

# **Ecolinguistics and sociolinguistics in the Nordic countries**

April, 11<sup>th</sup> 2025

Sorbonne University

Organization : Sarah Harchaoui, CeLiSo

**Maison de la Recherche**

**Salle D223 - 44**

**Et hall du 2<sup>ème</sup> étage**

9:30 - Welcome coffee

10:00-10:45 (ZOOM) - Stian Hårstad (Professor, NTNU, SPRØK) **The Linguistic Ecology of Norway: Understanding Minority-Majority Dynamics**

Norway is often celebrated for its general tolerance of linguistic diversity and variation. However, a deeper exploration of this tradition of acceptance - rooted in the late 19th-century elevation of the vernacular - reveals the incongruous marginalization of domestic minority languages. This talk examines the complex interplay of egalitarian ideals and exclusionary practices within Norway's linguistic ecology, highlighting how policies of linguistic liberalism have, paradoxically, suppressed "non-Norwegian" cultural expressions, as exemplified by the experiences of the indigenous Sámi and Norwegian Jewish communities.

11:00-11:45 Ingvil Brugger Budal (Professor, VHL) **Three Language Users in a Norwegian Fjord (1630-1750): Standardization and Vernacular in Denmark-Norway**

The paper aims to examine the dynamics of language standardization and vernacular usage in the dual monarchy of Denmark-Norway between 1630 and 1750. It does this through the texts of three literate individuals from Askvoll, a small parish situated in a Norwegian fjord: Christen Jensøn, who authored the first Norwegian dictionary, Friderich Arentz, who contributed to collect rare words and organized mandatory schooling, and Ingeborg Andersdotter Grytten, who wrote dialect-infused hymns reflecting her personal experiences.

These three literate individuals and their texts are, in their own ways, connected to central themes and institutions in the historical linguistic ecology of Norway and central themes in linguistic history, such as the dissemination and standardization of written language, the interplay between administration, church, school, as well as an emerging scholarly interest in dialects and the vernacular.

12:00-14:00 - Lunch

14:00-14:45 - Jaana Kolu (Professor, University of Eastern Finland) - **Boundaries in language - Language over boundaries. Outcomes of language contact in bilingual adolescents' conversations on the border between Sweden and Finland.**

Based on a speech corpus (2014–2019) of conversations between 14- to 19-year-old Finnish-Swedish bilinguals in Haparanda, Tornedalen, this study aims to give a systematic overview on language contact features with a microlevel perspective. Building on previous research on language contact between Finnish and Swedish in Tornedalen (e.g. Kolu, 2017), 2 500 tokens of language contact features in our corpus were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively according to their communicative function. Detected outcomes of language contact in the bilingual conversations include code-switching, borrowing, new discourse markers, phonological change, transfer, among others. The presentation also discusses phenomena related to so-called language mixing and language fusion (cf. Auer, 1999). While in conventionalized code-mixing the selection of elements attributed to one of the codes is unconstrained and results in free variation, fusion implies that mixing patterns undergo regularization (Auer, 2014, p. 312), as evidenced in the data.

## REFERENCES

- Auer, P. 1999. From codeswitching to language mixing to fused lects: Toward a dynamic typology of bilingual speech. *The International Journal of Bilingualism*, 3(4): 309–332.
- Auer, P. (2014) Language mixing and language fusion: When bilingual talk becomes monolingual. In: Besters-Dilger, J. et al. (eds) *Congruence in Contact-Induced Language Change: Language Families, Typological Resemblance, and Perceived Similarity*. Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 294–334.
- Kolu, J. (2017). "Me ollaan mukana tässä experimentissä": *Lingvistiska resurser och språkpraktiker i tvåspråkiga ungdomssamtal i Haparanda, Stockholm och Helsingfors*. Jyväskylä Studies in Humanities 317. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.

15:00-15:30 - Hadrien Boudier (PhD candidate, Sorbonne University, CeLiSo) **The revitalization of Kven in Northern Norway. Analysis of the presence of a minority language in the linguistic landscape of Troms.**

## CONTEXT

Kven, a Finno-Ugric language historically spoken in the northern provinces of Troms and Finnmark in Norway since at least the 16th century [Heikkilä 2023], has long been considered an "incorrect dialect" of Finnish. In 2005, the Norwegian Parliament recognized Kven as a minority language of Norway, protected under the general objectives of the Part II in the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. This official recognition has allowed Kven as a language to gain a greater visibility over the last two decades in the Norwegian linguistic landscape, particularly in the province of Troms.

## **METHODOLOGY**

We will begin this communication by exploring the historical presence of Kven as a language in the province of Troms, and its linguistic and cultural “nests” in the region. We will then present a current situation of the language, with a compilation of contemporary examples of the presence of Kven in the linguistic landscape in the region and the city of Tromsø. Applying Calvet’s theory (1994), we will classify these examples according to the two the following aspects: their function (official/symbolic) and their category (in vitro or "top-down"/in vivo or "bottom-up").

By studying the traces of Kven language in and around the city, the main goal of this communication will be to determine the place of Kven as a language in the province of Troms:

Have the language revitalization efforts of the Norwegian government, the province of Troms and the city of Tromsø led to the Kven language gaining better awareness and visibility? And does the number of Kven speakers in the city and province reflect this visibility?