

Can Norwegian dialect features be acquired by L3 speakers? The case of Poles in Tromsø.

Chloe Castle, Kamil Malarski, Helene Ruud Jensberg, Marta Velnić, Isabel Nadine Jensen, Magdalena Wrembel

(UiT The Arctic University of Norway, AMU Adam Mickiewicz University, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology, UiO University of Oslo, AMU Adam Mickiewicz University)

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There is scant literature on second dialect acquisition for L1 and L2 speakers (Drummond, 2013; Gnevshva et al., 2022), with none on L3 speakers. In this presentation, we focus on dialect acquisition in multilinguals. This is explored in the Norwegian context, where there is significant dialectal variation, and dialects have relative prestige. We bring together data from two closely related studies to assess L1 Polish-L2 English-L3 Norwegian speakers' production and perception of the Tromsø dialect across domains. In the first study, participants living in Tromsø (n=18) participated in sociophonetic interviews. In the second study, Tromsø residents (n=13) engaged in a translation task and an acceptability judgement task (AJT). Participants then engaged in a sociodemographic questionnaire and two language proficiency tests (English and Norwegian), which were used in linking sociolinguistic variables to language use.

In the phonology production task, we collected data in the form of recorded sociolinguistic interviews. The procedure involved wordlist reading (1 in Fig.1), text reading (2), picture description (3) and unscripted speech (4–6). We found that L3 speakers do produce Tromsø dialect forms, albeit variably. Interestingly, some speakers displayed style-shifting, especially those scoring high for overall dialect use, with more frequent and varied dialect features in unscripted speech, as opposed to in more formal speech styles elicited through reading tasks (Fig. 1). Statistical analyses point to the level of Norwegian proficiency, length of residence and number of Norwegian friends as significant predictors of phonological acquisition of dialect features in L3.

In the lexical production task, participants orally translated sixteen sentences from Polish into Norwegian. Critical forms were interrogatives: *ka/hva* 'what', *kem/hvem* 'who', *kor/hvor* 'where/how', and negation: *ikkje/ikke* (Tromsø dialect form/Bokmål form). Some L1 Polish participants variably use the Tromsø dialect in production. We analysed this against seventeen sociolinguistic and linguistic variables using Random Forests (Fig. 2) and Linear Mixed Effects Models. Key predictors of Tromsø dialect use are how much participants like the Tromsø dialect ($p < 0.001$) and passive language use in Norwegian ($p = 0.021$). In the AJT, participants judged critical (adjective-noun number agreement – present in Bokmål, not in Tromsø dialect) and control (adjective-noun gender agreement, required in both) sentences. There were no significant differences between ratings for each condition: participants do not appear to be sensitive to dialectal differences in morphosyntax. Overall, participants seem more able to use and exploit their knowledge of dialectal differences at the lexical and phonological levels.

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Figures

Figure 1. Z-score plots for style-shifting trajectories in L3 Norwegian speakers (1 = most formal, 6 = least formal part of the interview). X axis represents the tasks in the interview; y axis represents the z-score transformed scoring for the use of dialect forms.

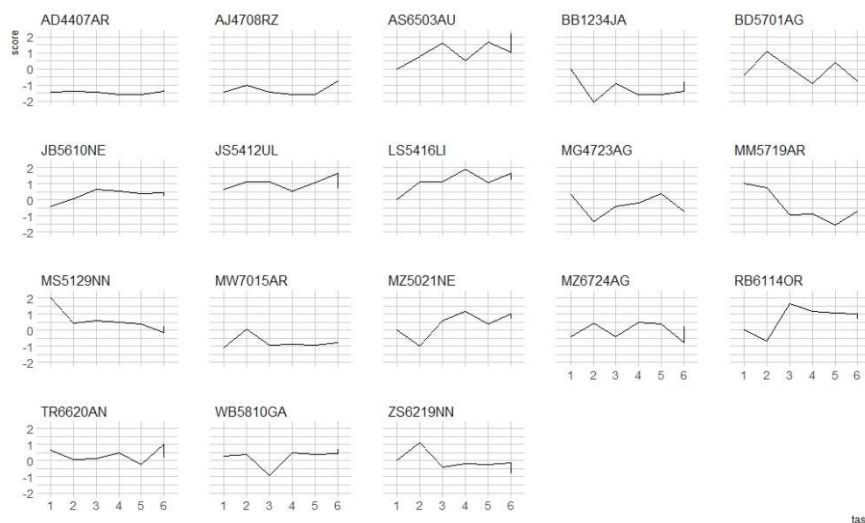


Figure 2. Conditional permutation variable importance with all predictors for use of dialect forms in the translation task.

