

Pia Quist:

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The article reports on the results from the project "Spoken Danish among Copenhagen adolescents in linguistic and culturally heterogeneous settings". The study was carried out during the period November 1998 – March 2000 at Department of Danish Dialectology, University of Copenhagen. The aim of the project was to test if new language varieties have developed in heterogeneous communities in Copenhagen, as for example is the case in Stockholm with *Rinkeby Swedish*. Quist describes a language use that deviate from Danish standard. The deviations can not be explicated as deficient Danish competences, but should rather be described and understood as a new Danish variety, a multi-ethnolect.

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1. Introduction

Two conditions form the basis of the study: 1) Copenhagen has since the 1960's developed into a multicultural city with mixed communities, institutions and schools. This "new" situation has not, so far, been studied from a sociolinguistic/dialectological perspective. 2) Ulla-Britt Kotsinas has in Stockholm described a Swedish multi-ethnic language variety, *Rinkeby Swedish*. Does a similar phenomenon exist in Copenhagen?

2. Design and data

The material is collected in three boroughs of Copenhagen: Avedøre (youth club for boys), Nørrebro (youth club for girls) and Kongens Enghave/Valby (high school). Quist carried out 3 to 4 days of participant observation at each place, and made recordings of different situations: 1) Self recording, i.e. an informant carries a small Sony-recorder and a microphone on his chest while he records himself; 2) group conversations round a board game; and 3) retrospective interviews.

	Youth club, boys	Youth club, girls	High school
Self-recording	Ahmed, 16, Berber Erchin, 15, Turkish	Mirca, 13, Serbo-Croatian Malene, 14, Danish	Rina, 17, Arabic (Palestine) Morten, 17, Danish
Board game	Ahmed, 16, Berber Erchin, 15, Turkish Dawood, Urdu ¹ Sevki, Kurdish (Tur.) Hasan, Turkish	Mirca, 13, Serbo-Croatian Fadime, 15, Kurdish (Tur.) Serife, 14, Kurdish (Tur.) Solaima, 12, Kurdish Iraque)	Rina, 17, Arabic (Palestine) Morten, 17, Danish Ravin, 17, Urdu Anne, 17, Danish Usma, 16, Urdu
Retrospective interview	Ahmed, 16, Berber Erchin, 15, Turkish	–	Rina, 17, Arabic (Palestine) Morten, 17, Danish

Table 1: Data types, the informant's age, and L1. All names have been changed.

3. The language of the adolescents – a Danish variety

It is argued that the adolescent's language use form a new Danish speech variety. This is based on 1) A linguistic description – recurring features that deviate from 'youth Copenhagen standard norm' 2) The adolescents' awareness of a special variety that deviates from 'youth Copenhagen standard norm'.

THE LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION

In her description of *Rinkeby Swedish* Kotsinas distinguishes between simplifying and expanding elements (Kotsinas 1988a & 1994). The simplifying elements are (typically) a tendency to use less marked structures where Swedish (and Danish) has more marked structures. The simplifying elements can according to Kotsinas also be phonetic features.

Simplifying elements in the Copenhagen multi ethnolect:

Word order: tendency to the preference of normal word order (SVO) in contexts where Danish would usually have inverted word order (X/A VS). Examples [1] and [2].

Gender: tendency to the preference of common gender where standard Danish would have neuter. Examples [3] to [5].

Pronunciation: Tendency to the omission of 'stød' (Danish phonetic feature often described as a kind of creaky voice or sort of glottal stop). Examples [6] and [7].

Stress: Tendency to syllable-timed stress instead of Standard Danish stress-timed stress. Examples [8] to [11].

¹ Dawood, Sevki and Hasan are between 14 and 16 years old.

Expanding elements in the Copenhagen multi ethnolect:

The expanding elements are typically lexical borrowings from the speaker's first languages (Kotsinas 1988: 268). The Copenhagen adolescents use words and phrases from Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, English, Serbo-Croatian. Examples [12] to [21], wordlist in appendix.

Examples of switching between the multi-ethnolect and standard Danish are being analysed on pages 159 to 164. Some of the speakers are able to switch between standard Danish and multi-ethnolect according to the situation. Hence the simplifying elements can not be explained as features of inter language or lack of Danish proficiency. Rather the multi ethnolect serves as an extra resource in the adolescents' linguistic repertoire. The terminology "simplifying/expanding elements" may be relevant in a formal linguistic description. But as soon as the description broadens and takes the contextual situation into consideration the term "simplifying" is no longer adequate as the elements expand the speakers' registers rather than simplify them.

THE RETROSPECTIVE INTERVIEWS

Both users and non-users of the multi-ethnolect are aware of a certain sort of Danish that is spoken by and associated to youth with immigrant background.

4. How widespread is the phenomenon?

6 of the 15 primary speakers in the data set use the multi-ethnolect, as well as many of the secondary speakers (i.e. boys and girls from the three institutions who were around during the study, but who did not get tape recorded). Boys seem to use the variety more than girls, and only few speakers with Danish L1 speak multi-ethnolect.

5. What kind of variety?

The described phenomenon is being discussed in connection to a range of linguistic terms such as register, dialect and interlanguage. A new term – multi-ethnolect – is preferred since the variety is new in a Danish context and the other terms already seem to be associated with other specific groups of speakers.

6. Multi-ethnolect and language change

Hypothetic scenarios of possible effects on Danish standard language are being discussed. The multi-ethnolect seems to carry a subtle prestige among Copenhagen adolescents, which could lead to 'change from below'.

7. Language, ethnicity and identity

The use of multi-ethnolect is discussed in connection to 'acts of identity' (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller), 'racism' and 'solidarity' (Hewitt) and 'crossing' (Rampton).