

The Norwegian Multiethnolect



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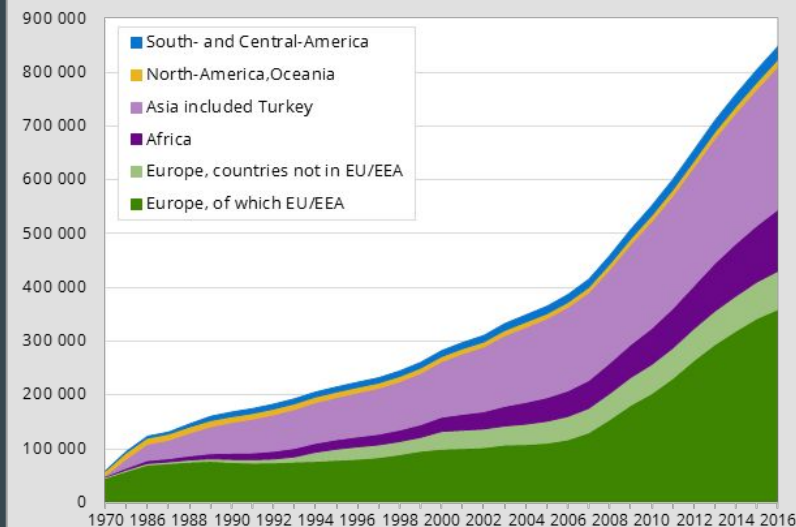
Terminology

- Kebabnorsk/Asfaltspråk/Gatespråk/Jallaspråk
- A collection of mostly urban immigrant youth dialects that use alternate grammar (breaking of V2 rule, negation in embedded clauses, etc) and a Norwegian vocabulary supplemented and/or replaced by foreign language words.
- Most, if not all, speakers also know “standard” Norwegian and do not appear to have to learn to code switch.
- Mostly spoken by young immigrant (or children of immigrant) males in urban settings **amongst each other**. This may present some difficulties in collecting accurate or authentic language samples.

Main influences

- Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Somalian, Persian, Urdu, Spanish....
 - Avor - å gå (to go/walk), Berber/Persian/Arabic in origin
 - Sjofe - å se (to see), Berber origin
 - Amigo - venn (friend), Spanish origin
 - Schmø - pen, bra (beautiful/good), Unknown origin
- Large influx of middle eastern (especially Pakistani) immigrants to Norway in the 70s-80s

Figure 1. Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by country background



Source: Statistics Norway.

Studies conducted in the past

- “Kebab-norsk: fremmedspråklig påvirkning på ungdomsspråket i Oslo (Kebabnorsk, foreign language influences on youth language in Oslo)” 1995, Stine Cecile Aasheim
 - First formal study of the multiethnolect, coined “kebabnorsk”
- Multilingual urban Scandinavia: new linguistic practices, Pia Quist and Bente Svendsen 2010
 - Deeper look into every aspect of the multiethnolect, especially in its role in the broader culture of the youths using it day to day
 - Created a corpus from recordings of spoken conversations between two speakers

Representation in Norwegian media

- Tante Ulrikkes Vei (2017)
- Alle utlendinger har lukka gardiner (2015)
- Music
 - Minoritet1, Karpe, Arif, Isah
- Jonis Josef



Overview of phonology and lexicon

Both the phonology and lexicon of the Norwegian multiethnolect have been shaped by the languages of the immigrants that speak it.

- The multiethnolect's phonology was largely shaped by the stresses of immigrant languages.

“As noted earlier, many of the adolescents we interviewed, point to prosodie features such as speech rhythm and stress as perhaps the most prevalent feature of the multiethnolectal speech style. It is reported to sound more staccato, harder, faster, and more aggressive than "normal" Norwegian...” (Svendsen, 2008)

- The lexical changes largely consist of words taken from immigrant languages which are reappropriated for use in the multiethnolect.

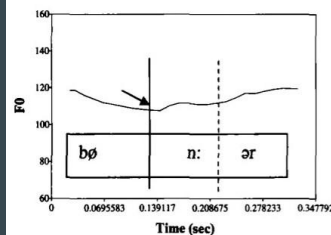
Phonology changes

Speakers of the multiethnolect have taken the accent patterns from their respective languages and applied them to Norwegian words. This has resulted in the loss of certain minimal pairs with distinct intonations.

This image shows the pitch accent of a multi-ethnolect speaker saying the words **bønder** (farmers/peasants) and **bønner** (beans), as well as the pitch accent of native Norwegian speaker saying the word **bønner**.

There are also case where minimal pairs may appear due to the same application of accent patterns.

(a) *bønder*, peasants, pitch accent 1 (Anders)



(b) *bønner*, beans, pitch accent 1 (Anders)

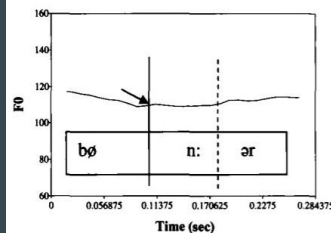
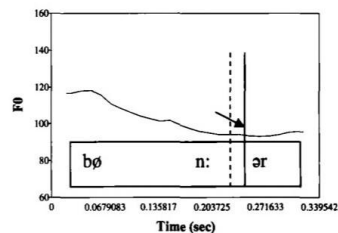


Figure 2

The pitch accent of the minimal pairs: peasants [¹bøn:ər] and beans [²bøn:ər]. In (a) and (b) both words are pronounced with pitch accent 1, that is, as peasants. In (c) we see an example of beans pronounced with pitch accent 2. (The dotted line illustrates syllable boarder)

(c) *bønner*, beans, pitch accent 2



Lexical changes

The integration of words from English is already a common practice within the Norwegian language, and the multiethnolect has expanded that incorporating words from its various immigrant languages.

- **Wolla** - (comes from the Arabic word Wallah, meaning “I swear by Allah”. (This word also acts as a shibboleth.))
- **Sjpa/Shpa** ‘bra’ - (good, from Berber)
- **Kæber** ‘jente’ - (girls, from Arabic/Berber)
- **Tæsje** ‘å stjele’ - (to steal, from Berber “to lure”)
- **Baosj** ‘politi’ - (police, from Arabic/Berber originally meaning boss)

Overview of morphology and syntax

- Many of these changes appear as the result of trends shown by L2 speakers of Norwegian
- These traits stuck and have become a part of the multiethnolect
- Typical traits include:
 - Violation of V2 (verb-second) constraint, XSV word order
 - Syntactic variation of negation in embedded clauses (Adv-V word order)
 - Variation among subject and object forms of pronouns
 - Overgeneralization of the masculine gender
 - Irregular verbs conjugated like regular verbs
 - Different conjugation of nouns (adding of -a suffix)

Morphological changes

- Overgeneralization of masculine gender

«Det er ikke det som er **problemen**» (Shakar, 2017, s. 28) - *Det er ikke det som er **problemet***

«Dem henger på **den husen** like ved Elvebakken der, du veit, den med masse tagging og sånn utapå» (Shakar, 2017, s. 281) - *De henger på **det huset** like ved Elvebakken der, du vet, det med masse tagging og sånn utpå*

“Typically the neuter tends to be substituted by the masculine form: ‘mitt liv’, ‘mitt rim’ (my life, my rhymes) becomes ‘min liv’, ‘min rim’, – or occasionally vice versa: ‘min ære’, ‘min flokk’ (my honor, my flock/gang) becomes ‘mitt ære’, ‘mitt flokk.’” (Knudsen, 2018)

- Irregular verbs conjugated like regular verbs

«... den som **stådde** på tunnelen på Stovner sykehjem der» (Shakar, 2017, s. 186) - *den som **sto** på tunnelen på Stovner sykehjem der*

- Variation in conjugation of nouns (from Anda, 2019)

Dette er eksempelvis a-ender på substantiver i bestemt form entall av feminine og bestemt form flertall av maskuline og nøytrer (Opsahl & Røyneland, 2009, s. 101), eksempelvis morra, skoa, pinnedyra (fra Alle utlendinger har lukka gardiner) og dama, kompisa, knæra (fra Tante Ulrikkes vei).

morgen, skoene, pinnedyrene, dama, kompisen, knærne

Syntax changes

- Violation of V2 constraint and XSV word order (from Svendsen, 2009)

(5a) i Norge **de spiser** med venstre (Anders) - i Norge ***spiser de** med venstre*
'in Norway they eat with their left'

(5b) egentlig **jeg har ikke følt** så mye rasisme jeg (Aswan) - egentlig ***har jeg ikke følt** så mye rasisme jeg*
'really I have not felt that much racism I'

(5c) hadde det vært begravelsen din **jeg hadde ikke kommet** (Esma) - hadde det vært begravelsen din ***hadde jeg ikke kommet***
'had it been your funeral I had not come'

- Negation in embedded clauses

(8b) de tror at vi **har ikke** integren oss - de tror at vi ***ikke har** integrert oss*
'they believe that we have not integrated ourselves' (Svendsen, 2009).

«Liksom, **ikke ofte vi kriter** da . . .» (Shakar, 2017, s. 101). - Liksom, ***vi kriter ikke ofte** da...*

- Variation of subject and object form of pronouns

«Eller **dem** lager stress om å skaffe venninner, sier **dem** skal være med neste gang, og at jeg liksom blocker dem om jeg ikke gjør det» (Shakar, 2017, s. 53)

*Eller **de** lager stress om å skaffe venninner, sier **de** skal være med neste gang, og at jeg liksom blocker dem om jeg ikke gjør det*

Conclusion

- “When there is a clustering of linguistic features, such as the XVS word order, combined with the characteristic prosody, it is more likely that we are dealing with a multiethnolect instead of linguistic change in general.” (Svendsen, 2008)
- The multiethnolect is a new, emerging linguistic trend, although not treated with the same social prestige that most Norwegian dialects are given
- Starting to gain more visibility in popular media- music, television, literature; more popularity among adolescents of all descents

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