Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas (WILA) 17 @ Penn State

Abstracts

The abstracts in this document are ordered by type: plenary talk, lecture, and workshop talk. The regular workshop talks are grouped by session and presented in their scheduled order.

Quick Links

Plenary Talks

The Meaning of Pennsylvania Dutch
Mark L. Louden

The Penn Dutch Dialects Project: A bright new future for Pennsylvania Dutch
Rose Fisher

Janne Bondi Johannessen Memorial Lecture

The Multilingual Mind seen from American Norwegian
Terje Lohndal

Session 1

To Link or Not to Link: The Morphosyntax of Pennsylvania Dutch Compounds
Deborah I Adeyeye

Which German? Religiolinguistic dimensions of German as a heritage language in Manitoba, Canada
Christine Kampen Robinson

Clarifying the status of gender in Wisconsin Immigrant and Heritage Dutch
Rachyl Hietpas

Session 2

Minority Language Press & Language Maintenance: Hansch, Mattäle, and the Indexicalization of Gottscheer Identity
Andrew Hoffman

Implicit processing and the prosody of Pennsylvania Dutch plurals
Emmeline Wilson, Rose Fisher, Matthew T. Carlson, and Michael T. Putnam

Session 3

Community Profiles of American German Communities in Southeastern Wisconsin in the 1940s: Contemporary accounts from Seifert's field notes and observations
Joshua Bousquette

"A time to speak": Negotiating researcher faith identities in sociolinguistic research
Christine Kampen Robinson and Mark L. Louden

Finding the "lights of the world": Methods for making connections with Plain communities and lessons learned through interdisciplinary research
Megan Wadas and Rose Fisher

Session 4

Grammatical gender in North American Swedish
Ida Larsson and Kari Kinn

The Greek Language in Migration and Diaspora: The case of Canadian Greek
Angela Ralli and Vasiliki Makri

Opening new avenues for research on heritage Scandinavian: Corpus of American Nordic Speech, version 4
Kari Kinn, Arnstein Hjelde, and Marie Lund Stokka

Session 5

Prosodic strategies in Norwegian heritage speech in the U.S.: Tonal accents in North Norwegian varieties
S. B. Haave

From Prosodic Segmentation to Constructionalization: Intonation and Verb-Third Word Order in Iowa Low German
Maike Rocker

Session 6

Differences and similarities in the variation and change of case marking in moribund North American heritage varieties and endangered, indigenous heritage Övdalian
Alexander Kristoffersen Lykke, Stefan Jacobsson, Alessia Nencioni, and Piotr Garbacz

Negotiating Heritage Language Across Generations: Perceptions and Ideologies among Yoruba-Speaking Nigerian Immigrants in the United States
Ruth Olayemi Adeniyi

Oligofunctionality in heritage Vietnamese
Tran Truong

Plenary Talks

The Meaning of Pennsylvania Dutch

Mark L. Louden (University of Wisconsin–Madison)

A throughline of the nearly three-hundred-year history of Pennsylvania Dutch is the bilingualism of its speakers. Though Pennsylvania Dutch–English bilingualism was historically often imbalanced, the active speakers of Pennsylvania Dutch today, mostly Amish and traditional Mennonites (Plain people), are effectively ambilingual. Aside from lexical borrowing, the main structural outcome of Pennsylvania Dutch–English bilingualism is a high degree of semantic convergence between the two languages, with English playing the dominant role. Indeed, the major difference between Pennsylvania Dutch and its distant linguistic cousin Palatine German is the extent to which the former language draws on English lexically and semantically.

The semantic influence of English on Pennsylvania Dutch is something that speakers are largely unaware of and does not affect their view that the two languages are fundamentally distinct from one another. Plain people feel a deep attachment to Pennsylvania Dutch, their *Mudderschprooch* (mother tongue) and "heart language," which, along with distinctive dress and grooming and the selective adoption of technology, is an important symbol of their separatist religious identity. The use of Pennsylvania Dutch connotes emotional intimacy, integrity, and humility, a cardinal Anabaptist virtue. While Pennsylvania Dutch speakers value proficiency in English, which is their primary vehicle of literacy and necessary for them to thrive in North American society, English remains fundamentally the language of society at large.

Drawing on four decades of scholarly, professional, and personal engagement with Pennsylvania Dutch and its speakers, in this presentation I will discuss the twofold "meaning" of the language. I begin by analyzing the main outcomes of the semantic convergence of Pennsylvania Dutch toward English, lexical borrowing and limited syntactic change, and note that Pennsylvania Dutch phonology and morphology have remained largely unaffected by contact-induced change. The evidence from Pennsylvania Dutch offers support for MacSwan's (2000) model of the "architecture of the bilingual language faculty." I then turn to the affective relationship of Pennsylvania Dutch speakers with their *Mudderschprooch*, drawing on their metalinguistic reflections as well as my experience as an interpreter and cultural advocate for Plain people in medical and legal settings. Recent studies of how multilinguals process input from different languages (e.g., Caldwell-Harris and Ayçiçeği-Dinn 2009; Malik-Moraleda et al. 2024) suggest a cognitive and neurophysiological basis for the differing perceptions and valuations of Pennsylvania Dutch and English by Plain people.

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The Penn Dutch Dialects Project: A bright new future for Pennsylvania Dutch

Rose Fisher (Michigan State University)

Pennsylvania Dutch is a classic example of an under-resourced, minority language spoken in North America. It is widely misunderstood, including by its own speakers, as lesser than standardized varieties of its linguistic relatives English and German. Because it typically is not written and audio recordings of spoken language are exceedingly rare, decentralized, and/or difficult to access, it is difficult to correct misunderstandings about the language and do systematic research based on large amounts of natural spoken data. No annotated and published corpus of the spoken language is currently in existence. Furthermore, because Pennsylvania Dutch is spoken by various groups all across North America, there are many varieties of the language that are completely undocumented. The Penn Dutch Dialects project seeks to rectify this situation by collecting recordings of spoken Pennsylvania Dutch (and English) from as many speakers and walks of life as possible. These recordings will be processed and published in a database that will be available for research, pedagogy, and public outreach. In this talk, I outline the project: its goals, its workflow and timeline, and its methodologies.

Janne Bondi Johannessen Memorial Lecture

The Multilingual Mind seen from American Norwegian

Terje Lohndal (Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and UiT The Arctic University of Norway)

The past two decades have seen a flurry of research into the grammatical properties of the heritage language American Norwegian, in large part due to the pioneering efforts of the late Janne Bondi Johannessen. In this memorial lecture, I want to consider some of the major theoretical implications of the research on American Norwegian in this period, focusing on what this research tells us about the nature of the multilingual mind. I will argue that a particular architecture emerges from this research, one which is built on late-insertion and a clear separation of syntactic features and their morphophonological exponents. This has a range of implications that I will discuss in the talk, notably (i) multilingual grammars can be modeled in a systematic and constrained way, (ii) 'words' can be decomposed syntactically, and their parts can be drawn from multiple languages, (iii) the multilingual mind consists of one repository of lexical items, and (iv) syntactic features and the mapping from features to exponents can account for a range of observed changes across generations (cf. Lohndal & Putnam 2024). In sum, this shows that research on American Norwegian continues to have an important impact on our understanding of the multilingual mind and its representations.

Session 1

To Link or Not to Link: The Morphosyntax of Pennsylvania Dutch Compounds

Deborah I. Adeyeye (Pennsylvania State University)

Introduction: As a central word-formation process across the Germanic languages, compounding enables speakers to combine two or more words or stems into a single complex unit (e.g., *Hand-tasche* 'handbag', *Haus-tür-schlüssel* 'front door key') (Bauer, 2017; Harley, 2009). Pennsylvania Dutch (PD), a West Germanic language spoken in North America, exhibits compound formation patterns similar to those found in other Germanic languages, including the presence of linking elements (LEs) between compound constituents, as illustrated in (1) (Neef, 2015; Nübling & Szczepaniak, 2013; Schlücker, 2023).

(1)	a. *Aebeer-e-boi*	b. *Grischdaag-s-baam*	c. *Kinn-er-gleed-er*
	strawberry-LE-pie	christmas-LE-tree	child-LE-cloth–PL
	'strawberry pie'	'Christmas tree'	'children's clothes'

Research Puzzles and Questions: While N+N compounds have received considerable attention in the Germanic literature, giving rise to divergent accounts of the compounding process and the distribution of LEs (Bauke, 2014; Delfitto, Fábregas, & Melloni, 2011; Eik, 2017), Pennsylvania Dutch remains underexplored in this respect (Louden, 2016; Schach, 1948). The central questions concern the structure of compounds, the distribution of LEs, and the effects of language contact on compound formation in PD. To address these questions, a pilot study of compounds manually compiled from Buffington (1949), Jehovah's Witnesses PD brochures, and selected PD prose and poetry reveals a predominance of Noun+Noun compounds. Compounds containing linking elements constitute approximately 37% of the dataset, a proportion comparable to that reported for German (Krott, Schreuder, Baayen, & Dressler, 2007; Kürschner, 2003). The pilot study further shows that LEs in PD are homophonous with the plural and genitive inflectional markers of the first constituent (N1) of the compound. In addition, PD allows hybrid compounds consisting of native and borrowed roots, e.g., *Oi-er+box* 'egg box'. Although, these data sources have been valuable, they do not adequately capture variation across PD varieties. The present study therefore addresses the following questions: (i) Is the structure of nominal compound in PD Germanic? (ii) How can we best account for the distribution of LEs in PD compounds? and (iii) Does language contact shape compound formation in PD?

Methods: Fieldwork and data collection in the Ohio variety of PD took place in the summer of 2026, with ongoing analysis following. Participants took part in two experimental tasks: one eliciting metalinguistic judgments and one eliciting production. The first task consisted of a forced binary-choice task in which participants chose between two competing PD compound forms. The stimuli included both attested PD compounds, such as those in (1), and nonce PD compounds presented in bare and linking-element variants (e.g., *Gaul-Ø-maemm* vs. *Gaul-s-maemm* or *Gaule-maemm* 'horse mother'). The compounds were presented auditorily in PD. In the second task, participants completed a picture-naming task in which they named objects displayed on a screen. Unlike the forced binary choice task, this production task elicited spontaneous compound formation without

directly prompting a particular structure. Both tasks provide insight into how speakers of the Ohio variety of PD evaluate and produce bare compounds and compounds containing LEs, and whether LE use is conditioned by lexical status, morphological structure, semantic relations, or other grammatical factors. The findings will further clarify whether LEs are productive in novel compound formation, restricted to attested lexical items, or licensed by specific structural patterns.

Conclusion: An investigation of PD compounds provides a valuable empirical lens for examining the morphosyntax of compounding. Beyond its theoretical contributions, the study will also advance the documentation of bilingual grammars and language contact phenomena in the United States.

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Which German? Religiolinguistic dimensions of German as a heritage language in Manitoba, Canada

Christine Kampen Robinson (Canadian Mennonite University)

Linguistic research on Germanic heritage languages dates back almost as long as German-speaking people have been in North America (Putnam 2024). Within this context, researchers have been particularly interested in language contact, variation, and shift in heritage varieties, which Mattheier (2003) calls *Sprachinseln* or "linguistic islands." The majority of Germanic linguistic islands in the United States, Mexico, and Canada are connected to groups of Anabaptist Christians, including Mennonites, Hutterites, and Amish, whose community language systems closely link faith and language.

In the Canadian province of Manitoba, the Germanic linguistic island originated in the late 19th century when German-speaking immigrants, many of whom were Anabaptist Christians, arrived. Lovrien-Meuwese and Gsell-Dentsoras (2013) assert that the development of German varieties in Manitoba was shaped by three distinct groups. First, Mennonite immigrants, primarily from the former Soviet Union, arriving in Manitoba in the 1870s, the 1920s, and the 1950s. Second, the Hutterian Brethren, arriving in the 1920s from the United States. Third, immigrants from Germany, Austria, and other German-speaking European countries without affiliation to these Anabaptist groups.

Both Mennonite and Hutterite groups in Manitoba have historically negotiated multilingual language systems that include Standard German, Germanic varieties *Plautdietsch* or *Hutterisch*, and English. The community language systems link closely to life domains, with Standard German being predominantly associated with church and religious practices as well as education, while the oral varieties constitute the practices of everyday life. Given the importance of Standard German for religious life, the existence of German language education throughout the province is not surprising (Prokop 2002). While the number of Manitobans claiming German as a mother tongue have declined, including among many Mennonites, German language varieties continue to be important, especially in religious contexts such as Hutterite communities (MBS Bulletin 2022).

This paper discusses the positioning of German as a heritage language in Manitoba over time, with a particular focus on the interplay between German language varieties and Anabaptist faith traditions. Drawing on curriculum documents, church and community records, alongside speaker narratives, this paper analyzes how Mennonites and Hutterites groups have oriented towards German as a "religiolect" (Hary and Wein 2013). The analysis sheds light on how Germanic varieties have been constructed as religious and offers insights on how religious dimensions can be considered for heritage languages more broadly.

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Clarifying the status of gender in Wisconsin Immigrant and Heritage Dutch

Rachyl Hietpas (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

In this project, I provide an update to a topic I have previously presented on at WILA, grammatical gender in speakers of Wisconsin Immigrant and Heritage Dutch. Gender is often vulnerable in Germanic (Kürschner, 2020) with Standard Dutch (and other Germanic languages) having undergone a historical reduction of the Proto-Germanic three-gender system to two. Additionally, Dutch gender agreement is only visible in a few instances including definite determiners: *de* occurs before common gender (merged masculine and feminine) and plural nouns and *het* occurs before neuter singular nouns; and adjective declension where only adjectives in indefinite neuter contexts are undeclined and adjectives in all other environments (definite, plural, or common gender) are declined (e.g., een klein-ø jongetje 'INDF small-INDF.N boy.N' versus de klein-e hond 'DEF.C small-C dog.C').

Furthermore, heritage languages frequently exhibit irregular gender usage and overgeneralization of one gender (e.g., Lohndal & Westergaard 2016; Polinsky 2008). In my previous study examining article and adjective gender agreement in immigrant and heritage Dutch speakers in Wisconsin, I noted a shift in gender agreement in the community over time. While speakers in 1966 showed relatively few differences from homeland speakers in terms of gender agreement, many of the speakers in 2018 showed relatively large differences. Less than half of speakers used *het* with nearly all *het*-users being 1st generation, and speakers in 2018 used predominantly *either* declined or undeclined adjectives. This pointed to a lack of gender agreement and even a lack of grammatical gender in general for 2nd and 4th generation speakers in 2018. However, the data from 2018 was extracted from a picture-book task which led to a lower variety of nouns and very low number of adjectives being used. This puts some uncertainty on whether these speakers actually lack grammatical gender or simply did not demonstrate it in the given task. Consequently, an elicitation task was conducted to lessen this uncertainty.

The elicitation task is based on tasks created by van Baal (2019) and Blom et al. (2008). The task consists of two parts. The first part uses pictures of two objects where the speaker says the objects they see and then one object disappears and they say what object disappeared and what object remains (Figure 1). This was designed to elicit both indefinite and definite determiner phrases. In the second part, there are four objects, two each of the same object but of different sizes or colors. The speaker again says what they see and then two of the objects disappear and they say what disappeared and what remains (Figure 2). This was designed to elicit attributive adjectives in both definite and indefinite contexts. The task was constructed to balance neuter and common gender nouns, singulars and plurals, and animates and inanimates. However, speakers did not always know the name for all nouns in Dutch or produce the expected noun/determiner phrase.

So far, four speakers have completed the elicitation task: three speakers from 2018 were re-recorded (one 1st-generation, one 2nd-generation, and one 4th-generation speaker) and one additional 2nd-generation speaker was recorded for the first time. Preliminary results largely agree with those from 2018. While the 1st-generation speaker largely uses gender agreement in line with the homeland, the two 2nd- and one 4th-generation speakers show marked differences. The 1st-

generation speaker uses *het* routinely before neuter-gender nouns, while the 2nd and 4th-generation speakers do not use the article *het*. The 1st-generation speaker also declines adjectives largely in line with homeland norms, while the 2nd- and 4th-generation speakers use both adjective declensions, but seemingly not according to the gender of the noun. What exactly is going on with adjective declension bears further analysis, but these results support the findings from 2018 of a shift to no determiner phrase gender agreement for heritage speakers of Dutch in Wisconsin.

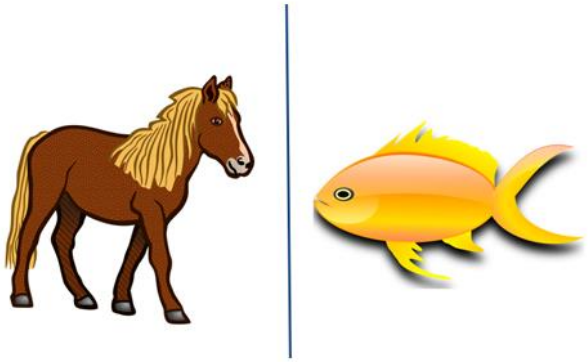

Figure 1: Example of a slide in part one of the elicitation task. The participant might say something like “Ik zie een paard en een vis.” (I see a horse and a fish.) Then the horse disappears: “Het paard is weg en de vis is er nog steeds.” (The horse is gone and the fish is still there.)

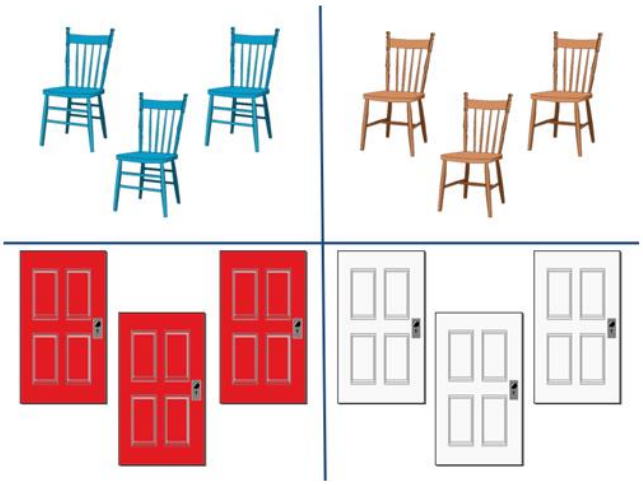

Figure 2: Example of a slide in part two of the elicitation task. The participant might say something like: “Ik zie drie blauwe stoelen en drie bruine stoelen. En ik zie drie rode deuren en drie witte deuren.” (I see three blue chairs and three brown chairs. And I see three red doors and three white doors.” Then the brown chairs and white doors disappear: “De drie bruine stoelen en drie witte deuren zijn weg en de drie blauwe stoelen en drie rode deuren zijn er nog steeds.” (The three brown chairs and three white doors are gone and the three blue chairs and the three red doors are still there.)

Session 2

Minority Language Press & Language Maintenance: Hansch, Mattäle, and the Indexicalization of Gottscheer Identity

Andrew Hoffman (Texas Tech University)

Media (e.g., newspapers, radio, and television) are often considered a key component of heritage and minority language maintenance and revitalization efforts (e.g., Crystal 2000; Amezaga et al. 2013). The 1992 explanatory report on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages even goes so far as to claim that media is "vital for their safeguard," although there is a lack of academic consensus on this point (cf. Fishman 1991; Fishman 2001). Volgger & Röggla's (2024) study of unique (vs. local-only) minority language media likewise reveals a mixed bag of results when it comes to media's role in language maintenance efforts. The triglossic reality of many dialectal German communities in the Americas (e.g., Gottscheers and Pennsylvania Dutch) complicates this narrative and further highlights the limits of media's ability to effect language maintenance.

This study examines the role of the interwar transatlantic Gottscheer press in its efforts to promote the Gottscheer dialect, particularly among its American readership, for example, through the publication of works by American-based compatriot Konrad/Conrad Perz (among others). Surrounded by foreign languages both at home and abroad, the Gottscheer press developed a series of indexicalization strategies (e.g., DO-periphrasis, naming conventions, and code-switching) to mark Gottscheer-ness in both standard and dialectal German, including in ways that overlapped with their representations of American English (largely unknown to readers in the homeland). Academic and editorial defenses of the language and promotions of its use were common, and Gottscheer media platformed a burgeoning dialect literature. Despite the continued existence of a Gottscheer press circulating in America, however, the effects on dialect maintenance have been limited at best. Particularly when considered against similar German-American press outlets (such as those of the Pennsylvania Dutch), the limits of (print) media to affect language maintenance trends are clear.

Drawing on articles and editorials from the Gottscheer *Bote* (1904–1919), *Zeitung* (1919–1941), and *Kalender* (1921–1941) that explicitly articulate the media's cultural and linguistic aims, alongside analysis of Perz's writings from America, this study traces the development and functioning of Gottscheer indexicalization in print, as well as why they ultimately failed to secure long-term maintenance of the dialect. Comparison with Pennsylvania Dutch, where maintenance has persisted largely without comparable institutional infrastructure, suggests that domain-specific use and social network density play a more significant role in minority language maintenance than the (non-)presence of minority-language media.

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Implicit processing and the prosody of Pennsylvania Dutch plurals

Emmeline Wilson (Pennsylvania State University)
Rose Fisher (Michigan State University)
Matthew T. Carlson (Pennsylvania State University)
Michael T. Putnam (Pennsylvania State University and Greenwich University)

Background: Prosody, particularly the trochaic template, has been shown to condition plural allomorphy in German. Wiese (2009: 145) defines a trochee as "a binary syllabic structure with the stress pattern strong-weak." In his study, Wiese examines and compares six dialects of German, finding that the role of the trochaic template in conditioning plural inflection varies greatly between dialects. The role of trochees has also been considered to some extent in the American German variety, Pennsylvania Dutch (PD; Fisher et al. 2022); however, that study had a relatively low sample size and only included speakers from the Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, who speak the eastern PD dialect. The speakers in the current study mostly come from Holmes County, Ohio and represent the midwestern PD dialect.

Research Question: To what extent does trochee condition plural allomorphy in contemporary PD?

Methods: In this presentation, we focus on the results of a repetition task in which participants repeated fifty prompts that each included a singular and parallel pluralized nonce noun. The plurals were presented as either trochaic or non-trochaic and followed a monosyllabic singular in the prompt, e.g., (1).

(1) *Di Katie hot net yuscht de ee **Plohk** weggenumme. Sie hot all di **Plohk<u>er</u>** weggenumme vun di Kinner.*

'Katie took not just the one [singular nonce word] away. She took all the [pluralized nonce word] away from the children.'

A repetition (or shadowing) task like this provides valuable additional data because it is arguably more implicit than explicit metalinguistic judgment or Wug-tests (Gleason 1958), because the participant is less focused on the target form. The value in this task lies in analysis of the places where participants deviated from the provided form.

Results: When participants deviated, they implemented a change that converted a trochaic input to a non-trochaic output 45% of the time and non-trochaic input to trochaic output 46% of the time – offering, at first glance, little evidence of a prosodic bias. However, the most common modification was to repeat the plural with no overt plural marker, always resulting in a non-trochee. This null-marking strategy could reflect a failure to encode the plural form accurately due to its low salience and short-term memory limitations, or to strategies employed to alleviate memory load. Crucially, participants rarely converted a trochaic input to a nontrochaic output by substituting a different overt plural exponent (e.g., -s, or umlaut), doing so just 17% of the time, whereas they converted non-trochaic inputs to trochaic outputs by inserting an exponent that added an unstressed syllable 69% of the time. Since null plural marking is less common than other exponents in PD, we consider the accurate repetition or substitution of overt exponents to be a better indication of synchronic PD

plural formation, and we thus interpret this asymmetry in responses as indicating a robust trochaic bias.

Conclusions: When implicit processing is being evaluated and less metalinguistic focus is allowed, it is clear that the trochaic template is a strong determining factor in PD pluralization. This supports the conclusions demonstrated by previous studies via Wug and acceptability judgment task (Fisher et al. 2022, Fisher et al. 2025).

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Session 3

Community Profiles of American German Communities in Southeastern Wisconsin in the 1940s: Contemporary accounts from Seifert's field notes and observations

Joshua Bousquette (University of Georgia)

This presentation analyzes language shift in American German communities in Wisconsin in the 1940s using the Verticalization model (Brown 2022a). The current work draws on Lester W. J. Seifert's hand-written notes on German-speaking communities, demographics, and social institutions, in order to identify: the language of worship in local churches (cf. Lucht, Frey & Salmons 2011); the language of instruction of local public and parochial schools; and the relative autonomy vs. interdependence of the local economies, and corresponding extra-community ties. Previous work in this framework has reconstructed domain-specific language use, based on the aggregate proficiencies of community members, often with supplemental qualitative data (Wilkerson & Salmons 2012; Frey 2022; Vosburg 2019; Brown 2022b; Bousquette 2022; Natvig 2022; Johnson 2022). Preliminary analysis suggests that religions, economic, and educational domains are in the process of switching from German to English, with variable degrees of language shift observed across different institutions and domains, with a corresponding increase in extra-community ties – particularly in the area of economy and labor. This work supports previous scholarship, in showing that linguistic domains shift independently from one another (Salmons 2005a, b; Bousquette 2020), subject to the social factors that determine whether community members can make decisions that affect their language use within their social network.

In the religious domain, many churches alternated German-language and English-language services, with dwindling numbers at the German services (cf. Lucht et al. 2011). In heavily Irish-settled Richmond, Wisconsin, for example, the Catholic church offered only one German-language service per month, with Seifert recording that "attendance now of German services is ½ of what attend English [services]". Another church in the area dropped German services at least five years prior, as Seifert observed that "Youngsters, even up to 30, do not speak Ger[man], although some do understand it."

Parochial schools are infrequently mentioned, with no specific mention of German language instruction. Between 1/3 and 75% of students attended high school (by Seifert's reckoning), with considerable variation between communities. Seifert attributes this low number not to an "anti-intellectualism", but rather to students' practical focus on going into farming. This local rootedness suggests a stable population with a low rate of out-migration. Combined with a "solidarity ideology" that arguably unites farmers (cf. Milroy & Milroy 1992), linguistic vitality models might predict language maintenance, were it not for the extensive extra-community ties also associated with farming – particularly related to supply chains linking production, distribution, and consumption.

The economies of Wisconsin German communities were predominantly agricultural but nevertheless show signs of Verticalization. In Sun Prairie, Seifert notes that, "Farms are large – 80 to 200 acres, and some are even larger." Dairy is listed as "the main source of income", suggesting

specialization within agriculture. In Cross Plains, the majority of workers are "chiefly in farming and services to farming," and "a very high %age [sic] go to Madison daily for work," suggesting a combination of subsistence and wage labor characterized by separate social networks for each, also observed in Finnish American communities in Wisconsin (Johnson 2022). Similar to Sun Prairie, Cross plains was also a large dairy farming town. Per Seifert: "Milk goes to a cheese factory & creamery in the village, and some goes to Middleton," attesting in both Madison-area settlements to an interconnected set of production, transportation, processing, and sale of surplus agricultural products beyond what can be consumed by the farmer, by their family, or within the community. Though primarily agricultural, the economy of Cross Plains seems largely externally-oriented, functioning economically as a suburb of the larger, English-majority Middleton and Madison, Wisconsin.

Supplementing the larger audio corpus of spoken German, Seifert's descriptions of individual American German communities provide valuable information on social institutions, and show a high degree of economic integration between German-speaking communities and the English-speaking majority. Language shift at the institutional level is seemingly complete in the schools, and church services have begun shifting to English, even in heavily German-settled areas, as the youngest generation is regularly described as receptive bilingual, or even English monolingual.

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“A time to speak”: Negotiating researcher faith identities in sociolinguistic research

Christine Kampen Robinson (Canadian Mennonite University)
Mark L. Louden (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Within Germanic linguistics in the Americas, Anabaptist Christian community languages including Pennsylvania Dutch (Johnson-Weiner 1998), Hutterite German (Brown 2017), *Plautdietsch* (Cox 2025) and Amish Swiss German (Hasse and Seiler 2024) and community language maintenance practices have been actively studied. Particularly among the “plain” Anabaptist communities, languages and language practices play a central role in their identity constructions because faith is lived out through language and delineates who belongs and can participate in community life (eg. Brown 2017, 2022; Sneath 2018). Many plain Anabaptist communities, including Amish, conservative Mennonites, and some Hutterites, share a general mistrust of higher education. As a result, social research within these communities has almost exclusively been conducted by outsiders—researchers who do not share their faith or religious worldview.

Increasingly, social scientists must engage with their researcher positionality, negotiating how who they are enables and constrains the work they are able to do. Notably, despite the call for critical reflexivity related to their positionality, researcher faith and religious identities have largely been bracketed out of this discussion unless directly relevant to racial or ethnic categories (Sanghera and Thapar-Björkert 2008) and all but absent within the field of linguistics.

This paper responds to the call to critical reflexivity on researcher positionality and the complexities of insider/outsider researcher identities by interrogating the experiences of two sociolinguists who identify as Anabaptists and engage in research with plain Anabaptist groups at the intersections of language, faith, and identity. Using an accidental autoethnographic approach (Fujii 2015), this paper discusses how these researchers’ religious identities have shaped their sociolinguistic research and how they have constructed their positionality through multilingual language practices in the communities within which they work (Rickert, et al. 2026). Finally, it discusses opportunities offered by the methodological posture of “belief-inclusive research” (Pohran 2022) within linguistics.

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Finding the "lights of the world": Methods for making connections with Plain communities and lessons learned through interdisciplinary research

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Rose Fisher (Michigan State University)

In early 2026, we began a study to better understand the motivational and societal factors potentially influencing Amish and Mennonite community members' decisions to use Pennsylvania Dutch (PD) and English. We used a novel approach to studying this heritage L1 context by adapting the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005) beyond its typical applications in L2 learning situations (Boo et al., 2015). Participants completed questionnaires examining their motivational self systems as they relate to PD and English. An additional set of questionnaire items gauged a participant's willingness to communicate, frequency of use, and self-reported proficiency in both languages. To explore verticalization (Brown & Salmons, 2022), we included open-ended questions investigating how our participants view their community, its support systems, its economic participation, and the role of PD and English in it. **RQ:** Do self-system motivational differences to use PD vs. English and perceived degree of community verticalization by Amish and Mennonite speakers predict self-reported frequency of use, proficiency, and willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998) in these languages?

Undertaking this study required utilizing multiple and innovative methods of outreach, some of which were surprisingly effective. Our primary recruitment methods centered on low-tech approaches: namely, flyers mailed to former study participants and classified advertisements in newspapers with high Amish/Mennonite readership (e.g., *The Busy Beaver*). Thanks to these advertisements and snowball sampling, we were also invited to undertake field recruitment at a youth sing and have our recruitment material included in a subscription email listserv for Plain communities receiving filtered internet. The ability to gain trust and build connections within these communities proved vital for recruiting over 100 PD-speaking participants across multiple Amish and Mennonite settlements in the United States and Canada: many more than initially thought possible.

Although the successful recruitment experience was extremely gratifying, perhaps the most important takeaways from this project were the lessons learned from our interdisciplinary collaboration and through applying methods typically used in applied linguistics to sociolinguistic field research. More specifically, we learned that some principles of questionnaire instrument construction common to applied linguistics were less-than-ideal when working with Plain populations in particular. Items were sometimes reported to be confusing or repetitive, necessitating multiple clarifications during data collection over the phone and occasionally leading to incomplete data where no opportunity for clarification existed. Additionally, the academic phrasing of and lack of specified context associated with certain questions often led to the Likert-scale being essentially ignored: Answers were instead provided qualitatively through more open-ended meta-discussions about the question itself and by participants specifying their own context

as the basis for their answers, leading to a rich but complex dataset that required flexibility and patience to analyze faithfully.

In sum, collaborating across disciplines has led to a project that serves both Second Language Acquisition and Pennsylvania Dutch studies in a unique and beneficial way. Such undertakings reveal strengths and weaknesses of approaches common to each field and can lead to improved recruitment methods and study design in both. By looking at language contact in the particular context of Plain communities in this novel way, we also hope to have meaningfully contributed to our respective fields and lay the foundation for more interdisciplinary research in this vein in the years to come.

Session 4

Grammatical gender in North American Swedish

Ida Larsson (Østfold University of Applied Sciences)
Kari Kinn (University of Bergen)

Several recent studies have investigated grammatical gender in both homeland Norwegian (*i.a.*, Rodina & Westergaard 2013, 2015, 2021; van Baal et al. 2024, Busterud et al. 2025) and heritage Norwegian in North and Latin America (*i.a.,* Johannessen & Larsson 2015; Lohndal & Westergaard 2016; Lund Stokka 2025). There are also studies of gender in heritage Danish (Kühl & Heegård Petersen 2021). In this talk, we turn to gender in heritage Swedish in North America, NAmSw. Johannessen & Larsson (2015) make some observations about gender agreement in NAmSw and show that the definite suffix (which displays a distinction between common gender and neuter) is in largely in place, consistent with findings for homeland and heritage Norwegian. They also point out that there is some variation in gender agreement in the noun phrase, with generalization of common gender, but that the definite determiners for some speakers seem to have an invariant form (cf. Lund Stokka 2025 for similar observations in Latin American Norwegian). However, Johannessen & Larsson only had access to a limited data set for NAmSw, and there is clearly a need for further investigations.

In this talk, we present results from an experimental study of gender in heritage Swedish in Texas carried out in 2014; for a description of the methodology see Rodina & Westergaard (2015). The experiment elicits production of noun phrases with indefinite or definite determiners and adjectives, but very few examples of the definite suffix.

Most of the NAmSw speakers show evidence of a baseline with two genders, common gender and neuter, as in Standard Swedish (see e.g. Larsson et al. 2015 on dialect and standard). A preliminary overview of the results for five speakers is provided in Table 1, which includes gender of both indefinite (*en*.C/*ett*.N) and prenominal definite determiners (*den*.C/*det*.N). Even with the small number of speakers, there is considerable variation: one speaker (Tx14m005) shows very little evidence of gender distinctions, whereas one (Tx14m017) has a two-gender system largely in place; the other speakers fall in between the two. It is clearly neuter that is vulnerable. The proportion of baseline-like gender marking is consistently lower in neuter than in common gender, e.g., *en*.C *ben* 'a leg' (Tx14m017) vs. baseline *ett*.N ben; the speaker Tx14m005 hardly produces any neuter forms at all.

In indefinite noun phrases, adjectives show agreement in gender in the baseline. In the NAmSw data, there is again variation; cf. Table 2, which gives a preliminary overview of phrase-internal agreement between adjectives and an indefinite determiner in common gender or neuter (independently of expected gender of the determiner in the baseline). Because many speakers seem to overgeneralize common-gender determiners (cf. Table 1), the data for agreement with neuter determiners is scarce; however, we note that neuter seems to be more vulnerable than common

gender also in terms of adjectival agreement, e.g., *ett*.N *grön*.C *ägg* 'a green egg' (Tx14f019), *ett*.N *blå*.C *glas* 'a blue glass' (Tx14m005).

The patterns observed in the heritage varieties can provide insights into the organization of the underlying gender system in homeland and heritage Scandinavian. There is a consensus in the literature that masculine/common gender is the default for gender *assignment* in Scandinavian (e.g. Teleman 1969; Lohndal & Westergaard 2021; Lund Stokka 2025). The data from heritage Swedish in Table 1 corroborates this. Considering gender *agreement*, it has been argued that masculine/common gender is not the default, since neuter is used in many contexts where there is no nominal agreement (see e.g. Källström 2008). This supports the view that although masculine/common gender is the default for assignment, neuter is the default for agreement (e.g., Lohndal & Westergaard 2021). Interestingly and somewhat surprisingly, the data in Table 2 from NAmSw might be taken to suggest that common gender is default also for agreement. We discuss different interpretations and lines of analysis in our talk.

Speaker	Common gender	Neuter
Tx14m005	71/72 (98.6%)	1/28 (3.6%)
Tx14f001	46/47 (97.8%)	2/19 (10.5%)
Tx14f019	59/64 (92.2%)	4/24 (16.7%)
Tx14m017	88/92 (95.7%)	14/29 (48.3%)
Tx14m006	33/39 (84.6%)	15/19 (78.9%)

Table 1 Gender forms of indefinite and definite prenominal determiners in six NAmSw speakers; number of examples conforming to the gender expected in Standard Swedish.

Speaker	Common gender determiner	Neuter determiner
Tx14m005	44/45 (97.8%)	0/1 (0%)
Tx14f001	42/42 (100%)	0/2 (0%)
Tx14f019	40/40 (100%)	0/5 (0%)
Tx14m017	29/31 (93.5%)	3/9 (33.3%)
Tx14m006	14/15 (93.3%)	13/14 (92.8%)

Table 2 Adjectival gender agreement with an indefinite determiner in common gender or neuter.

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The Greek Language in Migration and Diaspora: The case of Canadian Greek

Angela Ralli (University of Patras)
Vasiliki Makri (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

This paper investigates the mechanisms of loanword accommodation and linguistic hybridity in Canadian Greek, focusing on the diasporic variety as documented across mid-to-late twentieth-century immigrant speech. The analysis draws on extensive archival material and 431 interviews across Canada with informants who migrated between 1945 and 1975. This corpus was compiled within the framework of the "Immigration and Language in Canada: Greeks and Greek-Canadians" Project (2017–2018), a two-year interdisciplinary initiative funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation that brought together research teams from the University of Patras and three Canadian universities: McGill, Simon Fraser, and York (Ralli 2019).

Building on frameworks from contact linguistics (Matras 2009; Wohlgemuth 2009) and bilingual morphosyntax (Ralli et al. 2015; Karatsareas 2019; Karatsareas & Charalambidou 2020), this paper argues that lexical integration in immigrant speech is not random, but follows systematic, rule-governed patterns across these migratory waves (Ralli & Makri 2020; Ralli et al. 2019). Particular emphasis is laid on nominal (1a) and verbal (1b) borrowing from English and the systematic structural integration of this analytical input into the highly fusional system of Greek:

(1) a.	*μπαγκαδόρος*.MASC [bagaˈðoros]	<	*banker*
	σπιτάλι.NEU [spiˈtali]	<	*hospital*
b.	*κάνω κλέιμ* [ˈkano ˈkleim] 'do.1SG claim'	<	*claim*
	μουβάρω [muˈvaro]	<	*move*

Morphologically, we classify loanwords on the basis of the varying degrees of adaptation they exhibit, ranging from full integration to native inflectional paradigms (2a) to nonadaptation (2b) into the recipient language, thereby remaining uninflected (Gardani 2020):

(2) a.	*μπάγκα*.FEM [ˈbaga]	<	*bank*
	τικέτο.NEU [tiˈceto]	<	*ticket*
b.	*φούτμπολ*.NEU [ˈfutbol]	<	*football*
	κέτσοπ.NEU [ˈcetsop]	<	*ketchup*

Our comparative analysis of loan verbs and loan nouns reveals that the structural strategies employed — namely direct insertion, indirect insertion, and the light verb strategy (Wohlgemuth 2009; Ralli 2022) — are governed by strict language-internal constraints. Crucially, concerning grammatical gender assignment to newly accommodated English nouns, we hierarchize competing linguistic principles — such as natural gender, semantic analogy, phonological shape, and default mapping, among others (Clyne, 2003; Corbett, 1991). Additionally, the data demonstrates the ways contact-induced innovation extends beyond simple insertion to productive, secondary word formation.

Semantically, we categorize these items into a split tripartite taxonomy:

a. Loans introducing entirely new concepts (e.g., *ταμπλέτα*.FEM [tabˈleta] < *tablet*).

b. Loans maintaining identical meanings with existing native Greek terms (e.g., *χοτέλι*.NEU [xoˈteli] < *hotel*, *μπόσης*.MASC [ˈmbosis] < *boss*).
c. Substantive shifts where an existing native meaning is replaced or expanded by an English concept. This development is driven entirely by superficial phonological attraction, where the formal phonetic shape of a native word triggers the direct mapping of a new English meaning onto the recipient lexicon (e.g., *μαγαζί*.NEU [maɣaˈzi], originally 'shop', resemanticized or semantically expanded to mean 'magazine', as well).

Overall, the evidence shows that Canadian Greek actively regulates typologically distinct English input by forcing many borrowed forms into native morphological patterns while allowing others to remain less to nonintegrated morphologically in mixed bilingual speech. Ultimately, Canadian Greek offers a revealing case study of how immigrant grammars systematically negotiate environmental structural pressure, bilingual usage, and ongoing language shift in diasporic settings in the Americas.

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Opening new avenues for research on heritage Scandinavian: Corpus of American Nordic Speech, version 4

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Arnstein Hjelde (Østfold University of Applied Sciences)
Marie Lund Stokka (University of Stavanger)

The corpus of American Nordic Speech (CANS) has been an invaluable resource for research on heritage Norwegian (later also Swedish) since its first release in 2015 (Johannessen 2015). In this talk, we present a new version of CANS, version 4, to be released in the autumn of 2026. This version includes novel data from speakers of Norwegian in Latin America, and also older recordings made primarily by Einar Haugen in the 1940s, with improved and enriched metadata and new query options. In our talk, we demonstrate some of the new features and show how CANS v. 4 can facilitate work on important questions in heritage-language research in years to come.

CANS v. 4 is a speech corpus encompassing over 890,000 tokens (≈words). Like previous versions, it consists of transcribed and morphologically tagged recordings; recordings and transcriptions are linked, and sound/video for each query hit can be accessed through the search interface (*Glossa 3*). The most significant addition to CANS v. 4 is the recordings of 21 heritage speakers of Norwegian in Latin America, whose majority language is Spanish (Kinn et al. 2024). The new recordings constitute 120,000 tokens. These data pave the way for research in understudied areas, including heritage languages in a non-English majority context (e.g., Polinsky 2018; Scontras & Putnam 2020) and comparative perspectives on heritage varieties with different majority languages (e.g., Polinsky 2018, D'Alessandro et al. 2025). Direct comparison is enabled by the clickable options in the *LOCATION* part of the metadata menu (Fig. 1).

The older data from speakers in North America were mainly collected by Einar Haugen in the 1940s, but also by Didrik Arup Seip and Ernst W. Selmer in the 1930s and Arnstein Hjelde in the 1980s/-90s. These recordings, amounting to 114,000 tokens, were available also in the previous release of CANS, v. 3.1. However, in CANS v. 4, the metadata have been revised, and a new feature has been added: In the *INFORMANT* part of the metadata menu, speakers from Haugen's recordings are now equipped with Haugen's own (1953) speaker code in addition to their CANS speaker IDs (Fig. 2). Thus, it is possible to cross-reference Haugen's (1953: 616ff) detailed information about dialect background, and other information that is not systematically captured by the CANS metadata. Haugen's metadata is a rich resource which can now be accessed and utilized much more easily than before.

CANS v. 4 will be openly available for research purposes (users must identify themselves to register and log in). For reasons of privacy and data protection, the corpus cannot be downloaded, and search results can only be viewed with limited context. Despite these restrictions, CANS remains a treasure trove for heritage-language research, and version 4 both widens and deepens the scope for possible research questions.

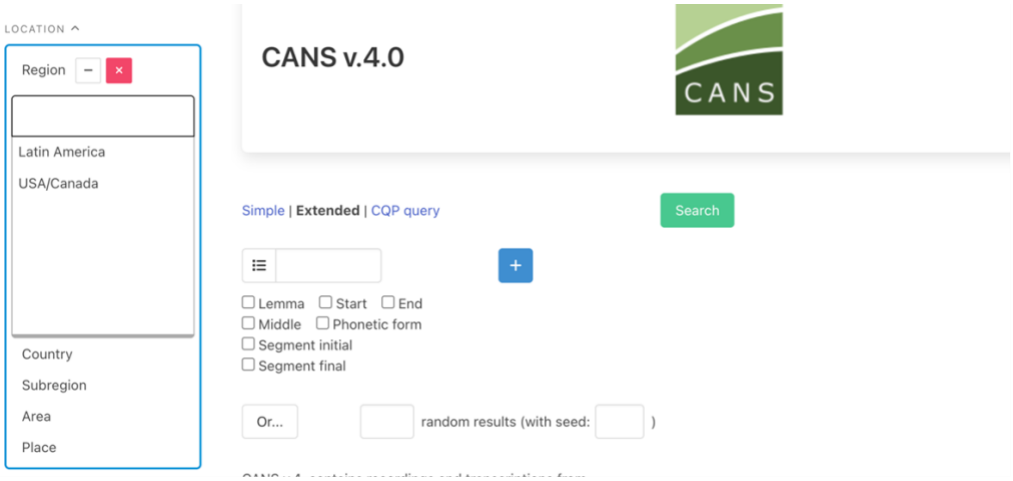

Figure 1: LOCATION metadata, including the variable *Region*.

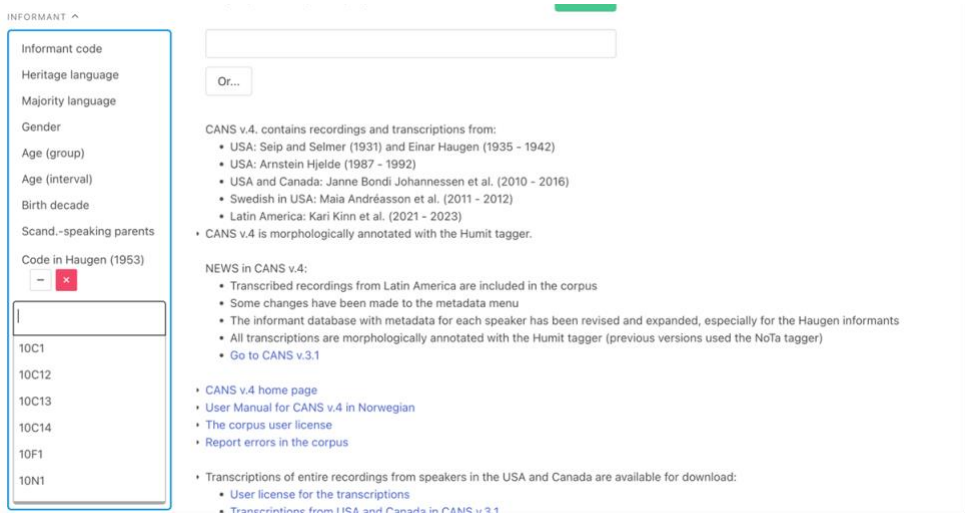

Figure 2: INFORMANT metadata, including the variable *Code in Haugen (1953)*.

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Session 5

Prosodic strategies in Norwegian heritage speech in the U.S.: Tonal accents in North Norwegian varieties

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The role of tone and intonation in the so-called 'heritage accent' has been sparsely investigated (cf. Kim 2024: 567; Chang 2021: 593, 597), and the prosody of American Norwegian is particularly understudied. Homeland Norwegian is typologically noteworthy in having lexically specified tonal pitch accents (Accent 1 & Accent 2) aligned with primary stress syllables. At the same time, the tonal contrastivity is typically treated as redundant (e.g., Haugen 1967: 185) because minimal pairs are few, realizations vary widely across dialects, and the lexical load is low. Nonetheless, existing work on North American Norwegian prosody (Haugen 1953; Natvig & van Baal 2024) suggests that tonal contrasts are generally stable, but provides little detail on individual or dialectal/typological variation.

This study presents an exploratory analysis of tonal accents in three speakers of North American Norwegian with North Norwegian (Nordland) dialect backgrounds. The data consist of spontaneous speech recorded in the Corpus of American Norwegian Speech (CANS) (Johannessen 2015). Speakers were selected based on ancestral origin, perceived North Norwegian tonal profile, and the technical quality of sound recordings. Fundamental frequency (F0) contours are analyzed in Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2025) and compared with patterns in homeland North Norwegian (e.g., Strand 2023: 3) and Standard East Norwegian (e.g., Kristoffersen 2000: 242). The data set comprises 300 samples, 100 per speaker.

The results reveal two main prosodic strategies. Two speakers exhibit recognizable Accent 1 and Accent 2 contours comparable to homeland North Norwegian, but with a restructured distribution across the lexicon, suggesting robust retention of melodic patterns combined with innovative reorganization under heritage language conditions. A third speaker appears to have merged her heritage North Norwegian prosody with a Standard East Norwegian-like tonal profile, plausibly reflecting adult L2 instruction in Standard (Urban East) Norwegian. These case studies, based on natural, spontaneous, continuous speech, indicate that tonal accents in heritage Norwegian are not simply eroded due to, for instance, their low lexical load. Rather, they are reorganized within individual grammars, drawing on heritage-language (native, first-language) and standard-language (instructed, second-language) prosodic resources.

Because the investigation is based solely on production data and on the phonetic aspects of tonal accent realizations in non-controlled continuous speech (i.e., not experimental, structured data-gathering), many of the conclusions are highly hypothetical and should be regarded as exploratory work. The main aim of this study is to propose a methodological and theoretical approach to investigating the prosodies of previously unstudied varieties and to identify tendencies in the prosodies of heritage speakers of North American Norwegian. In addition, the study highlights tone as one of the dimensions contributing to the perception of the American Norwegian 'heritage accent'.

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From Prosodic Segmentation to Constructionalization: Intonation and Verb-Third Word Order in Iowa Low German

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Verb-third (V3) word order has become a central topic in the study of Germanic heritage languages, where it has been interpreted as the product of language contact, syntactic innovation, and discourse organization (Arnbjörnsdóttir et al., 2018; Kühl & Petersen, 2016; Sewell, 2015; Westergaard et al., 2021; Westergaard & Lohndal, 2019). While previous research on heritage Germanic varieties has demonstrated that these grammars exhibit systematic change, accounts of V3 have largely focused on morphosyntax while giving comparatively little attention to prosodic organization. This paper argues that prosody is central to understanding the emergence and conventionalization of V3 constructions.

This study is based on a variationist analysis of Iowa Low German containing 664 utterances with sentence-initial adverbs followed by either canonical V2 or V3 word order. Each token was coded for its realization in intonation units (IUs), adopting an interactional approach to prosodic segmentation. Within this framework, intonation units are treated not simply as phonetic groupings but as fundamental units of information structure and discourse organization. Consequently, examining whether an initial adverb forms an independent IU or is integrated into the following clause provides insight into the relationship between discourse organization and syntactic structure. Overall, speakers strongly prefer utterances realized within a single intonation unit. V3 constructions, however, differ systematically from canonical V2 as they are significantly more likely to occur across two intonation units, with the sentence-initial adverb produced as a prosodically autonomous unit preceding the clause (see examples 1 and 2). A notable exception is the temporal adverb *dann* ("then"), which accounts for the largest proportion of V3 tokens in the corpus (32%). Unlike other sentence-initial adverbs, it is more likely to be prosodically integrated with the following clause despite exhibiting non-canonical V3 syntax (see example 3).

I propose that these findings reflect an ongoing process of constructionalization. Rather than emerging directly as a syntactic innovation, V3 may originate in discourse-organizing sequences in which an initial adverb constitutes a separate intonation unit. With repeated use, especially in highly frequent lexical combinations such as *dann*, prosodic boundaries become progressively weakened and ultimately disappear. This process resembles the reduction accompanying grammaticalization in usage-based models (Bybee, 2003; Bybee & Hopper, 2001): repeated co-occurrence leads not only to phonetic reduction but also to the entrenchment of larger constructions. The proposed developmental trajectory is therefore: V2 → V3 with prosodic separation across two intonation units → V3 with prosodic integration into a single intonation unit for highly frequent lexical items → potential extension of the integrated V3 construction to less frequent adverbs.

The findings suggest that the development of V3 in heritage Germanic varieties is best understood not as a purely syntactic change but as the gradual conventionalization of recurring discourse-prosody pairings into stable grammatical constructions. More broadly, the analysis proposes that heritage languages provide a valuable window onto mechanisms of language change

that are likely occurring across Germanic languages more generally, even if they are more readily observable in heritage settings.

(1)	*un de tied,*	and that time
	w- wi wi ***harren*** *.. poor .. poor swienen,*	we have-PAST some pigs
	'And in those times, we had a few pigs.'	

(2)	*un dann,*	and then
	wi ***mussen*** *antrecken.*	we must-PAST dress-INF
	'And then we had to get dressed.'	

(3)	*un dann de kinner mu-* ***mutten*** *finnen,*	and then the children must-PAST find-INF
	'And then the children had to find [them].'	

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Session 6

Differences and similarities in the variation and change of case marking in moribund North American heritage varieties and endangered, indigenous heritage Övdalian

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Much work has been dedicated to case marking in heritage languages (HLs) in contact with English (Polinsky, 2018, pp. 197-204). In this paper we compare case in multi-generational moribund heritage varieties in North-America (MHNAm), with a sociolinguistically parallel indigenous heritage variety, Övdalian in Sweden, to develop a novel, broader understanding of variation and change in moribund HLs. Övdalian is a North Germanic variety, which is mutually incomprehensible with all Scandinavian standard varieties, including Swedish, with which it is in intense contact. Importantly, Övdalian had fully functioning nominativeaccusative-dative (nom.-acc.-dat.) case-marking on nouns and other nominals in the early 1900s, whereas standard Swedish has no case marking on nouns in this period.

A close MHNAm grammatical parallel to Övdalian is Icelandic. The nom., acc., dat. and genitive system of MHNAm Icelandic exhibits some innovation, but retains the overall system (Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2006, pp. 99-104; Dehé & Kupisch, 2022), placing it among the more stable HL case systems. Nom.-acc.-dat.-systems similar to Övdalian, are common also in German varieties. The MHNAm German data discussed by Yager et al. (2015) show innovation with regards to case marking, lower likelihood of case marking on full NPs and development towards a differential object marking-system. Focusing on nouns, Övdalian in Sweden has seen a similar, but more pronounced move away from case marking. This change is ongoing and well-documented diachronically (Garbacz & Johannessen, 2015; Jacobsen, 2024; Svenonius, 2015, inter alia). Table 1 illustrates a conservative version of present-day Övdalian case marking on nouns, where there is base form vs. dative distinction, marked only in the definite form of nouns. Unsurprisingly, there interindividual variation among speakers. Moreover, case is a sociolinguistically marked feature, whose reintroduction may be attempted in schooling and revitalisation efforts, which motivates study of case marking among speakers born after 2000.

Importantly, Övdalian is endangered, not moribund, but patterns sociolinguistically with MHNAm Icelandic and German varieties: During the 1900s, dense local networks gave way to reduced domains and Swedish-dominance (see Brown, 2022 for MHNAm; Garbacz, 2010). In contrast to MHNAm, however, Övdalian in Sweden is undergoing language revitalization efforts, which may affect case in younger speakers. In 2007, there were an estimated 2400 speakers, of which 45 were aged 15 years or younger. In this paper we present new data from spontaneous speech in a new public podcast made by young Övdalian speakers (Martinsson et al., 2026). The three speakers have acquired Övdalian naturalistically, and are born in the 2000s.

Data from our preliminary analysis is focused on the use of the phonetic exponents of the morphological categories (see Table 2). The morphological and syntactic baseline for comparison underlying our counts, is Classical Övdalian (speakers born before 1920). There is much baseline syncretism, which is why the baseline distinct column, shows the number of baseline forms with distinct case-marking. The data show an expected case system, moving towards elimination of morphological case marking. Case-marking on nouns appears primarily limited to dative forms of a few masculine and neuter definites. One speaker uses the form *Övdal-im* 'Älvdal-DAT.SG.DEF', which may reflect schooling, but otherwise the case use seems naturalistically transmitted rather than revitalization-driven. Going forward we will expand the syntactic dimension of our analysis, to better compare with MHNAm Icelandic and German, analyzing according to the distinction between lexical and structural case (see Yager et al., 2015). We will discuss why Övdalian case has changed more than MHNAm Icelandic, and whether and why Övdalian is more in line with MHNAm German.

Table 1: Modern Övdalian inflection of *est* 'horse'

		Indef.	**Def.**
Singular	Nom / Acc	*est-0*	*est-n*
	Dat	*est-0*	*est-em*
Plural	Nom / Acc	*est-er*	*est-er*
	Dat	*est-er*	*est-um*

Table 2: Case marking of younger Övdalian speakers in Martinsson et al. (2026)

Case	**Baseline**	**Baseline distinct**	**Non-baseline**	**Total tokens**
Nominative	159	27	3	162
Accusative	124	10	16	140
Dative	78	28	133	211
Total	361	65	152	513

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Negotiating Heritage Language Across Generations: Perceptions and Ideologies among Yoruba-Speaking Nigerian Immigrants in the United States

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Heritage language (HL) acquisition, maintenance, and education remain central areas of inquiry in applied linguistics and education as migration and global mobility continue to shape multilingual societies. While the field has expanded beyond documenting linguistic outcomes to examining the social and interactional dimensions of heritage language use (Lynch & Avineri, 2021) much of this scholarship has focused on Latinx, Asian, and other immigrant communities. African immigrant families remain comparatively understudied, despite linguistic and social experiences shaped by multilingual contexts and the historically marginalized status of African languages. Although existing research has examined the language experiences of first-generation African immigrants (Kupolati, 2024; Obeng, 2009) relatively little attention has been paid to how heritage language is experienced and negotiated across generations, particularly by second-generation children (Kigamwa, 2016).

Guided by Anzaldúa's Borderlands theory and Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital, this exploratory qualitative study examines how Yoruba-speaking Nigerian immigrant parents and second-generation children perceive, negotiate, and make meaning of heritage language in the United States. The study conceptualizes heritage language practices as sites where families negotiate identity, belonging, and language values within hierarchies that privilege English over African heritage languages. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with four participants—one first-generation Nigerian immigrant parent and three second-generation Nigerian American children (ages 13–16)—residing in a Midwestern U.S. state. Interview data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) through iterative coding, theme development, and refinement across participants' narratives.

Preliminary findings reveal competing ideologies surrounding the value and use of Yoruba. The parent described Yoruba as a source of cultural pride, identity, and familial continuity while also expressing concerns about assimilation, the language's perceived low social value, and limited opportunities for meaningful use. The children described an evolving relationship with Yoruba, marked by a shift from embarrassment and concealment in public spaces toward pride and more open expression of their language and Nigerian identity. Together, these findings illustrate how heritage language is negotiated within families and in relation to broader linguistic hierarchies and children's everyday experiences. By centering the perspectives of an underrepresented African immigrant community, this study extends heritage language scholarship beyond its traditional focus and highlights the importance of affirming linguistic identities, challenging language hierarchies, and fostering more humanistic approaches to heritage language education.

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Oligofunctionality in heritage Vietnamese

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Background It has long been known that divergence in heritage grammars is not across the board, but rather concentrates in particular domains: for instance, phonology tends to approach baseline more closely than morphology, and within morphology, verbal morphology tends to approach baseline more closely than nominal morphology (Benmamoun et al. 2013). This work proposes a new type of systematic divergence in heritage grammars of languages with polygrammaticalised (Craig 1991, Robert et al. 2003) forms: *oligogrammaticalisation*, or a reduction in the range of possible uses of multifunctional morphemes.

Data Vietnamese contains a large number of polyfunctional strings that can act variously as modals, operators, or particles, all while retaining their pregrammaticalised use as content words. Consider the behavior of mới 'new' in (1-4).

(1) *Sang mua xe mới.* (main [stative] verb use)
S buy car be.new
'Sang bought a new car.'

(2) *Sang mới mua xe.* (recent past use)
S REC.PST buy car
'Sang just bought a car; Sang has newly purchased a car.'

(3) *Sang mới là mua xe.* (emphatic use)
S EMPH COP buy car
'It's Sang who bought a car; it's new information that it's Sang who bought a car.'

(4) *Ngày mai mới Sang mua xe.* (restrictive focus use)
day tomorrow not.until S buy car
'Not until tomorrow will Sang buy a car; tomorrow, Sang's buying of a car will be news.'

Data in the form of judgements and written production from two heritage speakers (one 1.5-generation and one second-generation Vietnamese American) finds that although (1-2) are maintained, (3-4) are not. Crucially, (3) is interpreted as (2), and (4) is not accepted at all. Similar oligofunctionality (this term is preferred over *loss*, as it is unclear if these speakers have ever acquired the later uses at all) is observed for *chắc* 'firm', *nên* 'develop', *liệu* 'consider', *lại* 'come', *inter alia*. In general, lexical meaning and transparent grammatical meanings are retained, but opaque grammatical meanings are reanalysed or absent.

Analysis It is clear that the core meaning of *new* persists to some degree in all the grammatical uses, although in a differentially recoverable way. It is argued here that the more obvious grammatical uses

(e.g., recent past) emerged prior to the less obvious grammatical uses (e.g., restrictive focus), and that this diachrony is recapitulated in the acquisition order for learners. This means that heritage speakers either fail to acquire them at all (never-in) or acquire them late and lose them (last-in, first-out). *Undergrammaticalisation of polyfunctional forms* emerges as a possible pattern of divergence for heritage speakers of isolating languages.

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