Janne Bondi Johannessen and Joseph C. Salmons (eds.)

2015. *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, attrition and change*. VI, 418 pages. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, Studies in Language Variation 18.

This anthology contains a collection of papers focused on issues in Germanic languages spoken by immigrant communities (and their descendants) in North America. The volume, edited by Janne Bondi Johannessen and Joseph C. Salmons, is organized into five thematic sections, and contains 17 articles. It also includes an introductory essay by the editors, and index material at the end of the book. The volume makes an excellent contribution both to the study of heritage languages and language contact, and to Germanic linguistics. While each of the articles could easily stand alone as a valuable scholarly contribution in another forum, a synergy is created from bringing them together in a single volume. The foci and methodologies of the articles are quite distinct, yet from the totality of the collection the reader emerges with a deeper understanding of the larger picture of the dynamics and the nuts-and-bolts of heritage languages in North America, focusing on “the critical issues that underlie the notion of ‘heritage language’: acquisition, attrition and change” (editors’ essay, p. 2). The five thematic sections are: Part I. Acquisition and attrition; Part II. Phonetic and Phonological change; Part III. (Morpho-)syntactic and pragmatic change; Part IV. Lexical change; Part V. Variation and real-time change.

The editors’ introductory essay situates the larger object of study—Germanic heritage languages in North America—within scholarly and historical contexts, as well as provides basic backgrounds of the languages under study in the anthology, as pertains to their existence in North America: Dutch, German, Icelandic, Norwegian, Pennsylvania Dutch, Swedish, West Frisian, and Yiddish. The editors note that this volume is a result of several years of collaboration among scholars, including workshops held at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, the University of Oslo, Pennsylvania State University, University of Iceland, and University of California Los Angeles, and that additional volumes are in preparation.

Part I. Acquisition and attrition, contains three articles. The first article, “Word order variation in Norwegian possessive constructions: Bilingual acquisition and attrition,” by Marit Westergaard and Merete Anderssen, looks at the acquisition of possessive constructions among bilingual children in Norway and the United States. The two possessive constructions permitted—prenominal (e.g., *min bil* ‘my car’) vs. postnominal (e.g., *bilen min* ‘my car’, lit.

car-the-my) involve different syntactic structures with presumed different levels of complexity. The authors look at expected vs. unexpected orders of acquisition among the bilingual children in Norway and in the United States, and conclude that both linguistic complexity and frequency of occurrence play a role in acquisition orders of the test group. The second article, "Attrition in an American Norwegian heritage language speaker," by Janne Bondi Johannessen, focuses on one "elderly bilingual lady", a speaker of Heritage Norwegian and English. The author uses the speech production of this woman as a test case for testing Jakobson's (1941) regression hypothesis, namely, that what is learned first (in childhood) is retained longest, and that what is learned later is lost earlier in attrition. The author provides background discussion on the order of grammatical acquisition in Norwegian, which sets the stage for her in-depth examination of the informant's speech. Johannessen looks at issues in NP definiteness, as well as several issues related to V2, e.g., topicalization, negation, target V3 in subordinate clauses, as well as other topics. The third article, "Reexamining Icelandic as a heritage language in North America," by Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, provides a general overview of the situation of Icelandic in North America, the history, geography, and demographics of this heritage language, and to scholarship on this topic. Additionally, the author gives the reader several interesting points to ponder, such as that North American Icelandic shows "surprisingly little attrition in its morphology" (p. 82), and also that proper names typically do not show the expected inflections. The author goes on to provide examples and discussion from other areas of grammar, such as anaphoric binding, subjunctive, syntax, as well as from the phonetics and phonology.

Part II. Phonetic and phonological change, contains two articles. The first article, "Heritage language obstruent phonetics and phonology," by Brent Allen and Joseph Salmons, focuses on a comparative examination of voicing distinctions in consonants in American English and Norwegian, and then looks in-depth at American bilinguals in Norwegian and English. The paper offers meticulous acoustic discussion of the phonological issues under examination. Among many others, one particularly nice point is made in the discussion on vowel length before final fortis vs. lenis consonant, comparing Norwegian, English, and the English of Norwegian heritage speakers (p. 111). The second article, "The history of front rounded vowels in New Braunfels German," by Marc Pierce, Hans Boas and Karen Roesch, looks at the maintenance and/or loss of front rounded vowels in this variety of Texas German from several perspectives, including dialect history, markedness, language contact, as well as the sociolinguistics within the community. The authors provide background

orientation on the problem and on the scholarship. The analysis as presented by the authors sees the problem (maintenance/loss) “as the result of several factors, both language-internal and language-external” (p. 123).

Part III, (Morpho-)syntactic and pragmatic change, contains three articles. The first article, “Functional convergence and extension in contact: Syntactic and semantic attributes of the progressive aspect in Pennsylvania Dutch,” by Joshua Brown and Michael Putnam, examines “the extension of the progressive aspect in contemporary Pennsylvania Dutch” (p. 135) in terms of contact with English and feature reconfiguration. This paper provides very nuanced discussion of the semantics and syntax of progressive constructions, and offers comparative discussion of the constructions in Pennsylvania Dutch and other varieties of German. The second article, “Hybrid verb forms in American Norwegian and the analysis of the syntactic relation between verb and its tense,” by Tor Åfarli, looks at English verbs that are “nonce borrowed” into American Norwegian, and which take Norwegian tense inflection as a means of gaining insights into the “morpho-syntactic relation between a verb and its tense affix” (p. 161). In defining “hybrid verb forms” the author draws distinctions between the “nonce”-borrowed forms—that is, “borrowed *ad hoc* by a speaker in a given situation” (p. 162)—and single-word code-switched forms. The focus is on the formal syntactic relations between verb and tense. The third article, “Discourse markers in the narratives of New York Hasidim: More V2 attrition,” by Zelda Kahan Newman, focuses on the rise to prominence of the word *shoyt* ‘already’ as a discourse marker in New York Hasidic Yiddish. The author provides background discussion on V2 in Yiddish, the relevance of language contact with English in the evolution of the new discourse marker, followed by extensive illustration and analysis of the innovative discourse marker within a set of several discourse markers and strategies. The author’s discussion includes consideration of discourse contexts and intonation. Also included is brief discussion of sociolinguistic gender-based differences in the use of the discourse marker.

Part IV, Lexical change, contains four articles. The first article, “Maintaining a multilingual repertoire: Lexical change in American Norwegian,” by Lucas Annear and Kristin Speth, looks at changes in the lexicon of American Norwegian resulting from contact with English. The authors discuss three types of transfer: semantic transfer, phonemic transfer, and lexical transfer. In the bulk of the paper they provide examples and analysis, including discussion of difficulties in determining exactly what type of transfer has occurred. The second article, “How synagogues became *shuls*: The boomerang effect in Yiddish-influenced English, 1895–2010,” by Sarah Bunin Benor, looks at “the resurgence of substrate features that were previously on the wane” (= the “boomerang

effect"). Using Shandler's (2006) notions of Yiddish as a "postvernacular language," that is, "privileging the symbolic understanding of a language over its communicative use," the author thus is looking at the relationship between language use and identity. The author examines a number of Yiddish words used in English in the context of knowledge of Yiddish, and age group, using results from questionnaire survey, as well as from findings gleaned from corpus study. The third article, "Phonological non-integration of lexical borrowings in Wisconsin West Frisian," by Todd Ehresmann and Joshua Bousquette, investigates questions concerning the "comparatively low frequency of borrowing compared to other heritage communities, with a corresponding lack of phonological integration" (p. 234). The authors approach the problem from the vantage point of issues of bilingualism type (coordinate), code switching, time-depth of presence in North America. The fourth article, "Borrowing modal elements into American Norwegian," by Kristin Eide and Arnstein Hjelde, discusses the broader topic of modals and language contact by focusing on the American Norwegian word *spost*, deriving from American English suppose/supposed to. Based on this item(s), discussion is broadened to the borrowing of function words, grammatical features, etc. The paper looks at the range of uses of *spost* in American Norwegian, from modal-like function to discourse marker.

Part v. Variation and real-time change, contains five articles. The first article, "Changes in a Norwegian dialect in America," by Arnstein Hjelde, examines American Norwegian dialect change over time. The two communities under focus are Coon Valley and Westby (both in Vernon County, Wisconsin). The author looks to see if the terms "Coon Valley Norsk" or "Westby Norsk" refer to "a consistent language norm, a koiné which has evolved when speakers with different dialect background have met" (pp. 286–287). Hjelde's focus is thus on determining whether an American Norwegian koiné has arisen, and the relation of this variety to established Norwegian dialectology. The time span of Hjelde's data stretches from 1931 to 2014. In discussing the older data, Hjelde importantly discusses issues which may have impacted the nature of the data recorded, such as informants' knowledge and use of linguistic registers (p. 289). He also discusses the widespread access to standard written Norwegian in earlier periods (e.g., church, education, movies from Norway in the 1940s–1960s screened without subtitles); by the period 1990s–2010 this direct access to Standard Norwegian had largely disappeared. The second article, "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, looks at two common claims made about Heritage Norwegian in the American

Midwest: Is the language “archaic”, and, at the same time, is it approaching the written Bokmål standard (and thus, away from dialect speech). In addressing these questions, the authors provide extensive data from several areas of morphology and lexicon, as well as syntax. The third article, “Coon Valley Norwegians meet Norwegians from Norway: Language, culture and identity among heritage language speakers in the U.S.,” by Anne Golden and Elizabeth Lanza, looks at the role of language in identity constructions. The authors focus on the last generation of heritage Norwegian speakers, and write that they are looking not only at language, but at “other semiotic resources” (p. 324). Some of this discussion thus touches on issues found in works such as Shandler (2006) on Yiddish and the semiotics of postvernacularity. The authors use two types of situations to elicit data: focus groups, where explicit attention is given to language use; and narratives. After discussion of identity as a social construction (pp. 329–330), the authors provide extensive data—including full texts of narrative interactions—and analysis. The fourth article, “Variation and change in American Swedish,” by Ida Larsson, Sofia Tingsell and Maia Andréasson, looks at change in American Swedish since the 1960s, based on fieldwork conducted in 2011. The paper includes discussion of speech styles, as well as attitudes toward dialect speech and standard language. The fifth article, “On the decrease of language norms in a disintegrating language,” by Caroline Smits and Jaap van Marle, examines “norm awareness in decaying American Dutch.” For analysis and discussion, the authors use data from free conversation as well as from acceptability tests. In laying forth a menu of questions (p. 392), they ask whether there are “grammatical norms which hold for SD” [Standard Dutch] “still recognized in AD ...” [American Dutch], “and if so, to what extent?” The authors then reformulate this question in intriguing fashion: “Or, put differently, can you make a mistake in AD?”

Taken individually, each paper in this anthology makes a significant contribution to its area(s) of focus. Some of the papers are more anchored to issues of general linguistic theory; others are more relevant to issues in sociolinguistics and/or dialectology. Each paper is firmly anchored in the scholarship of its respective focus area(s). Taken as a collective whole, the papers in this volume add to an understanding of (Germanic) heritage languages in North America that goes beyond the sum of the contributions, permitting a dynamic, multi-dimensional view of the phenomenon. This volume is an excellent and important contribution to scholarship in several fields.

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