



The NorPol project's kick-off seminar

Tuesday 23 February 2021

Welcome to a seminar that celebrates the kick-off of the NorPol project (*Second-language communication in workplace settings – the case of Polish migrants in Norway*), funded by The Research Council of Norway (2020–2024).

We have invited a group of international speakers involved in research related to the NorPol project. They have already inspired the NorPol research group, and we believe that their contributions, as well as input from all interested participants, will help us pointing to the future and success for the NorPol project.

The seminar consists of a workshop and a guest lecture free of charge and open to all, but we kindly ask you to fill in [a registration form](#). (Deadline for registration **19 February**)

Program

Part I Workshop

14.15 **Welcome. Presentation of the NorPol project.** Toril Opsahl (MultiLing, UiO)

14.30 **Practices for doing work together: observations from a multilingual construction site.** Linda Kahlin and Hedda Söderlundh (Södertörn University, Sweden) and Matylda Weidner (Kazimierz Wielki University, Poland)

Chair: Paweł K. Urbanik

15.00 **Stereotypes of migrant workers and language in the Norwegian construction industry.** Kamilla Kraft (Copenhagen University, Denmark)

Chair: Magdalena Solarek-Gliniewicz

15.30 Break (15 minutes)

15.45 **“Why should I make my life harder?” – Identity and name change in a narrative of a Polish migrant in Norway.** Maria Obojska (MLing, University of Luxembourg)

Chair: Oliwia Szymańska



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16.15 **Participating in a conversation in Norwegian L2.** Paulina Horbowicz (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland)

Chair: Piotr Garbacz

16.45–17.15 **General discussion** and closing of the first part of the program.

Chair: Jan Svennevig

Part II Guest lecture

18.30–19.30 **Identity, Language Learning, and the Multilingual Workplace.**

Professor Bonny Norton (University of British Columbia)

Chair: Anne Golden





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Abstracts

Associate professor Linda Kahlin (Södertörn University, Sweden), PhD Hedda Söderlundh (Södertörn University, Sweden) and PhD Matylda Weidner (Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz, Poland)

Practices for doing work together: observations from a multilingual construction site

In this presentation we focus on a small construction site in Sweden, where we observe parallel use of English and Swedish between Polish and Swedish carpenters. We demonstrate how the participants make use of different linguistic, embodied and material resources for collaborative accomplishment of manual tasks and solving specialized work-related problems together.

PhD Kamilla Kraft (Copenhagen University, Denmark)

Stereotypes of migrant workers and language in the Norwegian construction industry

Stereotypes have been identified as a prevalent and important factor in work conditions and relations in Norwegian construction sites, not least for the many migrant workers who characterise the building industry. The role of stereotypes - especially the 'Poles' or 'Eastern Europeans' ones - has been studied as a co-factor of discrimination and even stratification in the construction industry. Language, e.g. in the form of problematisation of multilingualism, is often part and parcel of such stereotypical constructions. In this presentation I will demonstrate how such constructions play out in everyday practices, institutional discourses as well as national legislation.

Postdoctoral researcher Maria Obojska (Institute for Research on Multilingualism (MLing), University of Luxembourg)

'Why should I make my life harder?' – Identity and name change in a narrative of a Polish migrant in Norway.

The present study explores the case of a transnational Polish individual in Norway, who decided to change his first name after the initial experiences of migration. Drawing on audio-recorded interactions in the interview situation, the present contribution investigates identity constructions of the focal participant in his narrative about the name change. The analysis shows that the identity claims the focal participant makes aim at dissociating himself from the powerless, stigmatized position of a migrant, in which he was cast upon his arrival in Norway.



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PhD Paulina Horbowicz (Scandinavian Department, School of Languages and Literature, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland)

Participating in a conversation in Norwegian L2

My research on everyday Polish-Norwegian conversation revealed that there are certain communicative practices that are frequently found in the L1 delivered speech, but seldom applied by the L2 speakers. In this presentation, the focus is on those practices that serve the function of displaying varying degrees of involvement in the conversation. I discuss how such practices can be used for performing agency in a communicative situation, and look into their potential relevance for workplace interaction.



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Guest lecture

Professor Bonny Norton (University of British Columbia)

Identity, Language Learning, and the Multilingual Workplace

In this presentation, I will draw on my research with immigrant women in Canada (Norton, 2013) to examine the complex relationship between identity, language learning, and the multilingual workplace. This research has been central in helping me to better understand how adult language learners navigate new linguistic communities as they claim the right to speak and be heard. While my earlier work focused on the way diverse power relations structure opportunities for language learning, my more recent work (Darvin & Norton, 2015) has investigated how language learners' investment in imagined identities impacts language learning. My research has found that when adult immigrants try to enter communities that offer possibilities for the future, they often reframe relationships with target language speakers in order to claim more powerful identities from which to speak. I will conclude by examining free multilingual stories on the Storybooks Norway platform that might expand identity options for Polish and other adult immigrants in the Norwegian workplace: <https://barneboker.no/>

References

- Darvin, R. & Norton, B. (2015). Identity and a model of investment in applied linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 35, 35-56
- Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation*. 2nd Edition. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.



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About NorPol

Second-language communication in workplace settings – the case of Polish migrants in Norway *(NorPol)* (RCN Fripro scheme 2020–2024)

Being the largest migrant group in Norway, without official Norwegian language training, and speaking a first language in many ways structurally different from Norwegian, Poles constitute a highly relevant case to gain better understanding of the interplay between language skills, inclusion and welfare in professional settings. Communication challenges are most likely not only a result of linguistic differences, but also socio-cultural and attitudinal differences. Hence, the project adapts an ambitious multi-layered approach, including: a) a socio-cultural level of analysis, which focuses on cultural representations and their role in L2 communication; b) an interactional level of analysis, which focuses on the structural organization of L2 communication; and c) a linguistic level of analysis, which focuses on the lexical, grammatical and stylistic characteristics of L2 communication. Data will involve a triangulation of methods, including focus group interviews, audio- and video-recordings of naturally occurring interactions involving Polish users of Norwegian as a second language in and across professional settings, as well as personal narratives elicited as responses to media representations of stereotypical perceptions of Poles. The body of knowledge generated by NorPol is likely to have impact on policy and practice pertaining to inclusion, welfare and secure working life for all citizens.