

# Language Choice as Contextualisation Cue in a Sámi Kindergarten in Norway

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## Abstract

Language choice indicate - or create - different contexts in a Sámi kindergarten. Three interactions from the daily routine of the Sámi kindergarten illustrate contextualisation and language variation: 1) Teacher-child interaction in the main room after breakfast, where monolingual conversation between bilinguals creates the meso-context “Sámi kindergarten.” 2) Outsider/researcher-child-teacher interaction in the main room, bringing the larger community, a macro-context, into the kindergarten. 3) Child-child interaction, a micro-context, during unsupervised roleplay is a space where language alternation signals the context play. This research is within the field of interactional sociolinguistics and micro sociolinguistics. John J. Gumperz developed the notion of contextualisation cue as any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signalling of contextual presuppositions. Signalling and the decoding of it, draws on the participants’ socio-cultural knowledge.

**Keywords:** contextualization cues; bilingual roleplay; North Sámi; Sámi kindergarten; trans-languaging

## Introduction

Colonial forces and understandings of one state – one language – one identity-ideology suppressed minority languages all over the world. Many into subtractive bilingualism, language loss and marginalisation. *Norwegianisation* is the name of the assimilation process of Norway, which marginalised the Sámi people and languages. Institutions like kindergartens are now essential for preservation of indigenous languages. The Sámi kindergartens can also be described within a one nation – one language – one identity-ideology, this time indigenous (Storjord 2008, Kleemann 2015). In a language sustainability perspective, the Sámi kindergarten can be described as a politically and ideologically created breathing space (Cenoz & Gorter 2017) for an endangered language. A space where languages are bounded, autonomous codes and important to preserve in a minoritised indigenous con-

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text. However, children and adults in kindergarten use their bilingual and cultural funds of knowledge resources to navigate ideologies of language separation in language alternation to serve their communicative intentions (Storjord 2018, Kleemann 2015). These practices could be described as *codeswitching* (Myers-Scotton 1993, Auer 1992) when named languages are treated as bounded entities in a monolingual perspective (Alvarez-Cáccamo 1998, Piätikäinen, Kelly-Holmes, Jaffe & Coupland 2016), or translanguaging with a bilingual perspective (Garcia & Li Wei 2014, Li 2017).

The research question in this study is how language choice indicate - or create - different contexts in a Sámi kindergarten. Treating named language as a code may not be meaningful in all bilingual contexts, however, together with other cues, language alternation could create a meaningful context in interactions between bilinguals, perhaps a new code. This research is within the field of interactional sociolinguistics and micro sociolinguistics. John J. Gumperz developed the notion of contextualisation cue as features of linguistic form signaling contextual presuppositions. Signaling and the decoding of it, draws on the participants' socio-cultural knowledge. (Gumperz 1982, 1992; Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz 2011)

## Contexts for North Sámi and Norwegian

There are nine Sámi languages, of which North Sámi is by far the largest and the only considered regional (Ethnologue), with perhaps 30 000 speakers<sup>2</sup>, the other eight are either near extinct or endangered (Ethnologue). The Sámi homeland and cultural region, *Sàpmi*, is divided by modern borders between Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. *Dávvisámegiella*, North Sámi, is the majority language within a Sámi minority exposed to the cultural modern nation building processes of the various countries. In Norway this process is called 'fornorskning', which could translate to *Norwegianisation*. This has led to all Sámi speakers being bilingual in their Sámi language and Norwegian, or monolingual Norwegian (Todal 1998). Norwegian is the language of the community outside the kindergarten, and the language of most media and other input. To correct this situation, several measures are taken with a goal to *reverse language shift* (Fishman 1991), among them, creating institutions like indigenous kindergartens to strengthen Sámi language and culture (Todal 1998, Kunnskapsdepartementet 2017, Storjord 2008).

The meso-context for this study is the daily life of the kindergarten. North Sámi is the working language, and the ideology of one nation-one language is also salient in minority language policy (Piätikäinen & al. 2016, Makoni & Pennycook 2006), and pedagogical ideologies for teaching Sámi (Todal 1998, Sarivaara & Keskitalo 2019, Storjord 2008). Practices in institutions for minoritised and endangered languages are preoccupied with protecting

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2 Counting language users in Sámi has numerous difficulties and complexities due to historical, political and ideological frameworks, as well as practical problems with counting practices per se, particularly for the Sámi languages due to national language categorisation practices, but also lack of research on both number and competences of Sámi language users.

the individual languages, they are part of conservationist discourses, and are ambivalent or negative towards language mixing (Blommaert, Leppänen & Spotti 2012, Li 2017: 14). The kindergarten policy provides a breathing space for the minority language, a space where it has high status and is the default choice for communication. (Cenoz & Gorter 2017)

The micro contexts are the personal meetings. A Sámi kindergarten is always a multilingual kindergarten, where language users are bilingual, and are socialised into and aware of the socio-political and ideological identities of the named languages North Sámi and Norwegian (Storjord 2018; Kleemann 2015). In bilingual interactions, the entirety of the language user's linguistic repertoire can be used. (Garcia & Li 2014)

To answer the research question and explore how language choice can be understood as contextualisation cue in this indigenous kindergarten, I use three examples (Table 2, 3 and 4) based on observations from fieldwork in a Sámi kindergarten. There is little research on the bilingual practices in North Sámi and Norwegian, even though it must have century-long roots in a multilingual area like the county Finnmark in Norway (Kleemann 2013, 2015). One aim for my research is to show bilingual practices as pragmatic choices made by competent language users who have the ability to exploit all of their linguistic resources to express their communicative intentions.

## Theoretical Framework

Within research on bilingualism codeswitching more or less implicitly has been defined as the juxtaposition of elements from two different languages (Auer 1984, 1998; Myers-Scotton 1993), indicating that any named language is viewed as a code. This can be viewed as a monolingual perspective on bilingualism (Alvarez-Cáccamo 1998; Gafaranga 2007), where codeswitching and language alternation are coinciding terms. In this study I use a *bilingual perspective* on code and codeswitching, inspired by Alvarez-Cáccamo (1998), Gafaranga (2007) and Li (2011, 2017). Within this view, *codeswitching* and *language alternation* are different phenomena. The *communicative intention* (Alvarez-Cáccamo 1998) is the code, while language choice could be one of several *contextualization cues* (Gumperz 1982, 1992) that form a cluster to manifest the intention.

### Contextualisation cues

Within interactional and micro sociolinguistics, John J. Gumperz developed the notion of *contextualization cue*, described by him as *any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signaling of contextual presuppositions* (1982, 131). These signals or cues can be surface features, like intonation or gestures, *framing* (Goffman 1974; Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz 2011) how an interaction or an activity within the interaction is to be understood. All language speakers have presuppositions, prior knowledge, of how to understand certain sig-

nals in certain contexts. However, contextualisation cues do not contain meaning in themselves; they are not referential in that they refer to something outside the conversation. They do not have decontextualised meaning like lexical items, but instead are signals used by speakers to enact a context for the interpretation of a particular utterance (Auer 1992, 25). Depending on context and language perspective, named languages can be paralinguistic signals. With a language-ideological context recognising named languages as a pure entity, any change of language will change the situation because the languages belongs to different domains, *diglossia* (Fishman 1991). Within a bilingual view of languages, meaning-making systems can transcend named language systems and structures (Li 2017).

Both understanding and use of contextualisation cues depends on the context. How to use which cues where, when and with whom, and how to interpret the cues used depends on participants' socio-cultural understanding. This is the process of inferencing, or reading meaning into cues. Cues may have different meanings in different contexts and be used together in different ways. In this case study, instead of focusing on language choice itself as a carrier of meaning in a contrastive sense, language and code in bilingual communication were divided to explore how language alternation can interact with other linguistic signals. This analytical orientation moves away from the role contrastive analysis has had in simply naming language choices and instead redirects attention toward a broader selection for pragmatic variables (Meeuwis and Blommaert 1998). Thus, bringing together the linguistic and pragmatic research perspectives on codeswitching leads to challenging the code view of named languages (Alvarez-Cáccamo 1998; Gafaranga 2007; Jakobson 1979; Li 2017).

## Translanguaging and Translanguaging Space

Translanguaging is a concept or term that has evolved and is evolving both within educational use and within the study of spontaneous speech. In-depth discussions and a history of its use can be found in e.g. García & Li (2014) and Li (2017) and critique of the term in e.g. Treffers-Daller 2025. Translanguaging takes up postcolonial perspectives on language (Canagarajah 2017; Makoni & Pennycook 2006; Pennycook 2010) and local practice as a third space (Bhabha 2004). Named languages, together with other contextualisation cues, create social spaces. Language alternation creates a context only insiders know:

[Translanguaging] includes the full range of linguistic performances of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures, the alternation between systems, the transmission of information and the representation of values, identities and relationships. (Li 2011, 1223)

This article explores how utilising linguistic resources on a micro level creates a context for ethnicity not *controlled* by macro or meso level policies for language use, but *exploiting* the multilinguals' own awareness of the sociocultural and political entities of named languages

(Li 2017) and transforming this into their own space (Li 2011). An important and autonomous space in children's lives is roleplay.

## Play and Roleplay as Context

Play and roleplay are special forms of interaction in the context of children's own culture (Corsaro 2011; Sutton-Smith 1997; Øksnes 2010). Knowledge of pragmatics, style, and unique linguistic codes are used and exploited within children's entire register of play. Corsaro expresses it like this: *[The children] relied heavily on implicit paralinguistic cues like voice, stress, and pitch to establish shared understanding and to extend the play in new directions* (1997, xi). Roleplay in a bilingual environment, provides more linguistic resources to use as contextualisation cues. Contextualisation cues often co-occur, or form a cluster of cues, to facilitate the process of inferencing or decoding (Auer 1992, 29). Every single contextualisation cue may not have independent meaning, but convey meaning as part of a redundancy of signals that the participants in a conversation can use to interpret in what context the message is to be understood (Auer 1992, 30).

During roleplay, there are clusters of cues that separate different utterance types from each other, and with that, different levels of reality. Mastering communication and metacommunication (Bateson [1955] 1976, [1956] 1982) is central to play, and in bilingual roleplay language choice is part of organising the play activities and context. In this article, roleplay utterances have been divided into four categories (Guss 2000, 2011; Høigård 2019; Kleemann 2015; Sutton-Smith 1997):

- A. *Role utterances* are used when children are performing direct speech in playing their roles. The cluster of cues connected to these can be called 'play-voice' and consist of a raised vocal pitch in addition to the use of present tense verbs and, in Norway, a representation of standard spoken South East Norwegian, the dialect of the capital area.
- B. *Directory utterances* are utterances about the role and the context of the roleplay. The children decide who plays which roles, what they will do or say, or they describe or explain time, place and environment—the entire context of the roleplay. Typically, these utterances are made in a local language variety or dialect, and the verbs are past tense, often preterite, or composite forms of future tenses with preterite.
- C. *Magical utterances* have an in-between position; they are clearly a part of the acting, but are context-descriptive. They are used when players verbalise what is being done or happening while it happens. For example, saying 'walk, walk' when the figure they are playing with is moving. The magic of these utterances is that the word creates what it denotes; action comes into being by naming it: the magic nature of play (Bateson [1956] 1982). Magical utterances are typically present infinitive, setting them apart from directory utterances.

- D. *Outside-of-play-utterances* are about play as a physical reality or about physical elements in the real world treated or negotiated as such. Players signal that they are outside of their play-character and the play-sphere by using the local language variety with the present tense. It is everyday language used to influence or negotiate play.

## Method

This research focuses on how bilingual children use their languages in their everyday lives. One such bilingual arena is the Sámi kindergarten, where Norwegian and North Sámi is used as in-group practice. To answer the research question, how they use their languages to indicate different contexts, I apply the linguistic notions *contextualisation cues*, *code-switching* and *translanguaging* to explore what meaning-making alternation between named languages could have in three recorded interactions.

## Data and Participants

This study is a qualitative analysis of three interactions, all excerpts from a larger data set collected by the author for the phd-project on bilingual roleplay in a Sámi kindergarten (Kleemann 2015). Fieldwork was conducted during two months on a daily basis. The aim was to record spontaneous and free play in the morning, from the children came to kindergarten around eight in the morning until it was time for circle time first, and then to go outside to play around ten o'clock in the morning. This time of day was chosen based on information from the leader and teachers of the kindergarten. The data set is 39 recordings selected from the raw material, varying in length between 32 seconds and 36:50 minutes, a total of 7:51:34 hours, in addition to hand written field notes. The recordings were transferred to Windows Media Player, and transcribed using EXMARALDA, a freeware for linguistic transcriptions developed at the University of Hamburg (exmaralda.org). Recording was done with a videocamera on a tripod, which was moved around the facility with the researcher and/or the children. The interactions chosen for this article, were recorded and observed in the main room of the department during the daily routine. The first excerpt (Table 2) focuses on teacher-child interaction in the main room after breakfast, with Isak, 4 years and 7 months old, and the teacher Elle Márjá. The second (Table 3) is an utterance from Risten, 3 years and 4 months old. Participating in the interaction, although not speaking, is the researcher and Elle Márjá. The third interaction (Table 4) is an excerpt from a child-child interaction during free play, towards the end of a longer play sequences between two four-year-olds, Anna and Piera.

The Sámi kindergarten had two Sámi-only departments and one bilingual. The recordings were made in the Sámi-only department with 16 children aged between three and six years old. The staff at the time of my fieldwork, was one ECEC teacher with a 3-year bach-

elor degree to work with children 0-5 years old, one member of staff with a vocational degree to work with children in general, and one with a bachelor degree with psychology, pedagogy and sociology. Elle Márjá, who has a vocational degree, is present in Table 2 and 3. While the staff spoke both Sámi and Norwegian at indigenous levels, some still viewed themselves as monolingual Sámi speakers fluent in Norwegian as well. Language used in the kindergarten by both children and adults included different North Sámi dialects. It is difficult, therefore, to create a precise picture of linguistic input in this environment, which must be taken into account when studying the children's bilingual language use at both grammatical and interactional levels, and making inferences on language proficiency.

Conversation Analysis and Method of Analysis

The interactional branch of sociolinguistics is inspired by Conversation Analysis (CA) (Auer 1984; Li 1998; Gafaranga 2007). CA is a systematic way of describing turntaking and sequencing conversation, and with that understanding the meaning of any utterance in a conversation in light of the next utterance and thus the local meaning-making (Wooffitt 2005, 29) rather than ethnographic information on macro structure. Transcribing children at play is challenging. The head teacher of the Sámi kindergarten assisted as transcriber, both with regards to the transcriptions of Sámi and Norwegian, and discussions around how to understand what was happening. When transcribing, a focus on readability and pragmatic choices was taken, diverting from the more exact system developed by Gail Jefferson (Wooffitt 2005, 11). In each case respelling, consistency and the use of more exact phonetic signs in relation to readability were considered (Jaffe 2006), using approximate standard Norwegian and North Sámi orthography whenever speech did not deviate but choosing some dialectal traits where they carried meaning in the context.

TABLE 1 EXPLANATION OF TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

SYMBOL	MEANING
text	Utterance in North Sámi
<b>text</b>	<b>Utterance in Norwegian</b>
[text]	Meta comment
^	Raised pitch, indicating role-utterance
(.) (7.4)	Short pause, longer pause in seconds
(text)	Inaudible elements, transcriber guessing
/	Abrupt stop
No. 1	Numbers in first column indicate turn-number in the conversation sequence
(4;7)	Age of child (years;months)

## Research Ethics

Too often, the issue of empowering the ‘objects’ of research has been ignored in research on the Sámi (Gaski 2000; Grenersen 2002; Myrvoll 2002), on children (Cannella & Viruru 2004; Rogers & Evans 2008), and probably in general when we look at elitism and research (Toulmin 2001). Indigenous minorities are far too familiar with ‘research on’. I am of Sámi heritage, and when one of the teachers asked me if I was Sámi, I understood that it meant something as a researcher ‘on’ Sámi issues. The children seemed to infer some familiarity with my use of Norwegian, as Joret (5;9) put it: ‘You speak Norwegian just like my mother.’ In reaction to research on children, methodology for this project was modeled on ‘the least adult role’ of Rogers and Evans (2008) to create distance between the researcher and the adult role of teacher or assistant in the kindergarten. I made a-normative linguistic choices, was less authoritative, and was open with the children concerning aims and research interests.

To empower the children, they had to allow the researcher to record at any given time, and accept being recorded at any given episode. Before fieldwork started, written informed consent was acquired from parents and staff, and additional information provided at a parents meeting in presentations and answering questions. Underway in the project, transcribed episodes were presented and discussed with staff and parents, and I would also meet parents when the children were brought to kindergarten in the mornings. The project was approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), project number 20529.

## Context and Contextualisation: Language Choice and Translanguaging

### Official and pedagogical language use

North Sámi, *Davvisámegiella*, is the official language of the kindergarten and the dominant language spoken in it. This was important to the teachers, who had a clear policy on creating a monolingual space for Sámi language. The choice of Sámi can be seen as a contextualisation cue even in this monolingual context, as in Table 2 below, because it is a monolingual conversation between to bilinguals. Isak (4;7) talks with his teacher Elle Márjá in Sámi:



TABLE 2 BIILMATTÁ 2/THE CAR MAT 2, EXCERPT B

NO.	NAME	TRANSCRIPTION	TRANSLATION
1	Elle Márja	Ja Isak, ei go don leat borrat ()?	And Isak, have you eaten?
2	Isak	<b>mm</b> (7.4) mun manan ja tissat (dál)	<b>No</b> (7.4) I'm going [implicit: to the bath- room] to <b>pee</b> (now)
3	Elle Márja	Ja mana (.) Ja mun háldan diekkara stivra	Yes, go (.) And I'll take that steering wheel.

In the excerpt, Elle Márjá is sitting by the main table in the department, where some children are eating. She stops Isak to ask if he has eaten, which he has not. He gives the minimal negative response in Norwegian by saying 'mm.' In Sámi, the same minimal response would normatively be 'aa,' but there is varying use. After a short hesitation, he continues his response in Sami: 'mun manan ja tissat.' In this utterance he borrows the Norwegian lexeme 'tisse' (English: pee) with Sámi present infinite '-at', creating a new Sámi word. Using the Sámi 'ja' (English: and) as infinite particle (like in English: to), he has created an analogy between the homonymous Norwegian 'og' (English: and) and 'å' (English: to), transferring it to Sámi, which does not have this kind of particle. In this exchange, the official language policy is a contextualisation cue. Thus, the teachers' consistent use of North Sámi builds a breathing space for the minority language. It makes small, mundane utterances important evidence of a vital language (Storjord 2008), and it allows for small tokens of bilingualism to be used.

When the researcher was present, adults and children would, politely, speak Norwegian, and switch to Sámi to speak to each other. One such situation is rendered in Table 3:

TABLE 3 BIILMATTÁ 2/THE CAR MAT 2, EXCERPT F

NO.	NAME	TRANSCRIPTION	TRANSLATION
1	<b>Risten</b>	<b>Isak sa/</b> [snur på hælen bort fra meg] Elle Márja Isak logai 'baika' (.) Isak logai 'baika'	<b>Isak said/</b> [turns on her heel away from me] Elle Márja, Isak said poo (.) Isak said poo.

In this interaction, Risten (3;4) is moving towards the researcher, telling on Isak (4;7). She starts her turn facing me, using Norwegian. Then, seeing the teacher coming into the room, turns on her heel to face her while simultaneously switching to Sámi. The switch in language and attention contextualises my role, the teacher's role and the official policy of the kindergarten. Her choice of Norwegian is typical for interactions with both she and I present; she has analysed my linguistic preference, recognising me as Norwegian speaking. Risten demonstrates an ability to understand that I only understand Norwegian, and every

time we speak with each other, we use Norwegian. Her language choice as a contextualisation cue brings about a context that is not part of the kindergarten policy; it brings about a context of otherness, placing me in a role as something other, perhaps a part of the macro-context of the community. Many of the children spoke bilingually at home, choosing Norwegian with one or both parents would not have been unusual. I would not have been 'other' in that sense. Norwegian, therefore, for these children brought about a familiar context, but not a kindergarten context. I was an adult she could place her complaint with, but my role as the 'least adult,' was also recognised in her shift of focus.

Additionally, in changing to Sámi when Elle Márjá comes through the door, Risten shows awareness of another context. Now she contextualises Elle Márjá's position as a responsible adult with whom to place her complaint, identifies her as Sámi speaking, and adheres to the official language policy. Even though we are still in the same room and the message is the same, using Norwegian would not fit the context. She is no longer telling on Isak to me but turning to Elle Márjá and at the same time changing languages. Elle Márjá understands Norwegian perfectly well, and I still had not heard the news, sitting right there eager to hear. However, by choosing Sámi, Risten contextualises her complaint in the official zone. This interaction demonstrates how her language alternation does not work as a code all by itself; it is part of a cluster of contextualisation cues: She turns away from me, spins on her heel, directs herself towards Elle Márjá and raises her voice slightly. She very clearly excludes me with more than one cue, and she frames her official complaint as such by using the official language.

## Hidden and Autonomous Language Use

The third interaction discussed here, is more hidden from adults, and from official language policy. It is the bilingual children's own context: free play. In Kleemann (2013, 2015), the use of both North Sámi and Norwegian in role-play was demonstrated, analysed and described as a practice tied to rules of role-play, which use language alternation to maximise differences between role-utterances, directory utterances and outside-of-play utterances. Building on this work, I here examine this practice of using language alternation as a form of contextualisation cue for the context play. As previously mentioned, the children use language alternation to signal play and in-character, defining a boundary between their simultaneous roles in the different realms. Language alternation together with other signals may either indicate or create a context of play.

The excerpt in Table 4 is from the end of a play-sequence lasting 5.43 minutes, starting at 09.57 in the morning, just before they usually go outside to play and in a period during which they usually have free play. The sequence shows two children, Anna (4;3) and Piera (4;5), apparently absorbed in their role play. They are sitting in the main room near the main table playing with Little People-figures and a castle in a place where both adults and children are passing by. Although their space is not shielded at all, they seem unaffected

by everything else. On the recording are many different voices, actions, and noises, to the point that it was sometimes difficult to hear what Anna and Piera said, but even amidst this cacophony they maintained their attention in an intense interaction of 51 turns.

TABLE 4 DRAGER OG SLOTT /DRAGONS AND CASTLE, EXCERPT G

TURN	NAME	TRANSCRIPTION	TRANSLATION
39	Piera	De don oidnet (.) ^boade geahččat Dat lea siivui mahkáš dát lea siivui Gea (.) dá lei su speajal	Then you saw (.) ^come to see It is nice, like it was nice Look (.) here is its mirror
40	Anna	De don *oinnet dá lei dragehula	Then you saw here was a dragons den
41	Piera	dál dat geahčai dáikko (.) Dá lei lássa	Now it saw over here It was a lock
42	Anna	Dát dat bodii (.) Dat bodii geahččat	This one it came (.) it came to see
43	Piera	^Hei! Er du bestevenn?	Hello! Are you best friend?
44	Anna	^Ja	Yes
45	Piera	Å prinsessen reddet de	And the princess saved them.
46	Anna	Jeg **gådde å ***redde prinsessene Åh liksom det ****brenna her	I went to save the princesses And like it burnt here
47	Piera	^ Åh *****brenn! Å må gå opp	And burn! Oh, must go up.
48	Anna	^Jeg kan kile vannet Du ordne	I can tickle the water, you fix.
49	Piera	Dos lei dolla ja dies lei čahci dan nuppis	This was fire and that was water that other one

\* -nn- for -dn- often used in speech, orthographic correct form is *oidnet*.

\*\* and \*\*\*\*weak declension deviating from orthographic strong declension *gikk* og *brant*, typical for Norwegian child language.

\*\*\* Two interpretations: Praeterite of *redde* is *reddet*, the -t could be silent. English translation: 'I went and saved.' Here I chose an implied *jeg gikk for å redde*, analogous with Sámi PRAET + INF, as in turn 42: *bodii geahččat*.

\*\*\*\*\*The naked form is imperative; the content is a verbalisation of the play figures actions: It is burning something or being burned. It is more like an interjection, like *sigh!* Or like magical utterances in role play.

In this interaction, the use of North Sámi and Norwegian forms a pattern of contextualization cues. There are two distinct clusters: First, using North Sámi with regular tone of voice and past tense for the verb, rather as if they are telling a story, only telling the story as it unfolds. We can see this in utterances 39–42, where the story of how the princesses are going up to the dragons den unfolds. They decide and try out how the figures react and agree on the course the story should take. Then when they use Norwegian, it is with a higher tone

of voice, slightly different dialect, and the verb is in present tense. At that point, they have agreed on what the figures are doing, and the figures start to speak. In utterances 43 and 44, the dragons are now reassuring themselves that they now are best friends and friendly dragons. They are all set to save the princesses, which Anna and Piera agree on when they in 45–46 speak directory utterances in Norwegian. The cues for these directory utterances are a lower tone of voice, use of the local dialect and the past tense of the verb. In utterance 47, Piera is back in her role as indicated by her shift to the high tone voice.

This could be analysed as codeswitching in a monolingual view because they signal something different by switching languages. However, they do not signal being Sámi or being Norwegian drawing on experiences from the macro- or meso-levels. The codeswitch lays in the codes of roleplay, the micro-level of their interaction here and now. They shift their contextualizing cues from directory utterances to play voice or lines. They are not contextualising the policy of the kindergarten (Boyd, Huss, and Ottesjö 2017), or even demonstrating some sort of resistance to it by using Norwegian. They are contextualising roleplay in their own way, using all their linguistic resources. Using the different languages here does not signal or denote anything outside play, because play itself is a transformation of their experiences. (Sutton-Smith 1997) For instance when children play ‘mother and child’: It is not any specific mother, not even their own, but some sort of transformation of their experiences with real mothers, fictional mothers and how their peers have played the role of mothers. Children learn roleplay from peers, they develop it together, and together they have created the codes that make up their play community. Therefore, in this context alternation between named languages is not an invocation of those languages themselves, but instead a stylistic choice that invokes maximum otherness between the different realities of roleplay. The recurrence of these cues makes it easier to convey which reality they are in.

Table 5 below helps visualise which cues always co-vary and which sometimes co-vary showing a turn-by-turn variation of codes. Notice the break in code-use in turn 45 and 46, here marked with blue, and what that could entail for the children’s own interpretation of language choice and use in roleplay. With this I am drawing closer to the conclusion of other codes than language choice being more salient for roleplay in two languages.

TABLE 5 DRAGONS AND CASTLE TURN 39–51: VARIATION

TURN	SPEAKER	LANGUAGE	TEMPUS/Form	TONE	UTTERANCE TYPE
39.	Piera	Sámi	preterite	-	directory
		Sámi	imperative	^	role
		Sámi	present	-	directory
		Sámi	present	-	directory
		Sámi	preterite	-	directory
40.	Anna	Sámi	preterite	-	directory
41.	Piera	Sámi	preterite	-	directory
		Sámi	preterite	-	directory
42.	Anna	Sámi	preterite	-	directory
<b>43.</b>	<b>Piera</b>	<b>Norwegian</b>	<b>present</b>	^	<b>role</b>
<b>44.</b>	<b>Anna</b>	<b>Norwegian</b>	-	^	<b>role</b>
45.	Piera	Norwegian	preterite	-	directory
46.	Anna	Norwegian	preterite	-	directory
<b>47.</b>	<b>Piera</b>	<b>Norwegian</b>	<b>present</b>	^	<b>role</b>
<b>48.</b>	<b>Anna</b>	<b>Norwegian</b>	<b>present</b>	^	<b>role</b>
49.	Piera	Sámi	preterite	-	directory
		Sámi	preterite	-	directory
50.	Anna	Sámi	present	-	?
	Anna	Sámi	preterite	-	directory
51.	Piera	Sámi	imperative	-	Out of play

The deviance in turns 45 and 46 is the choice of Norwegian. The rest of the excerpt uses Sámi as the language of choice for the play-code directory utterances. Such a minimal difference in cues does not seem to indicate anything about the sequencing. Both before and after these two turns, Piera leads in introducing new utterance types, as in turn 43 and 47. Anna responds with the same types of utterances as Piera uses in turn 44, 46, and 48. Table 5 also illustrates how she uses the same cluster of signals as him. She adapts to his use of codes, and thus they change codes with neither hesitation nor any pointing out of the different choices of signals. Such a variation in the code system of roleplay points to the conclusion that it is not the named languages in themselves that carry meaning in this codeswitching, but rather other codes signal how to understand the meaning of the content.

## Limitations

The present study has several limitations that need to be taken into account when interpreting the findings. First, the cases are picked from a larger qualitative study, and are as such not necessarily representative for a general pattern of language use in bilingual or indigenous settings. It is limited to one particular kindergarten selected from criteria of language use. As the children are balanced bilinguals, the language use may be different from other Sámi kindergartens, or even other departments of the same kindergarten. Second, the pragmatic choices for the transcriptions makes the data material difficult to use for other linguistic purposes, like phonological studies. Third, the films of the material is not backed by interviews with the children, a triangulation of methods could have shed light on more of the rationale for their language use. However, the study provides insight into an everyday life in kindergarten that there is little material from in a Sámi context.

## Summary and Conclusions: Implications for Indigenous Minority Kindergarten Practices

Even though North Sámi is the official language of the kindergarten, both children and teachers use their full linguistic resources to signal different contexts. Because any specific context in the kindergarten may be monolingual or bilingual, both children and adults have different registers ready and available. Awareness of official language policy is also present in the monolingual interaction between children and teachers: they have to make active choices to act monolingual when every situation is potentially bilingual. Creating this breathing space for the minority language is not easy, both because all are aware of each other's bilingual knowledge and a monolingual situation demands suppressing the other language, and because modern sociolinguistic theory and identity policy could oppose the monolingual stance. To embrace theories like translanguaging or too positive views on bilingual practices, could prove damaging for endangered and minoritised languages if it is not done in a sustainable way (Blommaert, Leppänen and Spotti 2012; Piä-tikäinen, Kelly-Holmes, Jaffe and Coupland 2016; Cenoz & Gorter 2017).

The bilingual children in this material can and do use both of their languages in roleplay. Language alternation, then, is an element that is present in the interactional type of roleplay, and the question is whether language alternation is the codeswitching that carries meaning in the context of bilingual roleplay. If it does not carry any meaning outside the signaling of how to understand the utterance in this specific context, it is a contextualization cue, not an autonomous code. The code for a role utterance in the named language Norwegian, is not 'Norwegian'; the figure is not Norwegian, or non-Sami, the figure is part of and placed in the play realm. The specific type of Norwegian that the children used is a part of play, not ethnic identity at a macro level, language policy or other 'extra-interactional' factors. Roleplay, therefore, is the defining context here for language choice, and in using their language resources in this way, they are creating an autonomous context.

Codes of roleplay signal ethnic identity, but not the ethnic identity of named languages or peoples. The two different definitions of 'ethnic' (Li 2011) can be used to understand how translanguaging practices create contexts that are more or different from any of the individual named languages or identities recognised by others. Without the monolingual Sámi policy of the kindergarten in a predominantly Norwegian-speaking community, there would be no bilingual play. The breathing space (Cenoz and Gorter 2017) for the indigenous minority language creates a third space for the children to construct a new form of context in their roleplay.

Like roleplay has many layers of reality, so does sociolinguistics. My field of sociolinguistics is on a micro-level, and although conversation analysis builds on ethnomethodology, it is still the specific interaction that makes the rules. Language and the alternate use of named languages function as signals within a bilingual conversation. Language choice has a meaning structuring and contextualising the conversation, but what that meaning is, can be local and tied to a specific context, and not readily analysed through a traditional macro-contextual ethnolinguistic study design. As Auer (1992) points out: any contextualization cue often co-occur with others to facilitate meaning-making. The analysis of turn-taking and language alternation in roleplay can also makes visible how language alternation in general builds contexts and invokes different meanings and arguments. Not because they invoke something that belongs to a specific language, like national identity and ethnicity, but because they bring about a sense of context and meaning from shared experiences.

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