

## The Norwegian language in Argentina – a first view of Norwegian in a new contact situation

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While Norwegian in North America (NorAmNo) has been investigated for more than 100 years (Flom 1903; Haugen 1953; Hjelde 1992; Johannessen 2018), Norwegian in Latin America has attracted less attention. More than 20,000 Norwegians emigrated to Latin America between 1820 and the 1950s (compared to 800,000 to NorAm); most of them to Argentina (Furuseth 2013; Sæther 2015). However, thus far, there are virtually no studies of Norwegian in this contact situation, in which Spanish is the main contact language.

This paper takes a first look at some lexical and morphosyntactic properties of Norwegian in Argentina (ArgNo), based on semi-structured interviews/conversations with 12 heritage speakers during a field trip in 2021.<sup>1</sup> The speakers are mostly elderly, second-generation immigrants based in/around Buenos Aires. Our goal is not to present a full account of ArgNo, but a first, tentative description of aspects of this heritage variety, with NorAmNo as a comparative backdrop. Our findings will fill an empirical lacuna and point out directions for future research. Comparing ArgNo to NorAmNo can enhance our understanding of the role played by different majority languages in HL settings (Polinsky 2018:21), and other factors shaping HLs.

Compared to NorAmNo (Haugen 1953), ArgNo does not have many lexical innovations/loanwords shared widely across speakers. Exceptions are *si*, *no* and *bueno* as discourse markers (ex. (1); cf. Søfteland & Hjelde 2021 on discourse markers in NorAmNo). Moreover, we observe some apparent semantic transfer from Spanish on certain Norwegian verbs, e.g. *gå* (EurNo ‘walk’, ArgNo ‘go’; cf. Spanish *ir* ‘go’ and also NorAmNo *gå*, which is used similarly to ArgNo *gå*). Some ArgNo speakers occasionally use English/German loans in addition to loans from Spanish. This use of an L3 as a lexical resource is hardly attested in NorAmNo.

Morphosyntactic features largely remain stable in ArgNo, though with some innovative patterns. Some speakers have regularized verbal inflections (e.g., strong verbs becoming weak; ArgNo *bindet* ‘bound’ vs. EurNo *bandt*); Lykke (2020) makes similar findings in NorAmNo. For grammatical gender, there are cases of divergent agreement/assignment (cf. (2); more details in Stokka (in prep.)); this, too, is found in NorAmNo (Lohndal & Westergaard 2016).

In main clauses, ArgNo speakers occasionally have V3 where EurNo requires V2; cf. (3); see Westergaard et al. (2021) for similar examples in NorAmNo. In subordinate clauses, we note examples of verb movement past sentence adverbials (V-to-T-movement) in cases where EurNo requires V-in-situ; cf. (4). On this pattern in NorAmNo, see Larsson & Johannessen (2015).

Preliminarily, we have noted lexical differences, but morphosyntactic similarities between ArgNo and NorAmNo. More research is required to draw any conclusions; however, the starting point is interesting, as our field work has also revealed clear differences between the contact situations in which ArgNo and NorAmNo exist: Whereas ArgNo speakers are mainly second-generation, NorAmNo speakers are typically third/fourth-generation. ArgNo

<sup>1</sup> The data were collected in the context of a project that investigates Norwegian in Latin America more generally. However, for the purposes of the present talk, we limit our attention to Argentina.

speakers are typically urban, while NorAmNo speakers are rural. Inter-Scandinavian ties are strong in Argentina, whereas NorAmNo speakers rather identify with specific regions in Norway.

Future studies will elaborate on the features brought to attention here and more; particularl grammatical phenomena that are different in the majority languages Spanish and English.

- (1) *Vi har fått besøk hit # **bueno** det er lenge siden men før ...* (ArgNo)  
 we have had visits here BUENO it is long since but before  
 ‘We’ve had visitors. Well, it’s been a long time, but before...’
- (2) a. ***et stort** museum* (EurNo, noun with neuter agreement)  
 a.NEUT big.NEUT museum  
 ‘a big museum’  
 b. ***en stor** museum* (ArgNo, noun with masculine agreement)  
 a.MASC big.MASC museum
- (3) a. *Nå **er** hun pensjonist også* (EurNo, V2)  
 now is she pensioner too  
 ‘Now she is retired too’  
 b. *...nå hun **er** pensjonist også* (ArgNo, V3)
- (4) a. *de forskjellige båtene som **alltid kom** hit til Argentina* (EurNo, V-in-situ)  
 the different boats that always came here to Argentina  
 ‘The different boats that always came here to Argentina’  
 b. *de forskjellige båtene som **kom alltid** her til Argentina* (ArgNo, V-to-T)

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