



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

The Dynamics of Citizen Science in Exploring Language Diversity

Bente Ailin Svendsen



Established by
the Research Council
of Norway



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).



Citizen Science Research



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



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)

2nd grade and younger

0.9% (39)

3rd grade

1.5% (68)

4th grade

5.0% (224)

5th grade

10.5% (472)

6th grade

13.5% (610)

7th grade

12.1% (546)

8th grade

16.3% (734)

9th grade

16.6% (748)

10th grade

14.6% (660)

1st year Upper Secondary

3.7% (166)

2nd year Upper Secondary

2.3% (102)

3rd year Upper Secondary

1.7% (78)

Older

1.4% (62)





330

students from the north
(Nordland, Troms, Finnmark)

289

students from central Norway
(Nord-Trøndelag, Sør-Trøndelag)

2235

students from the east
(Oslo, Østfold, Hedmark, Telemark,
Akershus, Buskerud, Oppland, Vestfold)

1454

students from the west (Hordaland, Møre
og Romsdal, Rogaland, Sogn og Fjordane)

201

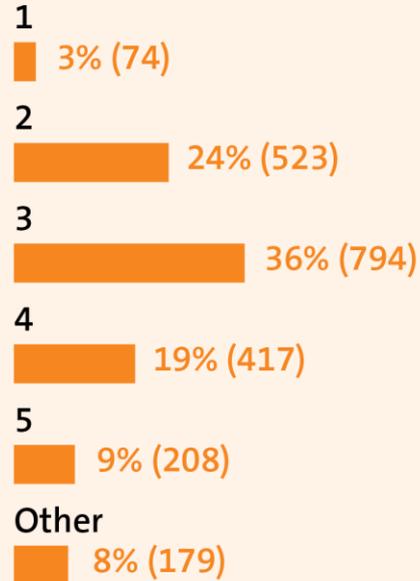
students from the south
(Vest-Agder, Aust-Agder)

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)

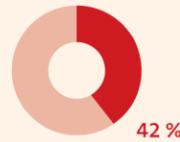
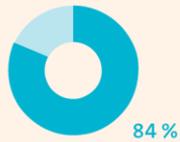


LEARNING LANGUAGES



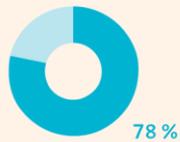
WANT TO LEARN MORE LANGUAGES?

Primary school Secondary school Upper secondary school



WANT TO IMPROVE SKILLS IN A LANGUAGE?

Primary school Secondary school Upper secondary school



**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)

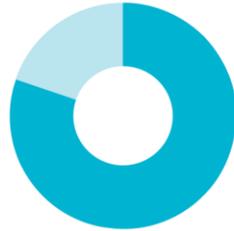
Other

 7 % (110)

66%
think its “very good” or
“good” that we use English
words in Norwegian.



70%
use English
every day



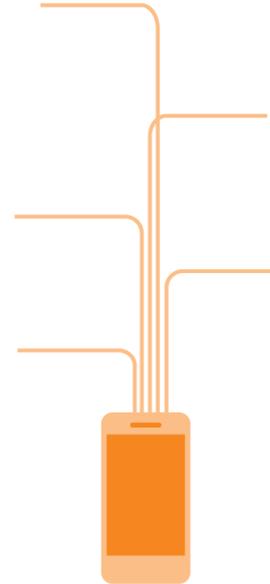
70%
use English when
they speak or write:
(73% girls and
67% boys)

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
omfg

LMFAO
lmfao

YOLO
y ♥ lo

SWAG
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/serriøst** (words that are similar, 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)



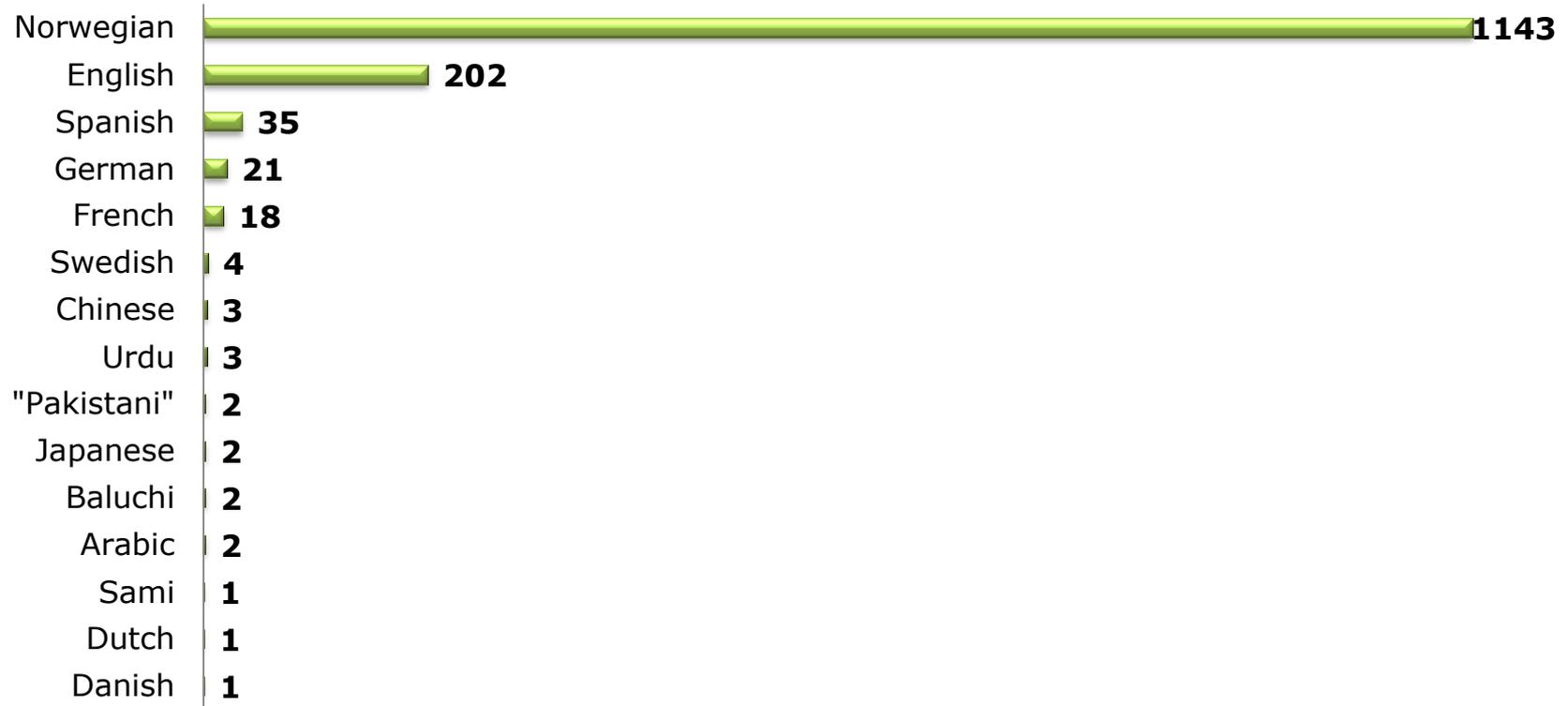
«dummy» English 60, N= 273

Statistics B. Uri Jensen

Student to teacher

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

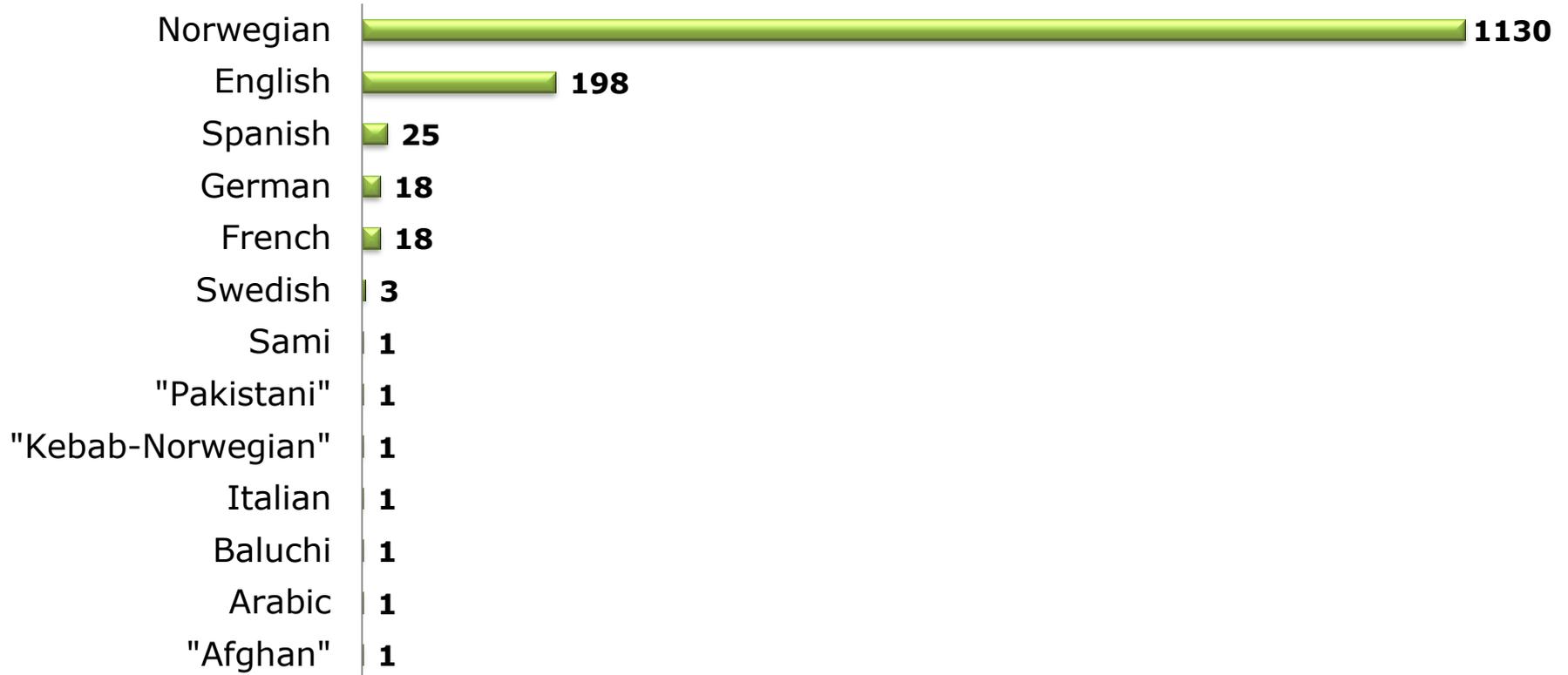
■ Languages mentioned



Teacher to student

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

■ Languages mentioned



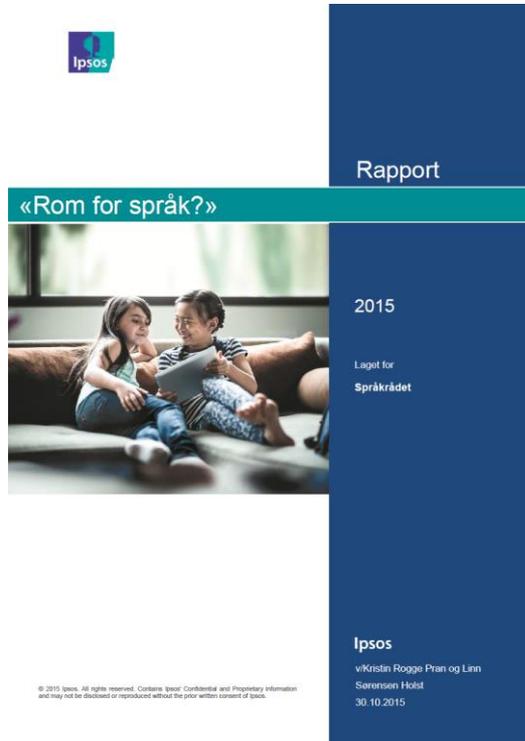
A mismatch between the linguistic diversity among the students and the homogenous language use in the classroom (i.e. in student-teacher interaction)

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*

tyster, snylter (fra engelsk)

stygg, stygt
(fra engelsk)

nerd (fra japansk)

dum, idiot (fra japansk)

in real life (fra engelsk,
i motsetning til dataverdenen)

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

så fort som mulig
(fra engelsk as soon as possible)

bra, pen, kul (fra urdu)

gå, stikke, komme, stikk!
(fra berbisk, kurdisk, farsi)

du lever én gang
(fra norsk)

så kult (uvisst opphav)

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

kan ha flere betydninger double d,
drug and disease free (fra engelsk)

slappe av, ta det rolig (fra engelsk)

å se (fra arabisk, berbisk)

laughing out loud
(fra engelsk)

nordmann (fra norsk, Ola baldengs)

ins *wannabe* *wtf* *m8*

ikke noe spesielt
(fra norsk)

en som gir seg ut for å være noe han eller hun ikke er (fra engelsk)

what the fuck
(fra engelsk)

venn (fra engelsk mate)

serr *swag* *yolo* *loco*

seriøst, alvorlig (fra norsk)

ofte brukt i betydningen stil
eller oppførsel (fra engelsk)

du lever bare én gang
(fra engelsk you only live ones)

gal, spro (fra spansk)

omg *keeg* *btw* *brb*

oh my God (fra engelsk)

soss, kul
(fra engelsk geek (baklengs) en som er sosialt utenfor)

forresten
(fra engelsk by the way)

snart tilbake
(fra engelsk be right back)







[Documentary by 1001 Films v/ Anwar Saab](#)

References:

- Canagarajah, Suresh. 2013. *Translingual Practice. Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations*. London: Routledge.
- Council of Europe. 2007. *From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education: Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe*, last accessed 1. December 2014 (see http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Guide_niveau3_en.asp, last accessed 1.12.2014).
- Creese, Angela & Adrian Blackledge. 2010. Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: a pedagogy for learning and teaching. *Modern Language Journal* 94. 103-5.
- Cummins, Jim. 2008. Teaching for transfer: Challenging the two solitudes assumption in bilingual education. In Jim Cummins & Nancy H. Hornberger (eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education: Vol. 5. Bilingual education*. Boston: Springer. 65-75.
- Janis L Dickinson, Jennifer Shirk, David Bonter, Rick Bonney, Rhiannon L Crain, Jason Martin, Tina Phillips, and Karen Purcell 2012. The current state of citizen science as a tool for ecological research and public engagement. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 10: 291–297. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1890/110236>
- García, Ophelia & Li Wei. 2014. *Translanguaging. Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

- Giddens, Anthony. 1984. *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Kulbrandstad, Lars-Anders, Elin Bakke, Anne Marit V. Danbolt & Thor Ola Engen. 2008. *Skolekulturer for språklæring 5* [School cultures for language learning]. Hamar: Høgskolen i Hedmark, avdeling for lærerutdanning og naturvitenskap.
- Lanza, Elizabeth. 2004. *Language Mixing in Infant Bilingualism: A Sociolinguistic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pike, Kenneth. 1954. *The Intonation of American English*. Ann Arbor, IL: University of Michigan Press.
- Rymes, B. & Andrea R. Leone 2014. Citizen sociolinguistics: A new media methodology for understanding language and social life. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics* 29(2): 25-43.
- Svendsen, Bente A. 2004. *Så lenge vi forstår hverandre. Språkvalg, flerspråklige ferdigheter og språklig sosialisering hos norsk-filippinske barn i Oslo* [As long as we understand each other. Language choice, multilingual competence and language socialization among Norwegian-Filipino children in Oslo]. Dr. Art. Dissertation, Acta Humaniora, 216: Oslo.
- Svendsen, Bente A. & Stefania Marzo 2015. A 'new' speech style is born. The omnipresence of structure and agency in the life of a semiotic register. *European Journal for Applied Linguistics*, (3):47-85.