

Helen White
Kari Lie Dorer
NORW 396
25 May 2021

Approaching the Norwegian Multiethnolect Using Corpus Data

Introduction

The past forty years or so have brought a huge influx of immigrants to Norway, seeking asylum from wars raging in their homelands, or simply seeking a better life for themselves and their children. This shift in the population makeup of Norway, in particular metropolitan areas, has resulted in a combination of many cultures in an area that was formerly largely homogeneous. Immigrants from a wide variety of countries began to learn Norwegian, creating something new: a Norwegian multiethnolect. A multiethnolect is a variety of speaking which mixes several languages together, creating a new style that denotes identity and minority status in order to reclaim and react to an imposed social status (Svendsen 2008). Multiethnolects can be found anywhere, but this particular phenomenon of refugees and immigrants coming mainly from the Middle East and North Africa and forming a new speaking style has cropped up in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, and other European countries. In Norway, this style of speaking began around thirty years ago, brought about by the high concentration of immigrants in certain parts of Oslo. The Norwegian multiethnolect (NMET) was mainly used by adolescent males or young men, and has since been studied and classified by linguists. Previously, this speaking style was known by other, less respectful names, many of which came from outgroups rather than the actual speakers. Such names included *kebabnorsk* (“kebab Norwegian”), *gatespråk* (“street language”), and *Holmlia-norsk* (“Holmlia Norwegian”), to name a few. However, for the purposes of this report, I will be using “Norwegian multiethnolect,” or “NMET,” as this is the more descriptive linguistic term and lends the most credibility to a natural

linguistic process and valid speaking style. There are a wide variety of changes from what is considered to be the “standard” way of speaking Norwegian, known as *standard østnorsk* (“standard Eastern Norwegian”). These traits include morphological, phonological, syntactical, and lexical differences, many of which have been written about in previous studies. For the purposes of this data collection, I will be focusing on the lexical items, or the unique words, often loanwords from other languages, used in NMET. The most easily recognizable traits are these lexical items, which are often loan words from other languages, brought about by the diverse cultural and linguistic mixing that has happened in these parts of Oslo. In examining these instances of NMET and the context in which this speaking style is used, we can draw estimations about its use across Oslo.

Source material

Before diving into the methods, it is important to give context and information about the source material that was chosen for this analysis and how it informs our understanding of the results. Initially, I narrowed down my analysis of NMET to only lexical items, which are often referred to as “tokens” in this paper. A token is an instance of a word being used, making the data more quantifiable and easier to analyze. I have selected lexical items as they are the easiest to find evidence for in the corpus, and because there are “no comprehensive studies of adolescents’ language use in Oslo, although there are larger studies of the use of slang” that would allow for such data collection (Svendsen 2008). Lexical items are the easiest to recognize as something outside of standard Eastern Norwegian because they are words that either are not used in the so-called “standard,” or that take on a new meaning in the multiethnolect. They are also the only trait that could be easily located in all of its instances in both the novel and the corpus, which are the main source materials for this undertaking.

A corpus is a body of language that can be searched through in order to find general trends about how the speakers are using language. Mainly, they consist of written or spoken content that a user can search through. The tokens are often categorized according to traits about the speaker as well. For example, the No-Ta Corpus utilized in this analysis took data on age, gender, level of education, cultural background, where in Oslo or Norway they had resided previously, their job, etc. in regards to the speakers. This allows us to examine not only general language trends, but also trends among specific groups. The corpus used in this project was the No-Ta Corpus from the University of Oslo (UiO). Data was collected from 2004-2006 from 166 speakers from all parts of Oslo, including “61... in the age group 16-25” (Svendsen 2008). Because NMET is most prevalent among adolescent boys, this is the primary group of interest within the corpus. This corpus recorded data from speakers in two contexts, during an interview with a researcher and during a conversation with a peer. Because I am focusing on lexical items, I used the corpus to search for 20 different words characteristic of NMET.

In order to gather these top 20 lexical items, I employed a widely-known Norwegian novel, *Tante Ulrikkes vei* (“Aunt Ulrikke’s Street”) by Zeshan Shakar. The novel follows two young men over a series of years in the early 2000s as they grow up in an area of Oslo called Stovner, on a street called *Tante Ulrikkes vei*, which houses a high concentration of immigrant and minority background residents. The setting and the speaking style is very much real, even though the stories and the characters themselves are not. The two protagonists, Mo and Jamal, have differing speech styles and outlooks on life, recorded by an imagined research project that they have been asked to participate in. They discuss their everyday life and experiences using their own personal speaking style. One of the protagonists, Jamal, relies heavily on the use of NMET in the parts of the novel told through his perspective. His portions of the novel are meant

to emulate a transcript of a spoken recording, which is fitting given that NMET is a speaking style. He describes the struggles he has in making financial ends meet, finding direction in life, and taking care of his family. Although he is one speaker, and a fictional one at that, the language mirrors the real language use of adolescence during the early to mid-2000s. The author himself grew up in the same area and around the same time where he creates the setting for the two protagonists of his novel, giving them an authentic speaking style. Because the novel is set in the early to mid-2000s, and the corpus data was gathered from 2004-2006, the timeframes line up in terms of the form of language use most prevalent within NMET.

The other protagonist, Mo, relies less on the use of NMET. He is an NMET user, though he mostly sticks to morphological features such as alternate verb endings. His style tends to be more formal as it emulates a written email. Mo has lofty ambitions and wants to fit into Norwegian society, but finds that many barriers exist. It is worth examining because it is a very popular example of NMET use written by an NMET speaker. As the setting of the novel is early to mid-2000s Oslo, it gives great examples of how NMET might have been used around the time that the corpus data was collected. Though the text is fictional, the speaking style is real because of the author's personal background and cultural knowledge. In order to gather words with which to examine corpus data, I pulled out the 20 most used NMET lexical items in the novel.

Methods

How can we classify this distinct speaking style? Who are the speakers, and how do they use this new creation, this new combination of so many different languages and cultures in a unique way? Over the past thirty years or so since the Norwegian multiethnolect began, has it spread to other speakers of Norwegian besides those with a minority background? In order to gather information about these questions, and others, I examined corpus data in conjunction with

one of the most prominent novels written using NMET, *Tante Ulrikkes vei (TUV)*, written by Zeshan Shakar. As mentioned earlier, lexical items will be the focus in examining the NMET use within the corpus. In examining the corpus, I searched for real-life examples of NMET being used, including evidence that NMET has spread to other parts of Oslo besides those with high concentrations of minority populations.

Altogether, 957,063 tokens, or lexical items, were collected from the 166 speakers within the No-Ta corpus. I selected this corpus because of the similar time period with *TUV*, the fact that speakers from all over Oslo were interviewed, and because of the formal nature of the data collection and findings. Because the data was collected and recorded in a very systematic way, it makes data collection stronger when searching for answers about the geographical use of NMET. Before searching in the corpus, I found the top 20 NMET words used in *TUV* and counted the number of tokens for each. In my research, I searched the corpus for these top 20 words as found in the novel. In my findings, I recorded context on the speakers and the tokens themselves in order to find out more about how NMET might be spreading in Oslo, and how it is used. I then collected data on different areas of Oslo from the same time period (2005), including the ethnic makeup of the areas. In particular, I looked for high concentrations of Norwegian-born individuals with immigrant parents, who are the main users of NMET due to its history and context; NMET is most widely found amongst adolescents. This is the data that this report will analyze and attempt to shed light on.

Corpus data

Before examining the findings from the corpus, we must take a closer look at these top 20 words found in the novel, their meanings, and how I searched for the data.

Table 1. Tokens used in corpus data collection.

This table outlines the data that was collected from *Tante Ulrikkes vei* in order to be entered into the corpus search. They are ranked according to their frequency within the novel. These tokens are from two protagonists and their accounts rather than multiple speakers, and the counts span the entire novel, making it a good source of language use. The search was conducted using all of the forms provided in the table.

| Rank | Token (NOR) | Token (ENG) | Word class | Other forms | Count |
|------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|--|-------|
| 1 | <i>sjofo</i> | to see, watch | verb | <i>sjof, sjofer</i> | 147 |
| 2 | <i>sverge</i> | to swear | verb | <i>sverg, sverga</i> | 137 |
| 3 | <i>heftig</i> | cool, good, intense | adj. | <i>heftige, heftigere, heftigste</i> | 103 |
| 4 | <i>avor</i> | to leave | verb | - | 64 |
| 5 | <i>flus</i> | money | noun | <i>flusa</i> | 55 |
| 6 | <i>keef/keefe</i> | weed/to smoke weed | noun/verb | <i>keefa, keefen, keefer</i> | 51 |
| 7 | <i>chill/chille</i> | chill/to chill | adj./verb | <i>chillern, chilla, chillere, chilleste</i> | 43 |
| 8 | <i>schpaa</i> | good, pretty, nice | adj. | <i>schpaae, schpaaere, schpaaeste</i> | 40 |
| 9 | <i>potet</i> | a white Norwegian | noun | <i>poteten, poteter, potetene</i> | 35 |
| 10 | <i>tishar</i> | a bad person, an asshole (derogatory) | noun | <i>tisharen, tisharer, tisharene</i> | 29 |
| 11 | <i>lættis</i> | funny, laughable | adj. | <i>lættise, lættisere, lættiste</i> | 24 |
| 11 | <i>tæz</i> | bad, sucky | adj. | <i>tæze, tæzere, tæzeste</i> | 24 |
| 11 | <i>kæbe</i> | a bitch, a whore | noun | <i>kæba, kæber, kæbene</i> | 24 |

| | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----------------------|------------|--|----|
| | | (derogatory) | | | |
| 11 | <i>kæze</i> | to beat up | verb | <i>kæza, kæzer</i> | 24 |
| 12 | <i>svarting</i> | a black person | noun | <i>svartingen, svartinger, svartingene</i> | 22 |
| 13 | <i>bauers</i> | the police | noun | <i>bauersen</i> | 19 |
| 14 | <i>ghetto</i> | ghetto | noun | <i>ghettoen, ghettoer, ghettoene</i> | 15 |
| 15 | <i>wallah</i> | to swear by Allah | expression | <i>wolla, wollah, walla</i> | 11 |
| 16 | <i>arsko</i> | to fuck (profane) | verb | - | 8 |
| 17 | <i>tæsja/tæsje</i> | to trick, to swindle | noun/verb | <i>tæsjer, tæsja, tæsjaen, tæsjaer, tæsjaene</i> | 7 |

The vast majority of these tokens come from Jamal, one of the fictional protagonists, who uses NMET very frequently within his perspective in the novel. The majority of these words (such as *wallah*, *tishar*) are loanwords that have been taken from languages like Arabic, Berber, Urdu, Spanish, etc. that are used by immigrant groups. Some others are Norwegian words that have taken on a new meaning (such as *heftig*). These words can be picked out in order to give a baseline for a variety of NMET lexical items that we can take a closer look at in the corpus. As we know that all of these fall within the realm of NMET, a corpus analysis will tell us more about the real-life use of these words.

Table 2. Corpus data findings.

Entering all of the forms of the tokens, these are the counts found within the corpus data, and the number of speakers that used each token. They are again ranked by frequency. Note that several tokens are missing in the table, as they were not used at all in the corpus.

| Rank | Token (NO) | Token (EN) | Count | Speaker count |
|------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------------|
| 1 | <i>chill/chille</i> | chill/to chill | 32* | 6 |
| 2 | <i>heftig</i> | cool, good, intense | 18* | 3 |
| 3 | <i>lættis</i> | funny, laughable | 16 | 7 |
| 4 | <i>wallah</i> | to swear by Allah | 9 | 4 |
| 5 | <i>chill/chille</i> | chill/to chill | 5 | 4 |
| 5 | <i>schpaa</i> | good, pretty, nice | 5 | 3 |
| 6 | <i>kæbe</i> | a bitch, a whore (derogatory) | 3 | 3 |
| 7 | <i>svarting</i> | a black person | 2 | 1** |
| 8 | <i>avor</i> | to leave | 1 | 1 |
| 8 | <i>sjofo</i> | to see, watch | 1 | 1 |

* Indicates the count of tokens used in accordance with NMET use. These tokens have other meanings in Norwegian, the tokens of which should be ignored for the purposes of this report. *Chill* was used as a proper noun once, *heftig* was used to mean heavy or heavily emphasized, and *potet* was used to mean “potato” rather than a white Norwegian.

** In this instance, the speaker was a white man talking about using that word towards black people, which can be considered derogatory. No actual minority-background speakers used this word. Though it was found in the corpus, the context makes it such that it can be discounted as NMET use.

Interpretation of results and speaking modes

At first glance, the findings of the corpus might seem rather insignificant. Only around half of the words pulled from *Tante Ulrikkes vei* were used in the corpus, and those that were, appeared rarely. What conclusions can be drawn from this evidence? The first key comes from the context in which the corpus was created, which changed the speaking modes of the NMET users. The social stigma around NMET certainly comes into play in this analysis and informs the ways in which the speakers use their language.

Something worth noting is that the majority of the tokens were used in a meta-linguistic context, meaning that the speakers used NMET words to describe the speaking style that they themselves use, or that others in their part of Oslo used. This is most likely because of the nature of the recordings made for the corpus, which included an interview with a researcher and a conversation with another participant for each respondent. One of the questions asked to the participants during the interview was “How would you describe the language from the part of Oslo you come from?” This question in particular led to many responses in which respondents attempted to describe NMET using some of its vernacular, giving us the majority of the tokens in Table 2. Additionally, it is clear that many speakers are intending to distance themselves from what they consider to be the stereotypical NMET user, an image which has been looked down upon in Norwegian society. This notion is so powerful that Svendsen notes that one respondent in his study, in which he interviewed NMET speakers about their language use, “projects an imagery of the multiethnolectal user as male, lazy, and with no activities other than girls” (Svendsen 2008). In the No-Ta corpus, there are instances of respondents approaching NMET in a similar fashion. Here are some examples of this attitude:

Respondent 165:

“...hva skal jeg kalle det... kebabspråk altså sånn fjortisspråk...”

“...what should I call it... kebab language, like fourteen-year-old language...”

Respondent 138:

“...det er jo en del fremmedkulturelle eller innvandrere eller hva skal jeg kalle det da... er jo ikke... norsken så veldig god...”

“...there are indeed a good number of foreigners or immigrants or what should I call it... the Norwegian is not very good...”

This suggests that possibly because of the negative attitudes surrounding NMET, it is possible that respondents, in a professional environment where they know they are being observed by researchers, would opt for a more formal or “standard” speaking style. The social stigma around NMET, particular to this time period, is shown in a quote from *Afterposten*, a major Norwegian newspaper, on June 8th, 2006:

I actually think many Norwegians would benefit from being instructed in Norwegian as a second language. Especially those who have grown up in areas with 90% migrants. Once, I had an ethnic Norwegian pupil at secondary school who spoke “broken” Norwegian. Frightening.

This quote exemplifies the negative social stigma surrounding NMET, in contrast to the high regard that many Norwegian dialects are held in. Many considered, and continue to consider, NMET as an inferior or incorrect speaking style, although multiethnolects are found all around the world and follow a predictable linguistic pattern in their formation.

However, we must also consider another reason for why respondents might be omitting their NMET speaking style. Something that has always been evident of NMET is the ability to code switch. Code switching is the ability to use two or more speaking styles or languages, depending on the context in which they are speaking. Several respondents allude to the status of NMET as a mode of speaking used around peers, almost like a secret language that the youth employ. A majority of the tokens that were used outside of the meta-linguistic mode discussed earlier used NMET during the peer conversation portion of the corpus data collection. It is very clear that NMET speakers are very good at switching between NMET and a more “standard” Oslo style depending on who is listening to them. Additionally, one can assume that this “standard” style includes omitting words that might be considered explicit or profane. Many of

the words that were used frequently in *TUV*, in particular many of the ones not found in the corpus, might have violated the unspoken social rules found within this social environment. It is likely that the participants deemed these words inappropriate to use in this academic context. Therefore, it would make sense that many of these speakers would stick with a more “standard” variety. Here are some examples of respondents speaking on the status of NMET:

Respondent 23:

“...jeg begynner å snakke til daglig liksom bruker ord som jeg trur jeg ikke hadde brukt hvis jeg hadde vokst opp på bondelandet liksom...”

“...I begin to talk daily using, like, words that I don’t think I would have used if I had grown up in, like, the countryside...”

Respondent 191:

“...jeg vet ikke... egentlig helt hvorfor det har blitt sånn det er vel kanskje delvis... prøve å holde det man sier litt hemmelig...”

“...I don’t really know why it has become this way, it is maybe partly... to try to keep what you say a little bit secret...”

Respondent 36:

“...jeg vet ikke kanskje det er litt tøft å snakke sånn...”

“...I don’t know, maybe it’s a little tough to speak that way...”

Respondent 138:

“...tatt i bruk av ungdommer som... andre kanskje ikke forstår...”

“...used by youth who... others maybe don’t understand...”

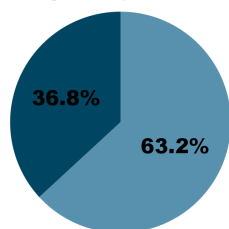
Because of these factors, and because of the longer, fictional narrative that we get from *TUV*, we see a far lower number of NMET tokens in the corpus than in the novel, and many of

the tokens are omitted entirely. This primarily shows us that NMET speakers are very adept with their language and are able to switch their speaking styles drastically depending on the context in which they are speaking. The findings align with an analysis by Opsahl in which a newer corpus, the Upuscorpus (not made available to the public, a corpus of only NMET speakers), displayed mainly “descriptions or meta-examples pursued in the interviews” (2009). It seems clear that NMET speakers are very skilled in altering their speaking style and have a high level of metalinguistic awareness. Svenden notes this too, finding that within his study the participants “display high metalinguistic awareness, and 77% of our respondents confirm the existence of a multiethnolectal speech style, but they do not necessarily have a label for it: ‘it is just the way we/they talk’” (2008). Simply put, an interview environment in which participants are observed is not going to elicit the most “natural” examples of NMET, but tells us more about how these youth perceive their speaking style and how they are able to switch modes depending on context. However, the data is still worth examining in order to display the versatility of these speakers and to gather data on the geographical spread of NMET.

Data analysis and statistical information

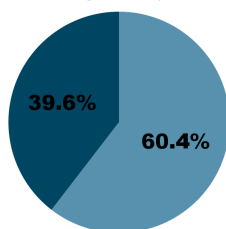
Besides the analysis of full quotes and sociolinguistic context, we can dive into the question of measuring the spread of NMET and examining other data collected.

Speaker background (Number of speakers)



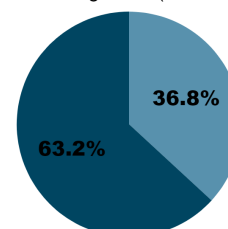
● NMET speaker ● Non-NMET speaker

Speaker background (Token count)



● NMET speaker ● Non-NMET speaker

Speaker ethnic background (Number of speakers)



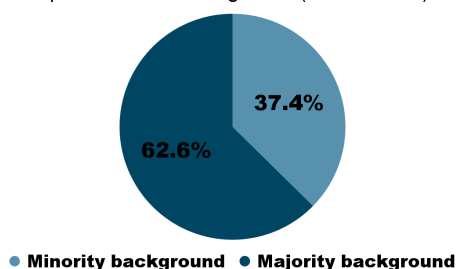
● Minority background ● Majority background

Figure 1. Percentage of speakers categorized as NMET speakers versus categorized as non-NMET speakers.

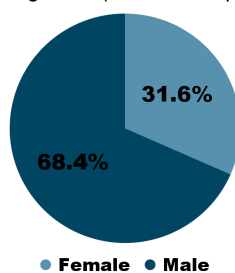
Figure 2. Percentage of tokens spoken by NMET speakers versus non-NMET speakers.

Figure 3. Percentage of speakers with a minority or immigrant background versus majority background.

Speaker ethnic background (Token count)



Speaker gender (Number of speakers)



Speaker gender (Token count)

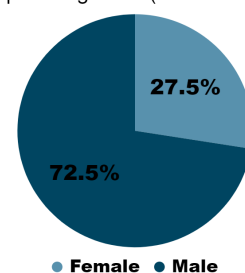


Figure 4. Percentage of tokens spoken by participants with a minority or immigrant background versus majority background.

Figure 5. Percentage of speakers who are male versus female.

Figure 6. Percentage of tokens spoken by male versus female respondents.

The figures above show us a great deal about the distribution of speakers who used NMET tokens in the corpus. Figures 1 and 2 tell us that about two thirds of the speakers using NMET tokens could be categorized as NMET speakers, and that about two thirds of the NMET tokens were spoken by NMET speakers. I decided whether each speaker was categorized as an NMET speaker based on the way they described the language they grew up around. When these speakers were asked how they would describe the language in the part of Oslo they are from, all of the speakers I categorized as NMET speakers described characteristics lining up with NMET. For example, many of them talked about how there were many immigrants in the area of Oslo they came from, and that their speaking style was influenced by other languages. Based on their responses in their interviews in the corpus, I categorized them according to NMET speakers and non-NMET speakers. The non-NMET speakers did not mention anything about the speaking style from their part of Oslo as being particularly influenced by anything, and seemed to view their language as simply “normal”. Out of the 19 respondents who used NMET tokens, 12 were NMET speakers, and 9 were non-NMET speakers. Out of 91 tokens, 55 were spoken by NMET users, and the other 36 were used by non-NMET speakers. While a majority of NMET tokens were used by those who displayed meta-linguistic knowledge of NMET and their unique

speaking style, there is still a significant portion of the speakers who do not identify themselves as NMET speakers, indicating a level of spread throughout Oslo.

When we look at figures 3 and 4, the spread becomes more apparent in terms of racial background. Around two thirds of the speakers and the number of tokens were spoken by respondents with a majority background, meaning that they are ethnically Scandinavian. The other third of the participants were noted as having parents from another country or as being born abroad themselves. Their countries of origin varied greatly; examples include Vietnam, Pakistan, Algeria, Chile, and Morocco. Here we see something that is deeply characteristic of NMET: language mixing across multiple languages and ethnicities. All of the participants with a minority or immigrant background were categorized as NMET speakers based on their descriptions of language, but not all of the NMET speakers had a minority or immigrant background. In fact, the majority of NMET speakers had a majority background. Interestingly, the speaker who used the most NMET tokens (19 out of the total 91 tokens) was a majority background speaker who was not classified as an NMET speaker, having attributed none of his language style to immigrant background people. This participant lived in Bjerke, an area where 30.0% of the population have an immigrant background. This implies that NMET is more dependent on the part of Oslo the respondents come from rather than their racial or ethnic background. NMET has become characteristic of entire parts of Oslo rather than just minority groups.

Figures 5 and 6 tell us more about the gender distribution of NMET. Previous research suggests that NMET is dominated by adolescent males. Opsahl found that within another corpus known as the Upuscorpus, which is another corpus focused on NMET speakers in particular (unfortunately not available to the public), the male respondents provided “87% of all the wolla tokens (119 of 137)” (2009). Here we see that the females do not provide as many tokens as the

male respondents, though they are not outnumbered quite to the degree that Opsahl observes. 68.4% of the total number of speakers who use NMET tokens are male, and 72.6% of the NMET tokens are provided by the male respondents. Something worth noting is that of the non-NMET speakers who provide NMET tokens, nearly all were male. It seems as though the NMET is more likely to spread to non-NMET speaking males than females.

The biggest conclusion that we can draw is that NMET is characteristic of younger participants. All 19 of the speakers, and therefore all 91 of the NMET tokens, were spoken by speakers within the 16-25 age category. Very few of them were even older than 20 years old. NMET, at least during this time period, was entirely dominated by younger speakers. In fact, 31.14% of all speakers in this age category used NMET tokens, which is surprisingly high. It seems to be an in-language among primarily male youth in certain areas of Oslo, regardless of ethnic background.



Figure 7. Map of all of the *bydeler* (“parts of Oslo”) within *Oslo kommune* (“municipality”) where speakers using NMET tokens were found.

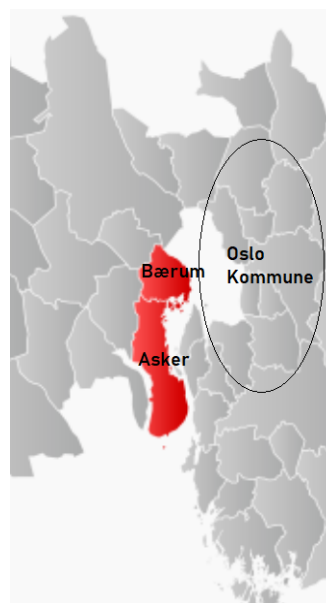


Figure 8. Map of the two parts of the Greater Oslo Area outside of Oslo municipality where speakers using NMET tokens were found.

Table 3. Regional distribution of findings.

This table shows the distribution of the findings for each part of Oslo where NMET tokens were found. The second column indicates the percentage of the number of speakers that were found to be using NMET for each part of Oslo. The third column shows the percentage of the total token count that was used by speakers coming from each part of Oslo. The last column details the percentage of the total population of each part of Oslo that are immigrants or Norwegian born with immigrant parents, what we would expect to be the biggest demographic for NMET users.

| Part of Oslo area | Percentage of number of speakers using NMET (total 19) | Percentage of token count (total 91) | Percentage of population who are immigrants or Norwegian born with immigrant parents (2005) |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| Søndre Nordstrand | 21.05% | 27.47% | 40.2% |
| Sagene | 10.52% | 4.40% | 20.1% |
| Gamle Oslo | 5.26% | 16.48% | 32.9% |
| Grünerløkka | 10.52% | 21.98% | 26.2% |
| Bjerke | 10.52% | 10.99% | 30.0% |
| Grorud | 5.26% | 3.30% | 32.8% |
| Bærum* | 10.52% | 3.30% | 9.3% |
| Nordstrand | 5.26% | 1.10% | 10.3% |
| Østensjø | 10.52% | 7.69% | 16.1% |
| Asker* | 5.26% | 2.20% | 11.2% |
| Nordre Aker | 5.26% | 1.10% | 12.0% |

*These two areas are located outside of Oslo municipality and are a part of the Greater Oslo Area. Data about population distribution according to immigrant background comes from Statistics Norway. 2005 was chosen as it is in between 2004-2006, the years that the corpus data was collected.

Now we must examine the distribution of the data according to parts of Oslo. Right off the bat, it is remarkable how many parts of Oslo included speakers using NMET tokens. There are a total of 11 parts of the Greater Oslo Area in which NMET tokens were observed, including two outside of Oslo municipality. What we expect to see here is certainly speakers and tokens

within the Eastern part of Oslo, as this is the origin point of NMET, the areas where immigrants began residing in high concentrations. It makes sense that Søndre Nordstrand, with 40.2% of the population being immigrants or Norwegian born with immigrant parents, would produce 21.05% of the speakers using NMET tokens and 27.47% of the total token count from these speakers. All speakers within Søndre Nordstrand using NMET displayed meta-linguistic knowledge of the speaking style used in the part of Oslo they are from and discussed other languages and immigrants having an impact on their speaking style.

An unexpected result was the complete lack of NMET tokens amongst speakers from Stovner. Stovner is the part of Oslo in which *TUV* is set, whose population is 34.5% immigrants or Norwegian born with immigrant parents, a portion that is much higher than several other parts of Oslo where NMET tokens were observed. This is likely an anomaly due to the contexts mentioned above as to why these speakers might omit NMET during their interviews. It is probable that other NMET speakers were interviewed and simply did not use any examples of NMET lexical items within the corpus.

As for the other parts of Oslo within Oslo municipality, it makes sense that all of these are clustered together on the Eastern side of the municipality. Many of the other percentages lined up with what you would expect to find given the percentage of immigrants and Norwegian born with immigrant parents. Some of these areas have clearly experienced more spread than one might expect. For example, Østensjø produces 7.69% of the NMET tokens, despite only having 16.1% of the population with an immigrant background. Other areas do not produce as many tokens, despite having a higher percentage of the population with an immigrant background. Though NMET originated in areas like Søndre Nordstrand, we can see spread to all of the surrounding areas, especially on the East side of Oslo.

On the West side, we also see some spread to areas outside of Oslo municipality, namely Bærum and Asker. These two areas are clearly more heavily influenced by spread across Oslo, as their percentages of immigrant background residents is low compared to the other percentages (9.3% in Bærum and 11.2% in Asker, numbers that are actually below Oslo's average in 2005). Their geographical distance, but how close they are to one another suggests that NMET is spreading to other parts of Oslo outside of the areas in which it was conceived of. The ages of all the respondents and other research leads me to believe that youth is the biggest factor. NMET is perhaps seen as a "cool" insider language for youth more than anything else. It is quite possible that these young users do not understand the cultural context in which NMET was created, as many of them do not seem to be aware about how they are speaking differently. NMET tokens were used much more frequently in the conversational part of the data collection by such speakers. Overall, there is strong evidence for NMET spread among the youth of Oslo, spanning across multiple parts of Oslo, though mostly saturated in these areas of origin for NMET.

Limitations and further research

Upon examining the data at hand, it is imperative to point out the limitations of this study and its shortcomings. Unfortunately, as noted by many others investigating NMET, there is a dire lack of research and data collected on NMET use. In order to gain a more comprehensive and concrete understanding of NMET, more research needs to be conducted on the geographical spread of NMET in current times. Most of the data has become somewhat outdated at this point, and other data sources, like the Upuscorpus outlined by Opsahl, are unavailable to the general public. There are certainly newer trends that could be examined with further research. I would be particularly interested in examining this data with newer data, as I anticipate that NMET has spread even more since this data was compiled.

Following the thread of further research, arguments can be made about the strength of this analysis due to the relatively low number of tokens and speakers that were actually found within the No-Ta Corpus. Only half of the tokens recorded from *TUV* were actually found in the corpus. Additionally, there were only 19 speakers who used NMET, and only 91 tokens using NMET lexical items. This comes out to 11.45% of the speakers using NMET, and a much lower 0.01% of all of the tokens found within the corpus that can be categorized as NMET lexical items. This suggests that a more specific study of speakers might yield better results in terms of measuring NMET here. The most powerful statistic is that all of the speakers using NMET were young, between 16-25 years old, and that 31.14% of the speakers in this age category used NMET tokens. Interviewing and/or observing youth in certain areas of Oslo would likely indicate a great deal about how NMET has evolved over time and how it is in use today.

Finally, it is important to note that these lexical items coming from *TUV* are coming from a fictional narrative. Though the speaking style is real because of the author's own status as an NMET speaker, he is one individual and cannot represent the speaking style of an entire demographic, nor does Shakar try to. His motive is to create fiction with a distinct speaking style to shed light on a group that is often underrepresented, and to expose social issues in Norway while telling a relatable story about two teenage boys. This novel was simply not meant to be used as a language collection point and cannot give definitive answers, but does provide a host of strong examples of NMET use that research currently lacks. Therefore *TUV* works for the purposes of this report, but the limitations must be acknowledged. Though the source material available for this analysis limits the scope of what can be concluded with certainty, it is a worthwhile endeavor that looks at NMET in the early to mid-2000s and attempts to guess as to the reality of its use.

Conclusion

This analysis of Zeshan Shakar's *Tante Ulrikkes vei* and the No-Ta Corpus created by the University of Oslo has attempted to examine how NMET was used in the early to mid-2000s and where it might be spreading to within Oslo since its creation in the 1980s in Holmlia (an area within Søndre Nordstrand). Though it is difficult to draw any distinctive conclusions as to how NMET was used during this time, previous research and the corpus data strongly suggest that NMET is spreading beyond the scope of its original birthplace. No longer does NMET belong to specific minority groups or immigrants as an entity; rather, it has come to characterize the speaking style of youth within certain parts of Oslo, particularly on the Eastern side of Oslo. General trends show us that some spread has occurred, having gone outside of this Eastern side and into two Western parts of Oslo. Additionally, the adeptness of these speakers and their ability to code switch is evident. These speakers depend heavily on context and are aware of their speaking style, displaying a high level of meta-linguistic awareness. Going forward, more research needs to be conducted in order to assess the spread of NMET in the past 20 years or so, and to extract more natural examples of NMET use.

Works cited

Bydelsfakta. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://bydelsfakta.oslo.kommune.no/bydel/alle>.

Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrerforeldre. (n.d.). Retrieved from

<https://www.ssb.no/statbank/list/innvbef/>.

Opsahl, T. (2009). *Wolla I swear* this is typical for the conversational style of adolescents in multiethnic areas in Oslo. *Nordic Journal of Linguistics*, 32(2), 221-244.

doi:10.1017/s0332586509990059.

Shakar, Z. (2018). *Tante Ulrikkes vei*. Oslo: Gyldendal.

Svendsen, B. A., & Røyneland, U. (2008). Multiethnolectal facts and functions in Oslo, Norway.

International Journal of Bilingualism, 12(1-2), 63-83.

doi:10.1177/13670069080120010501.