

Research paper for the Rand Scholar Award 2022-2023

# Dialectal Development and Comparison: Norwegian Dialects in the U.S. and Norway

Helen White ('23)

Individual Major in Applied Linguistics, Major in Norwegian

Concentrations in Educational Studies (TEFL), Linguistic Studies, and Nordic Studies

## Abstract

While a large body of scholarly literature on the influence of English on American Norwegian exists, the present report focuses on the impact Norwegian dialects, which vary vastly from one another, have had on each other in the post-immigration period during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This research paper on Norwegian dialects is contextualized within previous research on Norwegian, both in Norway and in North America. Using original interview recordings of heritage Norwegian speakers created by Terje Joranger and Odd Lovoll (1995-2002) and interview transcripts from the Corpus of American Nordic Speech (CANS, Johannessen et al. 2015), a comparative dataset was created in order to analyze dialectal change over generations. The report focuses on three features of dialect variability in Norwegian that served as a proxy to determine dialectal membership: first and third pronoun use, the negation adverb, and question words. In synthesizing the information from this dataset and comparing research to modern scholarship, the findings aligned with research from Johannessen and Laake (2015) and Hjelde (2015) that heritage Norwegian has undergone an incomplete koinéization process which was interrupted by the language shift to English. At the end of this report, I discuss the possibility that modern Norwegian may be headed in a more leveled direction as well.

This research was funded by the Rand Scholar Award (2022-2023) through St. Olaf College and the generous donations of Mary Rand Taylor and Ron Taylor. Special thanks go to the benefactors of this research, as well as the Rand Committee, Dr. Nora Vosburg, and the Norwegian-American Historical Association.

## Table of Contents

List of tables.....	3
List of figures.....	3
1. Introduction .....	4
2. History .....	6
2.1. Linguistic History and Revolution in Norway .....	6
2.2. Dialect Mixing in North America .....	8
3. Methods .....	10
3.1. Data Sources.....	10
3.2. Informants .....	11
3.3. Dialect Groupings .....	13
4. Data and Features .....	15
4.1. Dialect Features.....	15
4.2. Data and Results.....	19
5. Discussion.....	25
5.1. Contemporary Literature on American Norwegian .....	25
5.2. The Influence of English .....	27
5.3. Modern Norwegian .....	29
5.4. Sociolinguistic Implications.....	30
5.5. Limitations .....	32
6. Conclusion.....	33
7. Appendix .....	34
7.1. Legend of IPA Symbols .....	34
7.2. Additional Interview Excerpts .....	35
8. References .....	38

## List of Tables

Table 1: Respondent Demographic information Demographic information about the informants selected for this research, including gender distribution and their family’s area of origin in Norway.....	15
Table 2: Pronoun Forms. Typical object pronoun forms comparing Bokmål, Nynorsk, and other dialectal forms.....	16
Table 3: Negation Adverb Forms. Forms of the negation adverb “not” in Bokmål, Nynorsk, and other dialectal forms. ....	18
Table 4: Question Word Forms. Question words in Norwegian, comparing English, Bokmål, Nynorsk, and other dialects.....	19
Table 5: Token Count Statistical Summary. Statistical summary of token data collected from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) and CANS (absolute numbers in parentheses). ....	20
Table 6: Speaker Variation by Dialect Feature. Table showing a breakdown of the number of speakers who showed variation (used more than one form) in dialectal features. ....	23

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of First-Person Singular (left) and Plural (right) Pronoun Distribution. Mapping of dialect forms of the first-person singular pronoun developed by Martin Skjekkeland (2015) and Halfrid Christiansen (1969).....	17
Figure 2: Map of Negation Adverb Variation. Map of the distribution of the negation adverb “not” (ikke) taken from Ernst Håkon Jahr (1990). ....	18
Figure 3: Graph of Token Distribution. Graphic representation of Table 5 showing the number of tokens representing the regional majority dialect, the number of tokens representing the respondent’s own heritage dialect, and the number of tokens left unexplained. ....	21
Figure 4: Graph of Speaker Variation. Graphic representation of Table 6 showing the distribution of the number of speakers who used two or more forms of the same dialect feature for different regions of origin in Norway. ....	23

## 1. Introduction

Norwegian has a rather well-documented history that is worth examining, both because of the novelty of many of the language's developments and because of the particular sociopolitical factors influencing the language. Norwegian developed from Proto-Indo-European, then Proto-Germanic, both ancient languages, and more recently from Old Norse. What is known as modern Norwegian has been spoken since around the year 1525, though, as any language, Norwegian has undergone a multitude of changes from above and below (Nordbo 2023; see ch. 2 below). There are only two regions in which Norwegian-speaking communities of notable size have lived and operated: Norway itself, and the American Midwest. The former is the birthplace of the language, where the latter was the homeplace of waves of immigrants arriving in the United States from Norway primarily between the late 19th to early 20th centuries.

This sudden separate, but parallel coexistence of the Norwegian language had fascinating results that can be categorized and examined today. Norwegian settlers left for the American plains in the midst of a linguistic crisis that was taking place in their homeland, meaning they did not experience the reforms and revisions that Norwegian underwent during that time period. Their language became reminiscent of a time past as they passed their language down to their children and grandchildren in the new country. Here we see a divide, a branching off that creates linguistic circumstances ripe for inquiry. Many scholars, most notably Einar Haugen and Janne Bondi Johannessen, have dedicated years to the examination of American Norwegian and its phenomena. In particular, several studies have investigated the influence of English on heritage Norwegian (Allen & Salmons, 2015, Annear & Speth, 2015, Haugen, 1953). However, less research exists examining the impact Norwegian dialects have had on one another after being transplanted to North America. Of the existing research, the prevailing finding is that American Norwegian has undergone an incomplete leveling process, meaning that the dialects have influenced one another towards a middle ground, but that variation still exists (Johannessen & Laake, 2015, Hjelde, 2015).

In this research, I set out to examine the changes that the Norwegian language underwent in both the United States and Norway. Because there already existed a rich history of dialectal variation in Norway, the immigrants were often exposed to new varieties of Norwegian that they had never heard in their country of origin. Within these American communities, they often formed dialect groupings that resulted in a popular dialect that varied depending on the region in North America. Meanwhile, in Norway, an ongoing linguistic revolution brought about new recognition and status assigned to these more rural dialects, and they gained prestige that had not formerly been assigned to them. Though heritage Norwegian has become moribund in the American Midwest, examples of this preserved Norwegian form of the immigrant variety can be compared with the modern dialects of Norway to trace changes and fossilization within the language use of these two areas.

The purpose of these inquiries is to shed light on the rural dialects of both the United States and Norway, and to trace general trends within language change in communities like the Norwegian-American communities that were so prevalent during the late 19th and early 20th

centuries. Learning more about language change can help understand more recent linguistic developments in European Norwegian, in particular in regards to dialect variation in native speakers of modern Norwegian. Acknowledging the importance – and *creation* – of Norwegian heritage that lives on in the cultural practices of the Midwest (i.e., in a postvernacular form), highlights the intricate connection between language (in the largest sense) and identity. My goal for this research is to determine whether Norwegian in the United States is fossilized, or whether the proximity to novel dialects not encountered by these individuals in Norway has influenced their language production over a few generations. More specifically, I ask:

- (1) Is Norwegian in the United States truly a relic of times gone by?
- (2) Is it a preserved specimen of the Norwegian that was spoken at the time of immigration?
- (3) Or is it an amalgamation of dialectal contact in a new setting for Norwegian?

In order to effectively engage with these questions and others, I have examined dialect change by combing through transcripts of interviews with heritage Norwegian speakers, found in tapes made by Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) and archived in the Corpus of American-Norwegian Speech (CANS). In these transcripts, I have found select dialectal features that shed light on how Norwegian dialects have influenced one another among Norwegian-Americans. I hope to investigate whether the data found in Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) in particular, as it has remained largely untouched for the past over two decades, displays the incomplete leveling process (see ch. 5 below) as found in the research in the volume *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, Attrition and Change*, edited by Johannessen and Salmons (2015). My hypothesis is that the majority Norwegian dialect in each community in North America will influence individual respondents to speak more like the popular dialect, though elements of their heritage dialect will be maintained.

My first task will be to give some historical background about Norwegian and the sociopolitical factors that have influenced its speakers for generations. This will be particularly relevant for those who are unfamiliar with the Norwegian language, or with Norwegian history in general. This history will include both the linguistic environment in Norway that the immigrants left behind, and the new environments that they created upon their arrival (ch. 2). Next, I will describe my data sources, in particular the archival recordings housed at the Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA) and how I matched these interviews to transcripts from CANS. I will give some demographic information about the informants and explain my process in extracting meaningful dialect data from the raw interviews (ch. 3). In ch. 4, I will exemplify the dialect features I was looking for in the interviews, especially for those unfamiliar with Norwegian dialects. Then, I will present my data and results in a quantitative form (ch. 4). I will subsequently place my research in the context of current scholarship and discuss past findings about the influence of English on American Norwegian. I will compare modern Norwegian to American Norwegian and make conjectures about the sociolinguistic implications of this research. I will also include the limitations of this study (ch. 5). Finally, I will make some concluding remarks and suggestions for further research. At the end of this report is an Appendix, including a legend for the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) notation

used in this paper, as well as additional excerpts from the Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) recordings. The references may also be found at the end of the paper.

## 2. History

### 2.1. Linguistic History and Revolution in Norway

In order to attain a fuller understanding of the context of the Norwegian language during the time of Norwegian emigration, we must first investigate the historical status of Norwegian dialects. Though this report focuses primarily on spoken Norwegian, some information about the development of standardized written forms of Norwegian is needed, as this was a huge social debate at the time that affected the prestige of local dialects of Norwegian and changed how the immigrants thought about their own language use. Additionally, some of the changes being made to Norwegian were happening after many of the immigrants had already departed, meaning they were removed from the sociolinguistic context that caused changes in modern Norwegian that did not then happen in American Norwegian. In order to trace these changes, we must investigate the history of Norwegian, and in particular how dialects were perceived.

The history of Norwegian can be traced back to common ancestors of Germanic languages. Regarding modern Norwegian, its history is dated to 1537 with the Danish rule of Norway. In this year, Norway and Denmark became one country, under one Danish king, King Christian III of Denmark-Norway (Weidling & Njåstad, 2022). During this time period, as would be expected, the Norwegian language became heavily influenced by Danish, particularly in written form. At this time, some written language existed for Norwegian, and it was a separate entity from Danish and Swedish, which all descend from Old Norse (Nordbø, 2023). Through Danish rule, the existing written Norwegian language was gradually replaced by written Danish (Weidling & Njåstad, 2022). As a consequence of Danish nobles and royals residing in the nation's capital, Christiania (now known as Oslo), the spoken language in the city and the surrounding areas began resembling written Danish with Norwegian phonological features. As Ernst Håkon Jahr (2014, p. 21) writes of this period, "this upper-class oral variety was clearly non-Danish in terms of prosody, phonology and syntax, the word forms, morphology and vocabulary had been derived from the written Danish of the eighteenth century". While this was the case of the upper-class, who had the prestige that came with this Dano-Norwegian language, "fishermen's dialects were considered to be of low social status and were thus only used locally" (Jahr, 2014, p. 20). Prior to the Norwegian linguistic revolution, "there was a gradual shading off of dialects, with the lower classes in the cities speaking a language that approximated more nearly that of the surrounding countryside" (Haugen, 1938, p. 6). Dialect was heavily associated with societal status as a result of Danish colonization, where the very richest were likely of Danish origin.

In 1814, the Norwegian people were seeking independence from the rule of Denmark, writing their constitution which is still in use today. Rather than being freed from a foreign monarchy, Norway was passed from Danish rule to a union with Sweden. However, Norway

could now select its own king and keep its own constitution. During this period, there was a great push of nationalism and debates on language represented the sociopolitical division. On one end of the spectrum were those who advocated for Dano-Norwegian to become the standardized Norwegian language, arguing for the social status it had historically enjoyed and hoping to spread this “high-class” language to the peasants of Norway. On the other side were those who wanted to return to the roots of Norwegian, those who rejected Dano-Norwegian as a valid form of Norwegian because of the simple fact of its Danish influence, and who wanted to highlight the traditionally “low-class” dialects of fishermen and peasants.

These two sides were represented by Knud Knudsen and Ivar Aasen, two figures of language reform during the 19th century. Knudsen was a staunch advocate of Dano-Norwegian, publishing a grammar text in 1856 entitled “Handbook of Dano-Norwegian Grammar” (Jahr, 2014). Knudsen believed that the so-called “pronunciation in the mouth of the educated” should be the basis of the Norwegian standard, and that the Norwegianization of the Danish written language should gradually occur and thus reflect the speech of the upper-middle class (Jahr, 2014). This written variety, retaining the Danish influence, would become known as *Riksmåal* (“language of the kingdom”), and from 1929 onwards *Bokmål* (“book language”) (Jahr, 2014). Bokmål remains the majority written form of Norwegian today. Spoken forms similar to Bokmål (though this is a written standard) are and have historically been prevalent in Eastern Norway, known as Østlandet, because of the cultural hub of Oslo/Christiania. The Danish influence is clear in this region because it was the historical residence of the Danish nobles during the Danish rule of Norway.

Ivar Aasen is a famous figure within the linguistic revolution for his advocacy for the return of Norwegian to its Old Norse roots. Aasen rejected the validity of Dano-Norwegian as a candidate for the Norwegian written standard because of the simple fact that it was “too closely connected to Danish to be able to serve as a convincing linguistic symbol of the Norwegian nation” (Jahr, 2014). His response was to travel around the country and conduct research on the rural dialects he felt represented a more authentic form of Norwegian, supposedly free from Danish influence. From 1842-1846 he published his findings in a book entitled “The Grammar of the Norwegian People’s Language” as a nationalistic endeavor to create a new written variety of Norwegian. This was pioneering work in the recording of Norwegian dialects and gave social status and credence to these rural varieties for the first time.

From his work, Aasen created *Landsmaal* (“country language”), aiming to create a “national written standard [that] could be based directly on the dialects” (Jahr, 2014, p. 45). His motivation was based on the “idea that the national language of Norway should act as a common denominator for all rural, low-status dialects, to the exclusion of the spoken variety of the upper-middle classes,” which inspired his variety to be adopted by the Norwegian people alongside Riksmåal (Jahr, 2014, p. 45). Aasen published more works using his newly developed Landsmaal during the middle of the 19th century, and his written variety gained popularity among these rural populations (Jahr, 2014). Landsmaal later became known as *Nynorsk* (“new Norwegian”) and is still in official use today, though it remains a minority language. The

dialectal forms represented in Nynorsk are still in use today, and Nynorsk in its written form is most commonly used in more rural, Northern regions of Norway.

The controversies around Bokmål and Nynorsk rose to prominence as a part of the nationalism movement of the 19th century. The creation of a national identity was important to gaining independence. In 1905, Norway became fully independent of Denmark and Sweden, becoming a sovereign nation (Weidling & Njåstad, 2022). The linguistic debates continued into the 20th century, where both Bokmål and Nynorsk were in use. Beginning in the 1960s, laws began to be passed that required accessibility of Nynorsk in schools, broadcast media, and other public domains (Vikør, 2022). Local dialects also gained a level of prestige because of this linguistic revolution. While the rural dialects were previously not on the same level as the higher class Dano-Norwegian, in modern times, they are considered to be associated with local pride. This is somewhat of a unique situation, where “local dialects enjoy a higher status and may be used more widely and freely in Norway than in most other European societies” (Gooskens, 2005, p. 37). In many other European countries, dialects have historically been considered below the standard. However, the linguistic revolution changed this perception within Norwegian society.

## 2.2. Dialect Mixing in North America

The height of this linguistic revolution in Norway coincided with the height of Norwegian emigration. Between 1836 and 1915, over 750,000 Norwegians emigrated to the United States, which was about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the population of Norway at the time (Nerbøvik, 2022). These Norwegians left in mass numbers: of all the groups of immigrants during this time period, the Norwegians came in the greatest proportion to the population of their country, second only to those coming from Ireland (Library of Congress, 2022). The first six families of Norwegian emigrants arrived in 1825 via the ship *Restaurationen* (Library of Congress, 2022). This large-scale emigration took place in three major waves: from 1866-1873, 1880-1893, and 1900-1910, the largest being the middle wave (Nerbøvik, 2022). The vast majority of these emigrants were poor farmers from rural areas of Norway who were attracted to the United States by the prospect of settling farmland in the American Midwest. Given the years of departure, we can see that many of these emigrants were leaving while Aasen’s linguistic reforms were taking hold and while these debates were at the forefront of the national conversation. This means that many of the immigrants brought with them linguistic varieties of the time, that were consequently passed on to their children and grandchildren, while those who remained in Norway experienced the effects of the linguistic revolution that was still unfolding. This split provides a very interesting perspective on how Norwegian developed in two separate contexts.

From the beginning of when Norwegian was spoken in the United States and Canada, there existed a level of linguistic mixing between the Norwegian dialects, and now English as well. Einar Haugen, whose seminal works coined our understanding of American Norwegian, noted that “those who were freshly arrived from Norway... seem to have agreed from the beginning that the speech of their countrymen in America was both barbarous and confusing” (Haugen, 1953, p. 54). Suddenly, many were exposed to Norwegian dialects they had never



heard in their fatherland due to geographic isolation, and this sparked language change among the immigrants. As Haugen writes: “One of the first effects of emigration was to wipe out the isolation and thereby to upset the delicate balance of dialect against dialect which was conditioned by the social geography of the old country. Speakers whose ancestors rarely had communicated in the course of a thousand years were suddenly thrown into close contact in an American community” (Haugen, 1953, p. 337-338). However, many also managed to keep their native dialects fairly isolated, as “the tendency was toward the resettling of old friends, neighbors, and relatives” in the new country (Haugen, 1953, p. 343). These more dialectically separate settlements were often smaller. Haugen notes that the family was the linguistic core of the dialect, where “the family was the natural unit in the [linguistic] development that could endure for at least a while against the different opposing directions in the larger society” (Haugen, 1975, p. 37, author’s translation).

The meeting of these dialects in the new country gave birth to the Bygdelag movement, which allowed for the development of local pride surrounding the village in Norway where one’s family had originated. This created a sense of pride around one’s unique origin. Haugen notes that “the village dialects that came to create a nucleus in the old settlements had a lot in common; they were Ivar Aasen’s ‘real’ dialects, those who, as a consequence, had held onto old Norwegian’s sound system and vocabulary” (Haugen, 1975, p. 38, author’s translation). In both Norway and especially the United States, where these long-standing geographic boundaries were broken, “one conspicuous fact about each person was his dialect” (Haugen, 1953, p. 345). However, because of the time that the immigrants left Norway, they often did not have the same sense of pride around their dialect because of the prevalence of Dano-Norwegian during the time they left their home country. Haugen writes: “The implied standard against which the local dialects are often judged is that of the written [Dano-Norwegian] or of the corresponding spoken forms, particularly of urban dwellers in the eastern cities. From their pastors and other educated leaders they had learned that this was a more elegant form of Norwegian, and had in general accepted this judgment” (Haugen, 1953, p. 355). Some of the immigrants lamented the “ugliness” of their dialects in comparison to the more prestigious forms. However, the Bygdelag movement and the arrival of newer waves of Norwegian immigrants counteracted some of this negative sentiment. Over time, the prevailing sentiment was that the dialect forms were markers of being a “common person,” or an “ordinary” speaker of Norwegian. Additionally, Dano-Norwegian was considered the proper form of writing Norwegian, while speaking remained characteristic of the dialect one spoke at home.

The Nynorsk movement was not contained to Norway proper: news of Aasen’s Landsmaal had spread to the new country, and there were some efforts to make Nynorsk a part of American Norwegian. Rasmus B. Anderson was an outspoken Norwegian American scholar who believed that the best use of the immigrant’s time was to learn English, but that the immigrants should also be able to “enjoy the fruits of Norwegian cultural endeavor... among these such men as Janson, Vinje, and Ivar Aasen” (Haugen, 1953, p. 164). He believed that the Norwegian Americans should learn to read Nynorsk, but that English should be the first priority. Doctor R.

Leland gave a speech arguing that Nynorsk should be used if the immigrants would so please, proclaiming: “If a minister in Norway can preach more understandably, more heartfelt, and more touchingly in Landsmaal than in Danish, why can he not do the same in the country as long as he pretends to be preaching Norwegian to Norwegians?” (Haugen, 1953, p. 173). However, Nynorsk did not take off as a form of writing the same way that it did in Norway- the immigrants had been accustomed to the idea that Dano-Norwegian was the proper form of writing from the sentiment in Norway at the time of their departure.

While most Norwegians settled near, and therefore married within their own dialect group, some would marry outside of their speech variety, producing a second generation who “became dialectically bilingual, being able to switch over from one dialect to the other according to the situation” (Haugen, 1953). These individuals were common of the second and third generation of immigrants, and make up many of the informants used in this research. The dialects of these people, the later generations, have been subjected to many leveling influences; however, “even when these were in part the same as Norway, they were of such different weight and applied under such different circumstances that we could not expect the results to be the same” (Haugen, 1953, p. 360). This is to say that the Norwegian dialects we see in modern speakers of American Norwegian have taken on a life of their own and have developed separately from the regions in Norway from which they originated. While some aspects of the dialects have remained the same, others have changed entirely. The purpose of this research is to investigate some of the ways in which these dialects have changed or remained the same over the generations of separation they have experienced.

Today, Norwegian as a heritage language in the United States and Canada has become quite rare, as most speakers have since passed, and the language has largely not been passed down by heritage speakers. The disappearance of American Norwegian is primarily caused by larger societal language homogenization. The recordings analyzed in this research are from some of the last people to have learned Norwegian as a first language in North America, and many were quite elderly at the time of recording, and the vast majority have since passed away without a continuation of heritage Norwegian in their descendants. Fortunately, American Norwegian was documented while fluent speakers were still alive, which leaves us with a bounty of information we can now use to draw conclusions retroactively about these forms of Norwegian.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Data Sources

At the core of this project is my investigation of a series of recordings made by Terje Joranger and Odd Lovoll of interviews of heritage Norwegian speakers. These recordings were donated to the Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA), where I have worked since the summer of 2021. The collection includes over 130 tape recorded interviews created from 1995-2002 for Lovoll’s book *The Promise Fulfilled: A Portrait of Norwegian Americans Today* (1998). Some of the recordings are done in English, some in Norwegian, and some in a mixture

of the two languages. Joranger and Lovoll traveled around the United States, primarily in the American Midwest, interviewing individuals with Norwegian heritage. This collection is still being processed at NAHA and is currently not available to the general public. As a part of my work with these materials, I have transcribed over 20 of these recordings, and have selected 15 to be a part of this research. Most of the interviews were between 10 and 20 minutes in length.

In the transcription process, I wrote the dialect forms I heard to the best of my ability. Because these recordings are all over 20 years old and are not the highest quality, at times, understanding what was said could be difficult. I did not write using Bokmål standard forms, but rather wrote using my best approximation of how the dialect forms sounded using colloquial spellings. I selected the recordings for this research based on the recordings that were entirely or mostly in Norwegian and that I could understand the majority of. Some recordings were too difficult to decipher enough for me to use for the purposes of this research. Most of the recordings are in English, so this narrowed the selection down quite a bit. For this research, I will identify the respondents using the recording catalog name at NAHA. It is also worth noting that I am not a professional transcriptionist, and that these transcriptions of these recordings were made based on my judgment and experience with Norwegian.

I wanted to analyze these recordings since they have mostly been unused in research, and remain largely unexplored as a source of American Norwegian speech. Additionally, these recordings had not been transcribed and made more accessible in the 20-plus years they have existed. By using these recordings as a data source, I have investigated a relatively new source of data while also using my knowledge of Norwegian to translate many of these recordings accessible to a broader audience. They proved to be a rich source that contained a wide range of individuals with heritage from various places in Norway.

Alongside Joranger and Lovoll's recordings, I gleaned data from the Corpus of American Norwegian Speech (CANS), compiled by Janne Bondi Johannessen et al. The corpus contains data collected by Johannessen et al. (2010-2016), alongside older data from Didrik Arup Seip and Ernst W. Selmer (1931), Einar Haugen (1942) and Arnstein Hjelde (1987, 1990, 1992). The corpus, in total, covers 268 informants from 63 different locations throughout the United States and Canada. The transcriptions in this corpus are presented in both orthographic and phonetic form. Similar to the data collected by Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002), the recordings here are interviews with people speaking heritage Norwegian. CANS is publicly available online as a resource. It is also worth noting that the CANS transcriptions are much more developed and professional than my transcriptions of Joranger and Lovoll's work due to the sheer magnitude of the CANS project, which has been worked on by a wide range of scholars for a number of years. However, the preliminary transcriptions created by me are useful for the purposes of this dialect analysis with the selected dialect features.

### 3.2. Informants

For each of the 15 recordings I selected from Joranger and Lovoll's interviews, I selected one informant from CANS. I selected the matches from CANS based on the place of origin in

Norway of each informant from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002). For each of these informants, I chose a “matching” informant from CANS who originated from the same village in Norway or within the same region. I also chose informants who were born around the same time so as to account for differences between generations of immigrants and the changes in American Norwegian that may have occurred over time. Joranger and Lovoll only had recordings from the United States, while CANS had some recordings from Canada. Some of the informants I selected from CANS are Canadian residents. From each source, I chose 15 separate informants to investigate, and 14 separate interviews, as one interview from each source was with two individuals. While Joranger and Lovoll’s recordings have identifying information, which I have removed from this report, CANS does not have identifying information. This means that there may be overlap between the respondents without my knowledge.

After matching each informant from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) to an informant from CANS, I examined all 30 transcriptions for evidence of dialectal features I selected. The dialectal features included here were chosen based on frequency of tokens and variation between dialects. The features I selected included personal pronouns, question words, and the negation word “not”. I isolated personal pronouns because they represent lexical differences between dialects, or specific differences between common words. As pronouns are abundant in most speech, it was not difficult to find instances of the use of these personal pronouns. Both the abundance of these forms and their lexical natures made pronouns a good baseline for dialectal comparison. Similarly, the negation adverb “not” (*ikke*) is found frequently in the transcripts. This adverb provides both a lexical and phonological comparison point between dialects. Finally, I selected question words (like “what” (*hva*) and “why” (*hvorfor*)). Not all of the question words were encountered in the dataset, but most respondents used at least one question word. This is useful since, much like in English, many of the Norwegian question words begin with a similar phoneme that changes systematically between dialects. The variation in question words between dialects is mostly phonological, but some are lexical as well. These features were selected to get a sample of dialectal changes that were both easy to spot and representative of larger changes between varieties of Norwegian. All of the aforementioned forms will be examined and explained in depth later in the report prior to presenting the data. Isolating a few dialectal features was necessary for the purpose of being able to compare between dialects, both in American Norwegian and modern Norwegian.

For each speaker, I identified the dialect grouping (out of Østlandet, Vestlandet, Sørlandet, and Trøndelag) to which they were most likely to belong, as well as my best estimation of what the majority dialect was in the area where they resided in North America. At times, finding this information could be challenging, and was often dictated by what the respondent identified as the majority dialect(s) in the region. On the other hand, this metalinguistic information can be useful, as the dialects named by the respondents are most likely to have had the biggest influence on the respondent’s actual speech, as the speakers are most aware of these dialects. However, respondents may be incorrect when providing this information and may have a skewed perception of the demographic information of the area.

After I had identified which dialect grouping best suited the individual and the community to which they belonged, I found which dialect forms best matched both of these categorizations and compared these forms to the forms used by the respondent. In this manner, I was able to identify which forms the respondent had retained from their family's region of origin in Norway and which forms had been influenced by the majority dialect of the region in the United States. Some forms remained unexplained by either of these factors.

### 3.3. Dialect Groupings

Finally, I used several scholarly studies to inform my investigation. Much of the present scholarship examines the effect of English on American Norwegian, and studies about the dialectal variation in American Norwegian are rather sparse. Much of the relevant literature comes from Ernst Håkon Jahr and Janne Bondi Johannessen more recently, and Einar Haugen in the mid-20th century. In section 5, the comparison section of this report, I will return to scholarship on American Norwegian dialects and place the data in the larger context of the current literature on the subject. Much of their work has informed the historical background I have provided earlier and has given insight into previous findings regarding larger trends in Norwegian-American language use. Notably, Haugen provides us with a dialect categorization with East and West as the largest categories, followed by relevant subcategories (1953). This distinction serves as the basis for the dialect groupings in the older research on American Norwegian. However, for the purposes of this report, Haugen's categorization is too outdated, and more recent and broader groupings are used. Many of Haugen's categories are no longer considered dialect groupings in modern Norwegian, and literature is not available on the exact features contained in each subcategory.

Modern dialect groupings tend to fall into four major categories, which are far broader: East, West, Trøndelag, and North (Venås & Skjekkeland, 2022). For the sake of comparison with modern Norwegian dialects, this report will use the broader groupings with some changes, as many of Haugen's original distinctions are no longer made in literature on modern Norwegian dialects, and because not all of these dialects have modern sample recordings. Within American Norwegian speech, East and West are the most represented categories of Norwegian dialects, and North is the least represented. Because none of the respondents I came across in Joranger and Lovoll's interviews (1995-2002) had heritage from anywhere further north than Trøndelag, I decided to omit the North (*nord-Norge*) as a category from this report. The fact that this dialect is scarcely represented in American Norwegian is unsurprising due to the fact that nord-Norge is the traditional lands of the indigenous peoples in Norway, and has a very small population. Instead of including a dialect region with no representative speakers, I added the South (*Sørlandet*) as a dialect region, in order to keep four distinctive categories. Sørlandet is at times considered to be a dialect region, but as it has much in common with the West (*Vestlandet*) dialect, it is often not included and is instead grouped in with Vestlandet. Therefore, my four regional dialect categories in this report are the following: East (*Østlandet*), West (*Vestlandet*),

Trøndelag, and South (*Sørlandet*), which I will refer to using their Norwegian names in the remainder of this report.

In order to compare American Norwegian dialects to modern Norwegian dialects, sample recordings made by Jørn Almberg and Kristian Skarbø were analyzed. These recordings are publicly available through Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and are housed in a database including 55 recordings. In these recordings, informants were asked to read a source text aloud, and were allowed to make changes to the text to better suit their dialects. These recordings are an excellent baseline for comparing American Norwegian speech to modern Norwegian speech. In total, I cataloged 273 unique tokens from 30 unique speakers, 135 of those being from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002), and 138 of those being from CANS. For each respondent, I identified two categories in which to sort tokens: those representative of the respondent's own dialect, and those which suited the majority dialect in the area in which they settled. For the respondent's own dialect, I used the areas in Norway where respondents claimed their ancestors had emigrated from. This was self-reported by the respondents, so could contain errors, as many of these respondents were third or fourth generation immigrants. However, if respondents reported having ancestry from these areas, they likely identified with this region and perhaps, by extension, the dialect spoken there. The idea behind this category is that if respondents had ancestors originating from certain areas of Norway, they would be likely to speak a dialect similar to the dialect spoken in that particular region of Norway. The other major category of investigation was the perceived majority dialect in the region in North America in which the respondent was residing. This was also self-reported, as data was not often collected on which areas of North America had residents with ancestry from certain regions of Norway. For the Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) data, this was often an interview question, where the interviewer asked the respondent what areas of Norway were most commonly represented in this region of the United States. The respondent's answer informed my categorization, which often included at least two areas of Norway as being representative of the dialect spoken in that region. In the CANS data, I looked at the origin of all respondents from that town in North America and drew common areas from each respondent's self-reported region of origin in Norway. The findings were that the vast majority of respondents had a native dialect (passed down from their ancestors) that aligned with the majority dialect of the region.

Demographic	Number of speakers	Percentage
Male	18	60.0%
Female	12	40.0%
Family from Østlandet region	16	56.7%
Family from Sørlandet region	2	6.7%
Family from Trøndelag region	5	16.7%
Family from Vestlandet region	9	30.0%
Family from unknown region	2	6.7%
Family from more than one region	5	16.7%

Table 1: Respondent Demographic information Demographic information about the informants selected for this research, including gender distribution and their family's area of origin in Norway.

In order to determine how each token fit into each category, I used multiple sources on features of Norwegian dialects. I used the dialect maps created by Skjekkeland (2015) and Christiansen (1969), and those from Ernst Håkon Jahr's *Den store dialektboka* (1990). Finally, I listened to and read the transcripts of recordings from Almberg and Skarbø, to determine which dialect forms were appropriate for both the native and majority dialect categories. Using the data I collected, I then compared my findings to modern literature, primarily from the volume *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, Attrition and Change*, edited by Janne Bondi Johannessen and Joseph Salmons (2015). This volume contains several contemporary studies on American Norwegian and its current status in North America that proved very useful in interpreting my results.

## 4. Data and Features

### 4.1. Dialect Features

In order to fully understand the data regarding dialectal variation, we must first examine the dialectal features themselves and explain some of the differences I encountered. To begin

with, I compared the pronoun form used, including the object pronouns in first person singular, third person singular, first person plural, and third person plural, since these showed up most frequently in the interviews and display the most variation between dialects. As demonstrated in Table 2, the changes are largely lexical in nature, and the pronouns display a wide range of variability.

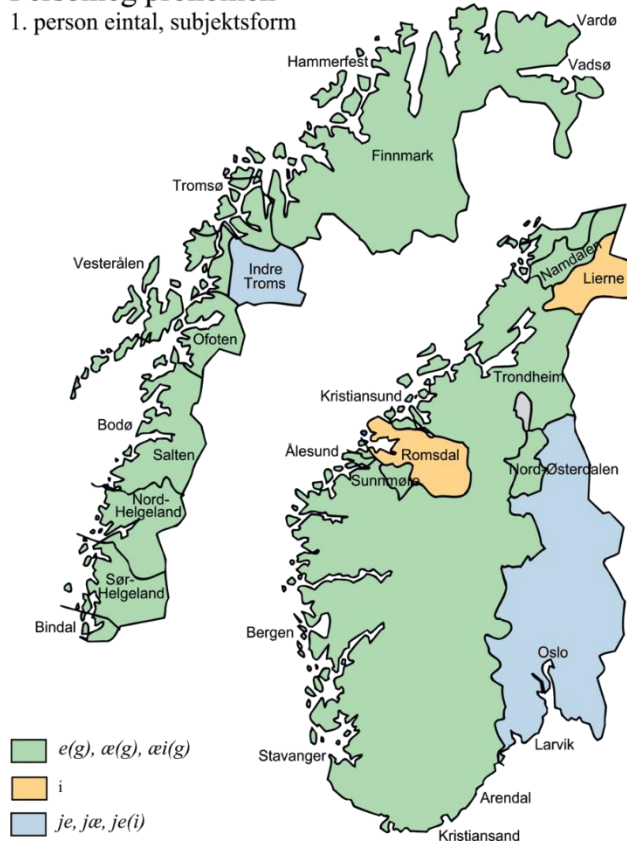
Pronoun	Bokmål	Nynorsk	Other dialectal forms
1st person singular	<jeg> /jæɪ/	<eg> /e:g/	<æ>, <i>, <e> /æ:/, /i:/, /e:/
3rd person singular	<han>, <hun> /han/, /hʉn/	<han>, <ho> /han/, /hu:/	<'n> /ŋ/
1st person plural	<vi> /vi:/	<vi> /vi:/	<me> /me:/
3rd person plural	<de> /di:/	<dei> /dæɪ/	<dem>, <døm> /dɛm/, /dœm/

Table 2: Pronoun Forms. Typical object pronoun forms comparing Bokmål, Nynorsk, and other dialectal forms.



### Personleg pronomen

1. person eintal, subjektsform



### Personleg pronomen

1. person fleirtal, subjektsform

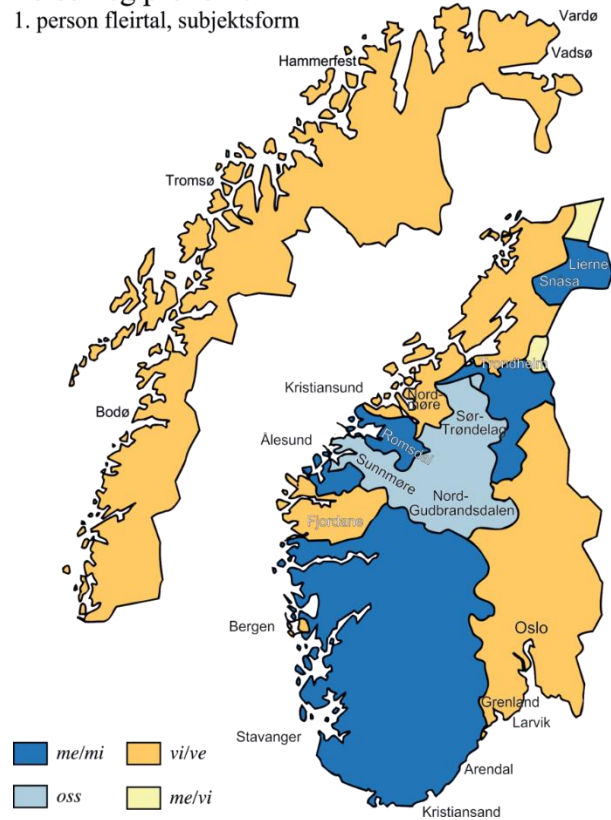


Figure 1: Map of First-Person Singular (left) and Plural (right) Pronoun Distribution. Mapping of dialect forms of the first-person singular pronoun developed by Martin Skjekkeland (2015) and Halfrid Christiansen (1969).

As shown in Figure 1, pronouns display a general trend based on the region of the country, with the divide being primarily between Østlandet, which historically leans more towards a spoken form of Bokmål, and Vestlandet, which leans more towards dialect forms. These maps were used to determine whether or not the respondents used the dialect form appropriate to the region in Norway that they originated from.

Another prominent dialectal feature I chose to investigate was the negation adverb “not” (*ikke*). The varying forms of this adverb are displayed in Table 3 below. The differences between these forms are largely phonological, as can be seen in their written forms. The main difference is whether or not the word contains some sort of fricative sound, namely /ʃ/, as indicated by the addition of the “j”. The differences were notably subtler for this adverb than for the pronouns, but provided a useful phonetic baseline, as many dialects that include the /ʃ/ sound in this word include it in other words with a /k/ sound as well.

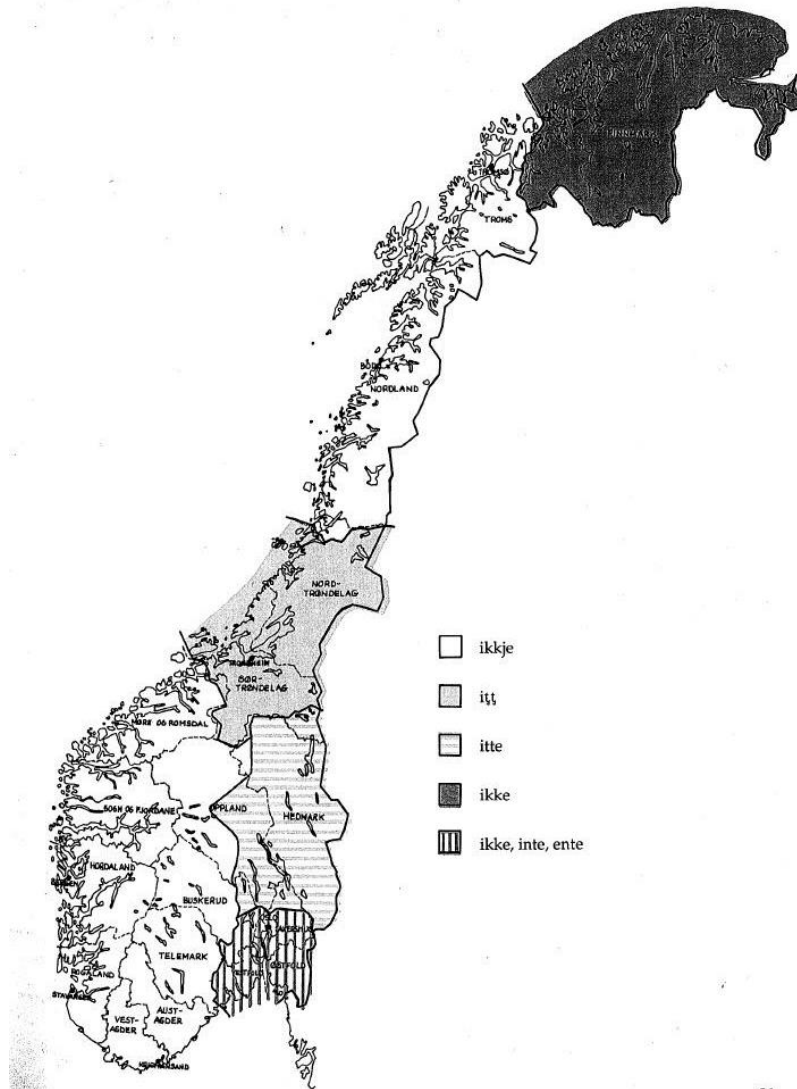


Figure 2: Map of Negation Adverb Variation. Map of the distribution of the negation adverb “not” (ikke) taken from Ernst Håkon Jahr (1990).

Bokmål	Nynorsk	Other dialectal forms
<ikke> /ɪfə/	<ikkje> /ɪfə/	<ittj>, <itte>, <inte> /ɪtʃ/, /ɪtə/, /ɪntə/

Table 3: Negation Adverb Forms. Forms of the negation adverb “not” in Bokmål, Nynorsk, and other dialectal forms.

Finally, I investigated the variation in question words. As many question words in English begin with the same sound, so do many question words in Norwegian, typically “hv” (/v/) or “k” (/k/). Table 4 illustrates the differences in these sets of question words.

English	Bokmål	Nynorsk	Other dialectal forms
what	<hva> /va:/	<kva> /kva:/	<ka>, <kå>, <hå> /ka:/, /kɔ:/, /hɔ:/
who	<hvem> /vem/	<kven> /kven/	<kem>, <håkken> /kem/, /hɔkɛn/
where	<hvor> /vu:r/	<kvar> /kva:r/	<kor>, <kvor>, <hår> /ku:r/, /kvu:r/, /hɔ:r/
why	<hvorfor> /vu:rfor/	<kvifor> /kvi:for/	<koffør>, <kvorfor>, <håfør> /kofør/, /kvu:rfor/, /hɔ:før/
how	<hvordan> /vu:rdaŋ/	<korleis> /ku:rlæis/	<kordan>, <håssen>, <assen> /ku:rdaŋ/, /hɔsɛn/, /ɔsɛn/
which	<hvilken>, <hvilket> /vilken/, /vilke/	<kossen> /kɔsɛn/	—
each	<hver> /væ:r/	<kor> /ku:r/	—

Table 4: Question Word Forms. Question words in Norwegian, comparing English, Bokmål, Nynorsk, and other dialects.

These question words often come in sets, as seen above. For example, if one speaker says *kva* for “what”, they are likely to also say *kvar* for “where”. This distinction is somewhat lexical, as some of the question words vary greatly, for example between *hvordan* and *korleis* for “how”, but there is a systemic phonological shift from “hv” (/v/) to “kv” (/kv/) occurring here, which extends beyond just the question words. Again, we see a clear baseline for comparison that allows for examination and categorization of the data collected.

#### 4.2. Data and Results

Using the methods described earlier, I searched the selected transcripts for the dialect forms as described above. Table 5 provides a statistical summary of my categorization of the data as explained in my methods.

Group	Average number of unique tokens	Tokens representative of respondent's own dialect	Tokens representative of majority dialect in region	Tokens unexplained by own dialect or majority dialect
Lovoll and Joranger data	9.0	69.0% (6)	84.3% (8)	13.3% (1)
CANS data	9.2	79.8% (7)	96.6% (9)	3.4% (1)
Heritage from Østlandet	8.6	82.2% (7)	97.1% (8)	2.1% (1)
Heritage from Sørlandet	10.0	75.0% (7)	87.5% (9)	12.5% (1)
Heritage from Trøndelag	8.2	71.4% (6)	86.9% (7)	11.1% (1)
Heritage from Vestlandet	10.0	61.0% (6)	83.8% (8)	14.8% (2)
Heritage from unknown region	10.5	N/A	93.8% (10)	N/A
Heritage from >1 region	9.2	77.7% (7)	97.8% (9)	2.2% (1)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>74.2%</b> <b>(7)</b>	<b>90.4%</b> <b>(8)</b>	<b>8.3%</b> <b>(1)</b>

Table 5: Token Count Statistical Summary. Statistical summary of token data collected from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) and CANS (absolute numbers in parentheses).

## Distribution of Dialect Tokens by Region of Origin in Norway

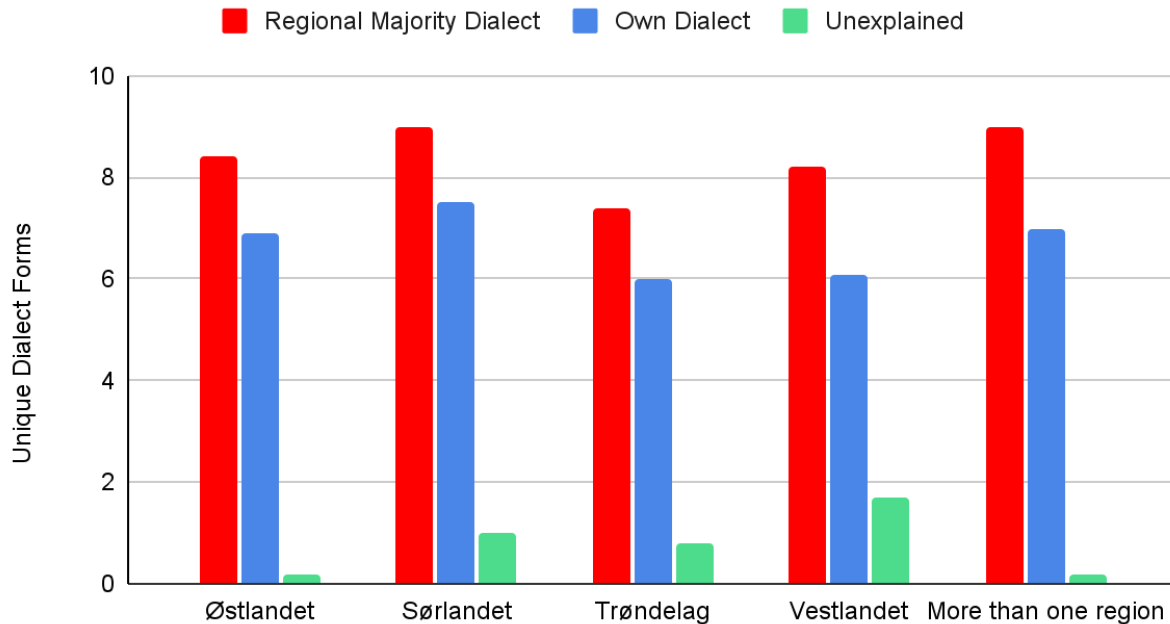


Figure 3: Graph of Token Distribution. Graphic representation of Table 5 showing the number of tokens representing the regional majority dialect, the number of tokens representing the respondent's own heritage dialect, and the number of tokens left unexplained.

As demonstrated by Table 5, there is a trend of influence from the majority dialect onto the tokens used by respondents. Figure 3 shows how the majority dialect aligns more with respondent speech than the heritage dialect. The heritage dialect has a strong influence: over 50% of the tokens, on average, align with the heritage dialect. However, the regional majority dialect, as an innately broader category which describes speech trends among an entire group rather than one individual, encompasses more of the respondent speech. Since the respondents are often several generations removed from their original heritage dialect, it makes sense that the regional majority dialect would have a strong influence on respondent speech. It is worth noting that of the 30 respondents, 25 were majority dialect speakers, 2 had a background from one area represented in the majority dialect but also had a background from another area not represented in the majority dialect, 1 did not have a background from the majority dialect, and 2 were unknown. This means that most respondents were a part of communities that were “clusters” of people with heritage from the same region of Norway. In other words, most respondents came from the region in Norway where the majority Norwegian-American population in their local area also came from. As a result, we would expect to see the majority dialect reinforcing the native dialect of the speaker, and therefore a high percentage of tokens representing the respondent's own native dialect. However, we must take into consideration the fact that the majority dialect often includes multiple areas of Norway and thus multiple dialectal features. Because this majority dialect is a larger category than the native dialect of the speaker, the

percentage of tokens representative of the majority dialect is higher than the percentage of tokens representative of the native dialect in all participants examined.

Some tokens remain unexplained, but could be attributed to a variety of causes. Because these respondents were often third or fourth generation heritage speakers of Norwegian, they likely had many different sources of Norwegian that informed their dialect. Most of them did not receive any formal schooling in Norwegian, though some received some parochial education in the language. Because of this, they relied almost exclusively on input from other heritage speakers, or perhaps some native speakers such as their grandparents, to inform their language development. Perhaps some of them had one grandparent from the Østlandet region, and one from the Vestlandet region, resulting in a dialect that mixes forms from both regions. Some respondents had no unexplained tokens, meaning they adhered more strictly to what one might expect in their native dialect or in the majority dialect, while others had several unexplained tokens, meaning they might have had more diverse influences on their language development, such as a close family member who had ancestry from a different region. Additionally, while many of the respondents were native to the area in North America where they currently resided, some of them had moved, and talked about their parents or grandparents also initially settling in one area and then relocating to another. This would likely also affect language development. However, it becomes impossible to pinpoint and isolate all of these influences, leaving some tokens unexplained.

In particular, it seemed that the third person plural pronoun (“they”) was unstable: 8 out of the 30 speakers (26.7%) had that pronoun as one of their unexplained tokens. Generally, the pronouns appeared to be less stable than the question words; most of the unexplained tokens consisted of pronoun forms. Table 6 below breaks down which features showed the most variation. For each speaker, I identified the features in which more than one form was used by the same speaker. This demonstrates that the feature is unstable within the respondent’s speech and might be more subject to influence from outside dialects.

Group	1st SG pronoun	3rd SG pronoun	1st PL pronoun	3rd PL pronoun	Question words	Negation adverb
Heritage from Østlandet	2	3	3	7	3	4
Heritage from Sørlandet	1	0	1	2	1	1
Heritage from Trøndelag	1	1	2	3	1	0
Heritage from Vestlandet	1	1	3	6	4	2
Heritage from unknown region	1	1	2	1	0	0
Heritage from more than one region	1	0	1	2	3	2
Total	6	6	10	17	6	5
Percentage of speakers showing variation	20.0%	20.0%	33.3%	56.7%	20.0%	16.7%

Table 6: Speaker Variation by Dialect Feature. Table showing a breakdown of the number of speakers who showed variation (used more than one form) in dialectal features.

### Number of Speakers Showing Variation in Dialect Features

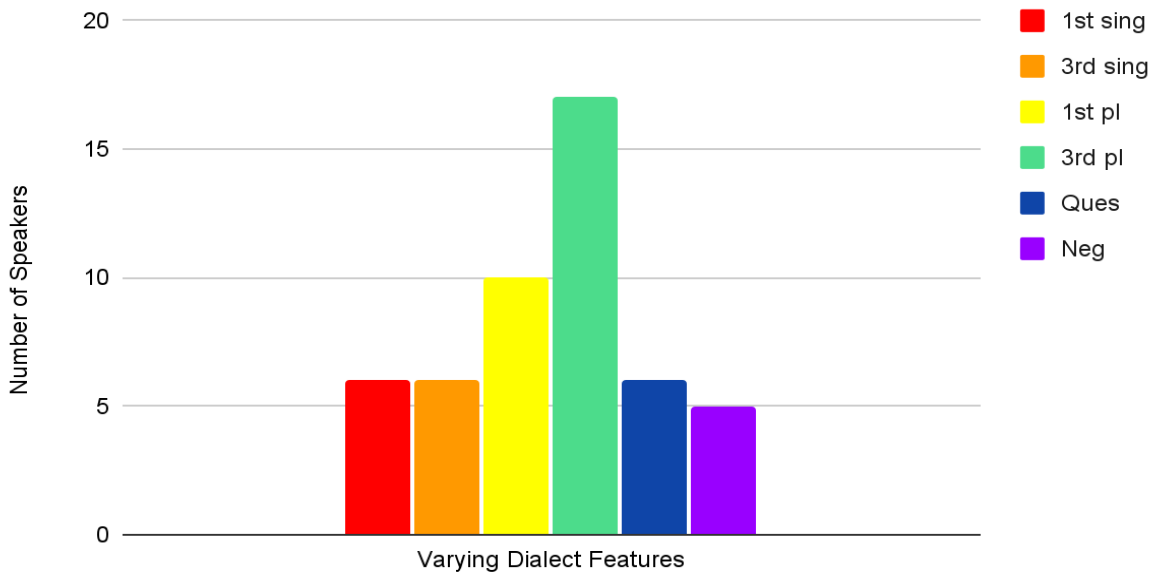


Figure 4: Graph of Speaker Variation. Graphic representation of Table 6 showing the distribution of the number of speakers who used two or more forms of the same dialect feature for different regions of origin in Norway.

We can see from Table 6 and Figure 4 that the plural pronouns, and in particular the third person plural pronoun, showed the most variability among speakers. The vast majority of the respondents used more than one form of the same feature. In fact, only 6 (20%) showed no variation in their speech. This means that most of the speakers were influenced by other dialect forms and used forms belonging to multiple dialects. Those who had heritage from the Vestlandet region of Norway demonstrated that 22.8% of their tokens could be attributed to the influence of the majority dialect alone. This is the highest percentage difference between the native dialect and majority dialect categories, suggesting that respondents with heritage from this area of Norway were most likely to be influenced by the majority dialect in their settlement in North America. Respondents from the Vestlandet area also had the highest percentage of unexplained tokens, at 14.8%. This is likely because the Vestlandet dialect is the furthest away from the Østlandet dialect, which of all the regions of origin, represents the majority of the respondents examined in this report. Additionally, as the most prestigious dialect at the time that many of the respondents' ancestors departed from Norway was Dano-Norwegian, heritage speakers might feel a trend towards a more Dano-Norwegian-sounding dialect, which is most reflective of the Østlandet dialect. Notably as well, those with family from the Østlandet region had the lowest percentage of unexplained token forms. Perhaps the general trend, among these respondents at least, was towards the Østlandet forms. The respondents with no information about their region of origin in Norway were both present in the interview with another respondent, but did not provide this information, therefore making it impossible to give percentages to the native dialect and unexplained categories.

Additionally, one can note that the data from CANS had higher percentages of adherence to both the native and majority dialects, and that the percentage of unexplained tokens were lower than the Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) data. This can be attributed to the fact that the CANS data has both orthographic and phonetic transcriptions for their interviews, while the Joranger and Lovoll data was transcribed by me, and did not include a professional phonetic transcription. Because of this, the nuances of the present phonology were often not as easily accessible in the Joranger and Lovoll recordings. Since I am not a trained transcriptionist, I was not able to phonetically transcribe the recordings the way they were done in CANS, which likely explains the disparity between these two groups.

There was also a great deal of mixing dialect forms, which was of particular interest. Many speakers used more than one form for pronouns and question words, flipping back and forth between a form typical of one dialect region to another. This is unusual in native Norwegian speakers, who are typically raised in environments where one dialect form wins out. This fact supports the theory that many of these heritage speakers have mixed dialects because of multiple influences on their language development. Because they are using conflicting dialect forms, they are demonstrating conflicting dialectal development and influence.



## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Contemporary Literature on American Norwegian

Much of the contemporary comparative literature comes from the volume *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, Attrition and Change*, edited by Janne Bondi Johannessen and Joseph Salmons (2015). Johannessen herself is one of the main contributors to CANS, and so has written relevant studies using this data. In particular, the chapter “On two myths of the Norwegian language in America: Is it old-fashioned? Is it approaching the written Bokmål standard?” by Janne Bondi Johannessen and Signe Laake is poignant to the comparison of American Norwegian to modern Norwegian. For this study, the authors selected four informants from the Gudbrandsdalen area of Norway, located in Østlandet. Some of the informants in this report have heritage from this very same subregion. Johannessen and Laake found that among these informants, their Norwegian was not archaic, except perhaps at the lexical level. However, the grammar was notably similar to the dialect of origin, in this case, from Gudbrandsdalen. In regards to American Norwegian’s similarity to Bokmål, Johannessen and Laake point out that modern Bokmål contained more dialect forms than the older Riksmål mentioned earlier in this report, but that “at no point is American Norwegian closer to Bokmål than to the Gausdal dialect” (2015, p. 319). Most important to this report, Johannessen and Laake conclude that “when it comes to pronouns and function words, we saw some examples of variation that suggest that American Norwegian has elements from more than one Norwegian dialect area” (2015, p. 312). The study conducted by Johannessen and Laake aligns with the findings of the present report, in that American Norwegian has often been influenced by multiple dialects.

However, the question then rises: how have these dialects changed over time? Do they resemble modern Norwegian, and have they undergone some of the same changes that Norwegian in Norway has? Johannessen and Laake introduce the concept of a koiné, suggesting that “the language of Norwegian Americans has undergone an incomplete koinéization process” (2015, p. 312). The koiné is defined (with the context of American Norwegian) in the chapter “Changes in a Norwegian dialect in America”, written by Arnstein Hjelde, from the same volume edited by Johannessen and Salmons (2015):

There are reasons to believe that this process has not followed the same paths in all Norwegian-American communities: Some settlements were established by people from a rather small area in Norway and where everybody spoke the same dialect when they settled. Others were populated by people from different places in Norway, speaking a greater range of dialects. It is fair to assume that in the first case, the dialects did not change much except for changes due to contact with English. On the other hand, in communities where different dialects met, we should expect to find that dialect contact over time results in the formation of a ‘new’ dialect, a koiné. (Hjelde, 2015, pp. 283-284)

Simply put, a koiné is the result of the meeting of several mutually intelligible dialects that then influence each other to create a new dialect. Modern literature theorizes that such a process has

happened to Norwegian spoken in North America as a result of Einar Haugen's (1953) observation that for many Norwegian emigrants, "their arrival in America meant also their first acquaintance with the more remote dialects spoken in their homeland" (p. 345). Hjelde's investigation centered on Coon Valley, Wisconsin, a settlement with many heritage Norwegian speakers, also represented in respondents pulled from CANS in this report. The findings were that "still today there is a lot of dialectal variation in the speech of those with an East Norwegian (especially Gudbrandsdal) background" (Hjelde, 2015, p. 294). In line with the findings of Johannessen and Laake (2015), Hjelde (2015) also concluded that the koinéization process is incomplete in American Norwegian. The findings of this report concur with this conclusion: if there was a complete koinéization process, we would expect to see no intraspeaker variation, and not much speaker variation in dialects within the same communities in North America.

Special attention is given to the Gudbrandsdal region of Norway, which is a part of Østlandet. This aligns with my findings, since the respondents with heritage from Østlandet make up the largest dialect group (56.7%) among my own respondents. Golden and Lanza from the *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America* volume (2015) note that the Norwegian settlers "mainly came from Gudbrandsdalen with its distinct dialect," making it easier to maintain the same dialect within Norwegian-American communities and thus strengthening the ability to speak Norwegian in North America in general (2015, p. 325). However, enough variation existed that an incomplete leveling process still occurred (Johannessen, 2015, Hjelde, 2015). Perhaps the individuals with heritage from Østlandet, particularly Gudbrandsdal, are least susceptible to other dialectal influences. This is supported by my finding that, on average, for respondents with heritage from Østlandet, 82.2% of the observed tokens could be attributed to the respondent's heritage dialect, a higher percentage than any other region of origin in Norway. Additionally, 97.1% of the observed tokens for respondents with Østlandet heritage could be attributed to the majority dialect of the North American region where the respondent was living, all of which included the Østlandet dialect. Clearly, in the case of American Norwegian, Østlandet largely wins out as a dialectal region. The dominance of Østlandet may not have always been the case, however. As Johannessen and Salmons write: "It turned out to be very difficult to find speakers with dialects from the Norwegian west coast area after 2010. Descendants of immigrants who settled before 1920 who speak Norwegian, are typically older than 70" (2015, p. 10). It seems as though what may have been a more prominent dialect earlier, perhaps during Haugen's time of investigation and even into the 90's, when Joranger and Lovoll's interviews were done, is no longer as prevalent as it once was. The Vestlandet dialect remains, but is not as strong in modern times, as many of the speakers have died off. Possibly, the Vestlandet dialect was once more influential in a time earlier than when the respondents examined in this report were recorded. Surely, if the data were recorded today, we would see Østlandet dominating even more than it already does.

Another study from Johannessen and Salmons' volume, entitled "Attrition in an American Norwegian heritage language speaker", conducted by Johannessen (2015) tested the regression hypothesis in one elderly heritage Norwegian speaker. The regression hypothesis

(Jakobsen, 1941) posits, in short, that what is learned first is retained the longest, and what is learned most recently is lost first (Johannessen, 2015). Essentially, when applied to heritage Norwegian in an elderly speaker, the theory was that the respondent's Norwegian abilities would mirror that of a first language learner (L1) of native Norwegian. While some of the more complex language structures (like grammar rules that do not convey any semantic purpose) may be forgotten, the respondent would retain some of the more fundamental features of Norwegian. This change is due to a process called attrition, in which a native language is forgotten when it is no longer the majority language spoken in the environment surrounding the speaker (Johannessen, 2015). In "Daisy", the respondent for this study, Johannessen concluded that "her heritage language production reveals language that is different both from what we know of Heritage Norwegian from other sources and from European Norwegian, and which is taken to be the result of language attrition" (2015, p. 46). Additionally, the regression hypothesis was supported in some areas of Daisy's speech, namely in clause-related categories rather than noun-phrase-related categories. Johannessen notes that because pronouns are acquired early in L1 Norwegian speakers, and are "fully in place for Daisy" (2015, p. 68). Language attrition definitely impacts the language of the respondents used in this report. As many of them are a few generations away from their immigrant ancestors, their language has undergone changes and has ultimately been weakened with distance from the original immigration event and from lack of use. This is ultimately an important factor in considering how their dialect use might compare to that of a native Norwegian speaker.

## 5.2. The Influence of English

Much of the literature on heritage Norwegian examines the language through the context of its contact with English and what changes this may have sparked in the vernacular of the immigrants and their descendants. English is certainly one of the main factors considered when examining the linguistic changes heritage Norwegian has undergone, but not one discussed at length in this report. However, some important notes about the influence of English on heritage Norwegian are made here, as I would be remiss to include nothing on the matter. As David Natvig writes, "comparing the English and Norwegian of bilinguals provides a baseline for which features of the languages overlap, and which ones are distinct" (2021, p. 8). It is highly likely that English has had a major impact on the speech of respondents from both CANS and Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002). Allen and Salmons (2015) theorize that "with our speakers, people who learned Norwegian first and English only later, we expect borrowings into Norwegian" (2015, p. 99). Given that most of the respondents in this report belong to that category, and that for most, if not all of them, English is their dominant language, their Norwegian becomes influenced by English, particularly in the areas of word order and lexical borrowings. Anear and Speth (2015) found that "lexical transfer is the most common route of convergence in American Norwegian" (2015, p. 201). In other words, borrowing is the biggest influence that English has on heritage Norwegian. However, we also see influence in other areas

of Norwegian speech, such as the hybrid verb forms investigated by Åfarli (2015). Hybrid verbs refer to the phenomenon that “English verbs that are nonce borrowed into American Norwegian regularly show Norwegian tense inflection” (Åfarli, 2015, p. 161). A wide variety of features in heritage Norwegian show influence from English, and much of the literature has been devoted to identifying these influences. However, this report is concerned with the influence Norwegian dialects have on one another, rather than the effect of English.

The introduction of English likely interrupted the leveling process of the Norwegian dialects within these communities, since English became the dominant language and Norwegian was no longer needed. Many respondents note that during their childhoods (for many of them, around the 1920-30s), the churches stopped using Norwegian during services and that schooling in Norwegian became unavailable. These communities stopped using Norwegian outside the home often because other ethnic groups were introduced to the area, meaning that English became necessary for communication. For example, take this account from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) of an interview with a woman with Østlandet heritage from Minnesota discussing how Norwegian was phased out during her lifetime. Please note that the initials “TJ” indicate Terje Joranger, the interviewer, while “LA” indicates the interviewee and that certain sections are underlined to highlight importance.

Transcript excerpt from interview 2019008\_17A\_3:

00:03:13 **TJ:** Ja... og, men, da du voksa opp, gikk du på norsk skole?

**LA:** Ja, vi måtte gå på norsk skole om sommeren i en måneds tid, så vi kunne lære oss... å lese norsk, vi kunne snakke det, for alle måtte være konfirmert i norsk. Og så litt etter litt også var det andre nasjonaliteter som måtte døm, da var det slutt på å lese for presten på norsk.

00:03:40 **TJ:** Veit du når, omtrent år, slutt her?

**LA:** Ja, det vet jeg for jeg var konfirmert i 1925 og så søstera mi i 1927, og ho... ho var på engelsk. Ho lest på engelsk, for ho gikk ikke på norsk skole nok for å lese norsk.

**TJ:** Nei, akkurat.

**LA:** Så det var omtrent i 1926 som det var slutt. Vi brukte han... norske... gudstjeneste i (?) så til slutt så var det mindre og mindre ta det, annenhver søndag, og så til slutt var det, nå er det bare engelsk. Omtrent i 1930 så sluttet døm å ha norsk.

English translation:

00:03:13 **TJ:** Yes... and, but, when you were growing up, did you go to Norwegian school?

**LA:** Yes, we had to go to Norwegian school in the summer for a month's time, so we could learn... to read Norwegian, we could speak it, as everyone had to be confirmed in Norwegian. And then little by little there were also other nationalities, so they had to, then it was done with reading for the priest in Norwegian.

00:03:40 **TJ:** Do you know when, about which year, it stopped here?

**LA:** Yes, I do know, because I was confirmed in 1925 and then my sister in 1927, and she... she was in English. She read in English, because she didn't go to Norwegian school enough to read Norwegian.

**TJ:** No, exactly.

**LA:** Then it was about 1926 that it stopped. We used him... Norwegian... church services in (?) so in the end it was less and less taken, every other Sunday, and then in the end, now it's just English. Around 1930 they stopped having Norwegian.

Most of the respondents blended at least some English speech into their interviews, particularly when they were unsure of a word or needed to communicate a uniquely American concept. Some had not spoken Norwegian in years, and were clearly out of practice. Furthermore, the respondents themselves report that English has become the dominant language of the community, and that Norwegian was more commonly spoken during their childhoods. It is highly evident by these factors alone that English has become the dominant language in all of these communities.

### 5.3. Modern Norwegian

In comparing my data to modern Norwegian, a study from Lundquist et al. (2020) explains some of the parallel development that Norwegian dialects have undergone in Norway. In this experiment, the researchers attempted to elicit code-switching in young speakers of the Tromsø dialect (in the nord-Norge dialect grouping) by exposing them to Bokmål, one of the standardized written forms of Norwegian discussed in the History section (ch. 2). They measured two experimental conditions, referred to as SPOKEN (researcher of the Tromsø dialect asked respondent to verbally fill in the blank of a sentence spoken by the researcher) and WRITTEN (respondent verbally filled in the blank of a sentence written in Bokmål). They hoped to show that these speakers would code-switch to Bokmål forms during the written experiment. One of the measures of dialect forms versus standardized forms was the use of the first-person singular pronoun, which we have used in this report. The researchers also made use of the question word sounds (*hv-* vs. *k-*) to measure dialect and standard forms. They found that when respondents were exposed to written Bokmål, they were far more likely to use the standardized Bokmål forms in their spoken responses. Notably, even in the spoken experiment, where there was no exposure to Bokmål, respondents varied their language use between dialect forms and standardized forms. Specifically, the first-person singular pronoun proved to be more stable than the other dialect measures (which included word order and morphological endings), as 104 tokens of the Bokmål form (*jeg*) were elicited in the written experiment, while 0 tokens of the Bokmål form were recorded in the spoken experiment. For the question words, 286 tokens of the Bokmål form (*hv-* onset) were found in the written experiment, and 182 tokens of the Bokmål form in the spoken experiment (Lundquist et al., 2020, p. 265). In this experiment, the first-person pronoun was far more stable than the question word onset sound. For question words, the participants varied the onset sound, even when there was no exposure to Bokmål. For Norwegian-Americans in this report, the amount of variation was the same between these two categories, but the third person plural pronoun was more unstable than the first-person singular pronoun. Since Lundquist et al. (2020) examined only this pronoun, it is difficult to compare the findings, but what we can take

away from this is that even native speakers of Norwegian vary between dialect forms. Lundquist theorizes as to the reason for this variation:

In Tromsø today, as in most larger towns in Norway, we can assume that many speakers have a more mixed dialect background, even though they still often conform to the classic dialect traits of their hometown. It is therefore highly likely that the high school students of today speak a more levelled dialect compared to the speakers in the Nordic Dialect Corpus. (Lundquist et al., 2020, p. 282)

What the study is suggesting here is parallel to what we see in scholarship on American Norwegian speech: greater dialectal contact, resulting in dialect leveling and variation between differing dialect forms. At the time that many of the ancestors of the respondents in this report departed from Norway, these levels of dialectal contact within Norway did not exist, which is why many were exposed to new dialects in North America. However, it seems that with time and more robust communication methods, dialectal contact has increased within Norway itself as well, resulting in dialect leveling. It seems that our respondents vary their dialect forms more frequently than native Norwegian speakers would, based on this study, but the variation still exists within modern Norwegian dialects.

#### 5.4. Sociolinguistic Implications

We have discussed earlier the effects of the Nynorsk movement in Norway and the Bydgelag movement in North America that led to a sense of pride and identity attached to the dialects. However, this seems to have been a more recent sentiment in North America. Haugen writes that “only in the case of a few informants has it been possible to discover a strong sense of pride in the dialect” and that “many informants spontaneously expressed their feeling concerning the ‘ugliness’ of their own dialects” (1953, pp. 353-354). As a consequence of linguistic changes in Norway, “dialect usage has a very strong position” in modern Norwegian society (Gooskens, 2005, p. 37). In the present report, many of the informants made comments about feeling pride over their own Norwegian identity, which may hint at a generational change between the generation of Norwegian heritage speakers studied by Haugen and the heritage speakers investigated here. None of the informants examined here expressed a feeling of shame or of pride around their local dialects. The following are examples of meta-linguistic commentary from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) which illustrate the awareness that the informants have of differing dialects within their community and their pride over their Norwegian heritage. Please note once again that the initials “TJ” signify Terje Joranger, the interviewer.

Transcript excerpt from interview 2019008\_38A\_1:

00:06:35      **TJ:** Men du, det at du snakker såpass godt norsk, Telemarking, er det for at mor og far din tar det Telemarking heime?

**AO:** Vel, ja, det gjorde dei heile tid da eg var liten, veit du.

**TJ:** Heile tid.

**AO:** Heile tid, ja, det var ikkje engelsk då, veit du, unntagene var Yankeer

som kom. Ja, du veit hva en Yankee er?

**TJ:** Ja.

**AO:** Dei som var ikkje norsk her, veit du. (latter)

English translation:

00:06:35 **TJ:** But you, you speak Norwegian so well, the Telemark dialect, is it because your mother and father spoke the Telemark dialect at home?

**AO:** Well, yes, they did that all the time when I was little, you know.

**TJ:** All the time.

**AO:** All the time, yes, it was not English then, you know, the exceptions were the Yankees that came. Yes, do you know what a Yankee is?

**TJ:** Yes.

**AO:** Those who were not Norwegian here, you know. (laughter)

00:11:12 **TJ:** Går det mykje Telemarkinga som var i menigheiten?

**AO:** Vel, det var nok, det var nok fleire som var der, men det var forskjellige norske, veit du. Det var jammen en par tyskarer. Ja, det var det, veit du, men eg har store problemer med dette gamle dorsk- danske-norske språk, (?). Ja, det var vanskelig å treffe med, for det var ikkje samme tinga som me snakka heime, veit du. Nei, men nå kan eg gå på en måte og klare de... men eg må jo sjå boke av og til, alt de forskjellige (?) ord meiner, ja. Men- og så når eg var i Oslo, da veit du, når dei har være på TV-en, så eg liker at det høres ut som det var noko tyskere eller noko, veit du? Eg er ikkje vant med dette! Eg er vant med den dialekten de snakker ut i Dalland og fjellet i Vinje, ja.

**TJ:** Og det blir vanskeligere å forstå andre dialekter.

English translation:

00:11:12 **TJ:** Is there a lot of Telemark dialect that was in the parish?

**AO:** Well, it was, there were several who were there, but there were different Norwegians, you know. There were certainly a few Germans. Yes, there were, you know, but I have big problems with this old Dan- Danish-Norwegian language, (?). Yes, it was difficult to get, because it was not the same thing we spoke at home, you know. No, but now I can manage it in a way... but I must look at the book now and then, all the different (?) words mean, yes. But- and then when I was in Oslo, you know, when they have been on the TV, so I like that it sounds like some Germans or something, you know? I am not used to this! I am used to the dialect they speak out in Dalland and the mountain in Vinje, yes.

**TJ:** And it is more difficult to understand other dialects.

As evidenced by this excerpt from Joranger and Lovoll's interviews (1995-2002), many of the informants displayed meta-linguistic knowledge about their own dialect use and about the dialect use in their local communities. For more examples of meta-linguistic commentary from interviews, please see the Appendix. Informants seem aware of the dialectal influences around them and how they impact their language use. Interestingly, they also seem confident in their ability to identify other Norwegian dialects. For example, informant IH from interview 2019008\_17A\_2 (in Appendix) claims to be able to tell if someone has heritage from Trøndelag based on their dialect. Gooskens (2005) tested how well Norwegians were able to identify other Norwegian dialects, hypothesizing that they would be better than speakers of Dutch at this task, since Norwegian dialects hold a more prestigious social position than do dialects of Dutch.

Unexpectedly, Gooskens (2005) found that “young Norwegians are not able to recognize different Norwegian dialects as well as could be expected on the basis of the special status which dialects have in Norway” (2005, p. 57). In particular, intonation was very important in helping speakers of Norwegian to distinguish between dialects. This study tells us that perhaps speakers of heritage Norwegian are influenced by dialects without knowing where they come from, or that they may think that others speak one dialect, when they in fact speak another, altering their perception of dialects altogether. Further research would need to be done to test this hypothesis; however, it remains clear that native Norwegian speakers confuse dialects just the same as heritage Norwegian speakers do.

### 5.5. Limitations

Some key limitations to this research must be identified for further research. Firstly, research in this area is extremely limited in terms of the number of available participants. The CANS corpus has data from a few hundred informants over decades of research on American Norwegian, but the vast majority of these respondents have since died off, leaving very few speakers of heritage Norwegian in the United States today. This makes further research in the field difficult, as we must retroactively examine prior interviews rather than conducting new ones. If new interviews were to be conducted, researchers would likely have a small interviewee pool to choose from. The reality of other ethnic groups and languages prevailing in the settlements that were once primarily Norwegian-American has led to the decline of Norwegian as a heritage language. While 30 respondents from two different data sources were examined in this report, I could not ask questions firsthand that I may have wanted to, as I did not conduct the interviews. Furthermore, 30 is a relatively small sample size to be able to draw firm conclusions about heritage Norwegian in general. However, the process of combing through the interviews is arduous and time consuming, and for time restrictions, I was not able to investigate more respondents from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) or CANS.

Additionally, though interviews in CANS were already professionally transcribed both orthographically and phonetically, making it easier to pick out dialect features, the data from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) was largely untouched. I am not a professional transcriptionist, nor were the tapes of the highest audio quality, meaning that my transcripts could be prone to error. At times, the speech could be difficult to hear and interpret, because of the audio quality of tapes made in the 1990s, muffled speech, antiquated Norwegian, background noise, and other audio distortions. This likely accounts for the discrepancy in data between Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) and CANS as seen in Table 5. The CANS professional transcriptions are likely more accurate to the recordings than my transcriptions of Joranger and Lovoll’s interviews (1995-2002).

Accounting for all the possible dialectal influences on a single respondent can become quite challenging. We may assume that their family has had a large impact on their language use in their upbringing, but perhaps other individuals, like family friends, teachers, pastors, etc. who speak a minority dialect of Norwegian have influenced the speech of some of the respondents. This explains why we might see some unexplained tokens: informants could have picked up a



dialect form from a wide variety of sources that may not be recorded. It can also be quite difficult to find a definitive answer on which dialect feature belongs to which region in Norway, since dialects change over time and there is no single guide mapping out all dialect features. For example, the geographical distribution of the question word onset sound was difficult to pin down. The forms are generally agreed upon, but it can be difficult to find isoglosses of where each form is used. This made it difficult to categorize the dialects of the informants and where their speech might belong to. I tried to be more forgiving where I could and to incorporate more dialect forms into each category rather than fewer. However, mapping dialect features is not straightforward and may be inaccurate because of the increase of dialect contact in modern Norwegian. All of the aforementioned limitations mean that this data may not be entirely free from error, though the fact that it aligns with earlier research on American Norwegian is encouraging.

## 6. Conclusion

The long journey that Norwegian has taken in both North America and Norway itself has resulted in the creation of a diverse tapestry of the language. Norwegian comes in many different forms and is not constricted to one standard, but instead is allowed to grow and change with the people who speak it. The present report showed some of this change and measured it over time through investigation of heritage Norwegian speech, passed down from generation to generation in an environment where it is by far the minority language. In order to extrapolate upon the research questions, data from Joranger and Lovoll's (1995-2002) mostly-unused interviews as well as the CANS database were employed to investigate selected dialectal features in the informants that served as a proxy to determine dialectal membership. The dialectal features investigated were first and third indirect pronoun use, question word onset sound, and the negation adverb "not". The conclusions of this research are chiefly the following:

- (1) Heritage Norwegian has been subjected to an incomplete dialect leveling process interrupted by the introduction of English.
- (2) Speakers of heritage Norwegian display a great deal of variety in the dialect forms that they employ, and often mix features from multiple dialects.
- (3) American Norwegian speech is often influenced by the majority Norwegian dialect in the region in which informants reside in North America, though their heritage dialect often plays a major role as well.
- (4) Modern Norwegian may be headed towards a leveling process in the same manner due to more dialectal contact in Norway today.

If possible, more research must be done on the heritage Norwegian speakers that remain in North America today, as the variety is already moribund. The extent to which speakers of modern Norwegian oscillate between dialect forms in their everyday lives and the causes of this variation must also be investigated further to understand the intricate balance along the dialect continuum. It would also be of interest to contextualize the data from Joranger and Lovoll's recordings (1995-2002) in contemporary literature, since they have not been much included at this time. The

present methodology may also be employed on the same informants but using different dialectal markers, perhaps of a grammatical nature, in order to compare that development with the features in this report.

The author's hypothesis that the regional majority dialect would influence the speech of heritage Norwegian speakers was correct in regards to the present data. Speakers of American Norwegian represent a minority language that is dying off after having been passed down for several generations, but it is nonetheless worth examining. What we see in these speakers are fascinating and complex linguistic influences interacting with one another to produce the speech we hear today. Even as heritage Norwegian is spoken less and less, it represents a history that these respondents clearly hold dear and displays an interesting incomplete leveling process, a case study in what happens when distinct but mutually intelligible dialects meet one another.

## 7. Appendix

### 7.1. Legend of IPA Symbols

Symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) used in this report.

Symbol	Sound	English word examples
/ʃ/	“sh”	<u>sh</u> op, ma <u>sh</u> , fi <u>sh</u>
/k/	“k”	<u>ca</u> ught, sti <u>ck</u> , ki <u>ch</u> en
/v/	“v”	<u>v</u> ote, do <u>v</u> e, <u>v</u> oice
/n/	“n”	<u>n</u> ight, <u>n</u> ote, sco <u>r</u> n
/ŋ/	“en”	cho <u>s</u> en, fro <u>z</u> en, take <u>n</u>
/m/	“m”	<u>m</u> oney, ha <u>m</u> , <u>m</u> ix
/d/	“d”	<u>d</u> ance, <u>d</u> uck, <u>d</u> istant
/f/	“f”	<u>f</u> ind, <u>f</u> lower, roo <u>f</u>
/tʃ/	“ch”	<u>i</u> tch, ma <u>t</u> ch, <u>C</u> hile
/t/	“t”	<u>t</u> ruck, <u>t</u> ower, ma <u>t</u>
/l/	“l”	<u>l</u> uck, <u>l</u> atch, fa <u>ll</u>
/j/	“y”	<u>y</u> ellow, <u>y</u> uck, <u>y</u> es
/h/	“h”	<u>h</u> appy, <u>h</u> ope, <u>h</u> op
/s/	“s”	<u>s</u> top, <u>s</u> our, pu <u>s</u>

/g/	“g”	great, tug, grow
/ɪ/	“i”	h <u>ill</u> , sh <u>ift</u> , n <u>ick</u>
/i/	“ee”	f <u>ee</u> l, st <u>ea</u> l, m <u>ee</u> t
/a/	“ah”	art, c <u>a</u> r, br <u>a</u>
/e/	“eh”	w <u>en</u> t, s <u>en</u> d, b <u>et</u> ter
/ɛ/	“e”	b <u>ed</u> , s <u>et</u> , b <u>et</u>
/æ/	“a”	app <u>le</u> , tr <u>a</u> p, l <u>a</u> ck
/ɔ/	“aw”	ca <u>u</u> ght, bou <u>gh</u> t, off
/œ/	“uh”	bu <u>r</u> n, foo <u>t</u> , chu <u>r</u> n
/ʊ/	“u”	g <u>oo</u> d, pu <u>t</u> , too <u>k</u>
/ə/	“uh”	ab <u>o</u> ut, <u>u</u> m, aw <u>a</u> ke
/u/	“oo”	f <u>oo</u> l, sch <u>oo</u> l, sco <u>o</u> p
/ʊ/	“ou”	m <u>u</u> le, fru <u>i</u> t, chu <u>t</u> e
/æɪ/	“ai”	fl <u>y</u> , gu <u>y</u> , k <u>i</u> te
/:/	—	elongates vowel before symbol

Visit <https://www.ipachart.com/> for a full list of IPA symbols.

## 7.2. Additional Interview Excerpts

Taken from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002), “TJ” indicates interviewer.

Transcript excerpt from interview 2019008\_12D:

00:09:31 **TJ:** Du... kor- kor mange norske- korst deltar i norsk i Blair i dag?  
Er det mange norske som bor her ennå?

**RR:** Å jo. Rundt del. Rundt del.

**IR:** Nærme del. (?) mye annen... annen som er fløtt igjen, vet du. Eldre daue da.  
Blir borte.

**RR:** De brukte på de som kom hit, måtte lære norsk, lære norsk for døm... tar det norsk alle sammen rundt og da... (latter)

00:10:01 **TJ:** Så andre som ikkje var norske måtte lære seg norsk?

**RR:** Ja, ja.

**IR:** Dem som snakket tysk, og der borte.

**RR:** Det måtte være stund. Dem tar det norsk, alle sammen.

English translation:

00:09:31 **TJ:** You... how- how many Norwegians- how do people participate in Norwegian in Blair today? Are there many Norwegians that still live here?

**RR:** Oh yes. Around here. Around here.

**IR:** The area near here. (?) many others... others who have moved again, you know. The older ones die then. Go away.

**RR:** It used to be that those who came here had to learn Norwegian, because everyone uses Norwegian around here, and then... (laughter)

00:10:01 **TJ:** So others who were not Norwegian had to learn Norwegian?

**RR:** Yes, yes.

**IR:** Those who spoke German, and down there.

**RR:** It had to be a while. They used Norwegian, everyone.

Transcript excerpt from interview 2019008\_12E:

00:12:36 **TJ:** Snakka dei det samme språket? Snakka dei heilt likt?

**HQ:** Ja, ja. I heimen mestedelen av det folket her som var ifra that area, Harding, som vi forsto each other. Og når du snakke i telefonen så var det "Ja, god dag!" "Kor lever du?" (latter) "Kor lever du i dag?" Så hadde vi en... kjerring som ikke forsto norsk, men ho hadde telefon, så alle lyde inn på det, veit du? Og ho hadde hørt det (?) "Kor lever du?"

English translation:

00:12:36 **TJ:** Did they speak the same language? Did they speak totally alike?

**HQ:** Yes, yes. At home the majority of people here that were from that area, Hardanger, we understood each other. And when you spoke on the phone it was "Yes, good day!" "How are you living?" (laughter) "How are you living today?" So we had a... woman who did not understand Norwegian, but she had a telephone, so everyone listened to it, you know? And she had heard that (?) "How are you living?"

Transcript excerpt from interview 2019008\_17A\_2:

00:02:52 **TJ:** Ja, akkurat. Er det mange- så når folk snakker norsk her i dag, tar da dei forskjellige dialekter, eller omtrent samme dialekter?

**IH:** Å det er- du kan høre dem som er ifrå Trønder, men meste tar det, så er det Hadeland-språk.

English translation:

00:02:52 **TJ:** Yes, exactly. Are there many- so when people speak Norwegian here today, do they use different dialects, or about the same dialects?

**IH:** Oh, it is- you can hear those who are from Trondheim, but most people speak it, so it is Hadeland-language.

Transcript excerpt from interview 2019008\_17A\_4:

00:06:40 **TJ:** Da du voksa opp her i Rothsay, var det mange som ikkje var norske her, då? Eller var det fleste norske?

**MH:** Ja, det var nok noen som itte var norske. Det var noen som itte var norske.

00:06:52 **TJ:** Kå synes- kå synes du om deg då?

**MH:** Vel... jeg veit ikke... jeg var liksom... (latter) dem- dem (?) nesten feel sorry for dem, for dem var ikke liksom- det var meste norske, det veit du. Så hvis vi ikke kunne ta det norsk, så var dem liksom... they were a little bit outsiders in a way, you know.

English translation:

00:06:40 **TJ:** You grew up here in Rothsay, were there many who were not Norwegian, then? Or were most people Norwegian?

**MH:** Yes, there were some people who were not Norwegian. There were some who were not Norwegian.

00:06:52 **TJ:** What do you think- what do you think about them then?

**MH:** Well... I don't know... I was like... (laughter) they- they (?) almost feel sorry for them, because they were not like- it was mostly Norwegians, you know. So if we couldn't speak Norwegian, they were like... they were a little bit outsiders in a way, you know.

Transcript excerpt from interview 2019008\_17B\_1:

00:02:35 **TJ:** Ja, akkurat. Så- men kå- er det mange Setesdøler rundt her?

**OF:** Ikkje så mye nå. Det var, det brukte å være mye (?), ja.

**TJ:** Det var fleire før.

**OF:** Å ja.

00:02:46 **TJ:** Kunne du høre Setesdøl på gata?

**OF:** I år sida, ja.

**TJ:** Ja?

**OF:** Ja då. Ja, det brukte å være at det norskan var på... øst-sida (?) og franskmenn var på denne sida.

**TJ:** Nei!

(latter)

**OF:** Men nå mikser då, ja, ja.

English translation:

00:02:35 **TJ:** Yes, exactly. So- but what- are there many people from Setesdal around here?

**OF:** Not so much now. It was, there used to be many (?), yes.

**TJ:** There were more before.

**OF:** Oh yes.

00:02:46 **TJ:** Could you hear Setesdal dialect on the street?

**OF:** In years past, yes.

**TJ:** Yes?

**OF:** Yes then. Yes, it used to be such that the Norwegians were on... the east side (?) and the Frenchmen were on this side.

**TJ:** No!

(laughter)

**OF:** But now it is mixed then, yes, yes.

## 8. References

- Åfarli, T. A. (2015). Hybrid verb forms in American Norwegian and the analysis of the syntactic relation between the verb and its tense. In Johannessen, J. B., & Salmons, J., *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, Attrition and Change*. (pp. 161–177). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/silv.18>.
- Allen, B. & Salmons, J. (2015). Heritage language obstruent phonetics and phonology: American Norwegian and Norwegian-American English. In Johannessen, J. B. & Salmons, J., *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, Attrition and Change*. (pp. 97–116). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/silv.18>.
- Almberg, J. & Skarbø, K. (n.d.). *Nordavinden og sola: Opptak og transkripsjoner av norske dialekter*. NTNU. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://www.hf.ntnu.no/nos/>.
- Annear, L. & Speth, K. (2015). Maintaining a multilingual repertoire: Lexical change in American Norwegian. In Johannessen, J. B. & Salmons, J., *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, Attrition and Change*. (pp. 201–216). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/silv.18>.
- Gooskens, C. (2005). How well can Norwegians identify their dialects? *Nordic Journal of Linguistics*, 28(1), 37–60. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0332586505001319>.
- Haugen, E. (1938). Language and Immigration. *Norwegian-American Studies*, 10, 1–43.
- Haugen, E. (1953). *The Norwegian language in America: a study in bilingual behavior*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Haugen, E. (1975). *Norsk i Amerika* (2nd ed.). Cappelen.
- Henriksen, A. H. (2020, July 16). *Spørreord*. Store Norske Leksikon. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://snl.no/sp%C3%B8rreord>.
- Hjelde, A. (2015). Changes in a Norwegian dialect in America. In Johannessen, J. B. & Salmons, J., *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, Attrition and Change*. (pp. 283–298). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/silv.18>.
- Interactive IPA Chart*. IPA Chart. Retrieved April 13, 2023, from <https://www.ipachart.com/>.
- Jahr, E. H. (1990). *Den Store dialektboka* (1st ed.). Novus.
- Jahr, E. H. (2014). *Language Planning as a Sociolinguistic Experiment: the Case of Modern Norwegian*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Jakobson, R. (1941). *Child Language, Aphasia, and Phonological Universals*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers.
- Johannessen, J. B. (2015). Attrition in an American Norwegian heritage language speaker. In Johannessen, J. B. & Salmons, J., *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, Attrition and Change*. (pp. 46–71). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/silv.18>.
- Johannessen, J. B. (2015). The Corpus of American Norwegian Speech (CANS). In Béata Megyesi (ed.): *Proceedings of the 20th Nordic Conference of Computational Linguistics, NODALIDA 2015, May 11-13, 2015, Vilnius, Lithuania. NEALT Proceedings Series 23*.

- CANS - Corpus of American Nordic Speech v.3.1:  
<http://tekstlab.uio.no/norskiamerika/english/corpus.html>.
- Johannessen, J. B. & Laake, S. (2015). On two myths of the Norwegian language in America: Is it old-fashioned? Is it approaching the written Bokmål standard?. In Johannessen, J. B. & Salmons, J., *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, Attrition and Change*. (pp. 299–322). John Benjamins Publishing Company.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/silv.18>.
- Johannessen, J. B. & Salmons, J. (2015). *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, Attrition and Change*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Joranger, T. M. H. & Lovoll, O. (1995–2002). *Oral histories* [Tape recordings]. Oral histories (NAHA 2019/008). Norwegian-American Historical Association, Northfield, MN, United States.
- Lovoll, O. (1998). *The promise fulfilled: a portrait of Norwegian Americans today*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Lundquist, B., Westendorp, M., & Strand, B.-M. S. (2020). Code-switching alone cannot explain intraspeaker syntactic variability: Evidence from a spoken elicitation experiment. *Nordic Journal of Linguistics*, 43(3), 249–287. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0332586520000190>.
- Natvig, D. (2021). American Norwegian Sound Systems and Language Contact. *Norwegian-American Studies*, 39, 4–10. <https://doi.org/10.5749/norwamerstud.39.0004>.
- Nordbø, B. (2023, January 25). *Norsk språkhistorie*. Store Norske Leksikon. Retrieved March 30, 2023, from [https://snl.no/norsk\\_spr%C3%A5khistorie](https://snl.no/norsk_spr%C3%A5khistorie).
- Nordbøvik, J. (2022, November 15). *Utvandringa frå Noreg til Nord-Amerika*. Store Norske Leksikon. Retrieved March 30, 2023, from [https://snl.no/Utvandringa\\_fr%C3%A5\\_Noreg\\_til\\_Nord-Amerika](https://snl.no/Utvandringa_fr%C3%A5_Noreg_til_Nord-Amerika).
- Venås, K. & Skjekkeland, M. (2023, January 23). *Dialekter i Noreg*. Store Norske Leksikon. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from [https://snl.no/dialekter\\_i\\_Noreg](https://snl.no/dialekter_i_Noreg).
- Vikør, L. S. (2022, October 27). *Nynorsk*. Store Norske Leksikon. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://snl.no/Nynorsk>.
- Weidling, T. R. & Njåstad, M. (2022, June 9). *Norge under dansk styre – 1537-1814*. Store Norske Leksikon. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from [https://snl.no/Norge\\_under\\_dansk\\_styre\\_-\\_1537-1814](https://snl.no/Norge_under_dansk_styre_-_1537-1814).