

## SUBMISSION of Abstract

### 2nd Norwegian Graduate Student conference in Linguistics and Philology

1) Title of Paper:

One language – two competencies: Norwegian eight graders as bilingual learners

2) Abstract (414 words):

Spoken Norwegian has two forms as a written medium, Bokmål and Nynorsk. In grammar, syntax and spelling the two varieties differ to such an extent that it is correct to refer to them as two different written languages. They do not represent separate ethnic minorities, and are only to a limited extent linked to separate regions in Norway. It is not common to refer to any Norwegians as neither Bokmål- nor Nynorsk-speaking, since these terms are strictly connected to written Norwegian.

Teaching in both varieties of Norwegian is compulsory for all Norwegian pupils, and they can choose which one they wish to use in their communication within the Norwegian society. Students using Nynorsk as their first-choice Norwegian language are in a singular situation, since they, like most Norwegians, are a linguistic majority when it comes to spoken Norwegian, but a minority in their use of written Nynorsk.

Some findings indicate that Nynorsk users have some multilingual benefits compared to Bokmål users (Vulchanova et. al, 2014, Vangsnes, Söderlund, & Blekesaune, 2015). On the other hand, there is a mismatch between the curriculum demands and the pupils' everyday exposure to the two Norwegian languages. Nynorsk-users have much easier access to Bokmål than the other way around. In addition, the dominance of Bokmål in the society makes the necessity to learn the second-choice language far greater for Nynorsk users than Bokmål users. This contributes to undermine the motivation of learning Nynorsk for the Bokmål users. Depending on their first-choice language, Norwegian pupils therefore face different challenges in achieving an equal totality of writing competence. The ability to learn to “write creative, informative, reflective and argumentative texts in both the first-choice and second-choice language” (Kunnskapsløftet 2013, NOR1-05), may depend more on the overall exposure of Nynorsk texts, than the teaching itself.

My study aim is to look further into these issues and reveal some of the complexities of what it means to read and write the two varieties of Norwegian. I have examined texts written in both Bokmål and Nynorsk by a selection of eight graders, to unveil differences in the learning of their second-choice Norwegian language. In my presentation, I will try to explain why I find it useful to divide Norwegian students in two different groups, as part of either a language majority or a language minority, depending on their first-choice language. Furthermore, by using theories commonly used in bilingual education (Baker, 2006), I wish to argue why these groups need different approaches in learning their second-choice language.

## References

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- Vangsnes, Ø., Söderlund, G. B., & Blekesaune, M. (2015). The effect of bidialectal literacy on school achievement. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*.
- Vulchanova, M. D., Åfarli, T. A., Vulchanov, V., & Asbjørnsen, M. (2014). Flerspråklighet i Norge: en eksperimentell språkprosesseringsstudie. I E. Brunstad, A.-K. H. Gujord, & E. Bugge, *Rom for språk. Nye innsikter i språkleg mangfald* (ss. 145-170). Oslo: Novus Forlag.