

INTERGENERATIONAL CHANGES IN NORWEGIAN HERITAGE LANGUAGE OF THE AMERICAN MIDWEST

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THE OLD IDEAL

- Chomsky (1965: 3): “Linguistic theory is concerned with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community.”
- Chomsky (1986: 17):
- We exclude, for example, a speech community of uniform speakers each of whom speaks a mixture of French and Russian (say an idealized version of the 19th century Russian aristocracy). The language of such a speech community would not be “pure” in the relevant sense because it would not represent a single set of choices among the options permitted by UG but rather would include “contradictory” choices for certain of these options.

THE MONOLINGUAL & THE MULTILINGUAL IN LINGUISTIC MODELLING

- Cook and Newson (2007: 223–224): “The issue is really whether it is proper to set this universal bilingualism to one side in linguists’ descriptions of competence or whether it should in effect form the basis of the description from the beginning. [...] UG [Universal Grammar] Theory has to account for this universal ability to have two, possibly conflicting, grammars at the same time.”
- The “emphasis on monolingualism has simply been taken for granted by those working within the UG Theory” and “the only true knowledge of the language is taken to be that of the adult monolingual native speaker” (Cook and Newson 2007: 221)

TO BE FAIR...

- Whatever the language faculty is it can assume many different states in parallel.
 - (Chomsky 2000: 59).

CHOMSKY (1988: 187)

- Question: A child can learn two languages simultaneously, one in the house and the other on the street. Does this mean that the child relates the position of the switches [parameters] to the environment?
- Chomsky: This is a very important question which I have been pretending all along does not arise. The question is a very mysterious one. [...] The child learns different languages, say Spanish at home and English in the streets. But in fact, the problem is really more general, because every human being speaks a variety of languages. We sometimes call them different styles or dialects, but they are really different languages, and somehow we know when to use them, one in one place and another in another place. Now each of these different languages involves a different switch setting.

BENMAMOUN, MONTRUL, POLINSKY (2012: 1)
"THE WHITE PAPER", 2010

For [heritage] speakers, one of the languages eventually becomes the primary language and the other weakens; this finding is at odds with the linguistic assumption that first languages are stable in adult speakers.

A CONSTANT STRUGGLE

- “All bilinguals are attriters”; Schmid, September 19.
- “Two languages are active at once”. Putnam, September 19.
- “It is virtually impossible to switch off the language not in use and [...] the parallel activation of a bilingual’s two languages can be observed in reading, listening and planning speech” (Amaral and Roeper 2014:30).

GRAMMARS ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO CONTAMINATION

- Scontras et al. (2015: 3)
- Simplification = TRANSFER from dominant language?
- Inflection in Spanish & Russian HL gets eroded because the dominant language is English.
- Also: preference for SVO word order over topicalization.
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- Cf. also Cook (2003) French L2 → English L1

AIKHENWALD (2013: 24)

- 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.

VAUGHAN ET AL. (FORTHCOMING)

- Universal property of language contact: Simplification.
- Irregularity, allomorphy, redundancy, overspecification, grammatical gender, case systems, etc.

MULTIPLE GRAMMARS (AMARAL & ROEPER, 2014: 29)

[From an MG perspective all grammars are created equal. Each individual will have a grammar with a unique configuration of rules, and these individual configurations may converge or diverge from what is considered standard in a given language by different social groups. However, an individual grammar is never deficient in any way.

CONT.,

- We believe that the suggestion that all grammars have to some degree structures that deviate from the prominent and productive properties of a given language highlights the fact that from a descriptive perspective L1, L2, bilingual, and heritage grammars all share the core properties of human language.
 - That is, HL languages are like any other language.
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UNIVERSAL BILINGUALISM (ROEPER 1999: 170)

[Any] person has numerous grammars: every lexical class with rules that are incompatible with another class should constitute a separate grammar. It sounds unwieldy and implausible to argue that a person has a dozen grammars. The essence of this assertion may, nonetheless, be true. It implies that the notion of a grammar should change to a more local conception.

KAYNE (1996: XIV-XV): NUMBER OF GRAMMARS

“It is possible to arrive at a much more radical reevaluation based on the following question:

Can anyone think of another person with whom they agree 100 percent of the time on syntactic judgements (even counting only sharp disagreements)? [...]

[I]t is entirely likely that no two speakers of English have exactly the same syntactic judgements. In which case there must be many more varieties of English than is usually assumed.”

EXAMPLE

a. Kåin du lika best? (Áfarli 1986)

Who you like best?

'Who do you like better?'

b. *Hvem du liker best? Standard No.

Who you like best?

'Who do you like better?'

Also: Reite (2011) on wh-constructions in a Norwegian dialect

FESTIVE SYNTAX

(EIDE & ÅFARLI 2007, EIDE & SOLLID 2011)

a. tre katter små, så søte så.

three cats small, so cute ptl

'Three small cats, so (very) cute.'

b. *katter små tre, så søte så

cats small three, so cute ptl

c. Den 8.8. Stina fyller 8 år.

the 8.8 Stina is 8 years.

'The 8th of August Stina is 8 years old.'

d. Hurra for Mia som på Elveng bor!

Hooray for Mia who on Elveng lives!

Hooray for Mia living in Elveng!

EIDE & SOLLID (2011: 327 FF.)

Every data set from any speaker will contain elements and structures from a set of sub-grammars [...]. Thus, what we dub a grammar, a dialect, or a language, on this view, is a somewhat arbitrarily chosen set of sub-grammars, where each set may be idiosyncratic to a speaker. In reality, this set of grammars constitutes an idiolect.

CONT.

This is comparable to the term 'vocabulary'. [Any] idiosyncratic selection of vocabulary items constitutes a set of subsets, where each subset belongs to a specific register or style. Moreover, his selection of vocabulary items is not likely to overlap exactly with that of any other person [.]

MATRAS (2011: 210 FF)

Individual structures and word-forms are accompanied in the repertoire by the speaker's awareness of constraints on the appropriateness of their usage in individual settings and contexts.

These constraints guide the speaker in selecting forms and structures within the repertoire, in separating subsets within the repertoire...

MATRAS (2009: 151, 237)

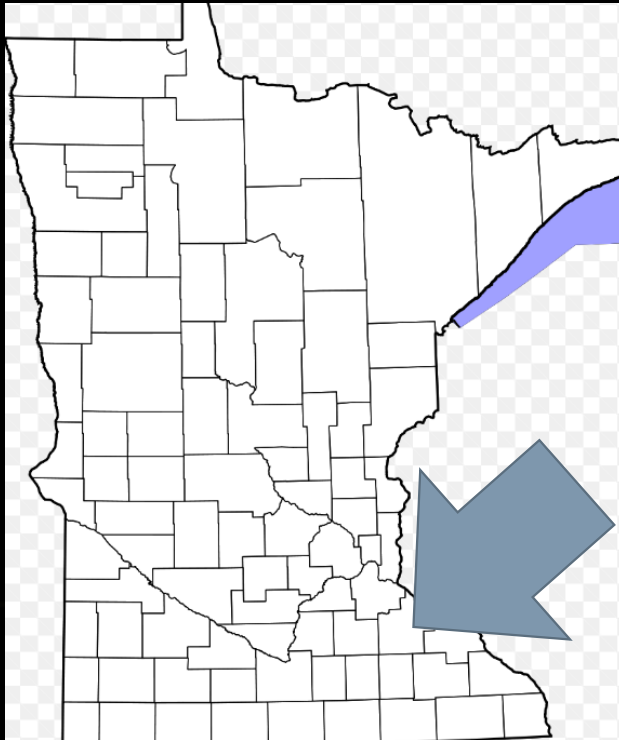
- [T]here is pressure on the bilingual to simplify the selection procedure by reducing the degree of separation between the two subsets of the repertoire...
- [W]e might view the replication of patterns as a kind of compromise strategy that [...] reduce[s] the load on the selection [...] mechanism by allowing patterns to converge, thus maximizing the efficiency of speech production in a bilingual situation.

CONVERGENCE

- Covers "transfer" between subgrammars of a "monolingual" grammar and transfer between subgrammars in bilingual borrowing (from dominant to weaker language).

THE SPEAKERS

- Father and daughter
- Wanamingo / Zumbrota, Goodhue County, MN
- Recorded in 1987 (father) and 2011/2015 (daughter)



Wanamingo: 38% Norwegian ancestry (US Census 2000)

	Father	Daughter
Born	1908 (-1988)	1939
Generation Norw-Am	3 (1858)	4 (1858)
Occupation	Farmer	Retired nurse / farmer's wife
Were learned Norwegian	At home	At home
Where learned English	At school	At school
Spouse's background	Stjørdal, Norw. speaker	Stjørdal, Norw.speaker
Language in neighborhood	Stjørdal dialect, English	English
How often is Norwegian used	Most of the time	Seldom/Hardly
Confirmed in Norwegian	Yes	No
Norwegian school	Yes	No
Read/write Norwegian	Yes	A bit
Visits to Norway	8 times	4 times

ADDITIONAL DATA: COON VALLEY, WESTBY, BLAIR, WI

- Recordings from Wisconsin
(dialects from Gudbrandsdalen and Solør in South-Eastern Norway)
- Coon Valley and Westby
 - 1940s (Haugen)
 - 1990s (Hjelde)
 - 2010s (Johannessen & Hjelde CANS)
- Blair
 - 1940s (Haugen)
 - 2010s (Eide, Johannessen & co: CANS)

PHONOLOGY

/Y/

- /y/: high fronted round vowel
 - Distinguished from /i/ by feature [\pm round]
 - Not present in all N. dialects

1980s America-Trønder dialect: strong tendencies towards delabialization

/Y/

OLD Wanamingo	YOUNG Wanamingo
<i>Intact</i>	<i>Some instability</i>
bync (begynt – started)	biɲc (begynt – started)
mycçy (mye – a lot)	tyçe – tiçe (tykkje – think)
my: (mye – a lot)	by:n –bi:n (byen – town)

/Y/ IN WISCONSIN

1942: Mostly intact:

[pynte] decorate, [rygen] ridge.DEF, [lysa] lights.DEF, [styçyr] pieces, [fyst] first

But also: [fist] first

2010-12:

[my:e] – [mi:e] much

[fyste] – [fiste] first

[y] and [i] in free variation

«THICK L»

/ɾ/

- Retroflex flap:

Old	Young
Mostly intact (more than 95%)	Mostly ɾ (more than 95%)
fju:ɾ (fjor, last year)	gamɾast (gamlast, oldest)
nu:ɾ (nord, north)	pɾas (plass, place)
çø:ɾi (kjølig, chilly)	nu:ɾum (nordom, north of)
avɾing (avling, crop)	føɾka (folk, folks)
ibɾaɾɔ (iblant, once in a while)	bɾi: / bɾi: (bli, become)
gæɾi (gale, wrong)	pɾuk (plukke, pick)

MORPHOLOGY



DATIVE

- Dative in Norw. dialects: pronouns and definite form of nouns
- The governing rather similar to German: Indirect object, some prepositions, verbs and adjectives
- For nouns: Case marked with different formatives according to gender and weak/strong noun
- Great dialectal variation in the formatives
 - In this dialect: neuter: -i/-a, mask: -a, fem: -n, plural -om

DATIVE

OLD: PRODUCTIVE

Men vi går no slettes itj ut i skjortarmom (*But vi do definitely not go out in short sleeves*)

Vi va no på gåra (We were at the front yard)

(det var) ei grein (...) som låg utpå stupa ((it was) a branch laying on the stoop

- sto på såmmå frettja (... stood at the same spot)

Vi fekk da te nok for så vi ha åt krøtterom (We got enough feed to have for the cattle)

DATIVE

YOUNG

hardly productive (2 examples, one is a quote)

«men du e frå Sjesjtamarkjen», sa a

(«but you are from Skjelstadmarka», she said)

Vi stoppa three # tri netn (?) på veia heim

(We stopped three # three the nights (?) at the way home)

DATIVE IN WISCONSIN

- 1940s: Documented in as productive in Haugen's recording
- 1990s: Found among only a few speakers
- 2010s: Not productive

SUBJUNCTIVE

- In archaic Trønder dialects: especially one verb «voro» (to be) in past tense: *va:* (indicative) and *vu:* (subjunctive)

We have never heard this used in Norway!

- YOUNG still has the opposition *va:* and *vo:* (like OLD had)

However, cf. English: If I were you

SYNTAX:

- Norwegian has obligatory V2 in declarative main clauses
 - Finite verb as 2nd constituent:
 - Jon *kjøpte* ikke ost . (vs. at Jon ikke kjøpte ost)
 - John *didn't* buy cheese.
 - Jon *kjøpte* aldri ost (vs. at Jon aldri kjøpte ost)
 - Jon never *bought* cheese.
 - I går *kjøpte* Jon ost.
 - Yesterday John *bought* cheese
-

TOPICALIZATION

OLD: 33%

YOUNG: 15%

Compared topicalization in recordings from Wisconsin in the 1940 and 2010.

- Einar Haugen: 4 speakers from Coon Valley & Westby:
 - 501 declaratives: 40% with topicalization (similar to Euro-Norw)
- NorAmDiaSyn: 3 dialogues, 6 speakers, Coon Valley, Westby, Blair:
 - 505 declaratives: 17% with topicalization
- (Informant b. 1961): 10 % topicalization
- Change in the use of topicalization towards an English pattern?

V2

V2 and Topicalization: OLD and YOUNG display about the same number of tokens of violations

V2 and sentence adverbials: OLD and YOUNG display about the same number of tokens of violations

V2 and negation: No violations

SUBORDINATED CLAUSES

OLD: No verb movement

- dæm som **leksom** *passa* sæ littegranj (Those who kind of took a bit care of themselves)
- Æ sa de at vi **kanskje** *skulj* sæll krøttera (I told that we were should maybe sell the cattle)

YOUNG: Only verb movement

- e hi nånn såmm **e itt** nå g- ... * ja
- han tjenne demm dennan **somm** ee # **e itt** så go da #
- e de så manng **somm** # **kann** itte veit de

CONCLUSION

- Cherry picking
- We believe that Amaral & Roeper's (2014) Multiple Grammars Approach in combination with Matras' (2009 / 2011) notion of Convergence provide a fruitful line investigation into inter-generational change in Norwegian heritage language.

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