

BA Thesis

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“Shit, it’s på Norsk”

A linguistic analysis of the mixed language in *The
Julekalender*

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1. Introduction

This thesis is a sociolinguistic study of the mixed language used in the Norwegian Christmas tv-show *The Julekalender* directed by Hans Erik Saks and first aired in 1994. The language is a type of Norwenglish, a blend incorporating both Norwegian and English, usually involving some amount of direct translation. The paper aims to understand how the blend was created and identify its characteristics, through a detailed analysis of four episodes from the series. The findings are compared to similar phenomena in real-life language identified in sociolinguistic literature, namely code-switching and mixed languages. The research question for this study is as follows: What real-life communication phenomena does the series' language resemble the most? First, the thesis will give some background information on the show, providing insights into the thoughts of the writers concerning the utilized language. Following that the thesis will present the theoretical background of the sociolinguistic terms, before going into the methodology of the study itself. There will then be a small section concerning an interview which was made for this study with one of the original scriptwriters, to provide some additional insights. The findings will be presented with plenty of examples and then it will all be drawn together in the discussion section. The transcriptions of the four episodes, as well as of the interview, are provided in Appendix 2.

2. Background

2.1 The Julekalender

The Julekalender was directed by Hans-Erik Saks and first aired in 1994 (“The Julekalender”, 2023). It is a “julekalender” or advent calendar in television format, a genre which is very popular in Scandinavian television. An advent calendar series consists of 24 episodes, being aired from the 1st of December till the 24th. *The Julekalender* quickly became a cult classic and is still being aired after 30 years (“The Julekalender”, 2023). It is almost a shot-for-shot remake from a Danish show from 1991 by the same name and produced by the same people, but with different actors and a few adaptations to better fit the Norwegian audience. It is mostly set in the Norwegian rural countryside in Sør-Trøndelag, with the main plot and narrative surrounding three *nisser*, a people with pointed ears and red caps. *Nisser* have long ago been driven from Norway by an evil race called the *Nåså*, a vampyresque people who appear human, but who when exposed to alcohol reveal their true selves and are adorned with

glasses and fangs. The *nisser* are tasked to travel back to Norway to find a key which is needed to save their friend “Good Old Gammel Nok” but must stay a while in Norway due an unfortunate crashlanding. Throughout the series we are exposed to a subplot involving a farmer-couple and their unfortunate and unwelcome houseguest, which turns out to be a *Nåså*. The farmer-couple speak in a dialect native to the area called trøndersk, which happens to be the two actors’ native language and dialect, while the *Nåså* speaks in an eastern-Norwegian dialect, native to the east, south-east especially in and around Oslo. The three actors for these roles are the same actors who play the *nisser*, played by Tore Johansen, Ivar Gafseth and Erling Mylius (“The Julekalender”, 2023). The *nisser* speak in a form of “Norwenglish”, a mixed language of Norwegian and English. They are also, according to the series, said to live “at the end of the world”, the assumption being that this is where they emigrated to when driven from Norway. The series also reveals in episode one where this is by showing the audience a map of their travel to Norway, through a line being drawn on it. The line begins somewhere around North America (Saks, 1994:5:05-5:32).

2.2. Theory

2.2.1 Mixed language

Broadly speaking, the language in the show is a form of mixed language, in the sense that there are clear elements of both English and Norwegian. The show implies that the variety has come about from language-contact, by giving the *nisser* the backstory of having been driven from their homeland to North America. According to Raymond Hickey, language contact always seems to induce change, but the degree and type of change may vary greatly (Hickey, 2020:8). To be able to distinguish what exactly is happening with the variety from the show, it is necessary to look at several different ways in which language has been shown to change under language-contact.

One of these types of change is mixed language, which is said to be one of the most extreme results of language-contact (Hickey, 2020:201). Mixed languages are those which can no longer be classified within one family tree when seen through the lens of the comparative method in historical linguistics (Hickey, 2020:201). The comparative method is a way to look at languages in their relationship to other languages over time and thereby establish lineages to determine if the languages are related or not (Hickey, 2020:203-204). This is how one has ended up with the language-tree model, in which languages have clear

common roots. Most languages are the results of “natural transmission”, a near-perfect transmission of the language between generations, accounting for natural change and/or influence from (an) other language(s), and the basic parts of the language can with relative ease be identified to belong to a specific branch of the language-tree (Hickey, 2020:204). Mixed languages however defy this type of classification, and the different linguistic levels, such as vocabulary and grammar can be traced to different family trees (Hickey, 2020:204).

One could argue that two examples of such mixed languages are pidgins and creoles. Pidgins come about quickly, perhaps only in the span of one generation, and are the result of a need for communication between two or more language groups where the groups stay socially distant from each other (Hickey, 2020:206). Pidgins usually stick to the grammar of the original language, however much simplified, while adopting some but not all the lexicon from the other language(s) (Hickey, 2020:204). A pidgin also has no native speakers and is usually only applied between select interlocutors in specific social situation. Creoles, as with pidgins, only have some of the lexicon transmitted from the other language, however unlike a pidgin, the grammar has been fleshed out to the point where it cannot be tied fully to any of the substrate languages, and the variety is now the first language of many (Hickey, 2020:204). Despite this or perhaps because of this, there are those who argue that the category of “mixed languages” should not include pidgins and creoles but be reserved for languages which clearly incorporate a preserved set of elements from one language into another, such as the grammar from one language and the lexicon from another, or the nouns from one language and the verbs from another (Hickey, 2020:205, 211). What they all have in common however is that they have had an interrupted transmission, in contrast to the natural transmission described above (Hickey, 2020:204-205).

2.2.2 Code-switching

Another effect of language contact is the insertion of words or phrases from a language within the regular speech of another language. This is one aspect of what is widely known as code-switching, henceforth referred to as CS. CS can take place both between sentences (intersentential) or within sentences (intrasentential). CS occurs in one form or another in practically all contact situations, and is a choice driven by social factors, between or within multilingual speakers who are fluent in the languages (Coulmas, 2005:109, 113). A common misconception is that CS occurs because of the speaker’s inability to produce the “correct”

word or phrase and must therefore resort to a different language (Coulmas, 2005:109). This might be an aspect of CS but is certainly not the prime factor. Switching between varieties may be conscious or unconscious but is considered a controllable strategy in which the speakers are consciously able to keep the varieties distinct and apart (Coulmas, 2005:110). This separates CS from language borrowing, since a borrowed element will be seen as an element of the borrowing language (Coulmas, 2005:110). However, it is debated whether CS leads to language borrowing, or to other types of linguistic change such as language shift, where one language takes over from another, or convergence in which two languages slowly coalesce into a common language (Coulmas, 2005:111; Hickey, 2020:181). One of the reasons for the debate is that change is always easier to identify after the fact and every contact-situation is different and complex, however it has been fairly well established that CS does not seem to lead to convergence and should be seen as a symptom of language contact rather than the cause of language change (Hickey, 2020:183). CS does not only appear in casual speech, but also in writing, usually in casual letters or dialogues in fiction writing, but also in areas such as marketing to signal a bilingual identity (Hickey, 2020:182).

2.2.3 The Matrix Language Frame model

There have been made several attempts to discover the grammatical constraints for CS, when and where it switches and can switch and what laws governs its usage. One such attempt is the Matrix Language Frame model developed by Carol Myers-Scotton and here described following the account in Namba (2004:2-3). The model proposes that when intrasentential CS occurs, its distribution is always asymmetrical. The dominant language, usually the persons native or first language, is called the Matrix-language (ML) while the other language is called the Embedded-language (EL). The ML provides the abstract grammatical frames in which the EL is inserted. This model relies heavily on the distinction between content and system morphemes. Content morphemes carry the most meaning in a sentence, and are typically nouns, verbs, adjectives, and some prepositions. System morphemes connects the content morphemes in relation to another and are also known as function words. According to the Matrix Language Frame model, in bilingual CS only content morphemes can come from either language, while system morphemes always come from the ML. This model will prove highly useful in describing the language of *The Julekalender*.

2.2.4 Interview

The interview was carried out over e-mail, and six questions were asked (see Appendix 1). It was clear when the answers came that they referred to the Danish version of the show. However, since the Danish and Norwegian are so closely linked, the answers are still applicable to this thesis. The perhaps most important points to arise from the interview is that the writers intended at first to create a new language, however they quickly saw that it would be too difficult and time consuming. They were inspired by comedians in Denmark and evolved the mix to fit the show. They intended for the *nisser* to have lived far away for a long time, thereby “forgetting” their language, as a way to explain it. In the choice of translation, they were not totally consistent, and usually opted for what they perceived was the funniest translation.

3. Methodology

In order to carry out a detailed study of the language used in *The Julekalender*, four out of the 24 episodes have been transcribed. The sections of the episodes which does not contain the language, about half of the episodes’ total length, have not been transcribed. The four episodes are episode 1, 8, 16 and 24 which have been chosen to be able to follow the dialog throughout the series. Episode 24 is also the longest with the richest material. The transcriptions are made line by line, meaning that every portion of text between two line-breaks, is an utterance spoken by a different actor. Transcribing proved challenging at times, mostly due to difficulties in finding a balance between a morphological transcription that also takes pronunciation into account. The result ended up being a morphological transcription and making personal notes on matters of pronunciation. Along with the study of the transcription itself, an interview has been made with one of the original scriptwriters for the show, in order to gain additional insight into the motives behind the construction of the mixed language.

4. Findings

This section presents the findings from analyzing the transcriptions of the four episodes, namely episode 1, 8, 16 and 24. During the findings the term “translation” is used to refer to

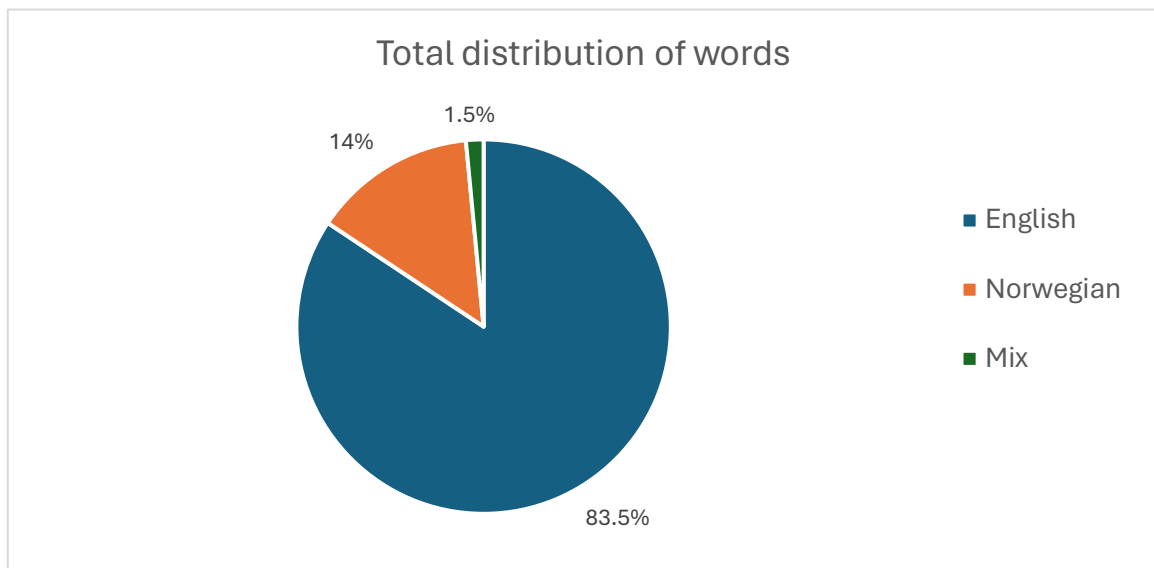
the act of expressing the same meaning in another language. “Direct translation” refers to expressing the meaning of a single word in another language without regard to the surrounding context. One could argue that the term “code-switching” should be used instead. However, code-switching is normally regarded as happening spontaneous in conversation between bilingual speakers, while the series’ language is created and written down before it is performed. It seems therefore natural to refer to language alternating as translating. The findings are organized into five categories: vocabulary, sentence structure and word order, idioms and expressions, pronunciation, and consistency.

4.1 Vocabulary

The following table presents the distribution of words of different languages across the four episodes, both in real numbers and percentages.

Table 1	Episode 1	Episode 8	Episode 16	Episode 24
English words	393 (81%)	242 (84,6%)	194 (91%)	613 (85%)
Norwegian words	80 (16%)	45 (15%)	17 (8%)	102 (14%)
Compound words (English and Norwegian mix)	12 (3%)	1 (0,4%)	3 (1%)	9 (1%)
Total words	485	294	214	724

This leads to the following total distribution in percentages:



The compound words in episode 1 consists of “backsack/backsekk”, “backlomme”, “skulderblades” and “verktøy-case”. Episode 8’s only compound word is “nintyfir”, while episode 16’s distribution consists of three words: “howdan”, “potetfarm” and “undetaljert”. In episode 24 one finds “playdåskøy”, “potetwoman”, “skulderblades” and “skueplayer”.

Across the four episodes there are 11 compound words consisting of both Norwegian and English. Of those, nine are nouns, one is an adjective and one is an interrogative adverb. The adjective “undetaljert” and adverb “howdan” are interesting because they are not actually compound words, since compound words usually consists of two or more nouns, a noun plus another word or two words that come from different word classes (Dypedahl & Hasselgård, 2018:36). They are derivatives, meaning that they have been produced by affixation, which refers to altering a word’s meaning by giving it a prefix or a suffix (Crystal, 2004:370-371). The adjective has had its prefix (u-) translated, with the meaning still preserved, from Norwegian to English (un-). The rest of the word is left as is, creating “undetaljert”. The adverb on the other hand has not been directly translated, as with most of the language variation in the show as will be shown further, but rather the first part of the Norwegian interrogative adverb “hvordan”, which on its own is another interrogative adverb; “hvor”, meaning “where”, is replaced with “how”, the English equivalent to “hvordan”. The meaning of the word has thereby been preserved, however the remaining “-dan” ending has been left behind, creating “howdan”. This could perhaps be referred to as a portmanteau, which is when two or more words or parts of words are combined to create a new word, however there is no new added meaning (“Portmanteau”, n.d.).

Many of the words included are ones shared between English and Norwegian, whether loanwords or reflecting the close relationship of the languages. Examples of loanwords, include “put” (English) - “putte” (Norwegian) and “propeller” (English) - “propell” (Norwegian), the forms used in the dialog is here marked by underscoring. At times it can be difficult to know which language is being used. One such case is seen in example a).

a) I can **fortell** you that – Episode eight, line 12.

It could be the Norwegian verb “å fortelle”, meaning to tell as in giving information or explaining something, but with the final “-e” removed or not pronounced which is something that happens several times and is discussed in the pronunciation section. However, it could also be interpreted as a mix of the Norwegian and English words, Norwegian “for-” added to the English word “tell”, as with the “howdan” example.

4.2 Sentence structure and word order

It is difficult to ascertain which language the syntax is based on, since the two languages share many grammatical structures such as an affinity to subject-verbal order and neither language has grammatical case (Dyppedahl & Hasselgård, 2018:171). One example which points to the word order being Norwegian is the use of the word “skulle”. It is used 13 times across the four episodes and is a modal equivalent to “were supposed to” or “was going to”. If the sentence structure and word order in principle was English, it would be more reasonable to assume that they would have used the English equivalent, perhaps directly translated to Norwegian as in “var meningen å” or “var skulle å”. Instead “skulle” fits very well with a Norwegian word order such as in example b).

b) Was it not you who **skulle** put bensin on the fly? – Episode 1, line 4

*Var det ikke du som **skulle** putte bensin på flyet?* – Norwegian direct translation

*Was it not you who **were supposed to** put gas on the plane?* – English direct translation (DT)

However, the same sentence could point to the basic sentence structure and word order being English. The definitive determiner is kept, and the noun *plane* is translated to Norwegian.

Another example which points to the word order being English is found in line 15 in the same episode.

c) Then **we have** verktøy enough med da. – Episode 1, line 15

Da vi har verktøy nok med da. – Norwegian DT

Then we have tools enough with then. – English DT

Here the Norwegian direct translation becomes ungrammatical, the expected word order being “da har vi”. What is telling is the lack of inversion, which takes place regularly in Norwegian declarative sentences in which the subject is not the first word, and the verb is finite (Dypedahl & Hasselgård, 2018:171). Inversion is when the verbal or an auxiliary, in this case “have”, is moved to a position before the subject, in this case “we”. In the case of the declarative sentences, Norwegian places the subject after the verbal while English normally has it the other way around. Throughout the show, inversion is never used, which points to the basic word order being English. The following example also points to that fact:

d) Oh yes. I have it akkurat here in my backlomme. – Episode 1, line 26

Å ja. Jeg har den akkurat her i min baklomme. – Norwegian DT

Oh yes. I have it right here in my backpocket. – English DT

English usually positions the possessive determiner before the noun to mark ownership. (Dypedahl & Hasselgård, 2018:49). Norwegian would either place the possessive determiner after the noun, or it would drop the possessive entirely.

e) But what dæven **do we do**? – Episode 1, line 16

Men hva dæven gjør vi gjør? – Norwegian DT

But what the devil do we do? – English DT

Example e) showcases the standard English form of do-support in interrogatives. The first “do” is an auxiliary within the verb phrase to express a question, and the second is the main verb of the clause. In Norwegian, however, no auxiliary is used.

All previous examples point to the basic sentence structure and word order being taken from English. However, supposing that the basic word order and sentence structure is English, one would assume the only difference to be a few words, directly and indirectly translated to

Norwegian. Still, even when there are only English words, there are elements of Norwegian peeking through, sometimes affecting the sentence structure. Consider the following examples:

- f) The clock is ten minutes på seven **about few seconds**. – Episode 8, line 15-16
Klokken er ti minutter på syv om få sekunder. – Norwegian DT
The clock is ten minutes on seven about few seconds. – English DT

This sentence appears to be translated directly from Norwegian, as the Norwegian DT is completely correct grammatically as opposed to the English one. “About” is used instead of “in a” which is expected to precede “few” in this instance. It at least seems then that the Norwegian word “om” is directly translated to “about”.

- g) (...) before he finds out and comes **to back**. Episode 24, line 31
(...) før han finner ut og kommer til tilbake. Norwegian DT

In this example, supposing that the structure is English, there is an added “to” which is not necessary. The Norwegian word “tilbake” could be split into “til” (which directly translated becomes “to”) and “bake” which sounds similar to “back”. “To back” then sounds like the Norwegian word “tilbake”, and due to “bake” either being replaced by “back”, or “bake” being pronounced as “back”, the meaning is still intact if one discards “to”. This is an example of Norwegian influencing the sentence structure.

The final example in this section showcases how both English and Norwegian sentence structure blends in a single sentence. Example h) combines the previously mentioned cases of lack of inversion, which points to the structure being English, and the direct translation of the Norwegian word “om” to English, which points to the structure being Norwegian.

- h) **Do you really think** the propell can be finished **about few days?** - Episode 8, line 9
Gjør du virkelig tenker propellen kan være ferdig om få dager? – Norwegian DT
Do you really think the propeller can be finished about few days? – English DT

4.3 Idioms and expressions

Some Norwegian idioms and fixed expressions are produced as they are, while others are translated directly to English. A fixed expression is a combination of words that must be used together to form a specific meaning (Shojaei, 2012:1220). An example is the Norwegian equivalent to the English term “(not) at all”, as seen in the following example:

- i) Ah, that's not funny **i det hele tatt**. – Episode 1, line 16
Ah, det er ikke morsomt i det hele tatt. – Norwegian DT
Ah, that's not funny in the whole taken. – English DT

Some expressions however are completely translated from Norwegian to English, like in the following example:

- j) The kart Günter, **think you a little about**. - Episode 1, line 25
Kartet Günter, tenk deg litt om. - Norwegian DT
The map Günter, think you a little about. - English DT

The meaning of the “tenk deg litt om” expression is to tell someone that they should understand something, in a context where something is obvious.

Some expressions are partly translated, as seen in the previous section in example f) with “The clock is ten minutes på seven”, which directly translated is the Norwegian way of expressing time. The English expression would be “The clock is ten to seven”.

4.4 Pronunciation

Within the scope of this thesis, it is not possible to perform a comprehensive phonetic study. However, there are a few interesting moments which should be mentioned. One example is the Norwegian word “skulle”, which was also looked at in example b). This word is not translated to English; however, it is pronounced as “skul” or phonetically; /skul/. The Norwegian standard pronunciation would be /'skulə/. There is no rule in standard Norwegian which causes words ending in -lle, -le or -e to be pronounced without the -e. English words ending in -lle are usually French loanwords, and the -e at the end is not articulated, a very common phenomenon in French concerning vowels at the end of words (Gizi, I. A. A,

2023:19). Words such as “Vaudeville” and “Gazelle” are examples of this, which could be the reason why “skulle” gets the same treatment as English words with the same ending.

However, this could also be an instance in which the dialect of the actors and the area in which the series is set influences the writing. One of the common traits of the trøndersk-dialect is apocope, which is when the final vowel at the end of a word is omitted (“Apocope”, n.d; Størdal, 2022:15). In the case of trøndersk this happens especially with the infinitive form of verbs. This means that in trøndersk, “skulle” would be pronounced /'skʊl/. Important to note however is that the first instance of “skulle” in the dialog is spoken by the actor from the south-east, whose native dialect does not have apocope. If it is the case that English pronunciation standards is the influencing factor, then this seems to be rather the exception than the rule. Most words in Norwegian are pronounced in Norwegian, or with a slight English accent, or in the native regional dialect of the actor.

4.5 Consistency

An important question to ask is how consistent the writers have been with what words are used in what language. Through examining the transcription alone, there seems to be only a few instances of a word being used in both respective languages that express the same meaning in their contexts. One example is in example k) where the word “enough” and “nok” is used right after another by two different speakers.

- k) Do you think one full dunk is **enough**? **It's nok**. – Episode 8, line 35-36
Gjøre du tror en full dunk er nok? Det er nok. – Norwegian DT
Do you think one full can is enough? It's enough. – English DT

The only real difference is that “enough” is being used within an interrogative, while “nok” is used within a declarative sentence. However, this is not consistently the case as seen in example c), where “enough” is used in a declarative. Another example is the word “om” which is used in its Norwegian form (Episode 8, line 9) and the English form “about”, which has been shown in examples f) and g).

Another matter of consistency concerns at what times words are used in the different languages. There are too many different perspectives that could be considered here; therefore, one was chosen based on an apparent pattern when analyzing the transcription. It concerns the

use of the definitive determiner with only the noun translated. Table 2 shows the frequency of the three different types of instances found.

Table 2	Episode 1	Episode 8	Episode 16	Episode 24
Total instances of “The + noun”	18	10	5	14
“The + Norwegian noun”	8	7	2	4
“The + Mixed Norwegian/English noun”	3	0	1	4
“The + English noun”	7	3	2	6

There is consistency in that there are always more Norwegian and Norwegian/English words combined after a definitive determiner than English, even though the large majority of total words are English.

The final matter of consistency that will be considered are direct translations. It appears throughout the transcripts, as is reflected in the examples, that there are no examples of direct translation from English to Norwegian. There are however many examples of direct translation from Norwegian to English (examples f, h and j).

5. Discussion

There is no doubt that the language which this thesis has analyzed is fictional, artificially created with an overarching purpose of humor, as shown in the introduction and interview. Even so, the fact remains that the language is quite functional in terms of communication, and it is therefore worth asking what real-life communication phenomena does the series’ language resemble the most? In the theory section, three main language phenomena were presented, namely mixed languages, pidgins and creoles, and code-switching. These will in turn be looked at in relation to the findings to determine in what ways the studied language may resemble and/or deviate from them. During this discussion, one must consider two levels, namely the language as artificially made, but also as a real-life spoken language within the premise of the series.

In what ways does the language in the series resemble or deviate from mixed languages? Mixed languages are those which defy classification within the “language-tree” model, due to their interrupted transmission, which may well be said is the case with the series’ language. As it is artificially created, it has definitely had its transmission interrupted. Also, if one follows the premise of the series, which is that the *nisser* has been driven from their homeland to a land far away, which could be the cause of their “unnatural” language, this could also be seen as an interrupted transmission.

Another important facet to mixed languages is that they preserve different sets of linguistic levels which are then mixed with one another with little to no intermixing between the levels. A mixed language may trace its grammar from one language, and its vocabulary from another, or nouns from one and verbs from another. The findings reveal that there are a lot of factors which points to the grammar being taken from English. There are no instances of inversion (example b, c, d, h), there is do-support in interrogatives (example e, k), and possessive determiners are positioned before the noun to mark ownership (example d). However, as shown, there are elements of Norwegian even when all the words are English, which creates an irregular syntax (example g). Since Norwegian and English sentence structure are quite similar, it is not always easy to distinguish what elements are from either language, but it seems that most of the grammar is English with elements of Norwegian, usually when translating words directly from Norwegian to English, or parts of a word as shown in example g). Looking at linguistic levels other than grammar, there appears to be no level that is consistently made up of only one language. Because of this, the series’ language cannot be said to belong to the category of mixed language.

However, there are also the examples of pidgins and creoles. Their categorization within mixed languages is debated, therefore they will be considered outside of them. When the language is viewed within the premise of the series, it makes sense that it could be seen as a pidgin. It seems to be the result of a need for contact where the groups stay socially distant, as the *nisser* is depicted as a people who prefer to stay hidden. However, pidgins usually stick to the grammar of the first language though simplified, which in this case would be Norwegian, yet the series’ grammar seems to be predominantly English. Also, pidgins usually adopt some but not all of the lexicon from another language, and as seen, 84% of the words are English.

Creoles on the other hand are distinguished in that their grammar has been fleshed out to the point where it cannot be fully tied to either of the languages it has developed from. This seems to fit much better with what has been found in the analysis. The grammar is mostly

English, yet with elements of Norwegian influencing it. This makes it neither one nor the other. Also, a creole is the native speaker of many, unlike a pidgin, and there are several elements which point to the language in the series being the *nisser's* native language. For one, there is a recurring joke throughout the series which happens when they are trying to read from a Norwegian book, which the *nisse* who is appointed to read cannot understand. Also, in the last episode, the old *nisse* “Good Old Gammel Nok”, says that he learned to speak English from himself, and the three *nisser* responds sarcastically to the camera that they can hear that (Episode 24, line 95-100). They are effectively mocking him for saying something incorrectly, meaning that they know how to speak properly. It also seems to indicate that they can hear that he has learned it himself, as opposed to have learned it from childhood. It is therefore safe to assume that the series’ language is the *nisser's* first language. The main argument for the language not to fall into the category of a creole when seen within the premise of the series is that creoles, like pidgins, usually keep most of the words from the original language, in this case Norwegian. All in all, it seems that a creole is the most fitting category yet for the language seen within the premise of the series.

Could the series language best be classified as code-switching? Code switching is when words or phrases from one language is incorporated into another language, either within or between sentences. There are clear elements of this happening in the series’ language, with single words, which happens regularly, and even whole phrases and fixed expressions (example i). However, there are a few problems with this. According to the Matrix Language Frame model (MLF-model), there must be a distinguishable Matrix language, usually the first language, and an Embedded-language, as in the inserted language. In the language of the series, there are direct translations and elements from both grammars. There are even words which are not compound words, but that are split with one part translated whilst the other is not such as with “howdan” and possibly example a). However, as established it appears that the more heavily influencing grammar is English. This could signify that in the case of the series’ language, English is the Matrix-language and Norwegian is the Embedded-language.

To test this hypothesis, the MLF-model suggests that in bilingual code-switching, only content words will be code-switched. When analyzing the transcripts it appears that there are very few instances of Norwegian function words being inserted, which would support the theory. Take the sentence in example c): “Then we have verktøy enough med da.”. “Verktøy” is a noun, and “da” is an adverb, which are both content words. “Med” in this case is a preposition, which can at times be considered content words, though it could also be seen as

an anomaly (Namba, 2004:2). However, there are also instances in which there are Norwegian function words, such as in example i) with “i det hele tatt”. Still, as previously seen, this can be regarded as a fixed expression, and should therefore be seen as a single entity, which can be inserted as a whole. Even if there are some instances of Norwegian function words being inserted, it should be pointed out that the MLF-model is mainly a tool for analysis, and that there are real world examples of bilingual CS where both function words and content words are switched (Coulmas, 2005:117). This means that even if there are Norwegian function words in the series’ language, it can and should still be referred to as code-switching.

However, the fact that there are instances of “double translation”, in this instance the action of taking a word from the Embedded-language and translating it into the Matrix-language, could speak against this. This is seen through the examples of direct translation. This could be solved by stating that there are instances of both code-switching and translation happening.

This would make sense as the speakers’ (actors) native language is not the Matrix-language of the CS. This is especially highlighted through the examples in the pronunciation section of the actors’ native Norwegian dialect influencing their English-production.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has presented and analyzed the spoken mixed language, commonly known as “Norwenglish”, found in the Norwegian Christmas television show *The Julekalender* (1994). With the goal of determining what real-life language phenomenon the language resemble the most, the following main points has been revealed through the analysis:

- 1) There is only direct translation from Norwegian to English, not the other way around.
- 2) The vocabulary and grammar are mainly based on English, with Norwegian-to-English direct translations altering that.
- 3) The language contains elements of both code-switching (inserting Norwegian words into an English frame), and translation (inserting directly translated Norwegian-to-English words into an English frame).
- 4) There are many instances of irregular translations, such as when only parts of a word are translated, but with the meaning still intact, reflecting the close relationship of the two languages.

Overall, the series' language should be considered from two different perspectives: 1) as an artificial language performed by actors and 2) within the premise of the series as a real-world language. At the first level, it seems that the most fitting category for the language would be as English-Norwegian code-switching. It happens between bilinguals who understand both languages, with English as the main language with several Norwegian content words and fixed expressions inserted. At the second level, code-switching can be discarded, as code-switching is done by bilingual speakers who know both languages and can distinguish between them (Hickey, 2020:181). The series clearly points to the fact that the *nisser's* language is their native language, and most of them cannot understand Norwegian. The language in this case appears to resemble a creole, which has undergone a grammatical change to the point where it cannot be tied fully to either Norwegian or English. It seems that it has come about from language contact between socially distant groups, and it is also seen as the native language of the speakers.

This analysis is necessarily a limited one. Further analysis should be done to discover exactly what this type of language does, its effect upon the listener and what its underlying implications are about the theory of language and language acquisition.

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Appendix 1

Interview

1. Where did the idea for the language of the nisser come from originally?

In the first place we tried to create a whole new language. But I think we had to study linguistic matters for several years to do that or ask Mark Okrand to do it.

In Denmark some other comedians had made monologues with a mix of Danish and English. We evolved it to be a language for a whole story.

2. Was the language in any way based on some real-life language use, or did you intend for it to be?

*Not answered

3. What was the intention behind the choice of language?

The “nisser” had been away from Denmark so long time, that they have forgotten to speak Danish. Or maybe they grew up somewhere else.

4. In the show, the nisser is said to live «at the end of the world», which from the map-scene seems to be around North-America, was this intentional to provide a reason for their hybrid-language?

It was an intention to make a long questionable flight, and it came out to start in Canada.

5. Was it difficult to stay consistent with which words were translated or not?

There were more ways to make “Denglish”. Viggo and I speak dialect of West Jylland, and a lot of grammar and words are similar to English. Other ways was to make a Danish word sound English.

I don't think, we were consistent the whole way through the script, about keeping strict to have only one way of translation of a word. The funniest way of translation a word was the most important.

6. Who influenced how you wrote the language? Did the actors participate in the creation or was it just the scriptwriters?

The three writers and actors were the same three.

Appendix 2

Episode 1

- 1 Au, hysj, shit, au. Was it not you who skulle put bensin on the fly? Look at what
2 happened to the propell when we nødland, it's completely bøyd.
3 Yes veldig much too.
4 Was it not you who skulle put bensin on the fly?
5 No it's not me.
6 Was it you da?
7 No I skulle pack the backsack and the verktøycase.
8 What skulle you do da?
9 I skulle take the verktøycase.
10 No I skulle take the verktøycase.
11 I skulle take the verktøycase.
12 No I skulle take the verktøycase.
13 I skulle take the verktøycase.
14 No I skulle take the verktøycase.
15 Then we have verktøy enough med da.
16 Ah, thats not funny i det hele tatt. But what dæven do we do? Where are we now?
17 We could kikk in the book.
18 Oh, just what i skulle til to say.
19 Shit, it's in norsk!
20 Ah, let me.
21 Now let's see one gang.
22 What stands there?
23 It says, when you've gone vill, then kikk on the kart. Where is the kart?
24 What kart?
25 The kart Günter, think you a little about.
26 Oh yes. I have it akkurat here in my backlomme.
27 Ah ah.
28 Now let's see. We are there.
29 But where is the hul then?
30 There. I think we shall that way.
31 Au, I think its feig that it's always me who shall bear the backsack, it hurts in my
32 skulderblades.
33 There's so much pjatt with you Hansi, take you together.
34 But why is it always me..
35 Because you are the one with the ugliest klær and the longest face Hansi,
36 therefore.
37 Oh, its hard to be a nissemann.
- 38 Ah, where in huleste is that hul. It skulle be here around. Ah, the kart. Lets see.
39 Oh, what stands there? I can't understand the setnings.

40 It stands: When the clock is five the skygge from this tree falls on the lem. Altså,
41 the hul-lem.
42 What tree?
43 That tree.
44 Oh, thats heldig. The clock is five about few seconds.
45 Lets skynd oss and put some lys on the tree then.
46 Where is the skygge?
47 It's on the other side so clear.
48 Oh yes.
49 Hey, it's here! The lem!
50 Who's lem?
51 The hul-lem.
52 Hey, come hereover with the parafin-lamp.
53 Well, who has the key?
54 What key?
55 The hul-key Günter, think you a little about.
56 Oh yes, I have it here. I have it here.
57 Ja men then, put it in the keyhole Günter.
58 Yes Fritz, yes.
59 Yes, yes yes.
60 Propell.
61 Thank you.
62 We must snart be there.
63 Look at all that spindellev.
64 It's over the whole.
65 Yes. Au my back.
66 Ah, there's a stol.
67 That must I say.
68 Hansi.
69 It's a nåså.
70 Günter, the parafin lamp.
71 Oh oh, I could give him some bank.
72 Günter, the parafin lamp.
73 Yes Fritz. Yes Fritz.
74 Well, it has been a long day so lets take it with ro. Then we'll find the key
75 tomorrow.
76 It's hard to be a nissemann.
77 So much pjatt with you Hansi.

Episode 8:

1 Stop that dunn dunn.
2 Hansi.
3 Stop that dunn dunn.
4 Hansi.

5 Stop that dunn dunn.
 6 Hansi.
 7 A ha.
 8 Hey Günter. How is spikking today?
 9 Ah, it goes overrasking good. I think I can be finished om a few days now.
 10 Oh good.
 11 What day is it anyway today?
 12 I can fortell you that. It's nøyaktig torsdag.
 13 Yes but I mean the dato Günter.
 14 Oh yes. It's åttende desember, nineteen hundred and ninetyfir. The clock is ten
 16 minutes på seven, about few seconds. It's halfmoon tomorrow, and the
 17 sunoppgang was..
 18 Yes yes yes yes yes. How's your spikking? Do you really think the propell can be
 19 finished about few days?
 20 Yes.
 21 Oh thats very good. Then we can go home in few days.
 22 Uuh. And then shall we bare husk at there is no bensin on the fly. We have to
 23 skaff some bensin.
 24 Yes. But how dæven do we do that?
 25 We could kikk in the book!
 26 Uh, just what I skulle til to say. You do that Günter.
 27 Yes Fritz.
 28 Shit, it's på norsk.
 29 Ah Günter. Let me.
 30 Now let's see. Skaff bensin. Skateboard. Skalldyrsalat. Skapdranker. Skaff
 31 bensin, here it is.
 32 What stands there? Read up!
 33 Well, it stands that if you have to skaff bensin, then take a dunk and go out and
 34 look for it. Quite enkelt. You do that Hansi.

 35 Hey Hansi. Do you think one full dunk is enough?
 36 It's nok. It's a very økonomisk fly. It kan fly minst ten thousand kilometers on
 37 one dunk.
 38 Oh, that's energibesparing.
 39 Here, take the kart so that you can find back to the hul again.
 40 Shit.
 41 Why is it always me who shall do the whole?
 42 Because you are the one with the ugliest klær and the longest face Hansi. All that
 43 work.

Episode 16.

1 Hey Günter. How-dan goes it with the sp..?
 2 Shush, I'm thinking.
 3 How-dan goes it with the spikking Günter?

4 I can't husk to spikk without the book.
 5 Yes but we don't have the book.
 6 Shush, I'm thinking.
 7 But, why don't you spikk it after the little propell then?
 8 Because you say it is too little.
 9 Yes, but spikk it five times bigger then, think you a little about.
 10 Shush, I'm thinking.
 11 See? One, two, three, four, five..
 12 Ah! I'm finished thinking. Hansi, Günter, kom hitover. I have a plan. Now Hansi,
 13 Günter, listen good after. Tomorrow night, we go up to the potetfarm and steal
 14 the book to back.
 15 Oh, that was a good plan Fritz.
 16 Yes.
 17 Isn't that a little bit undetaljert?
 18 You think kanskje you could do it better?
 19 No no no no no.
 20 Well, we have a plan. Lets feire it. Günter, you take the guitar. Hansi, you take the
 21 (unintelligible). Then I shall dæven døtte meg play that ståbass. Günter, are you
 22 ready?
 23 Yes.
 24 Hansi? Are you ready?
 25 Yes.
 26 Good. One, two, three, four.

 27 Oh I like that song. What was the name of it?
 28 Mannen was out after øl.
 29 Oh thats good. Maybe we can use that in another episode?
 30 Yeah.
 31 Yes I think so. Ok, lets take this one.

Episode 24.

1 Yes altså, my original name is Ronny ikke sant? But I thought it was a little too
 2 bob bob bob ikke sant? So now it's Benny ikke sant? Jensen ikke sant? My
 3 business name ikke sant?
 4 We don't care what your name is. A nåså is a nåså.
 5 Shush Günter. He has a gevær.
 6 Shut up you amatørnisse and get me a beer.
 7 That will I not.
 8 You do that Hansi.
 9 Why is it always me who shall..
 10 Because he has a gevær.
 11 I will not.
 12 I'll do that. I'll do that. Don't shoot. Don't shoot.
 13 Oh dæven how ugly you are.

14 Okay, that's it!
15 Are you not riktig klok Hansi? Will you have us all slått ihjel?
16 Åh, that was a good vending Fritz. Maybe we can use that in another episode?
17 No we cannot.
18 Now who should I shoot first?
19 Not me, not me, not me!
20 Take me!
21 No, I'll take you.
22 No! No no!
23 Ah din pyse! Den var ikke ladd engang. Amatørnisser! Piss meg i øret!
24 He took the book. Let's straks fang him and give him some bank.
25 Slapp off Günter.
26 But he took the book.
27 No he didn't. It was the wrong book. The righty book is over there on the spikking
28 place.
29 What was it then for a book he took?
30 One of the books on the table.
31 Let's get out of here in a fart, before he finds out and comes to back.
32 Ah shit.

33 Hello good old gammel nok. Here we are to back with the key.
34 I visst we could do it.
35 How are you good old gammel nok?
36 Gammel nok? Nok?!
37 We came for sent. He's dead.
38 No no, quick, the key!
39 What key? The hul-key?
40 No the playdås-key Günter. Think you a little about.
41 Quick, the key!
42 But I don't have it. You gave Hansi the ansvar for it.
43 Oh yes, Hansi!
44 Oh yes.
45 Let me take it over your hals Hansi.
46 I have it, I have the key!
47 Ja men then put it in the keyhole Günter.
48 Ah, let me. What? That's your skyld Günter.
49 Why that?
50 If you had husked to put bensin on the fly in the first place we would have to back
51 for long since.
52 But it wasn't me who skulle put bensin on the fly.
53 Was it you da?
54 No it wasn't.
55 And your father was a famous spikker? It took you a whole julekalender to spikk
56 one lousy propell.
57 But my father was a good spikker.
58 And you and your potetwoman.
59 Don't bring the potetwoman into this. What have you maybe done? Sitting on

60 your ræv the whole julekalender drinking øl, Hansi do this, Hansi do that.
61 If it hadn't been for me, we would all have been slått ihjel by the nåså.
62 Oh yes? That's not the way I husk it.
63 Listen.
64 And you and your evinelige back trouble. Why is it always me who shall bear the
65 back-sack.
66 Listen here now! It was you who skulle put bensin on the fly!
67 Listen! Listen!

68 Dette var bærre lekkert.
69 Yes that was that.
70 Yes, quite enkelt.
71 Is the julekalender finish?
72 Yes you can slapp off now Günter.
73 Oh, that's only lekkert.
74 This is the last julekalender were i'm bearing around on the back-sack. It hurts in
75 my skulderblades.
76 Yes yes yes Hansi. Do you husk in episode nine, when you said: This is a rotten
77 episode to be within.
78 Yes, that was also a rotten episode.
79 Yes yes maybe it was rotten, but it was a very good vending. Maybe we could use
80 that in another julekalender?
81 When shall I say my replikker?
82 What replikker?
83 The replikker in my manuskript.
84 That's for sent nå.
85 The julekalender is finish.
86 What?
87 Yes, and do you husk Günter when you said: he is a very busy business-nisse.
88 When did I say that?
89 Let's see, it was in episode six.
90 I forlang to say my replikker.
91 Yes yes yes. But here is the best one. Is it so that you eventuelt have just a little
92 bit overlook over when it muligens could be finished Günter. Oh that's a good
93 vending.
94 I am not come here to lay down in a bed in twentyfour episodes. I forlang to say
95 noe. I'm a famous skueplayer.
96 Skueplayer?
97 Yes.
98 Where did you learn to speak engelsk?
99 I learned it from myself.
100 Yes, that can we listen.