You Take the Low Road and I’ll Take the High Road: Variation in Agreement Structure in Wisconsin Heritage German

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Abstract

This article presents on interviews with 10 bilingual speakers of American English and Wisconsin Heritage German (WHG), with respect to their licensing of high (NP1) versus low (NP2) agreement. In terms of linguistic typology, English copular constructions license only NP1 agreement, in which the verb agrees in person and number with the first—or syntactically high—nominal element in the clause; Standard German copular constructions license NP2 agreement with the lower nominal element in the clause (though subsequent topicalization of this element is also licit). As a second variable, a subset (7) of these speakers license complementizer agreement (C-agr) in WHG, which obtains from a second, syntactically high agreement structure in the complementizer field, in addition to the canonical German NP2 structure. These data were compared to a control group of the remaining three WHG speakers who did not license C-agr.

Data presented here suggest a bi-directional transfer of both NP1 and NP2 agreement structures for both groups of heritage language (HL) speakers. The control group produced a majority of forms consistent with both English and German language-specific grammars. Evidence of NP2 structures in the control group’s English, however, suggests that these speakers are HL-dominant—since NP2 is categorically prohibited in English. WHG speakers with C-agr, in contrast to the control group, produced a majority of NP1 forms in both languages, with the presence of C-agr being a predicting factor in the presence of NP1 agreement in the English of WHG speakers. It is here argued that the presence of C-agr in the HL is similar to the canonical NP1 structures of Standard English, allowing for overlapping licit NP1 structures in both varieties. Data from Assumed Identify Constructions (AICs) suggests that canonical NP2 agreement in C-agr WHG may have been weakened as a result. This research suggests that even superficially English-like grammar may obtain not from a direct transfer from the L2 into the HL, but rather from the interaction of English grammar with the autochthonous grammatical structures of non-standard HLS.
Keywords

heritage language – agreement – language contact – bilingualism – complementizer agreement

1 Introduction

This article examines the distribution of ‘high’ and ‘low’ agreement among bilingual speakers of English and Wisconsin Heritage German (WHG), a set of moribund, non-standard varieties spoken in eastern Wisconsin. A heritage variety is here defined as a “language spoken at home or otherwise readily available to young children, and crucially this language is not a dominant language of the larger (national) society” (Rothman, 2009: 156); in the North American context, this socially-dominant language is typically English. In the present study, English and WHG copular constructions from 10 bilingual consultants recorded in 2014 show a mix of both ‘high’ (NP1) agreement, characteristic of English, and ‘low’ (NP2) agreement, characteristic of German, showing a bi-directional, cross-linguistic transfer between the two languages. Additionally, WHG speakers who exhibit complementizer agreement (C-agr) show a higher frequency of high/NP1 agreement than speakers without C-agr, including in the Heritage Language (HL). Given that English and German show categorical differences with respect to both high/low agreement and in assumed identity constructions, the central question is whether the HL grammar will reflect the typology of either or both languages.

The results of language contact are a mixed system, influenced by both the L2, as well as the interaction between the L2 and the grammar of the (non-standard) HL: in a bilingual setting, the higher rates of NP1 agreement in C-agr varieties of WHG are due to a harmonic convergence of high agreement structures in both WHG and English, resulting in high agreement as the majority form. The absence of NP1 agreement in non-C-agr varieties blocks this harmonic convergence. In the non-C-agr varieties, while bi-lateral cross-linguistic transfer is certainly attested, the typological tendencies of the baseline, language-specific grammars prevail as the majority form. While influence from the socially-dominant L2 (English) appears to affect the grammars of all speakers to some degree, it is only in the grammar of speakers with C-agr that the English-like NP1 structures appear as the majority form in the heritage variety. Additionally, assumed identity constructions1—a specific type

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1 Assumed Identity Constructions are copular sentences with the pronoun in final position, conveying the meaning of “to be in the role/place of pronoun”; an example would be, “If
of copular construction—yield results that are more consistent with English or Dutch than with German, suggesting a mix of influence from not only the English L2, but also possible features of the non-standard, pre-immigration Franconian variety. Thus, while the prevailing trend for language contact situations is the preference of majority forms over minority forms, and for simple over complex forms (cf. Kerswill and Williams, 2000; Trudgill, 1986; 2010), this study concludes that contact between English and the HL, in this case, does not result in a wholesale adoption of English-like structures. Rather, two simultaneously active grammars interact in one speaker to yield an innovative, HL grammar. Furthermore, these data suggest that features of the pre-immigration variety—as well as variation within a heritage language community—must be taken into account to properly discern the effects of English influence from the basic grammar of the HL.

Generally speaking, these data on copula constructions help us also to shed light on the structure of C-agr in modern varieties of West Germanic. In much of the current literature on the phenomenon, C-agr is licensed by a combination of a high, C-oriented agreement structure, and the low, VP-agreement typical also of Modern Standard German. In continental C-agr varieties, obligatory low agreement requires overt realization of verbal morphology in clause-final position in C-agr contexts. Correlating with a higher input of C-oriented, high agreement structures through German-English bilingualism, many WHG speakers are able to elide verb-final elements, effectively signaling a weakening of the low agreement constraint, and a divergence from continental C-agr varieties. Previous studies have shown that null arguments may obtain in varieties of German as a transfer effect, particularly among bilingual speakers of German and a Romance variety that licenses pro-drop, object-drop, or both (Sprouse and Vance, 1999; Dal Negro, 2004; Putnam and Lipski, 2016). Crucially this is not permitted in non-contact varieties of German2 that license C-agr, such as Bavarian (Fuß, 2004; 2005); and most importantly, the contact variety in the present study—English—is not a pro-drop language.

In broader terms, these data suggest that an increase in linguistic structures that appear to originate from the socially dominant L2 (e.g., English) may in fact result at least in part from structures present in the heritage variety (e.g., WHG). This idea has been previously submitted regarding contact varieties by Kroch, who suggest that, “the finding that a given context is most favorable to the use of an innovation is taken to show that the innovation is an

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1 I were you, I would leave now” Heycock 2012: 214). These will be discussed in greater detail in §3.1.
2 Axel and Weiß (2011) content that C-agr varieties do license pro-drop, but this assertion is not unproblematic (cf. Bousquette 2013: 147–154).
accommodation to the linguistic functionality of that context” (1989: 35). In other words, it is insufficient to merely identify the (language of) origin of a given innovation; rather, one must also identify the elements of the borrowing language that are conducive to the adoption of said innovation. Abraham’s (2011) treatment of Cimbrian—a Germanic variety long in contact with Romance varieties in northern Italy—similarly presents evidence that language change is not effected singularly in a unidirectional manner from majority to minority language, but rather occurs where there is structural overlap between both Cimbrian and Romance varieties. The focus, then, is not on dominance or imposition, but rather on the shared accessibility of an innovative element or structure between both languages. This position is adopted and supported in the present study.

The article is structured as follows: an overview of WHG is provided in section 2. In section 3, we will discuss typological aspects of WHG, Standard German, English and Dutch, as it relates to high and low agreement structures. An overview of the methods and consultants is provided in section 4, followed by the presentation and analysis of the data in sections 5 and 6, respectively. Section 7 concludes.

2 Wisconsin Heritage German

Owing to heavy German settlement from multiple German-speaking regions of Europe, a number of Wisconsin communities maintained linguistic and cultural norms indicative of the region of origin. Especially common in rural settings, immigrants from Cologne to Dane County, WI retained their Kölsch dialect (Drake and Kramer, 2014); Pommeranian was maintained for well over a century in Freistadt, WI (Louden, 2009); and Central Franconian features were maintained in eastern Wisconsin by immigrants from the Eifel and Rheinland regions (Bousquette, 2014). Known as Wisconsin’s ‘Holyland’ for its high concentrations of Catholic churches, the latter region is also characterized by Hessian and Bavarian speakers, in addition to the Protestant settlements of Kiel and New Holstein, WI (Schlemper, 2006; Schmahl, 2006). In addition to these and other localized varieties, many speakers had knowledge of Standard German through German-language instruction in church (Wilkerson and Salmons, 2012) or school (Petty, 2013). However, while some dialect mixing may have occurred between more or less mutually intelligible varieties, no comprehensive argument has been made for a unified variety of German spoken throughout all Wisconsin. WHG therefore refers collectively to the multiple varieties of German spoken in Wisconsin. With this broad definition of WHG
in mind, the present study focuses exclusively on data and speakers from the Holyland, located between Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan.  

Language use in the region of study follows a similar pattern as other German-speaking communities in Wisconsin—and of other immigrant communities in the Upper Midwest—in that high concentrations of monolingual heritage speakers progress through a stage of bilingualism, before ultimately shifting to English monolingualism. Records of language proficiency from the 1910 census report heritage language monolingualism to the tune of 28% in Kiel, WI (Frey, 2013). Still, reported monolingualism is only the tip of the iceberg: proficiency in English did not preclude use of German. Wilkerson and Salmons did find that 24% of households were German monolingual in 1910 in Hustisford, WI, and 58% of all households were presumed to speak German at least some of the time; the authors found that only 26 of 375 households did not contain any likely German-proficient individuals, without any identifiable link to German-language domains or institutions (2012: 13). That is, whether or not the home was itself a domain in which German was spoken, 93% of households nevertheless had at least one individual who may have been capable of speaking at least some German.

The decades after 1910 saw a sharp decline in reported heritage language monolingualism—and heritage language use, in general—due in large part to institutional language shift to English during the early to middle 20th century (Salmons, 2005a, b; Lucht, 2007; Frey, 2013). However, the home domain persisted as a heritage language domain, especially in cases where multiple generations lived in the same household, or in the case of endogamous marriages within the heritage community. Social interaction—including informal gatherings as well as social organizations—provided bilinguals additional domains in which the heritage language was spoken, including through the end of the 20th century, and—in limited numbers—into the 21st century with today’s speakers of a now-moribund variety (cf. Sewell, 2015: 230–233).

The current—and last—generation of WHG speakers grew up—at least in their earliest childhood years—in a community where German enjoyed institutional support. Directly relevant for the consultants considered here, “many parochial schools in rural Wisconsin continued to teach at least part of their curriculum, summer school, or Sunday school in German, in some cases until the 1940’s” (Petty, 2013: 55). The Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church in

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3 Unless otherwise noted, all studies mentioned on WHG focus on data from these communities.
4 Hustisford lies outside the Wisconsin Holyland, being roughly 50 miles (80km) south of the first Catholic church in Johnsburg, WI. Still, the pattern of language use and language shift in Hustisford is indicative of most contemporary German-speaking communities.
Hustisford, WI, for example, used German in its parochial school until 1944 (Wilkerson and Salmons, 2012: 14). German was also used in other domains, as well, with German language services at the same church continuing on at least a semi-regular basis until the 1970’s. In fact, the church continued to be a German language domain long after bilingualism became widespread in the community; cross-referencing the same individuals on both the 1910 US Census and in local church records, Wilkerson and Salmons found that English-proficient individuals (per Census data) were nevertheless confirmed in German, suggesting a high rate of bilingualism as well as a central role for German in the community (Wilkerson and Salmons, 2012: 14). A related study of the professions of monolingual German speakers in 1910 Wisconsin revealed not only a number of skilled tradespeople (e.g., blacksmith, tailor, cobbler, carpenter) but also a number of individuals for whom language use is central, including: a teacher, preacher, bartender, retail merchant, salesman and a clerk. (Wilkerson and Salmons, 2008: 271). Consultants interviewed for the present study were born in the 1930’s and 1940’s, and grew up in a setting where it was not only possible to speak German at school and at church, but also in a setting not too far removed from a time when even categorical interactions in public domains were negotiable by monolingual speakers of the heritage language.

More formal linguistic analyses of WHG are consistent with acquisition of a heritage language in a German-speaking community. Sewell (2015) shows that WHG speakers maintain the verb-second (V2) constraint, despite wide differences in frequency of activation across the lifetime and in adulthood. Infrequent activation of the HL—or frequent suppression of the HL—does not appear to cause any significant erosion of V2. Evidence of non-V2 structures among highly proficient speakers was restricted to a sub-set of topicalized elements—possibly discourse markers characteristic of the nature of the directed task (a picture narration).\(^5\) Hopp and Putnam (2015) similarly found maintenance of German V2 structures among speakers of Moundridge Schweizer German (MSG), in south central Kansas. More specifically, speakers of MSG maintained German V2 structures in main clauses, while the majority of the data show retention of canonical German verb-final word order in subordinate clauses headed by relative pronouns and temporal complementizers. Hopp and Putnam also note that, “[d]eviations from verb-final are specific to weil-clauses and finite clauses introduced by dass”, with these deviations reverting to German V2 word order characteristic of German main clauses.

\(^5\) Attrition would have been characterized by non-systematic uses of non-target grammar (assuming, of course, that these are not performance errors).
and not that of speakers’ English L2 (2015: 204). In a previous study on C-agr in WHG, Bousquette (2014) showed that C-agr in WHG is consistent with the morphological distribution and realization of 19th century central Franconian varieties—areas to which the majority of consultants had confirmed ancestral ties. A phonetic analysis of the same phenomenon in Bousquette (2015) similarly correlates C-agr in WHG with orthographic representations in 19th century Central Franconian dialect studies (Regel, 1868; Meyer, 1898; Kisch, 1905; Weise, 1900, 1907; Böttker, 1906). Distinct from the phonetic and morphological realization of C-agr in modern, non-standard varieties of German that license C-agr, the licensing of C-agr by modern speakers of WHG attests to the uninterrupted transmission of linguistic features of the heritage variety across as many as five generations (see also Nützel, 2009; Nützel and Salmons, 2011 for similar data on Haysville East Franconian, spoken in Haysville, Indiana). Crucially, these features are not present in either English or Standard German, and thus are indicative of the pre-immigration variety, and not resultant from a bilingual (WHG-English) or bi-dialectal (WHG-Standard German) situation in these Wisconsin communities. Broadly, these data suggest a lack of interruption or interference in core aspects of the grammar due to acquisition and activation of the socially-dominant L2, or due to variable knowledge of Standard German. In these aspects of the grammar otherwise expected to be vulnerable in language contact settings—especially those that are discordant between the languages—WHG speakers show no evidence of incomplete acquisition, or of simplification of the competence grammar relative to the identifiable (pre-immigration) input varieties.

While WHG speakers do show maintenance of both the V2 constraint and C-agr, language contact phenomena are not entirely absent. The lexicon is particularly susceptible to cross-linguistic transfer in language contact settings (van Coetsem, 1988), especially when the donor lexical item fills a gap in the matrix or recipient language. Sometimes referred to as ‘cultural’ lexical transfer, the borrowed lexeme is non-redundant in that it does not replace an indigenous lexeme in the matrix or recipient language. In the context of American Heritage Languages, such borrowings are commonly flora and fauna (e.g. groundhog), technological developments (e.g. tractors, cars), or express differences between related concepts (e.g. WHG die Farm versus German der (Bauern)hof; WHG der/die Town versus German das Dorf) (cf. Clyne, 2003; Matras, 2009; Annear and Speth, 2015). Additionally, the borrowed lexeme is also not compensatory: this type of borrowing acts as an enrichment of the HL lexicon through language contact, and is therefore distinct from an L2-dominant HL speaker’s inability to maintain language mode (cf. Grosjean, 2008), or from an attrited HL speaker’s inability to retrieve lexical items.
Additional instances of cross-linguistic transfer of syntactic features are typologically rare, but attested for a number of HLS, including WHG. Brown and Putnam (2015) provide evidence that bilingual speakers of Pennsylvania Dutch have not only incorporated the progressive aspect from their English L2 into their HL, but have extended its use into achievement and stative predicates, which is not grammatical for most spoken varieties of American English. In their study of verb placement Heritage Scandinavian (Heritage Norwegian and Heritage Swedish in the Upper Midwest), Larsson and Johannessen (2015) do find evidence of attrition among less proficient speakers, but also find evidence of an increase of syntactic processes in the heritage variety, relative to both the monolingual standard and the language of early immigrants (referred to as Emigrant Scandinavian6). With respect to negation in subordinate clauses, in both European Scandinavian (Modern Norwegian and Swedish) and Emigrant Scandinavian, the verb remains in situ in a verb-final position. In the heritage varieties recorded between 2010 and 2012, however, speakers employ V-to-T movement, meaning that the verb precedes negation in subordinate clauses.7 The authors term this development incomplete acquisition,8 because, in the strictest sense of the term, modern speakers of Heritage Scandinavian arguably did not acquire the grammar of the previous generation, as represented by Emigrant Scandinavian. If incomplete acquisition is also referred to as ‘fossilized L1 development’, then the authors are also well-supported in drawing parallels between Heritage Scandinavian speakers, and children growing up in Norway or Sweden, who similarly exhibit V-to-T movement in similar clauses, but who eventually acquire the more economical in situ position of the verb characteristic of adult speakers. The absence of the more economical in situ structures for this clause type in Heritage Scandinavian is a standard-deviant feature that requires additional syntactic movement, relative to both Emigrant and European Scandinavian, and is crucially not derived from speakers’ English L2. The authors therefore conclude that, “V-to-T movement in Heritage

6 This group is comprised of both Einar Haugen’s recordings of Norwegian from the 1930’s and 1940’s, and Folke Hedblom’s Swedish recordings from the 1960’s; these represent speakers born predominantly at the end of the 19th century.

7 V-to-T movement is characteristic of Icelandic, as well as for older stages of Norwegian and Swedish, as well as for Övdalian, a modern dialect of Swedish. However, while these typologies exist in related North Germanic varieties, the authors control for them, and find no direct evidence of immigration to the communities discussed, or language contact with the same.

8 The term here does not relate to proficiency, as the authors found that such V-to-T movement did not correlate with fluency (2015: 172–173). Rather the use here is akin to cross-generational grammatical change (cf. Lightfoot 1991).
Scandinavian appears to be independent of clause type, and it does not correlate with the fluency of the speakers. We contend that a change has taken place in the syntax of Heritage Scandinavian" (2015: 172–173).

Similar studies from Bousquette et al. (2013; 2016a,b) show that speakers of WHG license parasitic gaps (a type of multiple gap construction), which is characteristic of English, but extremely restricted—if not categorically prohibited—for German (Postal, 1994; Kathol, 2001a). Such licensing of null elements requires an increased cognitive load relative to the use of overt elements, contra what is often expected for HLS, and for language contact, generally (cf. Gibson, 1998; Engdahl, 1983). Moreover, null elements are by definition negative input, and are strikingly infrequent, at that. The licensing of gaps in WHG is therefore less likely resultant from a typical language contact situation, and more likely related to cognition and the simultaneous activation of multiple grammars in a bilingual speaker. Still, though, the transfer of this type from one language-specific grammar to the other represents an enrichment of the HL grammar.

In short, this WHG community—or at least the last generation of its speakers—grew up in a community that was German-English bilingual, but with clear examples of institutional support of German while they were in their formative years. Linguistic analysis of these varieties also confirms that core aspects of the grammar including V2, as well as non-standard C-agr were acquired by WHG speakers, suggesting an uninterrupted acquisition across generations resulting in high degrees of proficiency, even among the last generation of speakers of a moribund HL. Lastly, in addition to acquisition of aspects of the pre-immigration German variety, WHG speakers were bilingual speakers of WHG and English, supported by both sociolinguistic/demographic and linguistic evidence, which resulted in cross-linguistic transfer, even when acting against principles of economy (as relates to cognition).

3 Typological Differences, Theoretical Concerns

In this section, three points will be presented and supported: first, that there exists a typological difference between English and German with respect to the licensing of agreement. In English, only the highest, left-most noun phrase (NP) may be assigned nominative case, and agree with the verb; this is known as an NP1 language. German subjects, on the other hand, can agree with the

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9 The use of ‘core’ here refers to a grammatical structure that is characteristic of German, and does not refer to its relative stability in language contact situations.
verb, irrespective of their position with the clause, including instances where the grammatical subject appears in a lower phrase (XP) in the clause. This is known as an NP2 language. The second point to be proposed builds on the first: NP2 languages may license two nominative NPs within the same clause, which is not typical of NP1 languages. Nominative case in German is therefore arguably licensed optionally by one of two positions within the clause (high and low). Third, high and low agreement structures are also characteristic of non-standard varieties of German that license C-agr—including heritage varieties—which echo the high and low agreement positions within the clause of Standard German. The descriptive overview given in this section will provide a foundation for the current study, which will first test bilingual speakers of English and WHG for possible evidence of bilingual transfer of typological differences between the languages; and second, will test whether speakers of WHG who license C-agr pattern in fundamentally different ways than speakers of WHG who do not have C-agr as part of their grammar (section 4ff.).

3.1 Copula Constructions, Assumed Identity Constructions
Typologically speaking, there are clear differences between the Modern Standard West Germanic languages with respect to agreement structures. English copula constructions exhibit NP1 agreement—or agreement with the first, syntactically highest noun phrase (NP) in the clause—as in (1) below.

(1) English (Heycock 2012: 211)
The real problem is your parents.

Modern Standard German shows NP2 agreement, in which the number agreement of the verb matches with the second, or lower NP.

(2) German (Heycock 2012: 211)
Das eigentliche Problem sind deine Eltern.
the real problem are your parents

‘The real problem are your parents’

Modern Standard Dutch also shows NP2 agreement, though there is more variation between speakers than with speakers of German.

(3) Dutch (Heycock 2012: 212)
% De brandoorzaak waren de brandende kaarsen in de woonkamer.
the cause of the fire be.PST-PL the burning candles in the living room

‘The cause of the fire was the burning candles in the living room.’
Heycock differentiates between these two types of typologies by essentially arguing that parents/Eltern is the semantic subject of both sentences, but that the German example simply shows predicate inversion. The English example is therefore rather straightforward, in that the canonical SVO word order interprets the first (left-most) NP as the grammatical subject, which is consistent with verbal agreement with the singular problem, rather than the plural parents; it would follow, then, that flipping the order of NP constituents should yield Your parents are the real problem, which should be unproblematic for most native speakers of (Standard) English. The German example, on the other hand, could be appear also with a SVO surface word order, provided Eltern is still interpreted by speakers as the grammatical subject, as in (4) below.

(4) German
Deine Eltern sind das eigentliche Problem.
your parents are the real problem
‘Your parents are the real problem’

Barring subtle variations in intonation or meaning, our focus here is the argument that NP2 languages like German are able to license nominative case on post-verbal subjects in such inversion contexts, while the same would be ungrammatical in English, as in (5) below.

(5) English (Heycock 2012: 213)
The real problem are your parents.

In short, German as an NP2 language can assign nominative case (and license verbal agreement with an NP subject) to an NP subject, regardless of whether that subject appears in a pre-verbal or post-verbal position. We may therefore argue that nominative case assignment is not dependent on raising to spec,CP, and must be assigned at a lower XP, e.g. spec,VP (and indeed, this should be uncontroversial). English, on the other hand, assigns nominative case to the first and highest NP in the clause (likely with a relationship with spec,TP), and is unable to license subject marking on lower NPs. Providing further evidence of this typological difference, Heycock notes assumed identity constructions, as in the examples from German (6), Dutch (7) and English (8) given below.

(6) German (Heycock 2012: 214–215)
Wenn ich du wäre, würde ich sofort weggehen.
if I were you you were would I immediately leave
‘If I were you, I would immediately go away.’
(7) Dutch Heycock 2012: 214–215
Als ik jou was zou ik meteen wegaan.
‘If I were you I would leave immediately.’

(8) English
If I were you, I would leave immediately.

(9) English
If I were him / *he, I would leave immediately.

In the German example, both pronouns ich and du can be assigned nominative case, even though the verb agrees with only the first element, ich. Thus, the grammatical subject ich is clearly identified through agreement with the verb, but the second element, du, nevertheless may receive nominative case. Contra the German example, however, Dutch and English assumed identity constructions only mark nominative/subject case on the first or left-most NP, while the second NP receives a non-nominative case marking. Because English you is underspecified for subject or object case, example (9) is also provided with a third person pronoun to show a parallel construction to the German example (6); we may therefore safely assume that the underspecified you in (8) is, in fact, an object and not subject pronoun. Assumed identity constructions therefore confirm the typological difference between English and German regarding copula constructions: while English has a single, comparatively high agreement structure for marking subject position, German may license nominative case in both a high and low position within the clause, suggesting not only a variable position for the licensing of nominative case, but multiple structures within a clause that are able to license nominative case on multiple NPs in a single clause. Dutch—perhaps the most closely related standard language to WHG speakers from the Mosel and Eifel regions who have C-agr—is an NP2 language like German, but licenses non-accusatives in assumed identity constructions. In this respect, Standard Dutch occupies a position between German and English, being an NP2 language like German, but not being able to license a second, nominative XP in assumed identity constructions, similar to English. Further evidence for such a positional analysis of agreement will be provided on C-agr varieties, in section 6 below.
3.2  C-agr in Non-standard and Heritage Varieties of German(ic)

C-agr is widely attested across modern varieties of West Germanic, in both non-standard varieties and codified, national standard languages, including: West Frisian (de Haan, 2010), West Flemish (Haegemann, 1992), and a wide variety of non-standard dialects of Dutch (DeVogelaer, 2010) and German, notably Bavarian (Fuß, 2004, 2005) and Eastern and Central Franconian (Weiss, 2005; cf. Goeman, 1997 for a diachronic summary of the phenomenon). C-agr is also attested in German heritage varieties spoken in Kansas (Wratil, 2014), Indiana (Nützel, 2009), Michigan (Born, 1994) and Wisconsin (Bousquette, 2014, 2015). Its defining characteristic is the licensing of C-oriented agreement through overt affixes on elements in the CP domain. An oft-cited example is provided below, in (10).

(10) Bavarian (Bayer 1984: 233)
Wennst kommst
if.2SG PRO come
‘If you come’

The example shows an inflectional suffix, affixed to the complementizer wenn, marking for person and number. Differences exist across languages and dialects with respect to the morphological distribution of C-agr within the paradigm, though all C-agr varieties license C-agr for 2.SG; the next most frequently attested are 2.PL and 1.PL, respectively. Across all varieties of West Germanic that license C-agr, 3.SG and 3.PL are almost entirely unattested, except for West Flemish, which is the only West Germanic language to have C-agr across the entire paradigm (Haegemann, 1992); Cimbrian has C-orientated pronominal encliticization across the paradigm – arguably an historical precursor to C-agr—but 3.SG enclitics in Cimbrian do not possess formal features for nominative case, person or number (Bidese et al., 2012: 10).

As regards the inflectional affixes themselves, many appear to be at least superficially similar to verbal inflection, though that is not necessarily true for all affixes (cf. Fuß, 2008: 7). Fuß (2005) has concluded that this provides evidence of a fundamental difference between C-agr and ‘canonical’ verbal agreement, with the former being C-oriented, and the latter finding its locus in a lower projection, e.g. VP. This is corroborated by evidence from related West Germanic languages, such as Eastern Dutch (Zwart, 1993) and Central Bavarian (Weiss, 2005), in which the formal difference between C-agr and verbal paradigms is specific to position within the clause: elements occurring high in the clause, at C in V2 languages like German and Dutch, have a separate agreement
paradigm from verbal elements occurring in clause-final position, as given below in the C-agr example in (11).

(11) Eastern Dutch (Zwart 1993: 256)
   ... datt-e wij speul-t
   that-1PL we play-1PL
   ‘that we play’

Central Bavarian also similarly restricts the phonetic realization of agreement morphemes to specific positions within the clause, which obtains for both C-agr contexts (12) as well as for predicate inversion contexts (13).

(12) Central Bavarian (Weiss 2005: 153–154)
   dasma mia aaf Minga fahrn /*ma
   that-1PL we to Munich go.1PL *1PL
   ‘that we go to Munich’

(13) Central Bavarian (Weiss 2005: 153–154)
   Mia fahrma /*n aaf Minga.
   we go.1PL *1PL to Munich
   ‘We are going to Munich.’

As exhibited in the two examples directly above, Central Bavarian possesses an alternation between high (C-oriented) agreement and low (clause-final, e.g. VP) agreement. The 3.PL verbal morpheme -(e)n is realized in clause-final position, while 3.PL -ma appears in V2 contexts, both with C-agr (12) as well as obligatorily in verbal agreement specific to that syntactic position (13). WHG similarly shows an -s inflection in (high) C-agr contexts, while maintaining the -st inflection for verbs elsewhere. Such a dichotomy between two distinct agreement structures is formalized by van Koppen (2005), working in the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995). In this particular framework, syntactic derivation involves syntactic elements with uninterpretable (u-Phi) and interpretable (i-Phi) features; i-Phi elements contain the features necessary to license inherent structures in u-Phi, which motivates an element with u-Phi

\[\text{\textsuperscript{10}}\]

Realization of the finite verb in clause-final position in a V2 language may result from either the verb remaining in its lower projection, or by raising to a medial, right-headed TP/IP. This distinction is not directly relevant to the discussion here, so long as it is formally distinct from C-oriented agreement.
features to probe for its necessary i-Phi features (its goal) somewhere in the utterance. Lexically specified features are realized—or checked—during the syntactic derivation, essentially involving this matching of u-Phi and i-Phi features. The resultant, well-formed utterance is one for which the appropriate, lexically specified features are realized in the most economical way. With regards to C-agr, van Koppen posits uninterpretable phi-features at C, which may receive interpretable phi-features from either a subject position, or a lower, verbal agreement structure; ultimately, the i-Phi features are derived from a goal-probe relationship with the maximally local position, which is the subject. Evidence for this most economical and local goal in the derivation is illustrated by the asymmetry between C-oriented and clause-final agreement morphology: since the C-agr morphology matches verbal agreement morphemes for main clauses, and not the agreement morphemes for subordinate clauses, we may conclude that the overt morphology in C-agr contexts is licensed through a goal-probe relationship with the subject (i.e. high agreement) rather than with the canonical low agreement associated with the verbal paradigm in subordinate clauses. Such an approach acknowledges both agreement structures present in V2 languages, and in this respect is consistent with the positional analysis of C-agr in Kathol (2001b: 43); citing Reis (1985: 301), he notes that topicalized elements other than complementizers may host C-agr inflectional suffixes, and that the ability to host C-agr inflection is not dependent on traditional (Minimalist Program) distinctions between specifiers (14a) and heads (14b, 14c). To this we may add examples involving C-agr appearing on a pronominal head embedded within a PP (15).

(14) Non-Standard German (Kathol 2001b: 43)
   (a) warum-ste / wannste kommst
       why-2SG when-2SG come
       ‘When you come’
   (b) den-ste kennst
       whom[ACC.M.SG]-2SG know
       ‘whom you know’
   (c) dem-ste ähnlich siehst
       whom.[DAT.M.SG]-2SG similar look
       ‘to whom you look similar’

(15) East Franconian (Bousquette 2014: 567)
   Is des de Mann, mit demst du gesprochen hast?
   is that the man with whom.[DAT.M.SG]-2SG you spoken have
   ‘Is that the man with whom you have spoken?’
As with the above examples of agreement in copula and assumed identity constructions, we see that C-agr varieties of German (and Dutch) possess two distinct agreement structures that are not only distinct between C-agr and verbal agreement contexts, but more appropriately, are similarly located at distinct high and low XPs within the same clause.

In addition to the presence of both of these high and low agreement structures in C-agr contexts, additional literature suggests that these are not necessarily separate structures, but rather that they are both obligatory in C-agr contexts. C-agr—at least in Bavarian—‘is blocked in sluicing constructions, that is, configurations where an IP within a wh-CP is elided’ (Fuß, 2008: 11; cf. Lobeck, 1995: 59).

(16) Bavarian (Fuß 2008: 11; cf. Lobeck, 1995: 59)
I woass dass-ts ihr a Madl gseng hoab-ts,
I know that-2PL you.PL a girl seen have

owa I woass net wo(*-ts) ihr a Madl gseng hoab-ts.
but I know not where(*-2PL) you a girl seen have.
‘I know that you’ve seen a girl, but I don’t know where (you’ve seen a girl).’

That continental varieties require the overt realization of the finite verb in (16) in a lower (e.g. IP/TP) position provides evidence that both high and low agreement are required for C-agr in these varieties. Thus, while previous examples from both assumed identity constructions and double-agreement suggest two different loci for the licensing of agreement, example (16) directly above suggests that these two might not be entirely independent from one another.

In this section, a number of typological differences between English, German and Dutch agreement structures have been described. Additionally, related agreement structures in C-agr varieties of German(ic) have also been noted. Summarized in Table (1) below, we see that standard varieties of the languages show that German and Dutch pattern together as AgrNP2, while English shows NP1 agreement in copula constructions. For assumed identity constructions, English patterns with Dutch in licensing non-nominative elements, while German is the lone standard language of the three that allows for two nominative NPs in that context.

Because speakers of WHG are also English L2 speakers, the question at hand is whether they will break more towards English or German systems, since both languages are entirely different from one another in this regard. Comparison of
these bilinguals’ English and WHG could help identify the dominant language for speakers, and could also serve as a measure of cross-linguistic transfer. To add another variable, we consider WHG speakers who have C-agr. As shown in section 3.2, C-agr involves both high and low agreement structures. Analysis in subsequent sections 4–6 will consider the potential effect of both agreement structures being present in the grammar, when the baseline input varieties of English and German have a privative distinction. This may also be manifested not only in copula constructions, but also in instances of elision of clause-final verbs in C-agr contexts, which is prohibited in continental varieties like Bavarian. Additionally, WHG speakers who have C-agr typically have identifiable ties to the Eifel and Mosel regions, and corresponding speech patterns consistent with pre-immigration varieties of Central Franconian, including in the morphological distribution and phonetic realization of C-agr (Bousquette, 2014, 2015). As such, we compare these data to Standard Dutch agreement, in order to further differentiate between English influence, and underlying, inherited structures from the pre-immigration variety.

4 Method, Consultants

Interviews were conducted with 10 speakers of WHG in May and June, 2014, seven of which license C-agr. Consultants were previously interviewed in 2011–2012, and were thereby pre-screened for the presence of C-agr, as well as for proficiency. All speakers were capable of extended spoken discourse on a

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11 Assumed Identity Constructions.
number of topics, including specialized professional topics such as agriculture (since all speakers had lived or worked on a farm for some part of their lives). Consultants were also able to discuss topics both present and past, and to express themselves using a wide range of modality, including use of the subjunctive mood. At least some consultants continue to use WHG on a regular basis, though infrequent use does not necessarily correlate with lower proficiency (cf. Sewell, 2015).

Following an introductory discussion relating to language use by the individual consultant, and within the community, consultants were asked to complete an Agreement Structure Directed Task (ASDT), as well as English-to-German translations, and acceptability judgments of German sentences, rated on a 5-point Likert-like scale. The ASDT is a modification of the protocol employed by Heycock (2012), which is aimed at determining whether consultants license high or low agreement in copula constructions. Consultants were provided written\textsuperscript{12} sentences in both English and German, and were directed to choose between two verb forms; one verb form matched the first NP in the clause, while the other matched the second, lower NP in the clause. All forms were grammatical; there were no distractors in that sense. Parallel sentences were presented in both languages, and the order of constituents was varied so as to identify not just agreement, but also subject marking (cf. section 3.1). Example sentences included both bare copula constructions (1–8), as well as those introduced by free relatives, e.g. wh- elements or the quantifier ‘all’, which regularly allow exceptional NP2-like structures, even for speakers with strict NP1 grammars (9–11). Additional examples served as distractors (12), or to test agreement in subordinate clauses (13). The example sentences are presented below, in Table 2.

In addition to the ASDT, English-to-German translation sentences were designed to elicit C-agr, as well as to test case marking for assumed identity constructions using variations on “if I were you” in AICS (cf. 6–9); translation sentences also contained a number of examples relevant to other studies, in addition to distractors. Acceptability judgments included, among other things, examples of C-agr in which the ‘canonical’ verbal agreement was elided.

\textsuperscript{12} Sentences were presented in Standard German and Standard English, which all consultants were capable of reading. Consultants with poor eyesight were aided by the interviewer.
| English                                                                 | German                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. My favorite vegetable is/are tomatoes.                              | Mein Lieblingsgemüse ist/sind Tomaten.                                 |
| 2. Apples is/are my favorite fruit.                                    | Äpfel ist/sind mein Lieblingsfrucht.                                   |
| 3. The problem is/are your parents.                                    | Das eigentliche Problem ist/sind deine Kinder.                         |
| 4. Your parents is/are the problem.                                    | Deine Kinder ist/sind das grösste Problem.                              |
| 5. One primary concern is/are the health risks associated with smoking.| Ich glaube, das Problem war/waren defekte Räder von den Dreschmaschinen.|
| 6. The cause of the accident was/were the unsafe conditions.           | Die Brandursache war/waren die brennenden Kerzen im Wohnzimmer.         |
| 7. The best part of the meal was/were the cookies we had for dessert.  | Ein gutes Beispiel war/waren die Kinder, die auf der Farm gearbeitet haben. |
| 8. Ein weiteres Beispiel war/waren die Nachbarn, die mit dem Dreschen geholfen haben. |                                                        |
| 9. What interests me is/are the circumstances concerning the plane crash. | Was wir gepflanzt haben, ist/waren Weizen und Roggen, denn die sind winterhart. |
| 10. What we bought at the store was/were two sets of work boots.       | Was mich interessierte, ist/waren kochen und essen, weil die Arbeit auf der Farm besonders schwer war. |
| 11. What I saw in the forest was/were three large squirrels.           | Alles was ich auf dem Feld sehen konnte war/waren zwei Kühe.            |
| 12. The head of the household is me / am I.                            | Ich ist / bin die Königin von England.                                  |
| 13. Wir müssen etwas tun, weil das grösste Problem deine Eltern ist/sind. |                                                        |
5  Data

In the current section, data is presented on the ASDT (section 5.1), translation tasks (section 5.2) and acceptability judgments (5.3). An analysis of the data follows, in section 5.4.

5.1  Agreement Structure Directed Task (ASDT) – High and Low Agreement

Data from examples sentences 1–8 are provided below. Table 3 shows the total number of instances in which non-C-agr WHG speakers chose verbal agreement that matches with the first, or left-most syntactic constituent (high), or with the second syntactic constituent (low). Results below are given for both English and for German, with data provided both by speaker, and in aggregate.

As seen in the data, all three speakers choose both high and low agreement for both English and German, with low agreement being slightly higher in terms of raw numbers in German than in English. In examining the data more closely and in light of the typologies of the two languages, this variation can be explained. In looking at the data from the German sentences, we see that the higher frequency of low agreement structures is consistent with its designation as an NP2 language. High agreement—or agreement with the first syntactic constituent—is not prohibited in an NP2 language, provided that first constituent is interpreted as the grammatical subject. In this respect, variation of high and low agreement for the German sentences for the ASDT are licit within the typology.

In looking at speakers’ English data, a similar pattern emerges as in German, with nearly half of all responses—and fully half of the responses for two of

| Speaker | English high | English low | German high | German low |
|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| MX      | 3           | 3           | 3           | 5          |
| JX      | 5           | 2           | 3           | 4          |
| EX      | 3           | 3           | 3           | 5          |
| Total   | 11          | 8           | 9           | 14         |
| Percentage | 58%         | 42%         | 39%         | 61%        |
three speakers—show low agreement. Following the typology of an NP1 language like English, low agreement should not be a licit structure; the expected results for monolingual English speakers would be 100% high agreement for these examples. Since data show seemingly free variation in the licensing of not just high but also low agreement, it would appear that WHG speakers without C-agr apply the NP2 typology characteristic of their German heritage language grammar also for English.

Table 4 below similarly provides data on example sentences 1–8, but for WHG speakers who license C-agr in their heritage grammar. As before, results are given for English and German, both divided by individual speaker, as well as in aggregate.

Data from WHG speakers with C-agr differs in meaningful ways from data presented in Table 3 above. For these speakers, the NP2 typology of German is clearly apparent in the nearly equal distribution of high and low agreement for German sentences; again, for NP2 languages, low agreement is not prohibited, and high agreement is possible when the first syntactic constituent is interpreted as the grammatical subject. And while there is a slight shift towards a majority of high agreement forms, a simple 2x2 chi-square test comparing both groups shows that the presence of C-agr is not a predicting factor in the licensing of high agreement when speaking German ($X^2 = 2.159; p = .14173$). Still, while this statistical analysis alone does not necessarily identify a contrast in the grammars of WHG speakers, the shift towards prevailing high agreement

| Speaker | English | German |
|---------|---------|--------|
|         | high    | low    | high   | low    |
| AC      | 7       | 0      | 4      | 4      |
| WWC     | 4       | 3      | 3      | 5      |
| WGC     | 3       | 3      | 4      | 2      |
| EMC     | 5       | 2      | 5      | 3      |
| DC      | 6       | 1      | 7      | 1      |
| EGC     | 7       | 0      | 5      | 3      |
| RC      | 5       | 2      | 3      | 5      |
| Total   | 37      | 8      | 31     | 23     |
| Percentage | 82% | 18% | 57% | 43% |
structures among WHG speakers with C-agr does suggest an underlying difference between the two groups.

The data for English are more striking, with fully 82% of responses from speakers with C-agr being for high agreement; six of seven speakers chose high agreement more often than low agreement, with two speakers selecting high agreement exclusively. For these two speakers (AC and EGC), it is possible that they have employed an NP1 grammar in English—which prohibits low agreement—despite evidence of the underlying NP2 grammar in the heritage language. Indeed, both speakers to employ low agreement when speaking WHG. In comparing the two groups of WHG, it would be more appropriate to note a noticeably higher degree of high agreement across all speakers of WHG with C-agr when speaking English, than the non-C-agr group’s English. In fact, in running a similar chi-square test for English data, comparing the two groups of WHG speakers, we find that the presence of C-agr in WHG is a predicting factor in whether or not speakers will license high agreement structures when speaking English ($X^2 = 4.176; p = 0.41$). In short, WHG speakers without C-agr will predictably employ low agreement characteristic of their HL when speaking English—even though English is an NP1 or high agreement language. On the other hand, WHG speakers with C-agr will predictably employ high agreement when speaking English, which is a shared characteristic of both their HL and their English L2. The implication here is that the presence of a second, high agreement structure in the HL allows for the use of high agreement when speaking English, because the shared structure between both languages does not lead to a violation of either language-specific grammar. Again, as with the statistical tests for the German data, these p values should not be thought of as clear or absolute evidence, but rather should be taken along with the raw data and supplementary diagnostics (e.g., AICS) as indicative of the influence of speakers’ HL on their English L2.

In summation of data on sentences 1–8, speakers without C-agr appear to employ an NP2 typology when speaking both English and WHG. Speakers with C-agr, however, demonstrate a higher rate of high agreement overall, with some instances of NP2 typology in WHG, and something more closely resembling an NP1 typology in English.

As previously noted in section 3, sentences introduced by free relatives like wh-elements or all(es) tend to result in low agreement structures, even for speakers of NP1 languages like English. Data for sentences 9–11 from the ASDT are given in tables 5 and 6 below.

Data from WHG speakers without C-agr is exceedingly small, given a maximum number of 6 sentences multiplied by three speakers. Still, the data suggest a preference for low agreement structures at a rate higher than was
exhibited for bare copula sentences 1–8 (cf. Table 2), which is consistent with both the typology for an NP2 language, as well as for NP1 languages for these types of clauses.

Data from WHG speakers with C-agr also show expected results for clauses introduced by free relatives, with the rate of low agreement for this type of clause being higher for both English and German. And while raw numbers are again small, we must take into consideration the fact that, in bare copula constructions in sentences 1–8, these same speakers preferred high agreement in 57% of German sentences, and 82% of English sentences.
In a broad sense, these data on sentences headed by free relatives suggest that WHG speakers’ licensing of agreement structures in both English and German is sensitive to clause type, consistent with what is expected for monolingual speakers of both English and German.

5.2 Assumed Identity Constructions: English-to-German Translation Tasks

As noted above, typological differences between NP1 languages like English, and NP2 languages like German extend to other aspects of the grammar related to agreement. German typically licenses nominative case for both NPs in an assumed identity construction, English marks the grammatical subject as subject, but the second NP as non-nominative (i.e., object) case (cf. 8–9). Standard Dutch, while an NP2 language like German, licenses non-nominative case in AICs, similar to English (cf. 7). In order to test this case-marking for WHG speakers, consultants were asked to translate maximally 5 sentences including variations of “If I were you” from English into German. This example was chosen because the second person pronoun in English is underspecified between subject and object case, which limited priming effects; the resultant German translation would then show either two nominative NPs, following the Standard German typology, or two different overt cases, characteristic of English (or Dutch).

In looking at the data, there appears to be no difference between WHG speakers with C-agr, and those without C-agr. Interestingly enough, only one speaker licenses two nominative pronouns in German for AICs, as in 17 below.

(17) Wisconsin Heritage German
Wenn ich du wäre, däd ich eine neue Car kaufen. (DC)
if I[NOM.1SG] you[NOM.2SG] were do.SUBJ.1SG I a new car buy
‘If I were you, I would buy a new car.’

The licensing of nominative case on both the grammatical subject, ich (1SG.NOM), and du (2SG.NOM) is consistent across all four examples for this speaker. And while the other nine speakers licensed a case other than nominative, they did so consistently, and without variation.

(18) Wisconsin Heritage German
Wenn ich dich wär, ich däd ein neue Tractor kaufe. (RMC)
if I[NOM.1SG] you[ACC.2SG] were I do.SUBJ.1SG a new tractor buy
‘If I were you, I would buy a new tractor.’
(19) Wisconsin Heritage German
Wann ich dich wär, däd ich nicht so viel drinke.
If I[nom.1sg] you[acc.2sg] were do.subj.1sg I not so much drink.inf
‘If I were you, I wouldn't drink so much.’

(20) Wisconsin Heritage German
Wenn ich dich wäre, werde ich mehr Gemiese essen. (egc)
If I[nom.1sg] you[acc.2sg] were would I more vegetables eat.inf
‘If I were you, I would eat more vegetables.’

(21) Wisconsin Heritage German
Wenn ich dich wär, ich däd einen neuen Schlepper kaufen. (wgc)
If I[nom.1sg] you[acc.2sg] were I dosubj.1sg a new tractor buy.inf
‘If I were you, I would buy a new tractor.’

(22) Wisconsin Heritage German
Wenn ich dich wär, däd ich nicht so viel drinken. (wgc)
If I[nom.1sg] you[acc.2sg] were do.subj.1sg I not so much drink.inf
‘If I were you, I wouldn't drink so much.’

(23) Wisconsin Heritage German
Wenn ich dich wär, ich däd ein(e) neue Car kaufen. (wwc)
If I[nom.1sg] you[acc.2sg] were I do.subj.1sg a new car buy.inf
‘If I were you, I would buy a new car.’

(24) Wisconsin Heritage German
Wenn ich dich wär, ich däd nicht so viel drinken. (wwc)
If I[nom.1sg] you[acc.2sg] were I do.subj.1sg not so much drink.inf
‘If I were you, I wouldn't drink so much.’

(25) Wisconsin Heritage German
Ich däd nicht so laut sprechen, wenn ich dich wär. (wwc)
I do.subj.1sg not so loud speak.inf if I[nom.1sg] you[acc.2sg] were.
‘I wouldn't talk so loud, if I were you.’

(26) Wisconsin Heritage German
Wenn ich dich wäre, ich däd mehr Gemies essen. (wwc)
If I[nom.1sg you[acc.2sg] were I do.subj.1sg more vegetables eat.inf
‘If I were you, I would eat more vegetables.’
In addition to the use of *dich* (2SG.ACC) in AICS, two speakers—both without C-agr—used *dir* (2SG.DAT) as a non-nominative case.

(27) Wisconsin Heritage German

Ich däd nicht so laut sprechen, wenn ich dir wär. (MX)

I do.SUBJ.1SG not so loud speak.INF if you[DAT.2SG] were

‘I wouldn’t speak so loud, if I were you.’

(28) Wisconsin Heritage German

Wenn ich dir wär, däd ich mehr Gemiese esse. (JX)

if you[DAT.2SG] were do.SUBJ.1SG I more vegetables eat.INF

‘If I were you, I would eat more vegetables.’

Generally speaking, the use of non-nominative case marking in AICS is characteristic of NP1 languages like English; or of Standard Dutch, which is an NP2 language, but licenses non-nominative case in AICS. Of course, since all of these WHG speakers have English as an L2, it is possible that these non-nominatives obtain from English influence. However, since many speakers’ direct ancestry and non-standard linguistic features can be traced to Central Franconian regions of Germany, including the Mosel Valley and the Eifel (Bousquette, 2014), it cannot be definitively said that these non-nominatives in AICS are not resultant from the ancestral, continental variety. What can be said with certainty, is that only 1 of 10 consultants employs case marking in AICS consistent with Modern Standard German.

5.3 **VP/TP Elision in C-agr Contexts**

As discussed in section 2, Bavarian speakers with C-agr are not able to license C-agr in cases where the verb in clause-final position is elided (Fuß, 2008). In order to test whether C-agr is licensed in similar contexts in WHG, data were drawn through English-to-German translations tasks, as well as acceptability judgments.

Starting with translation tasks, we find variable realizations of C-agr, which can be organized systematically. Standard-like formulations are attested (29). Also, as is licit in standard German, some speakers elide verb final forms without licensing C-agr (30); and as expected in Bavarian, at least, many speakers license C-agr with an overtly realized verb in final position (31–33).

(29) Wisconsin Heritage German

Hank is gresser wie du bist. (wwc)

Hank is bigger than you are

‘Hank is bigger than you are.’
Additionally, however, are instances where speakers do, in fact, license C-agr in instances where the verb is elided (34–36). This is not attested in continental varieties of German that license C-agr, and is arguably prohibited in those varieties.

(34) Wisconsin Heritage German
    Josef spielt Ball besser wies du. (WGC)
    Joseph plays ball better than.2SG you
    ‘Joseph plays ball better than you (play ball)’

(35) Wisconsin Heritage German
    Josef, der spielt Baseball besser wies du das. (EGC)
    Joseph he plays baseball better than.2SG you that ø
    ‘Joseph, he plays baseball better than you (play) it.’

(36) Wisconsin Heritage German
    Anneke kann besser kochen wies du das. (EGC)
    Annie can better cook-INF than.2SG you that ø
    ‘Anneke can cook better than you can (do) it.’
The fact that WHG speakers are able to elide verbs in final position in clauses containing C-agr is a clear difference between this heritage variety, and what is evidenced for Bavarian; the syntactic minutia of this distinction will be discussed below, in section 6.

Additional qualitative data from acceptability judgment task supports the data from the translation task. In the example below, the interviewer inquires about a particular sentence in which C-agr is licensed on the comparative conjunction *dans*\(^{13}\) ‘than.2SG’. The consultant corrects the interviewer for the conjunction used in his variety of WHG, *wies* ‘than.2SG’, similarly with C-agr licensed, and similarly eliding the verb. After swapping the lexical items, the speaker accepts the example sentence.

(37) Wisconsin Heritage German

Interviewer: Der Josef ist älter *dans* du.

the Joseph ist older than.2SG you

‘Joseph is older than you (are).’

wgc: We’d say *‘wies* du.’

than.2SG you

‘We’d say *wies* du.’

Interviewer: Oh okay: Josef ist älter *wies* du.

Joseph is older than.2SG you

‘Oh, Okay: Joseph is older than you (are).’

wgc: ‘*Wies* du’, yeah.

than.2SG you

‘[Acknowledging the correction]: ‘*Wies* du’, yeah’

Interviewer: Oké.

Okay

‘Okay.’

These sorts of exchanges occurred frequently during the acceptability judgment task. One gets the impression that acceptance of elided forms is high; however, quantitative values supplied on a 5-point Likert-like scale were largely

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\(^{13}\) Standard and non-standard varieties of German and Dutch use a variety of comparative conjunctions, including but not limited to: dan, als, wie, als wie.
inconclusive, since consultants accepted almost every example. At least anecdotally speaking, heritage speakers seem to accept a higher rate of variation in a grammar, which in this case likely relates to the many input varieties present in these neighboring communities (cf. section 2). Though the data comparing relative acceptability of elided and non-elided clauses is inconclusive, it can at least be said that exchanges such as (37) support the results of the translation task, in that verb elision in C-agr contexts is both attested in production data, and acceptable in receptive judgment tasks.

5.4 Summary
In looking at the data from WHG, we see an interesting mix of typologies. These are summarized in Table (7) below.

For all WHG speakers, the heritage variety remains an NP2 language, with subject case being assigned in both pre- and post-verbal positions. For WHG speakers without C-agr, this typology extends to their spoken English, which similarly exhibits NP2 agreement not licit in the standard variety. This is likely the result of ‘seeping’ of syntactic features from speakers’ dominant HL into their L2. Contrasting with them, however, are the WHG speakers with C-agr, who license high (NP1) agreement when speaking English. Given that there are no discernable differences between the groups in terms of proficiency or frequency of activation, we must conclude that the data reveal meaningful differences in the competence grammar of each group of speakers, and that these differences relate to the presence (or absence) of the additional agreement structure in the grammar of some speakers.

As regards the AICS, speakers of WHG again show meaningful departures from Standard German. Within the consultant group, 9/10 speakers employed

| Table 7 Agreement typology of WHG |
|-----------------------------------|
| AgrNP1 | AgrNP2 | AIC\textsuperscript{14} | C-agr | C-agr in elided contexts |
| English | + | – | non-nominative | – | Ø |
| German | – | + | nominative | – | Ø |
| Dutch | – | + | non-nominative | – | Ø |
| WHG | – | + | non-nominative | – | Ø |
| WHG w/ C-agr | + | + | non-nominative | + | + |

\textsuperscript{14} Assumed Identity Constructions.
a non-nominative pronoun (accusative or dative) for the second NP. Only one speaker employed a standard-like nominative as the second pronoun in an AIC. At first blush, this would appear to be an imposition from English, which also licenses non-nominatives in AICS. However, given that WHG appears to be an NP2 language with non-nominatives in AICS, it would be more appropriate to note that WHG patterns more like Standard Dutch. Given the high rate of emigration from West-Central Franconian regions to Wisconsin’s Holyland, it may be safe to assume that non-nominatives in AICS are also reflective of the pre-immigration input varieties.

In addition to these agreement structures, WHG also exhibits a different pattern regarding agreement in C-agr contexts than is attested for Bavarian. In this continental variety, verbs in final position may not be elided in C-agr contexts, which suggests a connection between the high and low agreement positions characteristic of C-agr varieties. In WHG, however, elision of ‘canonical’ verbal agreement has been shown to be licit in both production and judgment tasks. It is not clear whether this is a difference between Bavarian and the West-Central Franconian input varieties, or whether this reflects a change in the syntax of WHG, post-immigration. All that can be said with certainty is that such a prohibition on the elision of clause-final verbs in C-agr contexts is not a universal constraint for all C-agr varieties in German(ic).

6 Analysis

For WHG speakers who do not have C-agr as part of their grammar, the patterns that emerge are consistent with other bilingual heritage communities, in that the HL affects the grammar of the L2. Consistent with the grammar of the HL, speakers employ NP2 agreement structures in both WHG and English. Since NP2 grammars allow the subject to appear in either high or low surface positions within the clause, influence from the socially dominant L2 (English) is not at odds with the underlying HL grammar when speaking WHG. The results, then, show the licensing of NP2 structures in WHG to be consistent with German typology. If anything, it is the influence of the NP2 HL that results in grammatical violations of the L2 grammar when speaking English, licensing NP2 (low) agreement in a language that otherwise prohibits it. In this respect, WHG speakers without C-agr pattern as HL-dominant speakers, who have an underlying heritage grammar that occasionally aligns superficially with licit structures in the L2, but who do not violate the constraints of their HL when speaking either the HL or the L2.

For WHG speakers who do have C-agr as part of their grammar, high and low agreement structures pattern, in large part, after the linguistic typologies
of the language-specific grammars: WHG data show NP2 (low) agreement (with surface NP1 agreement that does not violate the HL grammar), while English data show a majority of NP1 (high) agreement. Still, it would be counter-intuitive to suggest that the heritage speakers who faithfully maintain the most non-standard features of the pre-immigration variety would also show more standard-like English agreement than the other group of WHG speakers. No discernable differences emerge between the two groups with respect to language proficiency, language dominance, or any other extra-linguistic factor; the meaningful difference, then, is the presence of C-agr. As noted in section 3.2, C-agr varieties of German possess a second, (high) C-oriented agreement structure in addition to the canonical (low) NP2 agreement characteristic of the baseline variety, which occasionally manifests itself with domain-specific agreement morphemes. Thus, C-agr varieties of German (and Dutch)—including WHG—have not only an underlying NP2 grammar that does not prohibit the grammatical subject from appearing in a pre-verbal position in main clauses, but they also possess an additional high, C-oriented agreement structure in subordinate clauses. The apparent higher frequency of NP1 agreement in the English of WHG speakers with C-agr obtains due to the fact that the typology of English is 1) not a violation of licit structures in NP2 languages; and 2) English NP1 typology correlates with the high, C-oriented agreement structures characteristic of C-agr varieties of German and Dutch. As such, the NP1 typology of English encourages a higher frequency of licit structures from the HL, but does not introduce new agreement structures into the heritage variety. WHG speakers with C-agr are more sensitive to this activation of high agreement than other WHG speakers, due to the C-oriented agreement structure in their grammar.

When considering high and low agreement in a bilingual community, it is here argued that similarities between the grammar of English and the non-standard WHG with C-agr results in a higher frequency of high agreement when speaking English. While this bilingualism does not introduce new structures into either language, there is some evidence that English may have lead to a subtle change in the HL grammar. Specifically, the English input of uniformly high agreement may have caused an erosion in the dual high and low agreement structures in WHG, as discussed in section 3 above. As noted in section 3.2, WHG does have domain-specific morphology, such that C-agr morphology for 2.SG -s differs from verbal 2.SG -st. And while this suggests a localized agreement structure, the prohibition against verbal elision in continental C-agr varieties suggests that the two agreement structures are not entirely autonomous. In WHG, however, production and judgment tasks both suggest a weakening of this interaction, such that C-agr may be licensed even when the verb is elided. Thus, influence from the NP1 typology of the L2 on the
HL may have not only increased the frequency of superficial high agreement structures in WHG over the last 3–5 generations, but may have also lead to either a simplification of the two distinct agreement structures to one, single C-oriented structure; or English influence may have resulted in a strengthening of the more local, C-oriented (high) agreement at the expense of the low NP2 agreement. In any case, verbal elision in WHG C-agr would appear to be a change relative to the continental C-agr varieties, which suggests that 1) C-agr may be licensed independently of verbal inflection; and 2) this change may have been affected by increased frequency of NP1 structures from the L2. Taken in isolation, this point would warrant further investigation; taken in aggregate with the other data presented here, and a more subtle picture emerges of the influence of the L2 on the heritage grammar.

Regarding AICSs, 9/10 WHG speakers pattern like English or Dutch speakers, in that they license non-nominatives for the second NP in the utterance. While the influence of English is not to be understated, given that these individuals have spent the majority of their lives in an English-dominant society, it is not prudent to simply account for these patterns through English influence. All WHG speakers show a tendency towards NP2 agreement when speaking the heritage variety, and so the influence of an NP1 language like English on WHG is limited. In comparing high and low agreement structures, moreover, it is clear that WHG speakers without C-agr show a clear German influence on their English; for speakers with C-agr, apparent English-like structures are influential only insofar as they increase the frequency of certain licit structures in the HL grammar. With such evidence of NP2 structures in WHG for all speakers, and with such limited influence of the L2 on the HL, non-nominatives in WHG AICS cannot be derived solely from the influence of English. While English would yield non-nominatives in AICS, so would Dutch—and the parallels between Dutch and the pre-immigration Rhenish and Mosel Franconian input varieties are geographically and linguistically closer to Dutch than to English. Thus, for all WHG speakers, data suggest non-nominatives in AICS may have been characteristic of pre-immigration input varieties, and possibly reinforced by similar structures in the socially-dominant L2 in a bilingual community.

7 Conclusion

The present work concerns the licensing of high vis-à-vis low agreement structures in WHG, studying both the English and Heritage German of baseline speakers, and of speakers who license C-agr. Speakers without C-agr show
German-like NP2 structures when speaking both English and German, reflective of HL dominance. While superficial high agreement is not a violation of the HL grammar, German-like NP2 structures attested in the L2 suggest an imposition from the HL. Thus, these WHG speakers will employ a fundamentally HL grammar, and only employ superficially L2 structures when they are also licit structures in the HL.

Speakers with C-agr show licensing of NP2 structures in WHG, and NP1 structures in English, characteristic of the language-specific typologies. Still, it is here argued that the underlying grammar for these speakers remains a HL grammar, with the C-agr group being distinguished from the non-C-agr group on the basis of structural differences in the HL grammar. These speakers’ grammar includes not just the canonical NP2 agreement, but also an additional, C-oriented agreement structure. As such, the C-agr group patterned like an NP2 language when speaking WHG. The higher frequency of superficially high agreement observed in English obtains from the alignment of the English high NP1 agreement and the high C-orientated agreement of the heritage variety. Thus, when speaking English, these speakers simply use a higher frequency of high agreement, licit in the heritage variety with C-agr; English typology affects the frequency of high agreement structures, which are already present in the HL. One possible effect of English influence on WHG grammar is visible in the erosion of the low agreement in C-agr contexts, allowing for the verb to be elided.

When looking at these agreement structures in a heritage grammar—whether it be high/low agreement, AICS, or verbal elision in C-agr contexts—the present work seeks to more clearly define the influence of English on the heritage grammar. It is here argued that the majority of standard-deviant structures in WHG can be most likely attributed to the non-standard input variety. Still, though, English can influence the relative frequency of alternating licit structures in the heritage variety, seen in the number of high agreement structures among WHG speakers—especially in the English of WHG speakers with C-agr. At a more core level, English influence may have also lead to an erosion of the dual agreement structures of C-agr, yielding a single, C-oriented structure, and permitting verbal elision in C-agr contexts. Thus, the subtle influence of the L2 is visible not in the adoption of L2 structures into the HL, but rather in the way that structures in the L2 affect analogous grammatical structures in the HL. When considering the influence of the socially-dominant L2 on the heritage variety, it is therefore crucial that we clearly identify autochthonous features of the (non-standard) heritage variety, and that when considering a bilingual community we have a more nuanced view of the ways in which one grammar may affect another.
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