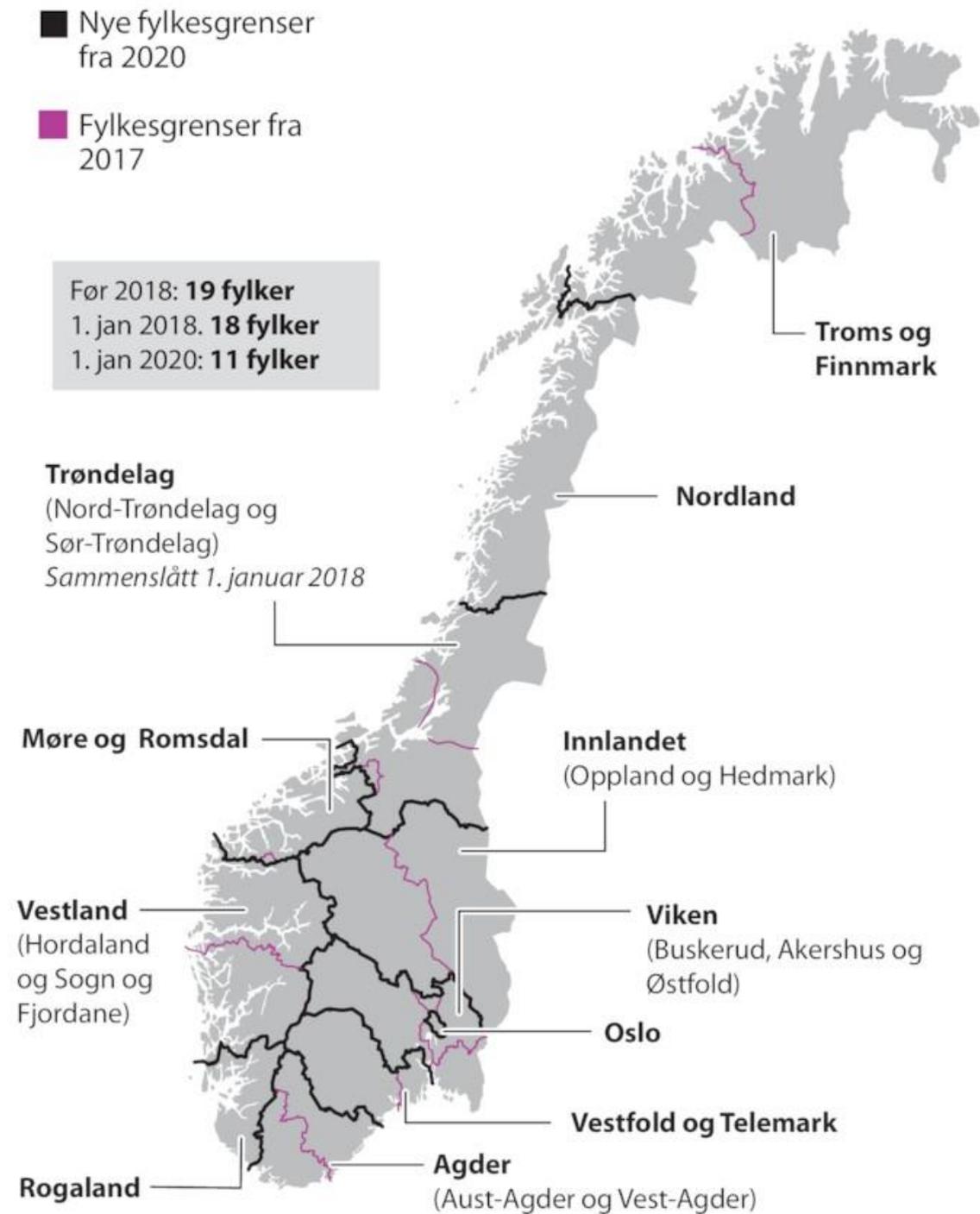


Illustrative map: Norway's new county boundaries, valid from 1 January 2020. The black lines show the current county boundaries. The purple lines show the former county boundaries. We see the four former western counties to the left: Møre og Romsdal, Sogn og Fjordane, Hordaland and Rogaland. 1 January 2020 Sogn og Fjordane and Hordaland were merged to one county: Vestland.



Norm competence among multilingual youth in Western Norway

Stig J. Helset

Abstract: Norwegian has two written standards, Bokmål and Nynorsk, and according to Norwegian subject curriculum all children and adolescents should learn to read and write both Bokmål and Nynorsk. This article discusses in what ways deviations from the written standard among youth with Nynorsk as their primary language form can be explained on the basis of the sociolinguistic situation in which they live. To explore this question, the author has conducted a study on self-reported language attitudes, language skills and language choices in different hypothetical language situations among 13-16-year-old students living in the core area of Nynorsk in Western Norway, and another study on actual writing skills in Nynorsk among a selection of the same respondents. The results from the studies indicate that there is a close connection between the multilingual situation and influence from Bokmål and dialect in formal Nynorsk writing.

Keywords: multilingualism, sociolinguistic, norm competence, minoritized language, dialect, Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), social media (SoMe)

1. Introduction

In this article I present results from two interconnected studies which may shed new light on what the sources of norm deviations in texts written by Norwegian Nynorsk students may be, and which sociolinguistic factors may explain the norm deviations. The first study is a survey among lower secondary school students in three different municipalities in Western Norway where Nynorsk is the local majority language and the primary language form in school. The survey includes questions about the sociolinguistic situation in which they live and questions where the students are encouraged to reflect upon what it means to be a Nynorsk writer and a dialect user. Furthermore, questions regarding whether they would prefer to use Bokmål, Nynorsk or dialect-based writing in different situations and media to different recipients, are also included. Finally, the survey collects information on students' self-reported norm competence in Nynorsk and Bokmål. The other study examines types and possible sources of deviations from the Nynorsk norm within a corpus of authentic student texts written by a sample of the students who participated in the first study. On the basis of analyses of these studies, I will try to answer the following research questions: *To what extent and in what ways do texts written by students with Nynorsk as their primary language form deviate from the written standard, and in what ways can the deviations from the norm be explained on the basis of the*

sociolinguistic situation in which they live? Before I present the results of the studies, I find it necessary to give a brief description of the unique language situation in Norway.

Norwegian language culture differs from most other European language cultures in two areas. One is the absence of an official pronunciation standard. Individuals are not only allowed but almost expected to use dialect in all social domains, not only in private settings, but also in school, media, parliament and other public contexts (Røyneland 2009: 9). The other is that Norwegian has two written standards with equal official status, Bokmål and Nynorsk, which are mutually intelligible and which to a great extent overlap in syntax and lexis (Røyneland & Vangsnes 2021 (head article on Nynorsk)). Furthermore, both standards allow an unusual amount of variation between alternative spelling and inflectional forms, representing different stylistic sub-varieties such as ‘conservative’, ‘moderate’ and ‘radical’ (Røyneland 2009: 11; Helset 2020: 1–2).¹ This is a result of historical and political circumstances that began with the dissolution of the Danish-Norwegian union in 1814, and which initially ended with Nynorsk (“det norske Folkesprog”) being officially equated with Bokmål (“det almindelige Skrift- og Bogsprog”) through a resolution in the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget) in 1885. However, throughout the 20th century opposing ideological stances claimed their rights to use dialects and their preferred written forms, while the official language policy was to pave the way for a merger between the two standards by allowing extensive variation, which thus led to a large amount of permitted alternative spelling and inflectional forms within both Bokmål and Nynorsk.

The efforts at amalgamation were met with substantial resistance from various groups of language users, and although the amalgamation project also had its supporters, this policy has now been abandoned. Hence, a new norm independent of Nynorsk was adopted for Bokmål in 2005 and a new norm independent of Bokmål was adopted for Nynorsk in 2012 (for comprehensive historical accounts and discussion, see e.g. Haugen 1966; Faarlund 2003; Jahr 2007, 2014; Røyneland 2016; Hyvik, Millar & Newby 2016; Braunmüller 2018; Eiksund 2018). However, both Bokmål and Nynorsk still allow a fair amount of variation. This can lead to confusion when young writers attempt to learn standard orthography and morphology.²

¹ These terms are established within the distinctive Norwegian language context and have a different meaning than in the case of standard English usage. A tentative definition of what they mean can be something like this: by ‘conservative’ word forms we mean traditional forms that have been handed down from earlier spelling reforms. By ‘radical’ forms we mean those that have been included in the spelling reforms to pave the way for a merger between the two standards. By ‘moderate’ forms we mean forms that are not marked in any noticeable way.

² For example, it is still possible to write the sentence *Vi ønsker dykk velkomne* [We wish you welcome] in 16 different ways in Nynorsk since you may choose between *vi/me* [we], *ønskjer/ønsker/ynskjer/ynsker* [wish] and

According to the Norwegian subject curriculum (Udir 2013), “children and young people should develop awareness of linguistic diversity and learn to read and write both Bokmål and Nynorsk.” While both teachers and students use their own dialect for oral instruction, children receive writing instruction mostly in either Nynorsk or Bokmål. From 1st to 7th grade, children would have to use the primary language form set by the municipality in which they live, which is typically Nynorsk in Western parts of Norway and typically Bokmål in almost all other parts of Norway. In the school year 2019/2020, 12% of the students (75.245) in Norwegian primary schools were registered with Nynorsk as their primary language form, while 88% of the students (562.425) were registered with Bokmål as their primary language form (Udir 2019). From 8th to 13th grade every individual may choose between Nynorsk or Bokmål as his or her primary language form (Udir 2020a), and former studies show that quite a few Nynorsk students change their primary language form to Bokmål during lower or upper secondary school (see e.g. Garthus 2009; Todal & Øzerk 2010; Idsøe 2016; Hårstad 2018). A meta-study by Wold (2019: 82) concludes that lack of norm competence in Nynorsk is by far the most important self-reported reason why students change their primary language form from Nynorsk to Bokmål. Thus, it would be interesting to examine to what extent, in what way and why texts written by students with Nynorsk as their primary language form deviate from the Nynorsk norm.

During the last two decades there have been numerous studies examining deviation from written standard in student texts in different grades. A common finding in most of the studies is that students with Nynorsk as their primary language form have more deviations from the norm than students with Bokmål as their primary language form (Vagle 2005; Matre et al. 2011; Eiksund 2017; Sønnesyn 2020). Some of these studies point to possible sources of influence that may explain why Nynorsk students have more norm deviations than Bokmål students. Matre et al. (2011) show that texts written by Nynorsk students have a lot of features from the majority language Bokmål. Studies by Skjelten (2013), Fretland (2015), Bjørhusdal & Juuhl (2017) confirm these findings at different levels of education. A study by Eiksund (2020: 60) indicates that a large part of the norm deviations made by Nynorsk students has its origin from the writer’s own dialect as well as from Bokmål, in contrast to the deviations made by Bokmål students. However, the focus of these studies is to identify the sources of norm deviations. They

dykk/dokker [you]. Furthermore, each of the different forms belongs to different sub-varieties of Nynorsk, which makes it even harder for young people to write within a particular sub-variety.

do not look into sociolinguistic factors that may explain the deviations, although Bjørhusdal & Juuhl (2017: 116) suggest that influence from the dominating majority language Bokmål is an important factor, while Eiksund (2020: 60) suggests that the use of dialect features may be due to young Nynorsk writers interpreting their dialect and Nynorsk as part of the same norm complex. Thus, in this article I will not only examine to what extent and in what ways student texts deviate from the Nynorsk norm, but also why. It is therefore appropriate to provide a description of what characterizes the core area of Nynorsk in Norway, where the participants in my studies live.

2. Western Norway: the core area of Nynorsk

As already pointed out, Nynorsk is an official written language in Norway on a par with Bokmål, and still there are Nynorsk users all over the country. In the last decades, however, the proportion of Nynorsk users has declined in most parts of the country. The core area of Nynorsk today is in Western Norway. Approximately 90% of primary school students with Nynorsk as their primary language form, live in one of the four Western counties of Norway.³ Furthermore, Nynorsk is the language of administration in most of the counties and municipalities in this area, while many of the regional and local newspapers, as well as the cultural and organizational life in the area, are dominated by Nynorsk.

It must be emphasized, however, that the Nynorsk core area is neither a coherent nor a unified area. This is reflected by the fact that only in the county of Sogn og Fjordane the majority of the students have Nynorsk as their primary language form (98%). In Møre og Romsdal about 1/2 of the students have Nynorsk as their primary language form; in Hordaland just above 1/3 and in Rogaland less than 1/4 (Udir 2020b). In addition, there are several areas in Western Norway that can be characterized as marginal zones where Nynorsk is under pressure (Brunstad 2020). Furthermore, Nynorsk has never gained a foothold as a language of use in larger cities of Western Norway such as Stavanger, Haugesund, Bergen or Ålesund. It is thus not a question of Nynorsk defining Western Norway as a region in a similar way that e.g. Catalan defines the region of Catalonia in Spain with the city of Barcelona as the spearhead (Conversi 1997). While the Catalan language receives support from important parts of the

³ 1 January 2020 two of the four Western counties were merged into one county (see Illustrative map), but since we do not have statistics for the new county Vestland, I use statistics for the former counties Sogn og Fjordane and Hordaland.

bourgeoisie in the cities of Catalonia, the same is not happening for Nynorsk in the cities of Western Norway.

However, the relative strength of Nynorsk is far greater in Western Norway than it is in other parts of Norway (Helset & Brunstad 2020), and several researchers point out that Nynorsk is in the process of being perceived mainly as a regional language, and to a lesser extent as one of two national languages (Arnestad 2002: 16; Mæhlum 2007: 194f). Hence, one can end up with Bokmål being perceived as the supra-regional and geographically unmarked language – and thus the national and nationwide language, while Nynorsk is regarded as a subordinate sub-identity within the Norwegian language culture (Mæhlum & Hårstad 2018: 298). Thingnes (2020: 129) argues that Nynorsk should be regarded as a *minoritized language*, as defined by Costa et al. (2017: 8): “It implies not only that «minorities» are forged out of «majorities», but also that certain groupness projects entail the creation of a marginalised collective «Other». Finally, and most importantly, it emphasises the processual and constructed nature of group categorisation as «a minority».”



Fig. 1: Pictures of the municipalities of Stord (Knudsen 2020), Sogndal (Sogndal Folkehøgskule 2020) and Volda (Volda Venstre 2020).

As already mentioned, this article is based on a survey among lower secondary school students in three different municipalities in Western Norway. The municipalities in question are Stord (Hordaland), Sogndal (Sogn og Fjordane) and Volda (Møre og Romsdal), which are solid Nynorsk areas. Nynorsk is the language of administration in all three municipalities and dominates the local newspapers as well as the cultural and organizational life in the area. Furthermore, 95% of the students in these municipalities have Nynorsk as their primary language form and all three municipalities have institutions that offer higher education where Nynorsk is the primary language form. Thus, Nynorsk has a stronger institutional basis in these municipalities than in most other areas of Norway. Nevertheless, young people growing up in these municipalities will be exposed to at least an equal share of Bokmål, since this is the absolute majority language of the nation. Nationwide, Bokmål is completely dominant in

literature, traditional media and Social Media (SoMe), as well as in working life and business. At the same time, people in Norway, both adolescents and adults, are expected to use some version of their dialect in oral communication within all social domains, not only in private settings, but also in public contexts. Furthermore, most Norwegian adolescents encounter and use a lot of English, both through communication on the Internet and within education. Thus, the adolescents participating in the studies on which this article is based, are multilingual in the sense that they alternate between English, Bokmål, Nynorsk and dialect-based writing.

3. Theory

In sociolinguistics, researchers have traditionally been most concerned with explaining variation in spoken language. Through the theory of accommodation, Giles & Smith (1979) explain how individuals make linguistic adjustments in order to create, maintain or decrease social distance in different contexts. The theory of social network as developed by Milroy (1980), claims that the more an individual is integrated into a particular social network (families, friends, colleagues etc.) the more he or she will adhere linguistically to the existing norms and values of this network. In *Acts of Identity*, Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985) argue that language use is both an expression of personal identity and a tool in search of social roles.

In recent years, however, several researchers have argued that writing, both traditional verbal writing and writing as an everyday language practice, is a worthy and indeed necessary object of sociolinguistic study (see e.g. Sebba (2007); Blommaert (2013); Coulmas (2013); Lillis (2013)). Lillis (2013) shows that an enormous amount of writing takes place in most people's everyday lives, not least in various platforms on the Internet, and argues that this type of writing should be subject to sociolinguistic research. Furthermore, she highlights the dynamic social nature of writing, and shows through several examples, that the way writing is conceived, shaped, and taken up by readers depends on social relationships. Lillis (2013: 147) emphasizes "the importance of writing as identity work" by discussing material on the Internet and in writing classrooms. By extension of this, we can notice that Woolard (2016: 7) points out that there are different forms of ideologies that give different forms of authority: "[A]n ideology of authenticity, which holds that a language variety is rooted in and directly expresses the essential nature of a community or a speaker, and an ideology of anonymity, which holds that a given language is a neutral vehicle of communication, belonging to no one in particular and thus equally available to all."

Juuhl (2014: 75) has shown how Norwegian adolescents' written language varies depending on situation, medium and recipients, in particular when it comes to what is called *Computer Mediated Communication* (CMC) or *Netspeak* (Crystal 2006). Georgakopoulou

(2011: 94) characterizes Netspeak as a mixture of spoken language and written language because it combines “qualities that are typically associated with face-to-face interactions – i.e. immediacy and informality of style, transience of message, reduced planning and editing, rapid feedback [...] – with properties of written language – i.e. lack of visual and paralinguistic cues, physical absence of the addressee, written mode of delivery, etc.” Although Crystal (2006: 51) agrees that Netspeak has similarities with spoken language, he claims that it is closer to written language: “Netspeak is better seen as written language which has been pulled some way in the direction of speech than as spoken language which has been written down.” Furthermore, Crystal (2006: 272) emphasizes that Netspeak is “a linguistic singularity – a genuine new medium.” Androutsopoulos (2006: 420) criticizes Crystal (2006) for not emphasizing the language user and the social context in CMC, and for presenting language use in Netspeak as one homogeneous language. Thus, Androutsopoulos (2006: 421) argues for a sociolinguistic, user-oriented approach to different types of Netspeak. It is obvious that CMC takes place on several different platforms with completely different purposes and in completely different ways. Sometimes CMC can be close to analogue written communication, other times CMC can be close to oral communication, but often CMC is somewhere in between. Based on this obvious fact, Georgakopoulou (2011: 96) points out that one cannot think of speech, writing and CMC as three independent and clearly defined quantities. On the contrary, the three terms refer to several different and to some extent overlapping forms of communication.

As pointed out by Lillis (2013), the development of digital platforms, internet and SoMe has paved the way for a massive written and spontaneous everyday communication. As will be shown, this applies to a large extent to the adolescents participating in the studies on which this article is based. A large part of the Computer Mediated Communication between youth takes place without external norm regulation. Thus, the participants in CMC are given the opportunity to use features from (different) written languages, dialects, styles and registers, and not least abbreviations and emojis, and they do (Androutsopoulos 2015; Deumert 2014; Cutler & Røyneland 2018; Røyneland & Vangsnes 2020). At the same time, CMC opens for negotiations on new meanings and domains of use for hitherto marginalized codes and features (Røyneland 2018: 166). Stæhr (2015: 156–157) points out that as a language user one is related to different norm centres, which are dependent on different social purposes. Furthermore, he argues that there exists implicit norms and rules also when writing on SoMe – and that you are sanctioned if you break these.

Stæhr et al. (2020: 172) argue for the importance of including media as constitutive of and integrated into processes of language change in general and language standardization in

particular. Androutsopoulos (2015: 29–30) claims that dialect-based writing in CMC will give the users resources that can provide writing skills, and he denies that their linguistic, orthographic and stylistic choices in CMC, challenge linguistic purity and prescriptive correctness when writing formal texts. Stæhr (2015: 162), on the other hand, points out that the Danish public debate has been characterized by a view of CMC-language as a threat to standard orthography and morphology in official Danish written language. In this article, I will discuss this question in particular, in the context of young people living in the core area of Nynorsk in Western Norway.

4. Material and method

As already mentioned, the data from the first study are based on a survey with response from students in lower secondary school, living in one of the municipalities of Stord, Sogndal and Volda in Western Norway. The survey was conducted during spring of 2019, and the respondents answered the questions anonymously on the digital platform Surveyxact during a school lesson set aside for this purpose.⁴

The digital questionnaire contains self-reported language attitudes, language choices in different hypothetical language situations and language skills. It is thus not a study of actual language use or actual language skills. This is important to emphasize; self-reports will not necessarily correspond to the actual language use or the actual language skills of the students. In this type of study, one must pay special attention to possible discrepancies between reported language use and attitudes and actual language use and attitudes, as the answers may be influenced by normative perceptions of what is ‘correct’ language use and attitudes (Rasinger 2018: 132; Johannessen: 136). Furthermore, this way of collecting data can lead to several sources of error, for example that the respondents misunderstand the questions, make interpretations that we are not aware of or are influenced by the contextual surroundings in the response situation (Schütze 2011: 216). However, the high number of respondents and the fact that all students answered the questions during a school lesson under the supervision of a teacher, allows us to expect that the study can provide reliable and valuable information about the students’ attitudes and their preferred forms of expression/language in different situations.

⁴ The survey was funded by UH-nett Vest and led by Professor Endre Brunstad, University of Bergen. Lower secondary school in Norway has 8th, 9th and 10th grade students, and these adolescents are between 13 and 16 years old.

The questions we asked can be divided into five different main categories. First, we mapped social background variables, such as gender, school, grade level and parental background. Secondly, we asked what written languages the adolescents encounter in different contexts. Third, we formulated questions that emerge attitudes to being a Nynorsk and a dialect user. Fourth, we formulated questions that aim to produce preconceptions of actual writing to different recipients in different situations and media. Thus, it is not just a question of what kind of written language the informants use in various situations and media, but also how they write to various intended recipients within these different contexts. Finally, we asked questions about the students' self-reported norm competence in Nynorsk and Bokmål.

The total number of respondents in the survey was N=706. However, since this article is particularly concerned with mapping language attitudes, preferences and skills between adolescents who have Nynorsk as their primary language form, I have chosen not to include the answers from the N=38 students who have Bokmål as their primary language form. Therefore, I was left with N=668 respondents. Of these respondents, 358 were girls (54%) and 310 boys (46%). 212 of the students were in 8th grade (32%), while 178 were in 9th grade (26%) and 278 (42%) in 10th grade. The distribution between the three municipalities was as follows: Stord, 359 respondents (54%); Volda, 227 respondents (34%); Sogndal, 82 respondents (12%). The percentage of counting respondents in proportion to the total number of students at all schools was 68%.⁵

The second study examines writing skills in Nynorsk through an analysis of authentic texts written by a selection of the students who participated in the first study. I received permission to collect anonymized versions of the texts that the 10th grade students in Volda had submitted in response to the mock exam assignments in Norwegian Nynorsk in the autumn of 2019. The purpose of this study was to map types and possible sources of norm deviations made by the young participants when writing formal texts. Since the submitted texts were important for the teachers' grading in Nynorsk, there is reason to believe that each student made an effort to write as correct as possible (according to the Nynorsk norm) during the mock exam. According to the curriculum students in 10th grade should be able to “express themselves using a varied vocabulary and master morphology, orthography and cohesion” both in Bokmål and in Nynorsk (Udir 2013).

⁵ There are, of course, potential differences between different groups of respondents that could have been interesting to study further. In this article, however, I have chosen to analyze the answers all together.

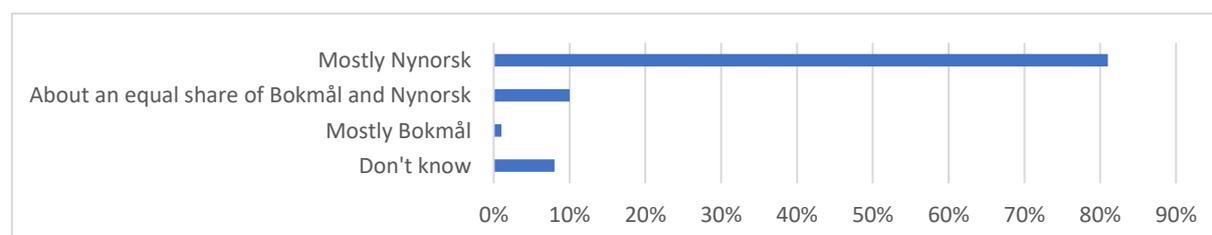
The total number of texts submitted for the mock exam was N=88. After removing four texts written by students with Bokmål as their primary language form, the data set contained N=84 texts. Based on findings from previous studies on this topic (see e.g. Vagle 2005; Matre et al. 2011; Skjelten 2013; Bjørhusdal & Juuhl 2017; Eiksund 2017, 2020), I designed an Excel sheet with an overview of different types of norm deviations that the students were likely to have made. The sheet was divided into five main categories of deviations, and each of these were divided into a number of subcategories (marked in *italics*): Spelling: *consonants – vocalism – monophthong and diphthongization*; Inflection: *noun conjugation – verb conjugation – conjugation in other word classes*; Derivation: *prefix – suffix*; Deviant lexical item; Other deviations: *word-division – improper use of regular/capital letter – mix up og/å – inconsistency – typing error*. Furthermore, for each of the subcategories in the first four main categories, I set up the following four possible sources of norm deviations: Influence from Bokmål – influence from dialect – influence from Bokmål and/or dialect – Norm deviations that do not correspond to either Bokmål or the local dialect in Volda. I could then check for different types of errors and sources of norm deviations in the Excel sheet as I read the proofreading of the individual texts (Helset 2020).

I will start the result section by presenting which written languages the students report that they encounter in different situations at school, before I take a closer look at the young people's self-reports on language attitudes. Thereafter, I examine which forms of expression/language the respondents prefer to use in different situations, in different media and with different recipients. Finally, I compare the self-reported competence with the actual competence in Nynorsk among the 10th grade students in Volda.

5. Results and discussion

5.1 Sociolinguistic situation and language attitudes

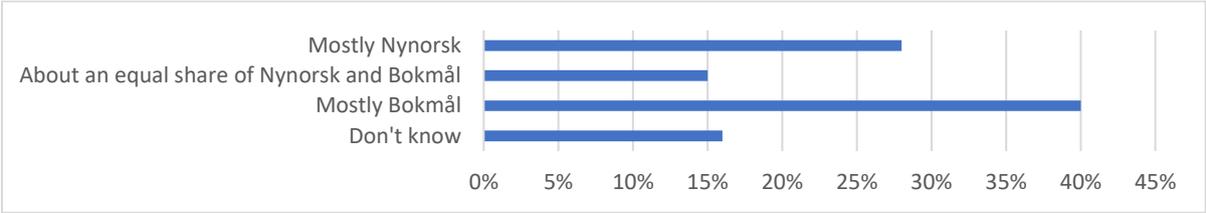
Fig. 2: What kind of written language do the teachers use when they teach subjects other than Norwegian? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)



As the figure shows, four out of five students report that their teachers mostly use Nynorsk when they teach subjects other than Norwegian, while 10% of the students report that their

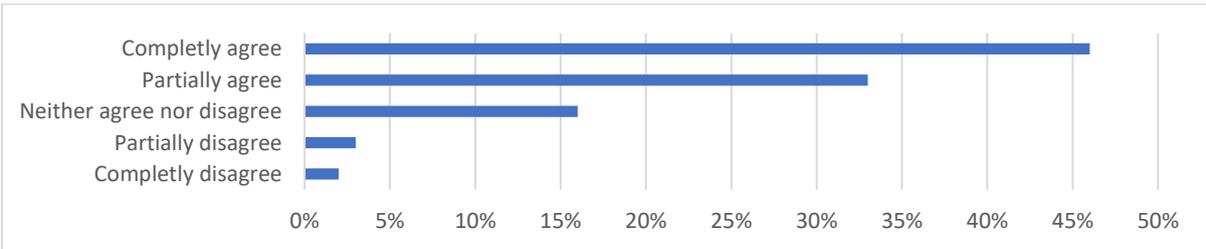
teachers alternate between Nynorsk and Bokmål and only 1% report that their teachers mostly use Bokmål. The dominance of Nynorsk use among teachers in the core area of Nynorsk is as expected. When, on the other hand, we ask the students which written language meets them in online resources at school, we get a quite different picture.

Fig. 3: What written language do you see most in online resources at school (like Fronter, Google docs, Pedit, It’s learning, Chrome book)? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)



In this type of written communication, we see that students in the Nynorsk core area encounter more Bokmål (40%) than Nynorsk (28%) – even in an official school context. The fact that students with Nynorsk as their primary language form encounter more Bokmål than Nynorsk on digital platforms can lead to confusion when writing Nynorsk. Although Figures 2 and 3 show that youth in the Nynorsk core area encounter alternation between Bokmål and Nynorsk, we will see in the next figure that they have rather positive attitudes towards being a Nynorsk-writer.

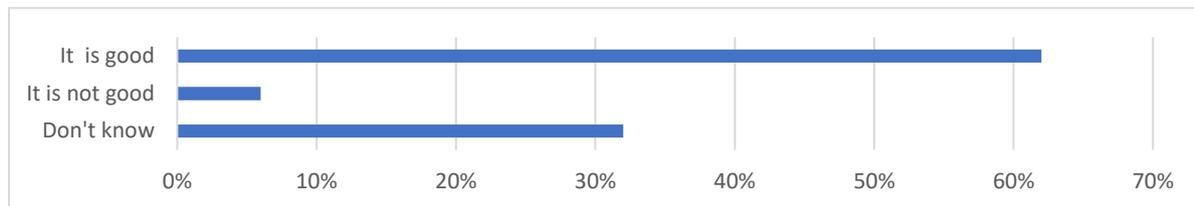
Fig. 4: How much do you agree or disagree with the statement? It is obvious to me to use Nynorsk. (Helset & Brunstad 2020)



The figure shows that almost half of the students (46%) completely agree that it is obvious for them to use Nynorsk and that a third of the students (33%) partially agree with this statement. This can be regarded as an indicator of the strong position of Nynorsk in the core area, and it may also indicate that Nynorsk is part of the identity of many of the students in the Nynorsk core area (see Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985; Lillis 2013). However, it is important to emphasize that the fact that Nynorsk is the primary language form in school in a given municipality, does not mean that each individual strongly (and equally) identifies with the Nynorsk norm. It might also quite simply refer to an administrative (and rather insignificant)

status as being registered as having Nynorsk as primary language, as stressed by Wold (2019: 86). This may explain why as many as 20% of the students report that it is not obvious for them to use Nynorsk. Let us now look at the students' reported attitudes to the use of dialect in writing.

Fig. 5: What do you think about people using dialect when writing? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)



We ascertain that well over half of the students (62%) like that people use dialect when they write, while only a small proportion (6%) of the students do not like it. This may be linked to the fact that dialect-based writing in CMC can be used to index authenticity (see Woolard 2016: 7; Røyneland & Vangsnes 2020: 364). However, further studies are needed to demonstrate such a connection. The fact that almost a third of the students (32%) answer that they do not have an opinion about this, is possibly related to the fact that the writing situation was not specified. In the next section, we will take a closer look at questions concerning preferred language in writing situations where media, situation and recipient are specified.

5.2 Multilingual youth in Western Norway

Norway as a nation and the Norwegian population are in general prosperous. This gives children and youth easy access to material benefits. A large study of media habits conducted by the Norwegian Media Authority shows that Norwegian adolescents have easy access to different kinds of digital platforms such as TV, smartphones and tablets, and that they make use of this access (Medietilsynet 2018). For example, the study shows that 98% of adolescents aged 13–15 have their own smartphone, and that about 60% of them spend more than two hours per day on their phone (Medietilsynet 2018: 5–9). Figures 6 and 7 from our own survey indicate that these media habits also apply to youth in the core area of Nynorsk in Western Norway.

Fig. 6: Outside of school, how much time do you usually spend in front of a screen (TV, mobile, tablet or computer) during a day? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)

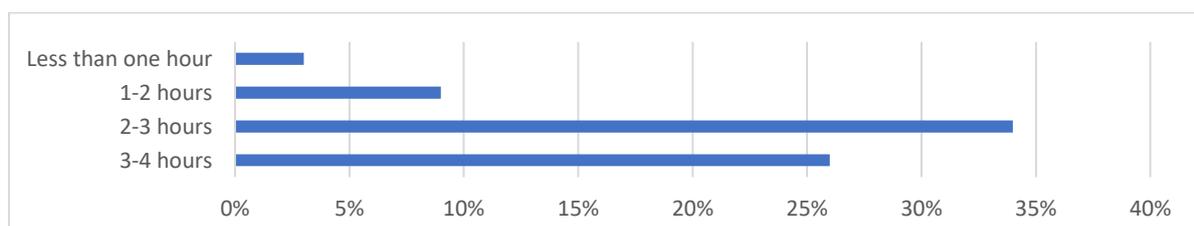


Fig. 7: On a typical day, how much time do you spend on social media like Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)

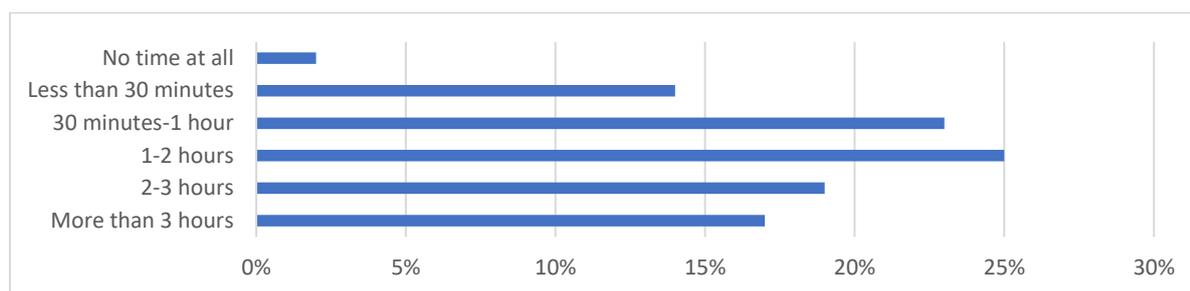


Figure 6 shows that almost nine out of ten students (88%) reports that they spend more than two hours per day in front of a screen outside of school context, while more than half of the students (54%) report that they spend more than three hours watching a screen. Furthermore, it seems that a large part of the screen time is spent on SoMe. As shown by Figure 7, six out of ten students (61%) report that they spend more than one hour per day on SoMe, while more than a third (36%) report that they are busy on SoMe more than two hours per day. These results correspond quite well with the abovementioned study of media habits among Norwegian adolescents (Medietilsynet 2018). There is thus little doubt that Norwegian youth spend quite a lot of time in front of a screen and that a large part of this time is spent on SoMe.

We also know that much of the communication on SoMe takes place without external norm regulation. Thus, today's youth probably produce multiple amounts of unregulated written text compared to those who were young only 10–20 years ago. This applies to most Norwegian adolescents, and thus represents a potential problem related to writing skills among Norwegian youth in general. However, problems with distinguishing between non-standardized and standardized written languages may be even more extensive for youth with Nynorsk as their primary language form than for others. Several studies indicate that Nynorsk students to a greater extent than Bokmål students alternate between Bokmål, Nynorsk and dialect-based writing in different situations (see e.g. Hernes 2012; Juuhl 2014; Fiskerstrand 2017; Eiksund 2019). What, then, do youth in the core area of Nynorsk report on this matter? Figure 7 and 8 show which forms of expression/language they would have chosen in two different *formal* writing situations.⁶

⁶ For each of the questions shown in diagram 7–10, it was clarified to the students that they could tick boxes for several alternatives. This explains why the response rate to these questions exceeds 100 %. However, the response rate is not much above 100 %, which means that most of the students have ticked only one of the options.

Fig. 8: What language would you have used if you were to write an e-mail to the mayor of the municipality where you live? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)

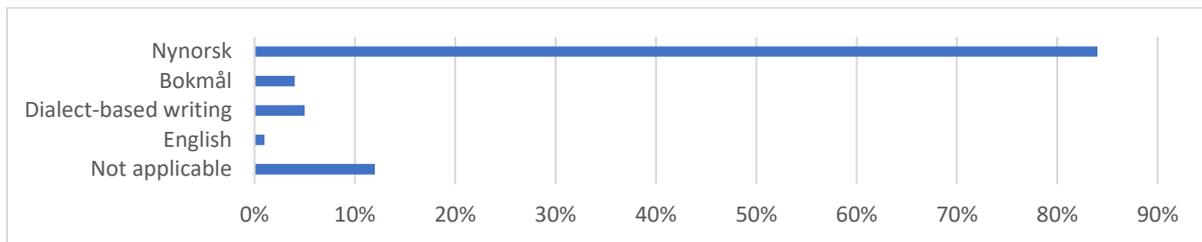
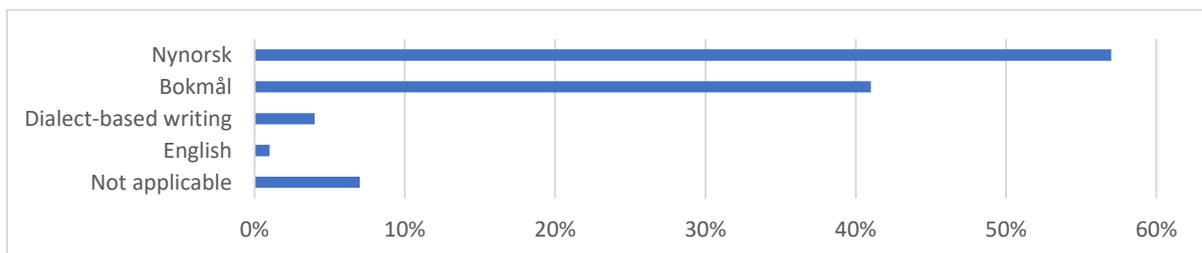


Fig. 9: What language would you have used if you were to write an e-mail where you apply for a summer job in Oslo? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)



In Figure 8 it can be seen that the vast majority of students (84 %) have answered they would use Nynorsk if they were to write an e-mail to the mayor of their home municipality, while only a very small proportion report that they would have used Bokmål (4%) or dialect-based writing (5%). This is an overwhelmingly clear, but not unexpected, result, since Nynorsk is the language of administration and completely dominant in all three relevant municipalities, Stord, Sogndal and Volda. Figure 9 shows which language the adolescents would have used if they were to apply for a summer job in the capital Oslo, where Bokmål is by far the dominant language, and this figure gives a quite different picture. In this situation, we see that six out of ten would have chosen Nynorsk (57%) and four out of ten (41%) would have chosen Bokmål, while only a small minority would have chosen dialect-based writing (4%). One possible explanation for the fact that four out of ten would have chosen Bokmål, may be that these adolescents follow an ideology of anonymity (see Woolard 2016). The fact that most of the students report that they would use Nynorsk in this situation may indicate that these students follow an ideology of authenticity (see Woolard 2016). In the following, we will see which forms of expression/language youth in the core area of Nynorsk will choose in *informal* writing situations, in another medium and to two different types of recipients.

Fig. 10: What language would you have used if you were to write a message to friends (e.g. snapchat, messenger)? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)

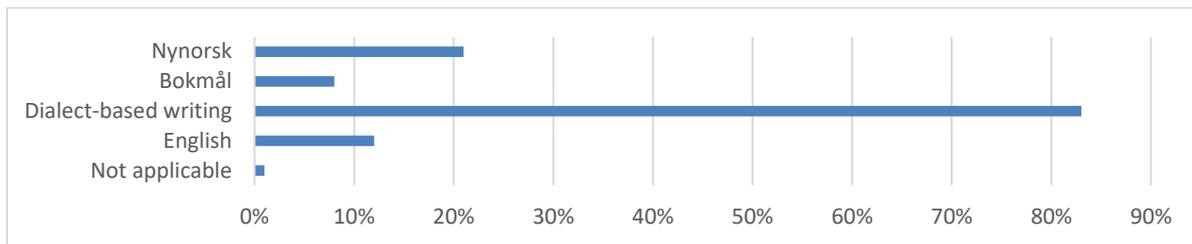
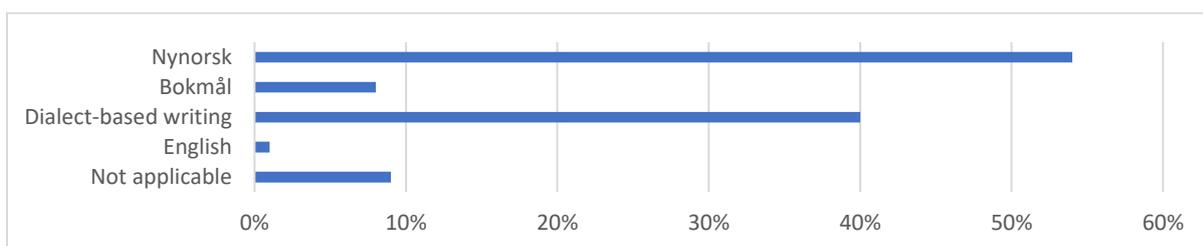


Figure 10 shows that as many as 83% of the respondents have answered that they will use dialect-based writing when they write messages to friends, and that only 21% have answered that they will use Nynorsk in this particular writing situation. Previous studies show that dialect-based writing is common on SoMe (Rotevatn 2014), and that it is more prevalent among youth in Western and Northern Norway than in Eastern and Southern Norway (Vangsnes 2019; Røyneland & Vangsnes 2020). A study from Opinion (2016) shows that 51% of the respondents with Nynorsk as their primary language form reported to use dialect-based writing in private messages, while only 26% of those with Bokmål as their primary language form reported to use dialect-based writing in this type of communication. The fact that the dialect-percentage is even higher among Nynorsk users in our survey than in the study from Opinion, can possibly be explained by the fact that our respondents were adolescents, while the respondents to Opinion consisted of a representative sample of people of all age groups.

Figure 11: What language would you have used if you were to write a message to grandparents (e.g. snapchat, messenger)? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)



In a similar way as we saw that the proportion of those who would have chosen Nynorsk decreased significantly from Figure 8 to Figure 9, we see that the proportion who would have chosen dialect-based writing decreases markedly from Figure 10 to Figure 11: While 84% of the students would have used dialect-based writing in messages to friends, only 40% would have used this form of writing in messages to grandparents. This shows that not only the degree of formality and type of medium is decisive for the choice of language, but also the recipients. One can argue that these results strengthen the theory of accommodation (see Giles & Smith

1979), and in particular, the sociolinguistic model of audience design as developed by Bell (1984) applied in CMC (see Androutsopoulos 2013: 675f). Two recent studies from Denmark, one by Westergaard (2014: 191) among young people in Southern Jutland and another by Stæhr et. al. (2020: 186f) among adolescents on Bornholm, demonstrate a similar correlation between dialect spelling and different levels of privacy on Facebook. Dialect writing occurred mostly in private chats in Messenger, less in comments to Facebook posts, and least in Facebook wall-posts directed at all Facebook-friends.

In total, the figures above not only show that the youth in the Nynorsk core area alternate between different forms of expressions/languages depending on situation, medium and recipients; they also indicate that the adolescents have internalized a form of text cultural competence about patterns of variation.

Furthermore, the survey shows that the youth in the Nynorsk core area are multilingual. This multilingualism is reasonable to see in connection with the sociolinguistic situation in which they live. They operate in a writing culture that is characterized by both English, Bokmål, Nynorsk and dialect-based writing, where Nynorsk is the absolute majority language in the municipalities in which they live, but, according to Thingnes (2020) a minoritized language in the nation. As users of a minoritized language, young Nynorsk users must be more flexible than users of the majority language. This follows a pattern we know from international research on the relationship between the majority and the minority in a society: the minority must to a greater extent adapt to the majority, while the majority does not automatically have to adapt to the minority (Bourdieu 1991). This situation and the fact that Nynorsk-writers to a large extent use dialect-based writing in informal situations in digital media, may give them extraordinary challenges regarding not including forms from Bokmål and dialect when writing standard Nynorsk. Section 5.3 is devoted to looking more closely at the self-reported writing skills of a selection of the students who participated in the survey, before section 5.4 analyses the same students' actual writing competence.

5.3 Self-reported writing skills

This section presents figures that show the answers from the respondents who were 9th grade students in Volda in the spring of 2019. These are the same students who submitted mock exam answers in Norwegian Nynorsk in the autumn of 2019, then as 10th grade students. In this way, we can make a direct comparison between the students' self-reported norm competence in the questionnaire survey and actual norm competence in Nynorsk, as this becomes apparent through the analysis of the submitted texts in section 5.4. Figures 12 and 13 show the self-

reported competence among 9th grade students in Volda who had Nynorsk as their primary language form, N=70.⁷

Figure 12: Do you feel confident in spelling in Nynorsk? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)

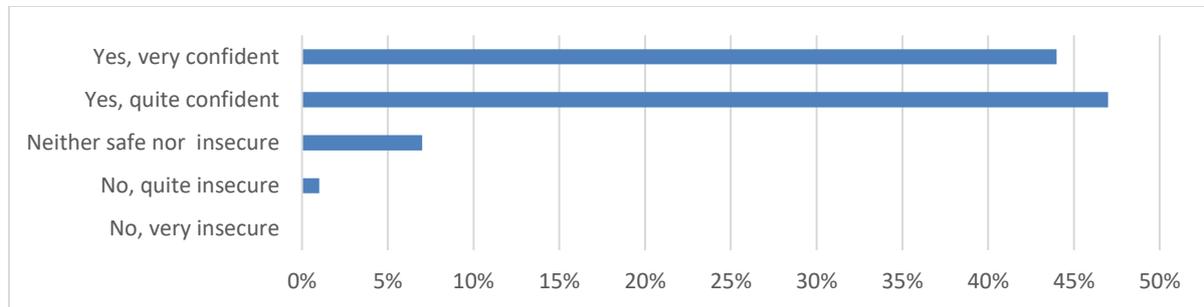


Figure 13: Do you feel confident in spelling in Bokmål? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)

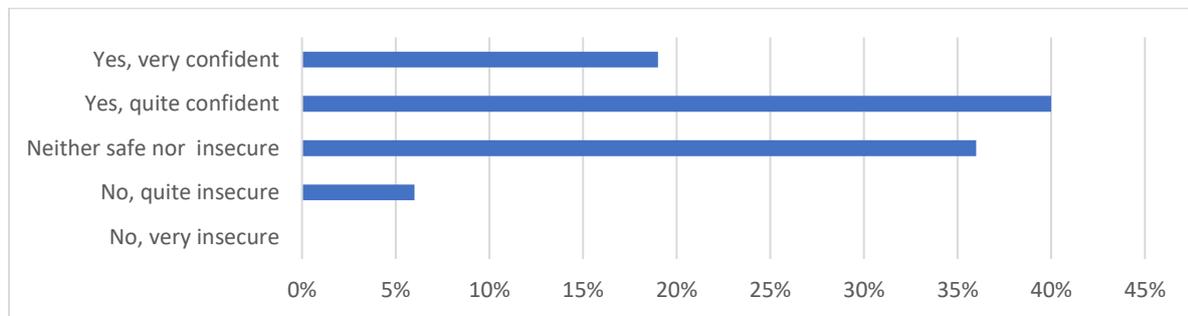
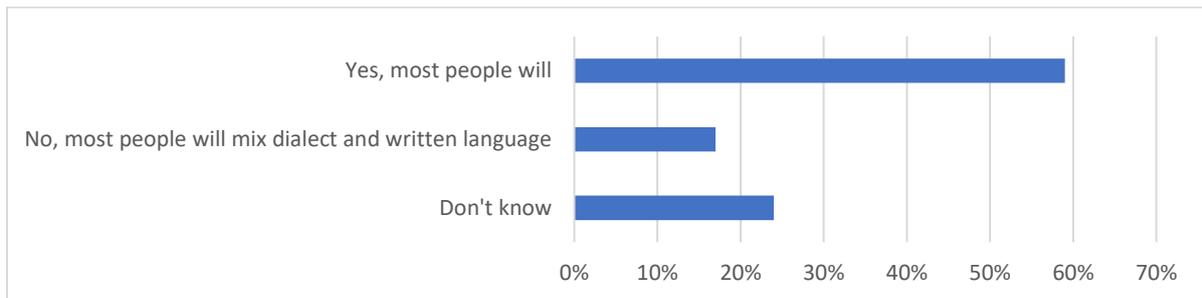


Figure 12 shows that 44% of the students report that they are “very confident” in spelling in their primary language form, Nynorsk, while 47% reports that they are “quite confident”, while Figure 13 shows that 19% of the students report that they are “very confident” in spelling in their secondary language form, Bokmål, while 4% report that they are “quite confident”. A large majority of the students thus have an opinion that they are better at writing Nynorsk than Bokmål. This self-reported norm competence does not correspond with the results from a study by Blekesaune & Vangsnes (2020: 59), which shows that 10th grade students in Western Norway with Nynorsk as their primary language form have better final assessments in Bokmål than in Nynorsk. In my own survey, I have not compared writing skills in Nynorsk and Bokmål. What I have done, however, is to conduct a thorough study of their writing skills in Nynorsk. Before examining the results of that study, it may be necessary to present the results of a final question from the survey. Considering the extensive use of dialect-based writing on SoMe

⁷ The reason why N=70 here while N=84 in the study of the mock exams, is simply that not all the 9th grade students in Volda participated in the questionnaire survey the spring of 2019.

among these adolescents, there may be reason to expect that non-permitted forms from the non-standardized language used on SoMe unconsciously appear when they are to write standardized Nynorsk (see e.g. Stæhr 2015). Therefore, I found it interesting to ask the young people themselves, if they thought this was a problem.

Fig. 14: Do dialect writers manage to follow the standardized norms when writing a formal e-mail? (Helset & Brunstad 2020)



The figure shows that six out ten (59 %) of the 9th grade students in Volda thought that most of the dialect writers would be able to follow standardized norms when they had to, while less than two out of ten (17%) thought they would mix dialect and standardized written language. In the following, it will be seen whether they were able to distinguish between Bokmål, dialect/dialect-based writing and Nynorsk themselves.

5.4 Actual writing skills

As shown in Figure 12 above, 87% of the 9th grade students in Volda the spring of 2019 reported that they were “very confident” or “quite confident” in the rules of spelling in Nynorsk. In this section I will examine the same students’ actual writing skills through an analysis of the texts they submitted as mock exam the autumn of 2019, then as 10th graders. The total number of texts submitted in Norwegian Nynorsk from the 10th grade students was N=88, but four out of these were written by students with Nynorsk as their secondary language form. Therefore, N=84 texts have been analysed. The texts were written by students in four different school classes (Helset 2020), and the assignments they received were the same as those given for the national exam in Norwegian in the spring of 2019. The set of tasks consisted of two parts. In part one, the students had to answer two short answers. In part two, the students should write a long answer where they could choose between four different tasks. The students could use dictionaries and spell checker on their computers when writing.

The total number of words in the 84 texts was 101.758, which gives an average length of 1.211 words per text. The analyses show that there is a total of 4.353 deviations from the norm in the 84 texts. This gives an average of 51.8 deviations per text. In total, the study shows

that 10th grade students in Volda with Nynorsk as their primary language form had an average of 4.6 deviations per 100 words. Furthermore, of the 84 texts, 38 were written by boys while 46 were written by girls. The analyses show that the boys had an average of 5.5 deviations per 100 words, whereas the girls had an average of 3.7 deviations per 100 words.⁸

5.4.1 Types of norm deviation

As explained in section 4, the deviations were registered in five main categories with a total of 14 subcategories (here marked with *italics*). The main category in which most deviations were registered was Inflection, with a total number of 2.069 deviations from the norm. The subcategory that caught the most deviations was *verb conjugation*, with a total number of 1.113 deviations from the norm. In the subcategory *noun conjugation*, 533 deviations were registered, while 423 deviations were registered in the subcategory *conjugation in other word classes*. The second largest of the main categories was Spelling, where a total of 810 deviations were registered. The subcategory that caught the most deviations in this category was *vocalism*, with a total number of 444 deviations. In the subcategory *consonants*, 243 deviations were registered, while 123 deviations were registered in the subcategory *monophthong and diphthongization*. In the main category Derivation, a total of 345 deviations from the norm were registered. 318 of these deviations were registered in the subcategory *suffix*, while 27 of them were registered in the subcategory *prefix*. The main category Deviant lexical item was not divided into subcategories. In this category, a total of 382 words that do not belong to Nynorsk were registered. In the main category called Other deviations, 747 norm deviations were registered. These deviations were distributed in the following subcategories: *word-division*; 243 – *improper use of regular/capital letters*; 191 – *mix-up og/å*; 122— *inconsistency*; 69 – *typing error*; 122. In the further analysis, not much emphasis will be placed on these different *types* of deviations. Instead, emphasis will be placed on identifying possible *sources* of deviations, since this approach can help us provide answers to the research questions for this article.

5.4.2 Sources of norm deviation

As shown in section 2, youth in the core area of Nynorsk in Western Norway grow up in a multilingual written culture. Nynorsk is the absolute majority language in the municipalities in which they live, while Bokmål is completely dominating nationally, and dialect-based writing

⁸ The fact that girls perform significantly better than boys in their primary language form, Nynorsk, is in accordance with findings from several other studies (see e.g. Blekesaune & Vangsnes 2020). However, the relationship between boys' and girls' written skills will not be analysed further in this article.

dominates among friends on SoMe. Hence, these adolescents become multilingual writers themselves, as shown in section 5.2. This situation may give them extraordinary challenges regarding not including forms from Bokmål, dialect and dialect-based writing when writing standard Nynorsk. Several studies point to the massive dominance of Bokmål as an important factor when explaining why students with Nynorsk as their primary language form have more deviations from the norm than students with Bokmål as their primary language form (see e.g. Matre 2011; Bjørhusdal & Juuhl 2017). Quite a few studies also point to elements from the dialects as an important factor (see e.g. Røhme 2020; Eiksund 2020). A study by Fiskerstrand (2008: 106) shows that students in upper secondary school in the core area of Nynorsk have problems distinguishing between dialect, Nynorsk and Bokmål, and that their teachers thought the students relied too much on the correspondence between dialect and Nynorsk.

There are, however, few studies that point specifically to the dialect-based writing that young people use on SoMe as a possible source of norm deviation. A study by Christoffersen (2016: 197) among upper secondary school students in different parts of Denmark, shows that the non-standardized language they use in various types of mediated writing only to a small extent is transmitted to texts they write in standard Danish at school. Another study by Valberg (2009: 83) among upper secondary school students in Oslo and Nordland, Norway, concludes in a similar way. However, both studies emphasize investigating whether the standard texts are influenced by features that are typical and distinctive for mediated writing, such as use of abbreviations and emojis. They do not investigate whether the standard texts are influenced of *dialectal forms* used on SoMe.

As shown in section 5.2, youth in Norway spend a lot of time on SoMe, and youth living in the core area of Nynorsk in Western Norway, mainly use dialect-based writing when communicating with friends on SoMe. In the introduction, we saw that these adolescents have the minortized language Nynorsk as their primary language form in school. Furthermore, we saw that Nynorsk (and Bokmål), unlike most other standardized languages in Europe, allows quite a lot of variation in orthography and morphology. One of the arguments for allowing such variation in Nynorsk is the idea that it is beneficial for students to be able to choose spelling and inflectional forms that are as close as possible to their own dialect (Røyneland 2013: 56). However, the diversity of different dialectal forms is more extensive than the permitted variation within standard Nynorsk. Thus, young people may be led to believe that they can use the forms from their own dialect that are not permitted in Nynorsk. This problem may be strengthened by the fact that the adolescents produce large amounts of dialect-based writing on

SoMe, in the way that non-permitted dialectal forms which are very widely used on SoMe unconsciously appear when they write standardized Nynorsk.

As mentioned in section 4, I set up the following four possible sources of norm deviation for each of the subcategories in the first four main categories: Influence from Bokmål – Influence from dialect – Influence from Bokmål and/or dialect – Norm deviations that do not correspond to either Bokmål or the local dialect in Volda. It was easy to determine whether a given norm deviation in the Nynorsk texts was in accordance with Bokmål. It was, however, not always easy to decide if a given deviation was in accordance with the local dialect in Volda.⁹ As already mentioned, there was a total of 4.353 deviations in the 84 submitted texts. However, the 747 findings in the main category Other deviations are not relevant in this context, since none of these deviations are related to influence from Bokmål or dialect.¹⁰ Therefore, I was left with 3606 deviations from Nynorsk for which I was to find the sources of influence. The analyses showed that 1061 (29%) of these deviations could only be explained by influence from Bokmål (e.g. **setninger* vs. *setningar* [sentences]), while 843 (23%) of them could only be explained by influence from the dialect in Volda (e.g. **kommuna* vs. *kommunen* [the municipality]). Interestingly, it turned out that as many as 1064 (30%) of the deviations correspond to both Bokmål and the dialect in Volda (e.g. **valg* vs. *val* [choice]). The remaining 638 (18%) registered deviations correspond neither with Bokmål nor with the dialect in Volda (e.g. **bileter* vs. *bilete* [pictures]). Thus, the distribution between deviations that can be explained by influence from a) Bokmål, b) dialect and c) Bokmål and/or dialect is even, although there are slightly fewer deviations that coincide with dialect than with Bokmål.¹¹ However, the even distribution applies to the total material. If we examine the distribution between the various sources of deviation within each of the four main categories, we will get a more nuanced picture. In the following I will present tables showing this distribution and some

⁹ As the main source for determining what characterizes the dialects of this region Mæhlum & Røynealand (2012) was used. Furthermore, I used a recording of a dialect user from Ørsta, the neighbouring municipality of Volda (NTNU). In addition, I used my own intuition, as I grew up in Ørsta and have worked as a teacher in Volda my whole professional life.

¹⁰ It should be noted that some of these deviations may be due to the fact that they occur frequently on SoMe. However, since it is difficult to prove such a connection, I decided to omit them from the further analyzes.

¹¹ When it comes to the deviations that coincide both with Bokmål and with dialect, it is difficult to determine whether each of these deviations is due to influence from Bokmål or influence from the local dialect in Volda (or more precisely: the idiolect of the individual student), since I only have access to anonymized written texts submitted by the students for mock exam.

authentic and typical examples within each category, taken from the texts written by the 10th grade students in Volda.

Table 1: Distribution between different sources of deviation within the category Spelling

Spelling					
Source of influence	Number	<i>Consonants</i>	<i>Vocalism</i>	<i>Monophthong</i>	<i>Diphthongization</i>
Bokmål	114	* <i>gutt vs. gut</i> [boy]	* <i>gjøre vs. gjere</i> [do]	* <i>hele vs. heile</i> [whole]	No examples
Dialect	106	* <i>nokk vs. nok</i> [enough]	* <i>såve vs. sove</i> [sleep]	No examples	* <i>røyse vs. reise</i> [erect]
Bokmål and/or Dialect	485	* <i>tjene vs. tene</i> [serve]	* <i>være vs. vere</i> [be]	* <i>kjøre vs. køyre</i> [drive]	No examples
Not Bokmål nor Dialect	105	* <i>skjekkar vs. sjekkar</i> [checking]	* <i>vor vs. vår</i> [our]	No examples	* <i>flaumar vs. fløymer</i> [floods]

Table 2: Distribution between different sources of deviation within the category Inflection

Inflection				
Source of influence	Number	<i>Noun</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>Other word classes</i>
Bokmål	774	* <i>verden vs. verda</i> [the world]	* <i>har skrevet vs. har skrive</i> [has written]	* <i>siden vs. sidan</i> [since]
Dialect	578	* <i>daga vs. dagar</i> [days]	* <i>har komt vs. har kome</i> [has come]	* <i>sida vs. sidan</i> [since]
Bokmål and/or Dialect	178	* <i>salget vs. salet</i> [the sale]	* <i>velge vs. velje</i> [choose]	* <i>et vs. eit</i> [a/an]

Not Bokmål nor Dialect	468	* <i>augene</i> vs. <i>auga/augo</i> [the eyes]	* <i>meinar</i> vs. <i>meiner</i> [mean]	* <i>skrive</i> vs. <i>skreven</i> [written]
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Table 3: Distribution between different sources of deviation within the category Derivation

Derivation			
Source of influence	Number	Prefix	Suffix
Bokmål	31	* <i>besynderlig</i> vs. <i>merkeleg</i> [strange]	* <i>veldedighet</i> vs. <i>velgjerd</i> [charity]
Dialect	26	* <i>anngår</i> vs. <i>vedkjem</i> [concerns]	* <i>likheiter</i> vs. <i>likskapar</i> [similarities]
Bokmål and/or Dialect	276	* <i>advare</i> vs. <i>åtvare</i> [warn]	* <i>plutselig</i> vs. <i>plutseleg</i> [suddenly]
Not Bokmål nor Dialect	12	No examples	* <i>oppmerksomheit</i> vs. <i>merksemd</i> [attention]

Table 4: Distribution between different sources of deviation within the category Deviant lexical item

Deviant lexical item		
Source of influence	Number	Examples
Bokmål	142	* <i>sult</i> vs. <i>svolt</i> [hunger] * <i>å spise</i> vs. <i>å ete</i> [to eat]
Dialect	62	* <i>lissje</i> vs. <i>vesle</i> [little] * <i>visst</i> vs. <i>viss/dersom</i> [if]
Bokmål and/or Dialect	125	* <i>kun</i> vs. <i>berre</i> [only] * <i>vindu</i> vs. <i>vindaug</i> [window]

Not Bokmål nor Dialect, often English	53	*rewards vs. påskjønningar *level vs. nivå
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On the basis of these tables we can summarize which sources of deviation dominate within each of the four main categories. With a total of 1988 deviations, Inflection is by far the largest category, and this category is dominated by deviations that only correspond to Bokmål (39%) and deviations that only correspond to dialect (29%). High frequency examples are: **mennesker vs. menneske* [people]; **leser vs. les* [reading]; **åpent vs. ope* [open] (Bokmål) and **tima vs. timar* [hours]; **synst vs. synest* [think]; **sida vs. sidan* [since] (dialect). The categories Spelling (810 deviations in total) and Derivation (345 deviations in total), on the other hand, are dominated by deviations that coincide with both Bokmål and the local dialect. As much as 60% of the deviations within Spelling and 80% of the deviations within Derivation correspond with both Bokmål and dialect. High frequency examples are: **samme vs. same* [same]; **uten vs. utan* [without]; **egne vs. eigne* [own] (Spelling) and **opplevelse vs. oppleving* [experience]; **tydelig vs. tydeleg* [clearly] (Derivation). The category Deviant lexical item (382 deviations in total) is dominated by deviations that only correspond to Bokmål (37%) and deviations that coincide with both Bokmål and the local dialect (33%). High frequency examples are: **å spille vs. å spele/spela* [to play]; **lille vs. vesle* [little] (Bokmål) and **man vs. ein* [you]; **grusom vs. grufull* [cruel] (Bokmål and dialect). Furthermore, we can note that 14% of the deviations in this category can be explained by the fact that the students have used English words that are not standardized in Nynorsk. Examples are: **release*; **interview*; **nice*. However, the influence from English makes up a very small part of the total number of deviations in the submitted texts. Therefore, I have not emphasized analysing these forms.

Unlike Androutsopoulos (2015: 29–30), who denies that use of non-standardized language in CMC challenge linguistic purity and prescriptive correctness, I would argue that it is not unlikely that these youth’s extensive dialect-based writing on SoMe strengthens the problem of influence from the local dialect when writing formal texts in Nynorsk. I would still like to clarify that the analyses indicate that the young people are very much *aware* that writing on SoMe and writing formal texts in Nynorsk are two different writing situations that require completely different sets of norms. This is shown by the fact that the texts submitted for mock exam in Nynorsk contain very few elements of emojis and (English) abbreviations that we know they use a lot on SoMe (see also Valberg 2009; Christoffersen 2016). But, even though the students are aware of the differences between these writing situations, we have also seen that

the submitted texts contain a lot of deviations that correspond to the local dialect in Volda, and the analyses indicate that some of these deviations come as a result of the massive dialect-based writing on SoMe.

The deviations referred to here are high frequency in everyday speech and thus on SoMe, at the same time as they deviate radically from Nynorsk (and Bokmål). Here are some typical examples from the submitted texts: **kjeme* vs. *kjem* [come]; **har mysta* vs. *har mista/mist* [has/have lost]; **sei* vs. *seier* [says]; **he* vs. *har* [has/have]; **va* vs. *var* [was/were]; **i morgå* vs. *i morgon* [tomorrow]; **monge* vs. *mange* [many]; **longe* vs. *lang* [long]; **ditte* vs. *dette* [this]; **dinna* vs. *den* [that]; **ej* vs. *eg* [I]; **dej* vs. *deg* [you]; **ka* vs. *kva* [what]; **ken* vs. *kven* [who]. An observation that strengthens the hypothesis that this type of deviation has been reinforced by the massive dialect-based writing on SoMe, is the fact that several of the best writers among the students also have this type of deviation. These writers are 15-16-year-old girls who master the complicated orthography and morphology of Nynorsk almost completely, but who still spell elementary words like those above incorrectly.

These results are not intended as evidence of the hypothesis that the dialect-based writing on SoMe weakens the students' ability to write Nynorsk correctly, but I think the results give indications that there may be a causal connection between the massive dialect-based writing on SoMe and deviation from the norm when writing formal texts in Nynorsk. However, further studies comparing texts written both pre- and post-SoMe are needed to demonstrate such a connection.

6. Concluding remarks

The research questions for the article were: to what extent and in what ways do texts written by students with Nynorsk as their primary language form deviate from the written standard, and in what ways can the deviations from the norm be explained on the basis of the sociolinguistic situation in which they live?

Although the article argues that youth in the core area of Nynorsk are very aware that different writing situations require different sets of norms, the study of submitted texts in Nynorsk clearly shows that (most of) these adolescents have difficulties distinguishing between Nynorsk, Bokmål and dialect-based writing. Even though a very large proportion of 10th grade students in Volda report that they are 'very confident' or 'quite confident' in Nynorsk orthography and morphology, the study of the same students' submitted texts for mock exam in Nynorsk, shows that that their texts are strongly influenced by features both from Bokmål

and from dialect/dialect-based writing. This corresponds with findings from similar studies (see e.g. Eiksund 2020; Røhme 2020).

As shown in the first part of this article, youth in the core area of Nynorsk in Western Norway operate in a written culture that is multilingual, where Nynorsk is the absolute majority language in the municipalities in which they live, while Bokmål dominates completely nationally, and dialect-based writing dominates among friends on SoMe. Hence, these adolescents become multilingual writers themselves. Their answers to the survey show that they perceive and are sensitive to the fact that there are different norms and norm expectations associated with the different contexts and we have seen that they alternate between Bokmål, Nynorsk and dialect-based writing depending on situation, medium and not least the recipients (see Giles & Smith 1979; Bell 1984; Androutsopoulos 2013). As users of a minoritized language, these adolescents must be more flexible than users of the majority language (see Bourdieu 1991).

The almost total dominance of Bokmål nationwide means that even youth in the core area of Nynorsk encounter more Bokmål than Nynorsk in their everyday life. This makes influence from Bokmål likely. Furthermore, we have seen that Nynorsk allows several alternative spellings that are close to dialects, without allowing all dialect-related forms. Thus, young people may be led to believe that they can use the forms from their own dialect that are not permitted in Nynorsk. This makes influence from dialect more likely, and I have argued that this influence may have been reinforced by the fact that the youth in the core area of Nynorsk practice extensive dialect-based writing on SoMe in their everyday life.

Thus, the study gives strong indications that there is a close connection between the multilingual situation of youth in the core area of Nynorsk and their problems with influence from Bokmål and dialect when writing formal texts in Nynorsk.

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External sources

Helset, Stig J. 2020. Table showing norm deviations made by 10th grade students in Volda for mock exam in Norwegian Nynorsk the autumn of 2019. Note: In order to maintain anonymity of the students are the class numbers fixed, that is, the class marked 10A in the table may be class 10B, 10C or 10D and vice versa.

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