

Variation in infinitive markers in American Norwegian

In this presentation we investigate the distribution of infinitive markers in American Norwegian (AmNo). Here we investigate the rise in alternative infinitive markers in AmNo that appear in the CANS (*The Corpus of American Nordic Speech*). We propose that the rise of bare infinitives in AmNo, i.e., the replacement of *å* with *til* or /te/ to introduce an infinitival clause, is due to two processes; namely, **amplification** and **structural salience** (Polinsky, 2018). Amplification is the process by which a dialectal feature/structure in the heritage grammar is amplified, or increased, due to sustained contact with a socio-linguistic second language (L2) that exhibits a similar feature/structure. Structural salience refers to the preference heritage speakers give to structurally higher syntactic positions (see e.g. Polinsky, 2018: Ch. 2).

Data. In most varieties of Euro-Norwegian (E-No), the *å* (/o/) particle represents the infinitival marker 'to' in English. Unlike in German and English, it is distinct from the preposition *til* (/till, tell, te, ti/). In AmNo, *å* is the most common infinitive marker; however, there are noticeable deviations found in the CANS corpus. These are instances of the absence of *å*, mostly either /te/ for expected *til å* (1a-b), or /te/ for expected "bare" *å* (2a-b):

- (1) a. *nå ha vi kke rå te fløtte te Nårge* (Spokane_WA_03gk)
Target: Nå har vi ikke råd til å flytte til Norge.
Now have we not funding to move to Norway.
- b. *hann va vannt te være uti å jøre mannges arrbei* (Fargo_ND_05gk)
Target: Han var vant til å være ute og gjøre mange slags arbeid.
He was used to be out and do many kind-of work.
- (2) a. *vi lære te bruk skrivemesjin* (Saskatoon_SK_14gk)
Target: Vi lærte å bruke skrivemaskin.
We learnt to use writing-machine.
- b. *mi ha plennti te eta væit du* (Rushford_MN_01gm)
Target: Vi hadde plenty å ete, veit du.
We had plenty to eat, you know.

Amplification. Amplification consists of two components in AmNo:

C1: The use of /te/ as infinitive marker represents the retention of an archaic (dialectal) Norwegian trait (cf. 3 a-b).

C2: The use of /te/ as infinitive marker in American Norwegian is due to language contact with English, either (i) as a simple loan of the English infinitive marker *to*, or (ii) an instance of convergence modeled on the homophonous status of the infinitive marker and preposition *to* in English.

Support for C1 from historical dialectology; Aasen (1853) shows that bare /te/ infinitives were quite common West-Norwegian dialects during the mid-19th century. Another proposal suggests that bare /te/ infinitives in the Bergen area are the result of contact with Low German during the Hansa period (Nesse 2001, 2003). The /te/ bare infinitives appear to cover a large geographic area (Faarlund, 2003); in the *Nordic Dialect Corpus* (Johannessen et al. 2009), where the modern Norwegian part consists of app. 2 million tokens from 438 speakers/111 places (collected in 2006-2012), we find several examples of the /te/ infinitive marker in examples from Western-Norwegian and beyond:

- (3) a. *viss da går an te jera sånne tinng fårr eksemmpel te haffs*

Target: Viss det går an å gjøre sånne ting for eksempel til havs.
If it goes (i.e. is possible) to do such things for instance at sea.
(Bømlo_04gk) (Western Norwegian)

b. å alle lærde se te dannse varrt grepa flinke til å danse

Target: Og alle lærte seg å danse, blei grepa flinke til å danse.
And everyone learnt REFL to dance, became very good at dancing.
(Vang_03gm) (Eastern Norwegian)

Furthermore, it can also be noted that the use of /te/ as infinitive marker is observed in several Swedish dialects as well (see e.g., *Svenska Akademiens ordbok*; Kalm 2016 etc.). The motivation for C2 is straightforward based on the properties of English outlined above.

Structural salience. We propose the following underlying structures for 'normal' infinitives and bare infinitives (cf. (4) and (5)).

(4) E-No: [_{TP} Han er god [_{PP} til [_{TP} å synge] 'normal' infinitive

(5) AmNo: [_{TP} Han er god [_{PP} til/te [_{TP} Ø synge] 'bare' infinitive

The key difference is between these two underlying structures is the absence of a lexicalized head (T) in (5), resulting in a weak (or absent) T. The material in the phase head (C or P) suffices to identify the clause as an infinitive. This process is not uncommon in contact and heritage Germanic, since similar structures are reported in Brazilian Pomeranian (Postma, 2014, 2018) and Pennsylvania Dutch (Börjars & Burrige, 2011; Louden, 2016, to appear; Putnam & Rocker, to appear).

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