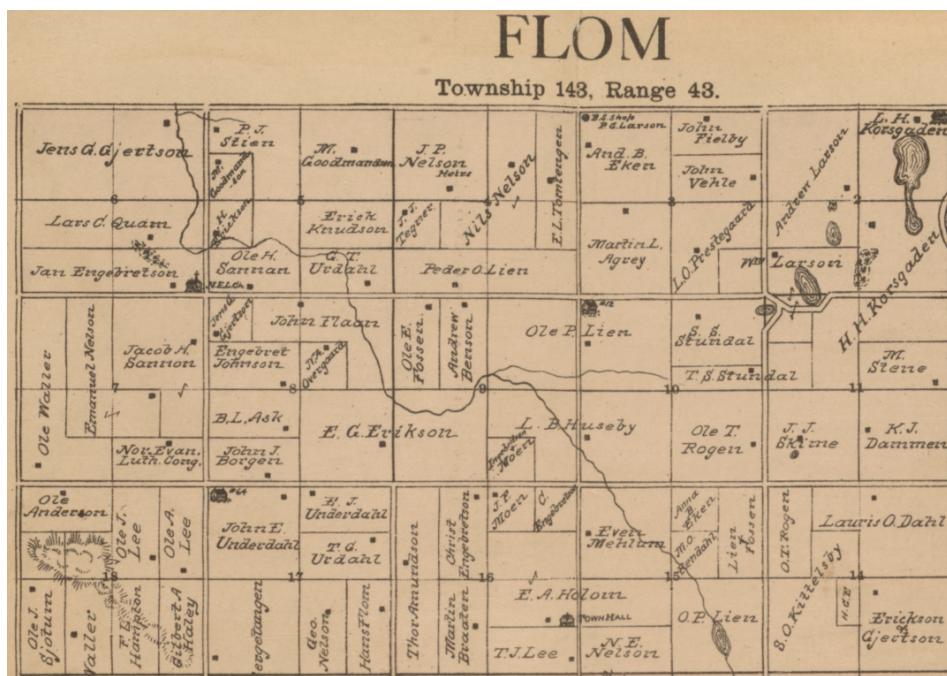


Figure 9: Extract of plat book from Flom, Norman Co, MN, 1896

even more. An exception is Pennington, Minnesota, but Thief River Falls is a thriving county seat which has several large industrial plants, and which hosts a substantial part of the county's population. The counties in Iowa also show a reduction in population, but a more modest one. The situation seems to be somewhat different in Wisconsin, where three of the four counties with the highest rate of Norwegian-Americans have enjoyed a modest growth.

The reduction in rural populations west of the Mississippi started with the farming crisis shortly after the First World War and was followed by the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression in the 1930s. In 1920, there were 178,000 farms in Minnesota (Department of Commerce 1922: 34). In 2017, their number was reduced to 69,000. This reduction did not only affect the farms, but also smaller towns nearby, causing many to leave for larger metropolitan areas. It is obvious that the reduction in population as well as the density of population in these rural counties had consequences for language use; the number of people available to interact with was shrinking, while the distance between them got bigger. The rural Midwest has traditionally been a stronghold for the Norwegian heritage language, and when the inhabitants, especially the young ones, chose – or

Table 2: Change in population between 1920 and 2020 in the four counties with the highest ratio of Norwegian-Americans in each state (Department of Commerce 1921 and US Census Bureau 2020).

	Population		
	1920	2020	Change
Griggs Co. ND	7,402	2,306	-69%
Steele Co. ND	7,401	1,798	-76%
Traill Co. ND	12,210	7,997	-35%
Nelson Co. ND	10,140	3,015	-70%
Marshall Co. SD	9,596	4,306	-55%
Day Co. SD	15,194	5,449	-64%
Deuel Co. SD	8,759	4,295	-51%
Harding Co. SD	3,953	1,311	-67%
Marshall Co. MN	19,441	9,040	-54%
Norman Co. MN	14,880	6,441	-57%
Pennington Co. MN	12,091	13,992	+16%
Lac Qui Parle Co. MN	15,554	6,719	-57%
Winnebago Co. IA	13,489	10,474	-22%
Worth Co. IA	11,630	7,422	-36%
Winneshiek Co. IA	22,091	20,090	-9%
Allamakee Co. IA	17,285	13,781	-20%
Trempealeau Co. WI	24,506	30,760	+26%
Vernon Co. WI	29,252	30,714	+5%
Jackson Co. WI	17,746	21,145	+19%
Buffalo Co. WI	15,615	13,317	-15%

were forced – to leave for larger urban areas, this would have a severe long-term effect on its everyday use. Natvig (2022), who examines language shift among Norwegian-Americans in Flom, MN, points at the effect changes in farming methods had on this shift. The traditional way of farming was community-oriented, where the farmers depended on help from each other, while the more modern and mechanized ways of farming which were rapidly introduced in the 1930s were individual-oriented. Therefore the heritage language was deprived of an important arena for use and maintenance.

It is a general observation that the Norwegian language communities in Wisconsin have survived longer than those further west on the prairie, despite being

settled a generation or two earlier. If this is actually the case, one of several factors explaining this could be the stability in population seen in counties with a high percentage of Norwegian-Americans in Wisconsin compared to the dramatic reduction in population in such counties in Minnesota and the two Dakotas. In line with this, it is also worth pointing at the role tobacco farming might have played. Up to the turn of the millennium, tobacco was raised in Wisconsin, but not west of the Mississippi; and tobacco farming was an almost exclusively Norwegian-American activity (Strickon & Ibarra 1983, Ibarra & Strickon 1989). Tobacco farming continued to be very labor-intensive and a scene for cooperative work among the Norwegian-American farmers long after the rest of the farm business was thoroughly mechanized.<sup>8</sup>

The settlement pattern described above has to a high degree determined where linguistic fieldwork on heritage Norwegian has been conducted; over the years, scholars have searched for speakers in the core areas where the Norwegians settled down (cf. Table 3 and Figure 10). Most fieldwork and studies of the American-Norwegian language have been done in the Upper Midwest; from Flaten (1901) and Flom (1901, 1903, 1912, 1926, 1929) early in the 1900s, through Haugen (1953 and many other works, see bibliography in Firchow et al. 1972) some years later, to the Corpus of American Nordic Speech (CANS) (Johannessen 2015) in the 21th century. One of the very few published studies outside of the Midwest is a small study from Texas (Johansen 1970). Out of 13 field trips done since 2010 to provide data for CANS, 11 have been to the Midwest. The other two covered the West (from Seattle to Minneapolis, 2012) and Saskatchewan, Canada (2013).

Einar Haugen in the 1940s did most of his fieldwork in Wisconsin when working on *The Norwegian Language in America*, where he visited many of the early Norwegian settlements and found that Norwegian was spoken, at least by the old generation. Most of these Norwegian communities were quite old, established between the late 1830s and the 1850s; the exceptions are Strum and Dovre from around 1870. And all these places had a substantial Norwegian population in 1870 (cf. Figure 4a). Many of these have been revisited since 2010, and some of them could still display quite a few speakers, notably Coon Valley and Westby, Blair and Beaver Creek, and “Indilandet” around Iola, Waupaca Co. In Rock County, it was possible to find one speaker, while none were found in Viroqua. Thus, Wisconsin is especially interesting when studying change in heritage Norwegian, as Haugen’s recordings can be compared with recordings done during the last decade as a part of CANS (Johannessen 2015).

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. Brown (2022) for the relation between community structures, including economic activities, and language shift.

Table 3: Communities in the Upper Midwest where linguistic fieldwork has been conducted. Only communities where more than one speaker is recorded are listed.

State/County	Communities	%NA <sup>a</sup>	Fieldwork conducted		
			1980s/		
			1940s	1990s	>2010
WI Rock	Jefferson Prairie, Rock Prairie	10.5	✓		✓
Lafayette	Wiota	12.1	✓		
Jefferson	Koshkonong	7.4	✓		
Dane	Blue Mounds, Norway Grove, Spring Prairie	9.0	✓		
Manitowoc	Valdres, Gjerpen	4.5	✓		
Waupaca	Iola, Scandinavia	7.4	✓		✓
Waushara	Wautoma, Mt.Morris	5.5	✓		
Vernon	Westby, Coon Valley	26.1	✓	✓	✓
Vernon	Viroqua		✓		
Juneau	Suldal	8.2	✓		
Trempealeau	Blair, Beaver Creek, Strum	28.4	✓		✓
Buffalo	Lyster	20.7	✓		
Barron	Dovre	17.9	✓		
La Crosse	La Crosse	14.7		✓	
IA Allamakee	Waterloo Ridge	16.5	✓		
Winneshiek	Decorah	24.7			✓
MN Houston	Spring Grove	26.8	✓		✓
Goodhue	Wanamingo, Zumbrota	20.0		✓	✓
Fillmore	Spring Grove, Harmony, Mabel and Rushford	29.3	✓		✓
Lac Qui Parle	Madison and Appleton	38.1		✓	✓
Minneapolis and St.Paul					✓
Norman	Flom	44.6			✓
Clay	Ulen	24.5			✓
Kandiyohi	Sunburg	19.7			✓
Pope	Starbuck, Glenwood and Brooten	32.5			✓
Lincoln	Hendricks	16.6			✓
ND Burke	Powers Lake	37.0		✓	
Williams	Williston	19.5			✓
Traill	Hatton and Portland	39.4			✓
Cass	Fargo	24.9			✓
SD Minnehaha	Baltic	12.6		✓	

<sup>a</sup>% Norwegian-Americans in the whole county in 2020

In Iowa, Einar Haugen visited the northeast corner of the state in the 1940s, and he recorded speakers at Waterloo Ridge in Allamakee County. The same part of the state was visited in 2010, and several recordings were made in and around Decorah in Winneshiek County.

Over time, the heritage language spoken in Minnesota became rather well-documented. Einar Haugen only visited the Spring Grove community, Houston County, in the southeastern part of the state. In the 1980s, the language in the Trønder settlements around Wanamingo, Goodhue County as well as in Madison and Appleton in Lac Qui Parle County was recorded (Hjelde 1992). Since 2010, these, as well as even more communities have been visited and recordings made: Wanamingo and Zumbrota, Goodhue County; Spring Grove, Harmony, Mabel and Rushford, Fillmore County; Minneapolis and St.Paul; Flom, Norman County; Ulen, Clay County; Sunburg, Kandiyohi County; Starbuck, Glenwood and Brooten, Pope County; Madison, Lac Qui Parle County, and Hendricks, Lincoln County.

North and South Dakota were outside Einar Haugen's operational range, but in the 1980s, Powers Lake, in the northwestern corner of North Dakota, was visited, as well as Baltic in Minnehaha County in South Dakota (Hjelde 1992). After 2010, several places have been sites for fieldwork in North Dakota; now most of the work has been conducted in the Red River Valley, in communities like Hatton and Portland, Traill County; and Fargo, Cass County.

## 5 Establishing a Norwegian-American community

From early on, most Norwegian emigrants tried to stick together and settle close to each other. In addition to their preference for rural settlements, their strong tendency to settle in clusters is a clear characteristic of Norwegian immigrants as an ethnic group in the US. By clustering in settlements, they had a security net; they were able to rely on each other and provide mutual support to one another on a regular basis. They could also build and maintain a social life within the settlement, gather in common worship, maintain an ethnogamic pattern, maintain the Norwegian language, and in many ways continue life as they knew it from the old country. These settlements could be quite large. By the beginning of the 19th century, Koshkonong in Eastern Wisconsin had about 9,000 Norwegians (Holand 1908: 142), the "Indilandet" settlement around Iola, Wisconsin had 8,500 Norwegians (Holand 1908: 206) and Coon Prairie, WI had 13,000 Norwegians (Holand 1908: 267), to mention just a few.

Many of the early immigrants came in groups from the same communities or areas in Norway, and as kin they tried to settle down close to each other. This

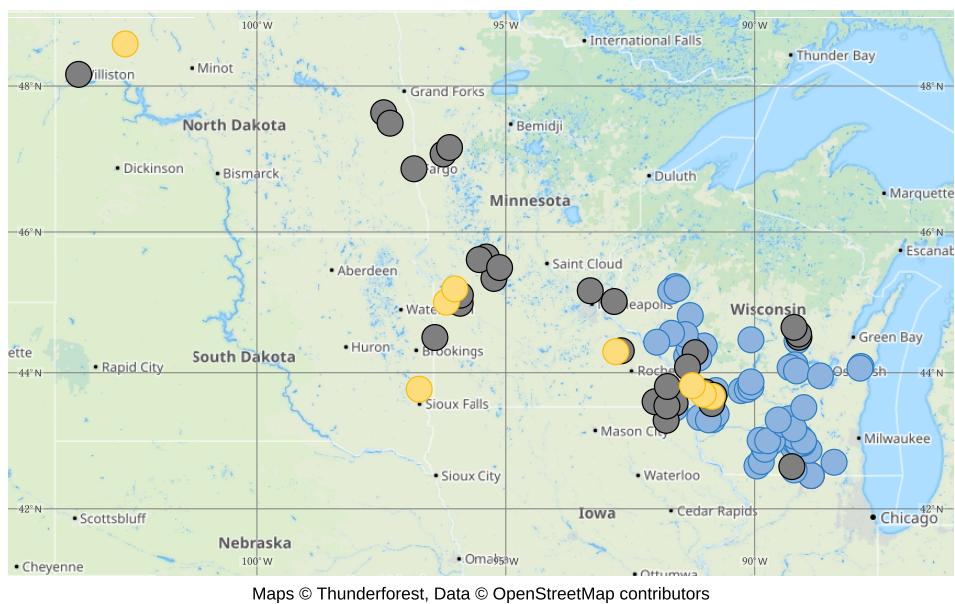


Figure 10: Map showing where fieldwork has been conducted. Blue: Einar Haugen in the 1940s; yellow: Arnstein Hjelde in the 1980s and 1990s; grey: fieldwork conducted after 2010.

meant that, in the larger settlements, one found mono-dialectal subgroups, where several large contingents of settlers from different places in Norway formed contiguous areas. In such communities, even when living close to other Norwegian dialect groups, contact outside of one's own group could be limited. Haugen reports on this from Koskikonong in southeastern Wisconsin, saying that "each dialect group has tended to concentrate in certain areas, but the settlement has on the whole had a strongly mixed character" (1953: 607). Here people originating from Telemark, Sogn, Voss and Numedal were especially numerous. George T. Flom (1912: 243) also commented on this settlement, claiming that "here everybody speaks in their own unabridged original dialect, any kinds of dialect mixing do not happen". We find a similar distributional pattern in Vernon County, where many from the Gudbrandsdalen region settled down in and around the towns of Coon Valley and Westby, but the area around Viroqua and Ferryville was populated by Sognings. Between these two large Norwegian groups, there were some so-called Flekkefjordings.<sup>9</sup> However, even if this was one continuous area of Norwegian farms, the contact between the two main groups, hail-

<sup>9</sup>According to Haugen (1953: 610), these were immigrants from the area around Flekkefjord; few of them came from that particular town itself.

ing from Gudbrandsdalen and Sogn, seems to have been rather limited. Among those living in Coon Valley and Westby today, we find only few descendants with a mixture of these regional backgrounds, which indicates that contact between the two has not been extensive. Furthermore, among people with their roots in Gudbrandsdalen, there are several stories expressing skepticism towards Sognings, including complaints that their Norwegian was impossible to understand. This tendency of dialect groups to cluster inside a settlement, or that one dialect group had a very dominant position, seems to have been quite common among Norwegians (Flom 1912: 242–243), and such patterns were to some extent self-determined through recruitment of new emigrants from the same area in Norway. Recruiting others with the same Norwegian background represented a kind of security when establishing a new life in America, and the system of prepaid tickets boosted this mechanism, as many new emigrants funded travel costs through tickets paid by kin in America. These arrangements came with the expectation that the debtor would repay this debt by working for the “sponsor” for a year or two. In such communities, the local dialect could serve as a first language and the main language in the community for several generations. This kind of dialect purity could still be found in the 1980s among speakers of the Innrønder dialect (Hjelde 1992). Even among speakers with a background from the neighboring valleys Stjørdalen and Verdalen, it was possible to find communities where very marginal dialectal differences were kept. Thus, the lower Stjørdalen dialect could be found around Lac Qui Parle, Minnesota; speakers from Hegra, a few miles up the valley in Norway, were found in Wanamingo, Minnesota; while the Meråker dialect, further up the valley, was found around Baltic, South Dakota.

In the late 1940s, the sociologist P.A. Munch (1949, 1954) did studies on the Norwegian-American communities in Vernon County, Wisconsin, and he identified two main settling patterns amongst the Norwegians, depending on when they came. The one he labelled the “extensive strategy” was employed when the Norwegians came to an area after other ethnic groups had started to settle down. Thus, when they claimed land, they had to squeeze in between other groups, and when such a Norwegian settlement grew, it had to expand into areas already inhabited, thereby establishing many contact points with other ethnic groups. In this situation, there were also consequences for social networks, as the Norwegians could hardly isolate themselves and were more easily assimilated into an American way of life. The Sognings settlement around Viroqua is considered a typical example of this strategy. When the Norwegians came first, on the other hand, they were able to set the rules. In these cases, Munch describes a situation where the borders of the settlement are quickly established, and where commu-

nity growth is confined within these borders. Here, the Norwegians could establish all-Norwegian networks. He noted that “(t)his community is very hard to break into, as is felt strongly by everyone who has tried it. There is a strong loyalty to the community and a correspondingly strong social pressure against any deviation from the accepted local pattern. What foreign elements have come in have either been assimilated completely to the cultural pattern of the community or they have been isolated socially until they preferred to leave” (Munch 1949: 784). Munch also observed that the way to be “fully accepted in the social life of the Norwegian group seems to be by marrying into a Norwegian clan and conforming to certain Norwegian values and customs, such as family ties (applied to the Norwegian clan), certain food habits, and first of all, Lutheranism” (Munch 1949: 786). The settlement around Coon Valley and Westby followed this strategy. Munch also points to the egalitarian ideology found in the latter settlement, as the strong social class distinction between families in rural Norway did not continue in America.

From a linguistic standpoint, this difference in settlement-formation strategies is important and had a direct impact on the extent that the heritage language was used and transmitted between generations. The intensive strategy meant that the heritage language could be widely used within the settlement, which Munch could observe around Westby and Coon Valley. The extensive strategy, on the other hand, gave fewer opportunities to use the heritage language, meaning that the heritage language would fade away. Around Viroqua, Munch observed that “(t)he use of Norwegian language in public situations is negligible, and it seems obvious that it will die out as a means of communication with the present older generation” (Munch 1949: 784). From Coon Valley, on the other hand, there were several German-Americans reported to speak fluent Norwegian, including the blacksmith, who needed this skill to stay in business.

However, we cannot characterize Norwegians altogether as being a group with a special preference to isolate themselves from other ethnic groups. In 1910, only 19% of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Norwegian-Americans shared their heritage language with their nearest neighbor, which is low compared to, for example, Germans (30%), Italians (30%), Spanish (45%), and Yiddish (47%) (Labov 1998: 388).

## **6 Ethnic institutions**

The era of emigration co-occurred with the emergence of civil society, which included an enormous increase in all kinds of volunteer organizations and institutions in Norway. Social changes in the traditional society due to industrialization, the weakening of traditional family ties, urbanization and better education

were all driving forces behind this. The eagerness to form organizations was also brought to America, where we find a number of Norwegian-American organizations, like churches and educational institutions of different kinds, a press, sports clubs (especially for skiing), Sons of Norway (insurance and social society), regional clubs (the *Bygdelag* movement), the youth movement (a parallel to the so-called *ungdomslagsrørsla* in Norway), music clubs (many singing choirs, The Hardanger Fiddler Association of America etc.), literary societies and the more academic Norwegian-American Historical Association, just to mention a few. Some of these played an important role for language preservation and maintenance of Norwegian identity; Lovoll (1984: 179) claims that preserving the heritage language and traditions were the main motivations for forming such organizations. In the following subsections, we will take a closer look at some of the most relevant ones for the use and maintenance of the heritage language.

## 6.1 The church

Many of the early immigrants emigrated because of religious reasons; they wanted to get away from the religious persecution by the state church in Norway. When Ole Rynning reports on religious life among the Norwegian-Americans in the 1830s, he writes that “(t)here are also various sects among the Norwegians, but they do not as yet have ministers and churches. Every man who is somewhat earnest in his belief holds devotional exercises in his own home, or else together with his neighbors” (Rynning 1917 [1838]: 255). However, as the so-called *America fever* spread over larger parts of Norway, the reasons for crossing the Atlantic became more economic rather than related to religious freedom. The emigrants started to establish congregations and churches in line with mainstream Lutheranism, with which they were well acquainted from the Lutheran state church in Norway. Thus, when Norwegians started to populate Wisconsin in the late 1830s and 1840s, work to organize a more traditional religious life, in line with the state church in Norway, started – in competition with the low church<sup>10</sup> ideology of the early emigrants, as well as the numerous different American affiliations. This Norwegian Lutheran church was soon organized into a synod in 1851, *Den norske Synode* (The Norwegian synod), which considered itself to be the successor of the state church in Norway (Lovoll 1984: 98). However, the Norwegian-American church would, over time, house several disagreements including “traditional” conflicts carried over from Norway, such as competition between high and low church ideologies, and liberal versus pietistic values. But

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<sup>10</sup>Typical characteristics for the so-called low church are its ignoring of hierarchic organization and rituals, and the emphasis on personal piety and the authority of scripture.

there were also new conflicts over theological questions, e.g., whether slavery was to be considered a sin, or the view of predestination. These conflicts resulted in splits and formation of a number of competing Norwegian Lutheran synods; between 1846 and 1900 no less than 14 such synods were established. Thus, it is fair to say that the church offered emigrants both a community where they could gather and worship, and a scene across which bitter conflicts between neighbors could play out. Traces of these conflicts are still seen today in many Midwestern towns, where we find several Lutheran congregations of Norwegian origin which have their own church building.<sup>11</sup> Today these churches mostly belong to the same synod and do not hold any major theological differences, but they are still kept as separate entities.

The church played a very important role for the heritage language. First of all, Lutheranism put limits on social contact, especially when it came to romantic relationships. There are many stories stating that it would have been unthinkable as a Norwegian-American to come home with a Catholic boy- or girlfriend; the expectation was that Lutherans should only become romantically involved with other Lutherans. And since Lutheranism and Norwegian identity were so closely linked, this restriction normally meant that the spouse-to-be would be of Norwegian stock as well, which, for generations, would imply that Norwegian would be the couple's home language. The church also helped to fortify the heritage language within the community, as Norwegian was used as the liturgical language, giving the heritage language the exclusive status of *lingua sacra* for many decades. And even more importantly, the church advocated for the use and maintenance of Norwegian for a long time, and they organized education for the younger generation. This church-led educational effort served a dual purpose – the first was to provide a parochial school for children as a supplement to public school. The second was to provide higher education, especially with the purpose to educate ministers to serve the many Norwegian congregations.

At one point, the Norwegian Synod had ambitions to establish a full-fledged alternative to public school, but they realized that the cost would be too high. However, at the Synod meeting in 1866, it was decided to gain control over the local public schools “by appointing Norwegian teachers, who are good Lutheran Christians” (Lovoll 1984: 107). This practice seems to have survived for a long time, as Ibarra (1976) in his study of the Norwegian community around Westby, Wisconsin, noted the importance of being Lutheran (and therefore Norwegian)

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<sup>11</sup>This is a primary reason why in 1909 there were 3,049 Norwegian-American congregations compared to 976 in Norway, and 2,190 Norwegian-American churches compared to 1,190 in Norway (Hempel 2012: 76–77).

when applying for a teaching position at the local school well into the 1950s “a Protestant, or preferably a Lutheran background was an unwritten prerequisite for hiring” (Ibarra 1976: 230). The parochial school organized by the church was normally referred to as “religion school”, “summer school” or “Norwegian school” – all three names indicate rather well the content and organization of this education. This school was held for some weeks when the public school had summer break, and its primary focus was on religion and Norwegian, but some places covered other topics as well, including arithmetic. Professor Eikeland at St. Olaf College tells about his time as a teacher in the parochial school, where he also assisted children in subjects from the common school (cited in Hvenekilde 1992: 74). This seems especially to be the case during the early period, when the common school was not yet fully established and compulsory. Later, religion and reading skills in the heritage language became the exclusive subjects of instruction. In 1914, Nordlie reports that in the “religion school” run by the *Unified Norwegian Lutheran Church in America* (*Den Forenede Norske Kirke i Amerika*), the only subject taught was religion. But in rural areas, instruction was in Norwegian, and here the children were taught to read Norwegian as well (Nordlie 1914: 64).

Reading Norwegian was a central activity, and the breadth of teaching material indicates the extent of this. Anne Hvenekilde (1992: 2) identified 18 ABC books, eight readers and two combined ABC-and-reader books published in America between 1853 and 1925.

## 6.2 The press

The first Norwegian-American newspaper was established in the 1840s in Wisconsin, and over the years several hundred different Norwegian papers were published; Lovoll (2010: 372) has identified 283 different secular newspapers and about 190 religious periodicals. The majority of these newspapers were short-lived; almost two-thirds of them lasted less than 3 years (Lovoll 2010: 375). But there were a few that were able to keep going for many decades, attracting many readers. Here we can mention the so-called “big three”: *Decorah-Posten* (1874–1972), *Skandinaven* (1866–1941) and *Minneapolis Tidende* (1888–1935). In the 1920s, *Decorah-Posten* approached a circulation of 45,000, and *Skandinaven* in 1912 peaked with 54,000 subscribers to their semi-weekly edition, while the daily issue was printed in 25,000 copies. In 1910, *Minneapolis Tidende* had about 33,000 in circulation (Lovoll 1984: 122–126). All three papers had larger circulations than any paper printed in Norway; *Aftenposten*, the largest one, had a circulation of 28,500 issues in 1910.

The newspapers played an important role in guiding newcomers into the new society, and they often reported and commented on political issues in America. Many Norwegian-Americans gave their support to the Republican Party, the party they associated with values such as Protestantism, high moral standards and support of the temperance laws, whereas the Democratic Party was associated with Catholicism, the saloon and corruption (Lovoll 1984: 121). Many of these papers also reported news from Norway and thereby served as a link across the Atlantic. And finally, the newspapers played a role in forming and expressing a Norwegian-American identity (Mathiesen 2015).

Some of the Norwegian-American newspapers also aimed for a larger audience than Norwegian-American immigrants. Several of them attracted Danish-American readers, and between 1873 and 1893, a semi-monthly edition of *Skandinaven* was published for subscribers in Norway and Denmark. We also know that other Norwegian-American newspapers found their way to Norway.

In addition to traditional newspapers, there were several other publications aiming to serve other informational functions, like the feminist *Kvinden og hjemmet* (1888–1947), the literary magazine *Symra* (1905–1914), published in Decorah, and *Lutheraneren* (1895–1956), published by the Norwegian-American church, or the more recent *Ny verd* (1973–1981), published in the written standard Nynorsk.

### 6.3 Sons of Norway

The Sons of Norway was formed as a brotherhood in 1895 during the economic depression, and the aim was to provide mutual help and security for its members during difficult times. This movement started in Minneapolis, but it spread throughout the Midwest, as well as to other parts of the US and Canada. Sons of Norway was organized locally in lodges and over time the social activities became more important than the security and insurance aspects of the organization. The cultivation of Norwegian heritage, including the language, eventually became a great focus of the lodges. When it was established, Norwegian was the only language accepted at meetings. The first English-speaking lodge was organized in Chicago in 1920, but Norwegian continued to be the main language of Sons of Norway until 1942, at a time when hardly any new immigrants arrived (Lovoll 1998: 200).

Over the years, the Sons of Norway became more urban as many lodges in the smaller towns closed. As the immigrants and their descendants succeeded in their new homeland, middle-class values became more dominant within the organization. Today, most lodge members are of fairly advanced age; Lovoll's

investigation from the 1990s indicates that the activities in Sons of Norway represent a “retirement culture”. “We are too old to dance, so we just eat and go home”, as one lodge president put it (Lovoll 1998: 202).

The Sons of Norway still serves as a gateway for linguistic fieldworkers to identify speakers of Norwegian. When Janne Bondi Johannessen started documenting Norwegian as a heritage language in America around 2010, she used Sons of Norway to establish contact with Norwegian heritage speakers. And as late as 2022, local Sons of Norway lodges helped fieldworkers locate such speakers and provided physical locations in which to conduct linguistic fieldwork.

#### **6.4 The *Bygdelag* movement**

While the Sons of Norway is an organization at the national level, attempting to reach and unite all Norwegian-Americans, the *Bygdelag* movement (home district movement) had a regionalized focus, aiming to strengthen ties between people from the same area in Norway and cherish memories of the place from which they originated in Norway. In a way, there were conflicting interests between those working to satisfy the goals of the *Bygdelag* movement and those who tried to establish a common Norwegian-American unity and identity (Lovoll 1977: 18–19). The first *bygdelag* was formally organized in 1902 by and for people from Valdres, the area in Norway with the highest rate of emigration. This Valdres Samband, as it was called, was led by Professor Andrew Veblen, the brother of the famous economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen, and its constitution – written in the Valdres dialect – stated that the dialect should be used in as many contexts as possible (Lovoll 1977: 30–31). In the years to follow, other *bygdelags* were organized, like Telelag, Hallinglag, Gudbrandsdalslag, Trønderlag, Nordlandsdag, Vosselag, Setesdalslag, and so forth.

These different *bygdelags* had two main purposes: First, they organized a so-called *stevne*, a reunion, often once a year, that could last several days and where people from the same area in Norway got together, shared memories and spoke in their dialect. Lovoll states that the *bygdelag* was the only place where local dialects were fully accepted and honored (Lovoll 1977: 19).

Another activity for many of them was to document the history of immigrants from this particular region, typically through the publication of yearbooks. These books, which often include member lists, give valuable insight into where people from different regions of Norway settled in America. Some of the texts are also written in dialect – these texts can also provide some insight into the language before scholars started to record it.

The *Bygdelag* movement witnessed the threshold of its activity in the 1920s. However, the decline in immigration and the economic depression, followed by the Second World War, had consequences for the activities of the *Bygdelag* movement. The movement persisted to a degree after the war, and even today quite a few of the *bygdelags* are active and continue to have their reunions. However, the focus has now changed from sharing memories and speaking in the old dialect to genealogy and sharing experiences from the last trip back to Norway. And while some of the *bygdelags* were able to guide fieldworkers to speakers of a certain dialect in the 1980s, it is very doubtful that they have this kind of insight into the members' linguistic repertoire today.

## 7 The spoken language

For many emigrants, the physical journey they made also involved a linguistic one. The communities they left were usually monolingual. All the people they met in their Norwegian neighborhoods spoke the same dialect as them. The minister in church would normally speak another variety, which was strongly influenced by written Danish, but through the schooling they received, people would be familiar with this "educated" variety. They had been to school, and thereby learned to read Dano-Norwegian, and for some maybe even to write it, but few of them had any knowledge of a second language. Emigration dramatically changed this situation. As immigrants, they came in to contact with several other Norwegian dialects, and they also met the language of the majority culture, English. Furthermore, the written language suddenly became paramount for them – that was the only means they had to keep in contact with family back in Norway (see further in Section 8). On foreign soil they had in many ways recreated the community they had left. When Kristofer Janson visited the Midwest around 1880, he was struck by how familiar it appeared: "The nature was completely East Norwegian with hills, dales, valleys, it was all similar to Ringsaker. The farmers' wives strolled along the road with their knitting and spoke dialect. They had a church as hideous as most country churches at home, with a pulpit that hung like a birdcage up on the wall, and with a priest in a dress and collar. They sang Norwegian hymns and had Norwegian sermon. Was this America?" (Janson 1913: 180, my translation).

### 7.1 Norwegian varieties

We have many testimonies and much documentation showing that the Norwegian-Americans have maintained a diverse dialectal landscape. This is not a sur-

prise, given the social and geographical background of the emigrants. In the existing literature on Norwegian dialects, there are several traditions of dividing Norwegian dialects into main types (with their subgroups): a division into two (Hans Ross and Sigurd Kolsrud), East and West Norwegian; a division into three (Ivar Aasen), East, West and North; and Hallfrid Christiansen's proposed division into four main areas, East Norwegian, West Norwegian, Trøndsk (Trøndelag, central Norway), and North Norwegian (Christiansen 1954). In the discussion below, I will follow Christiansen's typology as it is the most finely grained, and it also fits with the available statistics on where the emigrants came from (cf. Figure 11). From a dialectal point of view, these statistics should be of interest as they are a rough indication of the number of speakers who emigrated from each dialect area. Figure 11 is based on information about which Norwegian county the emigrants came from, and the counties can be grouped into larger areas that roughly follow the main dialect borders suggested by Christiansen. For an overview, this will give some idea of the number of speakers of each dialect.

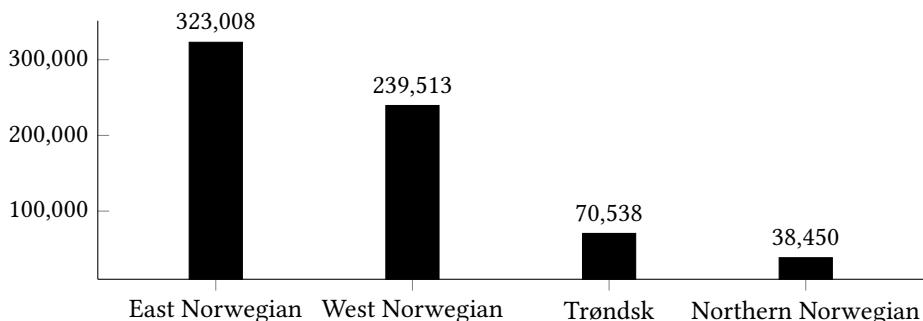


Figure 11: Emigration from the four main dialect areas (Departementet for sociale saker 1921)

When this distribution is contrasted with the group of speakers found and recorded for CANS in the Upper Midwest, we see a very striking difference. Based on findings from their first field trip, Johannessen & Laake (2012) claimed that Norwegian-Americans in general speak an East Norwegian dialect. As is evident from the discussion above, the terms East and West Norwegian are ambiguous in Norwegian dialectology, and Johannessen and Laake do not explicitly state how they define East Norwegian, which makes their observation somewhat difficult to discuss. Moreover, the number of speakers they encountered during this trip was limited, which makes it hard to draw any general conclusions. However, later rounds of fieldwork have revealed that there are hardly any speakers of West Norwegian dialects. Of several hundred recorded in the Midwest, only a

handful were speakers of West Norwegian. Attempts have been made to find such speakers, but in vain. There were some “rememberers” (Grinevald & Bert 2011: 51), people who grew up with Norwegian in their childhood, who at one time may have been able to speak some Norwegian, but who are currently only able to remember some words and phrases. The words and phrases they were able to produce, however, pointed towards the West Norwegian dialects. Those with an East Norwegian background who have been recorded since 2010 are numerous, and there are also some speakers of the Trøndsk dialect. The lack of West Norwegian dialects is striking, especially when we consider the number of emigrants from this region (Figure 11).

The situation in recent years is very different from what Seip and Selmer experienced when they conducted fieldwork with Norwegian-Americans in the Midwest in the 1930s. In an interview with Selmer before returning to Norway (*Nordisk Tidende*, 3rd December 1931, p. 24), he reports that “(i)t is mostly West Norwegian dialects we find in the Midwest, (...); 2/3, or even 3/4 of all our recordings are West Norwegian dialects, from Sogn, Voss and Ryfylke. From the east, Telemark is well represented” (my translation). When Haugen did his fieldwork in the late 1930s and 1940s, he collected most of his material in Wisconsin and eastern parts of Iowa and Minnesota. Of the 256 informants Haugen lists, 77 spoke a West Norwegian dialect (30%), which is very much in line with the ratio of people emigrating from this area in Norway. Considering this, it is hard to give a good answer to why the West Norwegian dialects had disappeared around 2010, while the East Norwegian ones have survived much longer; in 2022 it was still rather easy to find speakers of the latter variety.

There could be many reasons as to why the use of West Norwegian dialects declined more rapidly than the eastern ones. One clue can be found in Haugen’s field notes (written by Magne Oftedal in 1942, see informant 9G3). Oftedal reports from the settlement around Mt. Morris, Wisconsin, that it consists of Norwegians with two different backgrounds, from East Norwegian Holt and from West Norwegian Sogn, but the dialect from Holt is the dominating one. He ascribes this to prestige, as the dialect from Holt is more “according to the writing” (“etter skriften”). He continues to claim that the people from Sogn feel ashamed of their dialect and prefer to speak English in contact with other dialects. And this feeling of language shame is not limited to the Mt. Morris settlement; Oftedal’s observation is that language shame is common among the Sogn immigrants.

Andreas Munch Ræder reports as early as in the 1840s that speakers from the west coast are looked upon as a kind of an outcast group by other Norwegian-Americans. In his series of letters printed in many Norwegian newspapers, he describes a visit to the Rock Prairie settlement at the border between Wisconsin

and Illinois, and he says that in a settlement with people from different parts of Norway, many of the pre-existing rural prejudices against people from other regions are mostly gone, except the view on those from the Bergen area (i.e., West Norwegian); they are considered an odd group by the other Norwegian-Americans (Ræder 1848).

Johannessen & Laake (2012) make a case for a dialect shift, from West Norwegian to East Norwegian. There is not much evidence supporting such a shift, and it seems more likely that this is a result of language shift from Norwegian to English, and that this shift started earlier among those speaking West Norwegian than among those speaking East Norwegian dialects. We note that when Haugen visited Norwegian settlements around 1940, in all but one of the West Norwegian settlements the youngest generation did not speak Norwegian; the exception was the small Lyster settlement west of Mondovi. On the other hand, there were four fairly large East Norwegian settlements, where Norwegian was widely spoken by the younger generation (Haugen 1953: 606–615). This also indicates that language shift started earlier among the West Norwegian speakers than the East Norwegians.

## 7.2 English

Among those who left with the *Restauration* in 1825, several had been prisoners in England during the Napoleonic wars, and because of this, as well as coming from a coastal area of Norway with many from seafaring occupations, some of them had acquired some English. As Quakers, they also had an international orientation and thereby a need to master some English, and it seems reasonable to assume that these language skills were a prerequisite for even considering emigrating in the first place. The mastery of English was probably not widespread among the first emigrants but restricted to some of the leaders.

The younger generation was at least exposed to English through schooling in America. One of the Norwegian pioneers, Ole Rynning, stresses in his very influential book *True account of America* (1917 [1838]) the importance of learning English – and he also describes how easily it is learned by the younger generation:

Ignorance of the language is, to be sure, a handicap for Norwegian immigrants. It is felt especially on the trip to the interior of the country, if there is no one in the party who understands English. But by daily association with Americans one will learn enough in two or three months to get along well. Some half-grown children who came over last summer already speak very

good English. Before having learned the language fairly well, one must not expect to receive so large daily or yearly wage as the native-born Americans. (Rynning 1917 [1838]: 259)

Johan Reinert Reiersen, in his famous *Pathfinder for Norwegian emigrants* (1981 [1844]: 71) also mentions that Norwegians learn to master English quite rapidly. But this will depend on age, as well as the amount of contact with Americans:

Older people among our countrymen who do not already have the necessary ability and energy, will not shake off their lifelong habit of taking things easy when they get to America. Hence, they will not get ahead as surely as they might otherwise. They will learn the language only imperfectly if they are not in steady contact with Americans, and as they are unable to read the newspapers (which are part of the pleasures of life for every American), their feeling for public life cannot be aroused. But it is quite different with those who come over in their youth, who live in constant touch with the Americans, understand their language fully, acquire something of their character, and become familiar with their ways (p. 203).

But the need to learn the language was probably more urgent for the early immigrants, who had to navigate a totally unknown landscape while finding a new home, than what it was for those who came some decades later and could settle down in an already established Norwegian immigrant community where the heritage language, at a microlevel, was the dominant language. Knut Takla reports in 1913 from the Norwegian settlements that “(s)ome learned the foreign language (English) both quickly and well and can now both speak, read and write it. Others learned it to the extent that they can take part in a general conversation, and, in an emergency, they can spell their way through an English newspaper. But most of them have not learned it well enough to hold a proper conversation with a native American” (Takla 1913: 288, my translation). And in 1904, five years after his emigration, Even Solberg in Holmen, La Crosse County, WI, writes back home to his parents and siblings in Hedmark and says that he has learned to speak and read English – in contrast to many other immigrants. “Many have been here 25–30 years and still they are hardly able to talk [English]”, he reports (Øverland 2010: 444, my translation). These claims are, however, contradicted by data from the 1910 census, which reveals that 89% of the first generation of Norwegian-Americans claimed the ability to speak English, a figure substantially higher than many other European immigrant groups (Labov 1998: 385). How well they spoke English, though, is another matter.

Another strong indicator of the position of Norwegian in some of the communities is the non-Norwegians who acquired Norwegian. In Coon Valley, Hauigen recorded a German speaking the Gudbrandsdalen dialect (1942), and in 1931 Seip and Selmer recorded several non-Norwegians, including a German in Mount Horeb, speaking the Sogn dialect of his wife (*Minneapolis Tidende*, October 1<sup>st</sup> 1931, p. 1–2). For young people, however, the situation was quite different in the early 1900s: “A 7–8-year-old child therefore usually speaks much better English than his immigrant parents, even if they have lived in the country for 20–30 years. Norwegian, on the other hand, the child can easily avoid learning. They almost never hear this language outside their parents’ home, and even there it is often the case that the parents address the children in Norwegian and the children respond in English; this is particularly the case in the cities” (Takla 1913: 289–290, my translation). What Takla observes here is a massive language shift in progress.

Even though new generations grew up with English as their dominant – and maybe only – language, their English could still exhibit traits of an ethnolect. A study on Norwegian-American students in Crookston, MN, in the Red River Valley, showed that in the late 1920s, the English of most of the students contained phonetic crosslinguistic influence (CLI) from Norwegian (Simley 1930). Of 115 students investigated, 90% had an English marked by CLI. Most frequent was [s] for [z] and [ʃ] for [ʒ] (four out of five students), and [t] for [θ] and [d] for [ð] (about half), while about one-third of the students had an intonation pattern deviating from the “standard” American. A study from the 1980s showed the same tendencies in the English of Norwegian-Americans. Now intonation was especially targeted (88% of the speakers); even in the fourth generation, this was a common trait (Moen 1988). Still today, such CLI traits can be found in the English of quite a few, and this issue is under continued investigation (Moquin 2025).

## **8 The written heritage language**

Literacy is strongly linked to education, and when the Norwegians started to emigrate in the first half of the 1800s, schooling was compulsory in Norway and had been so for almost a century. However, the schooling the first emigrants had was limited to a few weeks every year and the curriculum was primarily religious, with some focus on reading skills. In 1860, there was a school reform in Norway, which improved the standard of education and included the end of ambulatory schools, along with an increased level of professionalization, so that teachers were required to have educational training. Education continued as a

primer for confirmation in the Lutheran church, but the school was also secularized by introducing new subjects like writing, arithmetic, history, geography and the natural sciences.

This educational foundation that Norwegians received through the reformed school system meant that emigrants coming to America from the 1880s and onwards were fairly well-educated. In line with this, the 1910 census shows that 94% of first-generation Norwegian-Americans considered themselves to be literate, a proportion that ranks among the top four of European immigrant groups (Labov 1998: 385).

It has been suggested that emigration was a strong motivation for widespread literacy, since the only way of keeping contact with family and friends across the Atlantic was through letter writing. And there is no doubt that the letters played an important role for Norwegians on both sides of the Atlantic, even if the ability to express oneself in writing varied greatly between individuals. In this context, developing and maintaining literacy skills in the heritage language became important and was largely under the purview of the parochial school.

Norwegian emigration took place during a period of major political changes in Norway, and when emigration started, Norway had been in a 400-year-long union with Denmark. Due to this, the only written language in the first half of the 1800s was Danish. Since Danish and Norwegian are closely related, the written language was for the most part understandable for a Norwegian with some training, but the National-Romantic ideology during large parts of the 1800s made it virtually impossible for a young nation to have a foreign language as its written standard. Thus, during the 1800s and the first half of the 1900s, much effort was given to create a uniquely Norwegian standard – or rather two standards: the work for a new standard followed two paths. One was to establish a new standard based on Norwegian dialects, what we today know as Nynorsk; and the other aimed to Norwegianize Danish, step by step, in what came to be known as Bokmål. These two strategies to establish a Norwegian written language had many supporters in Norway, but rather few in America. The national argument, which was strong in Norway, was not relevant for the Norwegian-Americans for whom the slightly modified Danish spelling from the late 1800s, Dano-Norwegian, was what they were familiar with from Norway and which many stuck to. Some of them understood the need Norway had for a language of its own, and at the same time they observed with regret that the written standards in Norway and among the Norwegian-Americans were drifting away from each other. So, when Norway did a series of spelling reforms of Dano-Norwegian (1907, 1917, 1938), it took a long time before they were adopted in America, if at all.

In the Norwegian-American literary landscape, many authors used the traditional Dano-Norwegian spelling, and printed in the letter style Fraktur. One of the very few exceptions was Ole Edvard Rølvaag, probably the only one of the Norwegian-American authors still known today. He emigrated at the age of 20 and became a professor of Norwegian at St. Olaf College, thus he was familiar with the Norwegian situation, and followed a more updated spelling. However, Rølvaag published in Norway, which probably affected his linguistic choices.

The Norwegian-American press also followed a very conservative strategy when it came to spelling, and for the most part ignored the reforms in Norway (Hjelde & Kolberg Jansson 2016, Bartásková 2017). In 1929, there was a tentative contract between the “big three” papers, with the aim to coordinate an update of the spelling so that their readers would not have had the option to change their subscriptions from one to another due to spelling preferences (Øverland 1996: 372–373). In the end, however, this looked like too daring of a step for them, and they hesitated. In 1939, *Decorah-Posten* made some adjustments to the spelling, making it more in line with the 1907 reform. In 1952, they switched from Fraktur to Antiqua, and during the 1960s *Decorah-Posten* made further adjustments which put it in line with the spelling in Norwegian newspapers. Towards the end, *Decorah-Posten* relied heavily on news articles from Norwegian news agencies, and by then, they lacked editorial recourses to transform these articles into the “old” spelling.

Among those institutions that employed a more contemporary spelling was the church; not in the liturgy, but in some of its publications. For example, the paper *Lutheraneren* was published with a rather updated spelling, probably because its editor was from Norway and brought a more updated language ideology upon immigration to America (Haugen 1953: 145–146).

## 9 Language shift

During the early 1900s, heritage Norwegian enjoyed its peak period of use in America. Many new immigrants continued to come, and between 1901 and 1905 more than 100,000 emigrated from Norway. The number of Norwegian speakers in the US was approaching 900,000, many books and newspapers were printed in Norwegian, and the heritage language was widely used in the church and in parochial schools – even in higher education. But this was soon to change, and Einar Haugen (1953: 255–258) points to 1917 as a critical year for the Norwegian heritage language for two reasons. First, the US entered the First World War that year, which, he argues, brought xenophobia to a new level, and increased the

pressure to become American, including using the English language.<sup>12</sup> Linking patriotism and loyalty to the use of English represented a formidable pressure for linguistic conformity on heritage speakers. One extreme outcome of what Haugen (1953: 255) calls the “World War Hysteria” is the so-called Babel Proclamation from Iowa in 1918, which banned the use of any other language than English in public places, in telephone communication, in education, and in religious services.

Secondly, three of the major Norwegian-American synods decided to reunite, as The Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. This huge organization of 2,800 congregations also housed an ambition to become a church for all American Lutherans, for which the Norwegian language served as an obstacle.

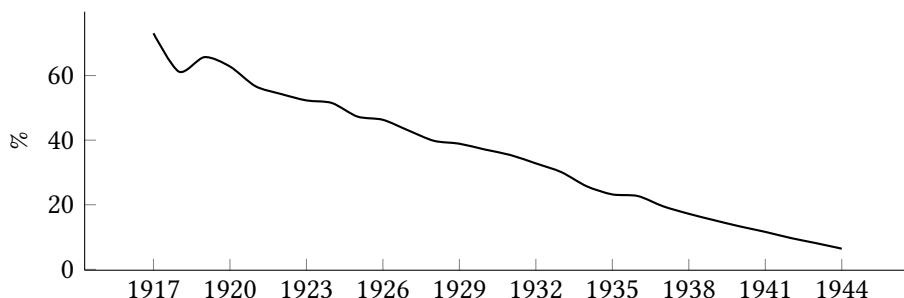


Figure 12: Percentage of Norwegian services; Norwegian Lutheran Church (based on Haugen 1953: 262–267)

Also, there was a wish to reach the young American-born generations who were fluent in English. Quickly, the congregations started to change over to English, first by offering occasional services in English, and then increasing the frequency of English services until Norwegian services were fully discontinued. In 1917, 73% of the services were offered in Norwegian, dropping to 61% the following year, and steadily shrinking to less than 3% in 1949 (cf. Figure 12). Some communities continued to offer occasional services in Norwegian up to this millennium, but lately the challenge has been to find a minister able to speak Norwegian.

A consequence of this was that the need to educate children in Norwegian faded; thus there was a rapid shift in the language of instruction in parochial schools. While more than 80% of parochial schools used Norwegian in 1917, this number was approaching 10% by the end of the 1920s, indicating an extraordinary speed in language shift (cf. Figure 13).

<sup>12</sup>To what extent the First World War was the main driving force for language shift is, however, debated, see Wilkerson & Salmons (2008, 2012).

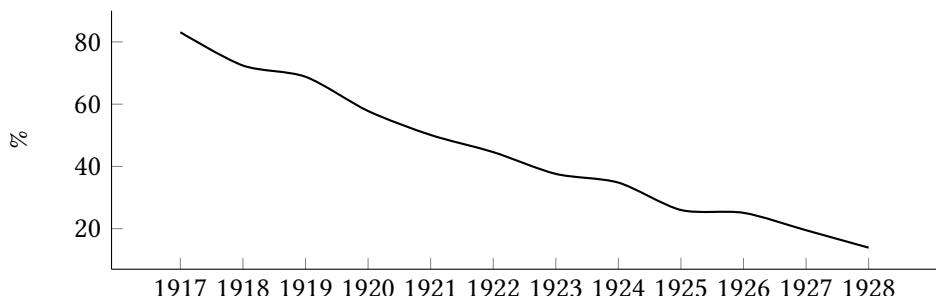


Figure 13: Percentage of the Norwegian Lutheran church's parochial schools given in Norwegian 1917–1928 (based on Haugen 1953: 262)

As the number of Norwegian readers declined, the number of newspapers in Norwegian also plunged steadily through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and today there are no longer any printed in Norwegian<sup>13</sup> (cf. Figure 14). This process of decline started before 1917, and parts of this reduction may also be a result of consolidation of the three big newspapers. But even those had to give up – the first one to do so was *Minneapolis Tidende* in 1935, followed by *Skandinaven* in 1941. *Decorah-Posten* was able to continue for decades, but in 1972 it had to close.

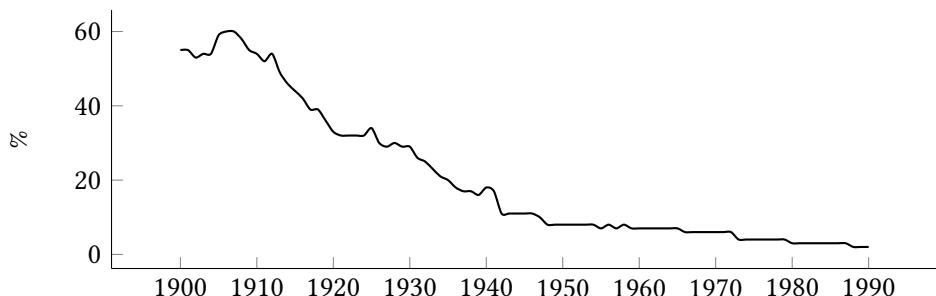


Figure 14: Number of secular Norwegian-American newspapers issued every year, in the period of 1900–1990 (based on numbers from Lovoll 2010: 351–372)

The last factor to be mentioned here is the end of immigration. In 1913 Knut Takla wrote:

(a)s long as Norwegian emigration takes place with the same unwavering force as until now, so long will the Norwegian language continue in America, and so long will the other two factors, the church and the press, work

<sup>13</sup>The *Norwegian American*, a weekly newspaper based in Seattle, does still offer a page or two in Norwegian, but most of its content is printed in English.

side by side with the Norwegian immigrants to maintain the language. But when emigration ends [...], then it will not take a lifetime before the Norwegian language is “a thing of the past” in the Norwegian-American settlements. (...) It will therefore be the Norwegian immigrants, and only them, who are the reason that the Norwegian language and the Norwegian feeling of nationality are maintained on the western prairies. It is not so easy to dress them in a new linguistic costume, and for their sake thousands of business people beyond the northwest must speak Norwegian in order to get hold of their trade; for their sake, ecclesiastical colleges have been built which can train ministers to preach in the language they understand; and for their sake half a hundred newspapers are edited, printed and published in the language of their fathers and not in the language of the country (Takla 1913: 290, my translation).

Ten years later the American authorities introduced a system of quotas for immigration, and during the 1920s these restrictions ended the era of mass emigration.

As a consequence of the factors mentioned above, at least in part, the number of Norwegian speakers has decreased steadily during the last century, and it is reasonable to assume that many of those who claim to speak Norwegian at home today are first generation speakers who emigrated after the Second World War. But still there are also a few heritage speakers here and there in the old settlements who grew up with Norwegian at home and who are still able – and willing – to let their heritage language be recorded for future research.

## Abbreviations

CANS	The Corpus of American Norwegian Speech or The Corpus of American Nordic Speech
CLI	Cross linguistic influence
Co.	County
IA	Iowa
MN	Minnesota
ND	North Dakota
SD	South Dakota
WI	Wisconsin

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## **Part II**

# The nominal domain



# Chapter 3

## Agreement in North American Norwegian determiner phrases

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In this chapter, we discuss agreement in determiner phrases (DPs) in North American Norwegian (NAmNo), and we focus on DP-internal agreement, i.e., agreement within the nominal phrase, realized as definite suffixes and determiners. As a backdrop, the structure and nature of European Norwegian DPs are presented, as well as previous analyses of NAmNo DPs, concerning the features definiteness, number, and gender. The bulk of the chapter is devoted to language mixing. First, theoretical implications of such mixing are explored, and we demonstrate the analytical benefits of a late-insertion syntactic model. Moreover, we employ language mixing data to unfold the structural architecture of the DP, in particular the locus of formal gender. We also discuss a mechanism for gender assignment as well as an analysis of agreement involving attributive adjectives. Last, we show through empirical data that agreement in NAmNo DPs seems to undergo diachronic changes, and we discuss whether such data can be analyzed as signs of changes in the functional exponents or in the syntactic structure itself.

### 1 Introduction

The topic of the present chapter is agreement within determiner phrases (DPs) in North American Norwegian (NAmNo). DPs in Norwegian can be quite complex: The noun itself is categorized for grammatical gender and is inflected for number and definiteness, and associated words such as determiners, adjectives



and possessive pronouns agree with these functional features, see (1a). Moreover, Norwegian has DP-external agreement, as exemplified in (1b), where the properties of the DP determine the shape of associated personal pronouns. In many Norwegian varieties this pronominal reference is primarily grammatical and does not distinguish between an animate or inanimate antecedent regarding gender (Faarlund et al. 1997, Johannessen & Larsson 2018).

- (1) a. det gul-e      hus-et      mitt  
the.N yellow-DF house-DF.SG.N my.DF.SG.N  
'my yellow house'  
b. Eg kjøpte ei ny jakke. Ho er brun.  
I bought a.F new coat. She is brown.  
'I bought a new coat. It's brown.'

In this chapter, we focus on DP-internal agreement, more specifically agreement realized as definite suffixes on the noun stem (and potential attributive adjectives) and determiners within the same nominal phrase.<sup>1</sup>

The corresponding agreement pattern in English DPs is not as complex, and due to the long-lasting contact between Norwegian and English in the heritage language NAmNo, the agreement pattern in DPs thus constitutes an interesting domain for studying resilience or vulnerability in grammar. In this chapter, we will address this issue, and we discuss how language mixing data in particular may shed new light on the structural architecture of the DP and its agreement patterns.

We assume at the outset that agreement encompasses both the overt morphological exponents in a DP and the underlying agreement between morphosyntactic features in an abstract syntactic structure. Hence, agreement concerns both a syntactic operation between features and its morphosyntactic realization. Our main questions of interest are then the following: How is agreement (overtly) realized in NAmNo DPs, and how can data from agreement in language mixing contribute to the general description of the structural architecture of the DP?

The distinction between phonological exponents and abstract syntactic structures mirrors our general, theoretical foundation. We follow a late-insertion approach to grammar like the one discussed in the Introduction chapter by Kinn & Putnam (2025 [this volume]), where a core assumption is the separation of an abstract syntactic structure and its phonological realization. More specifically, the

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<sup>1</sup>DP-external agreement in NAmNo has also been investigated in recent works: Rødvand (2017) and Johannessen & Larsson (2018) on gender in pronouns, and Kinn (2020) (briefly) on number agreement in predicate nouns.

model we utilize is anchored in an exoskeletal approach (Borer 2005a,b, 2013), and builds on key components from Distributed Morphology (DM) (e.g., Harley & Noyer 1999, Embick & Noyer 2007, Embick 2015). In DM, abstract syntactic structures are generated based on two types of syntactic terminals: roots and functional features. We assume roots to be bare, i.e., devoid of any functional features (Arad 2005, Borer 2014, Marantz 1997), and in the syntactic structure, roots are combined with a designated category-defining head, a categorizer, forming what we (informally) refer to as a stem (see, e.g., Embick 2015). Functional features are either valued or unvalued, and the operation Agree ensures a matching relation between a probe and a goal in the syntactic structure (cf. Kinn & Putnam 2025 [this volume]). At Spell-Out, phonological exponents are inserted into the syntactic terminals. We assume that insertion into stem positions is relatively free, whereas spell-out of functional terminals is more restricted. We argue that a late-insertion model is fruitful to account for agreement in NAmNo DPs, and in Sections 4 and 5 we will show how such a framework allows us to analyze cases of language mixing and at the same time explore the details of the DP structure.<sup>2</sup>

The bulk of our chapter will be dedicated to discussing the theoretical implications of language mixing. The term language mixing refers to cases where functional or lexical items from two or more languages appear together (see, e.g., Muysken 2000, Lohndal 2013). These data are especially interesting as they may function as windows into underlying syntactic structures and help carve out the models we employ to understand grammar. Here, we focus mainly on two issues: First, we inquire about the structural architecture of the DP and the locus of functional features ensuring agreement throughout the phrase. We discuss how gender can be used to illuminate the structural architecture of the DP, and more specifically the locus of the gender feature itself. Second, we turn to the morphophonological realizations of the agreement patterns. Here we investigate data where the expected realizations are missing or where English functional exponents are used instead of Norwegian ones. These data, we argue, are tokens of (diachronic) changes in the underlying agreement patterns of the NAmNo DP resulting in a different morphophonological realization. We discuss what such changes may be in Section 5.3.

The reasoning in this chapter is primarily based on empirical data and analyses found in previous studies in the field, some of which are our own. Common for most of these is that they generally apply data from the *Corpus of American Nordic*

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<sup>2</sup>Dealing with DPs, our chapter has some thematic overlap with van Baal's chapter (van Baal 2025 [this volume]). However, whereas van Baal focuses on definiteness marking, our goal is to discuss phrase-internal agreement and the morphophonological shape of functional exponents.

*Speech* (CANS, Johannessen 2015) in the discussion of present-day NAmNo. For purposes of comparison with respect to diachronic changes, we look primarily to Haugen (1953), and supplement the discussion with some examples from Haugen's recordings from 1942 (made available in the most recent version of CANS (v. 3.1)). Importantly, the main purpose of the current chapter is not to present an overview of the frequency of different types of DPs and agreement patterns. Our goal is thus not to reveal how common a certain phenomenon is, or how a phenomenon varies between speakers. Rather, we inquire strategically selected examples of DP agreement with an aim to discuss how these can best be analyzed in a grammatical model.

The chapter is structured as follows: First, in Section 2, we briefly present and discuss the Norwegian DP and propose a syntactic structure. In Section 3, we present previous studies of agreement patterns in NAmNo DPs. Thereafter, we turn to language mixing. In Section 4, we explore the theoretical implications of language mixing, discussing first how the typical pattern of language mixing in NAmNo may be neatly analyzed in a late-insertion model. In Section 4.2, we employ language mixing data to inquire about the structural architecture of the DP and specifically the locus of formal gender, and in Section 4.3, we discuss agreement involving attributive adjectives, also from a language mixing perspective. Then, in Section 5, we present empirical data showing a potential (diachronic) change in the agreement patterns in NAmNo DPs. Based on these data we discuss potential analyses, and how such data can be signs of changes either in the functional exponents or in the syntactic structure itself. Hence, these data may shed light on both our questions of interest. Section 6 concludes the chapter.

## **2 The Norwegian DP**

In this section, we give a brief overview of the morphosyntax of noun phrases in (European) Norwegian, and their agreement relations. This will serve as a baseline for the subsequent discussion. Establishing a baseline for a heritage language is, however, a much-debated issue (see, e.g., Montrul 2016, Polinsky 2018, Lohn-dal 2021, D'Alessandro et al. 2021). Ideally, the baseline should be the input that each speaker had as a child acquiring the language. This kind of data is, nevertheless, not always available in a heritage language, and the homeland variety is often used instead. In the case of NAmNo, present-day speakers (in CANS) are all second to fifth generation immigrants. Using European Norwegian as a baseline is thus problematic as this was never a part of their input in the first place. In some studies of NAmNo (e.g., Riksem 2017), the data collected by Einar Haugen in the 1930s and 1940s serve as a baseline instead as this presumably is more

resemblant to the present-day speakers' input. Nevertheless, in this chapter we take European Norwegian DPs as our starting point in order to present the basic agreement patterns in a Norwegian DP as well as a structural analysis. See also the discussion of a proper baseline for NAmNo in van Baal (2025 [this volume]), Eide (2025 [this volume]) and Larsson & Kinn (2025 [this volume]).

## 2.1 Agreement in Norwegian DPs

As mentioned in the Introduction, Norwegian nouns are inflected for definiteness (definite and indefinite) and number (singular and plural). Moreover, Norwegian nouns are categorized for gender, and most Norwegian varieties have three genders (masculine, feminine, and neuter). Gender assignment is primarily non-transparent, meaning that in most cases it is impossible to infer the grammatical gender of nouns based on phonological, morphological, or semantic features. DP agreement is visible on functional suffixes and associated words such as determiners, adjectives, and possessive pronouns, as shown in (1a).<sup>3</sup> In this section, we give a short overview of DP agreement in European Norwegian, focusing on agreement on definite suffixes, determiners, and adjectives.<sup>4</sup>

Indefinite singular phrases are realized with a prenominal determiner, an indefinite article, varying according to gender: *ein* (M), *ei* (F), and *eit* (N).<sup>5</sup> Definite singular phrases and indefinite and definite plural phrases are realized with a functional suffix also varying according to gender (though see discussion in footnote 9). The available suffixes are presented in the table below (Table 1). Note, however, that there is dialect variation in the phonological shape of the suffixes.

Definite phrases may also contain a prenominal determiner in addition to the definite suffix. This is the phenomenon referred to as double definiteness in Nor-

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<sup>3</sup>The DP can also contain weak quantifiers and PPs, but these are not affected by agreement.

<sup>4</sup>Possessive pronouns are also influenced by agreement in Norwegian DPs: Singular pronouns vary according to the gender of the noun (e.g., *min* 'my.M', *mi* 'my.F', *mitt* 'my.N'), and there is a separate plural form (*mine* 'my.PL'). The possessive pronoun can occur either prenominally or postnominally, the latter being the more frequent (see, e.g., Westergaard & Anderssen 2015, Anderssen et al. 2018 for more details). Westergaard & Anderssen (2015) and Anderssen et al. (2018) investigate the structural position of the possessive pronoun in NAmNo. They conclude that the postnominal possessive is robust and productive. This is not the expected result given that postnominal possessives are structurally more complex and in addition more vulnerable in a bilingual context. However, as the postnominal possessive is the more frequent pattern, they conclude that high frequency may protect against language attrition. For a more general discussion of possessive constructions in NAmNo, see Kinn (2025 [this volume]).

<sup>5</sup>The examples of European Norwegian used throughout the chapter (unless stated otherwise) are variants from *Nynorsk*, one of Norway's two written standards. See, e.g., Vikør (2001) for more about the Norwegian written standards.

Table 1: Functional suffixes in Norwegian DPs

	M	F	N
DF. SG.	<i>båt-en</i> ‘the boat’	<i>skei-a</i> ‘the spoon’	<i>tre-et</i> ‘the tree’
INDEF. PL.	<i>båt-ar</i> ‘boats’	<i>skei-er</i> ‘spoons’	<i>tre-</i> ‘trees’
DF. PL.	<i>båt-ane</i> ‘the boats’	<i>skei-ene</i> ‘the spoons’	<i>tre-a</i> ‘the trees’

wegian (see, e.g., Julien 2005: 26ff.). The shape of the determiner is then dependent on gender, *den* (M/F), *det* (N), and number, *dei* (PL). Using the nouns from Table 1 as our examples, the corresponding phrases with double definiteness would be *den båt-en* (the.M/F boat-DF.SG.M), *den skei-a* (the.M/F spoon-DF.SG.F) and *det tre-et* (the.N tree-DF.SG.N).

The agreement of the DP will also affect potential attributive adjectives in the phrase. Norwegian adjectival inflection can be divided into a strong and a weak inflection. The weak inflection is used in definite phrases, and it has only one possible suffix (-e). The strong inflection, on the other hand, is present in indefinite phrases, and is realized as different suffixes according to gender and number. The table below shows the inflection of the adjective *gul* ‘yellow’. Note also the syncretism between masculine and feminine in the strong inflection.

Table 2: Adjectival inflection in Norwegian

	M	F	N	PL
Strong inflection (INDEF)	<i>gul-</i>	<i>gul-</i>	<i>gul-t</i>	<i>gul-e</i>
Weak inflection (DF)	<i>gul-e</i>	<i>gul-e</i>	<i>gul-e</i>	<i>gul-e</i>

## 2.2 The basic DP structure

We take the structural analysis in Julien (2005) as our starting point for the analysis of the Norwegian DP structure (see also Kinn & Putnam 2025 [this volume]), however with some small alterations. Since we in this chapter focus primarily on agreement on the functional suffixes for number and definiteness, the determiner and occasionally also an attributive adjective, these are the only items accounted for in the applied structure, Figure 1. The example with glosses and translation is given in (2). See Julien (2005: 11) for a complete structure of the full DP in Norwegian.

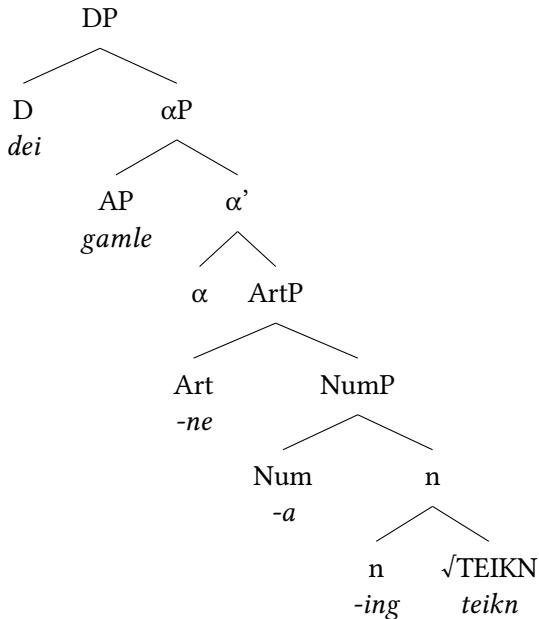


Figure 1: The basic Norwegian DP structure

- (2) *dei    gaml-e teikning-ane*  
       the.PL old-PL drawing-DF.PL.F  
       ‘the old drawings’

Starting at the bottom, we assume, like Julien (2005), that the noun stem consists of a root and a categorizer, *n*. Note that Julien (2005) uses the label *N* for the categorizer and the stem, whereas we use *n* in line with, e.g., Embick (2015: 44–45). When we have phrases with a derived noun stem, like in Figure 1, derivational affixes are considered a realization of the categorizer itself. In phrases with a simple noun stem, the categorizer is not overtly realized, but the stem is nevertheless considered structurally complex (Embick 2015: 44–45).

Above the stem follow the functional heads of the DP. The categories number and definiteness are assumed to constitute individual heads, *Num* and *Art*.<sup>6</sup> A functional head above *Num*, but below *D*, is motivated by double definiteness.

<sup>6</sup>Julien (2002) proposes the projection *ArtP* as the locus for the definite suffix in Norwegian and other Scandinavian varieties with double definiteness. This projection is labelled *nP* in Julien (2005) and *DefP* in, e.g., Åfarli et al. (2021). In line with the Introduction chapter as well as van Baal’s chapter in the present volume, we use the label *ArtP*.

Such phrases will have both a determiner and a definite suffix. Following Julien (2002), Art is postulated as the locus for the definite suffix (the determiner being a realization of D). Furthermore, exponents of Num and Art will be suffixed to the noun stem as it obligatorily moves to these positions. In the higher positions, we find adjectives in the specifier of a functional projection,  $\alpha P$ , and determiners in D. Gender is not accounted for in Figure 1. There have been several discussions and proposals concerning the structural position of a formal gender feature, which we will discuss in more detail in Section 4.2.

Since we will later discuss language mixing between Norwegian and English, we briefly also consider a simple structure for English DPs. A significant difference between Norwegian and English DPs is gender; whereas Norwegian has three genders affecting the shape of functional exponents in the DP, grammatical gender is an alien category to English nouns. Moreover, definiteness in English is expressed by a prenominal determiner (*the*), hence, we assume that an English DP does not have Art. A potential representation of the English DP, parallel to the Norwegian one in Figure 1, is presented in Figure 2.

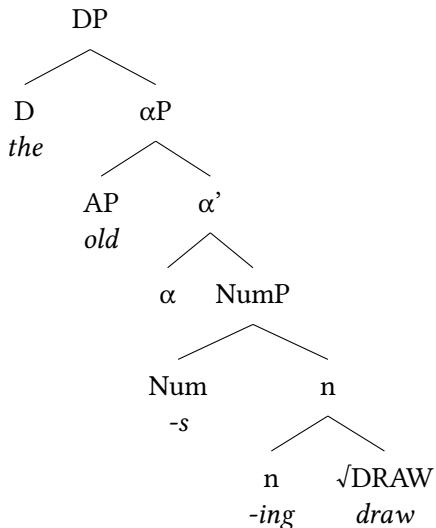


Figure 2: The basic English DP structure

When we now turn to NAmNo DPs, we take the discussion above as our point of departure. As we will see later, in particular in Section 5, however, NAmNo DPs show some differences compared to such a baseline, either in the phonological realizations of agreement or potentially the underlying syntactic structure.

Gender will turn out to be a crucial feature in exploring and analyzing such patterns.

### **3 The North American Norwegian DP**

Section 2 outlined the patterns of the European Norwegian DP. However, it is well-documented that, in general, heritage speakers have certain difficulties with morphology, and inflectional morphology in particular is often affected (van Baal 2020, Montrul 2016, Scontras et al. 2015). For instance, the speakers tend to simplify the inflectional system by omitting otherwise obligatory forms. In the current section we turn to the NAmNo DPs and some recent studies of agreement.

In a cursory study of old recordings of NAmNo (and North American Swedish), Johannessen & Larsson (2015) find that overall, the agreement system in the heritage language is identical to the baseline language, and that, if anything, the older heritage language had more morphological distinctions (e.g., case distinctions) within the noun phrase, not fewer. In a study of diachronic change in the nominal morphology, focusing on cases of language mixing, Riksem (2017), on the other hand, finds omission of functional suffixes both in plural and/or definite noun phrases, as well as an increased use of English functional exponents among present-day speakers. In the following, we will address definiteness, number and gender successively.

Concerning definiteness in NAmNo DPs, there are few studies, compared to, e.g., studies on gender.<sup>7</sup> In a comprehensive study of compositional definiteness (what we call double definiteness above), van Baal (2020) finds that NAmNo nominal phrases are very similar to homeland Norwegian, for instance with respect to word order and to the marking of definiteness. She states that, in DPs without compositional definiteness, the speakers typically use the indefinite article and the suffixed definite article in a stable, baseline-like manner.

Yet, compositional definiteness appears to be vulnerable, and van Baal (2020) points out that the prenominal determiner is the most vulnerable to omission: All the speakers were found to omit the determiner in some modified definite phrases, and for most, this was the most frequent type of non-baseline-like modified definite phrase. In fact, this pattern of modified definite phrases realized without the determiner was more frequent than modified definite phrases with

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<sup>7</sup>Investigating young heritage Swedish speakers, Håkansson (1995) finds that they struggle with definiteness agreement as well as gender and number agreement; they omit functional suffixes both on attributive adjectives and the noun itself.

compositional definiteness, and this pattern was also supported by acceptability judgment tasks. Thus, van Baal (2020: 218) concludes that whereas the typical homeland modified definite phrase contains compositional definiteness, as in (3a), the typical NAmNo modified definite phrase lacks the determiner, as in (3b). Van Baal (2020) argues that this pattern can be explained as an example of incomplete acquisition.

- (3) a. den stor-e bil-en  
the.SG.M large-DF car-DF.SG.M  
'the large car'  
b. stor-e bil-en  
large-DF car-DF.SG.M  
'the large car'

Moreover, van Baal (2020) observes that for some speakers, the definiteness distinction is disappearing in plural phrases. In her data, some plural nouns are realized with the indefinite plural suffix even though they appear in a definite context. For example, the phrase *svarte hester* 'black horses', with no determiner and the indefinite plural suffix *-er*, is used both in indefinite and definite contexts. See also van Baal (2025 [this volume]) for a more elaborate discussion of definiteness marking in NAmNo.

Apart from van Baal's (2020) finding concerning the diminishing distinction between definite and indefinite plural phrases, and the general comments on morphology in the NAmNo DPs, the literature is rather sparse on the issue of number agreement. One might suspect that number is less vulnerable than for instance gender, given that, as a feature, number is more indexical in nature. A few targeted searches in CANS give support to this assumption, showing that the weak quantifiers *fleire* 'several', *mange* 'many' and *disse* 'these' in nearly all observed cases appear with plural morphology on associated adjectives and nouns.<sup>8</sup> A couple of examples are *mange hest-er* 'many horses' and *fleire forskjellig-e skoler* 'several different schools'. However, all in all, number morphology in NAmNo DPs has not been thoroughly investigated and should be subject to future research.

For heritage speakers, a feature that has been found to be particularly difficult is gender. Johannessen & Larsson (2015) investigate NAmNo nominal phrases with the combination of (a determiner) an adjective, and a noun stem. Among

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<sup>8</sup>We found one exception, namely *mange slekting* 'many relative' (CANS; albert\_lea\_MN\_-01gk).

the 34 speakers included in the study, they find that the majority (20 speakers) produce target-like DPs. Examples of non-target-like cases are *en fin-t maskin* ‘a.M nice-N machine’ or *denna andre skolehus-et* ‘this.M other school house-N’, where the determiner does not agree with the gender of the inflectional suffix of the adjective or the noun, respectively. Going further into the details, Johannessen & Larsson (2015) report that the deviations occur primarily in what they label complex noun phrases, i.e., phrases involving a determiner, an adjective, and a noun stem. Hence, they argue that the complexity of the phrase is decisive of how target-like the agreement patterns may be.

Concerning gender, Johannessen & Larsson (2015) conclude that gender in NAmNo is stable for the majority of the speakers, although there is a tendency of overgeneralization to the masculine (the most frequent gender in Norwegian). Also Rødvand (2017) reaches a similar conclusion. Through two elicitation tasks she investigates the gender system of 25 NAmNo speakers. She uses agreement with personal pronouns, indefinite articles as well as the definite suffix to determine whether the speakers have retained a three-gender system and concludes that all speakers show relics of such a system. Despite great inter-individual variations, she finds no sign of a general breakdown in the gender system. More specifically, the definite suffix is produced target-like to a great extent, while the observed variation is connected to gender on pronouns and the indefinite article.

In a different study of gender agreement among 50 NAmNo speakers, Lohndal & Westergaard (2016) conclude, on the contrary, that gender in NAmNo is vulnerable. They observe what they call an erosion of the three-gender system and argue that this is due to the lack of transparency in the Norwegian gender system. The different conclusions in these studies are striking. One possible explanation for this is the different position they take regarding the definite suffix as a marker for gender. Whereas Johannessen & Larsson (2015) and Rødvand (2017) assume the suffix to be a marker for gender, Lohndal & Westergaard (2016) argue that the suffix is a marker for declension class. Hence, Lohndal & Westergaard (2016) hold a more restrictive view in the study of gender, and the status of the definite suffix as a gender marker might be decisive for the conclusion regarding a stable or eroding gender system in NAmNo.<sup>9</sup>

Studies of gender (in NAmNo), like the ones discussed above, all touch upon two interrelated issues: gender assignment and gender agreement; the assigned gender of a given noun will affect the expected agreement in the DP as a whole.

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<sup>9</sup>The interplay and differences between gender and declension class are a recurring discussion (see, e.g., Enger 2004). According to the Norwegian reference grammar (Faarlund et al. 1997), the definite suffix is considered a marker for gender. This is also what we assume in this chapter going forward.

Subsequently, one may discuss whether or not a DP should be considered target-like in cases where the assigned gender is unexpected (compared to a baseline), even if the agreement pattern matches the assigned gender. For instance, Johannessen & Larsson (2015) use the phrase *ei stor famili* ‘a.F big family’ as an example of a *non-target-like* phrase (the target being *en stor famili* ‘a.M big family’).<sup>10</sup> However, if the noun *familie* is in fact assigned feminine gender in this specific case, the phrase should be considered target-like.<sup>11</sup> In other words, even though a functional exponent has a non-target-like shape (compared to, e.g., European Norwegian), it does not necessarily indicate differences or attrition in the agreement patterns as it could also mean that the specific noun has been assigned a different gender.<sup>12</sup> The relation between assignment and agreement is therefore essential when discussing gender in NAmNo.

In this chapter, we are mainly concerned with agreement in NAmNo, hence we will primarily discuss how a gender feature affects the phonological realization of functional items in the DP. However, gender assignment will become relevant when dealing with English nouns being mixed into Norwegian. As we will see, also English nouns are assigned gender when they occur in a Norwegian structure, and the subsequent question is how a noun from a non-gender language like English can be assigned gender in a mixing context? We will argue that formal gender is a feature of the syntactic structure, and that gender assignment takes place through a gender translation mechanism (Åfarli et al. 2021, see Section 4.2. for discussion). Consequently, a single noun may be assigned different genders by different speakers. We will return to the discussion of this question and possible hypotheses for analyses in the next section, where we investigate language mixing and theoretical perspectives on this issue more broadly.

<sup>10</sup>Note that *famili* is the phonological transcription, whereas the orthographic spelling is *familie*.

<sup>11</sup>In fact, there are several examples of NAmNo DPs where the gender assignment might be judged non-target-like compared to European Norwegian, but where the subsequent agreement pattern matches the assigned gender:

- (i) *en liten rom* (M) ‘a small room’ European Norwegian target: n (CANS; decorah\_IA\_01gm)
- (ii) *ei tynn papir* (F) ‘a thin paper’ European Norwegian target: n (CANS; gary\_MN\_02gk)
- (iii) *et lite øy* (N) ‘a small island’ European Norwegian target: f (CANS; kalispell\_MT\_02uk)
- (iv) *et vakkert tur* (N) ‘a nice trip’ European Norwegian target: m (CANS; willmar\_MN\_01gm)
- (v) *ei lita skule* (F) ‘a small school’ European Norwegian target: m (CANS; westby\_WI\_12gm)

<sup>12</sup>Note also that many nouns are assigned different genders across various dialects in European Norwegian. For instance, the word *eple* ‘apple’ is feminine in some dialects, and neuter in others. Judging how target-like a DP is based on gender assignment in European Norwegian is therefore not always unproblematic.

## 4 The theoretical implications of language mixing

Several recent studies of NAmNo have focused on language mixing (e.g., Grimstad et al. 2014, Åfarli 2015, Alexiadou et al. 2015, Grimstad 2018, Riksem 2018b, Riksem et al. 2019, 2021). Still, language mixing in NAmNo is not a recent phenomenon; the usage of English items is observed in many early studies on NAmNo (Flaten 1901, Flom 1901, 1903, 1926, Hjelde 1992, Haugen 1953). The pattern of mixing has been described like this:

Some words are, indeed, used without any appreciable difference in pronunciation, but more generally the root, or stem, is taken and Norse inflections are added as required by the rules of the language. (Flaten 1901: 115)

A single form is usually imported and is then given whatever endings the language requires to make it feel like a proper word and to express the categories which this particular language requires its words to express. (Haugen 1953: 440)

These two quotes highlight the typical pattern for language mixing in NAmNo: English lexical items are used in Norwegian contexts where they appear together with Norwegian inflectional suffixes. In other words, English lexical items are integrated into a Norwegian structure.<sup>13,14</sup>

Riksem (2018a) investigates language mixing in present-day NAmNo DPs, and some examples of the typical pattern are given in (4). English items are boldfaced, and the code in the parenthesis identifies the speaker in CANS.

- (4)
- a. **ei** **nurse**  
a.F nurse (CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_02gm)
  - b. **en** **chainsaw**  
a.M chainsaw (CANS; blair\_WI\_07gm)
  - c. **chopper-en**  
chopper-DF.SG.M (CANS; blair\_WI\_01gm)
  - d. **den** **field-a**  
that field-DF.SG.F (CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_02gm)

<sup>13</sup>Note that by referring to something as a Norwegian structure or an English item, we do so based on functional features and lexical items typically associated with those languages.

<sup>14</sup>This implies that functional features are not associated directly with lexical items but are properties of the syntactic structure. Grimstad et al. (2018) discuss how a lexicalist model will fall short in analyzing such data, and how a late-insertion exoskeletal model fares better.

- e. det **stuff**-et  
the stuff-DF.SG.N (CANS; starbuck\_MN\_01gk)
- f. **birthday**-en hennes  
birthday-DF.SG.M hers (CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm)
- g. **deck**-en hans  
deck-DF.SG.M his (CANS; westby\_WI\_01gm)

In these examples, an English noun is used, but it occurs together with a Norwegian indefinite article (4a–b), a Norwegian determiner (4d–e), a Norwegian definite suffix (4c–g) and/or a Norwegian possessive pronoun (4f–g). These data clearly demonstrate how the English noun stems may be described as integrated into a Norwegian functional structure, where they appear with Norwegian functional exponents and in a Norwegian word order, cf. the postnominal possessive pronoun.

In the following, we discuss how language mixing data like those in (4) can shed light on agreement in NAmNo DPs. First, in Section 4.1, we show an analysis of the typical pattern and how the agreement in NAmNo DPs is realized in phrases with an English nominal stem. Then, in Section 4.2, we discuss gender in particular. Following Åfarli et al. (2021) we use grammatical gender in language mixing data to inquire about the locus of the formal gender feature in the DP structure. By extension, gender may also illuminate the structural architecture of the DP in general. Lastly, in Section 4.3, we briefly address agreement in phrases with an attributive adjective based on the work by Riksem et al. (2021). Here, we retain the focus on language mixing and will show how agreement unexpectedly is *not* overtly realized in cases where English adjectival stems are mixed into NAmNo DPs. Also in this case language mixing data may be a key to unfolding the details of the DP structure.

#### 4.1 Analyses of the typical mixing pattern

In general, there are two main approaches to analyzing language mixing data: One is assuming that such data are peculiar and restricted by some special constraints in grammar, whereas the other approach assumes that language mixing is restricted by the same principles as unmixed data. The latter approach is referred to as a Null Theory, or a constraint-free approach to language mixing (Mahootian 1993, MacSwan 1999). Following a Null Theory approach entails that mixing data might inform us not only about the patterns and restrictions of language mixing itself, but about grammar in general. Mixed data would then potentially serve as entries into the underlying grammatical structures enabling us to tease apart and identify details in a syntactic structure.

Riksem (2018a,b), among others, argues that a late-insertion exoskeletal model is well-suited to account for language mixing data without resorting to special constraints, hence based on a Null Theory view. She employs the structure in Figure 3 as the basis for analyzing data such as those presented in (4), and in the following we will briefly present the main points of this analysis.

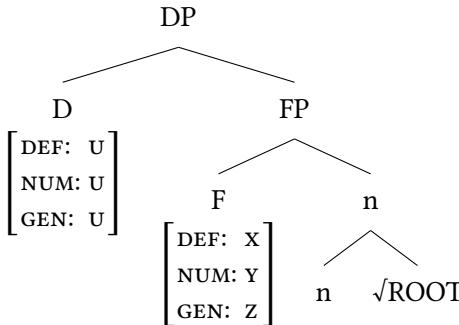


Figure 3: Simple DP structure prior to vocabulary insertion

One obvious difference between this structure and the one proposed in Figure 1 above concerns the functional heads between the nominal stem and the DP layer. Instead of using separate heads for definiteness (Art) and number (Num), a common functional head, (F), holding a feature bundle including definiteness, number, and gender, is employed.<sup>15</sup> The features in F are assumed to be valued, whereas D holds a feature bundle of corresponding unvalued features. The features in D will then be valued by a probe-goal relation with F during the derivation. Feature valuation thus ensures agreement between D and F.

The structure in Figure 4 demonstrates how (4e) can be analyzed. At Spell-Out, an English noun stem, *stuff*, is inserted as a realization of the stem complex (root + categorizer) in the structure. Insertion into the terminals holding functional feature bundles, on the other hand, is more restricted. Riksem (2018a) utilizes the Subset Principle (see Halle 1997: 428) in her analyses.<sup>16</sup> To put it briefly, this principle ensures the insertion of the most suitable functional exponent, which is the

<sup>15</sup>In Riksem (2018b: 95–96) the functional head F is motivated partly for its ease of exposition in the analysis. Moreover, it proves to be sufficient in analyzing the typical cases of language mixing where English nouns appear with Norwegian functional suffixes. Nevertheless, such a feature bundle will not enable fine-grained investigations of the complexity of Norwegian functional suffixes. In Section 4.2 we discuss how separate functional heads are necessary to reveal details of the syntactic structure and the locus of gender.

<sup>16</sup>The Subset Principle is one possible tool among others determining exponency in a late-insertion model. Due to the scope of the current chapter, we do not go further into the details of the theoretical framework.

exponent matching *the most* of the functional features specified in the syntactic terminal while not containing features not present in the syntactic terminal. In the case of language mixing in NAmNo, Norwegian functional exponents will be specified for all three of these features, and hence the relevant Norwegian exponent will be preferred over an English functional exponent. Phonological exponents are given in italics, and in course of the derivation the noun stem will move to F where it combines with the suffix *-et*.

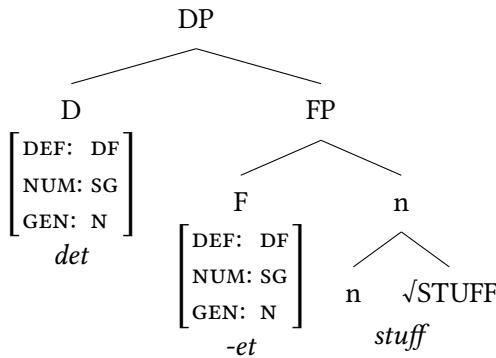


Figure 4: Structural representation of (4e) *det stuffet*

This structure demonstrates how Norwegian agreement, including gender, is preserved even in cases where the noun stem is English. Moreover, it does not utilize any special mechanism to account for the fact that the phrase is a case of language mixing, i.e., it forms a Null Theory. We therefore assume that the derivation of all-Norwegian phrases is parallel to Figure 4, the only difference being the inserted stem.

#### 4.2 What gender can tell us about the architecture of the DP structure

Comparing Norwegian and English DPs, grammatical gender constitutes a significant difference. This means that in a language mixing context involving English and Norwegian, gender is particularly interesting to investigate. As mentioned in Section 3, we are primarily concerned with gender agreement, and in the current section, we use language mixing data to inquire about the position of gender in a syntactic structure and at the same time show how gender may function as a tool in unfolding the architecture of the DP in general. However, first we will briefly address a couple of questions concerning gender assignment, namely how gender can be assigned a nominal stem from a non-gender language like English,

and how gender assignment can take place at all when it is assumed to be a formal feature of the abstract syntactic structure and not an inherent feature of the noun.

Regarding the assignment of gender to an English noun, there are two common hypotheses. Following the first hypothesis, one assumes that nouns from a non-gender language will be assigned one specific gender, most likely the most frequent gender, when mixed into a gender language. In the case of NAmNo, this would imply that English nouns are assigned masculine gender when used in Norwegian utterances. Even though signs of overgeneralization to the masculine have been observed in NAmNo (e.g., Lohndal & Westergaard 2016), this hypothesis is dubious as English nouns are distributed across all three genders in NAmNo, which also emerges from the examples in (4). The second hypothesis is that an English noun would be assigned the gender of the Norwegian equivalent (see, e.g., Jake et al. 2002, Liceras et al. 2008, Parafita Couto et al. 2015 for discussion). Riksem (2018b: 93–95) problematizes this hypothesis. First, a single English noun may potentially have many different Norwegian equivalents with different genders. An example is *field*, a noun which is often assigned feminine gender in NAmNo, and may correspond to *åker* (M), *eng* (F), *mark* (F) or *jorde* (N). Consequently, it is difficult to settle on which Norwegian noun was the basis for gender assignment. Moreover, Riksem (2018b: 94) compares the gender assigned to the singular English nouns in her material to a potential Norwegian equivalent and finds that almost 40% of the nouns in question are assigned a different gender than their most obvious Norwegian counterparts (see also Tjugum 2016).

It thus seems that neither of the two hypotheses are suited to account for gender assignment for English nouns mixed into Norwegian, and subsequently a more general question arises: How is gender assigned in the first place? The issue of gender assignment is discussed in Åfarli et al. (2021), building on a distinction between semantic and formal gender. More specifically, the claim is that even though there are semantic gender distinctions in all languages, only some languages – so called gender languages – grammaticalize these gender distinctions, with the consequence that these languages display visible gender morphology through affixes and functional words. This implies that even though the biological difference between *a girl* and *a boy* is manifest in the semantics of English, the determiner is the same since English is not a gender language, as opposed to Norwegian.<sup>17</sup> In general, there are in all languages many semantic properties

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<sup>17</sup>Note, however, that even if a gender language has a semantic core, it is not necessarily the case that semantics will dominate the assignment of grammatical gender. For instance, the noun *mamma* ‘mom’ is masculine in many Norwegian dialects. See Enger (2009) for a discussion of gender assignment rules.

that are not grammaticalized as formal features (Narrog & Heine 2011), as is the case for English gender.

To account for these patterns, Åfarli et al. (2021) suggest that in languages without grammatical gender, such as English, there are no gender features in the DP structure, whereas gender languages, such as Norwegian, have unvalued gender features (UGEN) somewhere in their syntactic structure, requiring valuation in course of the syntactic derivation. Moreover, the formal gender features in gender languages need first to be assigned a value, and subsequently gender agreement will be visible in the language. The lowest unvalued gender feature in the DP structure is subject to the assignment process, and gender agreement higher in the structure is then accomplished through a probe–goal relation.

The question of the nature of gender assignment can thus be reformulated as: How does the initial valuation of the lowest UGEN feature happen? Åfarli et al. (2021) propose that this happens through the process of gender “translation”, where a non-linguistic semantic gender property is transformed or fixed into a formal gender feature. They thus assume from the outset that gender has a conceptual core (see also Kramer 2015, Corbett 2013). This core can be based on different semantic categorizations such as biology, but also morphology or phonology, and the term conceptual covers all these nuances. We leave aside here the complex issue of which nouns get which gender in a language. Gender translation finds its parallel in the valuing of number features. It is even more obvious that number morphology mirrors semantic properties, and gender translation is thus only a variant of a more general mechanism which transforms semantic properties into formal features in the grammar, in the languages where these features are part of the grammatical inventory and therefore expressed in the formal inflection system.

Some could argue that such a translation process would imply an undesirable mixing of domains: the formal and the conceptual ones. We argue, however, that these processes seem very common. Åfarli et al.’s (2021) analysis resembles the one proposed by Picallo (2008), namely that gender is the formal exponent of the uninterpretable feature CLASS, which “serves to translate to the grammatical system non-linguistic processes of entity categorization” (Picallo 2008: 50). It also reflects the overall view in Broschart (2000), where it is argued that classifiers define units of different kinds and that there is no difference of principle between the function of a linguistic classifier and a concrete perceptual contour. They are both needed for the discrimination of units and for the possibility of recognizing them as a certain kind (Broschart 2000: 264).

Åfarli et al. (2021) thus argue that the lowest UGEN feature in a DP structure is subject to gender translation, where it is assigned a specific value, and that other

unvalued gender features are valued subsequently through probe-goal agreement. The next task then is to identify the locus of this lowest gender feature in the DP. In the following, we will use language mixing data to inquire about the possible structural loci of the gender feature. In other words, we explore the projections in a structure like Figure 5 to determine the position of formal gender (see Åfarli et al. 2021, Riksem 2018b: 89ff. for more discussion).

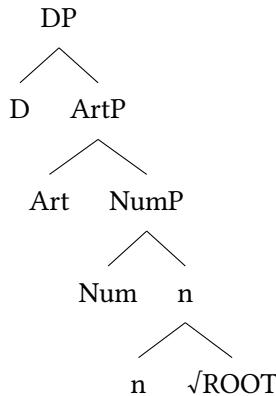


Figure 5: Structural basis for exploring the locus of formal gender

Starting at the bottom of the structure there is both theoretical and empirical evidence against assuming a gender feature on the root. Having a gender feature on the root is theoretically dismissed as the root is, by definition, an entity devoid of any grammatical features (cf. Borer 2005a,b, 2014, Arad 2005, Marantz 1997.). Moreover, as one root may surface in different word classes (for instance the verb *braid* and the noun *braid*), this would either mean a substantial expansion of the vocabulary assuming an individual entry for all possible realizations, or it would mean that also the verb *braid* would carry a gender feature. Both alternatives appear theoretically implausible. At the empirical level, language mixing also constitutes a counterargument against this position, as it would entail that English nouns also carry a formal gender feature enabling gender agreement in mixed DPs like those presented in (4).

The next possible position for a gender feature is then the nominalizer *n* (see, e.g., Alexiadou 2004, Julien 2005, Kramer 2014). Arguments in favor of this analysis are the fact that gender is an essential feature of the noun, and that gender often comes across as an inherent property of the noun (stem). However, this analysis is also contested by language mixing, more specifically cases where English derived nouns, (5a–b), and compounds, (5c–d), appear with Norwegian determiners or functional suffixes specified for gender.

- (5) a. **basement-en**  
basement-DF.SG.M (CANS; westby\_WI\_02gm)
- b. **et township**  
a.N township (CANS; flom\_MN\_01gm)
- c. **ei comic book**  
a.F comic book (CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_10gm)
- d. **graveyard-en**  
grave yard-DF.SG.M (CANS; blair\_WI\_07gm)

Let us consider derived nouns first. As discussed in Section 2, derivational affixes are considered realizations of the categorizer, in our case the nominalizer. In data like (5a–b), both the root and the nominalizer are then presumably drawn from English. The example in (5b) is the most obvious one in this regard as the derivational affix *-ship* does not exist in Norwegian. Hence, it is the complete stem (root + n) that is mixed from English into NAmNo. Figure 6 shows an analysis of the stem in (5b).

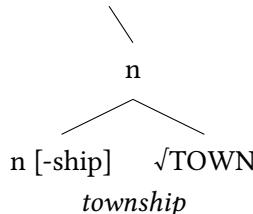


Figure 6: Structural representation of (5b) *township*

Still, these derived nouns appear with Norwegian functional determiners or suffixes in parallel to the examples in (4). Now, if the gender feature is assumed to be positioned on the nominalizer, this brings us back to the question raised above: How can an English noun stem provide a gender feature ensuring agreement with other parts of the DP when English nouns do not have grammatical gender? The fact that (5a) and (5b) are assigned different genders, masculine and neuter respectively, reinforces this argument, as this indicates the presence of a gender feature available for gender assignment.

Compounds also support an analysis where stems are the items being mixed. These are, by definition, complex stems, and finding cases like (5c–d), where all-English compounds are mixed into NAmNo, provides extra evidence that stems are the items being mixed. Neither the lefthand nor the righthand member of these compounds can be expected to carry a gender feature, but nevertheless,

the compounds are assigned gender visible in determiners and functional suffixes (see Eik & Riksem 2022 for more discussion on compounds and language mixing). Based on cases like those in (5), we argue that the stem must be the mixed item, and the gender feature must be located above stem level. However, strictly speaking we cannot be certain whether it is always the stem that is mixed, or if the root is available for mixing in different contexts. For the purpose of this chapter, we acknowledge that stems are available for mixing, but we remain agnostic as to whether roots alone can be mixed.

The data we have considered so far, provide arguments in favor of an analysis where gender is positioned above the nominal stem, i.e., in the higher functional structure of the DP. As discussed in Section 4.1. above, Riksem (2018a) does not go further into the question of the exact locus of the gender feature, and instead assumes a functional feature bundle with definiteness, number, and gender combined in a functional head, F. This analysis is sufficient to account for of the bulk of the language mixing data. However, more detailed analyses require splitting the feature bundle into separate heads, at least for number and definiteness. The question is then if grammatical gender is a feature of one of these heads. Åfarli et al. (2021) discuss the locus of the gender feature in these heads, and propose, based on data from language mixing, that gender is distributed, i.e., that gender is in fact a formal feature present in both these heads. In the following, we present the main outline of this analysis.<sup>18</sup>

First, let us consider Num. In the case of number, the examples below demonstrate how gender affects the shape of plural suffixes in European Norwegian. This suggests that gender is a feature of Num.<sup>19</sup>

Table 3: Gender variation in indefinite plural suffixes

	M	F	N
INDF.PL	<i>båt-ar</i>	<i>skei-er</i>	<i>tre-Ø</i>
	boat-INDF.PL.M	spoon-INDF.PL.F	tree-INDF.PL.N
	'boats'	'spoons'	'trees'

<sup>18</sup>Åfarli et al. (2021) also argue against an analysis in which gender is assumed to be head of a separate functional projection, as in Picallo (1991) (see also Ritter 1993, Kramer 2015).

<sup>19</sup>Notice that one's definition of gender will determine whether functional suffixes like these are considered markers for gender or declension class (see, e.g., Enger 2004 for more discussion). In parallel with the singular, definite suffix (see footnote 9), we consider the plural suffixes markers for gender.

However, gender may also be considered a feature of Art. The next table shows how definite suffixes also vary according to gender in Norwegian.

Table 4: Gender variation in definite singular suffixes

	M	F	N
DF.SG	<i>båt-en</i>	<i>skei-a</i>	<i>tre-et</i>
	boat-DF.SG.M	spoon-DF.SG.F	tree-DF.SG.N
	'the boat'	'the spoon'	'the tree'

A typical analysis of the pattern presented in the two tables above is that gender is a feature of Num and that Art holds an unvalued gender feature that receives valuation through a probe-goal relation with Num. In other words, the lowest locus of gender would be Num, and this feature is subject to gender translation, as discussed above. However, in NAmNo (as well as occasionally in present-day European Norwegian) we see examples like those in (6):<sup>20</sup>

- (6) a. grade-s-ene  
grade-PL-DF.PL.M (CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_08gm)
- b. brewerie-s-ene  
brewerie-PL-DF.PL.M (CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_14gm)
- c. pit-s-a  
pit-PL-DF.PL.N (CANS; sunburg\_MN\_07gm)

In these examples, the nominal stem is combined with both an English plural suffix and a Norwegian definite suffix. Due to the plural suffix being English, we can assume that Num does not hold a gender feature here. If it did, a Norwegian exponent would be preferred. Nevertheless, the Norwegian functional suffixes, spelling out Art, show gender variation. Based on data like these, Åfarli et al. (2021) argue that not only the nominal stem is mixed from English but the stem and Num together, whereas the rest of the DP is considered Norwegian.<sup>21</sup> A structural representation is provided in Figure 7, where the dotted line marks

<sup>20</sup>The examples in (6a) and (6b) are both transcribed with *-ene* in the orthographic transcription in CANS, which could entail both masculine and feminine gender in some Norwegian varieties and in the written standard *Bokmål*. However, according to the phonological transcription, the speakers use the suffix *-an(e)*, which is more clearly masculine.

<sup>21</sup>Admittedly, gender variation is notoriously hard to confirm in cases like (6), especially due to the infrequency of such examples. For instance, (6c) is realized with a suffix typically representing neuter (cf. the overview in Section 2.1), but there are no other examples of *pit* used with

the border between the Norwegian DP and the mixed items from English. As the noun stem moves to Num and Art, we get the form *gradesene*.

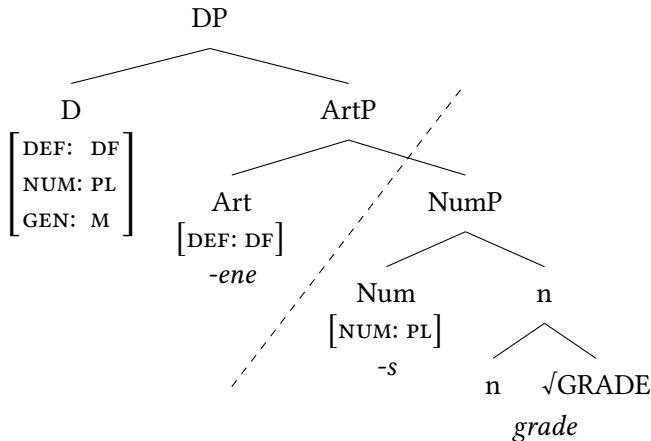


Figure 7: Structural representation of (6a) *gradesene*. The dotted line marks the border between the mixed chunk from English and the otherwise Norwegian structure.

Now, if NumP is drawn from English, but the definite suffix still shows gender variation, there must be a gender feature available in Art. In this case, then, the lowest gender feature is in Art and this is the feature subject to gender translation. We return to data showing English functional exponents, like the plural suffix, in Section 5.

Then, Åfarli et al. (2021) investigate whether an even larger English piece may be mixed into Norwegian and still be assigned gender. In other words, can the lowest gender feature be positioned also in D? The examples presented in (7) indicate that this is the case, as both the attributive adjectives and the noun stems are English, but the determiners nevertheless show gender variation.

- (7) a. det **third grade**  
the.N third grade (CANS; westby\_WI\_10gk)

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neuter, and one example where *pit* is used with the masculine definite suffix *-en* in the corpus. Moreover, we have yet to find clear examples of feminine gender used in such phrases. One potential example is *queen-s-a* ‘queen-PL-DF.PL.N’ (CANS; sunburg\_MN\_12gk) which could be considered feminine based on semantic properties, but the shape of the suffix is nevertheless more compatible with neuter. Finally, we cannot exclude potential dialectal variations in the phonological realization of the suffix. Future studies of this phenomenon should therefore pursue a larger pool of examples and also account for dialect variations.

- b. en **covered sled**  
a.M covered sled (CANS; gary\_MN\_01gm)
- c. en **hard dialect**  
a.M hard dialect (CANS; flom\_MN\_01gm)

The structure in Figure 8 shows an analysis of (7b).

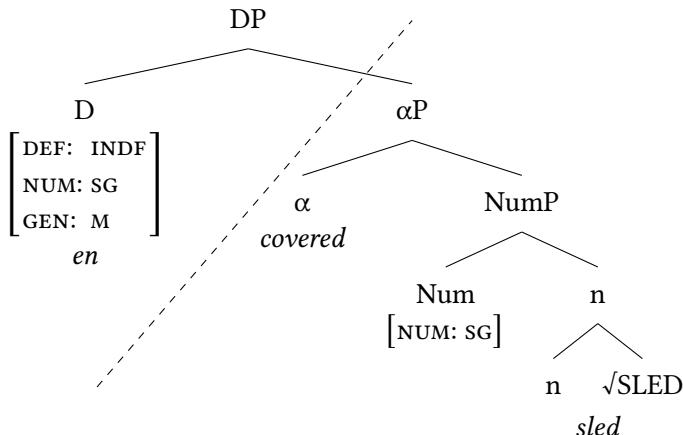


Figure 8: Structural representation of (7b) *en covered sled*

Åfarli et al. (2021) use these language mixing data to argue that the lowest locus of the formal gender feature is flexible; gender does not occupy one specific position in the structure, but each functional projection in the Norwegian DP spine is argued to hold a gender feature. Moreover, all gender features are assumed to be unvalued at the start of the derivation, and the lowest gender feature is valued through the gender translation mechanism (cf. the discussion above), and thereafter the other gender features (higher in the structure) are valued through the probe-goal mechanism. A general, structural representation is given in Figure 9.

Åfarli et al. (2021) argue further that in Norwegian DP structures, the most common locus for the gender feature is the nominalizer, n (see also Julien 2005: 3). The pattern where the position of the lowest gender feature is in a higher structural position only occurs in situations where it is forced, so to speak, upwards, for instance in cases where nominal stems or larger chunks are mixed from a non-gender language like English.

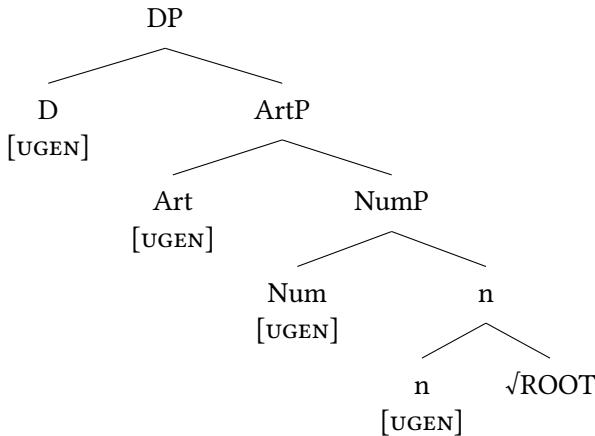


Figure 9: General, structural representation of distributed gender, assuming that all functional projections hold an unvalued gender feature at the start of the derivation

#### 4.3 A brief note on agreement on attributive adjectives

Before we conclude this section, we will briefly discuss how agreement is realized on attributive adjectives in a language mixing context in NAmNo DPs. These are also subject to agreement in (European) Norwegian DPs (cf. Section 2.1), but also in these cases language mixing may shed light on the structural architecture as adjectives seem to behave differently than nouns in mixing.

As discussed in Section 2.1 above, attributive adjectives in Norwegian are realized with a functional suffix corresponding with the definiteness, number, and gender of the DP. Based on a late-insertion model, one would expect that mixed adjectives would also get the appropriate Norwegian suffix, in parallel with the typical pattern for nouns, (4). On the contrary, English adjectives are rarely accompanied by Norwegian suffixes when they are mixed into NAmNo. Riksem et al. (2021) investigate adjectival agreement among 163 present-day speakers in CANS (v. 2) examining both the realization of agreement in present-day NAmNo and potential changes compared to historical NAmNo.

A first discovery in this search is that there are in general few English adjectives appearing together with a Norwegian noun; only 12 relevant cases combining an English adjective and a Norwegian noun were identified in the corpus. For many of these, no functional suffix is expected in the specific context (cf. the discussion in Section 2.1). In the cases where a functional suffix is expected, this is only realized in two examples – involving the same adjective and noun combi-

nation, uttered by the same speaker. One example is given in (8a). The examples in (8b–c), on the other hand, show phrases where a functional suffix would be expected from a Norwegian point of view: *land* in (8b) is typically neuter in Norwegian, meaning that the adjective should be realized with the suffix *-t*, and (8c) is a definite phrase entailing a suffixed *-e* to the adjective.<sup>22</sup>

- (8) a. Det er ikke noen **small-e** farm-*er*  
It is not some small-w farm-INDF.SG  
'There are no small farms' (CANS; westby\_WI\_06gm)
- b. Det var **cheap** land her  
It was cheap land here  
'There was cheap land here' (CANS; glasgow\_MT\_01gm)
- c. my **eld-est** søster  
my old-SUP sister  
'my oldest sister' (CANS; vancouver\_WA\_01gm)

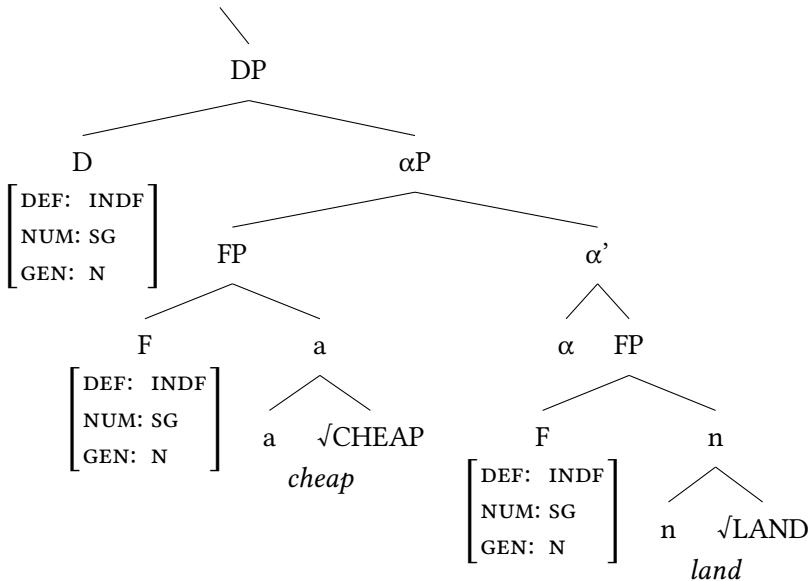
From a diachronic perspective, Riksem et al. (2021) find that this is not a recent phenomenon in present-day NAmNo as both Haugen (1953) and Hjelde (1992) describe a pattern where only a handful of English adjectives receive a Norwegian functional suffix. Hence, it is not the result of a diachronic change in NAmNo grammar. Instead, Riksem et al. (2021) propose an analysis whereby structural differences can account for this pattern. They argue that the agreement relation between, e.g., the functional features in D and in the lower functional heads in the DP is a direct one; they are all part of the extended projection of the DP. However, when the DP includes an attributive adjective, this is generated in a separate functional head in the specifier position of  $\alpha P$ , potentially like the structure in Figure 10. Notice that, for ease of exposition, the functional features in this structure are gathered in feature bundles in designated functional heads.

The functional features associated with the adjective do then not form a direct agreement relation with the functional features associated with the nominal. Riksem et al. (2021) instead argue that this agreement relation is an indirect one, which could potentially be more vulnerable, and that this might explain why so few adjectives occur with Norwegian functional suffixes.

We leave it up to future research to investigate the structure of adjectives in more detail. In the rest of the chapter, we turn our attention back to determiners and the functional suffix on the noun stem, and potential diachronic changes in the agreement patterns of NAmNo DPs.

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<sup>22</sup>The pronunciation of *land* in (8b) is clearly Norwegian [lan].


 Figure 10: Potential structural representation of (8b) *cheap land*

## 5 (Diachronic) change in the morphophonological realization of functional exponents

In this section, we will look at some different language mixing data from present-day NAmNo, more specifically cases where the functional exponent is either English or missing. In other words, they show patterns that diverge from the analysis of the typical mixing pattern discussed in Section 4.1 above. Based on these data, and by comparison with historical NAmNo (primarily Haugen 1953), we will discuss how agreement patterns and the morphological shape of inflectional suffixes may change over time. An interesting question is consequently the nature of such a change: Is it due to change in the exponents themselves, or the outcome of a structural reanalysis in the heritage language? In other words, this section deals with both our main interests in this chapter, as they concern both surface changes in the realization of agreement and a discussion of what this implies for the underlying structure of the DP.

The following discussion is largely based on the work by Riksem (2017). She investigates diachronic changes in agreement patterns in mixed DPs in NAmNo comparing historical NAmNo (primarily Haugen 1953) and present-day NAmNo in CANS, and presents potential analyses. Concerning gender, she also consults

Flom (1901, 1903) and Hjelde (1992) and finds that the distribution of gender assigned to English nouns has been relatively stable over time. About 70% of the English stems are assigned masculine gender, 10% or less are assigned feminine gender and assignment to neuter gender varies from 6 to 16%. Some English stems also appear with different genders. As there is no clear pattern of diachronic change in this category, Riksem (2017) does not discuss gender further, and in the following we will also continue focusing on number and definiteness.

The examples we discuss in the following are mostly taken from Riksem (2017). However, in certain cases we have supplemented the data with a few targeted searches in CANS. The most obvious supplements are examples from Haugen's recordings, which were made available in CANS (v. 3.1) in 2021. These examples are highlighted by including the year of the recording (1942) along with the speaker code in the following.

The DPs we discuss in the following subsections are either realized without an overt realization of functional features, or they are realized with English functional exponents. These data are especially interesting because they show a change in the phonological realization of agreement in NAmNo DPs, and they may also be tokens of changes in the abstract syntactic representations. As we will see, there might be various analyses of such data, and we will explore some potential analyses in Section 5.3. First, we discuss the observed diachronic changes concerning number in Section 5.1 and definiteness in Section 5.2.

## 5.1 Number

Among the present-day speakers in CANS, many of the plural DPs with an English noun are realized with an English functional suffix (-s) rather than a Norwegian suffix. According to Haugen (1953: 440), when English forms were used in NAmNo, they were *usually* provided with the appropriate Norwegian functional items, which we find in (9a–c).<sup>23</sup> Still, occasional usage of the English plural -s is observed by Haugen (1953: 450), as shown in (9d).

- (9) a. femti **bush**-er  
fifty bush-INDF.PL.M/F (CANS-1942; blair\_WI\_22um)
- b. noen **crop**-er  
some crop-INDF.PL.M/F (CANS-1942; ferryville\_WI\_04gm)
- c. store **jar**-∅  
big jar-INDF.PL.N (CANS-1942; blair\_WI\_34gm)

<sup>23</sup> Assuming that *jar*, in (9c), is assigned neuter gender, a null ending (∅) is expected in a Norwegian DP.

- d. **gamlе antique-s**

old antique-PL (CANS-1942; beaver\_creek\_WI\_01gk)

To account for this observation, Haugen (1953) separates the speakers into pre-bilingual borrowers and childhood bilinguals, and he argues that the former group of speakers take the *-s* to be part of the nominal stem, whereas the latter group of speakers may use the *-s* as a realization of plurality. All the 50 speakers investigated by Riksem (2017) are childhood bilinguals, and presumably they use the *-s* as an actual exponent for plurality. In fact, Riksem (2017) finds that the majority of indefinite plural phrases involving an English noun has the plural *-s*. Hence, we may assume that these speakers use the plural *-s* as a replacement for the Norwegian plural suffix. Among these data, most cases are indefinite, but there are also some definite phrases. Some examples are provided in (10).

- (10) a. **mange lawyer-s**  
many lawyer-PL (CANS; sunburg\_MN\_03gm)
- b. **andre tool-s**  
other tool-PL (CANS; sunburg\_MN\_03gm)
- c. **fem dialect-s**  
five dialect-PL (CANS; portland\_ND\_01gm)
- d. **alle disse minute-s**  
all these minute-PL (CANS; stillwater\_MN\_01gm)
- e. **de samme gene-s**  
the same gene-PL (CANS; flom\_MN\_02gm)

In a handful of examples, the plural *-s* is also used together with a Norwegian noun stem, (11). This amplifies the impression that the suffix is active, i.e., it is the realization of a plural feature, and not interpreted as part of the nominal stem.<sup>24</sup>

- (11) a. **innvandrer-s**  
immigrant-PL (CANS; flom\_MN\_01gm)
- b. **mil-s**  
mile-PL (CANS; sunburg\_MN\_03gm)
- c. **spise-plass-es**  
eat-place-PL  
'places to eat' (CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_01gk)

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<sup>24</sup>The stem *mil* in (11b) is pronounced in a distinct Norwegian way, [mi:l].

One speaker, in (12), clearly demonstrates how the plural *-s* should not be considered part of the stem, but acts as a functional exponent of plurality, as she uses the stem *bluebird* both with and without the *-s* in the same conversation:

- (12) a. Jeg trur det er en **bluebird** som sitter der nå  
I think it is a.M bluebird that sits there now  
b. Vi hadde familier av **bluebirds** dette året  
We had families of bluebirds this year  
(CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_01gk)

A different pattern found in the realization of plurality in NAmNo is plural DPs without a functional suffix at all. Some examples are given in (13).

- (13) a. fem seks hour\_  
five six hour (CANS; spring\_grove\_MN\_05gm)  
b. flere store\_  
several store (CANS; westby\_WI\_03gk)  
c. mange memorial\_  
many memorial (CANS; billings\_MT\_01gm)

Accompanying words like weak quantifiers tell us that these are plural phrases, but the lack of a functional suffix realizing plurality is an unexpected pattern both in Norwegian and English structures. This pattern is not discussed in Haugen (1953) and thus appears to be a change in the realization of agreement in present-day NAmNo.<sup>25</sup>

## 5.2 Definiteness

Also concerning definiteness some diachronic changes have been observed when comparing present-day NAmNo to Haugen (1953). According to Haugen (1953: 451), definiteness behaves as expected from a Norwegian perspective: The appropriate definite suffix is added when relevant, and in cases of double definiteness, a determiner is present as well. This is also the case in the typical mixing pattern in CANS as discussed in Section 4.1. above (see Riksem 2018a). Some examples of double definiteness in mixed phrases both from Haugen's 1942-recordings and present-day NAmNo are given in (14), and these phrases show the expected

<sup>25</sup>A few targeted searches in CANS using a weak quantifier (*mange* 'many', *flere* 'several', *noen* 'some') in combination with an English noun support this claim as the pattern in (13) is not found in Haugen's data.

### 3 Agreement in North American Norwegian determiner phrases

agreement between the determiner, the attributive adjective, and the functional suffix.<sup>26</sup>

- (14) a. den andre **crop-en**  
the second crop-DF.SG.M (CANS-1942; blair\_WI\_22um)
- b. denne **claim-en**  
this claim-DF.SG.M (CANS-1942; westby\_WI\_24gm)
- c. det **shanty-et**  
that shanty-DF.SG.N (CANS-1942; new\_auburn\_WI\_01um)
- d. disse **log-ene**  
these log-DF.PL.M (CANS-1942; viroqua\_WI\_04gm)
- e. den beste aure-**creek-en**  
the best brown trout creek-DF.SG.M  
'the best creek to fish brown trout' (CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm)
- f. dette gamle **stuff-et**  
this old stuff-DF.SG.N (CANS; blair\_WI\_07gm)

In parallel with the discussion of Number above, we find definite DPs where an expected Norwegian functional exponent is either lacking or replaced by an English one. In (15) we present some data where the expected definite suffix is missing.<sup>27</sup>

- (15) a. den **birdhouse\_**  
the.M/F birdhouse\_ (CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_12gm)
- b. denne **cheese\_**  
this.M/F cheese\_ (CANS; blair\_WI\_04gk)
- c. det **candy\_**  
the.N candy\_ (CANS; sunburg\_MN\_13gk)
- d. den andre **sister\_**  
the.M/F other sister\_ (CANS; saskatoon\_SK\_14gk)
- e. den **store building\_**  
the.M/F big building\_ (CANS; chicago\_IL\_01gk)
- f. det **gamle stuff\_**  
the.N old stuff\_ (CANS; chicago\_IL\_01gk)

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<sup>26</sup>According to the phonological transcription, the speaker in (14d) uses the suffix *-ane*, which is typically masculine, even though the orthographic transcription is *-ene*.

<sup>27</sup>Haugen's data typically include the definite suffix as described by Haugen (1953: 451). A couple of exceptions are nevertheless *det første year\_* 'the first year' (CANS-1942; chetek\_WI\_01gk) and *det norske course\_* 'the Norwegian course' (CANS-1942; iola\_WI\_09gm), in which a neuter definite suffix (*-et*) would be expected in both.

As mentioned in Section 3, van Baal (2020, 2025 [this volume]) discusses definiteness and double definiteness in detail and finds that even though double definiteness is still used in present-day NAmNo, it is used less than in historical NAmNo and in European Norwegian. Furthermore, she finds that many phrases where double definiteness is expected are either missing the prenominal determiner, the definite suffix or both. In most cases, the phrase contains the suffix but not the prenominal determiner, and van Baal (2020: 218) argues that this is the typical pattern for NAmNo modified definite phrases.<sup>28</sup> Among our mixed phrases, we also find cases where the functional suffix is realized, but no determiner, even though this would be expected from the context, (16). In this respect, the data presented in (15) are similar to the more English-like pattern having a prenominal determiner but no definite suffix.

- (16) a. beste plac[e]-en  
best place-DF.SG.M (CANS; spring\_grove\_MN\_05gm)
- b. norske family-en  
Norwegian family-DF.SG.M (CANS; flom\_MN\_02gm)
- c. første shower-en  
first shower-DF.SG.M (CANS; coon\_valley\_WI\_20gm)

However, we have not explored the frequency of these patterns and can thus not say whether one is more or less common than the other in mixed DPs. For our purposes, what is interesting about data like those in (15) and (16) is the missing overt realization of a suffix or a determiner that is expected if the underlying structure and its features are Norwegian.

Moreover, we also find mixed DPs where the Norwegian determiner has been replaced by the English *the*. This pattern is described by Haugen (1953: 451) as unacceptable in NAmNo, which suggests that this is a diachronic change in heritage Norwegian grammars.<sup>29</sup> At the same time it is important to note that there is substantial individual variation among the speakers in CANS, and these observed

<sup>28</sup>It is interesting that the speakers do not use the most English-like pattern with only a prenominal determiner in these phrases, due to the influence from English. Investigating the position of possessive pronouns, Anderssen et al. (2018) also find that most speakers use the pattern most different from English, in that case a postnominal possessive. They also find a correlation between the two patterns, roughly forming two groups: Speakers utilizing English-like patterns (no definite suffix in double definite phrases and a prenominal possessive) and speakers using the pattern most deviant from English (functional suffix in double definite phrases and a postnominal possessive).

<sup>29</sup>Also in this case, we do find a few exceptions in Haugen's recordings: *the gråsteinskirke* 'the grey stone church' (CANS-1942; spring\_grove\_MN\_19gm) and *the natt* 'the night' (CANS-1942; spring\_grove\_MN\_18um).

changes do not necessarily represent general and uniform diachronic changes (see also Anderssen et al. 2018).<sup>30</sup>

- (17) a. **the** by  
the city (CANS; chicago\_IL\_01gk)
- b. **the** ungdom  
the youth (CANS; harmony\_IL\_01gk)
- c. **the** gammalost  
the old-cheese  
'the mature cheese' (CANS; gary\_MN\_01gm)
- d. **the** land  
the land (CANS; gary\_MN\_01gm)

Notice that the examples in (17) also lack the Norwegian definite suffix, displaying a DP structure quite similar to English DPs. This could suggest that instead of an English item being mixed into a Norwegian structure, these cases are examples of Norwegian noun stems being mixed into an English structure. This could be a reasonable analysis. However, many of the DPs in question appear in utterances that are otherwise primarily Norwegian, as shown for some cases in (18).

- (18) a. Jeg husker ikke **the** by der vi stoppet  
I remember not the city there we stopped  
'I don't remember the city where we stopped'
- b. They bor er # **the** land som **the** indianer har  
They live are # the land that the Indians have  
'They live on the land that the Native Americans own'

Instead of an analysis where the structure of a sentence switches, so to say, from Norwegian to English and back to Norwegian for the sake of a single DP, we suggest that these unexpected patterns are indications of a change in the NAmNo grammar allowing an English functional exponent to be inserted.

Amplifying this suggestion are DPs exhibiting both an English determiner and a Norwegian definite suffix, (19). In these cases, double definiteness is retained, but the determiner is realized by an English exponent. We argue that these structures still have Art, where the definite suffix is generated, but the functional features of the determiner allow the insertion of an English functional exponent.

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<sup>30</sup>The pronunciation of *land* in (17d) is [lan] which is clearly Norwegian.

- (19) a. **the** gård-en  
the farm-DF.SG.M (CANS; gary\_MN\_01gm)
- b. **the** topp-en  
the top-DF.SG.M (CANS; gary\_MN\_01gm)
- c. **the** rest-en  
the rest-DF.SG.M (CANS; vancouver\_WA\_03uk)
- d. **the** katt-a  
the cat-DF.SG.F (CANS; saskatoon\_SK\_14gk)
- e. **the** samme tid-a  
the same time-DF.SG.F (CANS; westby\_WI\_10gk)

In the next section we discuss possible analyses of these changes.

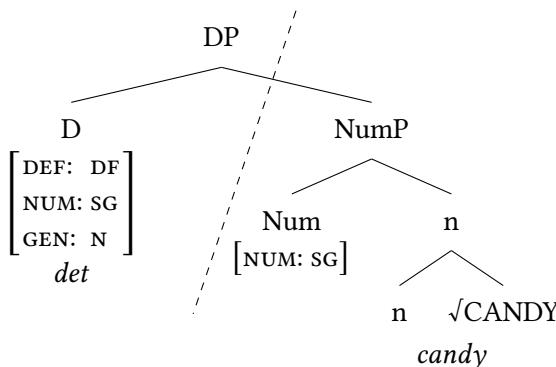
### 5.3 Analyzing the diachronic changes

In this section we consider some possible analyses of the data presented above that show signs of diachronic changes in the (overt) realizations of agreement. Subsequently, we also consider whether these data could be the manifestation of a more fundamental change in syntactic representation of agreement. The NAmNo data we have considered thus far may not be sufficient to draw strong conclusions, but they are nevertheless examples that may help illuminate potential changes in a heritage grammar. See also Lohndal (2021) for more discussion.

First, we will consider how the distributed gender analysis (cf. Åfarli et al. 2021) could be utilized in explaining some of the observed changes. In this analysis, chunks larger than the noun stem alone may be mixed into a Norwegian structure without compromising the realization of gender in higher positions. Since all functional heads in the DP are assumed to hold an unvalued gender feature, and that gender is assigned through gender translation, the value of the gender feature will be assigned in the lowest available position in a given phrase. Let us consider an example where the expected Norwegian functional suffix is not realized, like (15c) *det candy* ‘the.N candy’ (see Figure 11).

In this analysis, we would assume that not only the noun stem is mixed from English, but also Num, and since English does not have a functional exponent for singular, the phonological realization is *candy*. The D projection, on the other hand, may still be Norwegian, holding an unvalued gender feature which is valued based on the gender translation mechanism. In this case it is assigned neuter gender and spelled out by the determiner *det*.

Also the data in (10), where the English plural *-s* is used instead of a Norwegian exponent, could be analysed in this model. Then the mixed chunk would be


 Figure 11: Potential structural representation of (15c) *det candy*

parallel to the one in Figure 11, but as the number feature is plural, the exponent -s is inserted. A potential gender feature in the higher structure in such cases is nevertheless more difficult to validate due to syncretism in plural determiners and weak quantifiers.

However, encountering other types of diachronic change, like the usage of the plural -s with Norwegian noun stems, (11), and the English determiner *the*, (17) and (19), the distributed gender hypothesis alone is not able to account for the unexpected patterns. Instead, we might be facing some more overreaching questions concerning syntactic structures and their phonological realizations. In analyzing the observed diachronic changes, Riksem (2017) proposes two potential explanations: either the structure is intact, and the observed change is due to changes in the exponents, or the syntactic structure itself is undergoing change. In the final part of this chapter, we will present these two approaches and how they may account for the changes in the agreement patterns of the NAmNo DP.

Support for the first scenario, that the observed change is due to changes in the phonological exponents, is found in the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (Lardiere 2000, Prévost & White 2000). This hypothesis is motivated by research on second language acquisition, and put briefly it implies that the syntactic terminals and functional features may be retained even though overt morphology is missing. Due to factors like limited input, the speaker might not hold a full repertoire of functional exponents matching the possible conditions in the syntactic structure. Therefore, the speaker will rather avoid inserting a form than using the wrong form.

Such an analysis may explain some of the data discussed earlier in this section, in particular the data where the expected functional exponent is not realized; the

speakers might be avoiding using a functional exponent considering no insertion to be a better alternative than a wrongful insertion. By extension, also the usage of the English plural *-s* could be the outcome of such an avoidance strategy, where this plural suffix is considered an all-round alternative, avoiding the risk of inserting the wrong Norwegian suffix with respect to gender. However, Riksem (2017) goes on to problematize such an analysis, arguing that anything potentially could be explained as an avoidance strategy and that the analysis therefore lacks clear predictions as to what can and cannot be avoided.

The second analysis is that the abstract syntactic structure itself is, or has been, undergoing changes. This has been discussed in relation to other heritage grammars, e.g., heritage Russian (Polinsky 2011, 2016), heritage Spanish (Scontras et al. 2015) and heritage German (Yager et al. 2015). Due to factors like absence of consistent input, the availability of functional features in the syntactic structures may be changed, resulting in a structural reanalysis of the heritage grammar (Polinsky 2011, Putnam & Sánchez 2013). This will consequently complicate the insertion of phonological exponents potentially blocking functional exponents expected in the baseline or enabling the insertion of different functional exponents.

In the discussion of diachronic changes in NAmNo, Riksem (2017) argues in favor of such a structural reanalysis of the DP. More specifically she uses gender as a potential domain for such a change. If the gender feature in one or more syntactic terminal is diminishing, this would affect the exponents available for insertion, and an English exponent could be preferred over the Norwegian one. Take for instance the examples with the English determiner *the*. For this exponent to be inserted, at the expense of a Norwegian one, we assume that the gender feature in D must be weakened or erased from this terminal. Otherwise, the Norwegian alternatives would be more specified and therefore preferred for insertion. Thus, changes in the syntactic architecture may have clear consequences for the phonological realizations.

Importantly, the data from NAmNo do not show an abrupt change in the mixing patterns, but rather indication of an ongoing structural reanalysis. To illustrate this, we can consider the examples in (17) and (19) above with the English determiner *the*. Figure 12 shows a potential structural representation of (19a) *the gården* ‘the farm-DF.SG.M’, and Figure 13 shows a potential representation of (17a) *the by* ‘the city’.

Common for these structures is the D head, which only holds a definiteness feature, thus allowing the insertion of the determiner *the*. Considering the rest of the structures, Figure 12 may be considered an in-between stage where the gender feature is still present in the syntactic heads below D, and the presence

3 Agreement in North American Norwegian determiner phrases

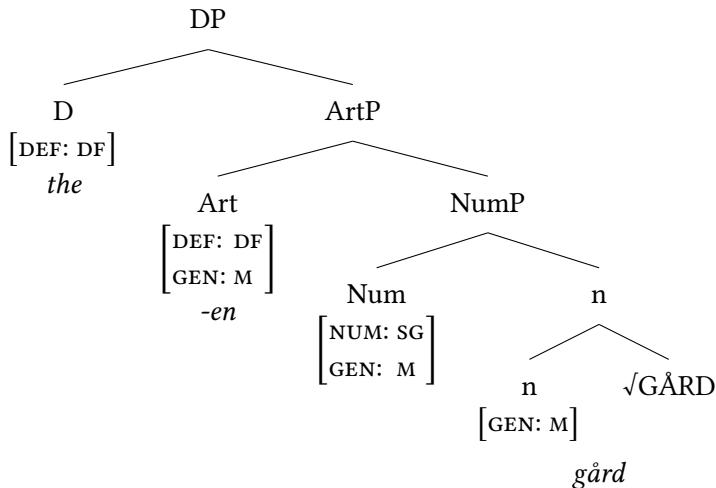


Figure 12: Potential structural representation of (19a) *the garden*

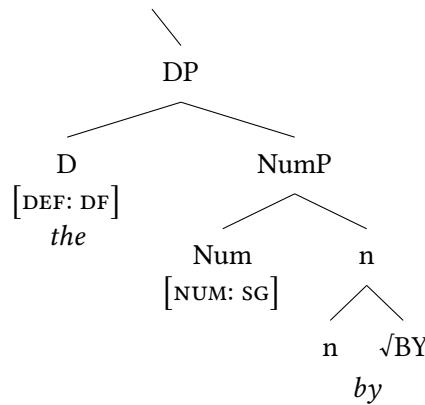


Figure 13: Potential structural representation of (17a) *the by*

of Art also ensures the realization of a definite suffix. The structure in Figure 13, would then represent a progression of this reanalysis, where the gender feature is not present at all in the DP, and the lack of the definite suffix may also indicate the absence of Art. If this is the case, Figure 13 also indicates a change that has progressed so far that the structural architecture now resembles the English DP structure, and consequently the Norwegian agreement patterns are no longer expected.

Before we conclude this chapter, it is nevertheless important to point out that the data discussed in this section are not very frequent. More data is therefore needed in order to further develop the analyses of such patterns.

## 6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have reviewed some of the main findings concerning agreement in NAmNo DPs. A large part of the chapter has been dedicated to language mixing as these data provide valuable windows into the details of syntactic structures. We set out with a twofold goal, namely to describe the attested patterns of agreement in the DPs, and also to describe the underlying syntactic structure of the DP. In this respect, studying agreement patterns in mixed NAmNo nominal structures is fruitful as it involves the contact between two grammars, Norwegian and English, with some important differences in the DP structure.

Analyses of the typical pattern of language mixing shows that English nouns may be inserted into Norwegian DP structures, where they are accompanied by Norwegian functional items varying according to gender, number, and definiteness. A late-insertion exoskeletal model is well-suited to account for these data by using the same constraints as for monolingual DPs. Hence, this theoretical model constitutes a Null Theory of language mixing. Studying language mixing data will thus not only give us insights into this specific outcome of bilingualism, but they may also inform our understanding of grammatical representations in general.

We have employed language mixing data to highlight two issues in particular: First, we use gender as a key feature in exploring the syntactic architecture of the DP. Showing how English items of varying size may be mixed into a Norwegian structure – and this structure is still marked for gender – is an argument in favor of gender being a feature of the abstract syntactic structure, and moreover that gender may be flexible as to where its lowest locus in the DP may be. In other words, it is distributed across the functional heads in the DP (Åfarli et al. 2021). Second, we have considered mixing data displaying a change in the morphophonological realizations as compared to the data presented and described

in Haugen (1953). We take these to be examples of an underlying (and ongoing) change in the agreement patterns of NAmNo DPs, resulting in data where the functional exponents are either missing or replaced by English alternatives. Also these data may be analysed in a late-insertion exoskeletal framework.

We have also pointed out some data for which the analysis is not conclusive. Some of these are possible objects for future research. However, since new empirical data from this group of speakers is becoming increasingly less available, some of the uncertainties may also remain empirical mysteries.

## Abbreviations

AP	Adjective Phrase	INDF	Indefinite
ArtP	Article Phrase	M	Masculine
$\alpha$ P	$\alpha$ Phrase (AP-related functional phrase)	N	Neuter
CANS	Corpus of American Nordic Speech	NAmNo	North American Norwegian
DEF	Definiteness	NUM	Number
DF	Definite	NumP	Number Phrase
DM	Distributed Morphology	PL	Plural
DP	Determiner Phrase	PP	Preposition Phrase
F	Feminine	SG	Singular
FP	Functional Phrase	SUP	Superlative
GEN	Gender	UGEN	Unvalued gender feature
		w	Weak adjectival inflection

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# Chapter 4

## Definiteness in determiner phrases in North American Norwegian

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This chapter provides an overview of definiteness marking in North American Norwegian (NAmNo), and compares present-day NAmNo to historical NAmNo and homeland Norwegian. Three types of definiteness marking are discussed: (i) indefinite determiners in singular indefinite phrases; (ii) the definite suffix in unmodified definite phrases; and (iii) double definiteness in modified definite phrases. Review of the available data and studies shows that present-day NAmNo is largely characterized by stability, although some aspects of the grammar are found to be more vulnerable to change. The first main conclusion of this chapter is that the syntax of definiteness is largely stable, while the morpho-phonological realization is less robust. This is in line with other findings in heritage languages. The second conclusion is that while indefinite determiners and definite suffixes are stable in present-day NAmNo, there has been an innovation in double definite phrases, where the prenominal determiner is often omitted. The chapter discusses theoretical implications of these findings, and discusses the factors that have made double definiteness especially vulnerable in NAmNo. At the end of the chapter, some venues for future research are identified.

### 1 Introduction

This chapter discusses definiteness marking in determiner phrases (DPs) in North American Norwegian (NAmNo). Definiteness is a semantic and pragmatic feature that is expressed morphosyntactically in Norwegian through the use of (in)definite morphemes. It is quite difficult to define “definiteness” precisely in terms of semantics and pragmatics (Lyons 1999: 253). I therefore use the



following, somewhat simplified, definitions. Indefinite phrases typically refer to an entity that is either not familiar to the listener or not previously mentioned in the discourse. Definite phrases, on the other hand, refer to entities that the listener is familiar with or can identify, either through context or because they have been mentioned in the discourse. In this chapter, I focus on the morphosyntactic expression of definiteness rather than its semantics or pragmatics. Three types of phrases are discussed: indefinite singular phrases (1a), unmodified definite phrases (1b), and modified definite phrases that contain double definiteness (1c). The chapter is generally restricted to referential nominal phrases containing common nouns.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. vi var på en kirke  
we were at INDF.SG church  
'we were at a church'  
(blair\_WI\_04gk, CANS)
- b. så de gikk på ski gjennom skog-en  
so they went on ski through forest-DEF.SG.M  
'so they skied through the forest'  
(coon\_valley\_WI\_04gm, CANS)
- c. i det norsk-e språk-et  
in DEF.SG.N Norwegian-DEF language-DEF.SG.N  
'in the Norwegian language'  
(westby\_WI\_09gm, CANS)

The goal of this chapter is to describe the morpho-syntax of definiteness in NAmNo, and to identify innovations from the baseline, if any. There have been several studies on definiteness marking, and especially double definiteness, in NAmNo and these will serve as the basis for this chapter. In addition, some new data from previous generations of speakers is presented. This chapter is based on studies that use corpus data from the Corpus of American Nordic Speech (CANS, Johannessen 2015b) as well as studies that use elicited production data. Despite

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<sup>1</sup>Proper nouns are not discussed in this chapter, but they are an interesting topic for future research. Certain dialects in Norwegian use so-called proprial articles, i.e., articles that combine with a proper name (see Johannessen & Garbacz 2014). Given the dialect background of most NAmNo speakers, we may expect to find proprial articles, such as *kjente du han M5?* 'did you know M5?' (coon\_valley\_WI\_03gm, where M5 represents the anonymized proper name). However, this has not been investigated systematically. See also Kinn & Larsson (2022) for a study of pronominal demonstratives in homeland and North American Scandinavian and its differences from proprial articles.

differences in methodology, these types of data are equally useful in studying definiteness: while corpus data come from a more naturalistic context, elicitation data allows for controlled semantic-pragmatic contexts and, in some cases, a larger data set. The type of data available depends on the type of noun phrase studied, but most phenomena in this chapter are illustrated with examples from the corpus and from elicited data. In addition to a speaker code, all NAmNo examples in this chapter are accompanied by the code “CANS-year” (for corpus data, where the year refers to the year of recording) or “elicitation” (for elicited speech).

In describing the definiteness marking in NAmNo, I also point out differences and similarities to homeland Norwegian and historical NAmNo. It is important to point out that this does not mean that homeland Norwegian is considered the target for NAmNo or that I use a deficiency-oriented approach. Instead, the comparison is purely descriptive. Heritage language grammars are consistent and complete grammars (Polinsky 2018: 25, 350), and comparing heritage languages to their homeland varieties allows us to investigate which aspects can change or vary in natural human language.

In this chapter, I follow the same core theoretical principles and concepts as discussed in the Introduction chapter by Kinn & Putnam (2025 [this volume]). I adopt an exoskeletal (non-lexical) approach to syntax (Borer 2005a,b, Lohndal 2014), compatible with Distributed Morphology, in which morphological processes apply after syntactic structures have been generated. The framework also maintains a separation between syntactic structures and their morpho-phonological realization. This means, for example, that I distinguish between the syntactic determiner projection (DP) and its possible realizations in Norwegian (*den*, *det*, *de*). In other words, I assume that syntax generates structures, which are then “sent off” to be realized phonologically through a process called Spell-Out. In this process, a syntactic structure is mapped onto its morphophonological realization, and this is argued to be processing or performance related (see Benmamoun 2021: 394, Lohndal 2021: 647, Putnam & Sánchez 2013). A difference between NAmNo and homeland Norwegian may either be located in Syntax, or at Spell-Out (the mapping). The main criteria I use to distinguish between them is systematicity. I take changes in Syntax to be systematic, whereas differences at Spell-Out are related to performance-factors and display much inter- and intra-speaker variation. When other performance-factors (such as length of the phrase, lexical access) play a role, I also consider this to be located at Spell-Out rather than at Syntax.

The chapter is structured as follows. In Section 2, I describe the baseline that present-day NAmNo is compared to. In this section, definiteness marking in

homeland Norwegian and in historical NAmNo is discussed and the three phrase types illustrated in (1) are described in more detail. In Section 3, I describe present-day NAmNo and the syntax of indefinite phrases (Section 3.1), definite phrases (Section 3.2), and double definiteness (Section 3.3). A brief summary of the differences and similarities between homeland Norwegian, historical NAmNo and present-day NAmNo is provided in Section 3.4. The theoretical implications of the findings are presented in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 concludes the chapter.

## 2 The baseline

In describing a heritage language, we typically compare it to a baseline. There have been several approaches to the baseline, and it has often been argued that monolingual homeland speakers should not be the baseline for heritage speakers (e.g., Polinsky 2018: 11–16). Instead, the baseline should consist of the input to heritage speakers, which is typically defined as the language of immigrant speakers. However, for NAmNo, with its long migration history, this approach is difficult: The present-day speakers are several generations removed from the homeland, all elderly, and their input has come from people who were heritage speakers themselves. On the one hand, this makes it all the more important to establish a “proper” baseline; yet on the other hand, this can only be done if data from previous generations are available.<sup>2</sup> For NAmNo, these data are available, as we will see in the next section, which makes it possible to use them in establishment of the baseline.

Still, in the present chapter, I start out by describing definiteness marking in homeland Norwegian, for several reasons. Firstly, homeland Norwegian has been studied in much more detail. In addition, homeland Norwegian has often been used as a baseline in previous studies on NAmNo. Generally, measures have been taken to optimize the baseline, e.g., by including (older) dialect data and not only the present-day standard forms of the homeland variety (for example, Johannessen & Larsson 2015). Finally, including homeland Norwegian allows for a three-way comparison, between the homeland, previous generations of NAmNo speakers, and today’s NAmNo speakers. As pointed out in Section 1, homeland Norwegian serves as a neutral point of comparison and not as a target for NAmNo.

In this section, I first describe definiteness marking in homeland Norwegian, with a focus on the three types of phrases central to this chapter: indefinite, defi-

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<sup>2</sup>This situation is not unique for NAmNo, as the same difficulties with establishing the baseline apply to other moribund heritage languages (Putnam et al. 2018, D’Alessandro et al. 2021).

nite, and double definite. Next, I discuss how these types of phrases are expressed in the data available from previous generations of NAmNo speakers. As we will see, historical NAmNo is similar to homeland Norwegian for the relevant aspects.

## 2.1 Homeland Norwegian

The description presented in this section is brief; for more details on Norwegian nominal phrases, see Faarlund et al. (1997) and Julien (2002, 2005). Here, I focus on three types of phrases: indefinite, definite, and double definite. After a brief description of definiteness marking in these phrases, I discuss their syntactic structure (expanding on the introduction in Kinn & Putnam 2025 [this volume]).

Singular indefinite phrases in Norwegian contain an indefinite determiner, while plural indefinites do not (they may be preceded by the plural determiner *noen* ‘some’). The indefinite determiner agrees with the noun for grammatical gender, illustrated in (2). Mass nouns like *melk* ‘milk’ and *kjøtt* ‘meat’ appear without the indefinite determiner. In addition, Norwegian has bare singulars: countable, singular, and indefinite phrases that occur without the determiner (see Borthen 2003). One context where bare singulars are found, are so-called classifying predicates which express that the subject belongs to a certain class or set. An example is given in (3a), while (3b) by contrast illustrates the use of an indefinite determiner in descriptive predicates.

- (2) en            bil, ei            bok, et            hus  
       INDF.SG.M car INDF.SG.F book INDF.SG.N house  
       ‘a car, a house, a book’ (M, F, N)
- (3) a. Ola er lærer  
       Ola is teacher  
       ‘Ola is a teacher’  
     b. Ola er en        god lærer  
       Ola is INDF.SG.M good teacher  
       ‘Ola is a good teacher’  
       (Kinn 2020: 6)

Like the other Scandinavian languages, Norwegian uses a definite suffix in definite phrases. These definite suffixes also inflect for grammatical gender, illustrated in (4).<sup>3</sup> Norwegian has both pre- and postnominal possessives; definite

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<sup>3</sup>It has been debated whether the definite suffix expresses gender, or rather declension class (see the overview in Lohndal & Westergaard 2021). For ease of exposition, I gloss the suffixes as inflected for masculine, feminine, or neuter gender.

nouns only occur in the latter. In some dialects of Norwegian, however, certain kinship terms appear in their bare form even with a postnominal possessive (see Kinn 2021 and references therein). Examples of possessive phrases with and without the definite suffix are given in (5).

- (4) bil-en,        bok-a,        hus-et  
car-DEF.SG.M book-DEF.SG.F house-DEF.SG.N  
'the car, the book, the house' (M, F, N)
- (5) a. sykkel-en        min  
bike-DEF.SG.M my.M  
'my bike' (suffix obligatory)
- b. mor        mi  
mother my.F  
'my mother' (kinship term, no suffix)  
(Kinn 2021: 2–3)

In definite phrases modified by an adjective or numeral, Norwegian displays double definiteness, sometimes also called compositional definiteness (Anderssen 2012). In these phrases, the definite suffix on the noun is accompanied by a prenominal (and pre-adjectival) definite determiner, as illustrated in (6).<sup>4</sup> The co-occurrence of these two definite morphemes has been central to many descriptions of Norwegian nominal syntax (Taraldsen 1990, Delsing 1993, Santelmann 1993, Kester 1993, 1996, Vangsnes 1999, Julien 2002, 2005, Anderssen 2006, 2012), and most current analyses take them to be located at different places in the syntactic tree. Recently, it has been argued that the determiner and the suffixed article each contribute to the definite meaning of modified definite phrases (Julien 2002, 2005, Anderssen 2006, 2012).

- (6) den        stor-e        bil-en  
DEF.SG large-DEF car-DEF.SG.M  
'the large car'

Although double definiteness is generally obligatory, there are several contexts in which either the prenominal determiner or the definite suffix may be omitted. An alternative to double definiteness is adjective incorporation, in which the adjective is incorporated into the definite noun and no prenominal

<sup>4</sup>In definite phrases like the one in (6), adjectives receive the so-called “weak” inflection (schwa, e.g., *stor-e*), irrespective of the gender and number of the noun. See Riksem & Nygård (2025 [this volume]) for more on adjectival agreement in NAmNo.

determiner is present. Adjective incorporation is productive in some dialects, most notably those spoken in Trøndelag (Central Norway), and it is also found in NAmNo, as we will see in Section 3.3. In addition, there is a set of adjectives which can appear without the prenominal determiner in definite phrases, exemplified in (7), but this is subject to much variation (see van Baal 2024a; see Dahl 2015: 124–125 for a discussion of these exceptions in Swedish).

- (7) a. (den) best-e plass-en  
DEF.SG best-DEF place-DEF.SG.M  
'the best place'
- b. (den) andre sid-a  
DEF.SG other side-DEF.SG.F  
'the other side'

The brief discussion above showed how definiteness in Norwegian is expressed with indefinite determiners, definite suffixes, and/or definite determiners. These different morphemes inflect for grammatical gender, and the definite morphemes also inflect for number. This is illustrated across the examples used above, and visible in the glosses. The focus of this chapter is definiteness marking rather than phrase-internal agreement; the latter is discussed in Riksem & Nygård (2025 [this volume]). In discussing NAmNo, my focus is therefore on the presence versus absence of the different definiteness morphemes, and less on the morphophonological shape they take as a result of inflection.

The Scandinavian languages display quite some variation in their nominal phrases, which has led to much work on the syntax of Scandinavian and Norwegian nominals (see references above). One of the most comprehensive and recent works is Julien (2005), and the syntactic structure she argues for is presented in Figure 1 (repeated from Kinn & Putnam 2025 [this volume] for convenience). Here, we can see the two projections for the definite suffix and the prenominal determiner, ArtP and DP, respectively. ArtP is the location where the definiteness feature (i.e., indefinite or definite) is merged. Between the noun and ArtP, there is NumP, which is the place where number features (i.e., singular or plural) are merged. In addition, there are  $\alpha$ P, which has adjectives in its specifier, and CardP, which has cardinal numbers and other weak quantifiers in its specifier. These two positions are argued to be present only when the phrase contains adjectives or numerals.

A central property of homeland Norwegian is that the DP-layer has to be phonologically realized, which means that either a determiner has to be located in D, or other material has to be moved to the Spec-DP position (Julien 2002,

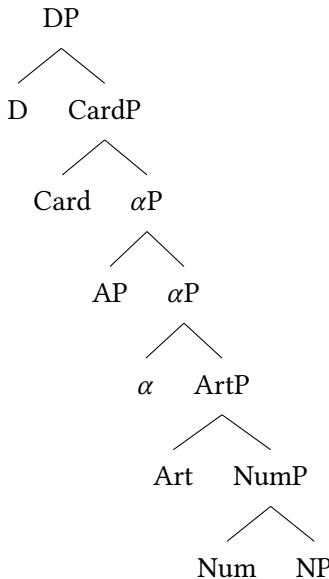


Figure 1: Nominal phrase, based on Julien (2002, 2005)

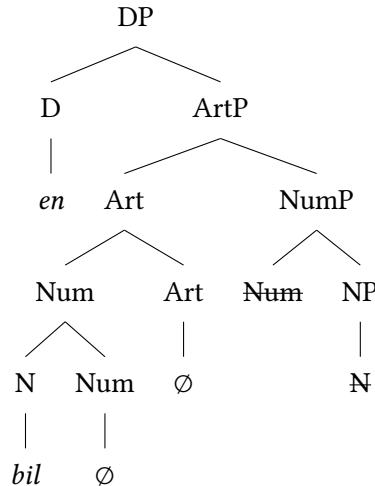


Figure 2: Syntactic structure of an indefinite singular phrase

2005).<sup>5</sup> This phonological realization happens differently in different phrase types. In all phrases, the noun moves up to merge with the Num-head, and then this complex head moves up to merge with the Art-head. The noun now contains features for grammatical gender, number, and definiteness. In indefinite phrases, the Art-head is not realized overtly (i.e., there is no morpheme spelling out an indefinite Art), and the Num-head is only realized if it contains a plural feature. In singular indefinite phrases, the indefinite determiner is located in D (after being moved there from Card), see the structure in Figure 2.

In definite phrases, the Art-head is realized as the definite suffix. In unmodified phrases, the whole ArtP is moved to Spec-DP (by phrasal movement), but in modified phrases, the presence of the adjective or cardinal number blocks this movement. Instead, ArtP stays *in situ* in these phrases, and D is spelled out as a prenominal determiner to fulfill the requirement that the DP-layer needs to be phonologically realized. Examples of unmodified and modified definite phrases are given in Figures 3 and 4, respectively. For ease of exposition, the internal structure of ArtP in Figure 4 is not provided, but it is identical to the one in Figure 3.

<sup>5</sup>The phonological realization of the D-projection is not necessary in phrases that are not referential or phrases that are inherently referential (i.e., contain a proper name). See Julien (2002, 2005) for details. Proper names may be preceded by a proprial article in D, cf. footnote 1.

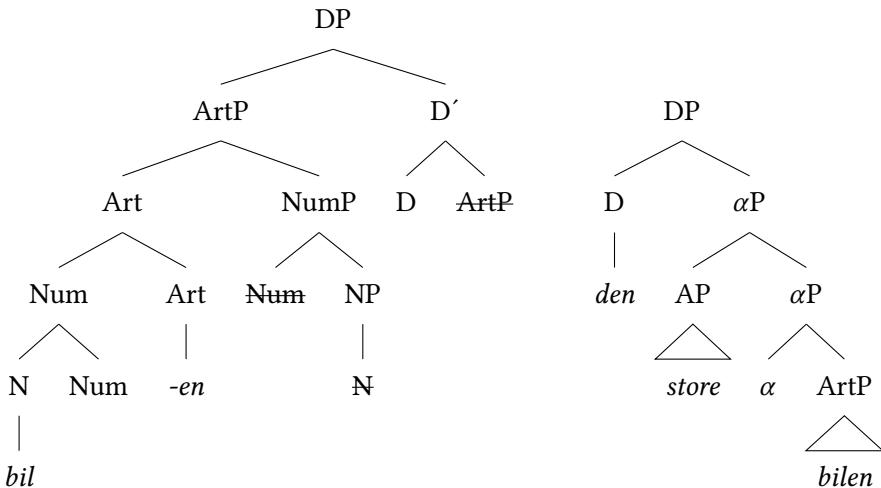


Figure 3: Syntactic structure of an unmodified definite phrase

Figure 4: Syntactic structure of a modified definite phrase, with double definiteness

## 2.2 Historical North American Norwegian

It has been argued that the ideal baseline for heritage language speakers consists of their input (Polinsky 2018: 11–16),<sup>6</sup> and this is also the approach taken in this chapter. In line with this view, definiteness marking in previous generations of NAmNo speakers is a better baseline than the homeland variety discussed above, but it is also much less studied. NAmNo has a long migration history, and present-day speakers are third- to fifth-generation immigrants. Because of their old age, it is not possible to study the language of their parents directly. However, there are recordings available of previous generations Norwegian Americans, and they can be used to establish a baseline. In addition, investigating historical NAmNo allows us to study trajectories of language change. If any differences between homeland Norwegian and all NAmNo (historical and present-day) are found, we know that the change happened early in NAmNo history, potentially shortly after arrival in the US.<sup>7</sup> If, on the other hand, we would find that present-day

<sup>6</sup>The choice for the optimal baseline also depends on the research question. See also Aalberse et al. (2019: chapter 6) on the use of a combination of multiple baselines.

<sup>7</sup>In this scenario, another possibility would be that homeland Norwegian has changed. For the cases at hand, however, there are no indications for this.

NAmNo differs from historical NAmNo, we know that this is a change in the current generation of speakers.

As described in Kinn & Putnam (2025 [this volume]), there are recordings in the Corpus of American Nordic Speech (CANS) from several points in time: the 1930s and 1940s, the 1980s–1990s, and the period 2010–2016. The latter are the present-day recordings and make up the largest portion of CANS. From the historical material, the recordings by Einar Haugen form the largest part (ca. 78,000 tokens of the 729,000 NAmNo tokens in CANS). These recordings resulted in the seminal two-volume work *The Norwegian Language in America* (Haugen 1953). The historical data in CANS became available relatively recently, and as a result, there are many formal aspects of historical NAmNo that have not been studied yet. Some exceptions are Kinn & Larsson (2022) on pronominal demonstratives, van Baal (2022) on double definiteness, and Lykke (2022) on verbal tense inflection. With respect to definiteness marking, only the use of double definiteness in historical NAmNo has been investigated. The data presented in this section on indefinite phrases and unmodified definite phrases are new and specifically collected for the present volume.

Since I focus on the presence versus absence of definiteness morphemes, the investigation of historical NAmNo in CANS involves quite some manual work to collect and analyse data. It is not possible to simply search for a morpheme (e.g., the indefinite determiner), because that would not provide cases where that morpheme is required but absent. In addition, the context is important to determine whether a phrase is (in)definite and whether or not a certain morpheme is expected. I took two measures in order to reduce the data set to a manageable size. First, I restricted the searches to the recordings from 1942 by Haugen (81 speakers and 76,147 tokens). In addition, I did not simply search for all nouns but restricted my searches to three contexts: (i) right after subjunctions,<sup>8</sup> (ii) the phrase before finite verbs, and (iii) the place after finite verbs. These are typical surface positions of subjects and objects, and hence places where we expect to find nominal phrases with overt (in)definite morphemes (e.g., Longobardi 1994).<sup>9</sup> After manual checking and exclusion of irrelevant cases, these searches resulted in a total of 1310 nominal phrases. Here, I focus on the singular indefinite phrases and unmodified definite phrases in this set.

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<sup>8</sup>In case of the subjunction *som* ‘who, that’, nominal phrases also occur right before the subjunction, viz. the correlates of the relative clause. These are also included in the data, although these are not restricted to subjects or direct objects (cf. footnote 9).

<sup>9</sup>Nominal phrases do not only function as subjects or objects. They can also be found in prepositional phrases, but those contexts are not included in the searches for the present investigation.

The data set contains 105 singular indefinite phrases and the vast majority of them contains the indefinite determiner as expected, as in (8a,b). However, there are 6 cases (5.71%) that do not contain a determiner while this would be expected. One example is given in (8c). There are many more bare phrases in the examined data (a total of 267), but these are all contexts where a bare noun would be expected in homeland Norwegian, for example because they are mass nouns (8d). Given the fact that most bare phrases are homeland-like and that omission of the indefinite determiner is very uncommon, I conclude that historical NAmNo is the same as homeland Norwegian with respect to indefinite singular phrases: the determiner is obligatory, and is located in D.

- (8) a. han hadde en bror som fikk gård-en  
he had INDF.SG.M brother who got farm-DEF.SG.M  
'he had a brother who got the farm' (viroqua\_WI\_04gm, CANS-1942)
- b. så organiserte de en luthersk menighet  
then organized they INDF.SG.M Lutheran congregation  
'then they organized a Lutheran congregation' (gays\_mills\_WI\_01gm, CANS-1942)
- c. og gammel lampe # har jeg  
and old lamp # have I  
'and I have an old lamp' (beaver\_creek\_WI\_01gk, CANS-1942)  
homeland: *ei gammel lampe*
- d. jeg vil ha brød  
I want have bread  
'I want bread' (blair\_WI\_28um, CANS-1942)

In the indefinite phrases, there are three cases where the indefinite determiner is present, but would not have been used in homeland Norwegian, as in (9a). These are classifying predicates, which are generally bare in Norwegian (see Kinn 2020). It has to be noted that there are also examples where the determiner is absent (as would be expected) in historical NAmNo, such as (9b).<sup>10</sup> Kinn (2020) notes that some present-day speakers of NAmNo sometimes “overuse” the determiner in these contexts, but this is not frequent and most speakers use bare phrases in classifying predicates. The fact that there are only three examples in

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<sup>10</sup>Mørland (2021) specifically investigated predicative constructions in historical NAmNo (recordings from 1935, 1936 and 1942). Although the data set is relatively small, she also finds some cases of indefinite determiners where bare nouns would be expected (including (9a)). However, use of the homeland-like bare predicative (as in (9b)) is more frequent.

the data set I examined suggests that this is not frequent, and since present-day NAmNo typically still uses bare phrases, I conclude that there is no systematic change in historical NAmNo in this respect.

- (9) a. far min var en snekker  
father my.M was INDEF.SG.M carpenter  
'my father was a carpenter' (spring\_grove\_MN\_22um, CANS-1942)  
homeland: *var snekker*
- b. M2 er prest  
M2 is priest  
'M2 is a priest' (blair\_WI\_19um, CANS-1942)

As for definite phrases, these do not differ from homeland Norwegian described in Section 2.1 above. In all cases, singular and plural definite phrases contain the definite suffix. Some examples are given in (10). These are all pragmatically or semantically definite. There are, in other words, no cases of "overuse" of the definite suffix in non-definite contexts. I found only 1 potential case of a definite phrase that lacks the suffix (out of 346 phrases, 0.29%). This phrase is given in (11a). It contains a post-nominal possessive and should therefore have the definite suffix. When listening to this phrase, however, it is difficult to tell if the suffix /e/ is present, so it is unclear if this actually is a bare phrase. There is, in other words, no evidence that the definite suffix is vulnerable in historical NAmNo. Only kinship terms can occur in their bare form with postnominal possessives, and they frequently do in historical NAmNo, as in (11b) (and also in (9a) above).

- (10) a. skulle gi hest-ene e mat  
should give horse-DEF.PL e food  
'(we) should give the horses food'  
(spring\_grove\_MN\_32gm, CANS-1942)
- b. når tobakk-en er blitt større  
when tobacco-DEF.SG.M is become bigger  
'when the tobacco has grown bigger'  
(ferryville\_WI\_02gm, CANS-1942)
- c. bygd-a ho var pen<sup>11</sup>  
village-DEF.SG.F she was nice  
'the village was nice'  
(coon\_valley\_WI\_45gk, CANS-1942)

- (11) a. så var navn hans M2  
           so was name his M2  
           ‘so his name was M2’ (blair\_WI\_31gm, CANS-1942)  
           homeland: *navn-et hans*
- b. far min var født i Norge  
       father my.M was born in Norway  
       ‘my father was born in Norway’ (chetek\_WI\_01gk, CANS-1942)

The analyzed data from 1942 in CANS contains two cases where indefinite and definite morphemes co-occur, as in (12). In both cases, the semantics seem to indicate an indefinite phrase, but I chose to translate the phrase as ‘a/the’ to indicate the conflicting definiteness marking. This is not possible in homeland Norwegian and therefore surprising. It is however also very infrequent (2 times in 1310 analyzed nominal phrases, or 0.15%), in fact, almost non-existent. The discussion above also indicates that the NAmNo speakers recorded in 1942 only use indefinite and definite morphemes in pragmatically acceptable contexts. I therefore consider these two instances production errors, rather than that they indicate that historical NAmNo allowed for phrases with both an indefinite determiner and a suffixed article.

- (12) en jule-dag-en  
       INDF.SG.M Christmas-day-DEF.SG.M  
       ‘a/the Christmas day’ (spring\_grove\_MN\_19gm, CANS-1942)  
       homeland: *en juledag* or *juledag-en*

Modified definite phrases have been investigated in historical NAmNo before: van Baal (2022) examined the use of double definiteness in version 3.0 of CANS.<sup>12</sup> The study included data from 1942 (Haugen’s recordings) and 1987–1992 (Hjelde’s recordings). The data set contained a total of 139 modified definite phrases and the results indicate that double definiteness was used in an almost-homeland-like manner. A large majority of the modified definite phrases contains double definiteness, as in (13). However, there is also a small number of phrases without

<sup>11</sup>A literal translation of the example would be “the village she was nice”. The anaphoric pronoun *ho* ‘she’ agrees with the noun in grammatical gender (feminine) in Norwegian, unlike in English, where the pronoun *she* almost exclusively refers to female (human) referents. See Rødvand (2017) and Johannessen & Larsson (2018) for studies on the grammatical gender on anaphoric pronouns in present-day NAmNo.

<sup>12</sup>The most recent version of CANS is v3.1, which was used for the investigation of historical NAmNo in the present chapter. The version that van Baal (2022) used contains fewer recordings from 1942 and none from 1935 and 1936.

double definiteness, which could be indicative of the start of a language change. In the phrases without double definiteness, there are phrases with only the definite suffix, phrases with only the prenominal determiner, and phrases with neither definite morpheme. These non-homeland-like patterns are roughly equally (in)frequent, and the typical modified definite phrase still contains double definiteness. The data from 1942 and 1987–1992 also contain many modified definite phrases that do not require double definiteness (similar to the examples in (7) above), and van Baal (2022) argues that this may make the determiner vulnerable for loss. I come back to this point in Section 4.

- (13) a. den stor-e båt-en skulle ta oss over Atlanterhavet  
DEF.SG large-DEF boat-DEF.SG.M would take us over Atlantic.Ocean  
'the large boat was going to take us over the Atlantic Ocean'  
(blair\_WI\_34gm, CANS-1942)
- b. på den engelsk-e skol-en  
on DEF.SG English-DEF school-DEF.SG.M  
'at the English school'  
(westby\_WI\_22gm, CANS-1942)

Taken together, the data presented in this section show that historical NAmNo is highly similar to homeland Norwegian as discussed in Section 2.1 above. Indefinite singular phrases contain an indefinite determiner, and unmodified definite phrases contain the definite suffix. For both types of phrases, there are exceptions where the noun is typically bare, but these exceptions exist in both homeland Norwegian and historical NAmNo. Modified definite phrases in historical NAmNo have co-occurrence of the prenominal determiner and definite suffix, as in homeland Norwegian, but there is a small number of phrases without double definiteness that may be indicative of the start of a change. There are no systematic differences in the use of indefinite determiners, definite suffixes, and double definiteness, and I therefore assume that nominal phrases in homeland Norwegian and historical NAmNo have the same syntactic structure. In the next section, we turn to definiteness in present-day NAmNo and compare this to the baseline we have just established.

### **3 Definiteness in present-day North American Norwegian**

This section presents the use of definiteness marking in present-day NAmNo and the syntax of indefinite phrases, definite phrases, and double definite phrases.

The description is based partially on elicited production data collected by myself, and partially on corpus data described by others. The elicitation data has been collected from 20 present-day NAmNo speakers in 2016, and consisted of translation and picture-aided elicitation. Details about the used methods can be found in van Baal (2020: chapter 4).

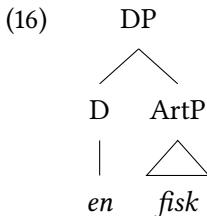
### 3.1 The indefinite determiner

In the elicited data from present-day NAmNo, singular indefinite phrases contain an indefinite determiner, just like in the baseline described above. Some examples are given in (14). Indefinite phrases have not been studied systematically with corpus data, but some examples from CANS are provided in (15).

- (14)    a. en                fisk  
            INDF.SG.M fish  
            ‘a fish’ (flom\_MN\_01gm, elicitation)
  - b. et                tre  
            INDF.SG.N tree  
            ‘a tree’ (sunburg\_MN\_12gk, elicitation)
  - c. en                grønn bil  
            INDF.SG.M green car  
            ‘a green car’ (fargo\_ND\_01gm, elicitation)
  - d. ei                gul     klokke  
            INDF.SG.F yellow clock  
            ‘a yellow clock’ (westby\_WI\_06gm, elicitation)
- (15)    a. et                ord  
            INDF.SG.N word  
            ‘a word’ (billings\_MN\_01gm, CANS-2012)
  - b. ei                stor pakke  
            INDF.SG.F large package  
            ‘a large package’ (albert\_lea\_MN\_01gk, CANS-2010)
  - c. en                vakker tur  
            INDF.SG.M beautiful trip  
            ‘a beautiful trip’ (willmar\_MN\_01gm, CANS-2015)

The examples illustrate two relevant observations from the data on indefinite phrases: the indefinite determiner is present in both unmodified and modified

phrases, and it occurs on the left-edge of the phrase. The patterns in the elicited data indicate no change from historical NAmNo. Johannessen (2015a: 57) investigates the spontaneous speech of a single NAmNo speaker, “Daisy”, and observes that she occasionally omits the indefinite determiner. However, this is not frequent, and it is also argued that Daisy is an atypical NAmNo speaker whose language is affected by attrition. It is therefore not possible to generalize Johannessen’s findings on Daisy to all present-day speakers. There are no other descriptions of the presence of the indefinite determiner based on corpus data that indicate a change from the baseline. I therefore conclude that indefinite determiners are used in a stable way in present-day NAmNo, and that there is no need to assume a different syntactic structure. In other words, the indefinite determiner in NAmNo occurs in the D-head and there is no overt realization of the indefinite Art-head, as in (16) (cf. Figure 2).



Although the indefinite determiner is typically present in the NAmNo data, there are two contexts where van Baal (2020) finds phrases that lack the determiner unexpectedly (see also van Baal 2024b). First, one of the elicitation tasks sometimes led speakers to produce noun phrases in isolation and in those cases, the determiner was more frequently omitted than in cases where the phrase was part of a sentence. Potentially, there is no full DP present when nouns are produced in isolation. Additionally, phrases without the determiner often occurred if the speakers paused or hesitated while trying to find the noun. In such instances, difficulty with lexical retrieval likely caused the determiner omission, therefore I do not analyze it as a change in syntactic structure.

In the baseline, D agrees with the noun for definiteness, gender, and number, and indefinite determiners have separate forms for masculine, feminine, and neuter gender. Although the current chapter is not primarily concerned with agreement within the DP, it is worth noticing that the indefinite determiner sometimes has a non-baseline-like morpho-phonological form. This is described in detail in Johannessen & Larsson (2015), Lohndal & Westergaard (2016) and Rødvand (2017) and also present in my data. Typically, masculine indefinite determiners occur with feminine or neuter nouns in these cases, as in (17).

- (17) a. en       blå glass  
           INDEF.SG.M blue glass  
           ‘a blue glass’ (fargo\_ND\_01gm, elicitation)  
           baseline: *et blått glass*
- b. en       hvit høne  
           INDEF.SG.M white chicken  
           ‘a white chicken’ (sunburg\_MN\_11gk, elicitation)  
           baseline: *ei hvit høne*<sup>13</sup>

As noted at the start of this chapter, I adhere to a framework where syntactic structures are separated from their morpho-phonological realization. The fact that the indefinite determiners are not always spelled out in the same form as in the baseline is therefore no reason to assume a different syntactic structure. In addition, there is a lot of individual variation with respect to the forms of the indefinite determiners, and examples like (17) are more frequent in modified, longer phrases than in simplex phrases with only a noun (van Baal 2024b). I therefore treat these instances as the result of a process at Spell-Out (or the interface between Syntax and Spell-Out), not as the result of a change in syntax.

In homeland Norwegian, the indefinite determiner does not occur in classifying predicates (see Section 2.1). Kinn (2020) has investigated predicate constructions in present-day NAmNo and finds that bare nouns are used in a stable way in these constructions, as in (18a). This is despite the fact that English uses an indefinite determiner in this context (as in the translations of the examples). However, Kinn (2020) also finds that a small subgroup of the speakers occasionally uses a determiner in a classifying predicate, as in (18b). She argues however that the syntax of classifying predicates is unchanged in present-day NAmNo. Kinn did not investigate the older NAmNo recordings (these were not available in CANS yet). In Section 2.2, we saw an example of a predicate construction with an indefinite determiner, similar to (18b), but I did not search systematically for classifying predicates. The results from Mørland (2021) suggest that such phrases are not frequent in historical NAmNo. It seems most likely that the occasional use of “English-like” constructions with a determiner is caused by performance related factors, as argued by Kinn (2020).

<sup>13</sup>In homeland Norwegian, the feminine gender is unstable. In written Bokmål, the (traditionally) masculine determiner can function as a common gender determiner, and be combined with masculine and feminine nouns. The same is true in several spoken dialects at present. However, the Eastern Norwegian dialects spoken by those who immigrated to the US (i.e., the ancestors of the present-day speakers) had a three-gender system, which is therefore part of the baseline (see Rødvand 2017).

- (18) a. hun var sykepleierske  
she was nurse  
'she was a (female) nurse' (fлом\_MN\_02gm)  
(Kinn 2020: 9)
- b. han var en sjømann  
he was INDF.SG.M sailor  
'he was a sailor' (stillwater\_MN\_01gm)  
(Kinn 2020: 9)

Summarizing, the available data on present-day NAmNo shows that singular indefinite phrases contain the indefinite determiner, identical to homeland Norwegian and historical NAmNo. Present-day NAmNo also uses bare phrases in classifying predicates in a stable way. Therefore, we can conclude that the three varieties have the same syntax, where the indefinite determiner occurs in D. In some cases, the morpho-phonological realization of the determiner is different, and the determiner is occasionally present in predicates, but this can be considered to be related to syntax-external processes.

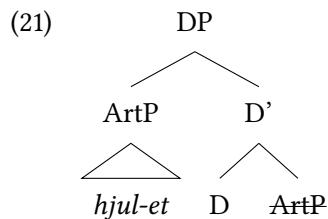
### 3.2 The definite suffix

In this section, we take a look at unmodified definite phrases. In the elicited production data from van Baal (2020), the presence of the definite suffix is very stable in these phrases. It is used even more consistently than the indefinite determiner. Some examples of phrases with the definite suffix are given in (19), and some examples from CANS are provided in (20). Although there is no systematic study of the definite suffix in CANS, there is no reason to assume it would differ substantially from the elicited production data.

- (19) a. hjul-et  
wheel-DEF.SG.N  
'the wheel' (fargo\_ND\_08gm, elicitation)
- b. bok-a  
book-DEF.SG.F  
'the book' (ulen\_MN\_01gm, elicitation)
- c. hest-ene  
horse-DEF.PL  
'the horses' (coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm, elicitation)

- d. sleigh-en  
 sleigh-DEF.SG.M  
 ‘the sleigh’ (fargo\_ND\_08gm, elicitation)
- (20) a. stol-en  
 chair-DEF.SG.M  
 ‘the chair’ (hatton\_ND\_03gm, CANS-2010)
- b. land-et  
 land-DEF.SG.N  
 ‘the land’ (westby\_WI\_02gm, CANS-2010)

The suffix is used in a stable manner and it is productive. This can be seen in the fact that the suffix is only used in definite phrases,<sup>14</sup> and that it combines with words from English origin. One example is given in (19d) above, but see Riksem & Nygård (2025 [this volume]) and references therein for more on language mixing in NAmNo. There are no differences in the use of the definite suffix in present-day NAmNo and historical NAmNo or homeland Norwegian. Therefore, I assume the same syntax for definite phrases in these varieties: the definite suffix is located in the Art-head, and the whole ArtP moves to Spec-DP, as in (21) (cf. Figure 3 above).



The definite suffix is inflected for gender and number. With respect to gender, the data contain sporadic cases where the definite suffix occurs in an unexpected form. This is however very infrequent, and also less frequent than for indefinite determiners, as Johannessen & Larsson (2015) and Lohndal & Westergaard (2016) also note based on corpus data. For number marking, there are some cases where the noun occurs with an indefinite plural suffix while the context is clearly definite. This leads to a unified plural (as in English and other North Sea Germanic

<sup>14</sup>There are a few scattered occurrences of definite phrases in indefinite contexts in the picture-aided elicitation task, but only when nouns were mentioned in isolation and not when they were part of sentences (see van Baal 2020: 119). They are so infrequent that I think it is justified to argue that NAmNo uses the definite suffix only in definite phrases.

varieties) where there is no distinction between indefinite and definite plural forms. An example is given in (22a), where the speaker describes which of the previously mentioned pictures disappears. In other words, the context is definite, while the suffix is indefinite plural. One speaker tends to realize the definite feature with an English determiner, illustrated in (22b), but this is highly atypical for the group of present-day NAmNo speakers. There is considerable variation in the use of the definite plural suffix, and the majority of phrases contains the definite plural suffix. In modified phrases (see Section 3.3 below), the unified plural is more frequent, which suggests that performance-related factors play a role. In isolation, the features [definite] and [plural] are very stable in NAmNo, and I therefore argue that their syntactic projections (Art and Num, respectively) are also stable. However, the feature bundle seems more vulnerable for changes at Spell-Out, and as a result, the bundle is sometimes realized as an indefinite plural suffix. It is worth noting that such phrases are occasionally found in historical NAmNo as well, though in demonstrative or double definite phrases, as in (23).

- (22) a. sau-er  
sheep-INDEF.PL  
intended: ‘the sheep’ (fargo\_ND\_09gm, elicitation)  
baseline: *sau-ene*
- b. the gutt-er  
the boy-INDEF.PL  
‘the boys’ (hendricks\_MN\_07gk, elicitation)  
baseline: *gutt-ene*
- (23) disse amerikanske gutt-er  
DEM.PL American boy-INDEF.PL  
‘these American boys’ (viroqua\_WI\_04gm, CANS-1942)  
baseline: *disse amerikanske gutt-ene*

A particular context where definite suffixes are used in Norwegian is with post-nominal possessives, while prenominal possessives occur with bare nouns. However, certain kinship nouns can occur in their bare form even with post-nominal possessives. In present-day homeland Norwegian, this is becoming less frequent, especially in urban areas (Kinn 2021: 26–27). However, in present-day NAmNo, the bare kinship nouns are still frequently used. See Kinn (2021) and Kinn (2025 [this volume]) for examples and discussion. It is important to note, however, that non-kinship nouns occur with the definite suffix as in the baseline. This adds to the observed stability of the definite suffix in present-day NAmNo (van Baal 2020, 2024b).

### 3.3 Double definiteness in modified phrases

The previous section discussed unmodified phrases, and we saw that the definite suffix is very stable in NAmNo. In this section, we take a look at modified definite phrases, which require double definiteness (the co-occurrence of the definite suffix and a prenominal determiner). Double definiteness has been studied in corpus data (Anderssen et al. 2018) as well as with elicitation data (van Baal 2020, 2024b). In both types of data, phrases with double definiteness can be found. Some examples are given in (24). In addition, there are phrases with adjective incorporation without a prenominal determiner. In these phrases, which are also found in certain dialects of homeland Norwegian, the adjective is incorporated into the definite noun. An example is given in (25).

- (24) a. det stor-e hus-et  
           DEF.SG.N big-DEF house-DEF.SG.N  
       ‘the big house’ (blair\_WI\_04gk)  
       (Anderssen et al. 2018: 755)
- b. den gaml-e maskin-en  
           DEF.SG old-DEF machine-DEF.SG.M  
       ‘the old machine’ (fargo\_ND\_01gm, CANS-2012)
- c. den hvite hest-en  
           DEF.SG white horse-DEF.SG.M  
       ‘the white horse’ (westby\_WI\_01gm, elicitation)
- d. de grønne epl-ene  
           DEF.PL green apple-DEF.PL  
       ‘the green apples’ (iola\_WI\_05gm, elicitation)
- (25) grønn-epl-et  
       green-apple-DEF.SG.N  
       ‘the green apple’ (flom\_MN\_01gm, elicitation)

Although double definiteness is still used in present-day NAmNo, it is used much less frequently than in historical NAmNo and homeland Norwegian. In the investigated corpus data and the elicited data, many modified definite phrases that require double definiteness do not have it.<sup>15</sup> There are three types of phrases without double definiteness: phrases without the prenominal determiner (26),

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<sup>15</sup>There is a set of adjectives that do not require double definiteness, see Section 2.1. The elicited data do not contain phrases like this. In the data from CANS (Anderssen et al. 2018) they are however rather frequent.

phrases without the definite suffix (27), and phrases with neither suffix or determiner (28). The final type is not reported by Anderssen et al. (2018), but that could be the result of how the corpus was searched (van Baal 2022 finds bare definite phrases in the historical NAmNo data).

- (26) a. varm-e kjøkken-et  
warm-DEF kitchen-DEF.SG.N  
'the warm kitchen' (iola\_WI\_05gm, elicitation)  
baseline: *det varme kjøkkenet*
  - b. gul-e konvoltt-en  
yellow-DEF envelope-DEF.SG.M  
'the yellow envelope' (coon\_valley\_WI\_10gm, elicitation)  
baseline: *den gule konvolletten*
  - c. stor-e skei-a  
big-DEF spoon-DEF.SG.F  
'the big spoon' (sunburg\_MN\_09gm, elicitation)  
baseline: *den store skeia*
- (27) a. den stor-e wheel  
DEF.SG large-DEF wheel  
'the large wheel' (sunburg\_MN\_11gk, elicitation)  
baseline: *den store wheel-en*<sup>16</sup>
  - b. den andre bror  
DEF.SG other brother  
'the other brother' (harmony\_MN\_01gk)  
baseline: *den andre bror-en* (Anderssen et al. 2018: 755)
  - c. den hvit-e e # geit  
DEF.SG white-DEF eh # goat  
'the white eh goat' (sunburg\_MN\_12gk, elicitation)  
baseline: *den hvite geit-a*
- (28) grønn-e bil  
green-DEF car  
intended: 'the green car' (sunburg\_MN\_06gm, elicitation)  
baseline: *den grønne bil-en*

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<sup>16</sup>The homeland Norwegian word for 'wheel' is *hjul* and one might argue that the use of the English noun has led to omission of the suffix. However, it is actually very common in NAmNo to combine English nouns with Norwegian grammatical morphemes, including the definite suffix. An example was given in (19d) above, and see Riksem (2018) and Riksem & Nygård (2025 [this volume]).

Van Baal (2020, 2024b) argues that the typical modified definite phrase in present-day NAmNo contains only the suffixed article and not the prenominal determiner, as in (26). There are several arguments for this: first, phrases without the determiner are very frequent, on the group-level as well as the individual level. All speakers in van Baal (2020) produce these phrases, and most speakers in Anderssen et al. (2018) do so as well.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the omission of the determiner is more systematic than omission of the suffix. The suffix is thus not only stable in unmodified phrases (Section 3.2), but also in modified phrases. There are speakers who only omit the determiner, but there are no speakers in van Baal (2020) who only omit the suffix. Most speakers never omit the suffix or do so less than that they omit the determiner. The omission of the suffix is more frequent in plural phrases, where sometimes the indefinite plural is used. We have already seen in Section 3.2 that this can be analyzed as a vulnerability of the feature bundle [DEF, PL] at Spell-Out. The fact that this is more common in modified (hence longer and more complex) phrases indicates that this is performance-related, and that the suffix is otherwise very stable.

Finally, omission of the suffix has been found to correlate with the general proficiency of the speaker. Anderssen et al. (2018) use marking of grammatical gender as a cue for proficiency, while van Baal (2020) uses speech rate and a vocabulary test to measure proficiency. Both find that there is a correlation between suffix omission and proficiency: speakers with a lower proficiency produce more modified definite phrases without the suffix. This is another indication that suffix omission has not become a standard part of NAmNo, but is instead restricted to performance-related issues.

The typical present-day NAmNo modified definite phrase thus only contains the definite suffix, but no prenominal determiner. This is an innovation from the baseline: in homeland Norwegian, and in historical NAmNo, double definiteness is highly stable. As was mentioned in Section 2.2, the start of a change may be observed in historical NAmNo, but double definiteness is generally used with high frequency in these speakers (van Baal 2022). This contrasts with the present-day speakers. It is interesting to note that this innovative pattern is not like English, the dominant language of the speakers. This is also noted by Anderssen et al. (2018), who show that there is a correlation between double definiteness and possessives: speakers who tend to omit the determiner use many postnominal possessives, while speakers who more frequently omit the suffix use many

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<sup>17</sup>Since modified definite phrases are not frequent in spontaneous speech (Dahl 2015: 121), there are speakers in Anderssen et al. (2018) who produce very few phrases in general and some of them produce no phrases without the determiner. An advantage of elicitation production data is, in this case, that we can investigate a higher number of phrases for each individual.

prenominal possessives (also in contexts where this is pragmatically strange in homeland Norwegian). In other words, there is a sub-group of speakers who use more English-like structures (suffix omission and prenominal possessives), and they are also less proficient in Norwegian. Most speakers, however, frequently use Norwegian structures that are unlike English (determiner omission and post-nominal possessives).

When it comes to the syntax of modified definite phrases in NAmNo, van Baal (2020) and van Baal (2024b) argue that the structure is as in Figure 5. Here, the realization of the D-head (*det*) is placed between brackets, to indicate that it is not obligatory. When the D-head is overtly realized, this leads to double definiteness, which is still observed in NAmNo (e.g., the examples in (24)). Typically, however, the D-head is not overtly realized in present-day NAmNo, as in the examples in (26).

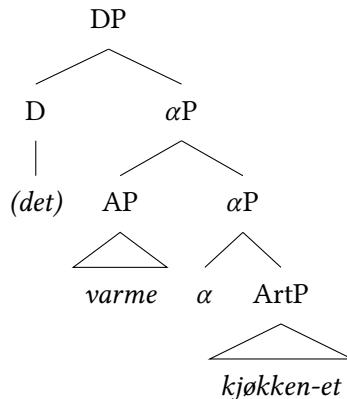


Figure 5: Syntactic structure of modified definite phrases in North American Norwegian, with optional realization of D

The syntactic structure in Figure 5 is an innovation, not only in Norwegian, but among the Scandinavian languages in general. Icelandic and the Northern Swedish vernaculars also have modified definite phrases without the determiners, but their syntax does not allow an empty D-head. Instead, Julien (2002, 2005) argues that the whole  $\alpha P$ , which includes the adjective and the definite noun, is moved to Spec-DP in these languages. However, there are restrictions to this movement that NAmNo does not comply with (see van Baal 2020, 2024b for details). In the available data on NAmNo, there are no clear restrictions on the omission of the determiner. It is not restricted to certain adjectives (as in homeland Norwegian, see van Baal 2024a), it occurs when there are cardinal numbers

and in phrases with ellipsis (where it cannot occur in Icelandic and Northern Swedish), and there do not seem to be pragmatic factors involved either. Van Baal (2024b) discusses several potential syntactic structures to capture determiner-less phrases in NAmNo, and concludes that “None of the syntactic analyses proposed for other (Scandinavian) languages is easily extended to AmNo, as clear counter evidence for all of them exist. AmNo is better understood as a language where D can be empty in modified definite phrases”. In other words, the syntactic requirement of overt realization of the D-head is no longer present in NAmNo.

### 3.4 Summary

In this description of definiteness marking in NAmNo, three types of phrases are discussed: indefinites, definites, and modified definites. In comparing homeland Norwegian, historical NAmNo, and present-day NAmNo, it has become clear that there is a large amount of stability, by which I mean that no change is observed. Indefinite singular phrases contain the indefinite determiner, and definite phrases contain the definite suffix – in all three varieties discussed. There are specific contexts where a bare noun would be used in the baseline (classifying predicates and kinship possessives), and some new patterns can be observed in a subset of the speakers. In addition, there are some phrases without the indefinite determiner in present-day NAmNo, and with indefinite determiners that have an unexpected morpho-phonological realization. However, I have argued that these can be accounted for by processes related to (the interface with) Spell-Out. In the literature at present, no cases of syntactic change have been documented when it comes to indefinite singular phrases and definite phrases.

Modified definite phrases, on the other hand, are subject to change. While homeland Norwegian and historical NAmNo use double definiteness (a prenominal determiner and a definite suffix) in these phrases, present-day NAmNo typically only uses the suffix. Double definiteness is not used completely consistently in historical NAmNo either, which can be indicative of the start of a language change. In present-day NAmNo, however, the determiner is omitted with high frequency and by all speakers. Given this systematicity within and across speakers, I have argued that this is a case of change in which the overt realization of the prenominal determiner is optional. In the next section, I discuss some theoretical implications of these findings.

## **4 Theoretical implications**

### **4.1 Stability and change in moribund languages**

The available data and studies on NAmNo show a large amount of similarity with homeland Norwegian and previous generations of heritage speakers. This is not only the case for definiteness marking discussed in this chapter, but also for other aspects of the language. The language these heritage speakers produce is unmistakably Norwegian, and in many respects identical to homeland Norwegian and the language of their (grand-) parents. Although differences or “unexpected” phrases of some sort may attract much attention at first sight, it is actually important to underline that present-day NAmNo is identical to the baseline to a high degree. The present-day speakers are the final generation of NAmNo speakers, and the language is therefore classified as moribund (like many other Germanic heritage languages in the US, cf. Putnam et al. 2018). The term “moribund” refers to the status of use in a group of speakers, and reflects that the language is not passed on to next generations anymore. Importantly, the term does not in any way express a judgement on the “quality” of the language as spoken by these speakers. We classify the language as moribund based on societal factors, not based on structural linguistic factors. As we have seen in the sections above, there are in fact aspects where NAmNo is syntactically non-distinguishable from homeland Norwegian or historical NAmNo, i.e., from communities where the language is or was actively used and passed on to the next generations.

In general, heritage languages can provide important insights to formal linguistics, as they can inform which aspects of language can be acquired and maintained in the specific circumstances of heritage speakers, who typically receive reduced (and often different) input compared to monolinguals, and additionally often use the heritage language less over their lifespan (cf. Benmamoun 2021, Lohndal 2021). We have seen in this chapter that indefinite singular phrases and unmodified definite phrases are stable across time in NAmNo. In other words, the use of the indefinite determiner and the definite suffix are unchanged, and we can conclude that these syntactic elements can be acquired in a minority language context, and are unaffected by the reduced use of Norwegian across the speakers’ lives. The case study in Johannessen (2015a) demonstrates how a severe lack of use of Norwegian may impact the use of the indefinite determiner, which may suggest that the indefinite determiner is somewhat more vulnerable than the definite suffix. In monolingual acquisition, the definite suffix is acquired earlier than the indefinite determiner (Kupisch et al. 2009: 229–230), but the data from NAmNo indicate that both can be acquired by heritage speakers.

Contrary to the stability of indefinite and unmodified definite phrases, the available data from NAmNo also showed that double definiteness in modified definite phrases is more vulnerable. Typically, the present-day speakers omit the prenominal determiner and only use the definite suffix in these phrases. From this, we can conclude that double definiteness is a phenomenon that is difficult to acquire and/or difficult to maintain in a heritage language context. I come back to the point of acquisition versus attrition in Section 4.4 below, but first it is important to note that the change in NAmNo is systematic. There is no complete breakdown of definiteness marking in NAmNo; rather, there is a specific aspect of definiteness marking that has changed. All speakers frequently produce modified definite phrases with only the definite suffix. This is a pattern which exists in the baseline, with a subgroup of adjectives, but that is now extended to all adjectives in present-day NAmNo. This systematicity in change is also seen in other aspects of change. In postnominal possessives, NAmNo has a larger set of kinship terms that occur in their bare form (see Kinn 2021, 2025 [this volume]), but this is not extended to all nouns. On a more general level, this shows that innovation and change is possible in moribund languages as in any natural language, and furthermore that changes in moribund heritage languages are systematic and not a matter of “anything goes”. Again, this is true for what we know from change in non-heritage languages, too (cf. Kupisch & Polinsky 2022).

## 4.2 Syntax and Spell-Out

As pointed out several times in this chapter, the syntax of definiteness marking in NAmNo is highly stable. Yet, this is not always the case of the morpho-phonological realization of definiteness markers. The indefinite determiner sometimes has an unexpected form in terms of gender (e.g., *en glass* rather than *et glass* ‘a glass’ in (17a) above). This is also occasionally found for the definite suffix. In addition, the definite plural suffix sometimes appears as an indefinite plural suffix (e.g., *sau-er* instead of *sau-ene* ‘the sheep’ in (22a)). Because such forms are not systematic across participants, and are more frequent in longer (i.e., more complex) phrases, I have argued that they are processing-related and not the result of a change in Syntax.

In other words, I argue that there is syntactic agreement between the noun and the definite morphemes in terms of gender and number features. This is the case even in instances where we do not see this agreement in the surface forms. In these instances, something happens in the (interface with) Spell-Out, such that the morpho-phonological form that realizes the syntactic feature bundle is different from the one in the baseline. This indicates that there is more vulnerability at Spell-Out than at Syntax with respect to definiteness marking.

Vulnerability of inflectional morphology has been observed in many other heritage languages. In fact, this is one of the most well-documented type of differences between baseline or homeland languages and heritage languages. Detailed discussions of this can be found in Montrul (2016: 54–71), Polinsky (2018: chapter 5), and Putnam et al. (2021). In the nominal domain, vulnerability of inflectional morphology involving grammatical gender or number is often observed (e.g., Albirini et al. 2011, Benmamoun et al. 2014 on heritage Arabic, Bolonyai 2007 on heritage Hungarian, and Håkansson 1995 on heritage Swedish). As Putnam et al. (2021: 614) note, the vulnerability of morphology contrasts strongly with the observed stability of syntax and phonology. Benmamoun (2021) discusses several examples which indicate that core Syntax is generally stable in heritage languages, while the morpho-phonological realization of elements is not always like the baseline. He concludes that “The difference [between heritage speakers and monolingual speakers, YvB] has more to do with the interface between syntax and PF, where, as expected, heritage grammar shows vulnerabilities” (Benmamoun 2021: 393). The data presented in this chapter on definiteness marking in NAmNo converge on this observation. In this way, the NAmNo data are yet another example of the stability of Syntax versus the vulnerability of the (interface with) Spell-Out or morphological realization. This, in turn, is an argument for formal models that separate syntactic structures from morphological exponents (Lohndal 2021, Putnam et al. 2021), such as the theoretical model that this volume and chapter adhere to.

### **4.3 Phrases without an obligatory determiner**

In this chapter, I have argued that the only syntactic change in present-day NAmNo is that the prenominal determiner is no longer obligatory in modified definite phrases. At face value, this analysis seem to go against two claims that have been made in the literature: (i) that DPs are generally stable in heritage languages, and (ii) that heritage speakers avoid null-elements and prefer overt realizations instead. Here, I briefly discuss these claims in light of NAmNo.

Polinsky (2018) argues that high syntactic projections are resilient to change, and that heritage speakers tend to maintain “forms and structures that have strong perceptual salience or rely on salient conceptual categories” (*ibid.*: 64). She argues that this can be shown across heritage languages for determiners and the DP in nominal domain, and for tense at the clausal level. This claim seems to be at odds with the data from NAmNo. Lohndal & van Baal (2025) discuss this puzzle, and they argue that the general claim by Polinsky (2018) can be nuanced in order to account for the NAmNo data. They bring forward two

important points. Firstly, a linguistic element can be salient in different ways: it can be phonologically salient, and/or syntactically salient. The prenominal determiner in Norwegian modified definite phrases lacks prosodic salience (i.e., it is unstressed), but has syntactic salience as it appears at the top of the syntactic phrase. The fact that the determiner is vulnerable for omission is then not surprising: apparently, the lack of prosodic salience “overrides” the syntactic salience for NAmNo, and non-salient elements are more susceptible to change or restructuring, in line with what Polinsky argues for. As a second point, Lohndal & van Baal (2025) argue that stability within the nominal domain need not be restricted to the D-level. Instead, a lower functional projection within the phrase may be stable, if the language has such a position. NAmNo in fact has the lower position ArtP (see Section 2.1 above), which is realized by the definite suffix in all definite phrases. As Lohndal & van Baal (2025) point out, and as we have seen in Section 3.2, this position is highly stable in NAmNo. In other words, NAmNo has a stable element within the DP, even though it is not the D-position itself as in other heritage languages with a less detailed cartography of the nominal phrase.

The NAmNo data presented here may also seem at odds with claims in the literature that heritage speakers generally avoid null-elements. They also differ from monolingual speakers in “their ability to identify and evaluate missing elements with discourse antecedents” (Laleko & Polinsky 2017: 136). This has been termed the “Silent Problem” by Laleko & Polinsky (2017). However, I would like to argue that this Silent Problem is something else than the use of phrases without a prenominal determiner in NAmNo. The cases discussed in Laleko & Polinsky (2017) and Polinsky (2018) as examples of the Silent Problem are cases of discourse-licensed silent elements. For example, heritage speakers of pro-drop languages have been found to overuse overt pronouns in pragmatic-semantic contexts where monolingual speakers would use a null pronoun. However, in these instances, the null-element has to be “recovered” and interpreted as a referent in the discourse. This is not the case for modified definite phrases in NAmNo, where not the whole phrase is null, but rather one element of the phrase (the determiner) is omitted. In these phrases, the null-element is not necessary to establish or interpret the referent of the phrase, and the null-element is not licensed by discourse-pragmatic principles either. In my understanding, the findings on NAmNo described in this chapter are thus not at odds with the Silent Problem, as they are simply a different type of phenomenon.

In addition, other studies have found the introduction of null-elements in other heritage languages. For Wisconsin heritage German, Bousquette et al. (2016) describe the use of parasitic gaps that are not acceptable in the baseline, and Bous-

quette (2018) finds the use of preposition stranding, which again is not possible in the baseline. Innovative introduction of preposition stranding is also found in heritage Spanish in the US (Pascual y Cabo & Gómez Soler 2015). These instances are not equivalent to the determiner omission in NAmNo that I discussed, but they make clear that the introduction of null-elements (or traces) in heritage languages is possible, and that the observed Silent Problem may not apply across the board for all silent or null elements. The data on NAmNo discussed here are thus not automatically at odds with the Silent Problem defined by Laleko & Polinsky (2017).

#### **4.4 Acquisition, attrition, and language shift**

A central finding in the work on definiteness marking in NAmNo is that most aspects are unchanged compared to the baseline, while there is change in double definiteness in modified definite phrases. As we have seen, the prenominal determiner has become optional in these phrases in present-day NAmNo. This raises the question *why* double definiteness is changed, and also raises questions to the *causes* of this change. In work on differences between heritage languages and the baseline varieties, causes that are often discussed are acquisition-related (a different acquisitional outcome), attrition (loss of a language phenomenon over the course of the lifespan), and transfer from the dominant language. A full overview of these processes and how they have been found to shape heritage languages is beyond the scope of this chapter (but see, e.g., Benmamoun et al. 2013, Polinsky 2018, Scontras et al. 2015), but I want to point out some relevant observations that can be made about NAmNo.

First, it is important to note that the change in modified definite phrases has not resulted in more similarity with English. Rather the opposite: the element that is different between the two languages – the definite suffix – is stable in NAmNo, while the English-like element – the prenominal determiner – is vulnerable to omission. This is also observed by Anderssen et al. (2018), who furthermore observe that the speakers who frequently omit the determiner in double definites also very often use (and sometimes overuse) postnominal possessives. In other words: these NAmNo speakers rely more on non-English-like structures than on English-like structures. Anderssen et al. (2018) describe this as cross-linguistic overcorrection, a process to maximize the differences between two languages by bilingual speakers. However, it has to be noted that the definite suffix and the postnominal possessive are also very frequent in the baseline, and this may also play a role in addition to overcorrection. But importantly, present-day

NAmNo is not shaped by transfer from English when it comes to definiteness marking.

Van Baal (2020: chapter 6) delves deeper into the role that acquisition or attrition may play in the innovation of omitting the prenominal determiner, and concludes that this is caused during the acquisition of Norwegian as a heritage language and not by attrition later in life. There are several arguments for this. First, as we also have seen above, the omission of the determiner is highly systematic across and within speakers. It has been argued that attrition is a less systematic process that leads to high levels of inter- and intra-speaker variation (see, e.g., Lohndal & Westergaard 2016, Kinn 2020, Perez-Cortes et al. 2019, Putnam & Sánchez 2013), and that is more related to processing.

Most importantly, however, van Baal (2020) describes how the patterns in NAmNo reflect those in monolingual acquisition of Norwegian (and Swedish). Monolingual children acquire the definite suffix very early on (around age 2;3, Anderssen 2006, 2012), while they acquire double definiteness much later. In Anderssen's longitudinal data (ending when the children are 3;3), double definiteness is not completely acquired. Based on data from Busterud et al. (2019), van Baal (2020: 163–164) established an age of acquisition of 6–7 years, i.e., quite late. In addition, the prenominal determiner is often omitted during the acquisitional period of double definiteness (Anderssen 2006, 2012). In other words, the typical NAmNo modified definite phrase that only contains the definite suffix is *also* the typical phrase during monolingual acquisition.

The late acquisition of double definiteness, and the determiner in particular, may make it vulnerable to change in a heritage language context. It is clearly a phenomenon that needs much input over a long time before it can be acquired. Van Baal (2020) argues that it is likely that the present-day NAmNo speakers did not receive enough input to acquire double definiteness completely, and that it is more plausible that the omission of the determiner is the result of this acquisition than of attrition later in life. However, as she also points out, there is no a priori reason that elements vulnerable in acquisition could not become even weaker as the result of lack of use.

There are several factors that make the determiner more vulnerable in acquisition compared to the definite suffix. The definite suffix is much more frequent in the input than the prenominal determiner (Anderssen et al. 2018: 751, see also van Baal 2020: 168–169), and contexts for double definiteness are infrequent in general (Dahl 2015: 121). There are also many exceptions to double definiteness: a subgroup of adjectives does not require the prenominal determiner. These exceptions are very frequent, and they are especially frequent in spoken Norwegian compared to written (Bokmål) Norwegian (van Baal 2020, 2024a). Present-day

NAmNo speakers have typically not had any written Norwegian input, and no formal schooling in Norwegian either. In their solely spoken input, the determiner is thus even less frequent than in the (spoken and written) input to monolingual children. In addition to its low frequency, the determiner is also prosodically weak and not salient (see Section 4.3 above), and it falls outside the typical trochaic metrical template of Norwegian. This has been argued to play an important role in the late acquisition of the determiner (Anderssen 2006, Bohnacker 2003, Kupisch et al. 2009). Although some acquisitional works focus on why one of the factors is more important in acquisition, I follow Bohnacker (2003: 236) and assume that both frequency and prosody play a role in the late acquisition of double definiteness. In other words, I assume that the combination of several factors makes the determiner more vulnerable in acquisition, and hence (even) more vulnerable in the heritage language context as well.

Previous work has found that double definiteness (and the determiner) were used in a stable way in historical NAmNo, and that the change of determiner omission is an innovation in the present-day speakers (van Baal 2022, and see Section 3.3 above). If double definiteness is vulnerable to change in the heritage language context, why did it then not change earlier in the NAmNo history? Van Baal (2022) argues that the status of the language in the communities is important: the historical recordings are made in pre-language-shift communities, where Norwegian was used actively and on daily basis by the whole community. Present-day speakers, on the other hand, live and partly grew up in post-shift communities where the status of Norwegian was much weaker. This has likely had consequences for amount and type of input, as well as possibilities for use of Norwegian, which has led to a language change (cf. Eide & Hjelde 2023). In this way, the innovation of determiner omission is an example of language change that happens faster (on “fast forward”) in heritage languages (Kupisch & Polinsky 2022).

## 5 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, marking of definiteness in NAmNo DPs has been described. Based on previous studies and some new data, three types of phrases were discussed: (i) indefinite singular phrases, (ii) definite phrases, and (iii) double definite phrases. A comparison between homeland Norwegian, historical NAmNo, and present-day NAmNo shows that the three varieties have the same syntax for (i) and (ii). However, when it comes to (iii), there has been an innovation in present-day NAmNo: Rather than double definiteness, the current speakers of NAmNo tend

to omit the prenominal determiner from modified definite phrases. I have argued that this is a change in Syntax, such that the D-head is no longer obligatorily realized with a determiner.

The findings on definiteness marking have several theoretical implications, discussed in Section 4. For example, the data presented here add to the existing body of research across heritage languages that report the stability of Syntax versus the vulnerability of morpho-phonological Spell-Out. In Section 4.4, I discussed several factors that likely have contributed to the fact that double definiteness has changed in NAmNo. These factors include late acquisition, low frequency, a high amount of exceptions, and lack of prosodic salience. Based on this, we can make predictions about other aspects of a language that may be vulnerable to change in a heritage language context. On the other hand, the stability of the indefinite determiner and definite suffix across time and heritage language context also lead to predictions about elements that are likely to be stable in heritage languages more general.

I pointed out in Section 4.3 that the determiner omission in NAmNo is not governed by discourse pragmatics. However, this may be a simplified statement: at present, very little work has been done on heritage language pragmatics in general and pragmatics in NAmNo in particular. In homeland Norwegian, there are several exceptions to double definiteness. With a selected group of adjectives, the prenominal determiner may be omitted, but it is yet unclear which factors govern whether the determiner is omitted with these adjectives. It is likely that pragmatic-semantic factors play a role here (see van Baal 2024a), but the exact role of pragmatics in double definiteness is an open question. Future research could establish in which pragmatic contexts the determiner can be omitted, and compare homeland and American Norwegian in this respect.

Another aspect of definiteness marking in NAmNo that warrants further investigation is the use of demonstratives. The elicitation data includes occasional demonstrative phrases, while a deictic demonstrative reading is not necessary (van Baal 2020, 2024b). See (29) for an example. These are not frequent, and they include the definite suffix as in homeland Norwegian demonstratives, so they are syntactically baseline-like. In terms of semantics and pragmatics, however, the status of these phrases is less clear. As van Baal (2024b) points out, these phrases may have a demonstrative intention. On the other hand, they could be a case of “overusing” the demonstrative. In similar elicitation tasks with homeland speakers (e.g., Busterud et al. 2019), no such demonstratives are found, which may suggest an innovation in NAmNo. However, it is unclear how the NAmNo speakers (historical and present-day) use demonstratives in spontaneous speech, and

there are relatively few demonstratives in the elicitation data. Kupisch & Polinsky (2022: 7) suggest that the use of the demonstrative “could indicate renewal in the grammaticalization cycle”, in which determiners typically develop from demonstratives. Future research could shed light on the use of demonstratives in NAmNo generally, the pragmatic contexts in which they are used, and test the suggestion by Kupisch & Polinsky.

- (29) denne hvit-e hest-en  
DEM.SG white-DEF horse-DEF.SG.M  
'this/the white horse' (fargo\_ND\_01gm, elicitation)

The finding that double definiteness has changed in present-day NAmNo also raises questions about the vulnerability of double definiteness, and the determiner in particular, in other Scandinavian heritage languages. Very recently, research on Latin American Norwegian has started, and data on (double) definiteness are being collected. It will be very interesting to see whether these speakers, who are dominant in Spanish rather than English, use double definiteness similarly to homeland Norwegian or similar to NAmNo (or different from both). Both English and Spanish do not have double definiteness, but the NAmNo and LatAmNo populations differ from each other in time of migration, size of the heritage community, contact with the homeland, and contact with the written language. Comparisons of the two varieties may therefore shed light on the role that these factors play in shaping double definiteness in the heritage language.

Comparisons with other Scandinavian heritage languages are another interesting avenue for future research. Swedish also has double definiteness, and furthermore has a number of exceptions where the prenominal determiner may be omitted. The status of double definiteness in American Swedish is not studied much yet, but preliminary findings suggest that the determiner is omitted in similar contexts as in homeland Swedish, but not more (van Baal & Larsson 2022). Although Danish does not have double definiteness, it has different definiteness marking in unmodified phrases (only the definite suffix) and modified phrases (only the prenominal determiner). This means that comparisons with heritage Danish, both in North and Latin America, may provide additional insights on the acquisition and maintenance of definiteness morphemes in heritage language contexts.

There are several non-Scandinavian languages that have nominal phrases with more than one (in)definite determiner (or determiner-like element). Alexiadou (2014) describes multiple determiner constructions in Greek, Romanian, Scandinavian, French, and Hebrew, among others. She argues that there is no unified account for the different types of multiple determiner constructions, and

that “multiple marking does not realize the same property/structure across languages” (Alexiadou 2014: 7). Phrases with multiple determiners in other languages are thus not structurally equivalent to double definiteness in Norwegian and Swedish. Still, I believe that investigating such constructions in heritage languages cross-linguistically can provide valuable insights on whether phrases with multiple determiners are always vulnerable to change in heritage language contexts, or whether only certain types of determiner doubling are vulnerable. Given that the underlying syntax is different in the various languages, cross-linguistic heritage language studies may shed light on which of these syntactic structures is more likely to be acquired and/or maintained in heritage speakers’ grammar.

Studies comparing several heritage languages are still relatively rare, but I hope they will become more common in the future. However, studies on single heritage languages are a necessary step towards comparative work. As I have shown in the present chapter, the definiteness marking in NAmNo has been studied with various types of data and in both historical and present-day NAmNo. This has lead to clear findings, most notably (i) a contrast in vulnerability between Syntax and morpho-phonological realization or Spell-Out; and (ii) a contrast between vulnerable double definiteness on the one hand and stable indefinite determiners and definite suffixes on the other. With this established, I pointed out two possible directions of future research that I believe to be of interest: the relation between double definiteness and pragmatics, and cross-linguistic comparisons with other heritage languages that have multiple determiner constructions. Insights from such future work will be valuable for our general understanding of heritage languages, and ultimately, the human language capacity.

## Abbreviations

CANS	Corpus of American Nordic Speech
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
F	feminine gender
INDF	indefinite
M	masculine gender
N	neuter gender
NAmNo	North American Norwegian
PL	plural
SG	singular

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# Chapter 5

## Possession in determiner phrases in North American Norwegian

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This chapter discusses DP-internal possessive constructions, of which there are several in European (homeland) Norwegian (EurNo). It is shown that North American Norwegian (NAmNo) generally has retained the different options for expressing DP-internal possession, and that analyses previously proposed for EurNo can be extended to NAmNo. There are some differences with respect to the *distribution* of the options. Notably, however, most speakers display no particular preference for patterns that converge with the majority language English.

### 1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of DP-internal possessive constructions in North American Norwegian (NAmNo). Both in the homeland variety European Norwegian (EurNo) and in NAmNo, DP-internal possessive constructions cover all of the central semantic relationships that are typical for DP-internal possession cross-linguistically: ownership, part-whole relationships and kinship (Dixon 2010: 263–264). Other relationships between two entities can also be expressed by possessives; for example, with deverbal nouns, a possessor can have a role parallel to that of the subject of the corresponding verb (e.g., Chomsky 1970). In what follows, possessive constructions expressing many different semantic relations will be included; however, the discussion will mainly focus on the syntax rather than the meaning.

EurNo has a relatively large set of possessive constructions. Examples of the main types are given in (1):



Kari Kinn. 2025. Possession in determiner phrases in North American Norwegian. In Kari Kinn & Michael T. Putnam (eds.), *A reference guide to the syntax of North American Norwegian*, 165–192. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15274566

- (1) a. **min sykkel**  
          my bike  
          ‘my bike’
- b. **sykkel-en min**  
          bike-DEF my  
          ‘my bike’
- c. **Ola-s sykkel**  
          Ola-POSS bike  
          ‘Ola’s bike’
- d. **sykkel-en til Ola**  
          bike-DEF to Ola  
          ‘Ola’s bike’
- e. **Ola sin sykkel**  
          Ola POSS bike  
          ‘Ola’s bike’

In (1a), the possessor is expressed by a prenominal possessive determiner. In (1b), there is also a possessive determiner; however, its position is postnominal, and the noun expressing the possessee is equipped with a definite suffix. In (1c), the possessor role is expressed by a noun to which a possessive clitic *-s* is attached. In (1d), the possessor is expressed by a PP introduced by the preposition *til* ‘to’. Example (1e) illustrates the so-called possessor doubling construction, in which the possessive marker *sin* “doubles” a noun with a possessor role. On Julien’s (2005) analysis, which is adopted here, possessors are generated in the specifier of NP; postnominal possessors are derived by movement of the noun past this position. Prenominal possessors move to a higher position below D, but above adjectives and ordinals (see further in Section 2).

The chapter builds on previous studies on possessive constructions in NAmNo, notably Anderssen & Westergaard (2012), Westergaard & Anderssen (2015), Anderssen et al. (2018) and Kinn (2021). These works do, however, not cover the whole range of possessive constructions shown in (1), and the chapter will offer new observations from the Corpus of American Nordic Speech (CANS, Johannessen 2015) to shed some (initial) light on understudied aspects of possession in DPs in NAmNo. It will be shown that most of the numerous ways of expressing possession in EurNo are attested in NAmNo; the overall picture that emerges is one of syntactic stability. However, as will be evident, there are some differences with respect to the distribution of the different options.

The chapter is structured as follows: Section 2 discusses possessive determiners. Section 3 discusses the possessive clitic *-s*, while Section 4 discusses constructions with PP possessors. Section 5 deals with the possessor doubling construction, and Section 6 discusses some special patterns associated with relational nouns. Section 7 briefly considers the theoretical relevance of some of the observations in the chapter, while Section 8 contains concluding remarks.

## 2 Possessive determiners

This section deals with constructions involving possessive determiners, which are very common both in EurNo and NAmNo. Possessive determiners can be either prenominal or postnominal; the syntactic structure and distribution of these options are discussed in Section 2.1. Section 2.2 discusses reflexive possessive determiners, and Section 2.3 is about possessive determiners with proper names.

### 2.1 Prenominal and postnominal possessive determiners

#### 2.1.1 Overview and syntactic structure

An overview of Norwegian possessive determiners is given in Table 1 (based on Faarlund 2019: 31).<sup>1</sup> The determiner forms are written Bokmål standard forms, which are the ones used in the orthographic transcriptions in CANS. In the spoken homeland dialects, as well as in NAmNo, a variety of dialect forms are used.

Table 1: Possessive determiners in EurNo (Bokmål standard).

<i>Singular</i>				
1st	2nd	3rd m	3rd f	3rd refl
<i>min</i> (M,F)	<i>din</i> (M,F)	<i>hans</i>	<i>hennes</i>	<i>sin</i> (M,F)
<i>mitt</i> (N)	<i>ditt</i> (N)			<i>sitt</i> (N)
<i>mine</i> (PL)	<i>dine</i> (PL)			<i>sine</i> (PL)
<i>Plural</i>				
1st	2nd	3rd	3rd refl	
<i>vår</i> (M,F)	<i>deres</i>	<i>deres</i>	<i>sin</i> (M,F)	
<i>vårt</i> (N)			<i>sitt</i> (N)	
<i>våre</i> (PL)			<i>sine</i> (PL)	

As is evident from Table 1, the set of possessive determiners distinguishes between singular and plural, and three grammatical persons, depending on the properties of the possessor.<sup>2</sup> There are separate reflexive possessive determiners in the 3rd person; these are discussed in further detail in Section 2.2. Most of the possessive determiners show agreement in gender and number with the

<sup>1</sup>I follow Faarlund (2019) in using the term possessive *determiner* rather than possessive *pronoun*, which is used by, e.g., Julien (2005).

<sup>2</sup>Many spoken dialects do not have the syncretism between the 2nd and 3rd pl. which appears in Table 1. Some common forms in the 3rd pl. in homeland dialects and in CANS are, e.g., *demmes*, *demmses* and *domms*.

possessee, except *hans* (3rd sg. m.), *hennes* (3rd sg. f.) and *deres* (2nd pl./3rd pl.), which are uninflected (Faarlund 2019: 31). On agreement in NAmNo, see further in Riksem & Nygård (2025 [this volume]).

Possessive determiners can be either prenominal or postnominal. When the determiner is prenominal, the noun must be indefinite, both in EurNo and NAmNo.<sup>3</sup> NAmNo examples (all taken from CANS, v. 3.1) of prenominal possessive determiners are given in (2):

- (2) a. **min** far  
my.M father  
'my father' (spring\_grove\_MN\_09gm)
- b. **hennes** jobb  
her job  
'her job' (seattle\_WA\_03gm)
- c. **vår-e** pengar  
our-PL money.PL  
'our money' (blair\_WI\_02gm)

When the possessive determiner is postnominal, the possessed noun must appear in the *definite* form, i.e., with a definite suffix. This is the general rule in both EurNo and NAmNo (certain kinship nouns are an exception, see Section 6). NAmNo examples of postnominal possessive determiners are given in (3):

- (3) a. farm-en **min**  
farm-DEF.M my.M  
'my farm' (blair\_WI\_01gm)
- b. land-et **mitt**  
land-DEF.N my.N  
'my land' (coon\_valley\_WI\_02gm)
- c. fel-a **mi**  
fiddle-DEF.F my.F  
'my fiddle' (coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm)
- d. hund-ene **dères**  
dogs-DEF.PL their  
'their dogs' (westby\_WI\_09gm)

<sup>3</sup>A query in CANS for possessive determiners followed by a noun yielded virtually no exceptions to this in NAmNo.

In EurNo, prenominal and postnominal possessive determiners have different syntactic and information-structural properties. Lødrup (2011, 2012) shows that postnominal possessors behave like weak pronouns (in the sense of Cardinaletti & Starke 1999) and are used for topical information, whereas prenominal possessives (at least in the spoken language) behave like strong pronouns and generally involve focal information. For NAmNo, there are, as of yet, no systematic studies of the information-structural properties of prenominal vs. postnominal possessive determiners (see Anderssen & Westergaard 2012: 327 for discussion); thus, it is not entirely clear if their distribution follows the same patterns. However, as mentioned, it is clear that both options exist (on their quantitative distribution, see further below).

In terms of syntactic structure, both prenominal and postnominal possessive determiners in NAmNo are generally compatible with the analyses proposed by Julien (2005). Postnominal possessive determiners can be analyzed as sketched in Figure 1 (based on example (3a) above and Julien 2005: 163).<sup>4</sup>

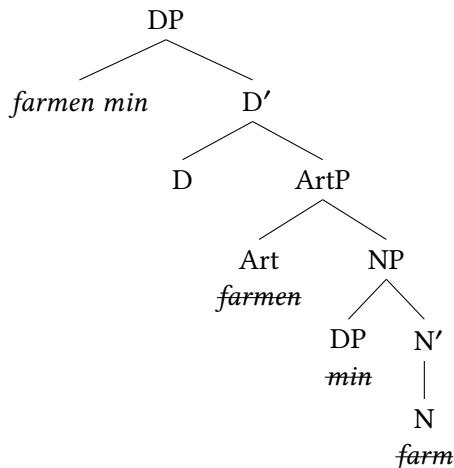


Figure 1: Possessive construction with postnominal possessive determiner, following Julien (2005).

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<sup>4</sup>Labelling the possessive determiner as a DP is a slight simplification (Julien 2005: 162). Julien (2005) provides a more elaborate analysis of the lower part of the DP structure, and she uses the label *nP* instead of *ArtP*. The label *ArtP* is, however, consistent with Julien (2002), and it is used in this chapter to avoid confusion with the nominalizer (*n*) in DM and related frameworks; see also Kinn & Putnam (2025 [this volume]).

In this derivation, the possessive determiner is base-generated in Spec-NP. The noun moves across the possessive, to Art, which hosts the definite article; this yields the postnominal position. In order to make the D-layer visible, the whole ArtP moves to Spec-DP.

The analysis of the prenominal possessive in (2a) *min far* ‘my father’ is sketched in Figure 2 (based on Julien 2005: 208, details omitted).

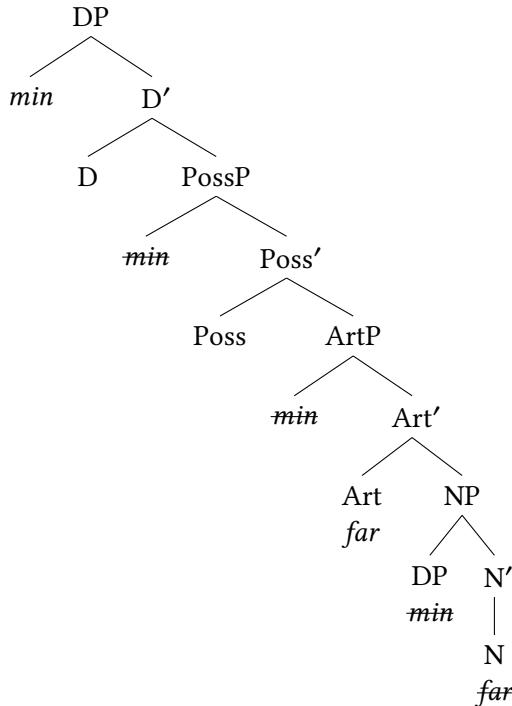


Figure 2: Possessive construction with prenominal possessive determiner, following Julien (2005).

In Figure 2, the possessive determiner is also base-generated in Spec-NP, above the noun, which means that it starts out in a prenominal position. However, the noun moves out of NP, past the base-generated position of the possessive determiner and up to Art. For the correct word order to be derived, the possessive determiner must sit in a higher position than this.<sup>5</sup> Julien’s (2005) proposal is a

<sup>5</sup> Although the noun formally has the indefinite form with prenominal possessive determiners, the nominal phrase behaves like a definite. If an adjective is included, it carries a definite suffix (see Riksem & Nygård 2025 [this volume]). Moreover, DPs with prenominal possessive

Poss projection below DP, which is associated with Focus; recall that prenominal possessors (at least in EurNo) are generally associated with focal information. From Spec-PossP, the possessive determiner moves up to Spec-DP to make the D-domain visible.

As mentioned, the information-structural properties of possessive determiners in NAmNo are still understudied; further inquiries into this area would be required to establish more firmly the independent motivation for the higher Poss position with a Focus feature in NAmNo. However, it is clear that prenominal possessives must be located higher than Spec-NP, where they are base-generated, and outside ArtP. Empirical evidence for this comes from constructions in which an adjective is involved: Like in EurNo, the prenominal possessive precedes adjectives, as illustrated in the NAmNo example in (4) (see also footnote 5):

- (4) min yngste bror  
 my.M youngest.DEF brother  
 ‘my youngest brother’ (fargo\_ND\_06gm)

Adjectival phrases are located in a layer labelled  $\alpha$ P above ArtP (see Kinn & Putnam 2025 [this volume]), which means that elements preceding adjectives must be in a high position. If it turns out that there is no motivation for a dedicated high Poss position in NAmNo, one could possibly assume that the prenominal possessive determiner moves directly to Spec-DP (via Spec-ArtP) (this would bear resemblance to the analysis that Faarlund 2019: 32–33 gives for Swedish and Danish).

### 2.1.2 Distribution of prenominal and postnominal possessive determiners

The distribution of prenominal vs. postnominal possessive determiners in NAmNo is highly interesting from a language-contact perspective, as a potential area of cross-linguistic influence (CLI) on syntax. The constructions involving postnominal possessive determiners do not have a direct equivalent in English, whereas prenominal possessive determiners converge with the English

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determiners are inappropriate in existential constructions, just like definite nominals. These are well-known facts of EurNo which motivate movement from N to Art, and I am not aware of evidence that NAmNo is different. An NAmNo example including an adjective in the definite form is given in (i):

- (i) sitt norsk-e hjem  
 his.REFL Norwegian-DEF home  
 ‘his Norwegian home’ (fargo\_ND\_02gm)

pattern (cf. examples (2–3) with translations). Anderssen & Westergaard (2012) and Westergaard & Anderssen (2015) show that postnominal possessives are the most frequent option in EurNo, occurring at a proportion of around 75% in corpora of spoken language, whereas prenominal possessives constitute around 25%. If CLI was affecting these possessive determiners, one would expect overproduction of prenominal possessives. However, overproduction of prenominal possessives is not the predominant pattern in NAmNo. Anderssen & Westergaard (2012), Westergaard & Anderssen (2015) and Anderssen et al. (2018) show that there is considerable inter-speaker variation; notably, however, a large majority of speakers overuse the pattern with *postnominal* possessives compared to the homeland baseline, while only a minority displays a preference for prenominal possessives. Anderssen et al. (2018) argue that the overuse of prenominal possessive determiners (CLI) is associated with low proficiency, whereas the inclination to use postnominal possessives (to an even greater extent than in homeland Norwegian) is described as “cross-linguistic overcorrection” (CLO), a notion attributed to Kupisch (2014), whereby bilinguals overstress what is *different* between their languages. Anderssen et al. (2018) tentatively explain CLO in terms of “overinhibition” of structures from the majority language, which also affects similar structures in the heritage language.

The conclusion that a majority of NAmNo speakers overuse postnominal possessive determiners is based on a comparison between present-day NAmNo and present-day EurNo; Anderssen et al. (2018) included 50 NAmNo speakers recorded in 2010 or later; their homeland baseline material is based on adults in an acquisition corpus collected in Tromsø, and the NoTa corpus, collected in Oslo in the early 2000s. A different perspective is taken by Eide & Hjelde (2023), who also discuss possessives (among other phenomena), and who include older data both from NAmNo and EurNo and study the development over time. Like Anderssen et al. (2018), they find inter-speaker variation. In their oldest data set (Einar Haugen’s recordings from the 1930s and 1940s), they also observe group-level variation between speakers from Coon Valley and Westby and the rest of the speakers: In Haugen’s recordings from Coon Valley and Westby (places with substantial Norwegian settlements which are well represented also in the present-day CANS material), the proportion of postnominal possessives is already remarkably high (87% postnominal vs. 13% prenominal) in the earliest recordings, and remains similar in recordings from the 1980, 1990s and 2010s. Many of the speakers in Coon Valley and Westby have ancestors from the valley of Gudbrandsdalen, and Eide & Hjelde (2023) conducted a preliminary investigation of older Norwegian dialect recordings from this area, based

on the Language Infrastructure made Accessible (LIA) corpus.<sup>6</sup> The sample is small; however, Eide & Hjelde report a proportion of around 90% postnominal possessives in this homeland dialect. They argue that taken together, the results from the older NAmNo and older homeland recordings could suggest that the high proportion of postnominal possessives observed in many of the present-day NAmNo speakers are an inherited dialect feature.<sup>7</sup>

Regardless of whether the high proportion of postnominal possessive determiners is inherited or a result of CLO, there is consensus that for most NAmNo speakers, CLI from the majority language seems to play a very minor role in the choice between prenominal and postnominal possessive determiners. This is an important insight, and it corroborates the notion that syntax is generally stable in heritage languages (Benmamoun et al. 2013, Lohndal et al. 2019).

## 2.2 Reflexive possessive determiners

The Norwegian paradigm of possessive determiners includes separate reflexive forms in the 3rd person sg. and pl. (see Table 1). The reflexive possessive determiner is *sin*; it agrees in number and gender with the possessee. The reflexive forms are anaphors in the sense that they generally obey Condition A of binding theory (e.g., Chomsky 1995: 95). A reflexive possessive can be bound in the contexts that allow binding of a regular non-possessive reflexive determiner (see e.g. Faarlund 2019: chap. 9 for an overview); the main rule in EurNo is that they are bound by (i.e., their antecedent is) the subject of the (minimal) clause.<sup>8</sup> This is illustrated in (5):

- (5) a. Ola så en mann på stasjonen. Mannen<sub>i</sub> tok kofferten  
     Ola saw a man at station.DEF man.DEF took suitcase.DEF.M  
     *sin<sub>i</sub>*       og gikk.  
     POSS.REFL.M and left  
     ‘Ola saw a man at the station. The man took his (own) suitcase and  
     left.’ (EurNo)

<sup>6</sup>Corpus URL: [https://tekstlab.uio.no/glossa3/lia\\_norsk](https://tekstlab.uio.no/glossa3/lia_norsk)

<sup>7</sup>Another point emphasized by Eide & Hjelde (2023), and also mentioned by Anderssen & Westergaard (2012) and Westergaard & Anderssen (2015), concerns the minority of speakers who overuse *prenominal* possessive determiners. Prenominal possessive determiners converge with English – however, they are also used at high proportions in *written* Norwegian (Bokmål), which is strongly influenced by Danish. Thus, input from the written language is an alternative source for prenominal possessive determiners. Eide & Hjelde (2023) argue that especially in the early NAmNo period, the written language is a very relevant factor – however, input from the written language dramatically decreased over time, and the present-day speakers of NAmNo do not generally read or write Norwegian.

<sup>8</sup>Exceptions are found; see e.g. Lødrup (2008, 2009a) and Julien (2020) for further discussion.

- b. Ola<sub>i</sub> så en mann på stasjonen. Mannen tok kofferten hans<sub>i</sub>  
Ola saw a man at station.DEF man.DEF took suitcase.DEF his  
og gikk.  
and went  
'Ola saw a man at the station. The man took his (Ola's) suitcase and  
left.' (EurNo)

The use of reflexive possessive determiners in NAmNo is still an understudied area, and it is an interesting one, as the majority language English does not have an equivalent distinction between reflexive and non-reflexive possessives. Examples in which reflexive possessive determiners are used in a baseline-like manner are easily found in CANS (see (6)); impressionistically, this seems to be the most common pattern.

- (6) a. han<sub>i</sub> mista sønn-en sin<sub>i</sub>  
he lost son-DEF.M POSS.REFL.M  
'he lost his son' (fargo\_ND\_01gm)
- b. hun<sub>i</sub> hadde klipt hår-et sitt<sub>i</sub>  
she had cut hair-DEF.N POSS.REFL.N  
'she had had her hair cut' (sunburg\_MN\_03gm)
- c. så han<sub>i</sub> tok ikke care av ung-ene sine<sub>i</sub>  
so he took not care of kid-DEF.PL POSS.REFL.PL  
'so he didn't take care of his kids' (sunburg\_MN\_15gm)

There are, however, also examples of non-reflexive possessives bound by a local subject, as shown in (7):

- (7) a. og de<sub>i</sub> hadde deres<sub>i</sub> drakt på  
and they had their costume on  
'and they had their costumes on' (spokane\_WA\_02gk)
- b. så han<sub>i</sub> hadde all famili-en hans<sub>i</sub> over der  
so he had all family-DEF his over there  
'so he had all his family over there' (saskatoon\_SK\_11gk)

Examples such as (7) could be interpreted as CLI from English; it would be an interesting task for future research to see how frequent the use of non-reflexive determiners is, if it occurs systematically in individual speakers, and if it correlates with other signs of CLI from English (see Anderssen et al. 2018 and Lundquist

et al. 2020).<sup>9</sup> Note that in (7a), the non-reflexive determiner occurs prenominally, although it has no focal reading; i.e., its position might be seen as another indication of influence from English (cf. Section 2.1).

While some examples of what could be interpreted as CLI are found, it is important to note that the “opposite” pattern is also attested; i.e., reflexives used with a non-local antecedent, as in the second coordinate clause in (8):

- (8) han<sub>i</sub> brukte å si “ikke” # og så bror sin<sub>i</sub> brukte å si  
 he used to say “not” and then brother POSS.REFL.M used to say  
 “inntje”  
 “not”  
 ‘he used to say “ikke” (‘not’) and his brother used to say “inntje” (‘not’)  
 (fargo\_ND\_01gm)

In (8), *sin* is a part of the subject of the second coordinate clause; thus, it is not bound by it. The antecedent is the subject of the first coordinate clause. In this case, it appears that the use of the reflexive form has been extended.

### 2.3 Possessive determiners with proper names

In many spoken dialects of EurNo, the possessor can be expressed by a postnominal possessive determiner directly followed a proper name or a kinship noun. Like with simple, postnominal possessive determiners, the possessee carries a definite suffix (except certain kinship nouns) (see Section 2.1). The construction is well attested in NAmNo; some examples are given in (9) (*M14* and *F1* represent personal names):

- (9) a. innkjøring-a hans M14  
 driveway-DEF his M14  
 ‘M14’s driveway’ (westby\_WI\_01gm)  
 b. birthday-en hennes F1  
 birthday-DEF her F1  
 ‘F1’s birthday’ (coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm)

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<sup>9</sup>The reviewers point out that there is some variation also among homeland Norwegian speakers with respect to the use of reflexive and non-reflexive possessives. This highlights the importance of establishing a sound baseline for comparison prior to concluding that CLI has taken place, an issue discussed in more depth in other chapters in this volume; see, e.g., Eide 2025 [this volume], van Baal 2025 [this volume] and Larsson & Kinn 2025 [this volume].

- c. og bestefar hans far var # sjømann  
and grandfather his far was sailor  
'and my father's grandfather was a sailor' (vancouver\_VA\_03uk)

In (9a) and (9b), the possessive determiners are followed by proper names. In (9c), it is followed by the kinship noun *far* 'father'.

Structurally, the construction with a possessive determiner + a proper name can be analyzed along the same lines as the construction with a simple, postnominal possessive determiner discussed above (see the tree structure in Figure 1). The difference is that the possessive determiner, which is base-generated in Spec-NP, takes a complement in the form of a proper name (Julien 2005: 172). The construction has a non-possessive parallel in preproprials articles, which are often found in the same dialects of EurNo (Julien 2005: 172). Preproprials articles are pronominal elements that function as determiners with proper names as complements; Johannessen & Laake (2012: 221, 2015: 318) note that preproprials articles are found in NAmNo too. Their distribution is yet to be investigated in detail, but an example from CANS is given in (10):

- (10) treffer du han M3?  
see you he M3  
'Do you see M3?' (coon\_valley\_WI\_03gm)

We now turn to another possessive construction, namely the possessive *-s*.

### 3 The possessive *-s*

The possessive *-s* is sometimes referred to as the “*-s* genitive”, and it bears strong resemblance to so-called “Saxon genitive” in English. Similar to the Saxon genitive, the present-day possessive *-s* in Norwegian is not a morphological case marker (as the label “genitive” might be taken to suggest); it has the distribution of a clitic and attaches to phrases. Some EurNo examples are given in (11); note that the *-s* in (11b) appears directly after a preposition that modifies the noun *naboen* ‘the neighbor’; this clearly shows that the *-s* is not a marker of nominal inflection.

- (11) a. jenta-s katt  
girl.DEF-POSS cat  
'the girl's cat' (EurNo)

- b. **naboen under-s hund**  
 neighbor.DEF below-POSS dog  
 ‘the neighbor below’s dog’ (EurNo)

In written, present-day EurNo, the possessive *-s* is more common in the Bokmål standard than in Nynorsk (Faarlund et al. 1997: 259). In the spoken language, it is typically associated with more formal registers than, e.g., possessive constructions involving a PP (see Section 4).

In NAmNo, the possessive *-s* is attested. Although extensive quantitative investigations must be left for the future, it seems that it occurs at rates fairly similar to EurNo.<sup>10</sup> Thus, there are no clear indications that the convergence with the “Saxon genitive” in English has led to a preference for this possessive construction among the options available to NAmNo speakers.

Three examples of possessive *-s* in NAmNo are given in (12):

- (12) a. **min far-s gård**  
 my father-POSS farm  
 ‘my father’s farm’ (outlook\_SK\_04gm)
- b. **mor-s folk**  
 mother-POSS people  
 ‘my mother’s family’ (fargo\_ND\_02gm)
- c. **bestemor min-s mor**  
 grandmother my-POSS mother  
 ‘my grandmother’s mother’ (blair\_WI\_04gk)

The example in (12c) stands out somewhat from a present-day EurNo perspective: As mentioned, the possessive *-s* is typically associated with more formal registers. In (12c), however, the *-s* is attached to a phrase which is itself a possessive construction (*bestemor min* ‘my grandmother’) which has an informal, dialectal flavor: it is postnominal, and it also follows one of the special patterns for kinship nouns which is typical for many spoken Norwegian dialects (see further in Section 6). The combination of two possessive constructions which, from a

<sup>10</sup>A query in the Norwegian part of CANS, v. 3.1, restricted to speakers recorded in 2010 or later, for nouns ending in *-s* and tagged as genitive, directly followed by another noun, gave 65 relevant hits. (This query yielded many irrelevant hits, which were excluded manually.) The number of word tokens in this part of CANS is 614,613. For comparison, the same query in the Norwegian part of the Nordic Dialect Corpus (NDC, Johannessen et al. 2009) to speakers aged 40 or older) gave 126 relevant hits; the size of this part of NDC is 1,102,568 tokens.

present-day EurNo perspective, have different stylistic connotations, is presumably related to the present-day heritage speakers' low amount of exposure to written language and normative rules that apply in the homeland.

The syntactic analysis that has been proposed for the possessive *-s* in EurNo can be straightforwardly extended to NAmNo. The syntactic structure of (11a) (*mors folk* 'my mother's family') is shown in Figure 3 (based on Julien 2005: 225, details omitted).

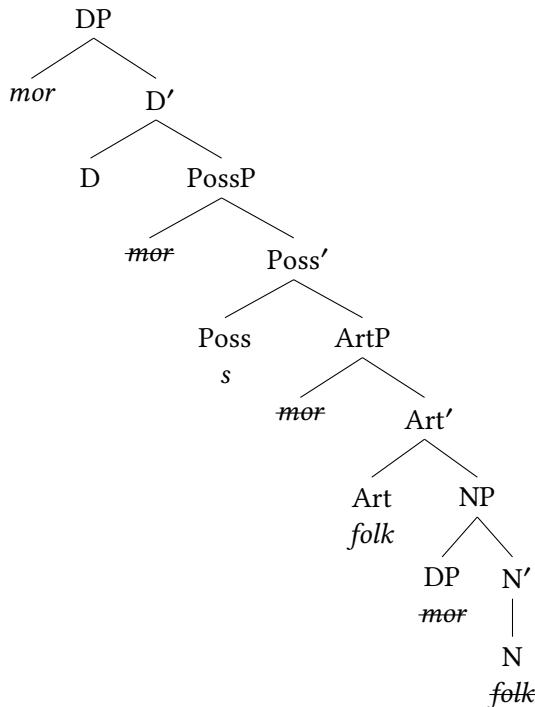


Figure 3: Possessive construction with possessive *-s*, following Julien (2005).

As the tree shows, the possessor *mor* 'mother' is base-generated in Spec-NP and moves up to Spec-DP (via Spec-PossP). The possessive *-s* is located in the Poss head below D.

## 4 Possessive PPs

When the possessor role is expressed by a noun or a modified DP (i. e., not just a simple pronoun/determiner, Johannessen et al. 2014: 70), EurNo possessive con-

structions may involve a PP. The possessor is realized as the complement of a preposition (*til* or *åt* ‘to’), the PP invariably follows the noun expressing the possessee, and nothing can intervene between the two. Possessive PPs are found in NAmNo too, as shown in (13):

- (13) a. navn-et **til hotell-et**  
name-DEF to hotel-DEF  
'the name of the hotel' (stillwater\_MN\_01gm)
- b. bak-en **til car-en min**  
back-DEF to car-DEF my  
'the back of my car' (westby\_WI\_07gk)
- c. sid-a **åt mor hennes**  
side-DEF to mother her  
'her mother's side' (coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm)

In possessive constructions with a PP in EurNo, the possessee must generally carry a definite suffix, similar to the possessive constructions with a postnominal determiner described in Section 2 (certain kinship nouns are an exception, see discussion in Section 6). The requirement that the possessee must carry a definite suffix generally seems to hold in NAmNo, like in EurNo (Kinn 2021: 203).<sup>11</sup> In terms of syntactic structure, the same analysis, which is in essence similar to the analysis of postnominal possessive determiners (Section 2), can be applied to both EurNo and NAmNo: the PP introduced by (*til/åt* ‘to’) is base-generated in the specifier of NP, and the possessed noun moves past it, yielding the postnominal order.

In some EurNo dialects, possessive PPs are only used with common nouns as possessors; if the possessor is a proper name, the construction with a possessive determiner and proper name is used (Section 2.3 and Julien 2005: 141). Although it is not categorical, and more systematic research must be left for the future, NAmNo appears to tend towards this distribution, with possessive PPs mainly used with common nouns as complements.

## 5 The possessor doubling construction

The so-called possessor doubling construction (Julien 2005: 214) consists of a possessor, which in most EurNo dialects must be a noun, a possessive marker *sin*,

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<sup>11</sup>However, occasional exceptions to the requirement that the possessor cannot be a simple pronoun are found (Kinn 2021: 196). More research is required to establish how systematically this occurs.

and the possessee, which is typically a noun in the indefinite form. The possessive marker agrees in number (and gender, if sg.) with the possessee. The possessor doubling construction is found in NAmNo; some examples are given in (14) (as before, codes such as M21 represent personal names).<sup>12</sup>

- (14) a. **mor-a**      **sitt**      **folk**  
mother-DEF POSS.N family  
'the mother's family' (webster\_SD\_02gm)
- b. **alle** [...] **M21 sine**      **unger**  
all ... M21 POSS.PL kids  
'all M21's kids' (hatton\_ND\_04gk)
- c. **M5 sin**      **bror**  
M5 POSS.M brother  
'M5's brother' (saskatoon\_SK\_01gk)

Although the possessive marker *sin* that appears in this construction is homophonous with the 3rd person reflexive possessive determiner (see Table 1 and Section 2.2), its syntactic behavior is different (see Julien 2005: 214ff for discussion). The syntax of the possessor doubling construction can be analyzed along the same lines as the possessive -s (cf. Section 3): Like the possessive -s, *sin* is generated in the Poss head below D, while the possessor phrase originates in Spec-NP and moves up to Spec-DP to make the D-layer visible. This yields strings in which the possessor is directly followed ("doubled") by the possessive *sin*.

The possessor doubling construction has traditionally been considered a Western Norwegian feature, possibly of Low German origin (see Norde 2012 and references therein for further discussion), although it is now common in other parts of the country as well. What seems like a considerable share of the attestations of the possessor doubling construction in NAmNo comes from speakers in Canada, who are a minority compared to NAmNo speakers in the US. Some of the speakers in Canada report the county of Rogaland in Western Norway as one of the places of origin of their Norwegian ancestors. The construction is, however, not restricted to speakers of Western Norwegian heritage. More systematic studies of the distribution of the possessor doubling construction must be left for the future.

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<sup>12</sup>I queried for nouns directly followed by the lemma *sin* and a noun in the indefinite form.

## 6 Special patterns with relational nouns

Relational nouns are nouns whose meaning is defined by their relationship to another entity (Matthews 2014), e.g., ‘friend’ or ‘sister’. EurNo (like many other languages, see, e.g., Stoltz et al. 2008 and Dixon 2010: chap. 10) has some possessive constructions in which relational nouns display special patterns. In particular, this concerns body parts and kinship terms, which express inalienable possession (Lødrup 2009b, 2014, 2018, Johannessen et al. 2014). In this section, I briefly look at some of these patterns and the extent to which they are also found in NAmNo.<sup>13</sup> Section 6.1 discusses postnominal possessives combined with a bare kinship noun; Section 6.2 discusses body part nouns and possessive PPs with *på*, and Section 6.3 discusses definite kinship nouns with an implicit possessor.

### 6.1 Bare kinship nouns with postnominal possessives

As mentioned in Sections 2 and 4, constructions with postnominal possessives determiners and postnominal possessive PPs generally require the possessed noun to be definite. However, in spoken EurNo dialects, certain kinship nouns, typically the most frequent ones denoting close family relations, are exceptions from this rule and appear in their bare form with no suffix. Some EurNo examples from the Nordic Dialect Corpus are given in (15) (from Kinn 2021):

- (15) a. **bror** min eide gard-en  
brother my owned farm-DEF  
'my brother owned the farm' (EurNo, alvdal\_04gk)
- b. for **mor** di hun er jo oppvokst her  
because mother your she is MOD.PART grown.up here  
'because your mother grew up here' (EurNo, ballangen\_03gm)
- c. og **far** til venninn-a mi jobba jo på Namnå  
and father to friend-DEF my worked MOD.PART at Namnå  
'and my friend's father worked at Namnå' (EurNo, kirkenaer\_08gk)

Kinn (2021) shows that this pattern is generally retained in NAmNo, and that it does not appear to be in decline (abstracting away from some inter-speaker

<sup>13</sup>Constructions not discussed here include kinship nouns with prenominal, unfocused possessive determiners and indefinite kinship nouns with a pragmatically anchored implicit possessor (*John bodde hos far* ‘John lived with father’, where ‘father’ can be interpreted as, e.g., John’s father or the speaker’s father, depending on the context) (Lødrup 2014). Both of these topics would require extensive prosodic and/or contextual analysis.

variation). In fact, compared to a baseline of older, homeland dialect speakers, some NAmNo speakers seem to be using bare nouns even more extensively, with more kinship terms, suggesting an extension of the special pattern. The use of bare nouns in possessive constructions does not seem to extend beyond kinship terms (Kinn 2021: 203), suggesting that the overuse of bare forms is a result of systematic overgeneralization of the special rule for kinship nouns rather than, e.g., more general instability of the definite suffix. This is in line with findings from other studies focusing on definiteness marking in NAmNo (e.g., Anderssen et al. 2018 and van Baal 2020, see discussion in van Baal 2025 [this volume]).

The examples in (16) illustrate bare nouns in the relevant possessive constructions in NAmNo (more examples are given in Kinn 2021).

- (16) a. **søster** hans var fire år  
sister his was four years  
'his sister was four years old' (sunburg\_MN\_03gm)
- b. **bestefar** til mor mi [...] kom i attenåtteogsytti  
grandfather to mother my came in 1878  
'my mother's grandfather came in 1878' (fargo\_ND\_01gm)
- c. **tremenning** til kon-a var i sykehjem  
second.cousin to wife-DEF was in nursing.home  
'my wife's second cousin was in a nursing home' (fargo\_ND\_10gm)

*Søster* 'sister' in (16a) (with a postnominal possessive determiner) and *bestefar* 'grandfather' in (16b) (with a possessive PP) are kinship nouns that are attested in their bare form in these constructions in EurNo too. *Tremenning* 'second cousin' in (16c), on the other hand, along with a handful of other, more peripheral kinship relations, was not found in its bare form in the EurNo sample investigated by Kinn (2021), or in a small sample from 1st generation speakers (emigrants to North America) that was also a part of that study. The current version of CANS (v. 3.1) includes 45 more recordings of Norwegian emigrants (primarily recordings from the 1940s); additional searches for possessive constructions with the more peripheral kinship nouns in these data also gave no examples of bare forms. This corroborates the argument that the use bare forms with certain peripheral kinship nouns is a fairly recent development that has happened in North American heritage language context.

Another observation which is compatible with the idea of productivity of the pattern with bare kinship nouns, is that it is occasionally found with English loans, such as *auntie*. This is shown in (17) (from Kinn 2021: 195):

- (17) ... var gift med **auntie** mi  
 ... was married to auntie my  
 ‘... was married to my auntie’ (westby\_WI\_01gm, CANS)

Here, the loanword *auntie* appears in a postnominal possessive construction without a definite suffix, analogous to Norwegian-origin kinship nouns. For a more detailed formal analysis of the use of bare kinship nouns, see Kinn (2021) and references there.

## 6.2 Body part nouns and possessive PPs with *på* ‘on’

Another construction in EurNo involves body part nouns in the definite form and a PP introduced by *på* ‘on’ (Lødrup 2009b, 2018, Johannessen et al. 2014). Lødrup (2018) refers to the possessor as a ‘prominent internal possessor’, implying that the possessor in some respects behaves like an argument of the clause, even if it is not a separate constituent.<sup>14</sup> Cf. (18):

- (18) De skar dypt i rygg-en på ham.  
 they cut deep in back-DEF on him  
 ‘They cut deep in his back.’ (EurNo; Lødrup 2018: 238)

Only body part nouns (such as *ryggen* ‘the back’ in (18)), and garments worn by the possessor, can occur as possessees in this construction. The construction has a number of additional characteristics and restrictions (Lødrup 2018: 235–238): For example, the body part noun cannot be modified by a non-restrictive adjective (see (19a)); if the body part noun denotes something that the body only has one of, it occurs the singular, with a distributive reading if the possessor is plural (see (19b)), and the possessor must be affected by the verbal action (see (19c)).<sup>15</sup>

- (19) a. \*Hun vasket grundig (\*den skitne) ryggen på ham.  
 she washed thoroughly the dirty back.DEF on him  
 ‘She washed his (dirty) back thoroughly.’ (EurNo; Lødrup 2018: 236)  
 b. Hun stappet kaker i munnen / \*munnene på dem.  
 she popped cakes in mouth.DEF / \*mouths.DEF on them.  
 ‘She popped cakes into their mouths’ (EurNo; Lødrup 2018: 237)

<sup>14</sup>Constituency tests reveal that the possessive PP can be either DP-internal and DP-external, see Lødrup (2009b, 2018), and it can sometimes be difficult to decide which analysis is correct for a given example. I leave this issue aside here.

<sup>15</sup>The preposition *på* is used DP-internally beyond this construction, to express, e.g., part-whole relationships and locations, but without the restrictions and special properties described here.

- c. \*Legene diskuterte ryggen på dem.  
doctors.DEF discussed back.DEF on them  
(Intended:) ‘The doctors discussed their backs.’ (EurNo; Lødrup 2018: 237)

Lødrup proposes an LFG-based account of the construction in terms of backward possessor raising – see Lødrup (2018) for details of the analysis. Turning now to NAmNo, queries in CANS only yielded clear examples of this construction in the older recordings (1942), even though the recent recordings (2010–2016) constitute the biggest part of the corpus by far (roughly 10 times as many word tokens).<sup>16</sup> Cf. (20):

- (20) a. også # dyppa hun # bomull ned i oil of cloves også hadde  
and.then dipped she cotton down.in oil of cloves and.then had  
inni kjeft-en på han  
inside mouth-DEF on him  
'and then she dipped cotton in oil of cloves and put it in his mouth'  
(blair\_WI\_23um, recorded 1942)
- b. så veit du mange tider man-en på hest-ene var nesten  
so know you many times mane-DEF on horse-PL.DEF was almost  
isammenvottet  
together.tangled  
'so, you know, many times, the manes of the horses were all tangled'  
(spring\_grove\_MN\_32gm, recorded 1942)

Note that in (20b), the body part noun *man* ‘mane’ is in the singular, with a distributive reading; the possessor *hestene* ‘the horses’ is plural. The construction with body part nouns and *på* thus seems to follow the same restriction with respect to number as in homeland Norwegian.

It is not clear if the lack of attestations of the construction in the most recent recordings in CANS is a coincidence, or perhaps an artefact of different recording situations, or if the construction has lost ground to other possessive constructions in NAmNo over time. If the latter is the case, this would be an exception to the general picture described in the previous sections, whereby many of the EurNo ways of expressing possession are retained, including constructions that have no clear English counterpart.

<sup>16</sup>I queried for definite nouns directly followed by *på* and then a pronoun, determiner or another definite noun. There is one more recent example from the speaker westby\_WI\_01gm transcribed as *hodet på han*; however, this is very difficult to hear.

### 6.3 Definite nouns with implicit possessors

In all the possessive constructions discussed so far in this chapter, the possessor is overtly realized, either prenominally or postnominally. However, another special pattern for some relational nouns involves the absence of an overt possessor; instead, a plain, definite noun referring to the possessee is used. Both (certain) kinship nouns and nouns denoting body parts can be used in this way (and also some nouns that can be seen as extensions of kinship nouns and body part nouns, e.g. *nabo* ‘neighbor’ and *lomme* ‘pocket’; see Lødrup 2010, 2014). The implicit possessor may be the subject of the clause, another referent which is salient in the discourse, or the speaker. Some EurNo examples are given in (21) (based on Lødrup 2014):<sup>17</sup>

- (21) a. John vasker **ansikt-et**  
John washes face-DEF  
'John washes his face' (EurNo)
- b. John snakket med **far-en**  
John spoke with father-DEF  
'John spoke to his father' (EurNo)

Definite nouns with an implicit possessor are found in NAmNo, both with kinship nouns and body parts; some examples are given in (22).

- (22) a. hun sitter og rister på **hod-et**  
she sits and shakes on head-DEF  
'she is shaking her head' (coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm)
- b. jeg må vaske **hår-et** for [...] jeg har vært # i [...] barn  
I must wash hair-DEF for I have been in barn  
'I have to wash my hair because I have been in the barn'  
(sunburg\_MN\_15gm)
- c. han var norsk og dansk # **far-en** kom her fra  
he was Norwegian and Danish father-DEF came here from  
Denmark  
Denmark  
'He was Norwegian and Danish. His father came here from Denmark.'  
(fargo\_ND\_05gk)

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<sup>17</sup>For ease of exposition, both examples have been translated with the subject of the clause as the possessor. However, depending on the context, the possessor could also be someone else.

In (22a) and (22b), the implicit possessor of *hodet* ‘the head’ and *håret* ‘the hair’ is the subject of the clause; in (22c), the possessor of *faren* ‘the father’ is a salient referent in the discourse (the subject of the preceding clause; this example differs from (22a) and (22b) in that the possessed noun *faren* is not in a configuration where it can be syntactically bound, see Lødrup 2014).<sup>18</sup> Although the use of definite nouns with an implicit possessor is found in NAmNo, it is a task for future research to investigate the distribution of these constructions compared to constructions with an overt possessive determiner, which are more similar to English, and which are also an option in both EurNo and NAmNo.

## 7 Discussion and theoretical relevance of the observations

A recurring observation throughout this chapter has been that the various possessive constructions of EurNo are also found in NAmNo, and that the analyses that have been proposed for EurNo can be extended to the heritage variety. This adds to the body of evidence suggesting a high degree of stability of syntactic representations in heritage languages (e.g., Benmamoun et al. 2013, Polinsky 2018, Lohndal et al. 2019 and references therein). Some differences with respect to the *distribution* of the different options have been noted. Importantly, however, NAmNo speakers do not generally display a preference for options that converge with the majority language English in their choice of possessive constructions. This is shown perhaps most clearly by Anderssen et al. (2018) and Eide & Hjelde (2023), who found that a majority of NAmNo speakers prefer postnominal possessive determiners rather than prenominal possessive determiners. Relatedly, the possessive *-s*, which strongly resembles the Saxon genitive in English, was not shown to be more frequent in NAmNo than in a sample from EurNo dialect speakers. These observations show that direct CLI from the majority language English overall plays a very limited role in the syntax of possessive constructions in NAmNo (although there is some interesting variation, particularly on the inter-individual level, as shown by Anderssen et al. 2018 and Eide & Hjelde 2023).

The findings from possessive constructions with bare kinship nouns (Section 6) are slightly different in the sense that there is evidence for a qualitative difference between NAmNo and EurNo, at least for some speakers: Some present-day speakers of NAmNo use the special patterns (i.e., no definite suffix) with

<sup>18</sup>Another example is *kona* ‘the wife’ in (16c) above; this is a complement of a possessive PP which is the possessor of *tremenning* ‘second cousin’, but at the same time it has its own implicit possessor, who is the speaker of the utterance (i.e., the husband).

more kinship terms than what has been attested in EurNo or data from emigrant speakers. However, as Kinn (2021: 212) points out, the change is systematic and restricted – the use of bare forms does not seem to extend beyond kinship nouns. This lends support to the (by now well-established) notion that change in heritage languages does not necessarily involve loss or incompleteness (Hopp & Putnam 2015, Kupisch & Rothman 2016, Bayram et al. 2019), despite the reduced input that heritage languages receive. Heritage languages develop on their own terms, and although the outcomes are not always the same as in the homeland variety, they can be analyzed with the same analytical tools (in this case, an over-generalisation of a pattern already present in the language) (see also Kupisch & Polinsky 2022).

## 8 Conclusion and outlook

This chapter has discussed DP-internal possessive constructions in NAmNo. The homeland variety EurNo has a wide range of possessive constructions; the chapter has shown that the various ways of expressing possession are generally found in NAmNo, too. The majority of the speakers do not display any clear preference for options that converge with English, and the syntactic analyses proposed for EurNo can be extended to NAmNo.

Relevant topics for future research on NAmNo possessive constructions include (but are of course not restricted to) the use of reflexive determiners, for which only some preliminary observations were presented in this chapter, and the pragmatic and information-structural conditions on prenominal and postnominal possessive determiners. Investigations into the latter topic would enhance our understanding of the observed preference for postnominal possessive determiners (generally used when the possessor is topical in present-day EurNo), possibly at the expense of prenominal ones (generally used to focus the possessor in EurNo). Moreover, it could shed light on the more general question of the vulnerability of phenomena at the syntax-pragmatic interface and the difference between core and periphery in grammar (e.g., Sorace 2011, Lohndal et al. 2019 and references therein). In terms of methodologies, it might be beneficial to supplement corpus queries in CANS with experimental data in order to target low-frequency phenomena and aspects of the linguistic competence that relate to comprehension rather than production. However, experimental methods must be chosen with care, especially with elderly heritage speakers such as the speakers of NAmNo (Montrul 2016, Polinsky 2018). Also, as NAmNo is a moribund language, time would be of the essence.

## Abbreviations

CANS	Corpus of American Nordic Speech
DEF	Definite
CLI	Cross-linguistic Influence
CLO	Cross-linguistic Overcorrection
DP	Determiner Phrase
EurNo	European (= homeland) Norwegian
F	Feminine
M	Masculine
MOD.PART	Modal Particle
N	Neuter
NAmNo	North American Norwegian
PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive
PP	Preposition Phrase
REFL	Reflexive
SG	Singular

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## **Part III**

# **The verbal and clausal domains**



# Chapter 6

## Tense, modality, and aspect in North American Norwegian

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This chapter offers an overview over some patterns of TMA-markers (tense, modality, aspect) attested in a corpus of North American Norwegian (NAmNo); a resource spanning 80 years of recordings. The inventories of markers and the contextual restrictions on their use resemble those of the European Norwegian dialects and variants serving here as the primary baseline for comparison (EurNo). However, there are also interesting differences. First, new markers are borrowed from American English (AmE); second, certain constructions and patterns occur with changed frequency over time; third, the inventory of productive distinctions and oppositions tends to reduce for several phenomena. Overall, the more recent TMA-systems are inclined towards simplification as compared with the early recordings, but simultaneously displaying an interesting mix of innovations (e.g. borrowings) and archaisms (old dialectal traits) so often observed in Heritage Language research.

### 1 Introduction: Tense, modality and aspect in heritage language research

Einar Haugen's studies of speakers of Heritage Norwegian in the American Midwest (North American Norwegian; NAmNo) are often considered one of the main starting points of language contact research; hence any endeavor to conduct investigations on his home turf, including Haugen's own recordings, fills one with awe. On the other hand, the topic of the present chapter, TMA-markers – markers of tense, modality, and aspect – started to attract substantial interest within



language contact research only recently, creating a strong imperative to undertake such investigations even for NAmNo. TMA-markers typically appear as verbal suffixes or function words like particles and auxiliaries, and the traditional view on the borrowability of such markers was as expressed by Haugen himself (1956: 67); “function words, which only occur as parts of utterances, are seldom borrowed”.

However, as is often the case, reports were lacking because thorough investigations had not yet taken place, and later studies, like Matras and Sakel’s study of more than 30 language contact situations, demonstrate that exponents of TMA, like other function words, are “borrowed easily and relatively early on in contact situations”; (Sakel 2007: 24; cf. also Östman 1981, Salmons 1990, Boas & Weilbacher 2007, Matras 2009, Matras 2011, a.o.). Still, it seems that function words are less prone to be borrowed and affected by language contact than content words, and among the content words, verbs (typical exponents of TMA, or hosting such exponents) are less affected by contact<sup>1</sup> than nouns and adjectives, according to Tadmor et al.’s (2010) study on 41 sample languages.

Within the formalist framework adopted here “[t]ense, aspect, and modality are grammatical categories that occur as functional heads in clause structure. They are traditionally grouped together by virtue of their semantic cohesion and their frequent morphological clustering or fusion” (Zagona 2013: 746). These functional heads tend to appear in a certain relative order, where mood scopes over tense, in turn scoping over aspect. As free-standing preverbal auxiliaries or particles, TMA-markers often appear in this order (MTA), while the order is reversed for bound markers due to *The Mirror Principle* (Baker 1985). The generalization across free-standing and bound morphemes can be expressed as “relative closeness to the verbal stem”. This generalization, expressed hierarchically as in (1), is attested across approaches and frameworks, e.g. Bybee’s (1985) “principle of relevance”; Van Valin & LaPolla’s (1977) “principle of scope assignment”, and others, cf. Cinque (2014).

- (1) Mood/modality > Tense > Aspect

Formalist approaches to HL-linguistics are still a young field of linguistic research (cf. Kinn & Putnam 2025 [this volume]), and many empirical and theoretical discoveries have yet to be made. With certain exceptions (e.g. Eide & Hjelde

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<sup>1</sup>“Affected by contact” may imply a range of different features, i.e. borrowing of an element or the emergence of a different, usually reduced or in some sense simplified form or system as compared to the *baseline*, i.e. our set of data selected for comparison. Affectedness typically involves omission of distinctions, cf. Section 2.

2012, 2015a,b, 2018, Eide 2019, Eik & Laanemets 2021 and Lykke 2020, 2022), the grammar of NAmNo TMA-markers specifically has undergone modest systematic scrutiny thus far. Still, the recent upsurge of HL-research provides an empirical fundament for drawing generalizations at a more comfortable level of certainty. Findings from studies on TMA in other HLs (e.g. Montrul 2009, 2016, Rodríguez & Brandl 2019, Corbet & Domínguez 2020, Laleko 2008, 2010) provide a point of departure for our study and our expectations on certain trends to emerge in the TMA-systems of NAmNo.

First, as is attested across all languages and frameworks, TMA-systems interact in intricate ways, with markers sharing domains (e.g. possible worlds) and grammatical tasks (e.g. expressing counterfactuality). A TMA-marker may for instance serve to express either tense or modality, and future tense may be expressed by a modal (like English *will*) while past tenses are expressed morphologically (-ed). TMA-markers are restricted at the syntax-pragmatic interface by complex pragmatic restrictions (discourse features) for their felicitous use, and such phenomena are especially prone to cross-linguistic influence (CLI) (Casalicchio & Moroni 2023, Sorace 2004, Tsimpli & Sorace 2006, Sorace & Serratrice 2009, Sorace 2011).

CLI is expected whenever two languages are in contact within a society, i.e. in the minds of language users. Even genetically unrelated languages come to share grammatical features after prolonged contact (*Sprachbunds*)<sup>2</sup> and as NAmNo and AmE have been in close contact for two centuries, we expect to find linguistic change induced by language contact in the NAmNo TMA-grammar. CLI comes in different guises; besides borrowing, mentioned above, convergence may occur, yielding hybrid systems with features from both languages, and different types of affectedness. Affectedness is often described as “simplification”,<sup>3</sup> a notion less straightforward than it seems,<sup>4</sup> but we will assume here that simplifi-

<sup>2</sup>Aikhena (2006: 2), “If two or more languages are in contact, with speakers of one language having some knowledge of the other, they come to borrow, or copy [...] linguistic features and forms of all kinds”.

<sup>3</sup>Especially in contexts of (short-term) extensive adult second language acquisition (Trudgill 2011), due to “the lousy language-learning abilities of the human adult” (Trudgill 2009: 372), compared to the amazing language-learning ability of the human child. Added complexity is a rare result of language contact, but exceptions exist; cf. Thomason (2008) on *Michif*, “the language of the children of French trappers and their Indian wives”, (Bossong 2009: 16). The verbs of Michif are Cree morphosyntactically, the morphosyntax of the noun is French, resulting in an “intertwined” language (Parkvall & Jacobs 2023), more complex than either of the parent languages.

<sup>4</sup>Trudgill (2011), pace Mühlhäusler (1977): Simplification includes 1) regularization of irregularities; 2) increase in lexical/morphological transparency; 3) redundancy reduction (agreement); 4) loss of morphological categories.

cation involves omission of distinctions on one level or another. Based on these observations in other language contact scenarios, our second expectation is that NAmNo TMA-systems will show various CLI-effects, as borrowing, convergence, and simplification.

TMA-markers are typically expressed via verbal suffixes, i.e. morphology, or free-standing particles and auxiliaries, i.e. syntactically. Earlier studies (e.g. Benmamoun et al. 2013, Scontras et al. 2015, Lohndal 2021, Putnam et al. 2021, a.o.) suggest that morphology is more easily affected by language contact than (most) syntactic phenomena, as “inflectional morphology is the linguistic domain most noticeably affected in heritage language grammars” (Montrul 2016: 54); including loss of morphological oppositions and categories. Hence, we expect NAmNo TMA-morphological markers to be more affected than syntactic TMA-markers, i.e. verbal suffixes to be more easily affected than e.g. auxiliaries.

Syntactic and morphological exponents of tense, modality, or aspect often occur simultaneously, and TMA-marking can be quite complex. Tenses can be simple (*went*) or complex (*has gone*), the bounded lexical aspect of *eat the lefse* can be cancelled by adding an unbounded progressive grammatical aspect, as in *She was eating the lefse*. Likewise, in EurNo dialects subjunctive mood is still expressed as inflection on the verb, deontic and dynamic modalities are expressed via modal auxiliaries.<sup>5</sup> In Norwegian dialects these modals may appear with subjunctive inflections, cf. (2a–b) where the modals express ability and obligation. In (2cd) these modalities are counterfactual/hypothetical; cf. Eide et al. (2017).

(2) Norwegian dialect Fosen

- a. Æ konnj hjølp dæm.  
I could.PRET help.INF them  
'I was able to help them.'
- b. Æ mått hjølp dæm.  
I must.PRET help.INF them  
'I had to help them.'
- c. Æ konnja hjørt dæm.  
I could.SUBJ help.PART them  
'I could've helped them.'

<sup>5</sup>Roberts (1985, 1993), and Åfarli (1995), suggest that erosion of mood in Old English and Old Norse is due to increased use of modals (cf. also van Kemenade et al. 2023). However, modals do not entirely replace mood inflections in Old Norse; instead these categories coexist and interact. Modals rather tend to host and preserve mood markings, cf. EurNo data in Eide et al. (2017: 3). Contracted English modals can also be seen as emerging mood markers: *coulda*, *shoulda*, *woulda*, *supposta* (the *a* in *supposta* goes back on *to*, not *have*).

- d. Æ måtta      hjørt      dæm.  
 I must.SUBJ help.PART them  
 'I would have to have helped them.'

HL-speakers tend to replace inflectional morphology with analytic forms (Polinsky 2018: 183, Putnam et al. 2021: 618), favoring the introduction and preservation of function words, like auxiliaries, and reducing morphological exponents, e.g. of mood (imperatives, subjunctives); see Polinsky (2018), Benmamoun et al. (2013), Scontras et al. (2015). This is often discussed in the context of language users' preference for transparency (e.g Polinsky 2018, Putnam et al. 2021). We add this as a fourth point emerging from our investigations: NAmNo TMA-systems include analytical and morphological forms, both types may occur simultaneously, but transparent systems where form and meaning mappings are one-to-one will gain momentum.

Finally, degrees of borrowability and affectedness are also attested *within* systems of TMA, in that some syntactic-semantic categories of TMA markers are more easily borrowed or otherwise affected by language contact. Montrul (2016: 71) summarizes a range of relevant studies on HL-grammars in a hierarchy given here as (2); a hierarchy also supported by other large language contact studies such as Matras & Sakel (2007), Matras (2007: 45).

(3) Mood/modality > Aspect > Tense

The hierarchy claims that mood and modality markers are more prone to be borrowed and affected than markers of aspect, which in turn are more easily affected and borrowed than tense markers. These trends cut across and may level out the effects of the morphology-syntax axis, such that tense – though it is expressed primarily via verbal suffixes in NAmNo – is expected to be less affected by language contact than modality, often appearing as auxiliaries, i.e. syntactic exponents. Interestingly, the hierarchy in (3) does not mirror the one given in (1), and both the hypothesized universal ordering of TMA-markers in (1) and the affectedness hierarchy in (3) face many exceptions and irregularities suggesting that the hierarchies amount to trends more than absolute universals. Adding to the potential confusion, some authors use the term *mood* where others use *modality*; the latter a broader term subsuming morphological mood and analytical exponents like modal auxiliaries (Cinque 1999: 78). Both hierarchies have been modified and refined to distinguish between different types of modalities (e.g. speech act modality, subjunctive vs. indicative moods, epistemic vs. deontic modality), and between different types of tenses (e.g. future tense vs. other

tenses). Aspects likewise can be split into several types, e.g. lexical vs. grammatical aspect, occupying different slots in the hierarchies.

Summing up our first expectations, 1) as “interface” phenomena, we predict that the TMA-systems of NAmNo at large will show CLI affectedness over time; 2) we expect to find several different CLI-effects; borrowing, convergence, and a loss of oppositions and distinctions in certain TMA-domains; 3) we expect morphology (e.g. verbal suffixes) to be more affected than syntax (free-standing auxiliaries); 4) TMA-exponents may be complex and express several TMA-categories simultaneously, e.g. one via its stem (e.g. modal ability) and a different one via its verbal suffix (tense or subjunctive mood), but the drive will be towards one-to-one mappings; 5) we expect affectedness to be high in the domain of mood/modality, low in the tense domain, with aspectual domains in the middle.

By the wording “high and low affectedness” I make no attempt at explicitly quantifying over occurrences of a marker or certain phenomenon over time. The data in this chapter are taken from many different speakers, generations, settlements, and different times, with much intra- and interindividual variation. The examples attest to linguistic change but come with no claim of statistically significant values for the tokens, types, or categories shown. Instead, the data serve to illustrate an overview over a wide range of phenomena, and our expectations will guide the search for trends and fluctuations in the material, still enlightening when paired with knowledge of what sociologically characterizes the same time spans.

In the next section I discuss some fundamental issues regarding the speakers, the input and the baselines relevant to this investigation. In the remainder of the paper Section 3 discusses mood and modality in NAmNo, Section 4 investigates the aspectual domain, and Section 5 is concerned with tense and finiteness in NAmNo. Section 6 sums up and concludes the chapter.

## **2 Speakers of NAmNo, affectedness and input, and baselines**

A typical Heritage Language (HL) speaker by today’s consensus is a bilingual who shifted from their (minority) heritage language to the dominant language of the society when attending school, and many of the speakers providing data to the current investigation, especially from Haugen’s own recordings, fall under this category. However, since Haugen’s recordings over the years have been complemented by those of a range of successors, resulting in a corpus spanning 80 years of recordings (the CANS corpus; cf. Kinn & Putnam 2025 [this volume]), the

HL-speakers of NAmNo discussed in this chapter spread along a much broader continuum. Many different definitions of heritage speakers exist; cf. for instance Benmamoun et al. (2013: 260):

Defined broadly [...] a heritage speaker is anyone who has an ethnic, cultural or other connection with a language, regardless of whether that person learned the heritage language as a child. Defined narrowly, a person is a heritage speaker if and only if he or she grew up learning the heritage language and has some proficiency in it.

Although all speakers included in this investigation fall under the narrow definition quoted here, huge differences may exist between the language and the linguistic situation of Haugen's speakers – many still conducting their daily affairs in Norwegian, listening to Norwegian services in church, reading Norwegian newspapers, books and letters from the homeland, some selecting Norwegian as a foreign language in high school – and the HL-speakers recorded in 2010 and after. The latter typically learned Norwegian from their grandparents, and after these grandparents were gone, the contexts in which Norwegian was spoken were usually few and far apart, which clearly affects the speaker's fluency of speech and processing of NAmNo.

The recordings discussed in this chapter span almost a century and mirror the contemporary sociolinguistic history of a society where potential contexts for natural use of the heritage language occur more rarely for each generation, gradually limited to conversations with close family members, confining the HL to a “home language”. This again affects the potential quantity, quality, and diversity of the HL-input that the speaker is likely to receive, in turn affecting the properties of their NAmNo, including their TMA-systems. The residing sources of HL-input provide the heritage speaker with fewer contexts to acquire fine-grained nuances and contextual restrictions of particular linguistic forms, affecting the vocabulary size – the HL-speakers of recent recordings usually possess a smaller and less specialized (productive) vocabulary than earlier generations, leading to the register reduction attested in many HLs. Moreover, the production of later generations of HL-speakers usually inclines toward structural simplification, visible through a reduction or omission of certain distinctions available to previous generations of NAmNo speakers and old and new speakers of contemporary EurNo. This loss of (mostly formal) distinctions seems to be a hallmark of bilingualism and language contact, cf. e.g. this early statement from Vogt (1948: 39).

[O]n observe souvent qu'une langue ..... perd des distinctions formelles, dans des circonstances qui rendent l'hypothèse d'influence étrangère assez naturelle.<sup>6</sup>

Loss of oppositions can thus be seen mainly as a result of less input from each language, characteristic of any bilingual situation.<sup>7</sup> Consider the potential relation between HL input and the maintenance of a certain productive opposition in EurNo. Whenever the EurNo variety contains two or more exponents of a closely related morphosyntactic feature, e.g. two different TMA-markers, sophisticated contextual restrictions may regulate the selection between the two. It does not suffice that both variants are present in the input to some extent; to learn the felicitous uses of both, the learner must first discover the two different forms available, then proceed to identify the differences between them. However, to observe the different forms in sufficiently abundant different contexts to learn the pragmatic restrictions for each form requires substantial contextually diverse input. In HL acquisition diversity of contexts tends to reside (Gollan et al. 2015), and contexts ultimately may be too few to learn the original context-dependent restrictions on the use of each of the two markers. As the rules for the opposition is not acquired, it is in effect omitted, and the language learner might as well settle for acquiring only one of the variants to cover the domain previously split between two markers.

Contextual restrictions on morphosyntactic markers operate on the interface between syntax and pragmatics, a well-known challenge for bilinguals (Sorace 2004, Tsimpli & Sorace 2006, Sorace & Serratrice 2009, Sorace 2011), and omission of a distinction is especially likely to occur where several domains of grammar interact. Attested cases in NAmNo HL include the presence vs. absence of resumptive pronouns in topicalizations (Bousquette et al. 2021), the choice of topicalization structures vs. SVO-structures (Eide & Hjelde 2015b, Westergaard & Lohndal 2019, Bousquette et al. 2021), and prenominal vs. post-nominal possessives (Westergaard & Anderssen 2015). These studies on NAmNo attest how one of the variants prevails over the other variant, which eventually occurs less frequently or not at all. Though fostering ambiguity, omission of oppositions yield simplification as two variants reduce to one.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted here from Trudgill (2011). Translation: “It can often be observed that a language loses formal distinctions in circumstances in which the hypothesis of a foreign influence is very natural.”

<sup>7</sup>But cf. Corbet & Domínguez (2020: 15), following Cuza & Miller (2015), Polinsky & Scontras (2020): Simplification is often due to divergence in the input, but also to innovation in HL-speaking children’s grammars.

The same type of mechanism can be argued to apply to borrowing or transfer. The NAmNo modal marker *sopst* ‘supposed to’ (Eide & Hjelde 2012) is absent from all variants of contemporary and current EurNo, hence likely borrowed from the dominant language AmE. At the outset, *be supposed to* comes with the contextual restriction “English linguistic context,” in opposition to the Norwegian modal auxiliary *skulle*, in turn contextually restricted to all-Norwegian contexts. Semantically, in EurNo *skulle* conveys the same two modal meanings as *be supposed to*, social obligation (deontic reading) and hear-say (evidential reading), cf. Eide (2005). For the first speakers to introduce *sopst* into NAmNo, restriction “English context” is relaxed, and for the next generation there is already conflicting evidence from the input as some speakers use *sopst* even in Norwegian contexts. Eventually there is too little evidence from input to uphold the distinction between *sopst* and *skulle*, and both are used in NAmNo.<sup>8</sup>

The acquisition and maintenance<sup>9</sup> of two or more similar variants in an opposition is thus likely to depend on whether the input is “rich” enough to provide the relevant contextual cues. An ongoing debate within HL-research discusses whether quantity, quality or diversity of input is more important. According to Meisel (2011), frequency remains a poor predictor for language change, as we have no good estimate on what constitutes the threshold frequency for acquiring a feature from HL-input. The issue likely has idiosyncratic aspects as certain speakers will rely on diversity more than quantity, some will need more input than others to transform HL-input data to useful intake material. Moreover, even though we have much data on spoken and written varieties, available in principle in the society as input to the different generations of NAmNo speakers, in practice there is no way to determine to what extent the individual subject made use of all possible available opportunities to practice their NAmNo, how much of the available input was *actual* input, intake and eventually internalized as a grammar of each of the individual speakers that happened to be recorded e.g. for the CANS corpus. Even if we subject speakers to elaborate interviews, linguistic self-reporting is unreliable, an observation going back to Labov (1972) and reconfirmed many times since.

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<sup>8</sup>The data in CANS suggest that *skulle* and *sopst* come to share the domain between them, as no instances of *skulle* are unambiguously evidential. Instead, *skulle* acts as a future marker (corresponding to *will*), cf. sect. 5.2

<sup>9</sup>For most of our informants we have no principled way of knowing whether a certain opposition was present in their production at an earlier stage, or never acquired in the first place. Polinsky (2018: 18) lists 1) transfer from the dominant language, 2) attrition across the lifespan, and 3) divergent attainment as possible explanations for deviation from a baseline. Cf. Kinn (2020) for enlightening discussions on these notions specifically for NAmNo.

HL-studies observe omission of oppositions of many types, but authors disagree on whether the different cases are best described as contact-induced simplification, convergence, or transfer/borrowing. Most studies feature English as the dominant language surrounding the immigrant society (Montrul 2016, Benmamoun et al. 2013), and as English has few formal grammatical oppositions compared to most HL-languages investigated, transfer from English may be hard to separate from the simplification otherwise attested in language contact (and even in monolingual, language-internal linguistic change, e.g. grammaticalization).

Borrowing or transfer implies a direction from a source language (here AmE) to a recipient language (here NAmNo). No directionality is implied in the notion *convergence*, implying instead an expectation of the emergence of hybrid phenomena, incorporating features from both languages. Matras (2009) discusses how any bilingual will look for overlap between their two linguistic systems, as maintaining a strict separation requires cognitively costly selection procedures to match the language to the context. Lowering the bar between the two languages and “allowing patterns to converge” thus maximizes “the efficiency of speech production in a bilingual situation” (Matras 2009: 151, 237; cf. also Wald 1987, an early proponent of these ideas). Again *spos* is a convenient example. Though *spos* has been subject to some legitimate linguistic interest since first discussed in Eide & Hjelde (2012, 2015a), no investigation has determined whether its syntactic features are maintained from EurNo or borrowed from AmE. Instead, the syntactic features of *spos* seem to converge on both EurNo and AmE patterns (Putnam & Søfteland 2022: 329); cf. also Section 5.2.<sup>10,11</sup>

In the previous discussion EurNo is the explicit comparison for NAmNo, i.e. the *baseline*. Using monolingual homeland speakers,<sup>12</sup> present or past, as a default baseline for HL-grammar production may seem straightforward, but

<sup>10</sup>Convergence also captures the principle of L1/L2 Non-interference in Roeper (2016: 3): “Rules from L1 may apply in L2 as long as no obligatory module from either language is violated or ignored.”

<sup>11</sup>In one example the selectional requirements of an infinitival complement are suspended, cf. (i) from speaker mabel\_MN\_01gk. Here the complement is finite, with a visible nominative subject and a finite present verb.

- (i) Va re i går du va spåos te du jør de?  
was it yesterday you were spos to you do it  
'Was it yesterday you were supposed to do it?

<sup>12</sup>To the extent that monolingual speakers exist, which they do not, according to theories of “universal bilingualism” Roeper (1999), multiple grammar theory (Amaral & Roeper 2014), and parallel grammars (Eide & Sollid 2011, Eide & Åfarli 2020). Cf. also the discussions in Wiese et al. (2022), see Eide & Hjelde (2023) for details. Recent studies conclude that earlier bilingual studies underestimate the variation found in monolingual native speaker control groups, i.e.

recently the notion of *baseline* has been questioned and refined within HL-linguistics, e.g. Polinsky (2018), Aalberse et al. (2019).

Something like a “methodological control” is a “well-known, essential part of the standard scientific method” employed in human social sciences; hence is inevitable also in heritage language studies, Rothman et al. (2023: 317). Serratrice (2020) discusses recent seminal HL-studies and notes that the term “baseline” is used in at least three different ways: 1) The language that served as the input for acquisition; 2) The diasporic variety spoken by first-generation immigrants; and 3), Homeland monolingual subjects. Rothman et al. (2023) object to using the latter as a default baseline. First, it sends the message that monolingualism is the “norm” state of linguistic knowledge (but cf. e.g. De Houwer (2021) for the observation that globally, multilingualism is the norm). Second, explicitly stated or implicitly inferred, the homeland monolingual variety already has some “privileged status” in the HL community, making it “the ubiquitous target and/or benchmark”. Third, as stated by Wiese et al. (2022):

A[nother] – implicit or explicit – requirement, often found in heritage language research, is that in order to be fully recognized as such, a native speaker has to master a repertoire that also involves standard or formal registers of their heritage language. [...] Since such registers are learned primarily in the context of formal education, heritage speakers often only acquire them for the majority language, which would then exclude them from the group of proficient native speakers of their heritage language.

This requirement would likewise efficiently exclude present-day speakers of NAmNo from scoring at “native levels”, since they too received their formal education in English, the dominant language of their society, not in Norwegian, although written registers and school-like contexts were available to NAmNo speakers in the earliest time periods we are studying (cf. below). Montrul (2016:

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the baseline (Dąbrowska et al. 2020), who show “a degree of lexical and morphosyntactic variation that [is] sometimes higher than that of bilinguals” (Wiese et al. 2022). To present this variation as non-existing or theoretically unimportant is neither “true, defensible, nor helpful” (Rothman et al. 2023). Dąbrowska et al. (2020) notes that L2 learners often score as high as, sometimes higher than native controls. E.g. Wakabayashi (1996) requires a score at 100% from L2 subjects to for their production to be “nativelike” (though not all natives score this high). Dąbrowska (2012) shows how “nativelike behavior” of actual native speakers hinges on high education. This suggests a biased perspective on below-ceiling scores in the two populations. For L2 and HL speakers, lower scores suggest inadequate attainment or language attrition (i.e. a deficiency). For native controls variation is ascribed to meaningful selection of items (i.e. a resource).

174ff.) acknowledges that using the monolingually raised native speakers as baseline promotes the monolingual biases mentioned above.

[However, this] comparison cannot be avoided entirely, especially when it is necessary to answer specific and important research questions. [Without it,] we would not be able to understand how one language influences the other during development, or to tease apart developmental versus transfer errors in second language and bilingual acquisition. We would not be able to understand diachronic change in a language that develops independently versus change in the same language in contact with another language.

In the case of NAmNo and the trends reported here, there are ideally several relevant baselines; the time span of 80 years of recordings and a fairly substantial conception of the selected society during this period allows us, at least in principle, to stipulate different baselines for different times; cf. Larsson & Johannessen (2015), Lykke (2020), van Baal (2022), Eik & Laanemets (2021), Kinn & Larsson (2022), and Eide & Hjelde (2023, forthcoming). To fully understand the NAmNo data, especially when studying the several different development paths of tense exponents and their relatives in the TMA-domain, ideally several intermediate steps in the development should be identified, representing different idealized generations, *cohorts*, in the diachronic development (adapted from Eide & Hjelde 2023; see also Table 4 in Section 5).

Table 1: Breakdown of the cohorts of NAmNo speakers (Eide & Hjelde 2023)

Cohort	I	II	III	IV	V
Born	Around 1870	1900–1920	1920–1930	1940–1950	after 1950

For some cohorts, e.g. the years 1945–1985, we have little speech data. Instead, we make qualified conjectures about the input of these cohorts based on the documented written input available, i.e. the number and volume of Norwegian newspapers published in the period, the number of parochial schools taught in local Norwegian Lutheran churches, the number of church services and confirmations conducted in Norwegian, and the status of Norwegian as the only foreign language offered in local schools. These extrapolated data allow for assumptions about the written input and the spoken formal “church language”, whereas the more home-based spoken registers from this period (1945–1985) are less well documented, cf. Eide & Hjelde (2023).

### 3 Mood and modality in NAmNo

According to our expectations listed in Section 1, modality is easily affected in language contact, strongly related to contextual-pragmatic restrictions on the famously vulnerable pragmatic-syntactic interface. We expect mood, i.e. modality expressed via morphology, to be more affected than any other TMA-category. Montrul (2016: 54) duly notes:

Perhaps the verbal category that is most affected in heritage languages is mood in languages that express it morphologically. That is, not all languages express modality overtly in the grammar, but those which do present a challenge to heritage speakers when it comes to the expression of mood.

For NAmNo it is relevant to point out that non-indicative moods, especially the Old Norse subjunctives, were clearly moribund already in EurNo when the immigrants left the “old country” (cf. Eide 2010, Hjelde 1992). In some settlements and certain frequently appearing contexts, the subjunctive was however present in NAmNo speakers’ input for a longer time. Finite mood markers in NAmNo constitute the topic of Section 3.1. In Sections 3.2 and 3.3 we look at non-finite mood morphology and modal auxiliaries, respectively.

#### 3.1 Finite moods: Subjunctive 1 and 2, imperatives and replacement forms

Contemporary Norwegian has almost no morphologically encoded finite mood distinctions, apart from the split between indicative and imperative, but in Old Norse the subjunctive was quite productive and occurred frequently in the old saga texts. The two morphologically distinct subjunctives split the domain of subjunctive meanings between them; the “present subjunctive” or subjunctive 1 expressed optative meanings like desires, wants, wishes, demands, and the “past subjunctive” or subjunctive 2 expressed hypothetical and counterfactual meanings (cf. Eide 2010 for details).<sup>13</sup> The latter tasks came to be expressed by the plus-perfect in Mainland Scandinavian; but the subjunctive 1 continued to be present

<sup>13</sup>The difference between the “present” and “past” subjunctive is clearly not one of temporality, but of distance to reality, cf. Iversen (1990: 142) on Old Norse. Thieroff (2004: 319):

The subjunctive 1 and the subjunctive 2 do not differ regarding time reference. For example, both *er singe* and *er sänge* have non-past time reference and differ only with regard to their modal meaning. In contrast, in the indicative the present form *er singt* has non-past reference, whereas the preterit form *er sang* has past time reference. The same behavior holds for the subjunctive forms in all German (and in most other European) languages.

in the input of NAmNo speakers for many generations. One text NAmNo speakers likely heard and recited on a regular basis is *The Lord's Prayer*, possessing a central position in the Liturgy of Norwegian Lutheran Churches. The 1930 edition of The Lord's Prayer features many present subjunctive verb forms.

(4) Fader vår (The Lord's Prayer)

Fader vår, du som er i himmelen! Helliget vorde ditt navn;  
Father poss, you who are in heaven! Hallowed be.SUBJ1 your name  
komme ditt rike; Skje din vilje, som i himmelen, så  
come.SUBJ1 your kingdom Happen.SUBJ1 your will, as in heaven so  
og på jorden  
also on earth

'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.'

Also, in many hymns the optative was very much in use, like hymn number 620, *Syng vi av hjertens grund* 'Let us sing from the bottom of our hearts' from *Landstad's Book of Hymns for Lutheran Christians* (1909). In this case the prevalent reading seems to be hortative ('let us').

(5) Syng vi av hjertens Grund, Love Gud med Maal og  
Sing.SUBJ1 we of heart.DEF.POSS ground Praise.SUBJ1 God with voice and  
Mund  
mouth

'Let us sing from the bottom of our hearts, let us praise God with our voices.'

In Old Norse the subjunctive occurred most frequently with copulas. Hjelde (1992) notes that some NAmNo speakers still use the subjunctive with copulas *være* 'be', *bli*, *verte* 'become'.

With many of my America-trønder informants I found that the subjunctive of the verb *å vera* 'to be' still was in use. For this verb they maintained the distinction between /va:/ in indicative and /vo:/ in the subjunctive. The same is true for the verb *å verte* where the indicative preterit is der /vart:/ and the subjunctive form is /vort:/. It is true that even American English may use the subjunctive with the verb *be*, like in the sentence *If I were you*. But even if American English has some relics of the subjunctive, I see no reason to assume that the NAmNo subjunctive forms are a result of transfer

since both /vo:/ and /vort:/ still exist in the old dialect of Inntrøndsk.<sup>14</sup> (My translation).

In contrast, the CANS corpus contains no subjunctives in the production of NAmNo speakers; the attribute *mood* has only has ‘imperative’ not ‘subjunctive’, as a potential value.<sup>15,16,17</sup>

- (6) a. Se der, Nystuggu.  
 look there, new.house.DEF  
 ‘Look, the new house.’ (albert\_lea\_MN\_01gk, rec. 2010)

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<sup>14</sup><sup>a</sup>Hos mange av dei Amerika-trønske informantane mine fann [eg] at konjunktiv av verbet å *vere* enno vart nytta. For dette verbet skilde dei mellom /va:/ i indikativ og /vo:/ i konjunktiv. Det same gjeld også for verbet å *verte*, der indikativforma i preteritum er /vart:/ og konjunktivforma /vort:/. Rett nok kan også amerikansk ha konjunktiv av verbet *to be*, som t.d. i setningen *If I were you*. Men sjølv om også amerikansk har nokre restar av konjunktiv, ser eg ingen grunn til å rekne dei norske konjunktivformene som eit resultat av interferens av di bade /vo:/ og /vort:/ enno finst i gammalt inntrøndsk mål.”

<sup>15</sup>Hjelde’s recordings are also incorporated into CANS, with certain exceptions. Some recordings were left out of CANS; e.g. because of privacy agreements, others because of the topics discussed require discretion.

<sup>16</sup>The CANS data are rendered here with a unique informant code. To give the reader an impression of whether the informant belongs to the very early or more recent generations of speakers, I have chosen to indicate the year of recording for each example taken from the CANS corpus. Also, the rendition of the examples in this chapter deviates from that of all the other chapters in this volume in that in this chapter the CANS examples are rendered in a semi-phonetic transcription. As stated in the introductory chapter of the book, the editors have opted for orthographic transcriptions as the default, and they give good reasons for this choice. However, in the present chapter the phonetic forms seem rather important, especially those which are clearly fused or hybrid forms containing features from AmE as well as EurNo, e.g. examples in (16), e.g. (16a) given here as (i). The orthographic transcription “far could not e kunne ikke få em petroleum” suggests that there is code-switching between AmE and NAmNo in this case, but the semi-phonetic transcription shows instead that the first modal is “kudd”, with a Norwegian pronunciation, not could, with an AmE pronunciation. Since I will make a point of these fused or hybrid forms, I have two options; either opt for coherence with the rest of the chapters in this volume or else opt for coherence across the present chapter. I chose the latter option, which makes the data rendition in this chapter stand out from that of the other chapters, although I try to minimize the semi-phonetic transcription to the relevant cases. I apologize to readers confused by this choice.

- (i) Far kuddn’t #ee# kunna ikke få petroleum.  
 Dad couldn’t      could not get petroleum  
 ‘Dad couldn’t get hold of gas.’ (harmony\_MN\_01gk, rec. 2010)

<sup>17</sup>A verb often tagged as imperative is *se* ‘see’, cf. (6abc). Formally an imperative, its function in NAmNo is often as a discourse particle, likely transfer from AmE ‘you see’, as only a few dialects of EurNo feature this particle.

- b. Det var verdt turen å få **se** det.  
it was worth trip.DEF to get see.INF it  
'It was worth the trip to get to see it.' (chicago\_IL\_01gk, rec. 2010)
- c. **Se**, det var ikke land å ta i Nord-Dakota mere.  
see there was not land to take in North Dakota anymore  
'See, there was no more land to take in North Dakota.'  
(stillwater\_MN\_01gm, rec. 2010)
- d. Å, unnskyld, ja.  
oh excuse yes  
'Oh, excuse me!' (chicago\_IL\_01gk, rec. 2010)

Although the imperative of the verb *se* 'see' is homophonous with the infinitive (6ab), in NAmNo as well as in EurNo, the imperative in EurNo usually differs from the infinitive and the present as the imperative form is the verb stem (cf. 6d), the infinitive has an *-e* suffix. A phonological rule sometimes adds a final *-e* to the imperative to ease pronunciation (Rice 2003). Infinitives and imperatives may be homophonous, especially in dialects where apocope deletes a final unstressed *-e* even with infinitives. However, syncretism occurring between the present tense and an imperative ending is quite rare in EurNo. This happens in NAmNo, though. The example in (7) is from informant "Lena", who clearly uses the present tense verb form as an imperative (cf. Eide & Hjelde 2015b for details).

- (7) Får sjå nå....  
let.PRES see.INF now  
'Let's see now.' (blair\_WI\_04gk, rec. 2010.)  
*Baseline: Få sjå nå*

As mentioned above, the Old Norse Subjunctive 2 expresses counterfactuality and hypothetical situations, in contemporary Norwegian and Swedish replaced by the plusperfect. The plusperfect itself is not very frequent in NAmNo, and among the examples found, few are counterfactuals. Montrul (2016: 62, 70) discusses several HL-studies where first generations of HL-speakers use counterfactuals, conditionals, and subjunctive moods to express different degrees of hypothetical reasoning, whereas already the second generation tends to replace the different exponents of degrees of possibility and certainty by indicative morphology, and compound constructions by simpler ones (e.g. Silva-Corvalán 1994). This simplified TMA-system does not differentiate morphosyntactically between more or less possible situations.

The plusperfect consists of a preterit auxiliary *ha(dde)* ‘had’ and a past participle main verb. A feature of many of the Norwegian dialects brought over by the immigrants is the invariant auxiliary (*ha*) (cf. Eide 2021 for details on the extension of this auxiliary); i.e. the auxiliary has the form *ha* in the infinitive, present and preterit. Invariant *ha* in EurNo occurs only as an auxiliary, never as a lexical verb; the latter has ordinary present and past forms (e.g. *har*, *hadde*) (cf. also Section 5.1). In standard EurNo these are the forms also for the auxiliary. CANS contains many plusperfects with invariant *ha*, but also many examples with the more “written standard-like” *hadde*, and sometimes both occur in the same utterance, cf. (8d).

- (8) a. E ønsker at e hadde lerrd te å læsa det og skrive det.  
I wish that I had learned to read it and write it  
'I wish I had learned to read and write it.' (billings\_MT\_01gm, rec. 2012)
- b. Ha e vårr kjuge år yngre så kannskji.  
have I been.PART twenty years younger then maybe  
'Had I been twenty years younger, then maybe.'  
(coon\_valley\_WI\_02gm, rec. 2010)
- c. Vi ha ællrin kommi ti å färstin färsto nå  
we have never come to understood.PART understood.PRET any  
nåssjt hell laga hell.  
Norwegian or speak or...  
'We would never have understood or spoken any Norwegian.'  
(coon\_valley\_WI\_07gk, rec. 2010)
- d. Kanskje ha vøri annsjless viss kona hadde vør norsk  
maybe had been different if wife.DEF had been Norwegian  
veit du.  
know you  
'Maybe it would have been different if the wife had been Norwegian,  
you know.' (ulen\_MN\_03gm, rec. 2014)

The contracted AmE modal forms *coulda*, *shoulda*, *woulda*, and also *s(up)posta* can quite easily be analyzed as (emerging) mood markers (cf. note 5), coding counterfactuality or irrealis. We also find examples of this kind in NAmNo, cf. (9ab) from CANS and (9c) from Eide & Hjelde (2015b: 258). Note that the English modals *should* and *could*, and also the semi-modal *supposed to* are pronounced with NAmNo phonology and occurred in all-Norwegian sentences in

these examples. These are evidently borrowings from AmE, what Matras & Sakel (2007) would refer to as *matter replication*, where a form (*sjudda*) and its meaning (counterfactual) is copied from the source language, although pronounced with NAmNo phonology, but also converge on EurNo dialectal patterns. For *vudda* (*woulda*), I found no examples with NAmNo phonology or outside an English context.

- (9) a. [E] sjudd a spørt mye.  
I shoulda asked a lot.  
'I should have asked a lot.' (hatton\_ND\_04gk, rec. 2010)
- b. Ja, romm kudd hævv skup upp, ja.  
yes they could have scooped up yes  
'Yes, they could have scooped it up, right.' (glasgow\_MT\_01gm, rec. 2012)
- c. [D]u va itj spost te å ji dæm nå mat.  
you weren't sposta to give them any food  
'You were not supposed to give them any food.' (appleton\_MN\_01gm, rec. 1987)

These examples attest to the high borrowability of modality markers, as predicted, both syntactic (*sjudd*) and morphological (-*a*), and simultaneously demonstrate that morphological mood markers – usually seen as prone to erosion and “perhaps the verbal category that is most affected in heritage languages”, according to Montrul (2016) – are still present even in later generations. The preservation of old dialectal modal traits like invariant *ha* also attests to the fact that certain archaic NAmNo modal markers are capable of surviving a diaspora lasting for almost two centuries (although our recordings only span half of that time).

### 3.2 Irrealis infinitives: Non-finite mood morphology

Non-finite mood markings also appear on non-finite forms in most spoken varieties of Norwegian, though never recognized in any of the two written standards, seemingly due to an historical fluke.<sup>18</sup> I refer to this construction as *have-less perfects* (Eide 2021), cf. (10ab); traditionally analyzed as perfects with an omitted auxiliary *ha* ‘have’. In EurNo they appear after counterfactual (formally preterit) modals, cf. (10a), and as infinitival complements, cf. (10b). The written norm disallows the infinitival marker *å* ‘to’ to appear with what is seemingly a past participle, and writers resort to the homophonous coordinator *og* ‘and’ to substitute

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Aasen (1864). Aasen laid the groundwork for *Nynorsk* and decided (rather arbitrarily) that these constructions not qualify as infinitives, which made norm. Cf. Eide (2011b, 2021), Aa (2022), and Sandøy (1991).

for *å*, cf. (10b). If the analysis of ‘have-deletion’ had merit and *og* was the right marker, one would expect (10b’), with *ha* “retained”, to be grammatical with *og*, but it is not – only with *å*.

- (10) a. EurNo

Vi skulle reist i går.  
we should left.PART yesterday  
'We should have left yesterday.'

- b. EurNo<sup>19</sup>

Det hadde vært så hyggelig og visst hvem de var.  
it had been so nice and known who they were  
'It would have been so nice to know who they were.'

- b' EurNo

Det hadde vært så hyggelig å/\*og ha visst hvem de var.  
it had been so nice to/and have known who they were  
'It would have been so nice to know who they were.'

- c. Hallingdalen dialect

Fått'n se kji kvæmmfolk, så døytt'n.  
gotten he himself not womanfolk then died.PART he  
'If he doesn't get himself a woman, he might die.'

Sandøy (1991, 2008), Julien (2003), and Eide (2011b, 2021), analyze these “participles” as irrealis infinitives. Diachronically deriving from subjunctives, they appear even in finite functions and positions in many Norwegian dialects (cf. 10c); importantly, in dialects spoken in areas of Norway where many of the immigrants had their origin.

The finite “participle” (cf. 10c) is unattested in NAmNo, but the “irrealis infinitive” is frequent in CANS, after counterfactual modals (11abc) and as infinitival complements (11de). These forms rarely appear in edited writing; hence they are commonly transmitted via spoken NAmNo. Like in EurNo written texts, they often appear in CANS with *og* ‘and’, not *å* ‘to’.<sup>20</sup>

- (11) a. E kunna jorrt det bære.

I could done.PART it better

'I could have done better' (billings\_MT\_01gm, rec. 2012)

<sup>19</sup>[https://www.nrk.no/telemark/tidenes-bryllupsbilde-\\_men-aner-ikke-hvem-brudeparet-er1.13615318](https://www.nrk.no/telemark/tidenes-bryllupsbilde-_men-aner-ikke-hvem-brudeparet-er1.13615318)

<sup>20</sup>Signe Laake (p.c): The annotators recognized the participle-looking form as an infinitive, but because of Norwegian *pseudo-coordination* with e.g. posture verbs, e.g. *sitter og spiser*, lit. *sits and eats*, ‘is eating’ (cf. Section 4.2), a normative tradition exists for *og* in functions besides coordination, and the annotators were advised to use *og*.

- b. Det måtte vøri        nokså tåfft.  
it must been.PART quite tough  
'That must have been quite hard.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm, rec. 2010)
- c. Mæn jæ sjudd    nå    jort        dæ.  
but I should now done.PART it  
'But I still should have done it.' (portland\_ND\_01gm, rec. 2012)
- d. Je sku        likt        å hatt en akksjon je å,    men.  
I should liked.PART to had and auction I too but  
'I too should have liked to have had an auction.' (blair\_WI\_01gm, rec. 2010)
- e. Dåm ha villa        vørri falig        å vårri        rundt veit du.  
they had will.PART been dangerous to be.PART around know you  
'They would have been dangerous to be around, you know.'  
(coon\_valley\_WI\_20gm, rec. 1992)<sup>21</sup>

In some EurNo dialects the “infinitive guised as participle” has meanings other than counterfactual (Sandøy 1991), but only the counterfactual type, attested in spoken varieties all over Norway, is attested in CANS, i.e. the “irrealis infinitive”. I replace the coordinator conjunction *og* appearing in these examples in CANS with *å* in my rendering of the data; cf. Eide (2021) and Aa (2022) for a more detailed justification of this choice.

### 3.3 Modal auxiliaries: Inventory and syntax

In the previous examples we see that NAmNo employs modal forms clearly borrowed from the dominant language AmE; e.g. *kudd* ‘could’, *sjudd* ‘should’, and *spost* ‘supposed to’. It is also evident that many speakers have both the borrowed form and the EurNo form in their vocabulary. There are many instances where speakers correct themselves, replacing the borrowed AmE-form with the more EurNo-like one, cf. examples in (12).

- (12) a. Far kuddn't #ee# kunna ikke få petroleum.  
Dad couldn't could not get petroleum  
'Dad couldn't get hold of gas.' (harmony\_MN\_01gk, rec. 2010)
- b. Den kjerringa sa kanhende du sjudd #du sku# sjå på Heddal.  
that woman said maybe you should you should look at Heddal  
'That woman said, maybe you should look at Heddal.'  
(harmony\_MN\_01gk, rec. 2010)

<sup>21</sup>For this particular recording the recording year is not entered, but it is likely to be 1992.

- c. Vi hædd ski, vi kudd #vi kunne ski e skol.  
 we had skies, we could we could ski to school  
 'We had skies, we could ski to school.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_12gm, rec. 2012)

Certain differences between AmE and EurNo modals make them an interesting testing ground with respect to potential syntactic transfer (cf. Eide 2005, chapter 2). AmE-modals occur in non-finite forms only, thus do not stack, unlike EurNo-modals, which appear as both finite and non-finite. Also, as most Germanic modals, except English and Icelandic ones, EurNo-modals feature verbless directional complements (cf. 14 below).

- (13) a. E driver tenke på å skø reise over igjen.  
 I continue think on to shall travel over again  
 'I am thinking about traveling over there again.' (harmony\_MN\_02gk, rec. 2010)
- b. For å kunne overleve di måtte ta inn forskjellige.  
 for to can survive they must take in different.PL  
 'To be able to survive they had to take different people in.'  
 (seattle\_WA\_03gm, rec. 2012)
- c. Vi kvinnfolka ha måtta ligge på på hand og kne og  
 we womenfolk have must.PART lie on hand and knee and  
 skura golv.  
 scrub.PART floors  
 'We have had to lie on our hands and knees to scrub the floors.'  
 (coon\_valley\_WI\_45gk, rec. 1942)
- d. E veit itte hå årstal dømm a kunna kommi, men.  
 I know not what year they have could come but  
 'I don't know what year they may have come.' (westby\_WI\_11gm, rec. 2011)
- e. Det a måtta vøre strevsamt.  
 that have must been arduous  
 'That had to have been arduous.' (madison\_MN\_07gm, rec. 2016)
- f. Dåm ha villa vørri falig å vårri rundt  
 they had will.PART been dangerous to be.PART around.  
 'They would have been dangerous to be around.'  
 (coon\_valley\_WI\_20gm, rec. year missing)

- g. Men det e spås te regne i mårå sie rømm.  
but it is supposed to rain tomorrow say them  
'But it is supposed to rain tomorrow, they say.'  
(coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm, rec. 2010)

Finite and non-finite modals are attested in CANS and occur with both deontic (or root) and epistemic (and evidential) readings, where the deontic reading is e.g. social obligation or permission (*John must/may v*), while the epistemic reading concerns the speaker's evaluation of the truth of a proposition (*It must/may be the case that John is v-ing*). Non-finite modals favor root readings, and by traditional assumption non-finite modals never denote epistemic readings, but cf. Eide (2011a) for massive counterevidence from both Germanic and Romance.

Against this background, it is quite intriguing that although examples (13a–c) are clearly deontic, examples (13d–f) are all more natural on an epistemic reading. In Norwegian epistemic readings of modals in the present perfect are non-standard, i.e. rarely appear in edited writing. Thus, the pattern attested in (13d–f) with epistemic modals in the present perfect, is clearly transmitted orally. Finally, (13g) features an evidential 'hear-say' reading of the borrowed modal *spost*; this is also the non-root reading it has in AmE.

Modals are often ambiguous between a root and a non-root reading. The root reading of *spos*, 'social obligation' is however not possible in (13g), as you cannot place a social obligation on the weather. This root reading is however illustrated in (14e); modals with directionals never allow epistemic readings, cf. Eide (2005). NAmNo features stacked modals (14a–b) and non-verbal directionals (14c–e), both clearly transmitted from EurNo. Though such examples exist, even with the borrowed modal *spos* (14e), the constructions in (14) are very infrequent in the CANS corpus.

- (14) a. Å ja, det skulle e nå kunna [...]  
oh yes that should I now can  
'Oh yes, I think I should be able to do that.' (chetek\_WI\_01gk, rec. 1942)
- b. ...hvor villt dei kunn være.  
...where would they can be  
'...where they might be.' (fargo\_ND\_06gm, rec. 2014)
- c. Han skulle tell Kannada, Sæsskætun  
he should to Canada, Saskatoon  
'He was going to Canada, Saskatoon.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_03gm, rec. 2010)

- d. Da måtte han hem att.  
then must he home again  
'Then he had to go back home.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_02gm, rec. 2010)
- e. Menn e æ spåost to æ tjærke no om synndan men.  
but I am supposed to a church now on Sunday but  
'But I am supposed to go to a church this Sunday.' (hatton\_ND\_04gk, rec. 2010)

Epistemic readings clearly occur less often in the corpus than deontic and dynamic readings, in line with all other languages investigated (Biber et al. 1999, Hacquard & Wellwood 2012), and the difference is even more pronounced in spoken corpora.<sup>22</sup> Epistemic readings also occur later in acquisition both for monolinguals and bilinguals, possibly related to both input and processing, since root modals are less abstract and more frequent than epistemic ones.

'Can' in its different appearances, as *kunne*, *kan*, or *kudd*, frequently receives the dynamic reading 'know how to'. This is not very surprising in this context, as speakers often talk about their Norwegian skills, and (15abc) are representative examples. Note especially the presence of the infinitival marker *å* after *kudd nt* in (15c). In many EurNo dialects an infinitival marker heading the complement of *kunne* disambiguates the modal towards a dynamic reading only: 'know how to'. Again, this non-standard feature attests to the oral transmission of NAmNo.

- (15) a. Eldre broren min han kudd læsa nårst.  
older brother mine he could read Norwegian  
'My older brother, he could read Norwegian.' (blair\_WI\_15gm, rec. 2012)
- b. Han kudd skriva nårskt.  
he could write Norwegian  
'He could write Norwegian.' (blair\_WI\_15gm, rec. 2012)
- c. Ja, det var ittje ein såmmt kudd nt å læse.  
yes there was not one who could not to read  
'Not a single one was unable to read.' (gary\_MN\_01gm, rec. 2010)
- d. Je ska bli ni og åtti ti såmmern.  
I will become nine and eighty to summer  
'I will be eighty-nine this summer.' (gary\_MN\_02gk, rec. 2010)

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<sup>22</sup>Cornillie (2007: 182) found that one and the same modal (Spanish *poder*) occurred with an epistemic reading in 30% of the cases in writing, but with 10% in the spoken corpus. The numbers vary, however, for each modal.

- e. De yngre vil gå mære og mære åver te ænngeles.  
the younger will go more and more over to English  
'The younger will go over to English more and more.'  
(spring\_grove\_MN\_19gm, rec. 1942)

Comparing the inventory of modals in NAmNo to EurNo, the modals *burde* 'should' and *trenge* 'need' are infrequent. The borrowed newcomer *spost* 'supposed to' is only a little more frequent than e.g. *burde*. To a modern EurNo speaker *burde* sounds formal, and if this carries over to NAmNo, *burde* is likely to be part of the written, but not spoken input. Raw numbers show that the most frequent modals in NAmNo across the CANS corpus are *kunne*, *måtte*, *skulle*, and *ville*. The latter two sometimes occur as future markers, likely as transfer from AmE, since modals in EurNo are never pure future markers (cf. Section 5.2). EurNo root modals are future-projecting, i.e. point to future situations, but always come with some extra modal reading, e.g. as intention, cf. (15d), volition or prediction, as in (15e).

According to our expectations, morphological markers of modality, i.e. mood, should be very vulnerable to erosion in NAmNo. This is borne out in the case of finite mood markers, as the subjunctive is as good as extinct in NAmNo, but this was already the case in EurNo long before the immigrants left for the US. Interestingly, the non-finite morphological marker on "irrealis infinitives" is very much intact across the corpus, and the invariant auxiliary *ha*, a feature of many dialects in the areas where the immigrants originated, is also intact (more on this auxiliary in Section 4.3 below). Comparing NAmNo modality markers with modern EurNo we find a range of differences, especially in relative frequency of particular markers and readings. It is tempting in many cases to ascribe these differences to the input. Features characteristic of EurNo written corpora are infrequent in NAmNo (*burde*, epistemic readings of present tense *skulle* (cf. Section 5.1 below), auxiliary *hadde* in counterfactual pluperfects). Modal markers maintained in NAmNo attest to the oral transmission of this HL, as invariant auxiliary *ha*, irrealis infinitives, and epistemic readings of non-finite modals are all features which hardly occur in EurNo edited texts but exist in abundance in spoken corpora.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>A possible CLI effect is the fact noted in Lykke (2022) that NAmNo modal *må* 'must' tends to show up in the present tense in preterit contexts. As AmE *must* has no specific past form, this may be CLI transfer from AmE.

## 4 Aspect in NAmNo

Aspect occupies an intermediate position of the hierarchies of borrowability and affectedness outlined as (3) above, and whereas all types of aspect are conflated to one in (3), aspect can be seen to operate on three different levels (Laleko 2010); lexical aspect (also called *Aktionsart*), grammatical aspect (also called viewpoint aspect; Smith 1991), and pragmatic aspect. Lexical aspect is expressed “by the inherent lexical semantics of the verb and its interaction with direct and indirect arguments and adjuncts” (Dowty 1986, Verkuyl 1994); cf. also Montrul (2016: 63). Grammatical aspect is expressed either via inflectional morphology – one rather well-studied distinction in HLs is the perfective-imperfective distinction – or syntactically, e.g. as posture verbs. The pragmatic level of aspect concerns when one form should be chosen over another, based on contextual cues.

Laleko (2010) compared HL-speakers of Russian to a baseline of monolinguals raised in Russia. The monolinguals mastered all three levels of aspect and their complex interactions, but each of the three different levels were seemingly affected – potentially separately – in HL. Montrul (2016: 66) concludes that “the degree of erosion of aspect and the structural level affected seem to be related to the level of proficiency of the HL-speakers in their language”. Laleko (2010) suggests an implication between the levels in HL: Speakers with low proficiency will ignore pragmatically restricted aspectual cues and eventually start losing the morphological opposition between imperfective and perfective (cf. also Polinsky 2006, 2008). Polinsky (2006) demonstrates that heritage speakers with low proficiency in their heritage language tend to conflate the three levels and typically start to lexicalize certain verbs as perfective and others as imperfective, mostly based on their lexical aspect (*Aktionsart*), a trend also observed for HL Spanish in the US (e.g. Silva-Corvalán 1994, Montrul 2002, 2009).

Modern EurNo has no aspectual inflections but expresses grammatical aspect via periphrastic constructions. Pragmatic-contextual cues are often important to determine the choice between stative and dynamic aspect even at the lexical level (stative *være* ‘be’ and *ha* ‘have’ vs. dynamic *bli* ‘become’ and *få* ‘get’), and to illustrate conditions restricting aspects on the syntactic level, we investigate the present perfect in NAmNo. The present perfect is often categorized as a type of aspect (but cf. below for a different view), and the felicitous choice between the preterit and the present perfect is governed by pragmatic-contextual restrictions. We look at lexical aspect in Section 4.1, periphrastic constructions are the topic of Section 4.2, and we discuss the NAmNo present perfect in Section 4.3.

#### 4.1 Lexical aspect

The distinction between dynamic and stative aspect (cf. Figures 1, 2) plays quite an important part in EurNo lexical aspects, and native speakers are quite sensitive to it. AmE does not maintain this distinction to the same extent, and a potential conflation of these two aspects in NaAmNo could be due to a simplification or to transfer from AmE.

Recent studies of HL Danish (Kühl 2018, Kühl & Heegård Petersen 2017) and HL Swedish in the US (Larsson et al. 2015, Hasselmo 2005) suggest that such conflation is indeed taking place, and that the stative *være* ‘be’ appears in many instances where the homeland variety would prefer the dynamic *bli*(ve) ‘become’, although to different degrees with different tenses and predicates. HL-speakers, also those recorded in CANS, often talk about when they were born, confirmed members of the congregation, and married, all important transitions naturally expressed with dynamic *bli* in the homeland varieties, and several of the previous studies investigate exactly these predicates.

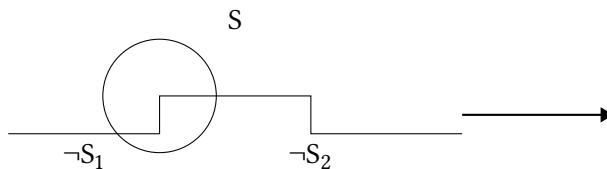


Figure 1: Dynamic aspect

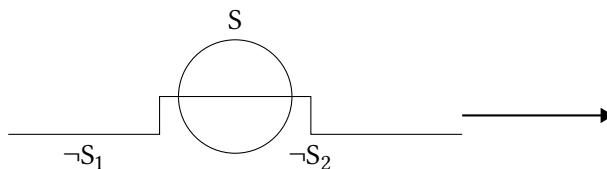


Figure 2: Stative aspect

CANS has many examples with dynamic *bli* ‘become’, but also data seemingly confirming the transfer analysis of the studies above, e.g. Kühl (2018), who ascribes this to CLI from AmE.

- (16) a. Jeg ble fødd i nittnhunndreeinåtjuge.  
I became born in 1921  
'I was born in 1921.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_03gm, rec. 2010)

- b. See jeg var født i nittenhundreogfemogtjuge.  
see I was born in 1925  
'You see, I was born in 1925.' (billings\_MT\_01gm, rec. 2012)
- c. Mor vadd gifte dær i Oslo.  
Mother became married there in Oslo  
'My mother got married there, in Oslo.' (billings\_MT\_01gm, rec. 2012)
- d. Kussn min var gift i Hamar i domkirka.  
cousin my was married in Hamar in cathedral.DEF  
'My cousin was married in Hamar cathedral.' (blair\_WI\_04gk, rec. 2010)

However, Eik & Laanemets (2021), following up on the discussion in Lykke (2020: 100–102) on what constitutes a relevant baseline for comparison with HL-speaker production, decide to compare the data in CANS, not with contemporary EurNo, but instead with a corpus of older Norwegian dialects (the *LIA* corpus). Their results do show differences in use of stative vs. dynamic exponents in NAmNo with respect to the old EurNo dialects (cf. Table 2), but smaller than suspected. In comparing the corpora, the authors conclude that the stative-dynamic is not very much affected by CLI, at least not for *være* and *bli* with the relevant predicates.

Table 2: Corpus comparison (from Eik & Laanemets 2021)

		CANS		LIA	
		%	N	%	N
VÆRE	<i>født</i>	96	609	89	512
BLI	<i>født</i>	4	27	11	63
VÆRE	<i>konfirmert</i>	70	48	58	74
BLI	<i>konfirmert</i>	30	21	42	54
VÆRE	<i>gift</i>	74	236	67	436
BLI	<i>gift</i>	26	81	33	214

The results from Eik & Laanemets (2021) suggest that the stative-dynamic distinction may be more pronounced in modern EurNo for the predicates in their investigation. This means that we need to proceed with caution in claiming that this distinction is eroded or omitted in NAmNo, even with other verbs and predicates, like stative *ha* 'have' vs. dynamic *få* 'get'. In CANS we find examples with

these verbs attesting to the distinction being maintained, but also some where the use of stative aspect seems to replace the dynamic variant.

- (17) a. Dåtter mi gifte seg og hadde fire onger.  
daughter my married REFL and had four kids  
'My daughter got married and had four kids.' (blair\_WI\_01gm, rec. 2010)
- b. Å så da hadd i enådher #hadd i enn aan ee dåtter.  
and so then had I another #had I another ee daughter  
'And then I had another daughter.' (harmony\_MN\_01gk, rec. 2010)
- c. Da fekk ho tvilling, det trengte ho itte.  
then got she twin, that needed she not  
'Then she had twins, which was the last thing she needed.'  
(billings\_MT\_01gm, rec. 2012)
- d. Når e va små gutt I nittenhundreogtræddve vi hadde bil.  
when I was small boy in 1930 we had car  
'When I was a little boy, in 1930, we had a car.' (billings\_MT\_01gm, rec. 2010)
- e. E va kjue år før vi fikk bil.  
I was 20 years before we got car  
'I was twenty years old before we had a car.' (glasgow\_MT\_01gm, rec. 2012)

To a modern EurNo speaker, (17a) carries the implication that the daughter no longer has four kids (but either more or fewer than four), since the stative situation of the daughter having four kids placed in the preterit implies that the situation described no longer holds. (17b) has the same implication, that the speaker used to have one more daughter. Employing *fekk* 'got', (17c) simply describes a change of state in the past, and there is no implication as to whether or not the resulting situation still holds. The same contrast is seen with the data in (17de); in (17d) the implication is that the family owned a car only for the year 1930, whereas the most likely interpretation pragmatically is the same as in (17e), that the family got a car without any implication about for how long they kept it.

## 4.2 Periphrastic expressions of aspect

EurNo employs a number of periphrastic expressions of aspect; here we will mention posture verbs (*sitte og*, 'sit and' *stå og* 'stand and'), *drive og*, 'be v-ing', *ta og*

‘take and’, and *bruke på* ‘use to’, cf. e.g. Tonne (2007). EurNo also features the construction *være i ferd med å* ‘be in the process of’, seemingly belonging to a formal written register, and not found in CANS.

Posture verbs are not uncommon cross-linguistically and exist in several Germanic languages, e.g. Mainland Scandinavian and Dutch. Posture verbs are natural parts of the NAmNo grammar, and examples are abundant. The reading resembles the English progressive; cf. (18). In addition to *sit* and *stand*, *ligge* ‘lie’ is also a posture verb, but infrequent in CANS.

- (18) a. Hun hadde pipa som hun satt og røyka med.  
she had pipe.DEF that she sat and smoked with  
‘She had the pipe that she was smoking.’ (harmony\_MN\_01gk, rec. 2010)
- b. I dag tili e satt og leste ei stund.  
today early I sat and read a while  
‘This morning I was reading for a while.’ (westby\_WI\_01gm, rec. 2010)
- c. E satt dærr og stirrde på.  
I sat there and stared on  
‘I was steaming at her.’ (albert\_lea\_MN\_01gk, rec. 2010)
- d. Bussen sto og venta på åss.  
bus.DEF stood and waited on us  
‘The bus was waiting for us.’ (gary\_MN\_02gk, rec. 2010)
- e. Han sto og såg på se sjøl i spilin veit du.  
he stood and watched himself in mirror.DEF know you  
‘He was watching himself in the mirror, you know.’  
(coon\_valley\_WI\_20gm, rec. year missing)
- f. Je stod og gråt mæssta tå tia.  
I stood and cried most of time.DEF  
‘I was crying most of the time.’ (dorchester\_IA\_01um, rec. 1942)

Note that there is no requirement for the felicitous use of these constructions that the subject in fact is sitting or standing for the intended period of time, the verbs are purely ornamental in this respect, resembling other grammaticalization outcomes (cf. also Lødrup 2019).

Another aspectual periphrastic construction is the *drive (med) og v*, also a construction reading as a pure progressive. The construction is quite frequent in NAmNo, seemingly more so than in modern EurNo, but the LIA corpus reveals

that it is surprisingly frequent in the old EurNo dialects. Of the very many examples in CANS, some appear with agentive verbs, like (19d) where the EurNo correspondent might occur in the same construction. However, the construction seems to have a wider application semantically in NAmNo than in EurNo and some of the examples, like (19a–c), sound outlandish in an EurNo context. The reading of *drive og v* seems too active and dynamic to match the more perceived or experienced situation with the rather non-agentive verbs and predicates in (19abc).

- (19) a. Kanskje ho driv å så såvå.  
maybe she be.at and to sleep  
'Maybe she is sleeping.' (blair\_WI\_07gm, rec. 2010)
- b. Å romm driv og ser på oss òg.  
and they be.at and look at us too  
'And they are looking at us too.' (harmony\_MN\_02gk, rec. 2010)
- c. Håper han driv og tenke om det da veit du.  
hopes he be.at and think about it then know you  
'I hope he is thinking about it, you know.' (harmony\_MN\_02gk, rec. 2010)
- d. Han drev og bader mæi så itt je fekk såva.  
he be.at and bother me so not I got sleep  
'He was bothering me so I could not sleep.' (blair\_WI\_23um, rec. 1942)

The *take and v* construction with its agentive, perfective meaning seems incompatible with passives or psych-verbs. In CANS NAmNo examples exist, but not very many.

- (20) a. Da tok han og kasta [n] ut.  
Then took he and threw him out  
'Then he just threw him out.' (hatton\_ND\_04gk, rec. 2010)
- b. Åsså tåk domm og kjørdes vit veit du.  
and took they and drove wheat know you  
'And then they just transported the wheat, you know.'  
(westby\_WI\_24gm, rec. 1942)
- c. Så tok jæi og kopærte noen a di dær replikkene.  
then took I and copied some of those there lines  
'So I just copied some of the lines.' (seattle\_WA\_03gm, rec. 2012)

Finally, the construction *bruke* (*på*) å is not very frequent in the LIA corpus in this exact shape. It clearly existed in EurNo, though exclusively in certain dialects, but crucially in those dialects spoken by the immigrants. However, its NAmNo use seems to converge on the AmE *used to v* construction; both occur mostly in the preterit, and *bruke* (*på*) å is translatable into *used to v*.

- (21) a. Du brukte på å bruke heit damp på å stime.  
you used to use hot steam to steam (it)  
'You used to use hot steam to steam it.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_03gm, rec. 2010)
- b. Vi brukte på å reise på mange danser.  
we used to travel to many dances  
'We used to go to a lot of dances.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_07gk, rec. 2010)
- c. Vi brukte gå på søttendemaiparade.  
we used go to 17th of May parade  
'We used to go to a 17th of May parade.' (chicago\_IL\_01gk, rec. 2010)
- d. Nårth ævvenu og Kælefornja brukte være nárskt.  
North avenue and California used to be Norwegian  
'North avenue and California used to be Norwegian.'  
(chicago\_IL\_01gk, rec. 2010)

This construction seemingly has a wider application than in modern EurNo, especially (21ad) sound coerced in EurNo. The AmE *used to v*-construction has as its core meaning that the situation described no longer holds, whereas the EurNo construction focuses on the habituality of the situation. This explains why (21ad) sound strange to an EurNo ear. In (21a) the two instances of *bruke* sound superfluous, whereas replacing the first instance *brukte på* with *pleide* 'used to' sounds more idiomatic. In contrast, *They used to use steam* sounds less superfluous; the first instance of *use* denotes 'detached past' (*v* no longer holds), the second is the lexical verb ('make use of'). In (21d) a direct translation into AmE seems idiomatic, as suggested by the gloss and translation, but in EurNo the habituality of *bruke* makes it incompatible with the stative situation of being Norwegian. This habituality is evidently not a necessary part of the reading in NAmNo, which suggests CLI from English – transfer of the semantics or convergence on the common parts of meaning.

### 4.3 The present perfect: Remote and immediate past

There is a longstanding debate in the linguistics literature as to whether the present perfect is in fact a type of aspect or a type of tense. Here Grønn & von Stechow (2020):

The perfect is one of the most complex constructions in temporal semantics. It shares properties with both tense and aspect, which is a source of constant confusion. It is therefore not easy to characterize its meaning in a few words.

This echoes Jespersen's (1924: 269) words: "The perfect cannot be fitted into the simple series, because besides the purely temporal element it contains the element of result", cf. Comrie (2020), Dahl (2000) and Eide & Fryd (2021) for similar descriptions. Eide (2002 and subseq.) classifies the present perfect in Mainland Scandinavian as a compositional tense consisting in a stative auxiliary (*har* 'have') encoding a present or future state and a supine (past participle) encoding an event in the past, i.e. in the past with respect to the stative auxiliary. The conceptual relation between the past event and the stative auxiliary is perceived as causation, the event caused the subject's present state. We see very clearly in examples like *Har du mistet brillene dine?* 'Have you lost your glasses?' An affirmative answer strongly implies that you are still in the state (e.g. of poor eyesight) caused by the past event (losing your glasses). Uncancelled, the present perfect implies that the state still holds. These aspectual features often ascribed to the present perfect are due to the stative auxiliary (cf. Eide 2020, Eide & Fryd 2021).

Whether we classify the present perfect as an aspect or a tense, it competes with the preterit for functional domains. Relevant HL-studies (e.g. Montrul 2016, Fenyvesi 2000) suggest that the challenge with tense in HL production is the mapping of the correct tense forms to the right context; i.e. once again contextual restrictions on members in an opposition pair.

In EurNo the present perfect is felicitous when it is used to refer to the "immediate past", i.e. within the time span of "the current cycle" (cf. Eide 2020, Eide & Fryd 2021). The current cycle is very often salient and not explicit, like in *Har du spist?* 'Have you eaten?' where the interesting point is whether or not you are hungry, that is, have you had a meal within the relevant cycle (here, the cycle consisting of usual mealtimes). Salient cycles are days, weeks, months, decades, centuries; and the present perfect is felicitous within the current cycle (22a), but situations temporally linked to the previous cycle as in (22b) require the simple past, i.e. the preterit, referred to as "the remote past" in Eide (2020) and Eide & Fryd (2021).

- (22) a. Jeg har sett ham idag / denne uka / denne måneden.  
 I have seen him today this week this month  
 'I have seen him today/this week/this month.'
- b. \*Jeg har sett ham igår / forrige uke / forrige måned.  
 I have seen him yesterday last week last month  
 'I have seen him yesterday/last week/last month.'

The present perfect is quite frequent in CANS, and the examples are mostly similar in their use to EurNo. The quite complex pragmatic-syntactic restrictions discussed above lead us to expect CLI-effects, according to current consensus. But it seems that the restrictions for AmE present perfects are quite similar to the EurNo ones, since discrepancies are few – or the construction is still robust enough in the input and the grammar of NAmNo to adhere to the restrictions relevant also in the earliest variants of NAmNo varieties. The examples in (23) mirror the use of present perfects in present-day EurNo (with certain irrelevant deviations).

- (23) a. Hun har snakka mer närskt i dag ell o a gjort i mange år.  
 she has spoken more Norwegian today than she has done in many years  
 'She has spoken more Norwegian today than she has done for many years.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm, rec. 2010)
- b. Je har levd hær siden nittenhundreogsækksæksti.  
 I have lived here since 1966  
 'I have lived here since 1966.' (sunburg\_MN\_03gm, rec. 2011)
- c. Men je tru je a lært i skolen at det var mange.  
 but I think I have learned in school.DEF that there were many  
 'I think I learned in school that there were many.' (kalispell\_MT\_02uk, rec. 2012)
- d. Det er noen ongdommer som har reister til Nårrge.  
 there are some youngsters who have travel to Norway  
 'There were some young people who travelled to Norway.'  
 (outlook\_SK\_08uk, rec. 2013)
- e. Je ha gjort høgskolen tolv år.  
 I have done high school twelve years.  
 'I went to high school, twelwe years.' (blair\_WI\_01gm, rec. 2010)

- f. Je trur je ha vøri dær ei vikus annde gânnga.  
I think I have ben there one week second time  
'I think I was there for a week the second time.' (blair\_WI\_01gm, rec. 2010)

In EurNo, examples (23c–f) seem equally natural with the preterit, in line with the AmE translations. However, though the felicitous use of the present perfect is restricted by the *cycles* and *present relevance* effect, the language user very often has a choice between the preterit, the present, and the present perfect, depending on contextually given information or *common ground*, and there are surprisingly few examples in running text where a speaker of EurNo could say with absolute confidence that this is not a possible context for the present perfect in our variety. In the CANS examples in (24a–b), however in EurNo the present is more felicitous than the present perfect (24c–d). Furthermore, speakers of EurNo would replace preterit with the present perfect.

- (24) a. Men det har vært lenge siden jæ har lesst bøker på nårsjk.  
but is has been long ago since I have read books in Norwegian  
'It has been a long time since I have read books in Norwegian.'  
(outlook\_SK\_08uk, rec. 2013)
- b. Nå har det vært tolv år sidn jæ bynnte dær.  
now it has been twelve years since I started there  
'It was twelve years ago that I started there.' (minneapolis\_MN\_01uk, rec. 2012)
- c. Ja, mange [...] ting som kamm framm ibei.  
yes many things that came from ebay  
'Yes, lots of things that came from ebay.' (albert\_lea\_MN\_01gk, rec. 2010)
- d. Jei våkkst åpp her så var femeljen alltid hær.  
I grew up here so was family.DEF always here  
'I grew up here, so my family was always here.' (spokane\_WA\_04uk, rec. 2012)
- e. Hå mange gonger var du te Nårje sier du?  
how many times were you to Norway say you  
'How many times did you go to Norway, did you say?'
- (blair\_WI\_02gm, rec. 2010)

The last example especially reveals the contextual restrictions. The implication of the preterit here is that the subject is now incapable of taking more trips to

Norway, that your Norway-visiting days are over. In contrast, *Hå mange gonger har du vært te Nårje?* asks for the present state of the interlocutor, the experience of having been to Norway a specific number of times.

As mentioned in the context of counterfactual plusperfects in Section 3.1 above, many EurNo dialects spoken in the areas where immigrants had their origin share a particular quirk relevant also for the present perfect. As opposed to written standards, where auxiliary *ha* and main verb *ha* share their inflection, in these dialects the auxiliary occurs in a non-variant form (*ha/he*) which serves as the infinitive, present and preterit (i.e. there is systematic ambiguity between the present perfect and the pluperfect). The lexical verb *ha*, in contrast, occurs with an *-r* affix in the present tense (and as *hadde* in the preterit). Studying specific speakers, we find that this split is still observable and, in some sense, robust in NAmNo. Speaker *albert\_lea\_MN\_01gk*, recorded in 2010, has rather consistently (and almost categorically) lexical *ha* with present tense affix *-r* (25a–b), but nonvariant auxiliary *ha* (25c–d).<sup>24</sup>

- (25) a. E har hunndre å seksti aker åg land i NorDekota  
I have hundred and sixty acers of land in North Dakota  
'I have one hundred and sixty acers of land in North Dakota.'
- b. De har kvæite sannflaors ee såi bins  
they have whete sunflowers and soy beans  
'They have whete, sunflowers and soy beans.'
- c. Ho ha tjøpi bok fárr me te læsa.  
she has bought book for me to read  
'She has bought a book for me to read.'
- d. Ha du høyrt om de golden pærasjut?  
have you heard of the golden parachute  
'Have you heard of the golden parachute?'

The opposition between lexical *ha* and invariant auxiliary *ha* is again an opposition not receiving any support from written input or standard variants. Hence, the opposition must be transmitted orally, and after several generations of AmNo (the speaker is fourth generation HL speaker) the distinction is still robustly in place with certain speakers.

Summing up some findings in the aspectual domain, lexical aspect may be affected, but maybe less than previous studies have suggested (e.g. Kühl 2018), as

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<sup>24</sup>This example is annotated as 'har' in the corpus, but to my ear there is no *-r* affix.

the tendency to conflate stative and dynamic aspect is present even in older EurNo dialects (cf. Eik & Laanemets 2021). Periphrastic constructions are abundant in CANS, especially (certain) posture verbs, the *brukte på* ‘used to’ construction seems to have extended its use, which seems like a CLI-effect, and the present perfect is used in a manner very much resembling EurNo use. Even for rather quirky constructions, oppositions are maintained (e.g. invariant auxiliary *ha* ‘have’ vs. lexical inflected *ha* ‘have’), and as in the rest of CANS, we find overwhelming evidence that NAmNo is orally transmitted, featuring dialectal traits quite different from any written EurNo standard.

## 5 Tense and finiteness in NAmNo

Montrul (2016: 62) notes that in HL, “tense and agreement morphology tend to be better preserved than aspect and mood” and that “In general, there are few if any reports of errors with tense in heritage grammars (Fenyvesi 2000)”. Also, Polinsky (2018, chapter 5) discusses that although morphology is seen as vulnerable to erosion in language contact, tense as a morphological subdomain has proved to be highly resistant to change.

Lykke (2020, 2022) and Natvig et al. (2025) argue that this is also true for NAmNo – for the most part of its history. Lykke (2022: 78) states that “the change found in present-day AmNo has arisen in the present generation”.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, the recent investigation Eide & Hjelde (2023) concludes that the verbal paradigms in NAmNo in two selected settlements (Coon Valley and Blair) change throughout different times, affected by the amount of written input available at different times. The discrepancy between the two views is less than it may seem. Firstly, Eide and Hjelde’s study (2023) addresses whole paradigms, where even non-finite forms count as tensed, focusing on the most productive class at intermediate stages and periods. Lykke’s (2022) focus is the felicitous use of finite forms in specific contexts, with a special emphasis on modal *må* ‘must’ and lexical verb *gå* ‘walk’ complemented by other verbs of all classes. Thus, the two views can be reconciled to complement rather than contradict each other.

Tense obviously belongs in an investigation of TMA-systems in HL, but it may seem more controversial to include finiteness. The finiteness feature rarely figures in HL studies; instead subject-verb agreement is frequently used as the visible counterpart of finiteness in natural languages, including HLs.<sup>26</sup> It is also not

<sup>25</sup>Lykke (2022: 78): This was also argued in Lykke (2020), but “with a minimum of empirical substantiation”.

<sup>26</sup>Eide (2016) shows why neither tense nor agreement, by themselves or in combination, equal finiteness, though these three often travel together. Instead, finiteness is a primitive feature associated with the speech act.

uncommon in the traditional literature to treat agreement as a visible marker for indicative mood (cf. e.g. Amritavalli 2014: 293). Moreover, as subject-verb agreement very often pairs up with the tense feature, the two are very often treated together in the literature on the topic. On wide-spread assumption the mere occurrence of visible subjects, especially when showing target-like case markings, is taken to signal the presence of tense features in the clause, even where no tense feature is explicitly expressed.<sup>27</sup> Subject-verb agreement has been at the focus of attention in TMA-investigations on language contact generally and HL-linguistics specifically, presumably because of its salience in overt morphology (Montrul 2016: 62). However, subject-verb agreement is of little relevance to an investigation of NAmNo, as no NAmNo baseline features this trait. Still, Mainland Scandinavian languages clearly employ finiteness distinctions; finite verbs are systematically different from non-finite ones morphologically, in the total absence of subject-verb agreement.

### 5.1 Tense paradigms and the finiteness distinction in NAmNo

Eide (2002, 2005, 2009a,b) and Eide & Hjelde (2015b, 2023) argue that EurNo verb forms adhere to the productive paradigm in Table 3, consisting in a four-way taxonomy of tensed verb forms where two tenses are finite and two are non-finite. Furthermore, each verb form is specified as past or non-past, thus each verb form in the paradigm has a different feature matrix  $\pm$ finite and  $\pm$ past. Committing to this paradigm, it makes little sense to treat tense morphology with no reference to the finiteness feature.

Table 3: Verb forms in Nynorsk and Bokmål (1907), NAmNo in the 1940s.

		(a)			(b)		
		+finite	-finite			+finite	-finite
+past	Preterit:	Participle:		+past	Preterit:	Participle:	
	<i>kleima</i>	<i>kleima</i>			<i>kleimet</i>	<i>kleimet</i>	
-past	Present:	Infinitive:		-past	Present:	Infinitive:	
	<i>kleimar</i>	<i>kleima</i>			<i>kleimer</i>	<i>kleime</i>	

<sup>27</sup>Lardiere (1998: 1) shows how an adult Chinese learner of English, despite consistently supplying tense markings at a low rate (34%), shows “perfect distribution of pronominal case (100%) in all contexts, suggesting the presence of a TP bearing a fully specified [ $\pm$  finite] feature”.

The paradigm is exemplified here by the borrowed verb *claim*, adapted as *kleima* in NAmNo, a deliberate choice in that borrowed verbs show the contemporary productive inflections, in the paradigm of the *kasta*-class, by far the most productive class for loan verbs in NAmNo.<sup>28</sup> The contemporary *Nynorsk* paradigm in Table 3a is provided as it is the explicit baseline for Haugen's (1953) investigations of productive verb conjugations in NAmNo, but we also provide the *Bokmål* paradigm from the 1907 standard in Table 3b. *Nynorsk* and *Bokmål* were both present in the written input of the NAmNo speakers, but the latter occurred in much larger quantities, serving as the written norm for most NAmNo speakers at the time.

According to Haugen's discussion of NAmNo verb forms in the 1940s, the distinction ±finite is retained in the non-past forms (infinitive *kleima* versus present *kleimar*), but absent from the +past forms: the preterit and the past participle share the form *kleima* (cf. Table 3a). Haugen's paradigm for *Nynorsk* shows syncretism between all forms except the present. *Bokmål* in the 1907 standard shows distinct forms for infinitive and present, but non-distinct forms for the +past cells; cf. Table 3b.

Bilingual production is characterized by variation. NAmNo is no exception, not surprisingly, as there is also a lot of variation in the input. Although each settlement tends to be dominated by a particular dialect, there are always other dialects in the area to provide ample “conflicting” input, in addition to the archaic standard used in church texts and the Bible, the different standards occurring in the Norwegian newspapers of the area, and the constant pressure from the dominant language delivering opportunities for cross-linguistic influence in constant supply. Thus, just looking at the infinitive of *fortelle* ‘tell’, we find many different variants even within the small settlement of Blair in the 1942 recordings (*fårtella*, *fåtella*, *fåtelja*, *fortæl*, *værtellja*). Other variants of this infinitive in NAmNo are *tella*, *tælja*, *tæl*, *tel*. What is interesting here is the infinitival inflection, which varies between null, -*a*, and -*e* (26a–c), not only between speakers, but also with one and the same speaker (cf. 26c–d)

- (26) a. Åh, je ska fortæl di jeg var n liten smågutt  
oh I will tell you I was a little toddler  
'Oh, I will tell you, I was a little toddler.' (blair\_WI\_24um, rec. 1942)
- b. Det va hardt det, ska jeg fårtella re.  
that was hard shall I tell you  
'That was hard, I can tell you.' (blair\_WI\_34gm, rec. 1942)

<sup>28</sup>Eide & Hjelde (2015b: 82) state that 94% of loan verbs investigated for this study are assigned to this class, remarkably stable as compared to Haugen's count of 93%.

- c. Væll, e kann da føtaellje  
well I can PTL tell  
'Well I guess I could tell you...' (blair\_WI\_17gm, rec. 1942)
- d. De æ ein ting såmm je må færtælja  
there is one thing that I must tell  
'There's one thing I have to tell' (blair\_WI\_17gm, rec. 1942)

Eide & Hjelde (2023) show how the verbal paradigms for the *kasta*-class change in NAmNo in two selected settlements (specifically Coon Valley and Blair) throughout different times, on our analysis affected by the amount of written input from Norwegian newspapers, parochial schools and confirmation preparation education. In keeping with the discussion on baselines in Section 2, we chose to separate the speakers in the available recordings into five cohorts or idealized generations to detect diachronic changes.<sup>29</sup> Note that the cohorts do not cover time spans of equal length, anticipating more changes for the more recent cohorts. For the first, mostly stable decades, we allowed for wider time spans for each cohort.

Table 4: Breakdown of the cohorts of NAmNo speakers and datasets  
(Eide & Hjelde 2023)

Cohort	I	II	III	IV	V
Born	Around 1870	1900–1920	1920–1930	1940–1950	after 1950
Data sets	Haugen 1940s	Haugen 1940s	Hjelde 1980s & 1990s	CANS Eide/ Hjelde	CANS Hjelde 2010–2018 2010

Especially speakers belonging to Cohorts II and III will be subjected to much more written NAmNo input than later generations, and the written standards clearly have a normative effect. We see this in particular with the occurrences of the present tense *-r*, since unlike the two written standards, the paradigms of

<sup>29</sup>In HL-research the more common way to differentiate between groups of speakers is to refer to the generation they belong to e.g. typically 3<sup>rd</sup> generation for this investigation. In placing such a heavy burden on input, it is more interesting to us to know how much and what types of written Norwegian they were exposed to. That means birth year is at least as interesting as how many generations have passed to produce this specific speaker.

the two dialects spoken in Blair at the time do not feature an *-r* inflection in the present tense. However, for a period of time, the present tense *-r* of the written standard(s) occurs also in the spoken production of the relevant speakers. Selecting e.g. a speaker from cohort III, billings\_MT\_01gm (born 1925, 2nd generation immigrant), we observe variation, but the speaker clearly uses a lot of *-r* suffixes in the present tense.

- (27) a. Nå e re itte nånn te snakke nårsjk med så glømmer det  
now there is nobody to talk Norwegian to so forget it  
bort.  
(away)  
'Now there's nobody to talk Norwegian to, so I forgot it.'
- b. Du kan itte bruke æit ord ti seie på enngelsk tia du snækker på  
you cannot use a word to say in English, time you speak in  
nårsjk  
Norwegian  
'You cannot speak a word in English when you are speaking  
Norwegian.'
- c. Det er sju som lever enda.  
there are seven who live still  
'There are seven who are still alive.'
- d. Men e ønnsker att jeg hadde lerrd te å læsa det.  
but I wish that I had learned to read it  
'But I wish that I had learned to read it.'

After a period where the written paradigms were on the rise, sources providing written input subsided, and the spoken variants once again took foothold over the NAmNo grammar (cf. Eide & Hjelde 2023). There were several competing systems, but the paradigm eventually prevailing in speaker production is the system in Table 5a, converging on the English paradigm with respect to the distinctions made Table 5b. The distinction  $\pm$ past is retained,  $\pm$ finite is lost, like the productive paradigm for English (cf. Eide 2016 for discussion).

This does not necessarily mean that the present tense *-r* is suddenly completely absent from the data, but it no longer necessarily serves to code the present tense in opposition to the infinitive. Take speaker albert\_lea\_MN\_01gk, born in 1925 and 3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> generation NAmNo speaker, belonging to the same cohort as the speaker in (27), cohort III. Collecting all forms of the verb *snakke* 'talk' in her CANS data we can compile the paradigm in Table 6a and compare this to the two

## 6 Tense, modality, and aspect in North American Norwegian

Table 5: Prevailing productive paradigms for NAmNo and English

(a) NAmNo			(b) English		
	+finite	-finite		+finite	-finite
+past	Preterit <i>kleima</i>	Participle <i>kleima</i>	+past	Preterit <i>claimed</i>	Participle <i>claimed</i>
-past	Present <i>kleime</i>	Infinitive <i>kleime</i>	-past	Present <i>claim</i>	Infinitive <i>claim</i>

dominating dialects in the area in the 1940s (5b: Southern system; 5c: Northern system; cf. Eide & Hjelde 2023). Note that this speaker uses the *-r* to code the participle, but not the present, example given in (28a), another example from a different speaker is given in (28b).

Table 6: Paradigm of *snakke* ‘talk’ in the CANS production of speaker *albert\_lea\_MN\_01gk*, compared to two dialects spoken in the area in the 1940s.

(a)		
	+finite	-finite
+past	Preterit <i>snakka (4x)</i> <i>snakk (2x)</i>	Participle <i>snakkar</i>
-past	Present <i>snakka (2x)</i> <i>snakke</i>	Infinitive <i>snakke (4x)</i> <i>snakk</i>

(b)		
	+finite	-finite
+past	Preterit <i>snakke</i>	Participle <i>snakke</i>
-past	Present <i>snakker</i>	Infinitive <i>snakke</i>

(c)		
	+finite	-finite
+past	Preterit <i>snakka</i>	Participle <i>snakka</i>
-past	Present <i>snakke</i>	Infinitive <i>snakke</i>

- (28) a. E he kji snakkar närsjk for menni år.  
I have not speak.PRES Norwegian for many years  
'I haven't spoken Norwegian for many years.' (albert\_lea\_MN\_01gk, rec. 2010)
- b. Det er noen ongdommer som har reister til Nårrge.  
There are some youngsters who have travel to Norway  
'There were some young people who travelled to Norway.'  
(outlook\_SK\_08uk, rec. 2013)

In addition to the significant inter-speaker and intra-speaker variation, the paradigms of the local dialects also dictate syncretism between forms. The Northern system has homophony between present and infinitive forms, cf. (29a–b) and between the participle and the preterit, cf. (29c–d).

- (29) a. Nå ræise rømm ått Nåri.  
now travel they to Norway  
'Now they travel to Norway' (westby\_WI\_03gk, rec. 2010)
- b. Du må ræise ned bLåffa først å komma åt Konn Valle  
you must travel down bluff.DEF in order to come to Coon Valley  
'You have to go down the bluff to get to Coon Valley.'  
(westby\_WI\_03gk, rec. 2010)
- c. De gammeste romm hadde ræist borrt allteræie  
the oldest they had traveled away already  
'The oldest ones had left already.' (westby\_WI\_03gk, rec. 2010)
- d. Å summe ræist åt Læ Krås.  
and some travelled to La Crosse  
'And some travelled to La Crosse.' (westby\_WI\_01gm, rec. 2010)

In the more recent recordings, we also find verb forms showing up as homophonous where the finite and non-finite forms used to be different; infinitives in present contexts, e.g. in (30a–b, expected forms: *søv*, *veks*), and preterits as participles (30c–d, expected forms *veksi*, *fått*).

- (30) a. Kanskje ho driv å så såvå.  
maybe she be.at and to sleep  
'Maybe she is sleeping.' (blair\_WI\_07gm, rec. 2010)

- b. Mi vekksa grønnsake i garden.  
we grow.INF vegetables in yeard.DEF  
'We grow/grew vegetables in the yard.' (albert\_lea\_MN\_01gk, rec. 2010)
- c. Je hadde vaks opp med rømmegrøt.  
I had grew up with sour cream porridge  
'I grew up with *rømmegrøt*.' (blair\_WI\_04gk, rec. 2010)
- d. Han laga renn je hadde fekk ja.  
he made that I had got.PRET yes  
'He made the one I had got.' (harmony\_MN\_02gk, rec. 2010)

We also find more unexpected mix-ups, e.g. infinitive forms where we expect participles (31a–b), or preterits where we expect infinitives, after modals and infinitival markers, cf. (31c–d).<sup>30,31</sup>

- (31) a. Men domm ha dø nå.  
but hey have die.INF now  
'But they are dead now.' (blair\_WI\_12gm, rec. 2010)
- b. Jei ville ha aldri møte dæi.  
I would have never meet you  
'I would have never met you.' (chicago\_IL\_01gk, rec. 2010)
- c. Så vi ska bisøkkte hann.  
so we shall visited him  
'So we are going to visit him.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_12gm, rec. 2012)
- d. Vi ha ællrin kommi ti å färstin– färsto nå nåssjt.  
we have never come to understand.PART/PRET any Norwegian  
'We would never have understood or spoken any Norwegian.'  
(coon\_valley\_WI\_07gk, rec. 2010)

Despite the massive syncretism and a lot of unexpected forms in the more recent recordings, it still seems that the finiteness distinction is less present in NAmNo than the tense distinction. Eide & Hjelde (2015b) explain this as a possible CLI-effect (although it also receives support from the most dominant dialect), since English has no finiteness distinction within the paradigm for main verbs (cf. Table 5b). However, there is a lot of variation, not only across the finiteness

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<sup>30</sup>This could also be a preterit form, as is the case in many EurNo dialects.

<sup>31</sup>This is likely to be cross-linguistic influence from German, infinitive *verstehen*.

distinction, but also across the tense distinction, and there is a lot of inter- and intra-individual variation in the realizations of the different forms in the paradigm (cf. Table 6a).

## 5.2 Striving for transparency

Future tense in EurNo expresses future via the present form of the main verb as a default. Second language learners of EurNo have a tendency to express future with a modal instead, e.g. *skulle* ‘shall’ or *ville* ‘want to’. This is also the case in NAmNo, and it is not very farfetched to see this as a CLI-effect from AmE. Moreover, recall that there is a tendency for HL-speakers to replace morphology with analytic forms and to strive for transparency, and the temporal ambiguity residing in the present form denoting either future or simultaneity, may drive this simplification. Reserving the present form for simultaneity and using a modal for future achieves both to reduce ambiguity, to increase transparency, and allows for two patterns to converge (adding a future auxiliary as in AmE, but using *skulle*, not *ville*, as the chosen modal).

- (32) a. O ska være hunndre år gammal omm onnsdan.  
she shall be hundred years old on Wednesday  
'She will be 100 years on Wednesday.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_08gm, rec. 2011)  
*Bokmål: Hun blir hundre år gammel på onsdag.*
- b. Onngeste o ska bLi førti hun nå om onsdagen  
youngest she shall become forty she now on Wednesday  
'The youngest will be forty years old on Wednesday.'  
(coon\_valley\_WI\_07gk, rec. 2010)  
*Bokmål: Den yngste blir førti år, hun, nå på onsdag.*
- c. Je ska bli ni og åtti ti såmmern.  
I shall become nine and eighty to summer.DEF  
'I will be eighty-nine this summer.' (gary\_MN\_02gk, rec. 2010)  
*Bokmål: Jeg blir niogåtti til sommeren.*
- d. I neste år det skal være førti år.  
in next year it shall be forty years  
'Next year it will be forty years.' (saskatoon\_SK\_14gk, rec. 2013)  
*Bokmål: Til neste år blir det førti år.*

In all these cases, the example sounds more idiomatic in EurNo replacing the modal + infinitive with the present form, which in EurNo is underspecified, span-

ning simultaneity and future. In EurNo, aspectual features of the predicate as stative or dynamic helps to specify the temporal relation in that a dynamic predicate typically gives a future reading, a stative reads as simultaneity (cf. Eide 2002, 2005, 2012). We see this very clearly in the *Bokmål* renderings of (32b–d) above, but even a stative predicate (32a), can be coerced by the future adverbial.

We mentioned in the introduction that TMA-systems interact in intricate ways. This is easy to illustrate through examples in which e.g. aspect, temporality, and modality depend on each other. Cf. (33a–b), from EurNo, where a stative predicate *være* ‘be’ yields a reading as present, which in turn gives the modal an evidential reading as ‘hear-say’. A dynamic predicate *bli* ‘become’ gives the reading of future, which in turn yields the root reading ‘intention’ of the modal.

- (33) a. Jon skal [være<sub>stative</sub> arkitekt] → present reading → evidential  
John shall be architect  
'John is supposed to be an architect, allegedly.'
- b. Jon skal [bli<sub>dynamic</sub> arkitekt] → future reading → root  
John shall become architect  
'John intends to become an architect.'
- c. Nå ska vi ræse te å besikk dæm e Nårrge, så de ska være  
now shall we travel to INF visit them in Norway so that shall be  
moLo tru e  
fun think I  
'Now we are going to visit them in Norway, and that will/should be  
fun, I think' (coon\_valley\_WI\_12gm, rec. 2012)

In contrast, in NAmNo there is a tendency that the stative *være* spreads to describe even dynamic future situations. Example (33c) would easily have a ‘hear-say’ reading in EurNo ('that is supposed to be fun'), but this is clearly not the intended reading in (33c). Using the predicate *bli* instead of *være* would instantly give the future-projecting root reading of the modal, and a possible next step is to remove the modal altogether, although that would give the reading of pure future instead of evaluative ‘should’.

When analyzing the data in CANS, it seems that not a single instance of *skulle* in the present tense is unambiguously evidential. It is always possible to interpret *skulle* as intention, or future tense. An infinitive perfect complement is usually a very efficient to tease out non-root readings of a modal (e.g. *John must have left*). Interestingly, although there are instances in CANS of the construction *skulle+ha+participle* where the construction is counterfactual, hence modal,

I cannot find a single instance of *skal+ha+participle* with *skulle* in the present. In contrast, the study of *spost* reported in Eide & Hjelde (2015a) finds that *spost* has an evidential reading in half of the examples, cf. (34a–b).<sup>32</sup>

- (34) a. Derre e spousa å vårra eit tre som va plantja [der].  
That.DEF is spos to be a tree that was planted there  
'That is supposed to be a tree that was planted there.' (Lac Qui Parle, MN, rec. 1987)
- b. Han e spost te å vara riktig god, han.  
He is spost to INF be right good he  
'He is supposed to be quite good, he is.' (Coon Valley, WI, rec. 1992)

This suggests that *skal* and *spost* have taken on different domains in NAmNo; *skal* as a future marker, having lost its 'hear-say', i.e., evidential, reading, a function taken over in NamNo by the modal-newcomer *spost*.

## 6 Summing up

We started out in this chapter by introducing five expectations; notably

1. TMA-systems of NAmNo, as "interface" phenomena will show CLI affectedness over time;
2. Different CLI effects; borrowing, convergence, and a loss of oppositions;
3. Morphology (e.g. verbal suffixes) will be more affected than free-standing auxiliaries;
4. TMA-systems will strive towards transparency and one-to-one mappings;
5. Affectedness will be high for mood/modality, low for tense, with aspect in the middle.

Prediction 1 is fulfilled in that we can see trends of simplification and convergence. For instance, non-finite modal forms are quite frequent in NAmNo recordings from the 40s (i.e. those collected by Einar Haugen), but less frequent in later generations. However, the inventory of productive modals is reduced, even though *spost* (and other English-sounding versions of many modals like

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<sup>32</sup>I cannot find these data in CANS, which is why I refer to the information provided in Eide & Hjelde (2015a).

*sjudd* and *kudd*) adds to the pool. The most frequent modals are becoming relatively more frequent (*kunne*, *måtte*, *skulle*, *ville*), at the expense of less frequent modals like *burde* ‘should’ and *trenge* ‘need’. We also see clear CLI-effects in the aspectual domain, e.g. the construction *brukte (på) å* has extended its domain in NAmNo as compared to EurNo. Tense is seemingly less affected, but this is as expected on prediction 5. Moreover, tense markers fluctuate over time, at some stages of development the written norms seem to have an impact e.g. in the temporarily increased occurrence of present tense *-r*.

Prediction 2 is borne out in that we have attested borrowing, e.g. of modals, but also convergence, e.g. in the case of periphrastic aspect marker *brukte (på) å*, incorporating contextual restrictions from AmE (*used to*) whereas the construction itself stems from EurNo. We find loss of oppositions, e.g. in the tense domain, in that the finiteness restriction which had its fifteen minutes of fame in NAmNo before WWII, was lost again – however, this distinction was also lacking from the productive class of one of the dominating dialects (cf. Table 6). Otherwise, a lot of oppositions are maintained, e.g. the distinction between invariant auxiliary *ha* ‘have’, and lexical *ha* ‘have’, traditionally inflected totally differently. It also seems that new oppositions have emerged, e.g. *skulle* takes on a role as future marker, in opposition to *spost*, which monopolizes the evidential reading ‘hear say’. Non-verbal directional complements are also part of the NAmNo grammar, although lacking in English.

Prediction 3 asserts that morphology ought to be more affected than auxiliaries, which is a bit hard to determine. One modal domain expressed in NAmNo as morphology, the irrealis infinitive, is very much alive and not at all moribund, even though it seems to tick all the boxes: Morphological mood markings are more vulnerable than any other domain in HL, according to wide-spread consensus, but seemingly not in NAmNo. For the other domains this is hard to determine conclusively, since aspect is not expressed morphologically and tense belongs to a stable domain; again according to consensus.

Prediction 4 is borne out at least in the functions taken on by modal *skulle* and *spos*, where *skulle* acts as a future tense marker in a more general and extended way as compared to EurNo, where the present tense form acts as a future marker, hence *skulle* resolves ambiguity in this respect. It appears that *skulle* has lost its function as marker of ‘hear-say’ evidentiality, a task taken over by *spos*.

Whether our findings comply with the affectedness hierarchies in (3), where modality is more affected than aspect, with tense as the most stable domain, is also very difficult to judge based on the material we have studied. First, the phenomena studied here are picked out because of saliency more than theoretically defined feature grids. Second, as promised, in very few instances have I referred

to statistics, percentages, and absolute numbers of tokens and types in this investigation. Also, to answer these questions it would be necessary to study all modal markers, all tense markers, and all aspectual markers occurring in the production of specific HL-speakers, and even then we would have to bear in mind that we do not know how representative our speakers in CANS are for the entire population.

Overall, our observations in this overview attest to an impressive level of maintenance in a diasporic variety of Norwegian that has endured for almost two centuries, where the data leave no doubt that the transmission has taken place in oral contexts. There are so many traits preserved in this variety which do not comply to EurNo written norms, regarding all domains of NAmNo TMA, and across morphology and syntax. This pays tribute to the conservatism often observed for HLs, but there is also ample evidence of innovations, both in the forms we observe and also in the underlying patterns they reflect.

## Abbreviations

AmE	American English	PART	Participle
CLI	Crosslinguistic Influence	PRES	Present
DEF	Definite	PRET	Preterite
EurNo	European Norwegian	REFL	Reflexive
INF	Infinitive	SUBJ	Subjunctive
NAmNo	North American Norwegian	TMA	Tense, Mood, Aspect
HL	Heritage Language		

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# Chapter 7

## Non-finite complementation in North American Norwegian

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In this chapter we take a closer look at the structure of non-finite clauses in North American Norwegian (NAmNo), building upon our ongoing work in this area (Søfteland et al. 2021, Putnam & Søfteland 2022, 2024). Although in many respects NAmNo infinitives and gerunds model what we find in European Norwegian, deviations from the latter show a unified trajectory. These different structures avoid the projection of “naked” TP-complements, which are commonly avoided in most Germanic languages except English (Wurmbrand & Christopoulos 2020). After reviewing the general properties of non-finite complementation in NAmNo, we briefly turn to how these findings contribute to broader debates in heritage language syntax, most notably, with respect to the notion of *Representational Economy* as originally formulated by Scontras et al. (2018).

### 1 Non-finite complementation and the role of T in Germanic

When one investigates the syntax of Germanic languages from a generative perspective, one particular domain in which the past and present languages and dialects of this family differ is in relation to the properties of the functional head T (Bobaljik & Jonas 1996, Bobaljik & Thráinsson 1998). A significant number



of syntactic phenomena, e.g., C/TP-expletives, subject-to-subject raising, scrambling, object shift, (in)coherent infinitives, sluicing, (a)symmetric V2, etc., hinge on the parametric variation of the nature of T and whether or not Spec,TP represents a licit final subject position in a particular language. English and European Norwegian principally differ in their preference for licensing T, with European Norwegian T not functioning as a subject position in most instances (whereas English allows this). This key distinction leads to a number of contrasts that are highly relevant for comparative research focusing on the English–Norwegian dyad. As a case in point, consider Exceptional Case-Marked verbs. Wurmbrand & Christopoulos (2020) suggest that Germanic languages have two different subtypes of ECM verbs, namely, ECM1 and ECM2 (examples in (1) are from Wurmbrand & Christopoulos 2020: 393). They argue that ECM1-predicates appear in all Germanic languages with causative and perception verbs (1a and 1b). An important feature of ECM1-predicates is that they do not co-occur with an infinitival marker, which suggests that the structures they occur in are smaller than TP (likely vP). ECM2-predicates contrast with their ECM1-counterparts with respect to their presence of the infinitival marker (1c).

- (1) a. I saw/let him steal my ice cream. [ECM1]  
b. Jeg lot ham stjele iskremen min. [ECM1]  
c. Leo believes/expects me to like ice cream. [ECM2]

Germanic languages vary with respect to whether or not they license ECM2-predicates. European Norwegian does not license ECM2-predicates with predicates such as *say/claim* and *believe*, and only licenses them in a restricted sense with *consider* and *expect*, as shown in (2–3).

- (2) \*Jeg forventer ham å drepe musen.  
I expect him INF kill mouse.DEF  
Intended: ‘I expect him to kill the mouse.’ [ECM2]  
(Wurmbrand & Christopoulos 2020: 394)

Only under exceptional circumstances do we find ECM2-predicates in European Norwegian. According to Lødrup (2008), these are only possible with “dislocated” subjects of individual-level predicates, as shown in (3).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For a more detailed discussion of the restricted contexts in which Norwegian can potentially license ECM2-predicates, the reader is referred to Lødrup (2002, 2008).

- (3) Ingen forventer lærere å være perfekte.  
 nobody expects teachers INF be perfect  
 ‘Nobody expects teachers to be perfect.’ [ECM2]  
 (Lødrup 2002: 3)

In this chapter, we review and expand upon our ongoing work on non-finite complementation in North American Norwegian (NAmNo) (Søfteland et al. 2021, Putnam & Søfteland 2022, 2024). Although core operations and properties of the syntax of heritage languages are generally held to be quite sturdy (Lohndal 2021), our research to date in this domain shows that some degree of syntactic optionality and derivation is present (Perpiñan 2011). Following recent arguments put forth by Putnam (2025), we classify differences in NAmNo non-finite complement clauses from what we would expect to find in European Norwegian, including relevant dialectal variation,<sup>2</sup> as well as American English, as an instance of *Representational Economy* (Scontras et al. 2018, Polinsky & Scontras 2020). In their own words, Scontras et al. (2018: 3) define the process and outcome of *Representational Economy* as follows:

...does the heritage grammar reduce or augment structure relative to the native baseline? The pressures driving each outcome are interestingly different. Finding reduced structure relative to the native baseline, heritage speakers will have likely prioritized representational economy, restructuring their grammar in favor of lighter-weight linguistic representations. Less articulated, more parsimonious structures (e.g., structures with fewer explicit agreement features or syntactic projections) could ease the load on working memory and might therefore be preferred to their fully-articulated brethren.

The validity of *Representational Economy* and its relevance for our treatment of non-finite complementation in NAmNo rests on two factors, namely, (i) the integrated nature of the cognitive architecture of bilinguals (Putnam et al. 2018) and its resulting hybrid representations (Abrah 2015), and (ii) the unique contrast in the Norwegian–English dyad with respect to how (Spec,)T(P) is realized (Scontras & Putnam 2020). Although we find the proposal of *Representational Economy*, and the notion of *clausal-shrinking* to be largely on track, in this chapter we also investigate instances of apparent *clausal-stretching*, i.e., situations in which the heritage grammar (in this case, NAmNo) appears to require *additional* syntactic

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<sup>2</sup>See Section 2 for a discussion of *baseline* in our case here.

structure to license a particular phenomena. Based on these empirical observations, we offer a revised definition of *Representational Economy* at the conclusion of this chapter.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter has the following structure: In Section 2 we review recent work on NAmNo non-finite clauses, demonstrating that alongside the dominant trend of structures that strongly resemble expected forms from European Norwegian, we find instances of both clause-*shrinking* and clause-*stretching*. We then investigate a number of properties associated with NAmNo non-finite clauses in general (i.e., A-movement) in Section 3, arguing that the lack of “true” ECM-predicates and instances of subject-to-subject raising support our analysis in terms of Representational Economy. Finally, we provide a brief treatment of important theoretical points in Section 4, and list a number of domains that are fertile for ongoing research in Section 5.

## 2 Shrinking and expanding computational domains

In this section we highlight and summarize our recent research on non-finite clauses in NAmNo (Søfteland et al. 2021, Putnam & Søfteland 2022, 2024). In particular, we expand upon two salient trends that exist in non-finite clauses in NAmNo; namely (i) instances of clausal “shrinking” as well as (ii) examples of clausal “stretching”. In Section 2.1 we take a closer look at the realization and position of infinitival markers in NAmNo. Building upon the findings of Søfteland et al. (2021) and Putnam & Søfteland (2022), we comment on forms that resemble European Norwegian and those that differ from it, and in some cases, from English too. We turn to the rise of *wh*-infinitives in NAmNo in Section 2.2, structures which are not attested in older, traditional varieties of European Norwegian, but commonly found in American English.

It is difficult to identify baseline populations in heritage language research (see Polinsky 2018: Section 1.4 and D’Alessandro et al. 2021), which is a challenge we also face here. Most of the speakers in our samples from CANS report a mixed dialectal background and the Norwegian-speaking language communities they have been part of have often been multilectal (see Hjelde 2025 [this volume] for an overview of the dialectal landscape in NAmNo). In previous work we have

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<sup>3</sup>It is worth noting that our call to revise the definition of *Representational Economy* as introduced by Scontras et al. (2018) does not refute their original definition, nor does it mean that we advance any claims on sentence processing being “shallow” (Ferreira et al. 2002, Sanford & Sturt 2002, Clahsen & Felser 2006). Rather, we merely seek to clarify that *Representational Economy* may in some instances imply additional functional projections in heritage representations when compared with homeland varieties.

discussed where the use of the infinitival marker /te/ in NAmNo could possibly come from, and one likely explanation is that it is a feature inherited from traditional rural dialects in European Norwegian (see Søfteland et al. 2021 for an overview of the most relevant structural variation in European Norwegian in our case here). Sometimes we refer to these dialectal variants in terms of a *baseline*, even though this is somewhat problematic, especially when it comes to 3rd and 4th generations of speakers. At some points in the text we also refer to, apparently in comparison with, the modern written standard Bokmål. This does not mean that we consider Bokmål a baseline in itself for our heritage speakers, but the structure we refer to when doing so will often be the most common variant in European Norwegian today.

## 2.1 Variation in infinitival marker placement

As pointed out to us by an anonymous reviewer, arriving at a definitive position for infinitival markers in European Norwegian is a difficult and arduous task. In fact, the most tenable view in the literature is that the infinitival marker can occupy *multiple* structural positions in Germanic languages (Faarlund et al. 1997, Faarlund 2007, 2003, 2015, Wilder 1988, Wurmbrand 2001, 2014, Wurmbrand & Lohninger 2023, Wurmbrand & Christopoulos 2020, Christensen 2007, Åfarli & Eide 2003). This is determined by the position of the non-finite verb in the clause alongside other requirements of the predicate. NAmNo appears to exhibit the same options for the placement of infinitival markers as in European Norwegian varieties (Putnam & Søfteland 2022, 2024, Søfteland et al. 2021). The tree structure in Figure 1 summarizes the various positions where the infinitival marker å (and other lexical variants) can occur in the clausal architecture of both European Norwegian and NAmNo.

Let's now turn to the empirical data that suggest that the infinitival marker in NAmNo can in fact occupy these multiple functional projections; consider the following examples of non-finite clauses in NAmNo (from the CANS corpus, described thoroughly in the introduction of this volume):<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>All examples from CANS here and in the following are rendered in standard orthography (Bokmål), except for the infinitival marker *te*, alone or in combination with å, as shown in (4). The equivalent to *te* in standard written Norwegian would have been 'til', but in almost all cases with this (former) preposition used as (part of) an infinitival marker, it is pronounced without the 'l' – mostly as /te/ and occasionally as /ti/ or with other vowels. See Søfteland et al. (2021) for details.

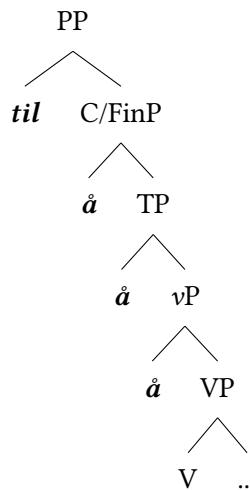


Figure 1: Structural positions where *å* can occur in Norwegian

- (4) a. jeg har ingenting å gjøre her i byen  
 I have nothing INF do here in town.DEF  
 ‘I have nothing **to** do here in town.’ (outlook\_SK\_06gm)
- b. jeg er for gammel te å reise  
 I am too old PRP INF travel  
 ‘I’m too old **to** go.’ (hatton\_ND\_02gm)
- c. åh det er så godt te komme heim att  
 oh it is so good INF come home again  
 ‘Oh, it’s so good **to** come home again’ (sunburg\_MN\_11gk)
- d. jeg har lært te å lese noe norsk  
 I have learnt PRP INF read some Norwegian  
 ‘I have learned **to** read some Norwegian.’ (fargo\_ND\_02gm)
- e. når jeg var stor nok å kjøre bundle-wagon  
 when I was big enough INF drive bundle-wagon  
 ‘When I was big enough **to** drive a bundle wagon.’ (decorah\_IA\_02gm)

As attested in the examples in (4), the realization of infinitival markers displays a certain degree of allomorphic variation in NAmNo, i.e., *å* and *te* in particular. For a more detailed discussion of this allomorphic distribution, see Søfteland et

al. (2021) and Putnam & Søfteland (2022: Section 2.2). While (4a) and (4b) follow the most regular patterns in European Norwegian, (4c) likely stems from (older, rural) dialectal patterns. Of particular interest, however, are examples (4d) and (4e), which are not considered to be found in European Norwegian (including dialectal variation). Although the vast majority of non-finite phrases follow what is found in European Norwegian, the existence of structures such as (4d) and (4e) requires deeper investigation.

Following Putnam & Søfteland (2022), we comment on innovative structures in NAmNo that exhibit “more” structure, and, contrariwise, “less” structure than what is found in European Norwegian. First, let’s take a closer look at forms with additional structure; i.e., those in which only a simple infinitival marker (either only *å* or only *te*) is expected. The NAmNo examples in (5) exhibit a structural unit that can be analyzed as either [PP + infinitival marker] or a double infinitival marker, in structures where this is not attested in European Norwegian.

- (5) a. det er fin ting te å ha stor family  
it is fine thing PRP INF have big family  
'It's a good thing **to** have a big family.' (saskatoon\_SK\_14gk)
- b. jeg har lært te å lese noe norsk  
I have learned PRP INF read some Norwegian  
'I have learned **to** read Norwegian to some extent.' (fargo\_ND\_02gm)
- c. jeg skulle like te å være kan hende i Fargo  
I should like PRP INF be may happen in Fargo  
'I would like **to** be, maybe, in Fargo.' (portland\_ND\_02gk)

In contrast, we also encounter non-finite clauses that display *reduced* structure, i.e., those in which only the infinitival marker *å* appears in NAmNo tokens when most or all European Norwegian varieties would require the combination of *til å* or *for å* (or other prepositions + *å*). Consider the examples in (6), where the structure that would be *til å* in the written standard Bokmål and most modern/urban dialects in European Norwegian (it could be only *te* in some traditional/rural dialects) is simply realized as a bare infinitival marker *å*:

- (6) a. men de er bedre enn meg å snakke og forstå norsk  
but they are better than me INF speak and understand Norw.  
'But they are better than me **to** speak and understand Norwegian.'  
(spring\_grove\_MN\_09gm)

- b. jeg er ikke vant å snakke med du da veit du  
I am not used INF speak with you then you know  
'I'm not used **to** talk to you, you know.' (sunburg\_MN\_10gm)

Putnam & Søfteland (2022) analyze these pairs of non-finite clauses in NAmNo as instances of HYPEREXTENSION, i.e., instances in which heritage speakers generate structures that are not found in homeland varieties of the heritage language, yet avoid converging with equivalent structures of the majority language (Kupisch 2014, Putnam & Hoffman 2021). The primary culprit that results in structures that sometimes display additional or reduced clausal structure in connection with non-finite domains is the avoidance of lexicalizing complement clauses with a "naked" TP; i.e., a TP that can be a selected argument of a verb in a matrix clause. This is possible in English, i.e., with ECM-verbs in sentences such as *I expect him to win*. In contrast, this is not possible in European Norwegian. The 'solution' that some NAmNo speakers have adopted to circumvent the occurrence of "naked" TPs is the inclusion of prepositions as in (5) (see the tree structure in Figure 1 for an illustration) in embedded clauses, in which non-finite complement clauses function as objects of said preposition. It is also worth noting that in English, non-finite clauses cannot function as objects of a preposition; however, in dialects of Norwegian, these structures occur frequently.

## 2.2 Wh-infinitives

We observe a similar trend to expand the computational domain of infinitival phrases in the context of *wh*-infinitives in NAmNo. Consider the contrast between English and Norwegian exemplified in (7). While English allows for modality to be represented, or *lexicalized*, on either the *wh*-element or the complementizer (7a) (commonly referred to as *covert modality*; Bhatt 1999, Groenendijk & Stokhof 1982, Portner 1997), modality must be lexicalized as a modal verb in traditional European Norwegian (cf. 7b–7c).

- (7) a. I don't know [what to do.] [English]  
b. \*Jeg veit ikke [hva å gjøre.]  
I know not what INF do  
Intended: 'I don't know what to do.' [trad. European Norwegian]  
c. Jeg veit ikke hva jeg skal/kan/må gjøre.  
I know not what I shall/can/must do  
'I don't know what I should do.'

Putnam & Søfteland (2024) show that several NAmNo speakers seem to adopt the English-like strategy of licensing *wh*-infinitives; see the examples in (8).<sup>5</sup>

- (8) a. jeg lærte i skolen åsen å snakke engelsk  
I learnt in school how INF speak English  
'I learnt how to speak English in school.' (hatton\_ND\_01gm)
- b. men jeg lærte aldri åsen å lese norsk  
but I learnt never how INF read Norwegian  
'But I never learnt how to read Norwegian.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_08gm)

Although the actual token number of items that display this English-like pattern is relatively low ( $n = 22$  spoken by 21 different speakers in CANS version 3.1<sup>6</sup>), the low frequency in the corpus does not diminish the novelty and importance of these forms (D'Alessandro et al. 2021). After searching through the (modern) Norwegian part of the *Nordic Dialect Corpus* (NDC, approx. 2 million tokens) and the *LIA – Corpus of older Norwegian dialect recordings* (LIA, approx. 3.5 million tokens) to investigate whether or not *wh*-infinitives can be found in spoken (older) European Norwegian<sup>7</sup>, Putnam & Søfteland (2024) report only one single example exhibiting a *wh*-infinitive, reinforcing the innovative nature of these structures in NAmNo. Nevertheless, we want to briefly mention here that recent research has discussed a possible emerging appearance of *wh*-infinitives in European Norwegian (Sunde & Kristoffersen 2018). Most young Norwegians today have a high competence in English, and possibilities of structural transfer are discussed in this work, initially building on data from a large web-corpus. Some of the young people in Sunde & Kristofferens study accept *wh*-infinitives in grammaticality judgements, but none of the adults do, supporting an analysis that this is a new development in Norwegian, and at least not part of a baseline in any way for the NAmNo speakers. The fact that some European Norwegian adolescents find these types of structures acceptable, and possibly use them in speech and/or informal writing, opens the door to a broad range of research questions that should be pursued in more detail in future studies.

<sup>5</sup>Putnam & Søfteland (2024) also mention the connection between the ability (or lack thereof) to license *wh*-infinitives with subject and non-subject infinitival relatives. (See Putnam & Søfteland 2024: Section 3.3 for an overview of these data.) We do not consider infinitival relatives further in this review chapter and leave this interesting puzzle for future research.

<sup>6</sup>For half of these speakers we find examples of the regular Norwegian pattern as well, see appendix 1 in Putnam & Søfteland (2024).

<sup>7</sup>See references and corpus webpages for details: Johannessen et al. (2009) <http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/nota/scandiasyn/index.html>; *LIA norsk: Korpus av eldre dialektopptak* (2019) <http://tekstlab.uio.no/LIA/index.html>.

In addition to the standard English-like patterns observed in (8), we also find *wh*-infinitives that exhibit a combination of the particle/preposition *te* and the infinitival marker *å* (cf. Putnam & Søfteland 2022):

- (9) a. veit ikke hva te å snakke omm  
know not what PRP INF talk about  
'(I) don't know what to talk about.' (saskatoon\_SK\_07gk)  
(Trad. Europ. Norw.: (Jeg) veit ikke hva jeg/vi skal/kan snakke om.)
- b. han veit ikke hva for en te å sette først  
he knows not what for one PRP INF put first  
'He doesn't know which one to put first.' (sunburg\_MN\_01gm)  
(Trad. Europ. Norw.: Han veit ikke hva for en han skal/bør sette først.)

Adopting a Spanning-analysis, Putnam & Søfteland (2024) suggest that the rise of covert modality in NAmNo can be understood as a preference for lexicalizing modality, represented as the modal  $\diamond_{D \rightarrow}$ , in the C-domain, rather than allowing the marker to be realized independently as a modal verb lower in the tree structure (in ModP). To appreciate the impact that these structures have on our call for the inclusion of *clausal-stretching*, let's discuss these examples in a bit more detail. We assume the underlying structure in Figure 2 for embedded questions that license modality.

In European Norwegian, which traditionally only allows embedded *wh*-questions to appear with overt modality, as illustrated above in example (7c), the *wh*-item moves to C and the modal element is spelled-out, or lexicalized, as a modal verb.

This situation is different whenever covert modality, i.e., whenever the head of MoodP is not lexicalized independently as a modal verb, is realized (as in English). In these cases, the *wh*-item participates in “roll-up” movement, incorporating the contents of MoodP, T, and C. Putnam & Søfteland (2024) call this complex lexical item a “span”, in line with current theoretical discussions surrounding late-insertion approaches to the syntax–morphology interface (Svenonius 2020).

This state of affairs shows that restructuring strategies in heritage language syntax may not always result in “smaller” computational domains, but optionally could result in “expanded” structures (see Lohndal & Putnam 2024 for a recent discussion of this phenomenon). The more complex span, i.e., *wh*-element in Figure 4, involves the semantic content of multiple functional heads, and as a result, more syntactic structure.

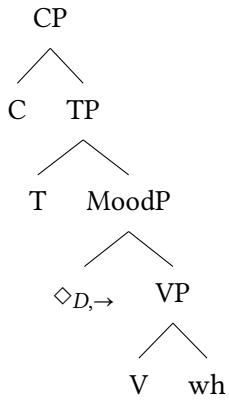


Figure 2: Functional heads in an embedded CP

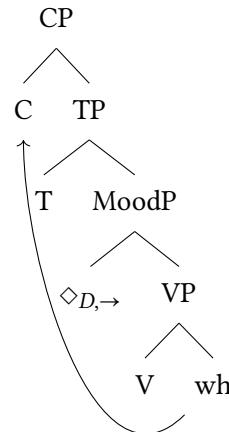


Figure 3: *wh*-movement and the lexicalization of a modal verb

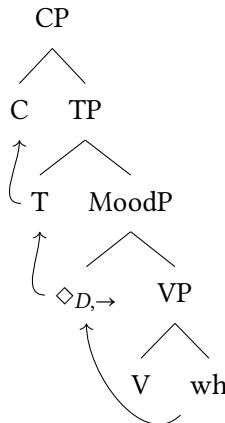


Figure 4: “Roll-up” movement associated with covert modality

### 3 The (current) status of TP in NAmNo

Based on our review of the status of non-finite clauses in Germanic and their classification as defective TP-projections in the contemporary languages (e.g., European Norwegian) and the empirical puzzles it presents, we can introduce some initial predictions concerning the licensing of non-finite clauses in NAmNo. The main point we wish to convey here is that how T is represented and realized in NAmNo is still likely to be fundamentally different than its status in American English. Based on this hypothesis, we make the following predictions in (10):

(10) Predictions:

- a. We anticipate that instances and approximations of English raising (Section 3.1) and Exceptional Case-Marked (ECM) verbs (Section 3.3) in NAmNo will be either (i) rare or (ii) structurally distinct from what is found in European Norwegian.
- b. Based on the long-standing assumption that PRO in control-structures requires a CP-projection, we should expect to regularly find related examples in NAmNo; see Section 3.2.
- c. Based on the assumption that gerunds require less structure than the projection of T (i.e., these are usually analyzed as VPs), we predict that *defective clausal* gerunds may occur in NAmNo somewhat frequently; see Section 3.4.

In the remainder of this section, we review data from the CANS corpus to put these predictions to the test.

### 3.1 Raising

The Norwegian Reference Grammar (NRG, Faarlund et al. 1997: 1027) says that most constructions with raising verbs in Norwegian belong to the written domain (and mostly Bokmål, not Nynorsk). Lødrup (2002: 2) opposes “the impression that raising from infinitival complements is a marginal phenomenon in Norwegian”. He lists a lot of different raising predicates, in active and passive form, with and without the preposition *til* preceding the infinitival marker *å*. This point notwithstanding, NRG’s overall comment is highly relevant for the NAmNo context: Most of the raising predicates in Lødrup (2002) are truly from the (formal) written domain and likely not part of the NAmNo variety, such as the Latin loanwords *dedusere* ‘deduce’, *erklære* ‘state, declare’, *estimere*, ‘estimate’, *rapporteres* ‘be reported’. Many of them are (Low) German loanwords, previously or still banned in the Nynorsk written standard, such as *anslå* ‘estimate’, *beregne* ‘estimate’, *forekomme* ‘seem’, *antydes* ‘be suggested’.<sup>8</sup>

The very few examples we have found of these formal/writing-style raising predicates in the CANS corpus are either from modern, younger speakers that have partly lived in Norway (they have a different profile than most of the older heritage speakers, both in input and use of Norwegian), or from the oldest recordings of 1st generation immigrants:

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<sup>8</sup>The treatment of raising in Åfarli & Eide (2003: Section 11.4) is based on this formal register that includes these verbs.

- (11) a. og så var det mye andre regler som syntes \_ være kanskje  
and so were there much other rules that appeared \_ be maybe  
nokså strenge  
quite strict  
'There were many other rules that appeared to be quite strict.'  
(viroqua\_WI\_04gm, 1942, 1st generation)

b. og så blei jeg oppfordret te åsså komme ned da de hadde  
and so was I encouraged PRP INF come down when they had  
åttiårsfest  
80-years-party  
'I was encouraged to come down when they had a birthday party.'  
(viroqua\_WI\_04gm, 1942, 1st generation)

As reported by Lødrup (2002) and Faarlund (2019), there is a small number of raising constructions, with verb + prep. ‘til’ (often pronounced /te/), that are frequently used in Norwegian and part of the domain of colloquial speech. These collocations are also present in the CANS data; the phrase *komme til å* ‘will, is going to’ is especially frequent (grammaticalized as a regular expression for future tense), and *få X til å* ‘get, make’ as well. There are also some examples of *se ut til å* ‘seem’ in the corpus.

- (12) a. det kom te å bli langt følge bakafor  
there came PRP INF be long trail behind  
'There would be a long trail behind.' (westby\_WI\_01gm)

b. hvis du kan få han te å snakke norsk  
if you can get him PRP INF speak Norwegian  
'..if you can get him to speak Norwegian.' (saskatoon\_SK\_01gk)

c. hun så ut te å være nokså kjekk jente  
she looked out PRP INF be quite nice girl  
'She seemed to be a nice girl.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm)

### 3.2 Control

Infinitive constructions with control verbs are very frequent, following mostly the patterns from European Norwegian (exceptions are mentioned in §2, cf. Putnam & Søfteland 2022). In (13) we see four regular examples with *like* ‘like’ and *prøve* ‘try’, varying between *å* and *te* as the infinitival marker<sup>9</sup>:

<sup>9</sup>See Putnam & Søfteland (2022) for details on variation in infinitival markers in constructions like these.

- (13) a. de liker å komme heim for jul  
 they like INF come home for Christmas  
 'They like **to** come home for Christmas.' (sunburg\_MN\_05gk)
- b. jeg liker te gå der og se hvor foreldrene s- de kom ifra  
 I like INF go there and see where parents.DEF s- they came from  
 'I like **to** go there and see where the(ir) parents came from.'  
 (sunburg\_MN\_08gk)
- c. de prøvde å ta norsken ifra oss  
 they tried INF take Norwegian.DEF from us  
 'They tried **to** take the Norwegian language away from us.'  
 (albert\_lea\_MN\_01gk)
- d. omtrent tre fire plasser jeg prøvde te komme oppover her  
 about three four places I tried INF come up here  
 '(There were) about three or four places here where I tried **to** get up.'  
 (coon\_valley\_WI\_17gm)

The examples from CANS in (14) are object control predicates:

- (14) a. dem ville hjelpe meg te lære engelsk  
 they would help me INF learn English  
 'They wanted to help me **to** learn English.' (sunburg\_MN\_18gk)
- b. og så han lærte deg å kjøre bil  
 and then he learnt you INF drive car  
 'And so he taught you how **to** drive a car.' (saskatoon\_SK\_01gk)
- c. jeg trur de sendte oss te å ha moro  
 I believe they sent us PRP INF have fun  
 'I believe they sent us **to** have fun.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_03gm)

Instances of general control in which an arbitrary PRO subject is licensed are also present in the CANS data, as shown by the examples in (15):<sup>10</sup>

- (15) a. men det tar så mye lengre å gjøre alt  
 but it takes so much longer INF do all  
 'But it takes so much longer **to** do it all.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_04gm)
- b. det tar nesten tre timer te å skrive bare ett brev  
 it takes almost three hours PRP INF write only one letter  
 'It takes almost tree hours **to** write only one letter.' (fargo\_ND\_01gm)

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<sup>10</sup>Note that (15b) could be an example of clausal stretching (added preposition).

- c. det er ikke så verst å være bestefar  
 it is not so bad INF be grandpa  
 'It's not so bad **to** be a grandpa.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_06gm)

It is interesting to note that the most frequent non-finite phrases in NAmNo are *tough*-constructions, as represented in (16). These constructions are generally held to have a PRO subject that is bound by an operator (Op) in Spec,CP (for an example of a contemporary analysis of *tough*-constructions according to Minimalist parlance, see Hicks 2009). Given the high frequency for which these occur in European Norwegian, it comes as little surprise that *tough*-constructions are commonplace in NAmNo.

- (16) a. det var hardt å sove når det var så lyst  
 it was hard INF sleep when it was so bright  
 'It was hard **to** sleep when it was so bright.' (sunburg\_MN\_05gk)
- b. det er så moro å ha besøk fra Norge  
 it is so fun INF have visit from Norway  
 'It is so much fun **to** have visitors from Norway.' (blair\_WI\_02gm)
- c. det er ingenting å gjøre i Hatton mer  
 there is nothing INF do in Hatton more  
 'There isn't anything **to** do in Hatton anymore.' (fargo\_ND\_03gm)
- d. det er ikke mye å høre om Casablanca  
 it is not much INF hear about Casablanca  
 'There isn't much **to** hear about Casablanca.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_02gm)

### 3.3 ECM

When it comes to ECM-predicates, European Norwegian only licenses ECM1-type constructions. Our efforts to mine CANS for similar constructions confirm that NAmNo overwhelmingly follows this pattern as well. In (17) we see examples with the matrix verbs *se* 'see', *høre* 'hear', and *late* 'let', which are canonically associated with ECM1-predicates:

- (17) a. men jeg har aldri sett dem spise blåbær  
 but I have never seen them eat blueberries  
 'But I have never seen them eat blueberries.' (stillwater\_MN\_01gm)
- b. så jeg har ikke hørt han synge  
 so I have not heard him sing  
 'So I haven't heard him sing.' (sunburg\_MN\_05gk)

- c. han lot oss bruke bilen deres for fem dager  
he let us use car.DEF theirs for five days  
'He let us use their car for five days.' (sunburg\_MN\_03gm)

Our search efforts through CANS have thus far not been successful in finding ECM2-predicates in NAmNo, which confirms the predictions we introduced at the beginning of this section, namely, that these structures should be absent or exceedingly rare in NAmNo. This is due to the fact that ECM2-predicates project a TP-layer and not a CP-layer.

### 3.4 Gerunds

Finally, we turn to gerunds, which, to date, have not received detailed treatment in NAmNo. Gerunds can be divided into two sub-classes: (i) *clausal gerunds*, and (ii) *defective clausal gerunds*. Consider the contrast between the control predicate licensing PRO in (18a) and the clausal gerund in (18b).

- (18) a. Carol worried about [PRO being late for dinner.]  
b. Carol worried about [Jim being late for dinner.]

Pires (2007: 16) suggests that clausal gerunds can be analyzed as TPs. As shown in (19), clausal gerunds (in English) can appear as (i) complements to verbs (19a), as (ii) complements to prepositions (19b–19c), and as (iii) phrases in "subject position" (19d). Clausal gerunds appear in "Case positions", i.e., positions in which arguments receive structural Case.

- (19) a. Mary favored [Bill taking care of her land].  
b. Susan worried about [Mark being late for dinner].  
c. Sylvia wants to find a new house without [Anna helping her].  
d. [Sue showing up at the game] was a surprise to everybody.

Associating clausal gerunds with the notion of Case positions also explains why these can occur as complements to prepositions (20b), unlike finite and non-finite clauses (20a). Clausal gerunds in English thus behave similarly to possessive -ing and DPs, as shown in (20c) (data from Pires 2007: 21).

- (20) a. \*Mary talked about [(that) John moved out/John to move out].  
b. Mary talked about [John moving out].  
c. Mary talked about [John's moving out/John's move].

In contrast, *defective clausal gerunds* appear to have a reduced syntactic structure. They can appear as (gerund) complements of aspectualizers (e.g., *start*, *finish*, *keep*) and verbs such as *try* and *avoid* (Pires 2007: 70):

- (21) a. Mary<sub>j</sub> started/finished/continued [ $e_j$  reading the newspaper].  
b. Bill<sub>j</sub> tried [ $e_j$  talking to his boss].  
c. Philip<sub>j</sub> avoids [ $e_j$  driving on the freeway].

Due to (i) their lack of independence regarding tense and aspect in relation to the matrix clause and (ii) the questionable status of PRO, these *defective clausal gerunds* are generally considered to be relatively small, i.e., VPs.

European Norwegian does not license either *clausal* or *defective clausal gerunds* on par with English. Consider the following examples in (22); while English allows both a gerund (22a) and an infinitive (22b) in this context, European Norwegian only allows an infinitive (22c):

- (22) a. He started reading.  
b. He started to read.  
c. Han begynte å lese.  
      he began INF read  
      ‘He began to read.’

Based on a cursory search through CANS data, NAmNo follows the pattern of European Norwegian to a large extent. This is illustrated in the data provided in (23), which show examples with matrix verbs *like* ‘like’, *prøve* ‘try’, *begynne* ‘begin, start’ and *slutte* ‘stop, quit’:

- (23) a. hun likte å snakke norsk  
she liked INF speak Norwegian  
'She liked speaking Norwegian.' (stillwater\_MN\_01gm)

b. jeg prøvde å spare så mye mjølk som jeg kunne  
I tried INF save as much milk that I could  
'I tried saving as much milk as I could.' (westby\_WI\_01gm)

c. de må begynne å skrive noen brev  
they must begin INF write some letters  
'They have to start writing some letters.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_10gm)

- d. etter jeg slutta å arbeide så kom jeg her en eller to eller  
after I stopped INF work so came I here one or two or  
tre dager i uka  
three days a week  
'After I stopped working, I came here one or two or three days a  
week.' (decorah\_IA\_01gm)

Once again, despite the prevalence of the European Norwegian pattern with respect to gerund-like equivalents in NAmNo, there exist a suitable number of examples in CANS that lack the required infinitival marker.<sup>11</sup> The examples in (24) reflect an English-like pattern of gerund-like VPs that lack an infinitival marker:

- (24) a. hun likte \_ ha moro  
she liked \_ have fun  
'She liked having fun.' (sunburg\_MN\_04gk)
- b. jeg prøvde \_ snakke litt norsk med han  
I tried \_ speak some Norwegian with him  
'I tried speaking Norwegian with him.' (coon\_valley\_WI\_12gm)
- c. nå må vi begynne \_ snakke norsk  
now must we start \_ speak Norwegian  
'Now we must start speaking Norwegian.' (outlook\_SK\_09gm)
- d. hvilket år var det du slutta \_ mjølke?  
what year was it you stopped \_ milk  
'What year did you stop milking?' (hatton\_ND\_02gm)

A common semantic feature in these examples in (24) is that they resemble English gerunds in involving some degree of aspectual complementation of the VP, e.g., *stop smoking*, *continue reading*, *start raining*, etc. (Freed 1979). Although this development warrants additional research in the future, even at this nascent state it is worth mentioning that while we see the emergence of *defective clausal gerunds* in NAmNo, we have not yet found any examples of *clausal gerunds* in CANS. A similar development has also recently been noticed and discussed in Pennsylvania Dutch, another Germanic heritage language (see Putnam 2025 for details).

<sup>11</sup>It is worth mentioning that the infinitival marker is optional in European Norwegian in a limited number of environments, especially when there is also negation ('*ikke*', 'not'). NRG (Faarlund et al. 1997: 995) gives the following examples: *Du behøver ikke (å) komme* (You don't need to come), *Vi trenger ikke (å) gå så tidlig* (We don't have to leave so early), *Jeg orker ikke (å) høre på deg* (I can't bear to listen to you), *Han gadd ikke (å) prøve en gang* (He didn't even bother to try), *Han freista (å) få igjen pusten* (He tried to catch his breath).

### 3.5 Section summary

Our succinct review of non-finite complementation in NAmNo, based primarily on CANS data, supports our predictions introduced at the beginning of this section. ECM2-predicates are not found in the extant CANS data; there is only evidence of ECM1-predicates. There is also only scant evidence of subject-to-subject raising in NAmNo, aside from a small number of fixed phrases. Subject control is highly frequent and object control is also present, once again confirming our initial predictions. Our incipient treatment of gerunds in NAmNo appears to echo recent findings in Pennsylvania Dutch (Putnam 2025), showing that while *defective clausal gerunds* are possible in NAmNo, *clausal gerunds*, as defined by Pires (2007), are not attested in the extant CANS data. In the next section we provide some theoretical guidelines into how formal analyses of non-finite complementation can shed light on the trajectory of these developments.

## 4 Theoretical relevance: Representational Economy

Research to date on non-finite complementation in NAmNo and other heritage languages largely confirms previous proposals concerning the relative sturdiness of these syntactic systems (Polinsky 2018, Lohndal 2021). With this being said, examples that differ from (most or all varieties of) European Norwegian display interesting and somewhat predictable patterns. To better illustrate the theoretical relevance of these forms, consider Table 1, which summarizes the size of the clausal projections associated with each type of non-finite clause.

Table 1: Non-finite clauses and their projections

Non-finite clause	Projection
ECM1	vP
Clausal Gerund (CG)	TP
Defective CG	VP (or “defective” TP)
ECM2	TP
Raising	TP
Control	CP

In our review of the general properties and proposed underlying structures of non-finite clauses in Sections 2 and 3, one factor that stands out is that NAmNo syntax collectively avoids projecting non-finite complement clauses that project

a TP. We illustrate this comparison of English, NAmNo, and European Norwegian in Table 2, which clearly shows that NAmNo has overwhelmingly retained a Norwegian-like syntax when it comes to non-finiteness.

Table 2: English–NAmNo–European Norwegian non-finite clauses

	English	NAmNo	European Norwegian
ECM1	✓	✓	✓
Clausal Gerund (CG)	✓	✗	✗
Defective CG	✓	✓	✗
ECM2	✓	✗	✗
Raising	✓	✗	✗
Control	✓	✓	✓

We now turn to the theoretical relevance of these findings. Firstly, decades of theoretical, experimental, and hybrid research on bi- and multi-component populations supports the integrated nature of these cognitive and grammar systems (Putnam et al. 2018, Aboh 2015). Second, if we embrace an integrated view of cognition and grammar of bi- and multi-competent populations, distinctions that are unique to the dyad of both/all grammar systems should receive elevated attention (Scontras & Putnam 2020). In this particular dyad, i.e., American English–NAmNo, the Norwegian-based representations display a strong tendency to avoid projecting “naked” TPs as non-finite complements, as argued most recently by Putnam & Søfteland (2022, 2024). The differences that cannot be directly attributed to American English can be classified as instances of HYPERCORRECTION (Kupisch 2014, Putnam & Hoffman 2021), e.g., instances where heritage speakers of NAmNo are generating Norwegian-source representations and want to avoid projecting English-like “naked” TP-finite complement clauses.

An important takeaway from this discussion of non-finite complementation in NAmNo is that underlying representations and the integrated nature of bi-/multi-lingual grammars matter a great deal. In fact, avoiding significant conflict between diametrically opposed elements of generated representations from both source grammars would seem to be a tacit goal of such a system in order to facilitate language production and comprehension. In a related treatment of non-finite clauses in Pennsylvania Dutch, Putnam (2025) advances a revised version of the notion of Representational Economy originally suggested by Scontras et al. (2018) and Polinsky & Scontras (2020), which we provide in (25):

## (25) Representational Economy (revised):

In HL-syntax, reduce syntactic structure (i.e., computational domains) in order to achieve maximal processing efficiency, *or avoid generating projections that result in representational conflict between the two source grammars in the dyad.*

Although the reduction, or *shrinking*, of domains is the most readily applied strategy in HL-syntax, the revised definition of Representational Economy provided in (25) opens the possibility of clausal-stretching in order to maximize efforts to avoid a conflict in dyadic representations (see e.g. Lohndal & Putnam 2024 for a treatment of the possibility of instances of clause-stretching in agglutinating HLs).

## 5 Conclusion

Our primary goal in this chapter was twofold: First, we provided an overview of non-finite complementation in NAmNo situated in current Minimalist theorizing of these structures. Second, we demonstrated that although NAmNo has retained a largely European Norwegian-like syntactic system with respect to non-finiteness, differences from this model provide an important and unique perspective into the grammar of heritage bilinguals. Nuanced non-finite forms in the CANS corpus overwhelmingly avoid projecting “naked” TP-complements, which are perfectly acceptable in English, but not in European Norwegian. This state of affairs led to a revised version of the Representational Economy metric introduced by Putnam (2025) in recent work. In summary, mental representations must continue to play a dominant role in ongoing research on developments in HL-syntax research – in NAmNo and beyond.

Two additional points are in order before ending this chapter. First, our nascent research on gerunds in NAmNo could be a productive and fertile empirical domain that warrants further research. Second, continued research with the remaining speakers of NAmNo should dedicate a watchful eye to these non-finite structures, because if they begin to appear more frequently in NAmNo, this could signal radical shifts in other elements of grammar, most notably, its V2-behavior. This, of course, is based on the assumption that these mental representations are not simply individual constructions (as assumed by some), but are actually a series of interconnected underlying structures that are responsible for generating any and all forms found in a grammar.

## Abbreviations

CANS	Corpus of American Nordic Speech
DEF	Definite
ECM	Exceptional Case-Marked
INF	Infinitival marker
LIA	Corpus of older Norwegian dialect recordings
NAmNo	North American Norwegian
NDC	Nordic Dialect Corpus
NRG	Norwegian Reference Grammar
PD	Pennsylvania Dutch
PRP	Preposition/particle

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# Chapter 8

## Verb second word order and finite verb placement in North American Norwegian

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This chapter discusses verb second word order and finite verb placement in North American Norwegian. As in other studies of this phenomenon in heritage languages, verb second word order (V2) in main clauses is robust in this population. Embedded structures, however, are found to be considerably more vulnerable, with a strong tendency for the finite verb to move above negation and adverbials. The chapter discusses possible explanations for these behaviours, suggesting that the high activation of English causes occasional crosslinguistic influence in the production of V2 in Norwegian, while several factors conspire to make the heritage speakers overuse verb movement in embedded structures.

### 1 Introduction

Verb second (V2) word order is a central property of Germanic languages, including Norwegian. It refers to the finite verb appearing in the second position in main clauses, as illustrated in (1).

- (1) På mandager **spiser** Hedda grøt.  
on Mondays eats Hedda porridge  
'On Mondays, Hedda eats porridge.'



Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a book on North American Norwegian (NAmNo) that does not address the question of how verb placement in main and embedded clauses is affected by the heritage situation. As discussed in Kinn & Putnam 2025 [this volume], Norwegian is an asymmetric V2 language, with verb movement in main clauses but generally not in embedded structures. Consequently, the order finite verb-negation/adverbial is expected in main clauses, while the opposite order, negation/adverbial-finite verb, is expected in embedded structures, even though main clause word order is found in European Norwegian (EurNo) in a limited number of embedded contexts (see, e.g., Ringstad 2019 and the discussion below). Several studies of heritage languages have shown that V2 remains quite robust in situations of diminished language exposure and use (e.g., Håkansson & Dooley-Collberg 1994, Schmid 2002), and as we will see in this chapter, this is the case also for North American Norwegian. Violations of verb second are observed only occasionally, and following Westergaard et al. (2021), we suggest that the low activation of Norwegian causes crosslinguistic influence (CLI) from English in production, initially resulting in a decrease in the proportion of non-subject initial structures and a subsequent weakening of the V2 grammar (i.e., making it more susceptible to influence from English). Embedded clauses are found to be considerably more vulnerable, and these structures are characterized by the overapplication of verb movement. This overuse of verb movement may seem surprising, given that embedded clauses with negation or an adverbial are very infrequent structures, and a more likely outcome of the heritage situation might be a complete loss of the few contexts in which the finite verb can precede negation/adverbials in embedded clauses. We argue that a conspiracy of factors can explain this behavior. Based on findings in Hopp & Putnam (2015) and Jensberg et al. (2024), we suggest that the development of embedded clauses can be explained by a combination of what we will call *language-internal drift* and influence from English, pulling in the direction of word order symmetry between main and embedded clauses. However, we also argue that there is more direct structural crosslinguistic influence from English, specifically in embedded structures which do not allow verb movement in EurNo, because in these structures, there is a much stronger tendency for auxiliaries to precede negation and adverbials than thematic verbs, making NAmNo structurally similar to English. We also briefly discuss to what extent verb placement in main and embedded structures in this variety of Norwegian can contribute to the ongoing discussion about whether verb movement in non-subject-initial and subject-initial main clauses should be analysed the same way.

The chapter starts with a background (Section 2) that introduces the syntax of V2, as well as previous studies of verb placement in main and embedded struc-

tures in other heritage populations. Then we provide an overview of studies on V2 in main clauses and show how they account for the characteristics observed in the heritage variety (Section 3), before we do the same for verb placement in embedded clauses (Section 4). The chapter finishes with a brief discussion (Section 5) and conclusion (Section 6).

## 2 Background

In this section, we introduce some relevant background regarding the syntax of V2, with a particular focus on the syntax of V2 in heritage languages.

### 2.1 The syntax of verb second word order

Verb second (V2) word order is typically defined as a requirement that the finite verb appear in the second position in main clauses, generally assumed to be the result of syntactic movement to the left periphery (e.g., Den Besten 1983, Holmberg & Platzack 1995, Vikner 1995). The traditional analysis of subject-initial and non-subject-initial declaratives such as (2a, b) is thus that the finite verb moves to C and the initial element appears in SpecCP (Figure 1).

- (2) a. Studenter **sover** aldri.  
students sleep never  
'Students never sleep.'
- b. I går **sov** studentene.  
yesterday slept students.DEF  
'Yesterday the students slept.'

More recent cartographic approaches to V2 make it harder to state the V2 requirement relative to the C head, which is why Holmberg (2015: 375) suggests a definition of V2 that is unspecified with respect to the actual landing site of the verb and the fronted element, as in (3).

- (3) a. A functional head in the left periphery attracts the finite verb.
- b. This functional head wants a constituent moved to its specifier position.

Both requirements must be met. An intensely debated issue in the analysis of V2 is whether subject-initial and non-subject-initial declaratives are derived in the same way; see Holmberg (2015) and Westergaard et al. (2019) for references

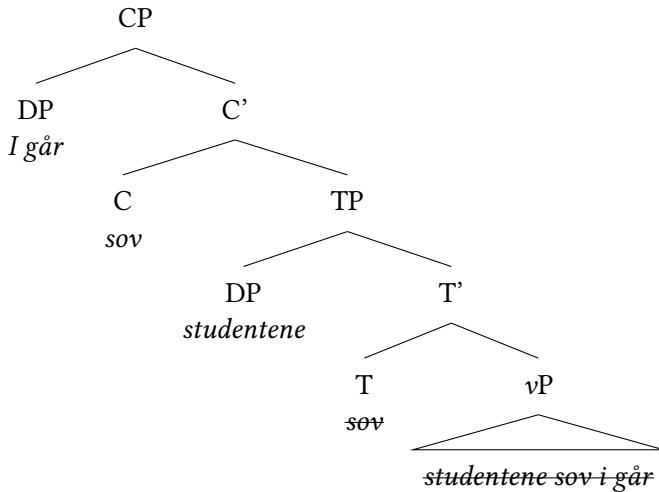


Figure 1: Structural representation of non-subject-initial declaratives

to the relevant literature. Two different syntactic analyses have been developed based on their approach to this issue, known as the symmetric and the asymmetric analyses, respectively. If we take the structure in Figure 1 as our point of departure, the symmetric analysis assumes that both subjects and non-subjects move to SpecCP. The main argument for this analysis is the observation that V2 is a main clause phenomenon in most Germanic languages; it is in complementary distribution with complementizers, which are argued to occupy the same position as the finite verb. The asymmetric analysis, on the other hand, argues that subjects and non-subjects do not move to the same position, and instead, subjects are argued to occupy a lower position. The main argument for this is that this verb movement as well as the corresponding subject movement to C would be vacuous, and it is questionable whether such movement is learnable. In support of the asymmetric analysis, Westergaard et al. (2019) review a range of acquisition/attrition evidence from different populations and languages, showing that the two constructions do not behave the same, in that they are not necessarily learned (or lost) at the same time.

The V2 requirement is found in all Germanic languages, to a greater or lesser extent (see e.g., Westergaard 2007, 2008, 2009a), and it is typically a requirement of main clauses. With the exception of Icelandic and Yiddish, the V2 requirement usually does not apply in embedded clauses, making V2 asymmetric in most Germanic languages. Thus, in embedded clauses, subjects typically appear in SpecTP,

and the verb either stays in situ or moves to T. An example of a typical embedded clause in Norwegian with the verb in situ is given in (4).

- (4) Jeg vet [at Emilie ikke *spiser kjøtt*]  
 I know that Emilie not eats meat  
 'I know that Emilie doesn't eat meat.'

For Norwegian in particular, there is considerable variation and deviation from the main V2 pattern in main clauses across many dialects (see, among others, Westergaard 2009b, Westergaard et al. 2017, Lohndal et al. 2020, Westendorp 2021 for recent overviews). The variation is most salient in different types of main clause questions, where many dialects optionally have non-V2 word order in all or a subset of question types. In (5), this is illustrated for the Tromsø dialect (from Westergaard 2009b: 23).

- (5) a. Ka slags bil kjøpte du? / \*Ka slags bil du kjøpte?  
     which kind of car bought you  
     'Which car did you buy?'  
 b. Korfor gikk ho? / \*Korfor ho gikk?  
     why went she  
     'Why did she go?'  
 c. Korsn har ungan det? / \*Korsn ungan har det?  
     How have kids.DEF it  
     'How are the kids doing?'  
 d. Ka legen sa? / Ka sa legen?  
     what doctor.DEF said  
     'What did the doctor say?'

We briefly discuss some of this variation in Section 3, but other types of V2 variation in main clauses in Norwegian will not be discussed in the present chapter.

In embedded clauses, there are environments which are known to facilitate additional verb movement, for instance verb movement that looks like V2 in main clauses. Bridge verbs such as *say* or *tell* are typically known to do this (Vikner 1995), though later work has also shown that verb movement can take place independently of this property (e.g., Bentzen 2007, Wiklund et al. 2009). Generally, the occurrence of V2 in embedded clauses has been found to be dependent on many different factors, including the semantic status of the matrix verb, the type

of embedded clause, and discourse status (Heycock 2006, Wiklund et al. 2009, Julien 2007, 2015, Bentzen 2014, Ringstad 2019). An example is provided in (6) (cf. (4)).

- (6) Jeg vet [at Emilie *spiser* ikke kjøtt]  
I know that Emilie eats not meat  
'I know that Emilie doesn't eat meat.'

Ringstad (2019) investigates five different corpora of spoken Norwegian to examine to what extent the semantics of the matrix verb and the type of embedded clause influence the use of verb movement in embedded clauses involving negation. Overall, she finds that the verb precedes the negation in 33% (377/1145) of these structures, varying from 21% to 43% across corpora. Ringstad (2019) also explores to what extent different types of clauses exhibit verb movement and finds no examples in relative clauses and embedded questions, supporting previous research. However, when it comes to adjunct clauses, the picture is a bit more varied. While temporal and conditional clauses generally are not attested with verb movement, as expected, other types of adjunct clauses, such as causal and consequential clauses (especially *fordi* 'because' and *slik at* 'so that' clauses) are attested with verb movement relatively frequently.

Ringstad (2019) also investigates whether auxiliaries are more likely to precede negation than thematic verbs in embedded clauses and finds that, while there is a difference between the two, it is quite marginal, with auxiliaries preceding the negation at 36%, lexical verbs at 33%, and the copula at 30%.

## 2.2 Verb second in heritage languages

In recent years, several scholars have investigated V2 in different Germanic heritage varieties. Heritage Norwegian has been particularly well studied, e.g., by Strømsvåg (2013), Eide & Hjelde (2015, 2018), Johannessen (2015a), Khayitova (2016), Alexiadou & Lohndal (2018), Westergaard & Lohndal (2019), Lundquist et al. (2020) and Westergaard et al. (2021), but there are also studies on Heritage Danish by Kühl & Heegård Petersen (2018), Heritage Swedish by Larsson & Johannessen (2015a,b) and Larsson & Kinn (2022), and Heritage Icelandic by Arnþjörnsdóttir et al. (2018) (see also Angantýsson et al. 2023). Here we review only a couple of earlier studies that all illustrate the resilience of V2 in Germanic heritage languages.

The investigation of V2 in heritage languages started with Håkansson (1995), who studied five bilingual expatriate (heritage) speakers with slightly different

backgrounds. One grew up in France learning Swedish and French, another grew up in Sweden and France and acquired both Swedish and French, whereas the last three speakers grew up in the US where they used English at school and Norwegian or Swedish at home. At the time of testing, the five speakers were also studying Swedish as a second language in Sweden. Håkansson's main finding was that V2 word order is resilient to attrition. She also compared the five heritage speakers to L2 learners of Swedish and found that the latter group was significantly different: they frequently made V2 mistakes, whereas only one of the heritage speakers as a group made *one* mistake in total. Håkansson (1995: 160) concluded that "the V2 rule resists attrition".

Schmid (2002) provides evidence that goes in the same direction. In Schmid's study, she considered data for 54 German Jews who had emigrated to England and the US during the Nazi regime. In her corpus, Schmid found 5,050 sentences that require V2 word order, and only 2% (102/5,050) had non-target word order. This suggests that V2 is resilient also in this population. However, a couple of caveats are in order: Schmid does not provide the total number of subject-initial clauses in the corpus, and furthermore, we do not know if some of the speakers were influenced by English and displayed a word order more like English.

Hopp & Putnam (2015) collected production and acceptability judgment data from speakers of Moundridge Schweitzer German, a variety of heritage German spoken in the USA (Kansas). Their general finding is that V2 is retained in main clauses, again demonstrating that this feature of the grammar is quite stable.

Unlike main clause V2, embedded verb placement has not been extensively investigated in heritage varieties. To our knowledge, there are only three studies: Larsson & Johannessen (2015a) for heritage Norwegian and Swedish, Hartling (2016) for heritage Danish, and Hopp & Putnam (2015) for heritage German. Hopp & Putnam (2015) show a higher use and acceptance of what they refer to as embedded V2 (movement to T past objects and negation/adverbials) in Moundridge Schweizer German, notably in clauses introduced by the complementizers *dass* 'that' (7) and *weil* 'because' (8).

- (7) ... dass da Lieber Gott **hot** uns auch **net** alles genom wie dat  
           that the dear God has us also not everything taken like there  
           in Oklahoma  
           in O.  
           'that the dear God hasn't taken everything away from us like in  
           Oklahoma.'  
 (Participant 102; Hopp & Putnam 2015: 195)

- (8) ... weil ich duh net Hochdeutsch redde  
because I do/can not High.German talk  
'because I can't speak standard German'  
(Participant 103; Hopp & Putnam 2015: 195)

The word order is mainly V2 in embedded clauses with these complementizers. Thus, Hopp & Putnam (2015) argue that there 'is little to no evidence in the production data that English SVO word order has affected [Moundridge Schweitzer German]' (Hopp & Putnam 2015: 203). Instead, they claim that 'the combination of lesser use or activation of [Moundridge Schweitzer German] and crosslinguistic influence from English which does not instantiate asymmetric word order in main and subordinate clause contexts leads to a particular type of levelling of word order distinctions across clause types within the constraints afforded by German syntax' (Hopp & Putnam 2015: 206). Furthermore, since Modern German is currently developing options that license V2 in certain embedded clauses, Hopp & Putnam speculate that these changes may be instances of what they call 'typological drift'.

### 3 Main clauses

As mentioned in the previous section, V2 in main clauses in North American Norwegian heritage language has been investigated in numerous studies. Common for these articles is that they all build on the spoken material from the CANS corpus (Johannessen 2015b). In this overview, we mainly summarize the findings in Westergaard et al. (2021), as it constitutes the most systematic investigation of V2 and V2 violations in main clauses, but we also point out similarities and differences between the findings of this study and other studies (e.g., Strømsvåg 2013, Eide & Hjelde 2018, Johannessen 2015a, Khayitova 2016). The study in Westergaard et al. (2021) covers all the declarative main clauses from the 50 speakers that were included in the corpus at the time when the study was carried out. In the summary below, we also briefly mention the result from a recent corpus study that targets the word order in main and embedded questions.

The study in Westergaard et al. (2021) covers in total 10,609 declarative clauses.<sup>1</sup> Out of these, only 2.2% (230 clauses) contain illicit non-V2 structures.

<sup>1</sup>The study focuses on a subset of the declarative utterances that either have or could potentially have non-V2. That is, simple SV(O) clauses without adverbs are excluded, as well as 16 sentences with non-V2 containing sentence adverbs such as *kanskje* 'maybe' and *bare* 'only', which are grammatical in homeland Norwegian. Furthermore, topic drop and instances of left dislocation have also been excluded; see Bousquette et al. (2021). In this reduced dataset, V2 violations make up 6.5% (230/3,534).

Examples of licit structures with V2 are given in (9) and non-V2 structures which are illicit in EurNo see examples (10).

- |      |  |                       |
|------|--|-----------------------|
| (9)  | a. Da <b>reiste</b> hun<br>then travelled she<br><br>'Then she travelled.'   | (albert_lea_MN_01gk)  |
|      | b. Søskena <b>snakka</b> bare engelsk<br>siblings.DEF spoke only English<br><br>'The siblings only spoke English.' | (stillwater_MN_01gm)  |
| (10) | a. Quicktrip de <b>kaller</b> det<br>quicktrip they call it<br><br>'Quicktrip they call it.'                       | (coon_valley_WI_02gm) |
|      | b. Han aldri <b>kom</b><br>he never came<br><br>'He never came.'   | (fлом_MN_02gm)        |

This small number of V2 errors is in line with some previous studies of heritage V2 languages (e.g., Strømsvåg 2013, Larsson & Johannessen 2015b), but it is still different from the almost complete absence of V2 violations reported in studies of older recordings or from smaller sets of speakers (Haugen 1953, Hjelde 1992). However, as Westergaard et al. (2021) emphasize, the low number of V2 errors is partly due to the fact that many of the speakers in the corpus produce mainly subject-initial sentences (see below), in which it is not possible to distinguish SVO from V2 word order. Out of 10,609 relevant sentences, only 3,534 provide contexts where V2 violations could be detected. As described in the background section, there are two types of declarative clauses in which it is possible to tease apart SVO from V2: (i) non-subject-initial clauses and (ii) subject-initial clauses with sentence adverbials. In the non-subject-initial clauses ( $n = 1,961$ ), there were 9.6% ( $n = 188$ ) V2 errors. In the subject-initial sentences with sentence adverbials, there were much fewer errors, only 58 out of 1,810 clauses (3.2%). In most of the clauses with sentence adverbials, the adverb is negation, and in these clauses the proportion of V2 errors is extremely low, only 2% (32/1,564). In the clauses with other types of sentence adverbs, however, the proportion of V2 errors is similar to that of the non-subject-initial clauses (26/246, 10.6%). In short, V2 is generally target-like in subject-initial sentences with negation, while around 10% of V2 errors are observed both in non-subject-initial clauses and subject-initial clauses with other sentence adverbs than negation. This pattern could in principle be

explained as a result of influence from English: English exhibits non-V2 in non-subject-initial declaratives and declaratives that contain sentence adverbs, while main clauses with negation always have an auxiliary verb preceding negation (*do*). Note, however, that there are many instances of Verb-Negation order in CANS where the finite verb is a lexical verb, see (11).

- (11) Jeg gikk ikke på skolen der (wanamingo\_MN\_04gk)  
I went not on school.DEF there  
'I didn't go to school there.'

Westergaard et al. (2021) further investigate which linguistic factors influence the likelihood of V2 violations in clauses where potential V2 violations may be spotted (cf. footnote 1). They look more closely into the properties of (i) the subject, (ii) the finite verb, and (iii) the fronted element in non-subject-initial clauses and find effects of all three factors. First, they show that both verb type and subject type matter: Non-V2 is more common with lexical verbs (8.4%) than auxiliaries and copula verbs (3.6%), and more common with DP subjects (9.7%) than pronominal subjects (6.2%). Sentences with a DP subject and a finite lexical verb have the highest percentage of V2 violations (14%). In sentences with a pleonastic subject (*det* 'it') and an auxiliary or copula verb, non-V2 is virtually non-existent (fewer than 2%).

As for the initial element, Westergaard et al. (2021) divide the fronted non-subject elements into eight distinct categories based on their form and function: (1) embedded clauses (Emb); (2) prepositional phrases (PP); (3) adverb phrases (AdvP, e.g. 'sometimes', 'this day'); (4) direct objects (Object); (5) simple adverbs (*da/nå*, 'then' and 'now'); (6) a phrase followed by the connector *så* (Ph-så 'so'); (7) quotes, and (8) the short adverbial connector *så*. In the examples (12a–g), we provide licit (12a, e, f) as well as illicit (12b, c, d, g) non-subject-initial declaratives with the eight categories of initial element.

- (12) a. Når vi kom til Oslo viste hun ... (wanamingo\_MN\_04gk)  
when we came to Oslo showed she  
'When we came to Oslo she showed ...'  
b. Opp på fjellet de har seter. (coon\_valley\_WI\_12gm)  
up on mountain.DEF they have summer.mountain.farm  
'On the mountain they have a summer mountain farm.'  
c. En gang vi kunne ikke finne ham. (gary\_MN\_01gk)  
one time we could not find him  
'One time we couldn't find him.'

- d. Han jeg **kunne** ikke forstå. (portland\_ND\_01gm)  
 he I could not understand  
 ‘Him I couldn’t understand.’
- e. Nå **kommer** naboene. (sunburg\_MN\_03gm)  
 now come neighbors.DEF  
 ‘Now the neighbors are coming.’
- f. Når jeg var hjemme så **gikk** jeg ... (wanamingo\_MN\_04gk)  
 when I was home so went I  
 ‘When I was at home, I went ...’
- g. «**Nei takk**» jeg **sa**. (harmony\_MN\_02gk)  
 no thanks I said  
 “No thanks”, I said.’

In Figures 2 and 3 (from Westergaard et al. 2021: 19), we show the proportion of V2 and non-V2 clauses for the different types of initial element, both in actual numbers and proportions.

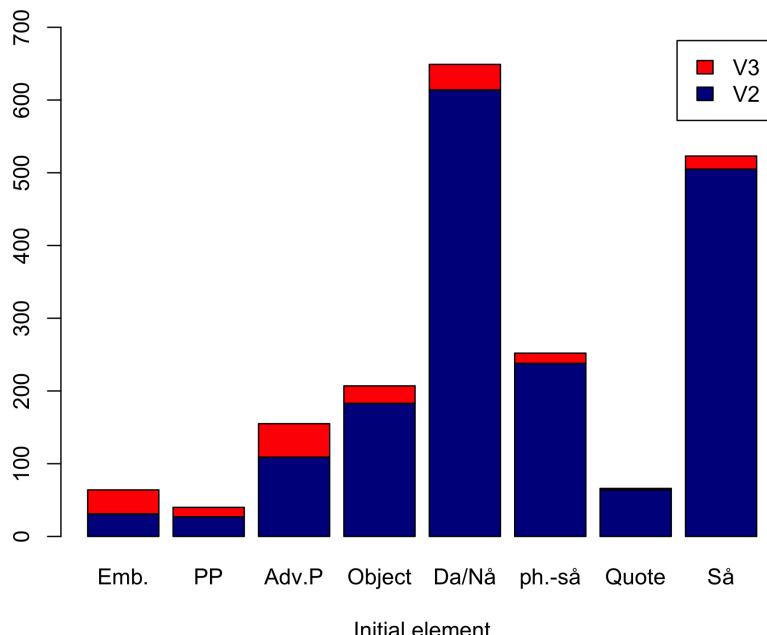


Figure 2: V2 with different initial elements (numbers)

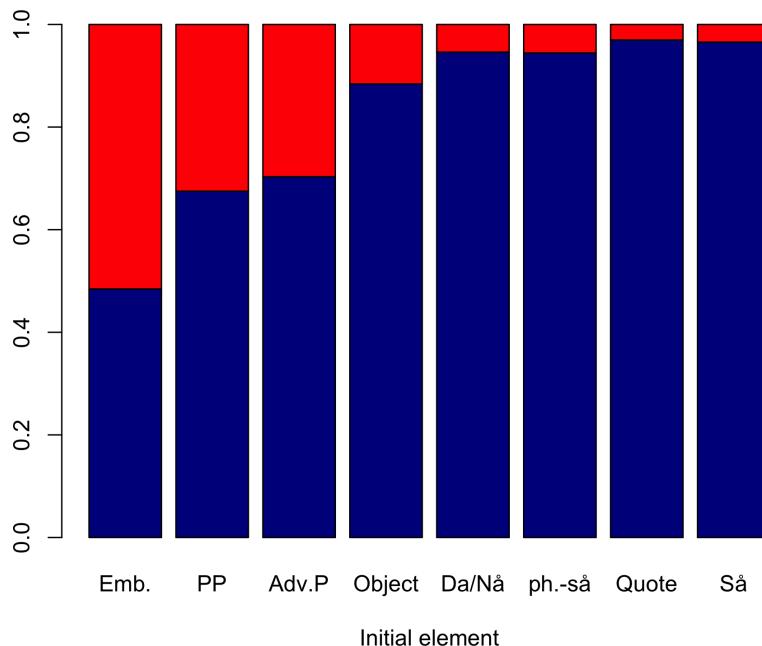


Figure 3: Proportion of V2 with different initial elements

As is evident from the graphs, the type of initial element has a strong influence on word order. Clauses with initial short adverbs like *da* ('then'), *nå* ('now') or *så* ('so'), as well as sentences that contain *så* in addition to a longer clause-initial element, very rarely give rise to V2 violations. This pattern has also been reported by Eide & Hjelde (2015) and Johannessen (2015a). The elements that are most likely to appear with V2 violations are those that are rarely fronted, namely embedded clauses, PPs, and adverbial phrases. As is shown in Westergaard et al. (2021), the patterns cannot straightforwardly be explained in terms of the length of initial element: for the fronted phrasal categories that can be longer than one word, length does not affect the likelihood of V2 violations; see also section 4.3 in Khayitova (2016) for problems with direct length/weight-based explanations of V2 violations.

The patterns above do not necessarily support any specific theory of V2: errors are found both in subject-initial and non-subject-initial clauses, and both with lexical verbs and auxiliary verbs. Nor do the patterns suggest that the heritage speakers have developed a new grammar that is qualitatively different from the grammar of non-heritage speakers in Norway; see also Larsson & Johannessen (2015b) for the same conclusion. Rather, it seems like V2 violations are likely to

occur in contexts where there is a lot of new or heavy information in the left periphery: the proportion of V2 errors are higher in sentences with full phrasal subjects compared to pronominal subjects, with lexical verbs compared to auxiliaries, and with phrasal adverbials compared to light adverbial sentence connectors. V2 errors are nearly absent in clauses with commonly used combinations of auxiliaries, subjects, and initial elements, e.g., *nå er det...* ('now is it...'). Overall, the findings suggest that the V2 violations are related to processing rather than grammar: lexically heavy material as well as rarely used structures increase the chances of V2 errors.

As a last step, Westergaard et al. (2021) investigate whether V2 errors are equally distributed among the speakers in the CANS corpus. They find that all the 50 speakers produce V2 sentences in contexts where English would not allow V2, i.e., they all have a V2 grammar. However, they differ in the proportion of V2 violations they make. Nine of the 50 speakers make no errors at all (although 4 of them produce fewer than 15 unambiguous V2 contexts), and most of the participants make fewer than 10% errors. Yet, there are speakers who make 20% V2 errors, or as many as 60%; see also Khayitova (2016), who finds similar individual variation in her analysis of a smaller set of speakers from the CANS corpus. Westergaard et al. (2021) carefully investigate the relationship between the proportion of V2 errors and the proportion of non-subject-initial clauses on an individual level. European Norwegian, just like other V2 languages, has quite a high proportion of non-subject-initial sentences, about 30–40% (depending on genre; see Olsen 2019). In English, non-subject-initial structures make up less than 10% of structures (see Yang 2001). Westergaard et al. (2021) find that speakers who have a low proportion of non-subject-initial declaratives produce a higher proportion of V2 violations (see also Westergaard & Lohndal 2019 for the initial observation). Speakers who have a more "native-like" fronting pattern (20–40% non-subject-initial declaratives) make few or no V2 errors. This observation raises the question of whether the low proportion of non-subject-initial clauses is causing the weakening of the V2 grammar, or whether it is an effect of this. The authors suggest that the fronting pattern is affected first in this variety of heritage Norwegian: because of their predominant use of English, the speakers first change the syntactic encoding of information structure by producing more subject-initial sentences in contexts where European Norwegian would use non-subject-initial structures.

The hypothesis that this tendency to avoid non-subject-initial clauses precedes the weakening of V2 is supported by a cross-generational study reported in Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming). They show that the proportion of subject-initial

clauses gradually increases across generations, and that the start of this development predates the first V2 violations. The increase in subject-initial clauses does not in itself result in a non-V2 grammar, as these structures will have a V2-compatible SVO order. However, as the speakers produce more subject-initial sentences, the “V2-muscle” also gets less “practice”, and a V2 grammar out of practice is more likely to produce errors, especially in contexts that are lexically and syntactically demanding from a processing perspective (e.g., lexically “heavy” left-periphery elements and syntactically rare fronting patterns). This suggests that the V2 violations are caused by the low activation of Norwegian (Putnam & Sánchez 2013), which is likely to have persisted for many years in this (elderly) population, causing the structure of English to occasionally affect the production of Norwegian V2 structures, especially in lexically and syntactically demanding contexts.

Finally, we would like to add a note about the word order in different types of questions. As was illustrated in Section 2, many Norwegian dialects have variable V2 in main clause questions. Most dialects with variable V2 also have restrictions on the form of the *wh*-word (monosyllabic interrogative pronouns are more likely to trigger non-V2), see e.g., Westergaard (2009a,b). Furthermore, in subject questions, the non-V2 properties are expressed through the presence of the relative marker/complementizer *som* (‘that’) which surfaces directly after the subject *wh*-phrase, just like in embedded questions. This variable V2 is also present in heritage Norwegian, although we are not aware of any published work that systematically studies this. In the preparation of this chapter, we investigated word order in main clause questions in the 50 speakers that were analyzed in Westergaard et al. (2021). We found 333 questions, of which 79 had non-V2 word order. The non-V2 examples all appear to be correct dialectal Norwegian. We give examples of a subject question (13a), an object question (13b), and an adverbial question (13c) (note that we give the phonetic form of the question word in the examples, and not the standardized written form):

- (13) a. Håkke **som** var president da? (westby\_WI\_03gk)  
who that was president then  
'Who was president then?'  
b. Hå **dere** skal gjøre i morgen? (coon\_valley\_WI\_07gk)  
what you.PL will do tomorrow.  
'What are you going to do tomorrow?'  
c. Hå **du** var hen da? (coon\_valley\_WI\_03gm)  
where you were at then?  
'Where were you then?'

Observe that (13a–13c) are all examples of word orders that exist neither in English nor in standard EurNo. Interestingly, the English translational equivalents of both (13b) and (13c) would require subject-verb inversion, i.e., residual V2, which shows that the heritage word order has remained surprisingly stable. It is also worth noting that some of the speakers in the corpus only produce V2 questions, but at the time of writing, we are not able to tell if these speakers have their origin in areas where the dialect lacked non-V2 questions.

As a final note on word order in questions, we note that many of the V2 questions indeed have a copula verb or an auxiliary as the finite verb,<sup>2</sup> i.e., they make up structures that would have V2 in English as well. However, we also find many structures where the subject inverts with a finite main verb, as in the following examples:

- (14) a. Hå lever du nå da? (blair\_WI\_04gk)  
       where live you now then  
       ‘So where do you live now?’
- b. Hva gjør man da? (kalispell\_MT\_02uk)  
       what do one/man then  
       ‘What do you do then?’

Example (14a) is especially interesting, as it contains a verb whose meaning is borrowed from English. Although the verb *leve* exists in Norwegian, it does not have a locative meaning, but only the reading ‘being alive’. Nevertheless, even with the use of this inappropriate lexical item, V2 is adhered to, demonstrating the resilience of this grammatical property.

To sum up, the word order patterns found in both declarative and interrogative clauses suggest that the speakers in the CANS corpus have a V2 grammar in main clauses (cf. Bousquette et al. 2021, Larsson & Kinn 2022), although some errors occur in a subset of the contexts.

## 4 Embedded clauses

As mentioned above, Norwegian can be characterized as exhibiting V2 in main clauses but generally not in embedded structures. While V2 word order in Norwegian main clauses is relatively consistent, there is somewhat more variation when it comes to verb placement in embedded clauses, where V2 is attested quite frequently in certain types of embedded clauses, but not in others (cf. Section 2.1).

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<sup>2</sup>This is the case also in European Norwegian; see e.g., Westergaard (2016).

In the types of embedded clauses where V2 is licit, it occurs both in subject-initial embedded clauses, where the finite verb precedes negation or other adverbials (16), and in embedded clauses that are non-subject-initial (15), where inversion is in fact obligatory (Holmberg & Platzack 1995, Vikner 1995, Heycock 2006, Wiklund et al. 2009, Julien 2007, 2015, Bentzen 2014, Ringstad 2019, Westendorp 2021).

- (15) Per sa at den boka **hadde han ikke** lest  
Per said that that book.DEF had he not read  
'Per said that he had not read that book.'
- (16) Per sa at han **hadde ikke** lest den boka  
Per said that he had not read that book.DEF  
'Per said that he had not read that book.'

In the current chapter, we do not consider embedded structures with non-subjects in initial position, that is, embedded V2 clauses where both the subject and the verb move to the C-domain. Rather, we focus on *that*-clauses, relative clauses, embedded questions, and various types of adverbial clauses in which the finite verb may potentially precede the negation or an adverb, but not the subject. Thus, verb movement here refers to V-to-T movement.

To our knowledge, there are four studies that investigate verb placement in embedded clauses in NAmNo. These are Taranrød (2011), Larsson & Johannessen (2015a,b) and Jensberg et al. (2024). Larsson & Johannessen (2015a,b) discuss increased use of V-Adv in embedded structures in the heritage variety, and they show that this also occurs in structures where it is not permitted in European Norwegian, such as relative clauses (see also Taranrød 2011). Larsson & Johannessen (2015a) compare a subset of the Nordic Dialect Corpus (old informants from Oppland County) to the CANS Corpus, which at the time consisted of considerably less data than it does now. The results reveal a clear difference between the two corpora. While the Nordic Dialect Corpus exhibits a high proportion of V-Adv in *that*-clauses (13/32) but hardly any examples in relative clauses (1/17), the CANS speakers use Verb-Negation order in approximately 50% of relative clauses (6/13) and almost all the time in *that*-clauses (15/16) (Larsson & Johannessen 2015a). Larsson & Johannessen (2015a) also show instances of verb movement in relative clauses in Haugen's recordings sixty years ago (17) (Larsson & Johannessen 2015a: 248), but not in first-generation speakers. The latter group exhibits a behaviour very similar to European Norwegian today, with no verb movement in most adjunct clauses, such as conditional clauses (18), but quite frequently in consequence of degree clauses (19) (examples from Larsson & Johannessen 2015a: 253):

- (17) Då di kåm ti detti landi        då settla dæ på en homstedde  
      when they came to this country.DEF then settled they on a homestead  
      som e no Taon åv Farmington  
      that is now town of Farmington  
      ‘When they came to this country, they settled in a homestead that is now  
      the town of Farmington.’ (Winfield Krostu, Waupacs county, born in  
      Wisconsin (1884), recorded 1942)
- (18) viss du inkje har riktig goe sement så dett an sund.  
      if you not have really good cement then falls he apart  
      ‘If you don’t have really good cement, it falls apart’  
      (Jacob Seljestad, born in Hardanger, Norway, 1866, emigrated in 1887,  
      recorded by Einar Haugen in 1942)
- (19) snøen va så dyp at me kunne ikkje gå  
      snow.DEF was so deep that we could not walk  
      ‘The snow was so deep that we could not walk.’  
      (Jacob Seljestad, born in Hardanger, Norway, 1866, emigrated in 1887,  
      recorded by Einar Haugen in 1942)

Larsson & Johannessen (2015a,b) consider different explanations for the observed increase of verb movement past negation/adverbials and argue that the behaviour can best be explained as incomplete acquisition (e.g., Montrul 2002, 2008, Polinsky 2018). This is based on the observation that overgeneralization of verb movement to embedded clauses in Norwegian and Swedish is attested in both L1 (Westergaard & Bentzen 2007, Waldmann 2008) and L2 learners (Piemann & Håkansson 1999). It is thus a characteristic of learner language. This proposal is inspired by Westergaard & Bentzen (2007), who propose that Norwegian children initially assume V-to-T movement in subject-initial structures (2a above) for economy reasons. Through exposure to various non-subject-initial structures (e.g., 2b above), the children become aware that Norwegian has V-to-C movement, resulting in a period of co-existence of both types of structures in the learner grammars. It is the absence of verb movement in embedded structures that is the cue for V-to-C movement in all main clauses. However, as mentioned in Section 2.1, adult asymmetric V2 grammars have also been argued to have V-to-T in subject-initial structures, see Holmberg (2015) and Westergaard et al. (2019) for an overview of the discussion. Larsson & Johannessen (2015a,b) reject influence from English as an explanation for the overuse of V-Adv in embedded clauses, because English does not allow verb movement, at least not of thematic verbs. They also argue against attrition as the cause of this development, both

because verb movement past negation in embedded clauses is more of an innovation than the loss of a feature, and because it seems to affect both fluent and less fluent speakers (Larsson & Johannessen 2015a,b).

Jensberg et al. (2024) investigate the same 50 speakers in the CANS corpus that were the object of study in Westergaard et al. (2021) and Lundquist et al. (2020).<sup>3</sup> Of these, 37 speakers produce embedded structures with negation or an adverbial, making it possible to distinguish between clauses with and without verb movement to T. The speakers produce a total of 264 relevant sentences, 60 of which (22.7%) involve an adverbial, while the remaining involve the negation (*ikke* ‘not’). On average, each speaker produces 7.14 examples, but the standard deviation is 5.87, which means that there is a great deal of individual variation. Based on the overview in Ringstad (2019), Jensberg et al. (2024) do not take the semantics of the matrix verb into account, but rather consider *that*-clauses, causal clauses (*fordi* ‘because’), and consequence of degree-clauses (*så stor at* ‘so big that’) as clause types that permit verb movement, and temporal-clauses (*når/da* ‘when’), relative clauses (relativizer *som* ‘who/that’), embedded questions, consequential clauses with *så* ‘so that’, and conditional clauses (*hvis/om* ‘if’) as clause types that do not permit verb movement in European Norwegian.

What is clear from the results is that the heritage speakers produce considerably more verb movement in embedded structures than both Norwegian speakers in Norway today and the first-generation immigrants. Like in Larsson & Johannessen’s (2015a, 2015b) studies, this increase includes both a higher proportion of embedded V-Adv word order in structures that exhibit variability in Norwegian and an extension of the phenomenon to structures where it is not acceptable in the homeland variety. Recall that Ringstad (2019) found 33% verb movement in embedded clauses in the corpora of European Norwegian that she investigated. This proportion is higher in the heritage speakers, who produce V-Adv in 57.4% (152/264) of embedded structures, 80.6% (58/72) in clauses where variable verb placement is found in European Norwegian and 47% (94/192) in clauses where it does not occur.<sup>4</sup> Figure 4 (Jensberg et al. 2024) shows the distribution between

<sup>3</sup>The search criteria in CANS were subordinating conjunctions and *wh*-words followed by an adverb or the negation *ikke* ‘not’. This identified 264 embedded clauses, which in turn were manually categorized in Excel based on the variables word order (V-Adv or Adv-V), verb type (main verb, copula, auxiliary) and clause type (the typology outlined at the end of this paragraph in the main text).

<sup>4</sup>In the elicited production experiments of Ringstad & Kush (2021) and Westendorp (2021), the proportion of V-Neg is a lot lower than in Ringstad’s (2019) study, 12.3% and 11.3%. However, as Ringstad (2019) is a corpus study, like Jensberg et al. (2024), it is a better point of comparison than the experimental studies.

verb movement (blue) and no verb movement (red) in different types of embedded clauses, of which causal, consequence of degree and *that*-clauses (on the left) permit it, while the rest do not. Figure 4 confirms that the heritage speakers produce V-Adv word order in structures where it is not acceptable in European Norwegian and a higher proportion of verb movement in structures that allow this.

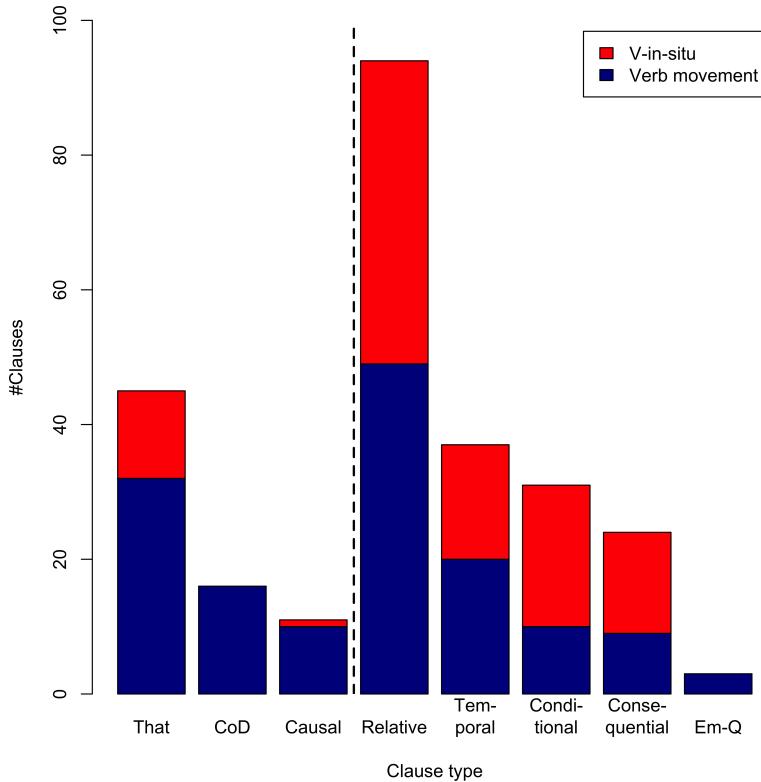


Figure 4: Distribution of verb movement (blue) and no verb movement (red) in different clause types.

Unlike Larsson & Johannessen, Jensberg et al. (2024) suggest that the activation of Norwegian influences the extent to which speakers produce V-Adv in embedded clauses. Figure 5 (Jensberg et al. 2024) provides an overview of the total distribution of embedded clauses with verb movement (blue) and those without verb movement (red) in the 37 speakers who produce relevant structures. There is considerable inter-speaker variation in both the total number of embedded clauses and proportion of verb movement in these structures. Much of the variation is due to the fact that it varies a great deal how many sentences the speakers

produce in the course of a recording, ranging from 35 to 812 declarative sentences per speaker. However, some of the variation is also due to differences in the production patterns of the speakers, as some of the heritage speakers produce fewer complex structures, sticking to structurally simple main clauses and avoiding subordination, while others have production patterns more on a par with speakers of European Norwegian. On the assumption that speakers who produce fewer complex structures, such as embedded clauses, also are more likely to make errors when producing these structures (c.f. the discussion on V2 errors in main clauses above), Jensberg et al. (2024) investigate whether there is a relationship between the number of illicit V-Adv structures in embedded clauses and the total number of embedded clauses produced by the speakers relative to their production of main clauses. Indeed, Jensberg et al. (2024) find a significant effect of the main-to-embedded clause ratio on non-target-like verb placement: speakers who frequently produce embedded clauses are less likely to use the V-Adv word order in embedded clauses that do not allow verb movement ( $\beta = 0.8736$ , SE = 0.3495,  $p = 0.0124$ , mixed effects logistic regression), see Figure 6 for an illustration of the effect.

The effect shown in Figure 6 is reminiscent of what we saw in the section on V2 in main clauses above, which revealed that those speakers who produce few non-subject-initial main clauses also make more errors with V2 (Westergaard et al. 2021). Jensberg et al. (2024) also find a negative correlation between the proportion of non-subject-initial declaratives and the proportion of V-Adv in clauses that do not permit it ( $r = -0.41$ ,  $p = 0.017^*$ ), meaning that heritage speakers who produce fewer non-subject-initial clauses are also less target-like with verb placement in embedded clauses. Furthermore, there is also a correlation between V2 violations in non-subject-initial clauses and the proportion of non-target V-Adv in embedded clauses ( $r = 0.44$ ,  $p = 0.009^{**}$ ). All these analyses made Jensberg et al. (2024) conclude that the increase in the occurrence of verb movement past the negation and adverbs in embedded clauses is the result of lower activation of Norwegian in the heritage speakers (see Putnam & Sánchez 2013).

While Larsson & Johannessen (2015a,b) reject crosslinguistic influence as an explanation for the increase of V-Adv in embedded clauses in NAmNo, Jensberg et al. (2024) argue that it looks like it might be a contributing factor. One of Larsson & Johannessen's main arguments against CLI is the fact that English in general does not have verb movement, in neither main (20a) nor embedded clauses (20b). However, as Jensberg et al. (2024) point out, auxiliaries and the copula do appear in T in English, both in main and embedded clauses (21), and

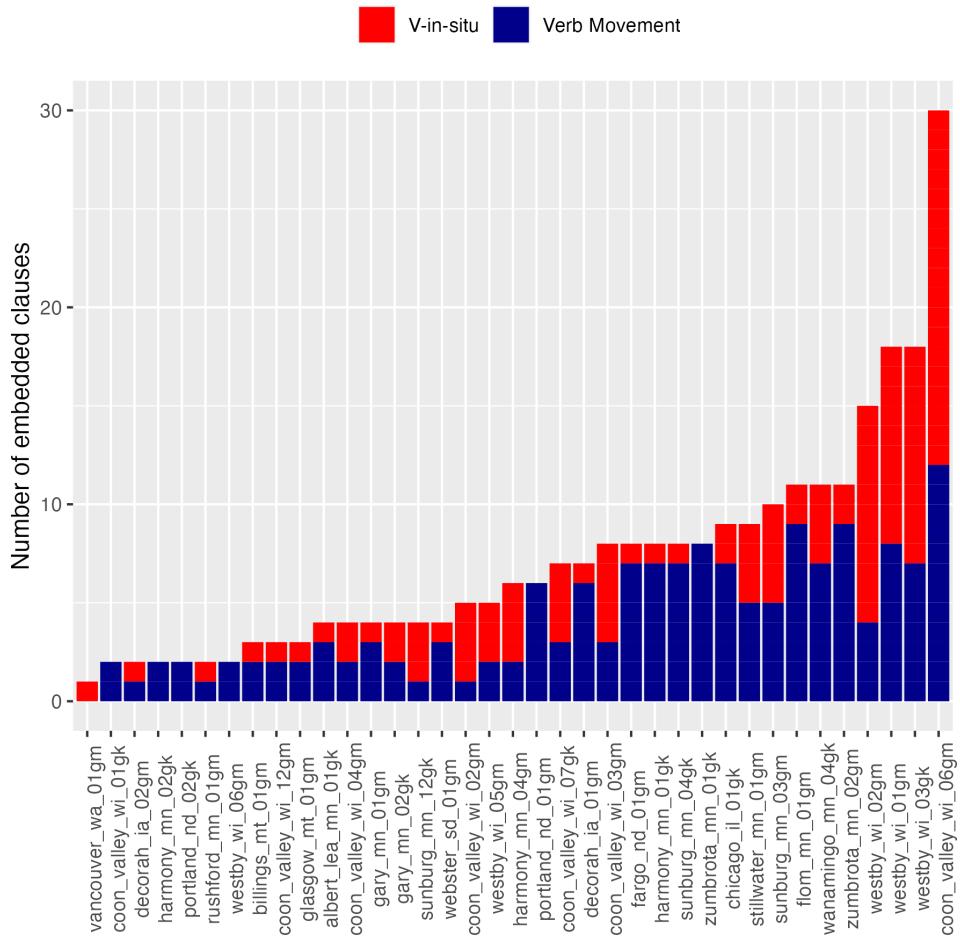


Figure 5: The distribution of verb movement and no verb movement in all embedded clauses, 37 speakers.

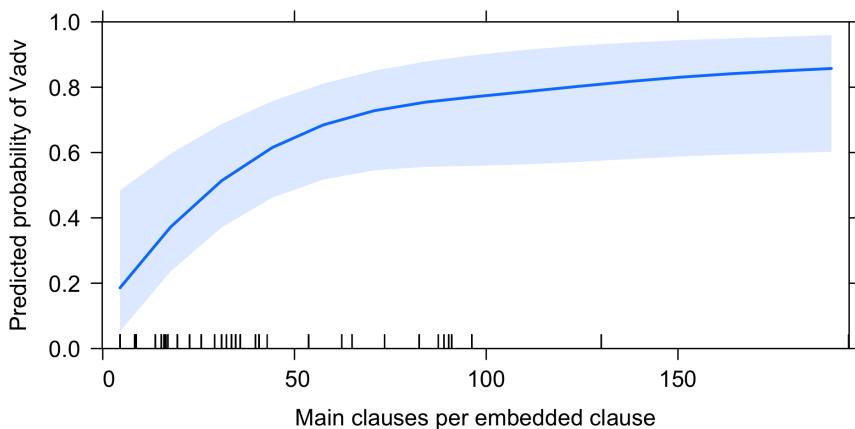


Figure 6: Predicted effect of main-to-embedded clause ratio on illicit V-adv, 37 speakers.

as a result, they will always precede negation and usually precede adverbials in both structures.

- (20) a. The man (\*works) actually (works) up there.
- b. The man who (\*works) actually (works) up there.
- (21) a. The man is **not/probably** working up there.
- b. The man who is **not/probably** working up there.

Thus, crosslinguistic influence from the position of auxiliaries in embedded clauses in English might also have contributed to the high proportion of V-Adv in embedded clauses in NAmNo. Jensberg et al. (2024) reason that if this were the case, auxiliary verbs and the copula should be more likely to appear in front of negation or adverbs than thematic verbs in NAmNo embedded clauses. Recall that in Ringstad's (2019) study, the proportion of verb movement is very similar for auxiliaries, thematic verbs, and copula (36%, 33% and 30%). In CANS, however, there is a clear difference between the distribution of V-Adv in embedded clauses with auxiliaries and *be* on the one hand and thematic verbs on the other in contexts that permit and contexts that do not permit it in European Norwegian. In the 190 contexts where the V-Adv word order is not permitted in the homeland variety, auxiliaries and the copula exhibit verb movement at 67.9% (36/53) and 61.8% (34/55), while thematic verbs involve V-Adv only 29.3% (24/82) of the time. In contexts that allow V-Adv, there are no differences between the verb types. These results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Proportion of V-Adv word order in EurNo and NAmNo with different verb types.

	Auxiliaries	Be	Lexical verbs
EurNo – contexts that allow V-Adv (Ringstad 2019)	36% (120/334)	30% (73/244)	33% (164/493)
NAmNo – contexts that allow V-Adv	88.9% (24/27)	83.5% (14/17)	85.2% (14/17)
NAmNo – contexts that do not allow V-Adv	67.9% (36/53)	61.8% (34/55)	29.3% (24/82)

Finally, Jensberg et al. (2024) suggest that the fact that English has symmetric word order in main and embedded clauses might also potentially have influenced the direction of this development in NAmNo, both as a catalyst for the kind of typological drift discussed in Hopp & Putnam (2015) (which Jensberg et al. refer to as language-internal drift) and more directly as CLI.

To sum up, studies on verb placement in embedded clauses reveal that the asymmetry regarding verb movement in main and embedded clauses may be vulnerable in North American Norwegian, as a large increase in verb movement past negation/adverbials has been observed in this variety, both in contexts that allow this word order and in contexts that do not allow it in the homeland variety (cf. Taranrød 2011, Larsson & Johannessen 2015b,a, and Jensberg et al. 2024).

## 5 Discussion

As the survey of the studies in this chapter reveals, there are some interesting differences between verb placement in main and embedded clauses in North American Norwegian. While V2 has been found to be remarkably robust in main clauses in the vast majority of speakers, the lack of verb movement typically associated with embedded clauses in asymmetric V2 languages such as Norwegian is found to be vulnerable. This makes for an interesting starting point for a discussion of what this means for the structural analysis of verb placement in Norwegian and how these data can contribute to our understanding of the factors that determine the course of development in heritage languages in general. The second point is mostly relevant to embedded structures, as these are the ones that appear to be most affected by the language context.

Regarding the analysis of V2, it is not completely clear how the results should be interpreted. On the one hand, the fact that non-subject-initial clauses and subject-initial structures with an adverbial exhibit similar proportions of non-V2 appears to go against an asymmetric analysis of these two types of structures, that is, an analysis in which the two structures target different landing sites for the finite verb (CP versus TP; see Holmberg 2015, Westergaard et al. 2019). On the other hand, if negative structures are included in the latter category, there is a clear difference between the two clause types, with V2 being more vulnerable in non-subject-initial clauses than subject-initial ones. However, given the obligatory presence of an auxiliary in negative structures in English, treating subject-initial structures with negation and adverbials the same way might mask the fact that this V2-like characteristic of English provides some evidence for V2 in negative structures for the heritage speakers (for a more detailed discussion of this and the other issues raised here, see Westergaard et al. 2021). Another question is how the high proportion of non-target-like verb movement in embedded clauses should be interpreted relative to the two analyses of subject-initial main clauses. If we assume that this feature of the heritage grammar is to some extent driven by both typological/language-internal drift and an external drive towards symmetry between main and embedded clauses, the latter due to influence from English, this could be interpreted as support for a TP analysis of verb movement in subject-initial structures.

When it comes to the question of which mechanisms can explain the development of verb placement in North American Norwegian, there are several factors that might be at play. First, if we take into consideration the frequency of the different structures discussed in this chapter, we have already seen that more frequent initial elements (see Figures 2 and 3 in Section 3) are less likely to trigger V2 violations in non-subject-initial clauses. Second, the frequency of unambiguous V2 structures in main clauses is considerably higher than the frequency of contexts in which verb movement in embedded structures can be observed, with 1,961 examples of non-subject-initial clauses (9.6% non-target-like) and 1,810 subject-initial structures with negation or an adverbial (3.2% non-target-like) in main clauses, and only 264 (57.4% V2) unambiguous contexts in embedded structures. Given the low activation of Norwegian, it is perhaps not surprising that infrequent embedded structures are more vulnerable, especially as they can be subdivided into structures that do (72) and do not (192) allow verb movement. However, low frequency cannot explain the direction of the development, that is, towards more verb movement. Also, given the considerable difference in frequency between non-subject-initial clauses (1,961) and subject-initial structures

with an adverbial (246), it is surprising that they appear to be equally target-like in the heritage population.

Larsson & Johannessen (2015a,b) propose incomplete acquisition as an explanation for the overuse of V-Adv in embedded clauses in the heritage population. One problematic aspect of this account is that the stage during which verb movement is overgeneralized to embedded structures in child language ends quite early. Ringstad & Kush (2021) show that verb movement is quite infrequent in relative clauses (less than 20%) and is only found in children under 5, that is, before the heritage speakers started school and typically became English-dominant. However, it is possible that the overgeneralization of verb movement observed in Norwegian child language may play a role in the development of the heritage language, as the general input situation may have resulted in *differential acquisition* (Rothman & Kupisch 2018) in the course of several generations, making verb movement in embedded clauses ever more frequent.

One thing that is puzzling about the increase in verb movement in embedded clauses in heritage varieties is that it embodies a process where a structure that is extremely infrequent spreads under conditions of diminished and potentially differential input, that is, conditions under which infrequent linguistic phenomena normally would be expected to disappear. This makes the notion of typological or language-internal drift attractive (Hopp & Putnam 2015, Jensberg et al. 2024), that is, the assumption that there is a “drift” within languages towards structural symmetry between embedded and main clauses. Hopp & Putnam (2015) suggest this as a possible account for the overuse and acceptance of V-Adv in embedded clauses in Moundridge Schweitzer German. While many properties of verb movement in main and embedded clauses are intact in this variety, embedded clauses introduced by the complementizers *dass* ‘that’ and *weil* ‘because’ almost consistently exhibit verb movement past not only objects, but frequently also negation and adverbs, in spontaneous speech. Interestingly, while *weil* ‘because’ is the only complementizer that can traditionally occur with V-Adv word order in modern German (depending on semantic-pragmatic distinctions), Freywald (2008) shows that *dass*-clauses with this word order are attested in a corpus of modern spoken German at 0.34% (in similar pragmatic contexts to *weil*). Despite its low frequency, this word order is steadily increasing in Modern German, and this makes language-internal drift, accelerated by the symmetry between main and embedded clauses in English, an interesting explanation for the unexpected direction of the development in Moundridge Schweitzer German: the occurrence of verb movement increases in a context where a complete loss of these structures would seem a more likely outcome, given their low frequency.

As pointed out by Jensberg et al. (2024), Norwegian is different from German in many respects. For example, as we have seen, verb movement in embedded clauses is considerably more frequent (33% in total, Ringstad 2019) and is found in many more contexts in Norwegian than in German, which makes the spread of the phenomenon more likely. Furthermore, Jensberg et al. (2024) have data that suggest that it is also a feature of the language of the first generation of immigrants. An example is provided in (22).

- (22) men så spekulerte han på det og når de (viroqua\_WI\_04gm)  
but then speculated he on it and when they  
skulle til Amerika om han kunne ikke likså godt reise  
were.going to America if he could not just.as well travel  
'But then he speculated on it and when they were going to America, if he could just as well leave.'

This suggests that the language-internal drift where optional verb movement has been expanded beyond the constraints offered by European Norwegian syntax in NAmNo is now developing towards word order symmetry between main and embedded clauses. The fast progression in NAmNo contra Heritage German is not surprising, given that the change from no verb movement to verb movement in embedded clauses in Norwegian involves a much smaller step than in German. In German it involves a change from verb-final SOV to V-Adv in embedded structures (23a), while in Norwegian, it is a change from SVO to a structure with verb movement (23b). The latter can only be distinguished in the presence of an adverbial or negation, making most embedded clauses ambiguous with respect to whether they are SVO or involve verb movement. Thus, if there is a drift towards verb movement in embedded clauses in V2 languages, it is not surprising that it is more advanced in Norwegian, as the evidence that embedded clauses are different from main clauses is much more unambiguous and frequent in German.

- (23) a. ... dass er (**nicht**) Angst **hat** / **er hat** (**nicht**) Angst  
... that he not fear has he has not fear  
b. ... at han (**ikke**) **er** redd / han **er** (**ikke**) **redd**  
... that he not is afraid he is not afraid

Along the same lines, another way in which Norwegian and German are different is related to precisely how similar the two languages are to English, and especially in embedded clauses.

As European Norwegian does allow verb movement in some embedded clauses, it is not possible to unequivocally conclude exactly what role language internal-drift towards symmetry has played in this development. However, it is likely to be a contributing factor, especially as the same development, albeit less pervasive, is found in Moundridge Schweitzer German. In a low input situation, it is not unlikely that the analysis that corresponds to that of main clauses is preferred.

Westergaard et al. (2021) suggest that the V2 violations observed in NAmNo main clauses are the result of crosslinguistic influence from English in production/processing, caused by the low activation of Norwegian, which initially affects how frequently non-subject-initial declaratives are used and subsequently weakens the V2 grammar (see also Larsson & Kinn 2022 for the same argument for American Swedish). Hopp & Putnam (2015) also appeal to CLI in an overarching way to account for verb movement in embedded clauses, by arguing that language-internal drift is exacerbated by the symmetry in the word order of main and embedded clauses in English. As we have seen, the same argument is made by Jensberg et al. (2024) for embedded clauses in NAmNo. However, Jensberg et al. also argue that there is likely to be some more direct structural CLI from English involved because of the higher proportion of V-Adv with auxiliaries in contexts where verb movement is not permitted (see Section 4). Naturally, this does not unequivocally prove that crosslinguistic influence plays a role here. Other studies have found a greater tendency for verb movement in embedded clauses with auxiliary verbs in the homeland variety as well. For example, the experimental study of Ringstad & Kush (2021) shows a distribution of 20% V-Adv with auxiliaries and 12.3% with thematic verbs in adult Norwegian speakers. A similar preference has been found for children in several studies, such as Ringstad & Kush (2021) for Norwegian, Håkansson & Dooley-Collberg (1994) for Swedish, and Heycock et al. (2013) for Faroese. Thus, it is possible that there are also language-internal preferences for auxiliaries to precede negation/adverbs more than thematic verbs. It is striking, however, that in the most comparable (corpus-based) study of the homeland variety (Ringstad 2019), the proportion of V-Adv in embedded clauses with auxiliaries and copula is vastly different from that of the heritage speakers, while with thematic verbs, it is quite similar.

A final possible explanation that should be discussed is whether the development observed for verb placement in NAmNo can be attributed to a general tendency towards simplification of the grammar (Scontras et al. 2015: 3). On the one hand, such a general tendency could clearly explain the decrease in the proportion of non-subject-initial structures in main clauses and the V2 violations in subject-initial clauses with adverbials as avoidance of verb movement. However,

it could not really explain the overuse of verb movement in embedded structures, unless we assume that symmetry between main and embedded clauses represents a type of simplification.

## 6 Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that in North American Norwegian, V2 is relatively robust in main clauses. However, the high activation of English has caused the use of non-subject-initial clauses to go down, which in turn has precipitated a weakening in the V2 grammar which is manifested by occasional V2 violations. Ironically, while the heritage speakers sometimes fail to apply verb movement in main clauses, they overapply it in embedded clauses, both in structures where it is accepted in European Norwegian and in structures where it is not. There is also a clear connection between main and embedded clauses in the sense that an analysis of individual variation reveals that speakers who fail to apply V2 consistently in main clauses have a stronger tendency to overapply verb movement in embedded structures and are also less likely to produce non-subject-initial declaratives (Jensberg et al. 2024). While the slight weakening of the V2 grammar in main clauses can be accounted for quite straightforwardly as a result of the occasional inability to inhibit the highly activated majority language, English, it is less clear why embedded clauses develop in the direction that they do. What is clear, however, is that they are more affected by the lack of language use than main clauses. Given how infrequent embedded clauses are, one might have expected verb movement in these structures to disappear completely in a heritage language situation. Instead, what we see is clear development in the opposite direction.

Several factors seem to conspire to make this happen. One such factor is the fact that most embedded clauses are ambiguous with regard to whether they involve verb movement or not (i.e., clauses with no negation/adverbial), making most embedded structures compatible with both a grammar with and one without verb movement. In a situation of impoverished input and limited use, it might be that the analysis that corresponds to that of the main clause would be preferred, especially as the overapplication of verb movement is a characteristic of Norwegian learner language as well. This situation would be further accelerated and exacerbated by language-internal drift and language-external influence from the majority language driving the heritage language towards symmetry between main and embedded clauses. In addition, more direct structural CLI seems to be at play, causing auxiliaries to precede negation and other adverbials more often

than thematic verbs in contexts that do not permit V-Adv. In such a situation, the output of each generation is likely to be more and more skewed towards embedded verb movement to T and symmetry between main and embedded clauses, causing the next generation to apply it even more.

## Abbreviations

AdvP	Adverbial Phrase	PP	Prepositional Phrase
Adv-V	Adverbial-Verb word order	SOV	Subject Object Verb
CANS	Corpus of American Nordic Speech	SpecCP	Specifier of CP
CLI	Crosslinguistic Influence	SpecTP	Specifier of TP
C(P)	Complementizer (Phrase)	SVO	Subject Verb Object
DP	Determiner Phrase	T(P)	Tense (Phrase)
Emb	Embedded	V-Adv	Verb-Adverbial word order
EurNo	European Norwegian	V-to-C	Verb movement to C
NAmNo	North American European	V-to-T	Verb movement to T
		V2	Verb second

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# 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

Ida Larsson & Kari Kinn. 2025. Argument placement in North American Norwegian: Subject shift, object shift and verb particles. In Kari Kinn & Michael T. Putnam (eds.), *A reference guide to the syntax of North American Norwegian*, 313–353. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15274574



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]);<sup>1</sup> 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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<sup>1</sup>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.<sup>2</sup> 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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<sup>2</sup>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):<sup>3</sup>

- (4) a. Vi kastet {søppelet} ut {søppelet}.  
we threw rubbish.DEF out rubbish.DEF  
'We threw out the rubbish.'
- b. Vi kastet {det} ut {<sup>%</sup>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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<sup>3</sup>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).<sup>4</sup>

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 & Vangnes 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

<sup>4</sup>The question 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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* 1<sup>st</sup> 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 (2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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).<sup>5</sup> 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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<sup>5</sup>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.<sup>6</sup> 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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<sup>6</sup>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.<sup>7</sup> 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),<sup>8</sup> 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,<sup>9</sup> and the postverbal topical sub-

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup>This might appear slightly higher than expected, but see Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming) for further discussion.

<sup>9</sup>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).<sup>10</sup>

- (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.<sup>11</sup>

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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<sup>10</sup>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*.

<sup>11</sup>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 det.  
weather.forecast.DEF says that there will.be snow but I think not 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup>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’.<sup>13</sup>

- (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).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>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.

<sup>14</sup>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 (60.6%)	8/8 (100%)	8/67 (11.9%)	36/108 (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\_udio\_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.<sup>15</sup>

- (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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<sup>15</sup>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).<sup>16</sup> 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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<sup>16</sup>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 (1<sup>st</sup> 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 bikkje **seg ned**  
       before that he begins in the whole taken to tip REFL down  
       ‘before he starts to tip down at all’ (LIA, sel\_udio\_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.<sup>17</sup>

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).<sup>18</sup>

- (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 omrent 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)

<sup>17</sup>Like in Larsson & Kinn (forthcoming), significance was tested using the function `prop.test()` in R (R Core Team 2023).

<sup>18</sup>*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 acquisition; 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.<sup>19</sup>

## 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

<sup>19</sup>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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**Part IV**

**Conclusion**



# Chapter 10

## Epilogue

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This chapter concludes the present volume. It synthesizes the findings of the previous chapters and points out some under-researched areas and directions for future research.

### 1 Synthesis and summary of findings

The previous chapters in this book deliver a detailed overview of a number of empirical domains and theoretical issues relevant to the syntax of North American Norwegian. Although the topics covered in this volume are impressive and reflective of the research that has been carried out on this language over the course of many decades, these chapters do not represent an exhaustive treatment of the syntactic structure of this language. In all fairness, a comprehensive overview of the entirety of topics related to the syntax of North American Norwegian is simply not attainable. This state of affairs simultaneously represents a unique opportunity, while issuing a significant challenge to researchers moving forward. In many respects, this scenario is reminiscent of the traditional “carrot-and-stick” analogy. The “carrot” represents that abundance of remaining empirical domains and opportunities to advance and test theoretical axioms and proposals, while the “stick” relates to the fact that the remaining eldest and penultimate generation of North American Norwegian speakers in all likelihood represents the final generation(s) of highly proficient speakers. Although these challenges are certainly



not unique to research on this heritage language (D’Alessandro et al. 2021), they signal a shift in the research paradigm from limited fieldwork + corpus mining to exclusively investigating this language through the lens of what forms and constructions exist in CANS.

One salient point that is consistently present throughout these chapters is the robust nature of the core elements of syntax (Lohndal 2021), and beyond that, there are no signs of an extraordinary collapse or contraction of North American Norwegian syntax (Bousquette & Putnam 2020). Furthermore, despite arguments in favor of a “hybrid”, or “integrated” syntactic system (Aboh 2015, Putnam et al. 2018), there is an abundance of evidence of a clear Norwegian-based syntax vs. an English-based variant. To mention but some examples, most speakers retain DP-internal agreement in grammatical gender (Riksem & Nygård 2025 [this volume]), uniquely Norwegian possessive constructions are not replaced by more English-like constructions (Kinn 2025 [this volume]), and verb second is generally robust (Anderssen et al. 2025 [this volume]). These are findings consistent both with Minimalist theorizing and the individual implementations of this larger program in the individual chapters. In short, the analyses found in this volume are strongly supportive of a syntactico-centric model of grammar as found in the Minimalist Program.

If, as argued above, structure-building properties associated with Norwegian grammar are largely unaffected, we should expect that the locus of language change – either through the influence of English or due to the language’s status as a moribund heritage language – should be confined to functional heads and their interpretation at the external interfaces (Lohndal & Putnam 2021, 2024, Putnam et al. 2019). Concerning the phenomena that appear to be most susceptible to instability/change, three immediately come to mind, i.e., (i) the licensing of double definiteness, with the omission of the pre-nominal determiner (van Baal 2020, 2024, 2025 [this volume] [this volume]), (ii) the overgeneralization of verb movement in embedded clauses in contexts and structural positions that are not licit in homeland Norwegian (Anderssen et al. 2025 [this volume]), and (iii) the occasional generation of “additional” and “less” structure in non-finite complement verb phrases (Putnam & Søfteland 2022). It is worth mentioning that these three syntactic properties are generally considered to be acquired relatively late in L1 acquisition, which provides support for maturational constraints on heritage language acquisition and the subsequent quality of representations that stem from qualitative and quantitative differences in input (Montrul 2008, 2016, Perez-Cortes et al. 2019).

## 2 Lingering questions and under-researched domains

Despite the fact that the chapters in this reference guide provide the most state-of-the-art assessment of the syntax of North American Norwegian, there are a number of empirical domains that remain under-researched and under-explored. In our closing comments, we point to a few of these areas, with the hope of encouraging continued research into the syntactic developments underway in North American Norwegian. One domain that has received little attention thus far in research on this heritage language pertains to issues related to A'-dependencies (i.e., filler-gap dependencies more generally). Structures that fit under this description are basic *wh*-movement phenomena, ellipsis, and relative clauses. A persistent challenge associated with researching A'-dependencies in moribund heritage grammars such as North American Norwegian is the difficulty in finding enough speakers who can successfully participate in judgment tasks or any other experiments (D'Alessandro et al. 2021).

Another “long-distance” phenomenon, albeit as an instance of an A-dependency, worthy of further study concerns the properties of anaphoric binding in North American Norwegian. Preliminary observations of reflexive possessives (Kinn 2025 [this volume]) suggest stability of Norwegian binding patterns, but also some interesting variation. Further inquiries into anaphoric binding should not only include the syntactic configurations that regulate the antecedent-anaphor or antecedent-pronoun relations, but also the position of these anaphors/pronouns. The realization of these forms has the potential to reveal significant insights about this facet of the language. Two final areas of syntax stand out at this juncture to us as suitable candidates for fruitful exploration: First, argument structure and grammatical voice alternations (e.g., passive, anticausatives, etc.) deserve more targeted attention moving forward. Finally, despite nascent work on non-finite clauses of North American Norwegian summarized by Putnam & Søfteland (2025 [this volume]), there remains a number of issues, such as a more thorough investigation of translational equivalents to gerund-like structures, that warrant additional research. The primary takeaway from this volume as a whole is the increased need for interpreting findings from heritage language research through the lens of generative grammar. For example, an appeal to representational economy as initially set forth by Scontras et al. (2018) (but see Putnam 2025 for a updated assessment of its application in heritage language syntax) has assisted many of the authors of this volume in establishing testable hypotheses and predictions in connection with observed changes. The axioms found in current generative approaches to syntactic change have thus proven to be valuable to not only interpreting empir-

ical findings, but also in theory-building efforts – especially those that integrate heritage language data in larger theoretical discussions and debates.

As mentioned, future research on NAmNo will primarily rely on the existing CANS data. While there are still many important questions that can be explored through the CANS data alone, the corpus can also be used in different ways. One perspective that stands out is a comparative perspective. To date, NAmNo is the only heritage variety of Norwegian that has been extensively researched from both a synchronic and diachronic perspective. This is a typical situation in the sense that it instantiates a dyad in which English is the dominant language (Scontras & Putnam 2020). However, heritage Norwegian, like many other heritage languages, is not confined to the US or other English-speaking countries. Recently, research on Norwegian as a heritage language in Latin America has begun (Kinn, Lund Stokka, et al. 2024, Kinn, Hjelde, et al. 2024). It will be interesting and exciting to compare findings on the syntax of North American vs. Latin American Norwegian in the years to come. This can enhance our understanding of the effects of different majority languages on syntax.

In closing, although we have reached the likely twilight of remaining (highly) proficient speakers of North American Norwegian, the research on this vernacular and its important contributions to syntactic change continues to move forward. In our humble opinion, there is no more fitting way to honor the legacy and heritage of those who spoke, and those who continue to proudly speak, North American Norwegian.

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# A reference guide to the syntax of North American Norwegian

North American Norwegian (NAmNo) is a diasporic heritage variety of Norwegian spoken primarily in the Upper Midwest of the United States. NAmNo has been in use since the mid-19th century, but it is now moribund. This volume serves as a synopsis of previous research focusing on the syntax of this language while also expanding upon these findings in key domains. Beyond the rich empirical description of facets of North American Norwegian syntax, the chapters in this volume also contribute to theory-building efforts from a Minimalist perspective. Kari Kinn and Michael T. Putnam begin the volume introducing the language and the theoretical preliminaries of aspects of the Minimalist Program found throughout the volume. The introductory chapter is followed by a detailed history of the emigration and language during the settlement period by Arnestein Hjelde. Brita Ramsevik Riksem and Mari Nygård explore the intricacies of agreement in determiner phrases, while Yvonne van Baal investigates its properties of definiteness. Kari Kinn rounds out the contributions on aspects of determiner phrases by taking a closer look at how possession is licensed in these structures. Shifting focus to the verbal and clausal domains, Kristin Eide's chapter addresses the syntactic reflexes of tense, modality, and aspect in NAmNo. The structure of non-finite clauses is the theme of Michael T. Putnam and Åshild Søfteland's contribution, which is followed up by Merete Anderssen, Helene R. Jensberg, Terje Lohndal, Björn Lundquist, and Marit Westergaard's treatment of verb second (V2) word and finite verb placement. Ida Larsson and Kari Kinn analyze argument placement in NAmNo, focusing particularly on subject shift, object shift, and verb particles. Michael T. Putnam and Kari Kinn conclude the volume with an epilogue, highlighting the key empirical and theoretical findings of these contributions as well as charting a course for future research on the syntax of NAmNo. In summary, this volume is the first of its kind whose mission is not only to simultaneously summarize previous and ongoing research on the syntax of NAmNo, but to also demonstrate the important role heritage language syntax contributes to our understanding of the acquisition, attrition, change, and maintenance of heritage language syntax.