

Language mixing and diachronic change

- patterns of change in mixed American Norwegian noun phrases

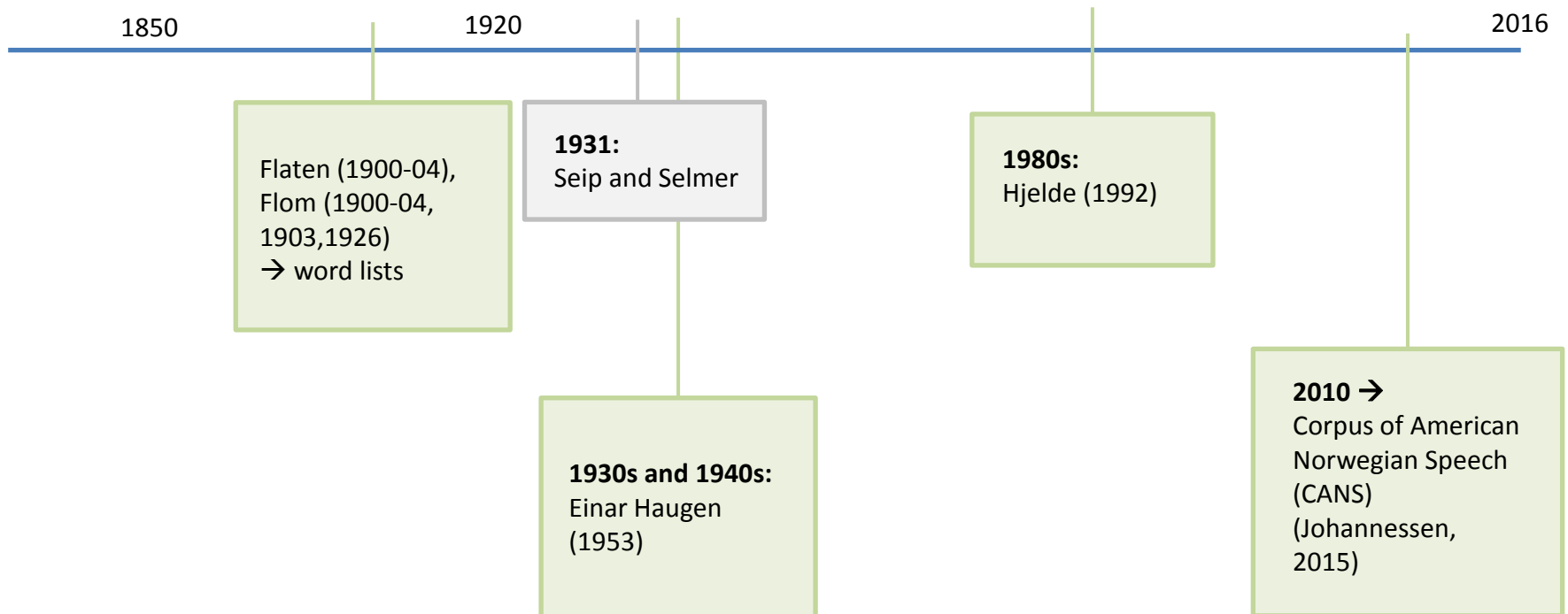
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American Norwegian I

Norwegian variety spoken by Norwegians who came to the US roughly from the 1850s to the 1920s + their descendants



American Norwegian II

- Einar Haugen
 - *The Norwegian Language in America* (1953)
 - Ch. 17: The grammar of loanwords
 - Ch. 20: A selected vocabulary of English loans
 - 260 informants
- **CANS** (Corpus of American Norwegian Speech)
 - Johannessen (2015)
 - Online, searchable corpus
 - Recordings from 50 individuals digitalized so far

Language mixing

- “mixture” of elements from two or more languages
- lexical and grammatical items from different languages appearing in the same sentence

(see e.g. Muysken 2000)

- jeg **teacha** # første **graden**

(CANS; coon_valley_WI_07gk)

I teach.PAST first grade.DEF.SG.M

‘I taught the first grade’

Outline

- Typical pattern
- Diachronic change
 - Number
 - Definiteness
- Discussion
 - What is changing?
 - Why is it changing?
- Conslusions

Typical pattern

Flaten, 1900-04: 115

«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»

Haugen, 1953: 440

«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»

Typical pattern II

- Norwegian structure with English content words

1. English stem with Norwegian determiner

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. | en svær crop | a.INDF.SG.M huge.INDF.SG.M crop | (Haugen 1953: 571) |
| b. | ei gammel basin | a.INDF.SG.F old.INDF.SG.F basin | (Haugen 1953: 561) |
| c. | et rent towel | a.INDF.SG.N clean.INDF.SG.N towel | (Haugen 1953: 601) |

2. English stem with Norwegian suffix

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| a. | harvest -en | harvest-DF.SG.M | (Haugen 1953: 579) |
| b. | field -a | field-DF.SG.F | (Haugen 1953: 575) |
| c. | train -et | train-DF.SG.N | (Haugen 1953: 602) |

3. English stem in a Norwegian word order

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| a. | trunk -en min | trunk-DF.SG.M my | (Haugen 1953: 603) |
|----|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|

Diachronic change – *number II*

CANS:

- mange **lawyers** *many lawyers* (sunburg_MN_03gm)
- fem **dialects** *five dialects* (portland_ND_01gm)
- andre **tools** *other tools* (sunburg_MN_03gm)
- alle slags **pills** *all kinds of pills* (westby_WI_02gm)
- de samme **genes** *the same genes* (flom_MN_02gm)
- alle disse **minutes** *all these minutes* (stillwater_MN_01gm)
- alle **things** *all things* (albert_lea_MN_01gk)

Diachronic change – *number III*

CANS:

- åtte **grade** *eight grades* (coon_valley_WI_07gk)
- fire hundre **member**_ *four hundred members* (decorah_IA_01gm)
- fleire **store**_ *more stores* (westby_WI_03gk)
- mange **building**_ *many buildings* (billings_MT_01gm)
- disse **garden snake**_ *these garden snakes* (sunburg_MN_03gm)

Diachronic change – *definiteness I*

Haugen 1953:

«Whether words were singular or plural [...] they had to add the N[orwegian] definite article under appropriate circumstances» (p. 451)

- **harvest-en** harvest-DF.SG.M (Haugen 1953: 579)
- **field-a** field-DF.SG.F (Haugen 1953: 575)
- **train-et** train-DF.SG.N (Haugen 1953: 602)

«E[nglish] the would not be acceptable» (p. 451)

Diachronic change – *definiteness II*

CANS:

- denne **cheese**_ *this cheese* (blair_WI_04gk)
- denne **country**_ *this country* (decorah_IA_01gm)
- den **school**_ *that school* (gary_MN_01gm)
- den **birdhouse**_ *that birdhouse* (coon_valley_WI_12gm)
- den store **building**_ *the big building* (chicago_IL_01gk)
- det gamle **stuff**_ *the old stuff* (chicago_IL_01gk)
- det norske **settlement**_ *the Norwegian settlement* (albert_lea_MN_01gk)
- **nephew**_ min my nephew (portland_ND_02gk)
- **cistern**_ min my cistern (westby_WI_01gm)

Diachronic change – *definiteness III*

CANS:

- **the** by *the city* (chicago_IL_01gk)
- **the** ungdom *the youth* (harmony_MN_01gk)
- **the** gamle kirke *the old church* (chicago_IL_01gk)
- **the** penger *the money* (albert_lea_MN_01gk)

- **the** andre dag-en *the other day-DEF.SG.M* (harmony_MN_02gk)
- **the** gård-en *the farm-DEF.SG.M* (gary_MN_01gm)
- **the** rest-en *the rest-DEF.SG.M* (vancouver_WA_03uk)

Summary of the changes

1. Increased usage of the English plural -s
2. Omission of functional suffixes, both in plural and in definite phrases
3. Usage of the English determiner *the*

What is changing?

- Theoretical framework:
 - Exoskeletal approach to grammar
 - Distributed Morphology



Analysis I: *change in the exponents*

- Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (Lardiere 2000)
- Avoidance strategies
 - Omitting functional suffixes
 - Inserting the suffix -s for plurality
- What about the determiner *the*?

Analysis II: *change in the structure*

- Structural differences in heritage grammars (e.g. Polinsky 2016)
- Features or feature bundles being altered, weakened or erased from the structure
- English DPs with Norwegian nouns
 - the by - *the city*

Why is it changing?

- Incomplete acquisition?
- Attrition?
- Cross-linguistic influence?

Investigating in retrospect

- We can only assume that Haugen's informants represent today's speakers' input.
- **Tendencies of change on a group level**
- Cross-linguistic influence

Conclusion

- Evidence of diachronic change in the patterns of language mixing in noun phrases in American Norwegian
 - Omission of functional suffixes
 - English functional morphemes
- Cross-linguistic influence
- «Timeline challenges»
 - *Tendencies* of change in the larger language community