

## Grammatical gender in Latin American Norwegian

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Grammatical gender has previously been studied in North American heritage Norwegian (Johannessen & Larsson, 2015, 2018; Lohndal & Westergaard, 2016; Rødvand, 2017), where the majority language is English. This paper presents preliminary results from a study of grammatical gender in a new group of Norwegian heritage speakers, namely Norwegian speakers in Latin America, whose dominant language is Spanish. The data consists of elicited determiner phrases from a linguistic experiment conducted among speakers of LatAmNo, including three pairs of siblings (young adults) who grew up in the same community in Ecuador and acquired Norwegian at home. Most of the participants have a similar linguistic background, yet they display great variation in their production of simple and more complex DPs.

Morphosyntax, and nominal morphology in particular, has been argued to be a vulnerable grammatical category in heritage languages (e.g., Benmamoun et al., 2013), and thus constitutes an interesting and valuable field of investigation, as variability is expected in speakers of both high and lower proficiency. The experiment design used in the present study is an adapted version of an experiment used in studies of grammatical gender in homeland Norwegian (Busterud et al., 2019; Rodina & Westergaard, 2015) and of definiteness in North American Norwegian (van Baal, 2020), which provides a favourable condition for comparison with other varieties of Norwegian.

In spoken Norwegian, most dialects have retained the traditional three-gender system (masculine, feminine and neuter). However, exceptions to this are found in several of the bigger cities in Norway (Lødrup, 2011; Rodina & Westergaard, 2015; Busterud et al., 2019), where the feminine gender is merged with the masculine gender, creating a common gender like in conservative varieties of the written standard Bokmål and standard Swedish and Danish. My aim is to investigate if the LatAmNo gender system undergoes a similar reduction from three to two genders, if the full three-gender system is intact, or if gender assignment and agreement in LatAmNo follow a different pattern altogether.

Analyses are at a preliminary stage, but tendencies are emerging. In the small sample hitherto analysed, few exponents of feminine gender are detected, and a two-gender system appear to be preferred, unlike what has been found in North America. Judging from the form of the indefinite article and demonstratives, feminine and masculine is mostly assigned to LatAmNo nouns in accordance with the baseline. However, the masculine forms are also frequently used with nouns of baseline neuter (see Tables 1 and 2 below<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers are based on a rough first count of the results and may be adjusted at a later point.

Speakers	Expected f			Expected m			Expected n		
	<i>ei</i> (f)	<i>en</i> (m/f)	<i>et</i> (n)	<i>ei</i> (f)	<i>en</i> (m/f)	<i>et</i> (n)	<i>ei</i> (f)	<i>en</i> (m)	<i>et</i> (n)
EC1-01	0	21	4	0	28	2	0	13	20
EC1-02	0	25	0	0	31	0	0	29	0
EC1-03	0	25	4	0	27	0	0	1	29
EC1-04	3	20	1	0	36	0	3	28	1
EC2-01	0	17	5	0	23	9	0	15	13
<b>Sum</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>63</b>
%	2,4	86,4	11,2	0	92,9	7,1	2,0	56,6	41,4

Table 1: Distribution of indefinite article grouped by grammatical gender in baseline Norwegian

Speakers	Expected f		Expected m		Expected n	
	<i>den</i> (f/m)	<i>det</i> (n)	<i>den</i> (f/m)	<i>det</i> (n)	<i>den</i> (f/m)	<i>det</i> (n)
EC1-01	8	1	10	0	6	5
EC1-02	7	1	4	2	7	1
EC1-03	10	0	10	0	2	8
EC1-04	7	0	8	0	8	0
EC2-01	7	0	11	0	6	2
<b>Sum</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>
%	95,1	4,9	95,6	4,4	64,4	35,6

Table 2: Distribution of demonstrative grouped by grammatical gender in baseline Norwegian

Regarding phrase-internal agreement, there is little deviance from the baseline, as over 90 per cent of phrases consisting of article+adjective+noun show correct agreement between the article and the adjective.

## References

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