Multiethnolectic facts and functions in Oslo, Norway
Bente Allin Svendsen and Unn Røyneland
University of Oslo

Acknowledgements
This research is based on the Oslo study within the national UPUS-project (Linguistic Development in Urban Environments), funded by grants from the Norwegian Research Council. We are grateful to the other researchers in the project, Ingvild Nistov, Tonil Opsahl, and Finn Aarsæther, and to the adolescents who participated in our study.

Abstract
Over the last 20 years, linguists have documented the emergence of multiethnolectic speech among adolescents in linguistically and culturally diverse areas in Western Europe. The main approach to multiethnolects has been structural or dialectological, describing the varieties’ linguistic traits. Another important approach has been sociopragmatic or functional, examining how multiethnolects are used in discourse. In this article, we have applied both approaches. We will discuss linguistic features of multiethnolectic speech among adolescents in Oslo, Norway, highlighting those traits that have parallels in other Scandinavian multiethnolects. Furthermore, we will discuss multiethnolectic use in discourse as an important marker of identity, focusing on the use of multiethnolect among adolescents with Norwegian as their first language. In this article, we will argue that multiethnolectic Norwegian is part of a larger individual and societal linguistic repertoire, and that its users are sensitive to its sociolinguistic significance.

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.

(Aftenposten 8.6.2006)

1 Introduction
In the letter to the editor quoted above and published in one of Norway’s leading newspapers, Aftenposten, a teacher expresses his fears of so-called “broken” Norwegian, even among pupils with Norwegian as a first language. The language situation in the Norwegian primary and secondary school is quite diverse, with more than 125 languages

Address for correspondence
Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo, Post Box 1102 Blindern, N-0317 Oslo, Norway; fax: +47 22 85 71 00;
e-mail: <b.a.svendsen@iln.uio.no> and <unn.royneland@iln.uio.no>.

in Oslo, the capital (Oslo Municipality, 2007). The migrant population (i.e., both parents born abroad) constitutes 24% of Oslo’s population and 9% of the total Norwegian population of 4.6 million (SSB, 2007). It is likely that we will find consequences of language contact in a city where a quarter is classified as migrants, but do they really, as the teacher postulates, amount to an incomplete mastery of Norwegian, even by first language speakers, and a greater need for second language instruction? The answer is clearly negative, and throughout the paper we will subject the assumptions behind these questions to critical examination in light of both linguistic and functional evidence.

During the 1980s Kotsinas (1988) traced a new group language among adolescents in Rinkeby, a highly linguistically and culturally diverse suburb of Stockholm, Sweden. Kotsinas argues that the adolescents’ language use is not so much a result of lack of proficiency in standard Swedish, as a dialect, and thus should be treated as such. Inspired by Kotsinas, Quist (2000) discusses the emergence of a variety among bilingual adolescents in an area with a high density of migrants, Nerrebro in Copenhagen, Denmark. Like Kotsinas, Quist argues that the bilingual adolescents are not second language learners of Danish since they are born and raised in Copenhagen. The linguistically “deviant” forms from standard Danish should thus, according to Quist, be treated as a variety in its own right, a so-called multiethnolect. Whereas ethnolects might be conceived of as “varieties of a language that mark speakers of ethnic groups who originally used another language or distinctive variety” (Clyne, 2000, p. 86), multiethnolects are characterized by their use by several minority groups “collectively to express their minority status and/or as a reaction to that status to upgrade it” (Clyne, 2000, p. 87). When majority speakers come to share a multiethnolect with minorities, we see an expression of a new form of group identity, as found in the Rinkeby area of Stockholm (Kotsinas, 1988, 1990), in Malmö (Bodén, 2007), in Bradford and East London (Rampton, 1993, 1998), Nerrebro in Copenhagen (Quist, 2000, 2005), the Lombok area of Utrecht (Nortier, 2001; cf. Nortier, this volume), and in the inner city area of Mannheim (Kallmeyer & Keim, 2003). In Norway, adolescents’ language use in multiethnic areas has primarily been studied at the lexical level, describing reported use and knowledge of loanwords from different languages other than Norwegian and English, and on the etymologic origin of those words (Aasheim, 1995; Drange, 2002; Østby, 2005). Thus, there is no Norwegian study parallel to, for example, Kotsinas (1988) and Quist (2000). In other words, neither structural nor functional features of a possible multiethnolect have, as yet, been studied in Norway.

In this article, we will argue that there is also a multiethnolect in the third and last Scandinavian capital, Oslo, consisting of more than single loanwords and phrases, a variety which can be distinguished from both “learner language” and from Oslo “youth language” in general. We will discuss the linguistic features or “facts” of the new variety in Oslo with emphasis on their correlates in the other Scandinavian multiethnolects described, that is “rinkebysvenska” (“Rinkeby Swedish”) (Kotsinas, 1988, 1990), Danish multiethnolect in Copenhagen (Quist, 2000, 2005), and “rosengårdsvenska” (“Rosengård Swedish”) in Malmö (Boden, 2007). Hence, we will demonstrate that there are parallel multiethnolectal patterns within the Mainland Scandinavian (henceforth MSc) languages, which are Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish. Finally, we will discuss multiethnolectal use as an important marker of identity through how it is used in discourse. This
research is based on an ongoing project studying linguistic practices among adolescents in multilingual and multicultural communities of practice in Oslo (UPUS = Linguistic development in urban environments, cf. Opsahl, Rayneland & Svendsen, 2008; Svendsen, 2008; UPUS/Oslo, 2008). In this project, we are currently developing a corpus of spoken data from approximately 90 adolescents (see Section 3). All of these are born and raised in Norway. As we are still in the early stages of the project, we will concentrate on a particular case study, presenting it in the light of more general observations from our field work and providing some preliminary analyses. The results clearly illustrate the supposition that a new multiethnolectal style is emerging among adolescent in multiethnic milieus in Oslo. We will be able to test hypotheses regarding the specific linguistic content of this style as more comprehensive quantitative and qualitative sociolinguistic analyses of the emerging corpus become available. The data we are reporting on has one 20-year-old boy, Anders, as its pivot point. Anders is identified by other adolescents and identifies himself as a multiethnolectal user. Anders’ father is from North Africa. Anders was born and raised, mainly by his mother of Norwegian descent, in a multilingual area in suburban Oslo. Hence, Anders is definitely not a second language learner. We will present conversational data and interview data from him and other adolescents in Oslo (see Section 3), highlighting multiethnolectal use among adolescents with Norwegian as a first language to demonstrate that multiethnolectal Norwegian is not a manifestation of lack of competence, but part of a larger individual and societal linguistic repertoire.

2 A structural and functional approach to multiethnolects

Kotsinas (1988) and Quist (2000) approach multiethnolects structurally and dialectologically, mapping out linguistic features of the new varieties of Swedish and Danish respectively (cf. Quist, this volume). They both discuss multiethnolects among bilingual adolescents in terms of processes of expansion and simplification. According to Kotsinas and Quist, expansion occurs at the lexical level; certain insertions of loanwords from different languages such as Arabic (wallah ‘swear by Allah’) and Turkish (kız ‘girl’) (cf. Section 4.1). Simplification works, according to Kotsinas (1988), as in creolization, at the grammatical and phonological level, and implies a preference for the typologically unmarked structures. Both Kotsinas (1988) and Quist (2000) report on the use of masculine as a kind of “default” gender, and preferences for “straight” word order in declarative clauses where the MSc languages adhere to the Verb Second or V2 constraint. That is, the verb obtains in the second position in all main clauses (cf. Section 4.3).

A preference for typologically unmarked structures is quite common in second language learning processes (e.g., Ellis, 1994). Hence, differentiating multiethnolects from learner language has been a central issue within the structural approach to multiethnolects (e.g., Boden, 2007; Kotsinas, 1988; Quist, 2000). Sometimes it is not possible to distinguish, but when expanded and/or simplified linguistic features are used by adolescents born and raised in the country of the target language, as in Quist’s, Kotsinas’, and in our study, it is unlikely that we are dealing with second language acquisition

---

1 Kotsinas does not use the term multiethnolect. It is first used in two different articles, Clyne (2000) and Quist (2000).
processes. Furthermore, there is, as we will show in Section 5, functional evidence for the existence of a multiethnolect when it is used as one of several registers in language user's linguistic repertoire, and in crossing situations by majority language speakers (cf. Rampton, 1995, 1998, see below). Within the structural approach to multiethnolects there is, nevertheless, a danger in overemphasizing the focus on "errors" and "deviation" from a standard variant, and thus imply a deficit perspective, especially when the functional perspective is underestimated or disregarded. A structural approach is, however, a precondition for a functional or sociopragmatic approach; it is not possible to study a variety's different functions in discourse, without a certain systematic analysis of the variety in question, that is, prosody, lexicon, and grammar, or at least some of these aspects. The significance of the structural approach as a source of analytical tools may be one reason for its relatively dominant position within the study of multiethnolects, and a reason for the thorough discussion of labeling (i.e., as a group language, a social dialect, register, variety, dialect, sociolect, chronolect, multiethnolect, cf. Fraarud & Bijvoet, 2004; Kotsinas, 1988; Nortier, 2001; Quist, 2000). Here, we will not enter into that discussion, but re-emphasize that the structural and functional approaches are not binary, but complementary, and in our study we have applied both of them.

Within the structural or dialectological approach we have used two different criteria to identify a multiethnolect in Oslo: (1) an *emic* criterion, where we rely on the adolescents' own report of language use somehow different from a more standard-like South-Eastern Norwegian (cf. Section 4.1), and (2) a linguistic criterion, mapping out linguistic traits which differ from standard South-Eastern Norwegian and "youth language" in Oslo in general. There are, however, no comprehensive studies of adolescents' language use in Oslo, although there are larger studies of the use of slang (e.g., The Uno-project; Orange, 2002; Hasund, 2006a). To overcome this deficiency, we compare our data with a newly established corpus of spoken language in Oslo (the NoTS corpus, cf. Section 3).

Within the functional or sociopragmatic approach we will discuss multiethnolectal use as an *act of identity* (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). A language or code choice seems to be relevant to identity constructions in situations where the participants choose to use certain languages or linguistic traits when they *could have* chosen differently; situations where the choice is not primarily denotive, but motivated by its symbolic value at the linguistic market (Auer, 2007; Bourdieu, 1991). One such metaphorical choice is language or code *crossing*, that is, "the use of a language which isn't generally thought to 'belong' to the speaker" (Rampton, 1998, p. 291). Rampton (1995, 1998) demonstrates how adolescents move across and redefine somehow fixed social and ethnic boundaries by means of language crossing. Crossing might occur as part of a performance, in Bauman's sense, highlighting the "awareness of both the act of expression and the performer" (Bauman, 1986, p. 3, cf. Goffman, 1959). Rampton (1995) analyses how crossing occurs as a performance act by the adolescents' use of what he calls *stylized* Asian English. According to Coupland (2001, p. 345) *stylization involves* "performing noncurrent-first-person personas by phonological and related means, sometimes in play or parody." In Rampton's (1995) data, the U.K. school students of Anglo, Asian, and Caribbean descent put on another voice and thus project hypothetical identities; comic personas that are polite, uncomprehending, and incompetent in English. Typically "described [by
young peoples themselves] as a subterfuge that Indian and Pakistani youngsters use to undermine white authority figures” (Rampton, 1995, p. 53). In this article, we will discuss multietnnolect use as acts of identities in general, in crossing situations in particular, and the use of stylization as means of positioning oneself and others in categories such as ‘us’ and ‘them’ and ‘majority’ versus ‘minority’.

3 The data, participants, and methods

Anders, the main respondent in this article, claims to be a multietnnolect user, and has also been identified as such by other adolescents in a perception task. These adolescents listened to the audio files in the UPUS/Oslo corpus and were asked to pick out the multietnnolect users. Anders is raised bilingually in Norwegian and Arabic, having mainly receptive competence in Arabic. He reports to have better productive and receptive competence in Norwegian, which he identifies as his first language and his “mother tongue”. Thus, Norwegian may be classified as his dominant language (i.e., a competence based definition, cf. Lanza, 2004). The multietnnolect is, as we will illustrate below, only one register in his linguistic repertoire.

To elicit data we used a triangulation of methods, namely a questionnaire to map reported language choice and competence, style, and interests, phonological perception and production tasks, participant observations, and video-taped interviews and peer conversations. Here, we will focus on the interview with Anders, and the peer conversation between Anders and a friend, Aswan. Aswan is 20 years old, and also of North African descent. Anders and one of the authors, Bente Ailin Svendsen, became very well acquainted outside this particular study, and they elaborated the analyses in detail in a retrospective interview (see Section 5). The data will, as noted above, be compared with a corpus of spoken language; the NoTa corpus. Both the NoTa corpus and the UPUS/Oslo corpus consist of two types of data from the same participant, interviews, and peer conversations. The NoTa corpus includes 166 participants from across Oslo, of whom 61 are in the age group 16–25 (data collection period 2004–2006). The UPUS/Oslo corpus will when it is completed, include spoken data from around 90 adolescents between 13 and 23 years from culturally and linguistically diverse areas in suburban Oslo (Søndre Nordstrand), urban Oslo (Gamle Oslo), and translocal milieus (data collection period 2006–2008). Currently the UPUS/Oslo corpus consists of 44 young respondents. These adolescents live in Gamle Oslo where 33% of the population are of migrant background and in Søndre Nordstrand where 43% are of migrant background (SSB, 2007). Hence, the heterogeneous demographics which are a prerequisite for the emergence of a multietnnolect are present. In the next section we will discuss some of the linguistic features of the multietnnolect in Oslo.

4 Multietnnolect features

4.1 Emic considerations and lexicon

Beside prosodic features, lexical features are perhaps the most striking characteristics of multietnnolects (cf. Bodén, 2007; Quist, this volume). Lexicon and prosody are
also what the adolescents in the UPUS/Oslo corpus refer to when they are asked if adolescents in multiethnic areas talk in a certain manner (e.g. different words, words from other languages, the syllables, the tone, harsh speech rhythm, authors’ translation, see Section 4.2). The adolescents 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 talk.” However, we find characterizations such as jalla-språk (Jalla-language), wollah-språk (Wollah-language), and kebab-norsk (Kebab-Norwegian). Some multiethnolectal users find these terms condescending, as articulated by one 15-year-old boy, Michael: “no (.) really bad like because when you say kebab language it is like (.) it is in a way shit” (authors’ translation). Labels such as Jalla-Norwegian and Kebab-Norwegian are primarily found among the nonmultiethnolectal users, and are often used as means of distancing, as shown in (1) from a conversation between a 17-year-old girl, Martine, and a 19-year-old boy, Tanh, both being of migrant descent.2

(1) 1 Tanh:       syns du jallanorsk er lattis, eller?
                ‘do you think Jalla Norwegian is laughable, or?’

                2 Martine:   hm?
                             ‘hm?’

                3 Tanh:       syns du sånn der kebabnorsk er funny, eller?
                               ‘do you think such Kebab Norwegian is funny, or?’

                4 Martine:   nei ()
                              ‘no (?)’

                5 Tanh:       [syns du ikke det?]
                                 ‘don’t you think?’

                6 Martine:   [sånn] wollahspråk?
                                    ‘such Wollah language?’

                7 Tanh:       ja
                           ‘yes’

                8 Martine:   nei
                              ‘no’

                8 Tanh:       “henger utanfor Oslo city, ler og (latter) skal vi eh sjøkke opp noen
                               sjøae kæber (?) ja, er drit-sipah i alle fall (?) gørmeg, sipah, herregud,
                              ikke sant? sipah, ikke sant? () ja eh” (2.0) skjerp deg
                                 ‘hangs outside Oslo City, laughs and (laugh) shall we land
                                  some ‘sipah’ birds () yes, is shit ‘sipah’ at least () maniac, ‘sipah’, dear
                                  God, right? ‘sipah’, right? () yes eh” (2.0) pull your self together’

                9 Martine:   jeg har altid irritert meg over sånn () (latter) () for sånt språk,
                              jeg (?) egentlig

---

2 Transcripts are close to orthographic. (.) denotes a brief pause; longer pauses are times in seconds. Inaudible strings are marked by xxx. Single parentheses denote paralinguistic traits, such as laughter, whereas ( ) denotes the turn in focus, and ‘- ’ denotes interruptions. Overlapping turns are marked by square brackets.

The International Journal of Bilingualism
‘I have always been annoyed about such ( ) (laughter) for such language. I ( ) really’

10 Tanh:
   (latter) (laughter)

In turn number eight above, Tanh crosses into multiethnolectal speech, speaks in altera persona, ‘as if this was him’, and stylizes what he conceives to be the “prototypical” multiethnolectal user in his “prototypical” milieu; outside a shopping mall in the center of Oslo, Oslo City. Tanh projects an imagery of the multiethnolectal user as male, lazy, and with no activities other than girls. In his performance we see that Tanh uses words such as spa (‘good’), Berber and kåber (‘girls’, Berber: ‘prostitutes’), words that seem to have received an iconic status as markers of multiethnolectal speech in Oslo.3 Furthermore, Tanh’s repeated use of these words intensifies this event as a stylized performance act, highlighting the way in which “communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content” (Bauman, 1986, p. 3). Through his performance, in the theatrical sense of the term, he takes responsibility for his audience, Martine. He manages to create a common ground with her; that kind of language has always annoyed her. Through his stylization Tanh projects an out-group identity onto the multiethnolectal users, although he has a minority background himself; being of Vietnamese descent. Quite contrary to Tanh’s stylization, Anders calls it, as shown in (2, Turn 4), a dialect:

(2) 1 Interviewer: hvilket navn har det? ‘what name does it have?’
   2 Anders: jeg kaller det på en måte jeg har ikke noe navn for det jeg har b- jeg f-ser på det som en refleksjon av mangfold og felleskap ‘I call it in a way I don’t have any name for it I have b- I f- look at it as a reflection of diversity and “togetherness”’
   3 Interviewer: mm () men eh aviene mediene bruker uttrykket kebab-norsk eh hva xxx syns du om det? ‘mm () but eh the newspapers the media use the term Kebab-Norwegian eh what xxx do you think about that?’
   4 Anders: () ja jeg helt ærlig () det er noe dem har sagt de jeg jeg ser ikke jeg har aldri () jeg s- () eneste jeg sier det her er vår dialekt () jeg trenger ikke å si kebabnorsk eller () ‘() yes I honestly () that is something they have said they I don’t look I have never () I s-() only thing I say is this is our dialect () I don’t need to say Kebab Norwegian or ()’
   5 Interviewer: og hvem er vi hvem er vår () dialekt hvem er vi? ‘and who we who is our () dialect who are we?’
   6 Anders: det er minoriteten ‘it is the minority’

3 We have written the words according to a standard Norwegian orthography, not as in the substrata languages.
7 Interviewer: *ehmm* () minoritetsungdom
‘ehmm () minority adolescents’

8 Anders: *ja*
‘yes’

9 Interviewer: *men da sa også at det var eh () eh andre unddommer med norsk bakgrunn*
‘but you also said that there were eh () eh other adolescents with Norwegian background’

10 Anders: () *ja*
‘() yes’

Anders has indeed, as we see in (2), a reflective view on this spoken variety (*a reflection of diversity and “togetherness”, Turn 2*). Furthermore, he connects the dialect to a “generalized” minority; the minority’s dialect (Turn 6). The fact that he uses the term ‘dialect’ is interesting and may be seen in connection to the special position dialects have in Norway (cf. Rayneland, 2008). According to our *emic* criterion, the data in the UPUS/Oslo corpus clearly demonstrates that there is a multiethnolect in Oslo. This multiethnolect is often, as pointed out by the interviewer in Turn 3 above, labeled by journalists, lay people, teachers, and even linguists, as ‘Kebab Norwegian’. Hasund (2006b, p.11f) for instance, argues in favor of the term ‘Kebab Norwegian’. Kebab is, however, primarily a kind of dish, and not a linguistic term, and since the term is not frequently used by the adolescents themselves, and some even find the term condescending, we discourage the use of it.

At the lexical level, there are differences between the multiethnolects across the MSc language area, simply because there are different migrant groups in the different countries. In Danish multiethnolect, as well as in Swedish, there are, as mentioned above, frequent loans from Turkish. Turks are the largest migrant group in Copenhagen, and in Denmark (DS, 2007), and one of the largest in Sweden (SCB, 2005). The Pakistanis are the largest migrant group in Oslo, and in Norway (SSB, 2007). Hence, in the UPUS/Oslo corpus we find as expected, and as documented in former studies, loans from Urdu and Punjabi, such as *baja* (‘friend’) and *tart* (‘good, pretty, cool’) (cf. Aasheim, 1995; Østby, 2005). However, we also find some of the same words across the MSc language area. A lexical analysis of words not listed in the Norwegian dictionary (*Bokmålordbok*), that is, loanwords, and other words often with a slang function, in the NoTu corpus, shows the following pattern (cf. Figure 1).

Figure 1 illustrates that the most frequent use of loanwords from other languages than Norwegian and English are found among boys in the Eastern part of Oslo (cf. Opsahl, Rayneland & Svendsen, 2008). Oslo has traditionally been divided dialectologically in two areas; Oslo East and West. The dialect or sociolect of the Western part of Oslo has had higher sociocultural and economic prestige (cf. Hanssen, 1978). The pattern in Figure 1 reflects that both gender and a sociolectal dimension seem to cut across the age dimension, as found also in Copenhagen (cf. Quist, this volume). The most frequent words from other languages than English and Norwegian in the NoTu corpus (cf. Figure 1) are *tas* (‘rubbish’, Arabic), *sipa, kabe, wallah* (‘swear by Allah’, Arabic), and compounds such as *dritispa* (Norwegian emphasis, *drit* ‘dirt’, “shit” + *sipa* = ‘very good’).

The International Journal of Bilingualism
In comparison, loanwords from other languages than Norwegian and English make more than half of the instances in the UPUS/Oslo corpus (58%). These words are primarily in use among the boys in this corpus as well. Wallah stands out as the most frequent word in the UPUS/Oslo corpus. Wallah seems to be a trans-Scandinavian word as well (cf. Boden, 2007; Quist, 2000), and it is also documented in so-called Street language ("Straattaal") in the Lombok area of Utrecht (Nortier, 2001; cf. Nortier, this volume). In Oslo, wallah has multiple functions. In conversation, it functions as an intensifier and emphasizes. Symbolically, it functions as a shibboleth; to describe adolescents who use a multiethnolect, or adolescents who try to use it; so-called "wallah-wannabees." Moreover, it denotes adolescents with a migrant background. At a general level, it seems that the use of loanwords, often with a slang function, is mainly a masculine phenomenon in culturally and linguistically diverse areas in Oslo.

Although there are trans-Scandinavian multiethnolectal differences at the lexical level, we find important structural similarities. Here, we will address some of them, with multiethnolectal speech in Oslo as a point of departure, namely prosody, inversion, and negation. We will emphasize that the study of multiethnolectal speech in Oslo and trans-Scandinavian patterns as such, are far from being fully understood, and that there is a need for further elaboration (cf. Quist & Svendsen, forthcoming).4

4 Quist and Svendsen’s publication (forthcoming) is based on the first Language and Practice in Multietnic Urban Scandinavia meeting on multiethnolects which took place in Copenhagen in June, 2007.

4.2 Prosody
As noted earlier, many of the adolescents we interviewed, point to prosodic 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:
(3a) hissig () jeg veit ikke på tonefall og liksom trykket på orda det virker me
mer hissig (Thomas)
‘aggressive () I don’t know in intonation and like the stress on the words
it sounds a lot more aggressive’

(3b) tonefall fra arabisk og ting og tang (Anders)
‘intonation from Arabic and stuff’

(3c) det eller så høres det ut som de går rundt og er forbonna konstant […] blir
så hardt […] [tonen, trykket] helt feil (Joanna)
‘or it sounds like they are constantly angry […] it’s so harsh […] [tone,
stress] all wrong’

(3d) det blir litt sånn annet tonefall (Maia)
‘it’s kind of a different intonation’

(3e) du får veldig mye sats da () i ordene (1.0) her nede så får du stort sett sats
i alle ordene […] det blir mye mer trykket ned da (Ummar)
‘you get a lot of force/stress () in the words (1.0) down here you get
force/stress in all the words […] it’s more squeezed down’

The fact that these adolescents hear a harsher, more aggressive or more “Arabic”
tonation is likely due to a variety of phonetic or phonological factors. It may depend
on stress distribution, vowel length, tonal accents and intonational patterns.

A perception test performed by Bodén (2007) shows that even very short speech
passages with no other multiethnolectal features were labeled as “rosengårdsvenska” if
a specific prosodic pattern was present. Our perception of rhythm is related to repeated
patterns in spoken discourse. One such pattern is syllable length and stress. Pike (1945)
suggested that languages have isochronal speech units, and that these units can be located
in the syllable (syllable-timing) or in the foot (stress-timing). Syllable timed languages
are characterized by having the same syllable length. In stress-timed languages, on the
other hand, each foot is supposed to have the same length. It has not been proved that
languages in fact are isochronous, and increasingly theorists have come to doubt the
applicability of Pike’s categories. However, it has been common to divide languages
according to this notion (cf. Low, Grabe, & Nolan, 2001; McLeod, 2005), and in the
context of the present discussion Pike’s distinction may usefully be invoked. Many of the
Germanic languages such as English, Dutch, German, and the Scandinavian languages
may be classified as stress-timed languages, whereas many of the contact languages
in multilingual milieu in Oslo can be characterized as syllable-timed languages, for
e.g., Spanish, Turkish, and Urdu/Punjabi (cf. McLeod, 2005).

Both Kotsinas (1988, 1990) and Quist (2000, 2005) mention characteristic pronuncia-
tion as maybe the most salient resource of the multiethnolectal style in Stockholm and
Copenhagen, but both find it difficult to give a linguistic description of what exactly
makes it different from standard Swedish and standard Danish. As noted above, it is
probably a series of phonological traits that gives this special sound, but one possible
candidate may be syllable timing versus stress timing. Factors like vowel reduction,
lexical stress and syllable structure are all relevant for the perception of speech rhythm.
For instance, vowel reduction is more frequent in stress timed languages than in syllable
timed languages. Kotsinas (1990) found less frequent use of assimilations and reductions across word boundaries in the multiethnolect than in other Swedish varieties, and both Kotsinas and Quist (2005) have observed lengthening of short vowels and shortening of long vowels, which of course results in a smaller difference between short and long vowels. Both of these observations may reflect influence from syllable timed languages where all syllables are given the same length. A staccato rhythm or “intonation from Arabic,” as some of our respondents call it, may be another way of describing the same phenomenon.

Both Norwegian and Swedish are tone languages where lexical tones differentiate meaning in multisyllable words, whereas Danish has phonemic glottal stop (the so-called Danish “stød”). Bødén (2007) does not find any deviation from typical southern Swedish word accent in “rosengårdsvenska.” However, Quist (2000, 2005) reports that the phonemic glottal stop is not used in all contexts where one normally would expect it in Danish, by the multiethnolectal speech style users. Also in Norway we find quite a lot of variation when it comes to the use of tones. A reading list containing a series of minimal pairs reveals that most of the adolescents in our study use both tones, but not in all minimal pairs. Anders, for instance, who both labels himself and is labeled by others as a multiethnolectal user, does not distinguish between for instance [ˈbænːøːr] peasants and [ˈbønːøːr] beans, but pronounces both words with pitch accent 1 as illustrated in Figure 2a and b.

The general tendency is that pitch accent 2 is substituted by pitch accent 1 in many of the minimal pairs in the reading list. Anders does, however, pronounce some minimal pairs in accordance with the standard South-Eastern Norwegian tone-system (for instance [ˈtænknə] the tank vs. [ˈtæŋknə] the thought). In pitch accent 1 in South-Eastern Norwegian the F0 reaches its lowest level within the accented syllable (cf. Figure 2a), whereas in pitch accent 2 the F0 reaches its lowest level in the syllable following the accented syllable (cf. Figure 2c). In Figure 2a and b we can see that both beans and peasants are pronounced with pitch accent 1.

There seems to be a tendency among adolescents in the Oslo area to substitute pitch accent 2 by pitch accent 1, for example in a number of present tense weak verbs [ˈspɪlːər] plays, [ˈre:iːər] travels, but not in minimal pairs as in the above example. On the contrary new minimal pairs may appear. This occurs for instance when the present tense verb [ˈspɪlːə] plays is pronounced with pitch accent 1, since it normally is homonymous with the indefinite singular noun [ˈspɪlːə] (player). Also multiethnolectal speakers seem to be taking part in this possible change in progress, but in addition they show mergers between minimal pairs where we do not find any change in progress among adolescents in general in Oslo. An interesting question, then, is which mergers reflect more general changes in progress, and which are characteristic of the multiethnolectal style. In some Norwegian dialects they do not have the tone distinction. These dialects are typically situated in areas where there has been a lot of language contact. Also in other language contact areas in Scandinavia tone distinction seems to be lost (e.g., in Finland Swedish). There might be a similar tendency in multilingual milieus in Oslo, reinforced by the fact that none of the major contact languages in the multilingual environments

---

5 The two sentences were the following: “Er det ikke godt med bønner til tacos?” “Doesn’t it taste good with beans to tacos?” and “Bønder i byen, altså — si, ikke mer ‘Peasants in the city, really’—say no more.”
Figure 2
The pitch accent of the minimal pairs: peasants ['bænər] and beans ['bænər].
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)

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

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

(c) *bænner*, beans, pitch accent 2

in Oslo are tone languages, except Vietnamese. Since we still are in an early stage of our research, we do not as yet have a clear picture of the variational patterns regarding these variables. However, this is clearly an interesting site for further sociolinguistic investigation and we will conduct quantitative variation analyses using both the NoTa corpus and the UPUSI Oslo corpus of spoken language.

4.3 Inversion
The MSle languages adhere to the V2 constraint in all declarative main clauses, as shown in the Norwegian example in (4a) and (b). Danish and Swedish have the same word order (Jensen, 2001). In a clause where another element has been topicalized or fronted (X), such as an adverbial or an embedded clause, and in interrogatives, the canonical subject position is after the finite verb, and before any of the verb complements (XVS) (cf. Faarlund, Lie, & Vannebo, 1997), as demonstrated in (4b) and (4c), marked in bold:

(4a) *han spiste fisk i går.*
    ‘he ate fish yesterday’

(4b) *i går spiste han fisk.*
    ‘yesterday he ate fish’
(4c) hva spiste han i går?\textsuperscript{6}
what ate he yesterday?
‘what did he eat yesterday?’

In the spoken MSs languages the V2 rule is abolished when the fronted element is extraposed, that is, when there is a pause after the fronted element and the following clause. Extraposed elements thus do not require XVS word order. Both Kotsinas (1988) and Quist (2000) show that XSV word order is characteristic for Swedish and Danish multiethnolects. In the UPUS/Oslo corpus there are several examples of XSV word order, as seen in (5a) to (5c), marked in bold:

(5a) i Norge de spiser med venstre
‘in Norway they eat with their left’

(5b) egentlig jeg har 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
‘had it been your funeral I had not come’

The fronted elements in (5a to c) are not extraposed in the respondents’ utterances. In these cases the V2 rule “should” thus be implemented, but is in fact not. The V2 constraint is a typologically marked structure. It is somehow difficult to acquire for second language learners of Norwegian (cf. Berggreen & Tenfjord, 1999), and it might be that the three adolescents in (5a to c) have not learnt the norm, although this is not likely to be the case. All three of them are born and raised in Oslo; Anders mainly by his mother of Norwegian descent. The variation in the distribution of inversion is in fact prevalent among the adolescents of Norwegian descent who claim to be multiethnolectal users. The examples in (5d) to (5h) below demonstrate XSV word order among majority adolescents, two 14-year old boys and one 15-year-old girl of Norwegian descent with Norwegian as their first language. The examples are from their peer conversations.

(5d) forrige gang vi lå under tre null vi vant fire-tre
‘last time we were under three-nil we won four-three’

(5e) etterpå jeg gikk og sjekka
‘afterwards I went and checked’

(5f) hvis en av oss vinner vi deler halvparten
‘if one of us wins we split half’

(5g) plutselig du vinner halvparten
‘suddenly you win half’

(5h) skal de være norske de må ha brune øyne og brunt hår
‘shall they be Norwegian they must have brown eyes and brown hair’

Since violation of the V2 constraint is found among majority adolescents it might reflect an ongoing linguistic change. However, this is not likely, first of all because the V2 constraint is very robust (Jensen, 2001). Furthermore, nonmultiethnolectal speaking

\textsuperscript{6} Westergaard (2005) shows that dialects in Northern Norway do not adhere to the V2 constraint in wh-questions. For dialectal variation of the V2 constraint in Denmark, see Pedersen (1996).
adolescents label these sentences as ungrammatical when they are asked to make grammatical judgments. 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.

4.4 Negation

In Oslo, there seems to be a multiethnolect trait which has not been documented hitherto in other Scandinavian multiethnolects, namely variation in the syntactic distribution of negative items in embedded clauses. In the MSc languages we find the same negative items: ikke ‘not’ in Danish and Norwegian and inte ‘not’ in Swedish. The V2 constraint in the MSc languages is, as mentioned above, very robust (Jensen, 2001). Thus, negative items in the MSc languages are typically postverbal. This is shown in the Norwegian example in (6). Danish and Swedish have the same word order (Christensen, 2003; Jensen, 2001).

(6) han spiste ikke fisk
he ate not fish
‘he did not eat fish’

The syntactic distribution of the negative items in the MSc languages is similar, apart from topicalization. In Danish (and English), topicalization of ikke ‘not’ is ungrammatical, whereas it is grammatical in Norwegian and Swedish (Christensen, 2003). Nevertheless, the V2 constraint does not apply in embedded clauses in the MSc languages, as demonstrated in the Norwegian example in (7):

(7) ... at John ikke spiste fisk
... that John not ate fish
‘... that John did not eat fish’

Thus, the negative items in the embedded clauses in the MSc languages follow the Adv-V word order (Jensen, 2001). The syntactic distribution of negative items and the V2 constraint in the MSc languages is somehow difficult to acquire, and variation in it is often salient in MSc learner languages (e.g., Berggreen & Tenfjord, 1999; Hyltenstam, 1978; Quist, 2000). In the Oslo multiethnolect we find instances of syntactic variation of the negative items in embedded clauses, as shown in example (8a) and (8b) from the interview and peer conversation with Anders:

(8a) dem som skjønner, dem som skjønner ikke, trenger ikke å skjønne.
‘those who understand, they understand, those who understand not, need not to understand’

(8b) de tror at vi har ikke integrerter oss
‘they believe that we have not integrated ourselves’

The embedded clauses in (8a) and (8b) where the negative item ikke ‘not’ comes after the finite verb, and not preceding it, as it is in the MSc languages, may be explained in terms of generalization of the syntactic distribution of negative items in main clauses. Interestingly, we find instances where Anders—who is not, as already mentioned, a
Multiethnolectal functions

Kotsinas (1988, 1990) and Quist (2000, 2005) characterize multiethnolectal use as an in-group phenomenon. In Oslo, the multiethnolectal style is used both in what may be characterized as in-group and out-group contexts, that is, the peer conversation and the interview with the researchers respectively. The majority of our respondents report, however, that the multiethnolectal style is used primarily among adolescents in peer groups (cf. Nistov, Opshäl & Aarsæther, 2007). Olav for instance, one of the majority adolescents, quite clearly shifts from a standard-like South-Eastern Norwegian in the interview, to a multiethnolectal style with the characteristic intonation pattern in the peer conversation. In addition, in the peer conversation with another multiethnolectal user, Olav displays several instances of XSV, as illustrated in (5f) to (5g) above. In the interview, however, Olav fully applies the V2 constraint. Lars, another majority adolescent (cf. 5d and 5e), displays the same pattern: nine instances of XSV in the peer conversation and none in the interview. As Olav, Lars fully applies the V2 constraint in the interview (cf. Nistov & Opshäl, 2007). These findings support the assumption that the syntactic distribution of inversion elaborated in 4.3, actually is a sociolinguistic and a stylistic variable. Olav is for instance conscious of the functional differentiation of his linguistic repertoire (from the interview: “it is like me and you (...) like when I talk to you [...] then I had spoken like ‘how are you doing?’ like properly [...] in front of family too I speak I- I do not speak like slang words’ [authors’ translation]). Olav’s use of multiethnolect is a form of crossing, although he says that the multiethnolect “belongs” to him (cf. Rampton’s definition of crossing in (2) above). Olav has grown up in Sondere Nordstrand, and states that he identifies strongly with the local milieu. He distances Sondere Nordstrand from the neighboring areas by positioning their inhabitants as byssaker (“posh city people”). All of his friends have linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. In the interview, Olav emphasizes that he too has a diverse background; he has Sami descent on his mother’s side.

Whereas Olav’s multiethnolect is in use in in-group contexts, Anders’ multiethnolectal use is quite prevalent in both the interview setting and in the peer conversation. Nevertheless, he shifts between the two varieties in the conversation with Aswan, as shown in (10) below. The following example is from the beginning of their peer conversation and the two boys have not yet figured out what to talk about. They have been given
some suggestions, like the movies “Jalla! Jallal!” and “Izzat,” and Aswan singles out the following topic:

(10) 1 Aswan: vi kan ta “kultur” da (.) daen
we can take “culture” then (.) fuck

➤ 2 Anders: mm (1.) ok (1.0.) hva er det (1.) og så de der kommer med det derre (.) “Jalla” og “Izzat” og kommer og prøver å ta over landet vårt (.) da kan du bare dra tilbake der dere kommer fra eh gjerne har lyst på
den passet ditt tilbake, altså
‘mm (1.) ok (1.0.) what is it (1.0.) and then those there come with that (.) “Jalla” and “Izzat” and come and try to take over our country (.) then you can just go back where you come from eh would fancy having your passport back’

3 Aswan: (latter)
(laughter)

4 Anders: e e e e er ikke verdt eh brytet altså (.) jeg vet ikke, trodde du kom hit for å jobbe, jeg (.) sitte der og tro du er noe (.) kan du dra en annen plass (.) se hvor toff du er (.) ja (.) kan ikke være eplekjekk og høy på pæra
‘e e e e it is not worth the trouble (.) I don’t know, thought you came here to work (.) sit there and think you are something (.) you can go somewhere else … see how tough you are (.) yes (.) can’t be full of yourself and look down your nose at people’

5 Aswan: (latter)
(laughter)

➤ 6 Anders: hei jeg s- helt arlig jeg klarer ikke å snakke noe seriøst her altså
‘hey I s- quite honestly I can’t talk seriously here right’

7 Aswan greit da, helt arlig
‘ok then, quite honestly’

In Turn 2, Anders shifts from a multiethnoctal intonation pattern into a clearly more standard South-Eastern Norwegian intonation. The shift interrupts the current situational frame; he puts on another voice, portraying an authoritarian adult with (a desire for) power to withdraw passports. Anders is projecting a racist imagery of migrants as imperialists, lazy, and with self-imagined superiority. Through his stylized performance he brings into play stereotyped ideological values associated with a racist or exclusionary discourse. He somehow undermines and subverts such ideological values through his parody, his mockery and ridicule. According to Coupland (2001, p.350) stylization “requires an enculturated audience able to read the semiotic value of a projected persona or genre.” In the sequence above, Aswan displays that knowledge; Anders’ stylized performance is successful; Aswan laughs. When the stylization is over, Anders switches into the multiethnoctal style again (Turn 6). When he stylizes, he turns, throughout the conversation, to the camera, including us (although we are not there) as audience, “us” as researchers and/or as representing the “others,” the “majority.” Anders’ stylization is and is not a form of crossing. In the retrospective interview, Anders
states that standard South-Eastern Norwegian, or “sophisticated Norwegian” as he calls it, does “belong” to him, but he does not identify with it. He sees “sophisticated Norwegian” as a necessary tool in certain contexts; to be paid attention to. Anders has made a choice; he confines himself to the minority since he has never been accepted as “hundred percent Norwegian,” as he puts it.

(11) deefor vi går fram som svartinger, for vi har blitt kalt det hele tida (Anders)

‘that’s why we go forward as niggers because we have been called that all the time’

Anders’ use of the pejorative term in Norwegian svartinger (‘niggers’), invokes an imagery with strong symbolic resonance to a racist discourse (note the XSV word order, cf. 4.3). The “minority” to which Anders assigns himself, is not, however, straightforwardly characterized. He does not see himself as a “mere” North African. He seems to identify with minorities in general (cf. Example 2). He emphasizes his affiliations with speakers of Punjabi, Thai, Swahili, and Farsi. He knows some phrases of these languages and regards them as part of their youth community of practice.

Anders, Lars and Olav, as people in general, do not confine themselves only to those identities, social groups or ethnic categories that society tries to fix them in. Language crossing might be one of several expressions of new plural ethnicities (Hewitt, 1992; Rampton, 2001). Crossing, however, whether it is stylized or not, does not mean that the crosser automatically claim that (s)he “really” is African, Asian, American, European, Norwegian, but it enables people to explore other people’s ethnicities, recategorize them, embrace them, and/or create new ones in a “third space” (Rampton, 2001, cf. Bhabha, 1994). However, our data indicate that the concept “belong to” in Rampton’s definition of crossing might be specified in certain contexts. Anders claims an out-group identity for himself, he emphasizes his confinement to the minority, his own conception of the minority or minorities, and he shares a multilingual with the perceived out-group. At the same time he constantly shows, through stylization, his competence in standard South-Eastern Norwegian. Moreover, he claims that in majority contexts he sometimes deliberately hides his “sophisticated Norwegian,” and then abruptly uses it, with the explicit purpose of subverting people’s stereotypical thinking. Both the multilingual and “Sophisticated Norwegian” do belong to him, although he does not identify with the “Sophisticated Norwegian.”

5 Conclusion

We began this article with a quote from a teacher fearing “broken” Norwegian among ethnic Norwegians, where the “remedy” prescribed is second language instruction. The above analyses have shown that what the teacher labels as “broken” is not “broken,” but a variety in its own right, a multilingual, shared by adolescents in culturally and linguistically diverse areas, regardless of ethnic descent. It is one of several varieties in many of the adolescents’ linguistic repertoire, and they display their ability to choose between a multilingual and standard South-Eastern Norwegian. When majority and minority adolescents develop a common multilingual, as demonstrated here, we see an expression of a new form of group identity. In general, in out-group contexts in our data (i.e., interviews), we find minimal use of the characteristic multilingual intonation.

The International Journal of Bilingualism
In the peer conversations, however, it is fully displayed by some of the adolescents. Our preliminary analyses illustrate that multiethnolectal features, such as violation of the V2 constraint, vary systematically according to context, and should thus be analyzed as sociolinguistic and stylistic variables. Further confirmation of these results, however, requires quantitative analysis on a larger scale (cf. Quist & Svendsen, forthcoming).

The present analyses clearly show that there is a need to elaborate further the extent to which parallel trans-Scandinavian multiethnolectal patterns, especially prosodic ones, are being drawn from the different substrata languages. Furthermore, there are parallel morphological and syntactic patterns in need of examination, for instance the syntactic distribution of negative particles. The question why the described linguistic traits reappear in all the studied contexts in Scandinavia, when the languages in contact differ, must be further addressed (cf. Quist & Svendsen, forthcoming).

Another question is whether the multiethnolect, especially beyond the word level, is in use mainly in Sørre Nordstrand, as our data hitherto indicate, or whether it may be found also in other heterogeneous areas of Oslo. In both of the Oslo corpora there seems to be a link between the use of the multiethnolectal speech style and engagement within music scenes such as hip hop and rap. These are preliminary findings, however, and a more comprehensive style analysis is required (cf. Quist, 2005; Quist, this volume). Moreover, there is a need for a thorough analysis of single users in different contexts in order to investigate multiethnolect as part of individuals’ linguistic repertoires and to characterize its functions within their repertoire.

There seem to be no clear-cut boundaries between the multiethnolect, standard South-Eastern Norwegian, and Oslo dialect as such. Anders uses for instance traditional Oslo dialectal forms such as å where the standard has hvor (‘where/how’). The multiethnolect is, as Quist (2006; cf. Quist, this volume) points out, an integrated part of the city’s total linguistic and stylistic practices, and cannot be understood separately from the dialectal space in which it is used. It is, however, necessary to highlight the use of multiethnolect as a substantial tool in (re)negotiating identities in interaction within and across traditional social categories such as majority and minority.

Norway is sometimes described as a sociolinguistic paradise, with abundant linguistic heterogeneity, both written and spoken. Dialect diversity has been and still is considerable, and dialects enjoy relatively high prestige and are used in practically all social domains (cf. Raynelland, 2008). The multiethnolectal speech style contributes to a further increase of dialect diversity in Norway. However, this speech style has not, as yet, achieved a status equal to that of the traditional dialects. It is often taken as a manifestation of lack of competence rather than as a new Norwegian dialect (cf. the epigraph of this article). But as we have demonstrated, our respondents switch between multiethnolectal Norwegian and other varieties of Norwegian. This shows that multiethnolectal Norwegian is part of a larger linguistic repertoire and that its users are sensitive to its sociolinguistic significance. Furthermore, it shows that neither lect is “owned” by any particular group. The boundaries between the majority and minority and lects are fluid.
References


The International Journal of Bilingualism


