

UiO : Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan
University of Oslo

The Dynamics of Citizen Science in Exploring Language Diversity

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The objective of this talk is to explore the dynamics of citizen science (CS) in sociolinguistics, i.e. the involvement of non-professionals in doing sociolinguistic research, coined as *Citizen Sociolinguistics* (Rymes and Leone 2014, Svendsen, pending for review).





CS involves in one way or another, the engagement of non-professionals in authentic scientific research (Dickinson et al. 2012: 291).

Citizen science



- Long tradition in natural science research
- **Fred Urquhart** (1911-2002) & **Norah Roden Urquhart** (1918-2009) recruited hundreds of volunteers - "citizen scientists" who helped in their research on the migration routes of monarch butterflies by tagging butterflies and reporting findings and sightings
- The primary impacts of citizen science are seen in biological studies of global climate change – biological changes in natural habitats



Citizen Science is gaining momentum



Work Program of ‘Science with and for Society’ (SwafS) 2018-2020, Part V of Horizon 2020:

CS is one of four strategic lines of action (‘Exploring and supporting citizen science’), and citizen science was, recently, recognized as an open science priority by the European Council.

Citizen Sociolinguistics (Rymes and Leone 2014)

a ‘new sociolinguistic methodology that accounts for and partakes of the social demands and affordances of massive mobility and connectivity in today‘s world.’



citizen sociolinguists’ as ‘people who use their senses and intelligence to understand the world around them. Citizen sociolinguistics, then, is the study of these understandings’

CS and folk linguistics

the term ‘citizen scientists’ or ‘citizen sociolinguists’ is conceived as ‘non-professionals’ or ‘laypeople’ who have no formal and lengthy sociolinguistic training and who are involved in doing scientific research. (Svendsen, under review)

Crowdsourcing big sociolinguistic data

Leemann, Kolly, Purves, Britain Glaser's (2016) – Smartphone app, dialect data

They argue that crowdsourcing techniques using apps have the potential to 'complement existing data collection techniques and to provide evidence that traditional methods cannot, with normal resources, hope to gather' (Leeman et al. 2016: 1).

Take-home message

1. Methodological: To advocate the use of citizen science (CS) as a tool for sociolinguistic research and public engagement





Take-home message

2. Empirical/theoretical: To encourage an increased use of the pupils' multiple language resources by revealing the linguistic diversity among pupils versus the linguistic homogeneity in reported language use in the classroom (i.e. student-teacher interaction)





Ta tempen på språket!

Taking the temperature on language!

National research campaign in 2014 where we invited students in all grades in Norway to be language researchers





The campaign is held annually and organized by the **Research Council of Norway** (RCN) and the **Center for Science Education** at the University of Bergen, in collaboration with a research unit. In 2014, **MultiLing Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan** (CoE) gained the responsibility for the campaign, led by Bente Ailin Svendsen, in close collaboration with Else Ryen and Kristin Vold Lexander.

Ta tempen på språket!

In the course of the campaign, students from all over the country explored their own and others' language and dialect competence and language use in various contexts and collected popular words and phrases – registered the data in a digital database www.miljolare.no



Why CS as a sociolinguistic tool in Norway?

No large-scale census data on language competence and use

Immense linguistic diversity –
we need to learn more about *de facto* language vitality

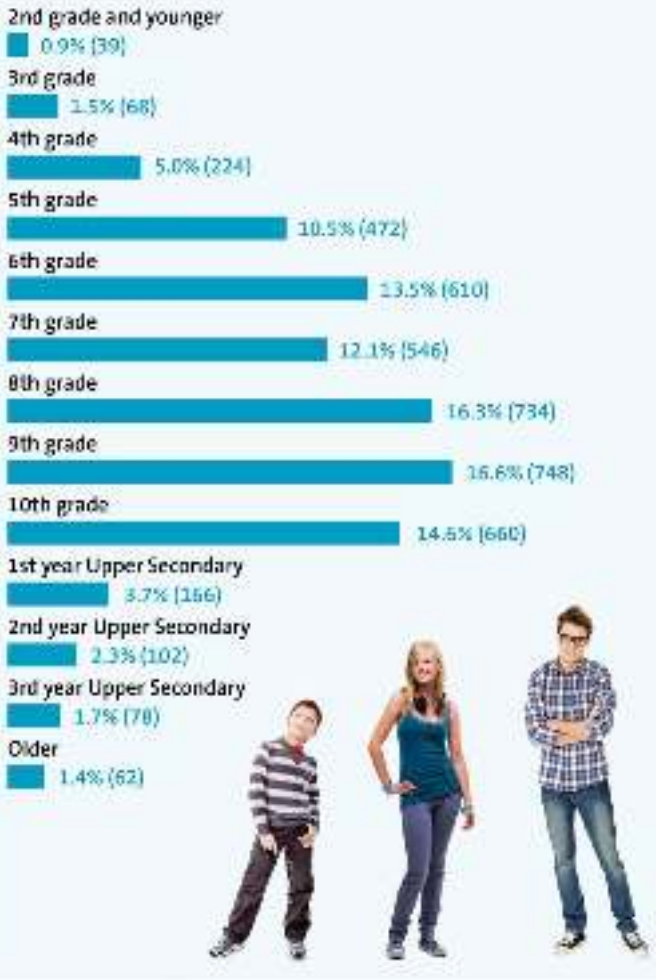


Two official languages: Norwegian (Bokmål and Nynorsk) and Sami, five Sami languages (North Sami, Lule Sami, Pite Sami, Ume Sami, South Sami), many dialects (4 main groups), Norwegian Sign Language, Kven, Romani, Romanes, more recent minority languages (200+ languages: Poland, Pakistan largest groups), and English is known and used by almost the entire population.



PARTICIPANTS PER GRADE

87 schools, 4509 students
(50% girls, 50% boys)



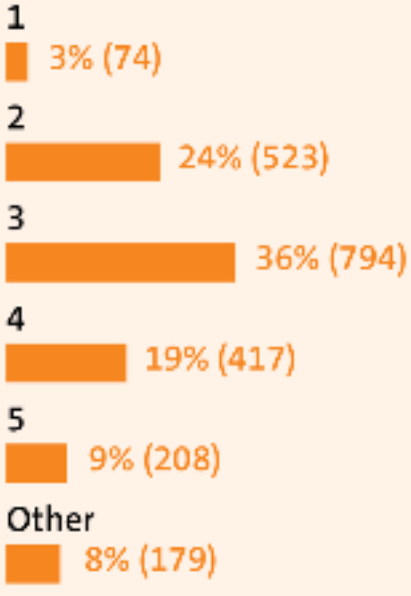

330
289
2235
1454
201

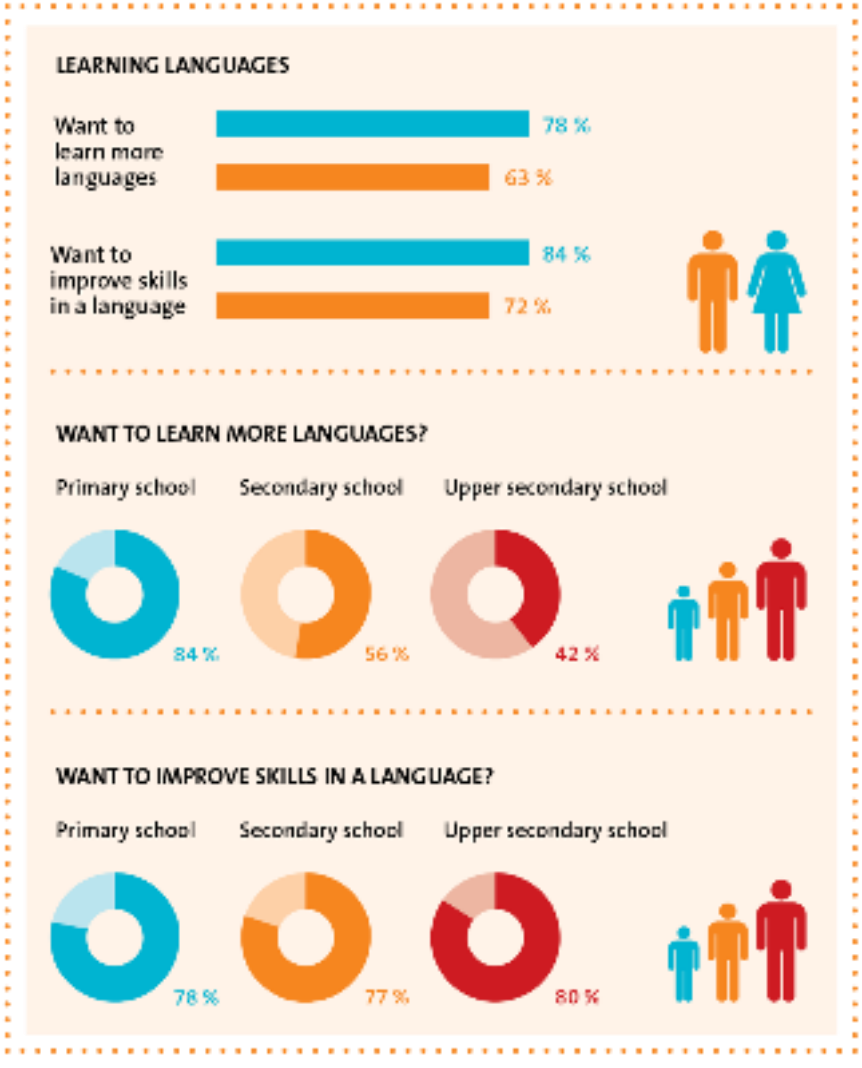
177 – the number of dialects children and youths report they know (entire country)

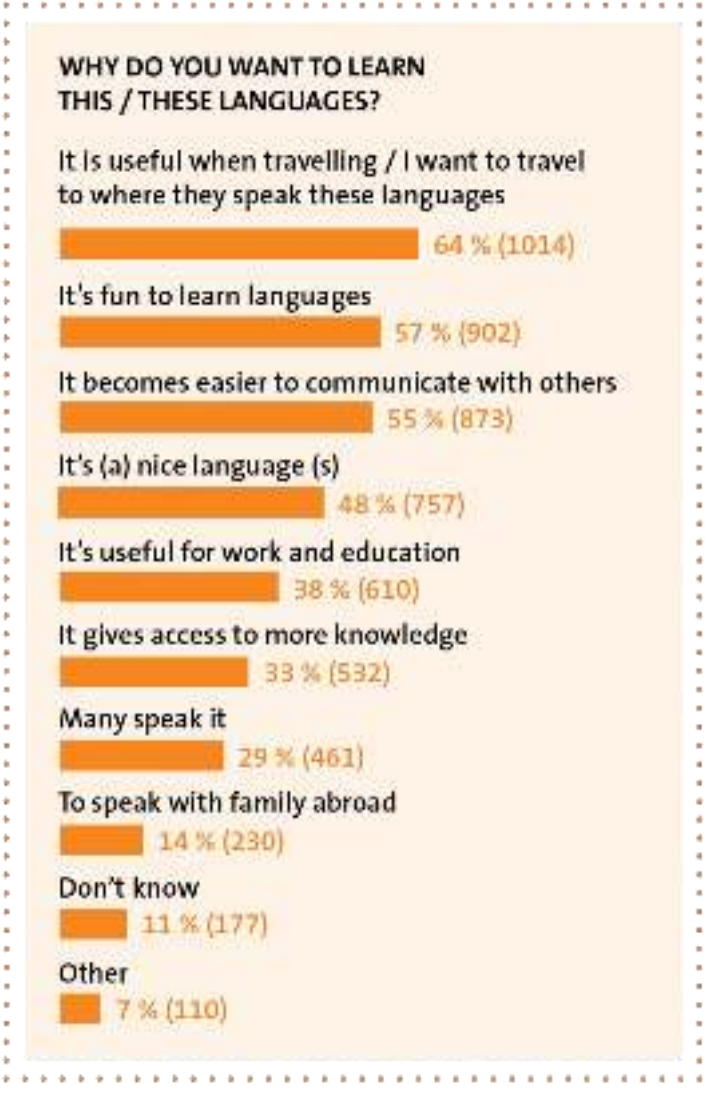
95 – the number of languages the students report they speak (entire country)

13 – the number of languages in addition to Norwegian spoken by 8th grade students at Sandgotna school in Bergen

HOW MANY LANGUAGES DO YOU SPEAK?
(Do not be too critical when assessing your skills)




LEARNING LANGUAGES
Want to learn more languages
78 %
63 %
Want to improve skills in a language
84 %
72 %
WANT TO LEARN MORE LANGUAGES?
Primary school
Secondary school
Upper secondary school
84 %
56 %
42 %
WANT TO IMPROVE SKILLS IN A LANGUAGE?
Primary school
Secondary school
Upper secondary school
78 %
77 %
80 %


WHY DO YOU WANT TO LEARN THIS / THESE LANGUAGES?
It is useful when travelling / I want to travel to where they speak these languages
64 % (1014)
It's fun to learn languages
57 % (902)
It becomes easier to communicate with others
55 % (873)
It's (a) nice language (s)
48 % (757)
It's useful for work and education
38 % (610)
It gives access to more knowledge
33 % (532)
Many speak it
29 % (461)
To speak with family abroad
14 % (230)
Don't know
11 % (177)
Other
7 % (110)

66%

think its "very good" or "good" that we use English words in Norwegian.



70%

use English every day



70%

use English when they speak or write: (73% girls and 67% boys)

38%

use English when they play computer games

67%

use English in chats



78%

use English in conversations with friends

60%

use English in text messages


OMFG
LMFAO
YOLO
SWAG
LOL

THE TWELVE MOST CITED WORDS ADULTS DON'T KNOW ARE:

1. **Lol** ('laughing out loud')
2. **Yolo** ('you only live once')
3. **Swag** (often used in the sense of 'style' or 'behaviour')
4. **Omg** ('Oh my God')
5. **Serr/serrløst** (words that are similiar, meaning 'seriously')
6. **Chille/chille** (words that are similar, meaning 'to chill')
7. **Dd** (can have several meanings such as 'double d', 'drug and disease free')
8. **Ins** ('ikke noe spesielt', 'nothing special')
9. **Btw** ('by the way')
10. **Wtf** ('what the fuck')
11. **Brb** ('be right back')
12. **Dleg** ('du lever én gang', 'you only live once')

«I love slang!», boy 9th grade, Oslo

Languages in family interaction (excl. Norwegian – mother, father, other adults, brothers and sisters, N = students = 532, incl. Norwegian = 497 students)

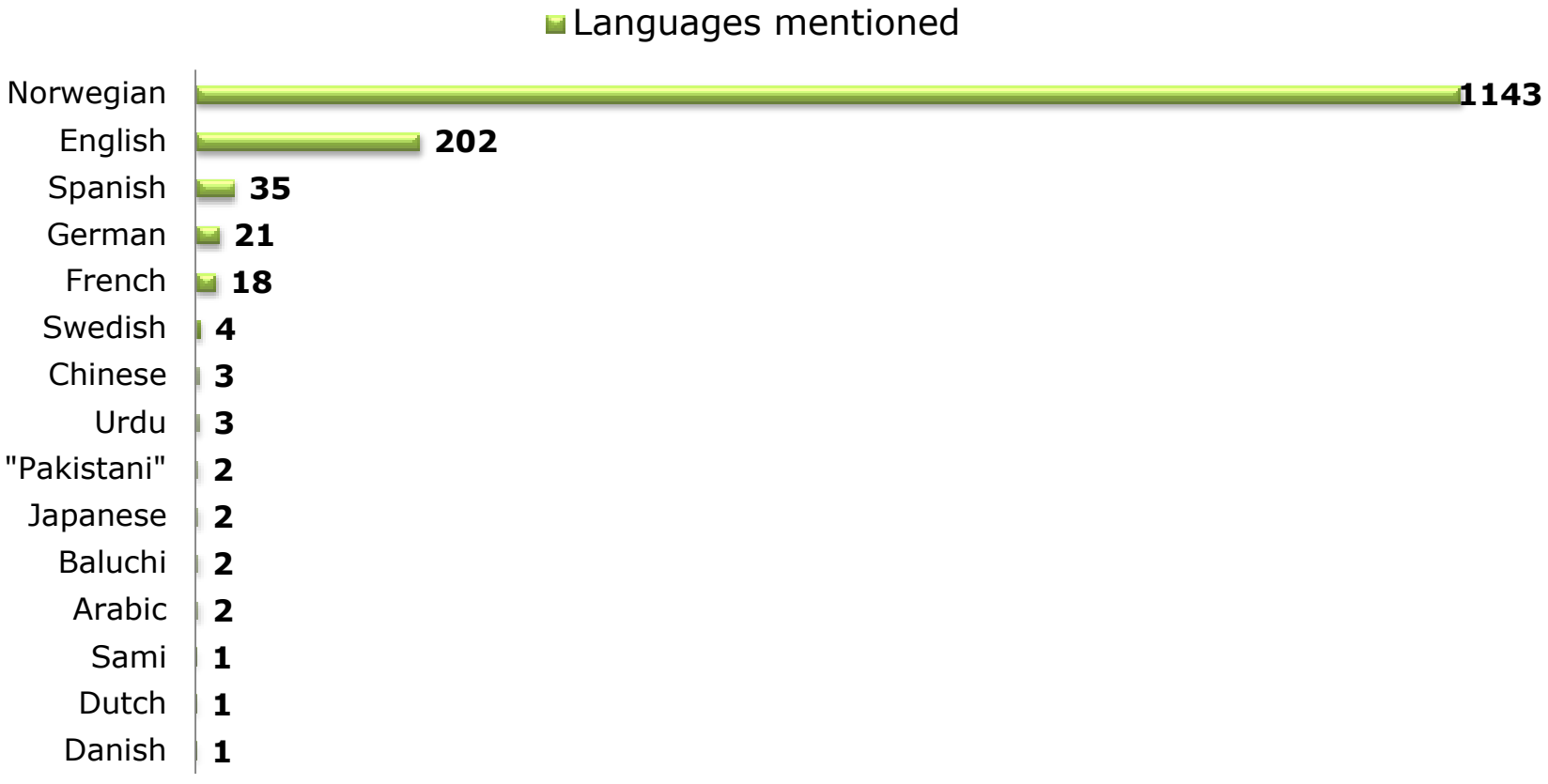


«dummy» English 60, N= 273

Statistics B. Uri Jensen

Student to teacher

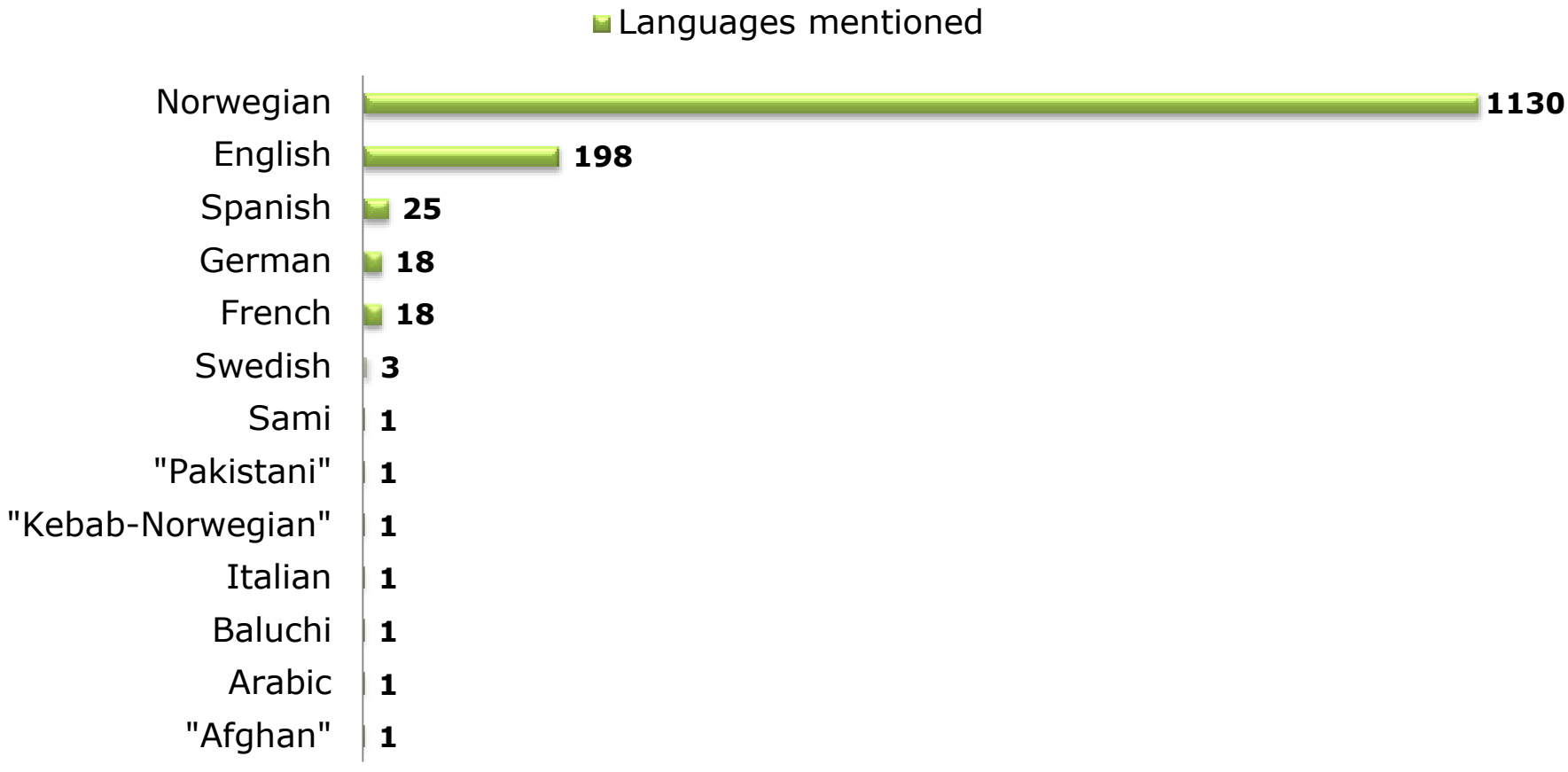
(students who report the use of more than one language or dialect daily)



Statistics B. Uri Jensen

Teacher to student

(students who report the use of more than one language or dialect daily)



Statistics B. Uri Jensen

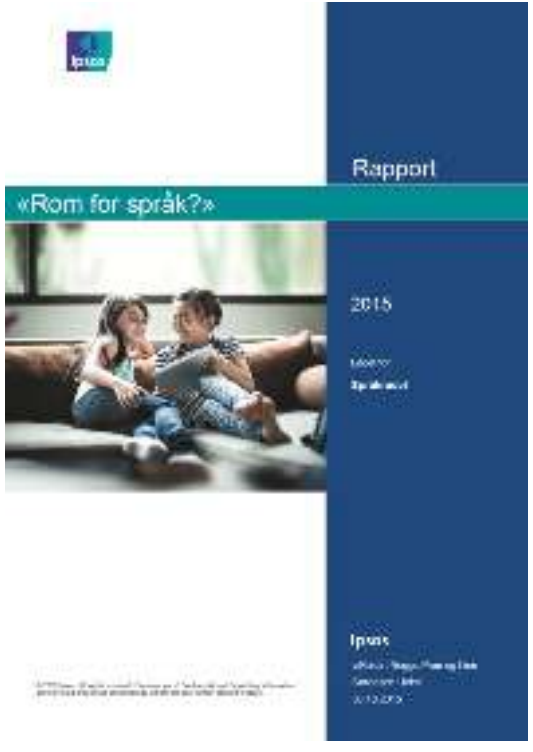
A mismatch between the linguistic diversity among the students and the homogenous language use in the classroom (i.e. in student-teacher interaction)

In alignment with other studies on the subject (e.g. Cummins 2008; Creese & Blackledge 2010; García & Li Wei 2014; Kulbrandstad et al. 2008)

Generated a new study in collaboration with the Language Council of Norway:

«Room for languages?»





School languages are taken home, but not vice versa

Rich potential to enhance the use of the pupils' multiple linguistic resources

CS under fire – data from and by non-linguists

the ‘local-knowledge turn’ (Albury, in press)

“The children’s reports have provided us with more knowledge and a better understanding of multilingualism in schools and of its importance in society,” says Arvid Hallén, Former Director of the Research Council of Norway.



Linguistic stewardship

Potential to enhance metalinguistic awareness and encourage linguistic stewardship, that is planning and management of linguistic resources and language diversity – individual, family and societal level, in education in particular



snitcher *ugly* *otaku* *baka* *irl*

asap *tert* *avor* *dleg* *adda*

dd *chille* *sjofe* *lol* *alo*

ins *wannabe* *wtf* *m8*

serr *swag* *yolo* *loco*

omg *keeg* *btw* *brb*



UiO : MultiLing Senter for flerspråklighet
Det humanistiske fakultet



Språkrådet

om;
oslo museum

MultiLing



[Documentary by 1001 Films v/ Anwar Saab]

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