

Preface

Kelly Biers, Joshua R. Brown, Janne Bondi Johannessen, and Michael T. Putnam

The Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas (WILA) started in 2010 when Janne Bondi Johannessen (University of Oslo, Norway) and Joseph Salmons (University of Wisconsin-Madison) collaborated regarding the possibility of initiating a workshop focused on issues connected with heritage and immigrant languages spoken in the Americas. WILA soon became an annual forum for those researchers interested in the development of immigrant minority languages in North and South America. The WILA workshops have been organized each year alternating between North America and Europe: University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Oslo, Penn State University, University of Iceland, University of California-Los Angeles, University of Uppsala, University of Georgia-Athens, University of Copenhagen, and University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Previous WILA papers have appeared in various edited volumes. In 2018, WILA published its first *Selected Proceedings of the Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas* with Cascadilla Press. The papers collected in this second volume of selected proceedings were first presented at WILA 9, held at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in conjunction with the University of North Carolina-Asheville in October 2018.

The language communities represented in this volume span from Argentina in the south to Manitoba in the north, with a heavy concentration in Wisconsin. Unsurprisingly, Germanic languages are well represented, but are accompanied by a study of a heritage Romance language. The languages under study are in varying states of shift or maintenance, giving wide and quite differing perspectives of how languages function when in contact with a dominant language. An emergent theme of this volume, and of WILA 9 as a whole, is the importance of remembering the heterogeneity of heritage language contexts when drawing larger conclusions.

The approaches to these languages range from the structural study of phonology and morphosyntax, to broader examinations of the link between language and community identity. This year's conference saw spirited discussion surrounding the notion of 'attrition' and the role that language contact plays in change for heritage languages. These themes are robustly present in this volume, with a heavy focus on bilingual communities in intensive contact situations. Despite the varying languages and contexts described in this volume, several parallels can be found in both the approaches and analyses among various articles, providing the reader ample opportunity to draw connections and view a bigger picture of heritage language usage, change, and identity.

Two papers explore phonetic and phonological changes in heritage languages. First, Klosinski investigates plosives in bilingual speakers of Misionero German and Portuguese in Argentina in order to explore the role of language contact and convergence in sound change. The results highlight the importance of considering interspeaker variation when drawing larger conclusions. The paper also cautions against overstating the role of attrition in language change, and instead explores several possible explanations for the apparent sound change.

In a similar vein, Biers and Osterhaus investigate a phonological change in the vocalic system in Walloon spoken by English bilinguals in Wisconsin. The paper describes a shift from phonological length to tenseness and a phonemic merger among high front vowels. This shift raises questions about the phonological status of tenseness, as well as the role that language contact might (or might not) play in sound changes in heritage languages.

If the role of language contact in sound change is unclear, it is perhaps less so in at least some morphosyntactic changes. Putnam and Rucker argue that the lexical borrowing of 'start' into Pennsylvania Dutch (as *schaerte*) by English bilinguals in Ohio has influenced not only the aspectual system of the heritage language, but also its syntactic structure. Here, the authors argue for a case of

language change without attrition, instead making a case for convergence of similar structures. Important to this analysis, and complementing other papers in this volume, is a consideration of the sociolinguistic context, especially concerning the role of bilingualism in the speech community.

Contact-induced syntactic change has limits, however, as illustrated in Bousquette's paper on left dislocation in Wisconsin Heritage German. Here, it is shown that while left dislocation may appear to violate V2 constraints inherent to the heritage language, these structures are pragmatically licensed and are themselves consistent with the underlying grammar. Most interestingly, the argumentation is based on data collected from highly proficient bilingual speakers in the 1940's. The analysis from this unique data set contributes to a more complete and robust picture of heritage language acquisition.

Along similar lines of morphosyntactic stability, Jóhannsdóttir shows that heritage speakers of Icelandic in Manitoba maintain a distinction between two perfects that is not present in English and that L2 (and even young L1) learners of Icelandic have difficulty producing. This study joins a number of others, including in this volume, that challenge broad claims about the vulnerability of heritage language syntaxes to attrition or to transfer from the dominant language. While it may be the case for some languages, it is clearly not for others.

Eide's study of verb movement in North American Norwegian neatly dialogues with the other morphosyntactic articles in this volume. The analysis is drawn from spoken data corpora from the 1940s to the present and again, tracing the evolution of the V2 constraint across five generations of heritage speakers in the American Midwest. In this way, we are able to witness the convergence of syntactic rules in the heritage and the dominant language, creating a more complex V2 constraint system, at least in certain contexts. Again, we are cautioned against assuming attrition or transfer are inevitable and the only mechanisms of change.

Finally, language shift and identity are at the heart of three papers in this volume. Vosburg investigates a shift away from triglossia within a Mennonite community in southwestern Kansas, using oral history interviews in order to assess the external factors that might have led to this change. The shift towards English reported in this study parallels shifts in the domains of education, work, and especially religion within the community. Excerpts from the interviews make for a compelling illustration of the link between language and identity.

Religion is also an important theme in Moquin's study of the Norwegian-American newspaper *Reform*, where it is argued that such newspapers worked to reinforce morality and linguistic purism. Examples from the newspapers provide a fascinating glimpse into the intentional links between linguistic and religious ideologies. A clear picture emerges of the extent to which language shift is viewed by the community as a shift in identity, or even as an external attack from the dominant culture as it imposes its linguistic—and therefore cultural—norms on the heritage community.

Whereas the other articles in this volume discuss heritage languages in various states of stability or decline, Brown and Hietpas present the case of a Dutch heritage community in Wisconsin for whom language shift is near completed. Drawing from a variety of evidence—Dutch influence on spoken English, metalinguistic commentary from oral interviews, and symbolic Dutch in the linguistic landscape and in rituals—the authors show that the heritage language remains an important marker of identity for the community. Like with previous articles, the examples given (photos and excerpts from interviews) demonstrate how deeply and widely language permeates different aspects of community life, such as in education, work, and religion.

The *Selected Proceedings of the Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas* provides quick publication for smaller studies and documentation of ongoing work in the field of heritage linguistics. All contents were anonymously peer reviewed by reviewers both within and outside of WILA; we thank our reviewers for their fair evaluations:

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Asheville, North Carolina; Eau Claire, Wisconsin; Oslo, Norway; University Park, Pennsylvania, July
2019

Kelly Biers (University of North Carolina Asheville) and Joshua R. Brown (University of Wisconsin-
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Selected Proceedings of the 9th Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas (WILA 9)

edited by Kelly Biers
and Joshua R. Brown

Cascadilla Proceedings Project Somerville, MA 2019

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ISBN 978-1-57473-475-1 hardback

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This paper can be cited as:

Biers, Kelly, Joshua R. Brown, Janne Bondi Johannessen, and Michael T. Putnam. 2019. Preface. In *Selected Proceedings of the 9th Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas (WILA 9)*, ed. Kelly Biers and Joshua R. Brown, v-vii. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. www.lingref.com, document #3481.