

New perspectives on grammatical change in heritage Norwegian: Introducing the adult speaker and adolescent relearner

Alexander K. Lykke and Arnstein Hjelde

Østfold University College

This study introduces two speaker types, which have not yet been studied, to the study of heritage Norwegian: one adult (48, i.e., not elderly) and one adolescent speaker (16), “Kari” and “Jess”. They are both North American, English-dominant heritage speakers of Norwegian (AmNo), but differ from an older, previously studied cohort of American Norwegian speakers (old AmNo) in several respects. Kari and Jess have had more continuous contact with Norway throughout their lives. They are both Norwegian-literate and consume Norwegian-language media. Jess has attended Norwegian language courses in Norway, which motivates seeing her as a heritage language relearner. In this pilot study, we test the hypothesis that such extra-linguistic factors lead to grammatical differences between the groups. The hypothesis is tested by the analysis of three variables previously studied in old AmNo speakers: verb-second word order in non-subject initial clauses, possessive placement, and grammatical gender. We drew data from a 48-minute semi-structured speech recording. The study found that Kari and Jess indeed differ from old AmNo speakers. Kari’s language shows very little grammatical innovation, placing her among the most stable AmNo speakers. Jess’ language, in contrast, shows strongly innovative tendencies in all studied variables. To explain the innovations in Jess’ language, we appeal to heterogeneous input during childhood acquisition and cross-linguistic influence from English. Both factors, we argue, are active in the process of heritage language relearning.

Keywords: grammatical change, heritage relearning, balanced bilingualism, speaker demographics, heritage language exposure

1. Introduction¹

In this study, we introduce new speaker types to the study of heritage Norwegian; one is a present-day heritage speaker who is a more balanced bilingual than most elderly heritage speakers studied before. The other is a teenage heritage speaker, whom we argue is a heritage relearner. Both are English-dominant Norwegian heritage speakers of types that have not yet been studied. Additionally, they are mother and daughter. The present work is a pilot study intended to form hypotheses for future work on adult (as opposed to elderly) heritage speakers and relearners of Norwegian. First, with these two speakers, aging effects will not be an issue.

¹ We want to thank the participants at Janne Bondi Johannessen’s memorial seminar, the participants at WILA 12 and the reviewers and editors for feedback and helpful comments.

Second, we expect the grammatical trends in the subjects' language to differ from those of older speakers of American Norwegian (AmNo) due to the subjects' varying exposure to Norwegian and their different migrational histories. In this work, we tested this hypothesis by studying three different grammatical variables that have been previously studied using the data from the two aforementioned speakers. The variables under scrutiny are topicalization and V2, possessive placement, and gender. These variables were selected not only because they have been studied previously (Johannessen & Larsson 2015; Westergaard & Anderssen 2015; Westergaard & Lohndal 2019), but also because these phenomena are frequent enough in online speech to occur in the rather short recording presently available to us.

Over the last decade, AmNo has seen greatly increased interest as an object of research. The most recent work uses data from the Corpus of Nordic American Speech (CANS, Johannessen 2015b). The Norwegian part of the present version of CANS (v.3.1) contains 729,393 tokens produced by 246 speakers. Most of these data are based on recordings from the American Upper Mid-West from 2010 onwards. Older recordings have only recently been included.

The typical speakers studied in the work based on CANS have been sequential bilinguals who were Norwegian dominant in early childhood. They are typically third- or fourth-generation immigrants with ancestors who emigrated before 1930. A significant amount of their input came from other heritage speakers. Their shift to English dominance typically occurred sometime after six years of age. These speakers are commonly exposed only to their own dialect of Norwegian. Moreover, they are usually not Norwegian literate, and thus have had no access to written Norwegian language. As we will see below, it is relevant that written Norwegian can be quite linguistically different from spoken dialects.² AmNo speakers typically have few social domains in which they can use their Norwegian, and they speak the language rarely, if at all. They commonly have little to no contact with Norway and do not follow the Norwegian media.

In the following, we refer to the speakers who are descendants of Norwegians who emigrated to America before 1930 as speakers of old American heritage Norwegian (old AmNo). The two speakers studied in the present study are also North Americans who speak Norwegian, but they are (socio-)linguistically distinct from the other group (see below). We refer to them as younger American Norwegian heritage speakers (young AmNo), or simply with the pseudonyms "Kari" and "Jess."

This paper addresses the following two research questions:

² There are two different written standards of Norwegian, *Nynorsk* and *Bokmål*. *Nynorsk* is based on Norwegian dialects, while *Bokmål*, the most commonly used standard of these two and the one Jess has been exposed to, has its origin in written Danish. Written Danish has a two-gender system and pronominal possessives, which has influenced *Bokmål* to a large degree.

1. What differences are found with regard to topicalization and V2, possessive placement, and gender between data from our old and young AmNo speakers?
2. How can the differences between old and young AmNo in the studied variables be explained?

2. Background and data source

Kari and Jess are a mother-and-daughter pair, living in Vernon County, Wisconsin, and were 48 and 16 years old, respectively, when they were recorded. Kari is a second-generation immigrant; her mother came from the Salten area in northern Norway, while her father was a non-Norwegian American. He spent long stretches of time out of the home and Kari's mother mainly spoke Norwegian with Kari. Kari's mother emigrated to the US in her late 20s, meaning that Kari's childhood input was, plausibly, highly homeland-like. Kari uses Norwegian on an almost daily basis. With this linguistic background, she more closely resembles early AmNo speakers (e.g., as recorded in 1942) rather than present-day speakers of old AmNo. Like her mother, Kari married a non-Norwegian speaker who spent longer periods out of the home. She was able to offer her children a Norwegian–English bilingual upbringing. Kari has focused on passing Norwegian on to the subsequent generation, since ties to Norway are very important to her.

Kari's daughter, Jess, has been exposed to Norwegian since early childhood, but the amount of input increased markedly when she was eight years old. At that time, the family moved next to Kari's mother, who later moved in with them. Jess has never been Norwegian dominant, but used Norwegian increasingly later in childhood. Moreover, she has received more heterogeneous dialect input than old AmNo speakers. In addition to Kari's Northern Norwegian dialect, Jess has been exposed to spoken homeland Norwegian through children's entertainment since childhood. Spoken homeland Norwegian in the media is dialectally diverse and includes standard-near language unknown to old AmNo speakers.

Both Kari and Jess keep in touch with family and friends in Norway through visits and modern communication technology. Additionally, both have had some education in Norway: Kari spent a year at school in Norway in her late teens, while Jess, being much younger, spent a few weeks at summer school at an earlier age. Both are thus literate and report reading in Norwegian.

The present study drew its data from a 48-minute recording of a semi-structured conversation between these two speakers and a field worker (Arnstein Hjelde). The semi-structured conversation is of a similar length and type to those on which CANS is based, making it suitable for a pilot comparison with the CANS data of old AmNo speakers. The recording was phonetically transcribed, manually annotated, and analyzed. As a caveat to our findings and discussions, we emphasize that our data material is somewhat sparse, and that this study is meant to form hypotheses for future work on the kinds of speakers that Kari and Jess represent.

3. Findings

3.1 Topicalization and V2

Unlike English, Norwegian is a so-called V2 language. This means that in Norwegian main clause declaratives, the finite verb is the second constituent (outlined in bold, 1a–c). As evident in 1b, in contrast to 1a, when a non-subject is fronted, or topicalized, the finite verb is moved across the subject. This is distinct from English, where the fronting of a non-subject in main clause declaratives does not affect the subject–finite verb word order.³ 1c is an example of innovated V3 word order from AmNo (Westergaard & Lohndal 2019).

- (1a) *De ville aldri møttes i Norge*
They **will.PRET** never meet.PRET.REFL in Norway
'They never would have met in Norway.'
- (1b) *I Norge ville de aldri møttes*
in Norway **will.PRET** they never meet.PRET.REFL
'In Norway they would never have met.'
- (1c) *I Norge de ville aldri møttes*
in Norway they **will.PRET** never meet.PRET.REFL
'In Norway they would never have met.'

Another relevant difference between Norwegian and English is that topicalization is much more frequent in Norwegian than in English. A common estimate for Norwegian is that in spontaneous speech, around 33 percent of declaratives have topicalization, while the same ratio for English is 10 percent. In their study of AmNo, Westergaard and Lohndal (2019: 96) find that the amount of topicalization in main clause declaratives in the production of heritage Norwegian speakers varies between 33.1 percent and 6 percent—the first figure is thus close to a homeland Norwegian amount of topicalization, while the last one is more in line with monolingual English. Most of the 16 speakers investigated by Westergaard & Lohndal patterned between these two extremes, with a median amount of topicalization of 15 percent.

Our data are displayed in Table 1. We see that Kari has 23 percent topicalization, while her daughter Jess has only 15 percent topicalization.⁴ To contextualize Kari and Jess' data, we introduced further new data on topicalization and V2 in parent-child pairings. These data sources are available at

³ An exception in English is constructions with negation, which triggers do-support.

⁴ We have chosen to use a qualitative method in this analysis and thus did not conduct statistical testing. The main point of differences between Kari and Jess' topicalization and verb placement were the clearly different patterns in V3 use: 0 vs. 100%.

Tekstlaboratoriet at the University of Oslo.⁵ In this material, there are data from at least four pairs (1–4 in Table 1) of parent (A) and child (B) in recordings from the 1980s, 1990s, and 2010s. Table 1 displays their year of birth, their total produced declaratives, the percentage of which have with topicalization of non-subjects (as in 1b) and the percentage which has V3 word order (as in 1c). As we can see, the other parent-child pairs display a pattern similar to what we find for Kari and Jess, where the parents' topicalization percentage ranges between 20 and 30 percent, while their child has a topicalization percentage closer to 10 percent.⁶

Table 1: V2 and topicalization in parent–child pairs

Speaker (Birth year)	1A 1908	1B 1939	2A 1915	2B 1943	3A 1932	3B 1957	4A 1922	4B 1961	Kari 1968	Jess 2002
Declaratives	235	274	87	164	779	68	254	318	328	168
Topicalization %	23	13	28	25	29	10	27	10	23	15
V3 %	5	11	6	0	1	14	0	20	0	100

Westergaard and Lohndal (2019) also found innovative V3 word order occurring rather frequently among some AmNo speakers and argue that the decrease in topicalization is a cause of the increase in V3 innovation. Among the speakers they investigated, the tendency to use V3 varied from 0 to 42.1 percent, with a median of 3 percent. More than half of the speakers seldom or never employed innovative V3 in declaratives. In our study, the data from Kari and Jess aligned with each side of this extreme. Kari's data only have V2 structures, whereas Jess' data only have V3. Table 1 shows that, among the parent–child pairs mentioned previously, it is common for the older generation to have more stable V2 than the offspring, but the differences are not as extreme as with Kari and Jess. Like Westergaard and Lohndal (2019), we see a certain correlation between decreased topicalization and increased V3. In the case of Kari and Jess, their amount of topicalization was somewhat different, but the amount of V3 innovation was much more clearly different. In Jess' production, as opposed to most other AmNo speakers, the amount of topicalization correlates less directly with her amount of V3 structures.

⁵ The recordings are available at <http://tekstlab.uio.no/norskiamerika/opptak.html> [accessed 1 March 2022].

⁶ 2B is exceptional in having about as much topicalization as 2A. 2B is an avid speaker of Norwegian who frequently has sought out older members of his community to speak Norwegian. We believe this explains the homeland-like production with a relatively high amount of topicalization and low V3.

3.2 Possessive placement

Norwegian allows for two different positions of the possessive in the noun phrase (NP): preposed and postposed, as exemplified in (2a–b). The variation between the two different word orders is determined by information structure and other factors (Westergaard & Anderssen 2015: 24–25).

(2a) Preposed possessive (POSS-N)

Min bil
my car
'My car.'

(2b) Postposed possessive (N-POSS)

bilen min
car.the my
'My car.'

In homeland Norwegian, the N-POSS word order makes up roughly 75 percent of all possessive constructions (Westergaard & Anderssen 2015: 25–26). Westergaard and Anderssen found that the overall occurrence of N-POSS in AmNo constructions is somewhat higher, at 79.9 percent. What is more, almost all occurrences with POSS-N word order in their AmNo material are produced by three speakers who have between 60–100 percent POSS-N. Thus, N-POSS, if anything, has been found to be stronger in AmNo than in homeland Norwegian. Westergaard and Anderssen (2015) propose that the marked overgeneralization of POSS-N word order of the three mentioned speakers is related to heritage relearning, which we return to in the discussion section.

Table 2: Distribution of possessives

	Preposed possessive (POSS-N)	Postposed possessive (N-POSS)	Total
Kari	4	19 (79%)	23
Jess	11	3 (21%)	14

As shown in Table 2, Kari produces N-POSS word order in 79 percent of the occurrences. Kari's distribution is thus on par with homeland speakers of Norwegian. Jess' language shows a quite opposite tendency. She produces N-POSS word order in only 21 percent of the occurrences. Jess thus shows a strong tendency toward overgeneralization of POSS-N word order compared to the language of her mother and homeland language.

3.3 Gender

Most Norwegian dialects have three genders: masculine (M), feminine (F), and neuter (N). For the sake of comparability with Lohndal and Westergaard (2016), we adopt the same definition of gender, as “classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words (Hockett 1958: 231).” Examples of indefinite and definite noun phrases (NPs) with gender agreement are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Norwegian gender example data

	Indefinite NP			Definite NP		
Masculine	<i>en</i>	<i>fin-Ø</i>	<i>bil</i>	<i>den</i>	<i>fin-e</i>	<i>bil-en</i>
	a.M	nice-M	car	the.M	nice.DEF	car-M.DEF
	“a nice car”			“the nice car”		
Feminine	<i>ei</i>	<i>fin-Ø</i>	<i>bok</i>	<i>den</i>	<i>fin-e</i>	<i>bok-a</i>
	a.F	nice-F	book	the.F	nice-DEF	book-F.DEF
	“a nice book”			“the nice book”		
Neuter	<i>et</i>	<i>fin-t</i>	<i>hus</i>	<i>det</i>	<i>fin-e</i>	<i>hus-et</i>
	a.N	nice-N	house	the.N	nice-DEF	house-N.DEF
	“a nice house”			“the nice house”		

Our gender analysis is based on NP-internal gender agreement marking on determiners and adjectives, as exemplified in Table 3. While the definiteness inflection on nouns in Norwegian also reflects gender (see the definite NPs in Table 3), we have not included the definite suffix in our analysis. The main reason for this exclusion is that definiteness suffixes originally specified for gender can be reduced to markers of inflection class (Lødrup 2011; see also the discussions of Johannessen & Larsson 2015: 2–3; Lohndal & Westergaard 2016: 2–5). Following Hockett’s definition, given previously, we have included postposed possessives in our analysis.

In Table 4, the gender data of Kari and Jess are displayed. Primarily, we analyzed items that have distinct marking for all three genders. We have, however, made exceptions for items with M/F-syncretism, because they distinguish neuter from non-neuter (see examples in Table 3). Non-syncretic forms still make up most of the attestations, and exact numbers of syncretic forms are provided in footnotes to the numbers in Table 4. We categorize the innovative use of M/F-syncretic tokens with N nouns as M in Table 4 for three reasons. First, their form is consistent with the masculine gender. Second, there are no examples of unambiguous feminine forms spreading. Third, the masculine gender has been shown to be expansive in both homeland and heritage Norwegian, whereas the feminine is much less so (see Johannessen & Larsson 2015; Lohndal & Westergaard 2016; Rødvand 2018).

Table 4: The gender marking of Kari and Jess

Homeland gender	Masculine (M)			Feminine (F)			Neuter (N)			Total	Total innovated
	M	F	N	M	F	N	M	F	N		
Kari	22 ⁷	–	1	1	12 ⁸	–	5 ⁹	–	4	45	7 (15%)
Jess	24 ¹⁰	–	5	7	–	–	3 ¹¹	–	2	41	15 (37%)

In Table 4, we once again see different trends with the two speakers. Kari’s production of gender is quite homeland-like. Her main innovative trend is the overgeneralization of M with N items. Jess’ production is markedly different. First, Jess’ production is consistent with a two-gender system where F is eliminated. She uses M with F nouns in all seven possible instances. Second, her production exhibits variations different from Kari’s.

Previous studies of gender in heritage Norwegian found that the original three-gender system is retained with many speakers, but that there can be great variation between individuals (Johannessen & Larsson 2015; Lohndal & Westergaard 2016). The strongest tendency for innovation is overgeneralization of M, but overgeneralization of N with M items is also found. In Lohndal and Westergaard’s (2016) study of 50 speakers from CANS, a small group of five speakers had an unchanged gender system. Among the remaining 41 speakers with analyzable trends, a range of tendencies was found. Some speakers may have an innovated system without gender, some have considerable innovation with F nouns, and others with N.

Kari patterns with the more stable of the CANS speakers in Lohndal and Westergaard’s (2016) study. In AmNo, overgeneralization of M with N nouns has been found to occur more frequently than with F nouns (Lohndal & Westergaard 2016). As such, Kari’s gender data were quite parallel to AmNo speakers. Kari’s single overgeneralization of M with an F noun is with the item *skole* ‘school,’ which often occurs with M in homeland written and oral language, although it is F in Kari’s baseline dialect.

In Jess’ language, the overgeneralization of M with F is so strong that F is not attested in her data. Studies of gender marking on determiners and adjectives report no evidence of an innovated two-gender system like the one indicated by Jess’ data (Johannessen & Larsson 2015; Lohndal & Westergaard 2016). As such, Jess’ data show a unique tendency. However, Rødvand’s (2018) study of personal pronouns referring to inanimates (PPIs) finds a two-gender system without the marking of F,

⁷ 5 M/F syncretic

⁸ 1 M/F-syncretic.

⁹ 3 M/F-syncretic.

¹⁰ 3 M/F-syncretic.

¹¹ 1 M/F-syncretic.

with a group of five speakers. We note the parallel to Jess' determiner and adjective marking but have not been able to systematically study PPIs in the present work.

Jess' innovative data mostly seem to indicate changes in gender assignment, and not agreement errors. Jess' overgeneralization of N indicates that she does not use N randomly. Two overgeneralizations of N are arguably related to gender assignment with the noun *klasse* 'class(M).' This noun is consistently N in Jess' language, being only attested with neuter agreement (though only twice). The three remaining instances of N overgeneralization are instances of the determiner *det* /de/ 'the.N' used with M nouns. Johannessen and Larsson (2015: 14) observed the overgeneralization of *det* /de/ "the.N" with speakers who do not otherwise overgeneralize the neuter. They attribute the overuse of *det* /de/ 'the.N' to a transfer of features from the similar English functional item *the* /ðə/, which is not specified for gender. Jess' innovative use of *det* /de/ 'the.N' in M contexts is parallel to what is observed by Johannessen and Larsson. In the same way, we find cross-linguistic influence (CLI) from English *the* /ðə/ to be a plausible cause for its overgeneralization.

4. Discussion

We now discuss the innovations described in the findings section from the perspective of acquisition-related restructuring and CLI. We assert that the innovations in Jess' language are, to varying degrees, related to acquisition. Jess' acquisition has occurred with less access to and use of Norwegian than would be common in a majority language context. Additionally, she has received input from different varieties of Norwegian. In other words, decreased exposure to Norwegian combined with heterogeneous Norwegian input has led to restructurings in Jess' grammar when compared to that of Kari's.¹² An important source of this heterogeneous input has been Jess' relearning of her heritage language at summer school in Norway, which increased her exposure to written Bokmål.

Furthermore, we argue that in conjunction with acquisition-related restructuring, CLI is equally relevant to explaining the patterns in Jess' grammar. First, Jess' data indicate that her grammar is more English-like when it comes to verb and possessive placement. Second, notable CLI effects from the dominant L2 have been found among heritage speakers who relearn their language (see Polinsky 2015 and further discussion below.). Our understanding of CLI is rooted in the assumption that the different languages spoken by a multilingual speaker share a single grammar (see Fisher et al. 2022; Putnam, Carlson & Reitter 2018). CLI, in such a view, is that the rules or structures associated with one language are extended

¹² Attrition in our conception is the weakening of previously acquired grammatical knowledge. When attrition occurs in childhood, it can be difficult to determine whether grammatical knowledge has been lost, or whether it was never acquired, in the absence of longitudinal data. Thus, at the present stage, we will not discuss attrition as a cause for the innovations we observe in Jess' language.

into use with another.¹³ All innovations, including those caused by CLI, can occur variably in the production of a speaker.

In the case of Kari and Jess, the grammatical trends appeared relatable to their linguistic backgrounds, specifically the quantity and quality of their Norwegian input during acquisition and how much they used the language across their lifespan. Kari's linguistic biography is markedly different from that of typical old AmNo speakers. It seems clear that Kari's different linguistic background is the main reason why her data provide so little evidence for change. She is a second-generation immigrant who received her input from an emigrant speaker; importantly, she has had continuous contact with Norway throughout her life. Kari uses Norwegian daily, whereas old AmNo speakers typically use the language rarely. Additionally, Kari is literate in Norwegian. Such factors mark her as clearly different from old AmNo speakers. We believe that Kari's data underline the importance of language maintenance across the lifespan in grammatical stability, but further study of similar heritage speakers is needed to make a strong claim.

The only part of Kari's data that might indicate a change in her grammar is her gender data. One interpretation of this finding is that the gender system is among the more vulnerable domains of heritage Norwegian grammar. Considering that incipient change in a variety is often accelerated by heritage speakers, it is probably relevant that gender is undergoing changes in homeland Norwegian as well (see e.g. Lødrup 2011).

Jess' data show tendencies that are markedly different, both to Kari's data and, in most cases, to speakers of old AmNo. As with Kari, we see these differences in the data as relatable to Jess' linguistic background. The crucial difference between Jess and old AmNo speakers is that she is a simultaneous bilingual who, importantly, experienced increased use of her non-dominant language later in childhood, around age eight. Additionally, she has received heterogeneous Norwegian input from a young age and has never been Norwegian dominant.¹⁴

As mentioned, we propose that the trends in Jess' data are likely the result of what has been called heritage language relearning. Polinsky (2015) has shown that heritage relearners show tendencies similar to non-native speakers. Effectively, Polinsky argues that the relearned heritage language becomes similar to an L3 in many properties. Most relevant to our study is that the heritage relearners in Polinsky's study exhibited the effects of CLI from their dominant L2 in word order phenomena. Both Jess' innovated V3, and possessive placement are English-like, and may be caused by CLI from her dominant English. Furthermore, connections between relearning and increased innovation are suggested for possessive

¹³ It falls beyond the scope of the present work to discuss why CLI has the effect it has on heritage relearners.

¹⁴ Both Jess and the old AmNo speaker Daisy studied by Johannessen (2015a), are simultaneous bilinguals who experienced increased Norwegian input and use around age 8 with the advent of a Norwegian-speaking grandparent (see also Lykke 2020: 39, 44). Daisy's parents spoke different dialects, whereas Jess has received input from different dialects otherwise. Both have been to Norway several times. Interestingly, both speakers display many innovations. An exploration of their similarities must, however, be left for future work.

placement by Westergaard and Anderssen (2015) and gender by Johannessen and Larsson (2015). The cited authors all point out that the relevant properties of the language that heritage speakers are (re)learning are grammatically dissimilar to their original heritage variety. These grammatical differences are proposed as the cause of linguistic changes during heritage relearning. We will now consider Jess' grammatical innovations from the perspective of heritage relearning.

In our study, Jess strongly overgeneralizes POSS-N word order in possessive constructions, e.g., the *min bil* 'my car' type. This same tendency was found by Westergaard and Anderssen (2015) with three speakers, whom they similarly propose may be relearning Norwegian as adults. Bokmål, the most commonly used Norwegian written standard, has a markedly higher occurrence of POSS-N word order than the Norwegian spoken language. Westergaard and Anderssen (2015) propose that this difference may be a part of causing POSS-N word order in heritage relearners. Additionally, however, they suggest that the overgeneralization of POSS-N word order might be a phenomenon common to all acquisition of Norwegian, L1, and L2 (i.e., *Ln*). POSS-N is overgeneralized by children in early language acquisition, both monolingual Norwegian, and simultaneous Norwegian–English bilinguals in Norway. The proposed cause of the overgeneralization of POSS-N during acquisition is that it is less syntactically complex than N-POSS.

In the case of an adolescent, English-dominant, heritage relearner like Jess, we would like to add that CLI effects cannot be disregarded when it comes to possessive placement. POSS-N, e.g., *my car*, is the only option in English grammar, and this word order is overgeneralized by Jess. Considering the findings of CLI effects with heritage relearners (Polinsky 2015), CLI is a relevant factor that may explain Jess' possessive placement. This does not, in our opinion, exclude the causes argued by Westergaard and Anderssen (2015), and structural complexity is likely relevant. In the case of possessive placement in heritage Norwegian relearning, multiple factors may work toward the same effect.

Based on the strong tendency of V3 word order in Jess' language, we furthermore propose that the loss of V2 is a trait of heritage relearning of Norwegian, at least with English-dominant speakers. To the best of our knowledge, this has not yet been claimed in a systematic study of heritage Norwegian.¹⁵ In the case of V2 in main clause declaratives, heterogeneous Norwegian input is plausibly not the cause of innovation, at least not in the case of Jess. CLI from English may then be the cause of the consistent non-V2 in Jess's data as well. Nevertheless, to specifically determine whether the non-V2 is caused by CLI from the English study of heritage relearners with a dominant language with OV word order is needed.

¹⁵ It has, however, been anecdotally observed that some of the AmNo speakers which we perceive as highly proficient, have a tendency towards increased V3 word order. For instance, the two AmNo speakers Fargo_ND_01gm and Webster_SD_01gm of CANS are both literate in Norwegian and have the highest non-V2 occurrence among the speakers of Westergaard and Lohndal (2019). Fargo_ND_01gm shows similarly high non-V2 occurrence in the experimental data of Lykke (2018). Their non-V2 word order may be caused by heritage language relearning.

Relearning is also relevant for Jess' gender data, which indicate that she may have a restructured system with only M and N. During early childhood, Jess experienced limited access to Norwegian, which is typical of heritage speakers. This likely affected her acquisition of the gender system. Her chief source of input was her mother (Kari) and grandmother's dialect, which has a traditional three-gender system. Subsequently, or perhaps simultaneously, Jess encountered varieties of Norwegian with different gender systems: in summer school in Norway, through other visits to Eastern Norway, or in various Norwegian-language media. Importantly, she received input from the written Bokmål standard from a young age, which uses F much less than the traditional dialects, and possibly also from urban Eastern Norwegian, which may lack F (see the argumentation of Lødrup 2011). Her relearning of Norwegian thus served to increase the heterogeneity of her input. In the discussion of their gender findings, Johannessen and Larsson (2015: 18) also suggest that the tendencies of two of their more innovative speakers may be related to relearning because the relearned variety differs from the heritage variety. Since Jess' data do not indicate a complete loss of gender, the combined effects of heterogeneous dialect input and low exposure to Norwegian during acquisition seem a likelier explanation for the innovative trends than does CLI from English.

5. Conclusion

In this hypothesis-building pilot study, we studied three grammatical phenomena in heritage Norwegian: V2 word order, possessive placement, and grammatical gender. Data are drawn from the spontaneous speech of two speakers, "Kari" and "Jess," who are mother and daughter. These speakers are younger and less removed from the homeland language than previously studied speakers of AmNo.

Kari's data indicate a highly homeland-like grammar in the three investigated properties. The only exception is a slight innovative tendency in her gender data. The relative instability in the gender data may imply that gender is particularly changeable in Norwegian heritage language. Kari is a second-generation immigrant, and a more balanced bilingual than old AmNo speakers. The findings from her language predict that second-generation immigrant, balanced bilingual heritage speakers will show less innovation than old AmNo speakers, who are third and/or fourth generation immigrants, elderly, and more unbalanced bilingual heritage speakers.

Jess' data show clear innovative trends across all investigated properties. Her linguistic background is also quite different from that of Kari. Jess is a third-generation immigrant and an unbalanced bilingual. She has received Norwegian input since birth but showed a marked increase in use of Norwegian around age 8. She has since received academic support for her Norwegian, and, in contrast to Kari, Jess has thus received input from Norwegian written language from a young age (being 16 at the time of recording).

We argue that the innovative tendencies in Jess' data are caused by heritage language relearning. Her data thus suggest that heritage relearners of Norwegian

will have a high degree of innovation in the three grammatical properties investigated here. Similar trends to those of Jess' data have been related to heritage relearning in the study of both possessive placement and gender (Johannessen & Larsson 2015; Westergaard & Anderssen 2015). Moreover, Jess consistently produces an innovated V3 word order in non-subject initial main clause declaratives where the homeland language has V2. Heritage relearners have been found to have a high degree of CLI from their dominant language (Polinsky 2015). In this light, CLI seems to be a probable cause of the English-like patterns in both Jess' possessive placement and preference for V3 word order. The innovation in her gender data, however, must rather be explained by the effect of heterogeneous Norwegian input.

References

- Fisher, Rose, David Natvig, Erin Pretorius, Michael T. Putnam & Katharina S. Schuhmann. 2022. Why Is Inflectional Morphology Difficult to Borrow?—Distributing and Lexicalizing Plural Allomorphy in Pennsylvania Dutch. *Languages* 7(2). 1–25.
- Hockett, Charles F. 1958. *A Course in Modern Linguistics*. New York, NY: MacMillan.
- Johannessen, Janne B. 2015a. Attrition in an American Norwegian heritage language speaker. In Janne B. Johannessen & Joseph C. Salmons (Eds.), *Germanic Heritage Languages in America. Acquisition, attrition and change*. 46–71. Amsterdam & Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Johannessen, Janne B. 2015b. The corpus of American Norwegian speech (CANS). In Beáta Megyesi (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 20th Nordic Conference of Computational Linguistics, NODALIDA*. 297–300. Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/43898/2/NODALIDA-CANS-proc-trykt-2015.pdf> (31 May 2022)
- Johannessen, Janne B. & Ida Larsson. 2015. Complexity matters: On gender agreement in Heritage Scandinavian. *Frontiers in Psychology* 6. 1–20.
- Lohndal, Terje, & Marit Westergaard. 2016. Grammatical gender in American Norwegian heritage language: Stability or attrition? *Frontiers in Psychology* 7. 1-15.
- Lykke, Alexander K. 2018. The relation between finiteness morphology and verb-second: An empirical study of heritage Norwegian. In Jan H. Petersen & Karoline Kühn (Eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the 8th Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas (WILA 8)*. 71–79 Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project
- Lykke, Alexander K. 2020. *Variation and Change in the Tense Morphology of Heritage Norwegian in North America*. Oslo: University of Oslo dissertation.
- Lødrup, Helge. 2011. Hvor mange genus er det i Oslo-dialekten? *Maal og minne* 103(2). 120–136.

- Polinsky, Maria. 2015. When L1 becomes an L3: Do heritage speakers make better L3 learners? *Bilingualism* 18. 163–178.
- Putnam, Michael T., Matthew Carlson & David Reitter. 2018. Integrated, not isolated: Defining typological proximity in an integrated multilingual architecture. *Frontiers in Psychology* 8. 1–16.
- Rødvang, Linn I. S. 2018. Systematic variation in the gender system in American Norwegian. In Jan H. Petersen & Karoline Köhl (Eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the 8th Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas (WILA 8)*. 88–95. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Westergaard, Marit & Merete Anderssen. 2015. Word order variation in Norwegian possessive constructions. In Janne B. Johannessen & Joseph C. Salmons (Eds.), *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America*. 21–45. Amsterdam & Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Westergaard, Marit, & Lohndal, Terje. 2019. Verb second word order in Norwegian heritage language: Syntax and pragmatics. In David W. Lightfoot & Jonathan Havenhill (Eds.), *Variable Properties in Language: Their Nature and Acquisition*, 91–102. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Address for correspondence

Høgskolen i Østfold
Postboks 700
NO-1757 Halden, Norway

alexander.k.lykke@hiof.no
arnstein.hjelde@hiof.no