

***Kallemann & Amandus:***  
**The use of dialect in children's programmes**  
**on early Norwegian radio**

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**LANGUAGE IN EARLY NORWEGIAN RADIO**

The linguistic history of the 20th century cannot be seen as complete without the inclusion of the language that was heard on the radio and on television. Radio is especially important, since it was the sole talking medium for several decades before television appeared, and the radio thus had the possibility to form the norms for how a national language such as Norwegian was to be spoken in this kind of public domain. This standardisation never reached a level of rigidity in Norway comparable to what has been described for, say, the BBC in Great Britain (Schwyter 2008). But compared to the general Norwegian language situation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, linguistic norms were nevertheless narrow.

There are different opinions among Norwegian linguists as to whether Norway today does have a spoken standard language at all, but there seems to be agreement on the fact that if such a phenomenon has ever existed in Norway, then certainly it would have been evidenced on the radio, more precisely in the public Norwegian broadcasting corporation, *Norsk Rikskringkasting* (NRK). Sandøy (2009: 31) writes:

‘Det blir ofte understreka at me *ikkje* har noko vedteke eller fastsett standardtalemål i Norge. Men det er for absolutt å seie noko slikt. Viktigast er det at NRK har og har hatt språknormer.

It is often emphasised that we do *not* have a given spoken standard language in Norway. But this is to put it too strongly. The most important fact is that NRK has and has had language norms’.

Radio very soon became popular in Norway, and due to the reasonable price of radio sets and the well-organised building of transmitters around the country, a large part of the population became eager radio listeners early on (Bastiansen and Dahl 2008: 248; Bjørge et al. 1965: 182). After the broadcasting monopoly was

introduced in 1933, the programmes were the same for all listeners, and listening became a social act. To gather around the radio was an important social practice for many families and neighbours,<sup>1</sup> and we can assume that whatever voices featured on the radio may have influenced – in one way or another – the ideas the listeners had of correct language. If their dialects weren't influenced directly, then their attitudes to the sociolinguistic meaning of different varieties were certainly reinforced by the radio (cf. Androutsopoulos 2014: 14; Kristiansen 2014: 101).

Radio enabled the development of and discussions about spoken language standards, and became an important pattern for public speech. Radio spread authoritative voices to a large proportion of Norwegian homes, and gave people who had earlier heard mainly their own dialects and dialects from the nearest neighbouring districts the possibility to listen to a wide variety of possible ways to speak Norwegian. Vagle (2007: 317) claims that during the period that she calls 'Old Radio 1', 1933–1940, most parts of the country came to be represented on the air. One can claim that NRK, which had as one of its goals to tie the country together and develop Norwegian identity (Nesse 2014), did this by displaying the different ways of being – and speaking – Norwegian. This was not of course a uniquely Norwegian experience; the same phenomenon can be traced in other countries, for example in Sweden (Rydin 2000: 40). Sweden had a different history from Norway, but when it came to using the radio for nation building, the two countries were similar. Listeners, both adults and children, could arguably learn that the geographic distance between them meant nothing, because they all belonged to the same nation.

Early radio speech in Norway was varied when it came to linguistic outputs. Reporters were to use one of two linguistic standards, and were thus given courses in standardised speech, either Nynorsk or Bokmål (Skarstein 2010). The freelancers who came to the studios and made different kinds of programmes had the liberty to use dialects or regional dialects, according to what kind of programme they participated in. The interviewees could speak as they wished, but studies show that most of them spoke the Bokmål standard. In the data set *Radio Archive Nordland, 1936–1996*<sup>2</sup>, there were 75 interviewees. 40 of these spoke Bokmål and one spoke Nynorsk. 34 of the interviewees, 30 male and 4 female, spoke dialect. Of the 30 dia-

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<sup>1</sup> This was especially so during the Second World War. When the German occupation set in in 1940, slightly more than half of the Norwegian population had access to a radio (Vagle 2007: 276). This popularity, and the fact that this half of the population could listen to programmes broadcast from England in Norwegian, led to the confiscation of all radio sets. But many people hid away their radios in barns and other places, and could listen to the Norwegian king, prime minister and other voices encouraging them to maintain the resistance. In 1960 there were three million listeners of NRK radio – almost the whole population (Bastiansen and Dahl 2008: 303).

<sup>2</sup> Some results from the analysis of these programmes have been published in Nesse (2007, 2008). The correlation between social status and linguistic variety has not yet been published.

lect-speaking men, 26 were either manual workers, farmers or fishermen. All reporters except for one spoke one of the two standards.

So the norm was clear. A typical workplace interview would, for example, have a standard-speaking (Bokmål or Nynorsk) male reporter, and those interviewed would be a standard-speaking male manager and dialect speaking workers, most often also men. In this corpus, there are no female reporters before 1970, so that the only female voices we hear from the first decades are freelancers (for example in programmes for children) and interviewees. The women who were interviewed were often housewives, but some were factory workers, for example in the textile industry. Children were heard in some of the programmes for children, and they were interviewed for other programmes on special occasions, for example programmes about the celebration of the national day.

With such a clear norm, and such a dominance of adult men speaking the Bokmål standard with east Norwegian intonation on radio, any other style had the potential to be regarded as ‘funny’. A typical example is an interview with Magnhild Borten, wife of Prime Minister Per Borten in September 1967. The programme was recorded with a studio audience, and the audience laughs enthusiastically throughout the interview. Borten speaks broad, rural, Mid-Norwegian dialect, and the interview styles her as an ordinary house wife who, as she says, *spreng tu vaskebøtta opp i langkjolen* (‘jumps from the washing bucket and into the long dress’). The laughter seems to stem from this styling of the country’s first lady not just as ‘ordinary’, but as ‘rural ordinary’.

Still, the most common way to make dialect funny, is by imitation, or what Coupland (2001: 350) calls ‘strategic inauthenticity’. This was indeed the case for the programmes that are to be presented in this article, as they are an example of skilful imitation: One media performer who, with a swiftness reminiscent of a ventriloquist, plays different characters with different linguistic styles.

### **KALLEMANN & AMANDUS: THE PROGRAMMES**

The programmes about Kallemann and Amandus (K&A) were first produced in 1927. They were broadcast on the private local radio station in Bergen, as the only programmes intended for children. 15 minutes every Thursday afternoon was what the children were offered. After the establishment of NRK in 1933, these programmes were also broadcast on the national radio, as part of the popular *Lørdagsbarnetimen* (‘Saturday children’s hour’) that was produced from 1924 and until 2010. For children in the western part of Norway, especially in Bergen, who listened to the children’s programmes in the 1930s – 1950s, *Kallemann & Amandus*

form a very important part of their childhood's cultural input. One of the informants (for a presentation of the interviews, see below), a woman born in 1943, says:

*Torsdag ettermiddag var høydepunktet i min radioverden da jeg var liten. Kallemann var helten, Amandus var teit. Barnetimen fra Oslo var helt teit!*

'Thursday afternoon was the highlight of my radio world when I was little. Kallemann was the hero, Amandus was silly. The Children's hour from Oslo was really silly!'

Another informant, a woman born in 1931, says:

*Nei, det var dette at det på en måte var en del av barndommen på den måten at alle visste om det, og måtte høre på det.*

'No, it was that it [listening to K&A] in a way was a part of my childhood in the way that everybody was familiar with it, and had to listen to it.'

Since these programmes were the only ones made for children, it is not surprising that they were popular. They were also an effective tool to spread useful knowledge, norms of moral conduct and linguistic norms. The fact that the children's culture 'from above' had local voices and happened in their local environment gave the programmes an important closeness to the young listeners.

The idea to create programmes for children in which a local vernacular was used came from Sweden. Radio entertainer Sven Jerring had created a figure called Efraim Alexander, as a part of the programme *Barnens Brevlåda*, 'The children's mail box', that existed from 1925 until 1972. In her dissertation on children's programmes in Swedish radio and television 1925–1999, Ingegerd Rydin emphasises that the pioneering years of the radio coexisted with the development of the welfare state, and with a strong interest in child psychology, influenced by Alva and Gunnar Myrdal (Rydin 2000: 17). The characters that dominated radio in children's programmes during the early years of broadcasting were the same as those that dominated children's literature: Well-behaved, harmonious and un-spoiled children. Authors such as Elsa Beskow and Alice Tegnér were popular readers of their own stories. But Efraim Alexander was another type altogether. Rydin (2000: 44) compares him with Astrid Lindgren's *Karlsson på taket*, 'Karlsson-on-the-roof', a figure that is far from well-behaved, harmonious or un-spoiled, but rather irritating and naughty. Efraim Alexander also stood out linguistically, and was introduced by Jerring himself to his listeners as having a mixed dialect with west Swedish diphthongs (Rydin 2000: 41–42), which was Jerring's own linguistic background.

In an interview on NRK radio (12th December 1975) the creator of the series *Kallemann & Amandus*, Sverre Erichsen, said that the inspiration to make a Norwe-

gian counterpart to Efraim Alexander came from a programme secretary at Bergen Radio, who explicitly asked Erichsen to develop a character using the Bergen dialect. This must be an indication that – at least in some genres – dialect was indeed considered as both acceptable and as a striking artistic effect on radio. At the time, Norway was a speech community where bidialectism was common. Many people, for example shop attendants, telegraph workers, teachers, priests, actors and radio journalists used standard language at work and dialect in familiar situations. Therefore, radio plays that displayed familiar settings, would include dialect-speaking characters in order to be realistic. The decrease of this vertical bidialectism may be the most important change that took place in the Norwegian sociolinguistic landscape during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Nesse 2015).

Still, showing authentic linguistic situations by displaying different varieties could have different nuances. (Swedish) Efraim Alexander had clear rural connotations (according to Olle Josephson, personal communication), and the Norwegian Kallemann was an urban street boy. Sverre Erichsen was probably chosen to create the new series by virtue of his reputation as reader and actor, using a multitude of West Norwegian dialects. This ability was further developed in the series about Kallemann and Amandus, where Erichsen himself played most of the characters, each character with his or her own voice quality and speech variety. A third strategy was chosen when similar programmes based on two street boys were created in Oslo in 1934 (Dahl 1999: 276). In these programmes dialect was not used. Speech style in the Oslo-based programmes will not be analysed here, but one point may be noted as it may be relevant for the understanding of the sociolinguistics of Norway: The difference in linguistic strategy indicates that the use of dialect vs. standard in different domains may have carried different connotations in different parts of the country. We cannot say this simply on the basis of these children's programmes, but analyses of two other sets of data clearly show that all dialects were not equal in Norwegian radio. In short, whereas the Oslo version of the spoken standard (Bokmål) is the variety most likely to be heard in any radio programme during the 20th century, the Oslo vernacular is one of the least likely to be heard (Nesse 2015).

## DATA AND METHODS

Using radio programmes as data for linguistic research has become much easier since the substantial digitisation that NRK has been undertaking since the 1990s. The archive now contains more than 400,000 programmes,<sup>3</sup> some with just a couple

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<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, not all of these are accessible to the public, but around 40,000 can be listened to at the Norwegian national library: <https://www.nb.no/>

of minutes duration, some an hour long. In addition to the programme itself, contextual information about each programme is provided. This lists the topic of a programme, the music that is played and the names of people involved in the production. Only in very few instances, when the person working with the archive has found the dialect especially interesting, there is a note about 'dialect' in the written information, but there is no coherent system in this.

Which programmes were saved and which were deleted, before the policy was changed in 1986 to save everything, has had to do with the alleged importance of the subject matter for the future, but economic matters were also important. From the first decades not many programmes have been saved, since the tapes were expensive and had to be re-used several times. The fact that programmes intended to entertain children were not given priority is no surprise. Of the several hundred K&A episodes that were produced, only five remain. My earlier investigations of 300 programmes produced locally in the Nordland area during the period 1936 to 1996 showed a clear tendency as to which programmes were saved. One third of the programmes in this database were in some way or other connected to the Second World War (Nesse 2008: 112). Needless to say, these were considered important to the common Norwegian memory, which the NRK archive was obligated to preserve.

The main data for K&A thus consists of the five episodes that have been saved, produced in 1947 (two episodes), 1963, 1966 and 1968. Episodes last for between 6 and 14 minutes. In addition to these, one can hear Sverre Erichsen portray some of his characters in programmes where he is interviewed about his radio career. As secondary data, Erichsen's entries in the city archive of Bergen have been used for the investigation. This collection contains, among many other texts, a vast number of scripts for K&A programmes, from the very beginning in 1927 up to the last 'come-back' in 1973. Most of the scripts are written in dialect, or in a mix between the Bokmål standard and dialect, and can, when used with caution, be a good supplement to the recordings. In the instances where we have both recording and script, we have a good opportunity to evaluate how accurately Erichsen followed the scripts when he performed in the studio. By comparing the written and spoken versions of certain words and phrases (see below), we can learn to what degree the spelling rules and the formalized word order of the standard language still applied when he tried to write dialect.

For a researcher sitting in her office half a century after these programmes were made, it is – obviously – not possible to interpret the characters, their language and their jokes in the ways that the original listeners did. My aim is not to reproduce the original contexts of listening, but knowledge about this might expand the understanding of the reception of the programmes in their heyday. This could lead to a more accurate analysis of the sociolinguistic contextualisation of the programmes

Table 1: A questionnaire given to a group of primary listeners  
of *Kallemann & Amandus*

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|---|
| Gender and year of birth  |
| Approximately how old were you when you listened to <i>Kallemann &amp; Amandus</i> ?  |
| How would you describe the boys' personalities?   |
| How would you characterise the language of the different persons in the series (including the adults)?                      |
| Are there words and expressions in these episodes that you believe children today would have difficulties in understanding? |
| Anything else that you would like to add?   |

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and their implications for the linguistic community. Thus an interview with people who listened to K&A when they were children (this group is later in this article referred to as the *primary listeners*) is what constitutes the third part of the data. These data were collected during a group interview with 11 informants, born between 1931 and 1943. During the two hours of the interview, the informants listened to three of the old K&A episodes, took part in a group discussion, and filled out a simple questionnaire (in Norwegian), as follows.

There were several benefits in arranging the interview as a group discussion rather than as a series of individual interviews. The main reason is that the informants inspired each other in remembering details that they would not have remembered on their own. It soon became clear that the act of listening as a social practice was important. One of the informants said that their family did not own a radio, but that a childless couple in the street, who did have a radio, invited the children to their home every Thursday afternoon to listen to K&A. This made the listening something even more memorable. Another informant, who lived in an extended family in few rooms, said that his grandmother was among the most eager listeners to K&A, and that the adults especially enjoyed the music that was an obligatory part of the programmes. This came as a surprise to me, since the music of old radio today often seems to last longer than feels natural for a 2015 listener. In the early years, music filled out about half the programme time altogether (Bastiansen and Dahl 2008: 304). For many Norwegians, music in the radio was the only channel through which they could listen to music at home – if they did not play musical instruments themselves. Gramophones were for the more privileged, and even if they had one, records had to be bought at a high price. From the point of view of the radio company, music was a way to fill the time – and it was a way to ‘enlighten the

masses'. Music that was deemed to be 'difficult' or 'inaccessible' was presented in pedagogical ways, through programmes with titles such as *Opusmusikk for umusikalske* ('Opus music for the unmusical'), *Vi besøker orkesteret* ('We visit the orchestra') and *Komponistportretter* ('Portraits of composers') (Klæbo 1953: 92).

## FROM THE STAGE TO THE MICROPHONE

Sverre Erichsen's collection at the Bergen city archive can shed light on the characters that inhabit the K&A universe, on Erichsen's method when he created the episodes, and on his sources of inspiration. It becomes evident, when we look at the many scripts for different kinds of entertainment, that popular entertainment in front of the microphone was a continuation of a tradition with readings and short plays at common gatherings, anniversaries and similar events. Characters that were well-known because of the radio were used as entertainment outside radio itself, and *vice versa*. Because the characters from K&A are sometimes used in scripts for entertainment at adult parties, it must mean that adults did listen to the children's programmes and were familiar with the characters, their ways of speaking and their personalities. The rural voice in the K&A universe, the voice of the so-called Uncle<sup>4</sup> Tobias character, shows up in a script for a celebration of a new department store in 1938. He speaks in the broad, rural dialect of an island to the west of Bergen, and makes fun of the language of the polite head of marketing (see Extract 1).

### Extract 1

From an undated script, most likely from 1938

Head of Marketing: *Var det noe spesielt De søkte, da?*

'Was there something special you [form.] were looking for?'

Onkel Tobias: *Spesielt? du snakka nett so ein prest, kar. Du får ta deg ein tur heim å preika i kyrkja vår. Dar e høgt onna takje. Jau, da va noke spesielt, ja, eg skal ha meg nye helgekle, da ska eg.*

'Special? you [inform.] speak just like a priest, man. You should take a trip home and preach in our church. It has a high ceiling. Yes, there was something special, yes, I am buying new weekend clothes, that's what I shall do.'

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<sup>4</sup> All adults in children's programmes were addressed with *tante*, 'aunt', and *onkel*, 'uncle', and first-name, in line with how children (at least in the cities) were supposed to address adults who were friends of their family. Other adults were to be addressed as *fru*, 'Mrs.', and *herr*, 'Mr.', and surname.



Table 2: Differences between Uncle Tobias's rural dialect and the Bokmål standard forms in Extracts 1 and 2

| Feature        | Rural form                            | Standard form                         | English translation                                  |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Segmentation   | tudlabrok, si-<br>dlafiskje,<br>sudla | tullebokk, sil-<br>lefiske,<br>suller | silly person,<br>fishing for herring,<br>fool around |
| Palatalization | kyrkja,<br>takje                      | kirken,<br>take                       | the church,<br>the ceiling                           |
| Diphthong      | ein, heim, preika                     | en, jem, preke                        | one/a, home, preach                                  |
| Infinitive     | preika                                | preke                                 | preach   |
| Present tense  | snakka, venta,<br>sudla               | snakker, venter,<br>suller            | talk, wait,<br>fool around                           |
| Lexis          | nett, helgekle                        | akkurat, penklær                      | exactly, nice clothes                                |

The head of marketing uses a formal address-form, *De*, to Uncle Tobias, which was the only correct way to address strangers in an urban environment in the 1930s. When Uncle Tobias uses informal address, *du*, in response, it is, however, not primarily an impolite gesture. *De* was not used as much in rural as in urban speech communities; therefore this can be seen as a failure or a refusal to adjust to the politeness conventions of the city. Since such refusals were not common at the time, they had the potential for being funny (cf. Van Hoof & Jaspers' analysis, this volume, of the Sisse character). The linguistic differences between the Bergen variant of Bokmål and the rural dialect of Uncle Tobias, are substantial; most of Uncle Tobias's words are marked as rural dialect, either on the phonological, morphological, lexical or pragmatic level (see Table 2).

When Uncle Tobias accuses the Head of Marketing of speaking like a priest he is effectively mocking him for being overly formal. In context, this is a definite insult.

We see that both form and content of this conversation serve to emphasise the normative gap between the polite life in the department store and life as a fisherman and farmer on the islands close to Bergen.

### Extract 2

Continuation of the conversation in Extract 1

Head of Marketing: *Jaså, jaja, De får se innom butikken igjen i morgen da...*

'Oh, well, you [form.] should stop by the shop again tomorrow then...'

Onkel Tobias: *Imorgo? Nei no snakka du nett so ein tudlebrok! Eg e på sid-lafiskje, eg, ska eg seia deg, og ikkje trur eg sidlen venta til dokker sudla dokker ferig. Eg må ut igjen på timen...*  
 ‘Tomorrow? No, now you [inf.] speak just like a fool! I am fishing for herring, I will tell you [inf.], and I do not think the herring will wait until you [inf.] are finished. I have to get back to sea this hour...

As the exchange continues (see Extract 2), the combination of the linguistic contrast and the display of how little the Head of Marketing understands of rural life is effective. The humour is created by exaggerating this contrast, and Erichsen would have been helped by the fact that many of the shop assistants present at the party where he was performing had rural backgrounds, but had learned to address customers in the formal standard in order to satisfy both their bosses and their customers; at least the most posh among them.

## FROM SCRIPT TO SOUND

The scripts are typed, with additions and corrections in pencil. There is also underlining to indicate which words should be emphasised when Erichsen read the script aloud. Even if most of the scripts are written in the different dialects used in the series, the spelling bears the mark of the Bokmål standard – and of how the standard had changed. Sverre Erichsen (born in 1899) belonged to the Norwegian generation that lived through all the great spelling revisions of the 20th century, in 1907, 1917, 1938, 1959 and 1981.<sup>5</sup> Those parts of the scripts that are written in the standard show us a writer who, to a large degree, has adapted to the new rules for spelling, even if he from time to time writes old forms. This is a pattern typical for this generation, and is not just due to the writers’ inability to follow the latest regulations of spelling. Since many authors, newspapers and other large text producers refused to follow the official norms for the orthography, spelling in society was always – and is still – not always in line with these official norms.

As is commonly known, it is not easy, or even possible, to write accurate dialect through a standard orthography. And a comparison between the written dialect of the scripts and the spoken dialect of the recordings shows a clear pattern in that the scripts are somewhat more standard-based than the recordings, on all linguistic

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<sup>5</sup> These are the spelling revisions for Bokmål, which is the standard used by Sverre Erichsen. Nynorsk had spelling revisions in 1909, 1917, 1938 and 1959. In the 21st century, Bokmål was changed in 2005, and Nynorsk in 2012.

levels. A few examples can serve as an illustration on the principles that were at work.

### 1. Pragmatics

- a) Use of formal address: Change from formal address *De* in the manuscript to familiar address *deg* in the recording:
  - Script: *Men er det De som er politimesteren? Det stod på døren.*
  - Recording: *Men e de deg så e politimeistaren? Det sto på døren.*
  - ‘But are you the Chief of Police? It said so on the door.’
  
- b) Addition of the discourse particle *mann*:
  - Script: *Nei no gjer eg meg. Gå for en luring du e.*
  - Recording: *Nei no gjer eg meg. Går for en luring du e, mann.*
  - ‘No, now I give up. My how clever you are, man’

There is a folk linguistic stereotype that the discourse particle *mann* ‘man’<sup>6</sup> is used extensively in Bergen. Whether this was ever the case has not been investigated, and now it is too late. (If *mann* is used in this way today, it is because of influence from English, although particles of this sort in English are themselves highly variable.) We can assume that Sverre Erichsen and other popular figures performing boys from Bergen have contributed to – if not creating, then certainly exaggerating – this stereotype.

### 2. Syntax

- Change of position of sentence adverb:
  - Script: *Du kan no vel skjønne det at politimesteren ikke kan være med å gå rundt å spille*
  - Recording: *Du kan no vel sjønne de at politimesteren kanke vere me å gå runt å spille*
  - ‘You must understand that the Chief of Police cannot come along and play with us’
  
  - Script: *Kunne du ikke tenke deg at det var en kokebok?*
  - Recording: *Kunn’ikke du tenke dei at de va en kokebok, da?*
  - ‘Couldn’t you imagine that it was a cook book?’

The position of the adverb *ikke* has traditionally been quite rigid in written Norwegian. In the dialects, however, the position has been more flexible, and especially so

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<sup>6</sup> Often (still according to the stereotypes) combined with the infinitive *gå* ‘go’ in the expression *gå mann*.

in the Bergen dialect (Pettersen 1973; Venås 1971). This may be due to language contact between Norwegian and Low German in Bergen during the late middle ages. This contact situation coincided with the period when Norwegian sentence structure was fixed as a result of the restructuring of the morphology.

### 3. Morphology

- Personal pronoun, 1<sup>st</sup> person sing.: Change from subject form (correct according to the standard grammar) in the script to object form in the recording:
  - Script: *Ja, de e eg så e Kallemann*
  - Recording: *Ja, de e meg så e Kallemann*
  - ‘Yes it is I who is Kallemann’ > ‘Yes it is me who is Kallemann’

This is a common phenomenon in Norwegian, and the adjustment from *eg* to *meg* can be considered necessary for the line to sound like a dialect-speaking child.

### 4. Phonology:

- Change from modern to old-fashioned form of words that had been «Norwegianised»
  - Script: *tillatelse*
  - Recording: *tilladelse* ‘permission’
  - Script: *antakeli*
  - Recording: *antageli* ‘probably’

‘Norwegianisation’ (*fornorsking*) is the term used in Norwegian linguistics for the process of bringing Bokmål closer to the Norwegian dialects, and away from written Danish. This was a main reason for the spelling revisions before 1940. Since written Danish has *b*, *d*, *g* where most Norwegian dialects have *p*, *t*, *k*, to change words like *tilladelse* and *antageli* to *tillatelse* and *antakeli* was an important Norwegianisation of the spelling system. But in many words, Danish spelling had become the norm for Norwegian pronunciation, and it took a while before the norm was changed to what was considered correct, original Norwegian. So even if Erichsen writes correct Norwegian, his pronunciation is reminiscent of the older, Danish-based norm.

## REBELLIOUS VERNACULAR AND OBEDIENT STANDARD?

In the series about Kallemann and Amandus, linguistic heterogeneity in and around Bergen is exploited in order to underpin the different personalities that are repre-

sented. Four varieties are used, and these would be the four best-known varieties for those who lived in Bergen early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and maybe even today:

- i. The Oslo variant of the Bokmål standard is represented by different adults, for example the Chief of Police.
- ii. The Bergen variant of the Bokmål standard is used by the boy Amandus, and by Sverre Erichsen himself, in his role as Uncle Sverre. In one episode where K&A rescue two princesses from a troll, the princesses also speak the Bergen standard.
- iii. There is only one character who speaks a rural dialect, and that is Uncle Tobias, mentioned earlier.
- iv. Last, but not least, the (urban) Bergen vernacular is used by two of the main characters: Kallemann himself and Aunt Amalie.

When analysing the linguistic varieties, it is important to bear in mind that even if Erichsen's imitation is good, it is indeed imitation, and it is also likely that the differences between the varieties are somewhat enlarged in order to enhance the humour potential of the programmes. Before we look at examples of the different varieties, and how they form contrasts to one another, the judgements of the primary listeners are worth looking into. Through their lived and remembered experiences, the primary listeners are closer to the linguistic stereotypes of the 1930s and 1940s than I am, and their attitudes, even though expressed in the 21st century, may have similarities with those that were dominant in the society when they were in their formative years.

The informants' evaluation of Kallemann's language was quite homogeneous; the label is either *gatespråk*, 'street language', or *kjuaguttspråk*, 'street boy language'. Amandus's language is described through a greater range of attributed traits, such as *dannet*, 'polite'; *pent*, 'nice'; *konservativt*, 'conservative'; *bergensk riksmål*, 'local standard'; and *voksent språk*, 'adult language'. That they view his language as conservative is interesting. From a modern point of view, all the persons in these programmes speak conservatively, so why pin this label on Amandus? It may be that the term *conservative* for these informants does not mean 'old-fashioned', but 'standard-like'. It has been common in Norwegian linguistics to use the labels *conservative vs. radical Bokmål* in order to describe Bokmål with similarities to Danish (conservative) and to Nynorsk (radical), respectively. And since several of the informants had been teachers, they may be more aware of this than most people.

Not all of the informants put labels on the language of the adults in the series (as they were requested to do in the questionnaires), but most of them did. One wrote that *de voksne har sitt normaliserte Bokmål (riksmål?)*, ‘the adults have their normalised Bokmål (conservative standard?)’, which was elaborated during the discussion by the statements that standard Bokmål with east Norwegian intonation was the unmarked radio variety, and that when the informants were children they believed that adults had to speak like this on the radio. Another informant wrote that the language of the adults was *anonymt – lite særpreg*, ‘anonymous – featureless’. This matches what Niedzielski and Preston (2000: 20) describe as a “common folk taxonomy of competence and performance”, where a standard variety is seen as the unmarked language. In contrast, all other varieties, whether they are dialects or slips, are seen as “failures to observe the rules of ‘The Language’” (Niedzielski and Preston 2000: 22). The fact that linguistic variety goes together with geographical and socio-economic place in the speech community can be observed by the statement by one informant, who wrote about Aunt Amalie that she was *svært bergensk – langt fra Paradis og Kalfaret*, ‘really Bergensian and far away from Paradis and Kalfaret’, which are two traditionally wealthy parts of Bergen. The same informant noted that the rural variety that Uncle Tobias used would hardly be heard anywhere today. Another comment was that Aunt Amalie spoke the ‘madam’ Bergen vernacular. From a linguistic point of view, Kallemann and Aunt Amalie speak the same variety, only with different voice quality, but following the logic of folk linguistics, Kallemann speaks ‘street language’ and Aunt Amalie speaks ‘madam language’. The descriptions of the varieties are as much based on the personalities and social characteristics of the speakers as on the actual linguistic output. This shows that the primary listeners perceived language as an integral part of the personality of the character, not something that can be isolated and abstracted from the rest.

Something that stands out as strange when one listens to these programmes today is the choice to have two boys as protagonists, since one of them, Amandus, to modern ears sounds very feminine. This might of course have to do with the time difference, and that indexical relations between speech style and gender have changed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The use of the spoken standard in Norway has, according to sociolinguistic studies, been more common among girls than among boys (see, for example in Bergen, Ulland 1984; in Stavanger, Gabrielsen 1984; in Trondheim, Fintoft and Mjaavatt 1980). In addition to the use of the standard, Erichsen gives Amandus some more specific, feminine linguistic characteristics. A high-pitched voice indicates femininity, and the discourse marker, *gid*,<sup>7</sup> that he uses (but which neither Kallemann nor the adult men in the series use), is noted as ‘women’s language’ in *Norsk Riksmålsordbok* (Knudsen and Sommerfeldt 1927:

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<sup>7</sup> The origin of *gid* supposedly is *Gud* ‘God’.

1485). The primary listeners did in fact evaluate Amandus as ‘the little girl in the story’, so my experiencing of Amandus as effeminate is not entirely anachronistic.

However, according to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003: 292–304), the tendency, both among linguists and non-linguists, to associate standard language with femininity is based on a usage of statistics that at best is questionable. They argue that social meanings for gender do not emerge from simple correlations, but through an indirect process of social attribution. It is not surprising, then, that in Eckert’s data from Belten High, girls used both most and least of the negative concord variable. Thus it cannot be said that girls simply speak in a more standard (or less standard) style than the boys. Rather than indexing gender itself, positive correlations between social categories and linguistic features remain to be socially interpreted. In Eckert’s well-known material, Jocks used negative concord less than Burnouts (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 295), and this allowed quite different interpretations of the social meaning of the sociolinguistic variable.

In our case this could mean that what is important with Amandus is how he is attributed the social traits of being ‘a good student’, ‘well behaved’ and ‘timid’. The fact that Kallemann, who does not share any of these categories, from time to time uses the word *jente*, ‘girl’, to tease Amandus is simply Sverre Erichsen’s folk linguistic interpretation along the lines that ‘good student’, ‘well behaved’ and ‘timid’ index ‘standard language’ which in turn attributionally indexes ‘girl’. We must assume that, in spite of this, Amandus played a role as a sociolinguistic prototype for those children, both girls and boys, who shared his social characteristics. In this, we can see one of the success formulae of the programmes, since they offered a wide range of possible social categories to identify with.

A typical example of the relationship between the two friends Kallemann and Amandus can be heard in the extract where they visit the Chief of Police:

### Extract 3

From *Kallemann & Amandus*, recording produced 14 January 1947.

(Underlined words show sociolinguistic variation, discussed in the sections below.)

Kallemann: *Se der du Amandus, der e gutt så har hannelag med gitaren. Så god bler ikkje du.*

‘See, Amandus, there is a boy who is handy with the guitar. You won’t be that good.’

Amandus: *Å nei, gid!*

‘Oh no, dear me!’

Police: *Nå du, du vet jei har jo spilt mye mer enn det du har, Amandus. Men når du blir litt eldre så blir du nok bedre enn mei.*

‘Now, you, you know I have played much more than what you have, Amandus. But when you become a little older, you will probably become better than me.’

Amandus: *De smigrer, herr politimester.*

‘You [form.] flatter, mister Chief of Police.’

Kallemann: *Du eh, politimeistar – omforladelse – De menar eg. De vikkje vere med oss rundt å spelle, vel ja, uten uniform?*

‘You [inf.], eh Chief of Police – pardon me – You [form.], I mean. You [form.] won’t come around with us and play will you, yes, without a uniform?’

Police: *(ler) Åhå nei, nei det går nok ikke, nei.*

‘(laughs) Oh no, no, that is not possible, no.’

Amandus: *Nei, han der Kallemann han e så freidi at det gåkke an! Du kan no vel sjønne det at politimesteren kanke vere med å gå rundt å spille. Du ødeleggar no alt mulig for oss.*

‘No, that Kallemann, he is so rude that it is not possible! You must understand that the Chief of Police can’t come with us around and play. You ruin everything for us.’

Kallemann: *Nei eg tenkte bare det at då kunne vi hatt to gitarar og munnspell då. Det hadde vært fint, men hvis han ikkje ve spelle, så kunn’an jo gå rundt med hatten.*

‘No, I just thought that then we could have had two guitars and a harmonica. That would have been nice, but if he won’t play, then he could go around with the hat.’

Police: *(ler)*

‘(laughs)’

Amandus: *Du e verre å verre. Jei e nesten flau a dei.*

‘You are worse and worse. I am almost embarrassed by you.’

Amandus is timid, but he takes on the responsibility of taming his wild friend. The adult, in this case the Chief of Police, plays the good, wise, tolerant, just, patient



person, a source of protection for the boys, at the same time as he teaches them the rights and wrongs of society. This is the same personality that the different uncles that appear in the programmes have, and it must be the personality that Erichsen considered should constitute a good, male role model. The use of standard language for this character is typical, but not obligatory. The rural dialect speaker Uncle Tobias has the same personality as the other uncles when he is featured on the radio. Only when specifically entertaining an adult party, as in Extracts 1 and 2, does Erichsen perform him as funny, flirtatious and cheeky.

### SOME SALIENT FEATURES AND CHANGES OF LINGUISTIC NORM

The speech styles that characterize Kallemann and Amandus have, despite their differences, also many similarities. According to the description of the Bergen dialect (Larsen & Stoltz 1911–1912), the differences between the two main varieties were fewer than in other Norwegian cities, but needless to say, even few differences can be highly salient. (An excellent example of this is the importance of the articulation of /a/ in Danish (Thøgersen 2013)).

As in many other Norwegian dialects, the first-person singular personal pronoun is an important sociolinguistic marker; if one should decide on one single feature that marks a person as speaking vernacular or standard, this would be it. The standard variant of ‘I’ is /jei/, used by Amandus, by the Chief of Police and by Uncle Sverre, whereas the vernacular has /e:g/, used by Kallemann and Aunt Amalie.<sup>8</sup> In reality, all research on the dialect from Larsen & Stoltz in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the investigations by Nesse (1994), Nornes (2011) and Doublet (2012) a hundred years later shows that an intermediate variant /e/ is commonly used by most speakers, especially when spoken without stress. But in imitation, which is typically intended to show as many differences as possible in a short time, there tends to be no use of intermediate forms.

Another salient feature, which often co-varies with ‘I’, is the pronunciation of ‘not’. The standard variant of ‘not’ is /ikε/, while the vernacular form is /içε/. This also includes elliptic forms like /viçε/ < /vil içε/, ‘will not’; /gokε/ < /go:ɔ ikε/, ‘goes not’ (‘won’t do’); and /kanke/ < /kan ikε/, ‘can not’.

A feature that, unlike ‘I’ and ‘not’, is more difficult to relate to social stratification is the adverb ‘now’. Here, the standard variant has changed from /nu/ to /no/ during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while the Bergen vernacular always has had /nu/. According to Myking (1983), there is even a question whether /nu/ was ever really established

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<sup>8</sup> Most speakers who use /jei/, ‘I’, will also use /mei/, ‘me’; /dei/, ‘you’ (in object form) and the reflexive pronoun /sei/. Most speakers who use /e:g/ will use /me:g/, /de:g/, and /se:g/.

Table 3: The sociolinguistic development of the adverb ‘now’

| Old system        |                 |                 |               |        |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------|
| Bergen vernacular | Bergen standard | Oslo vernacular | Oslo standard | Danish |
| /nu/              | /nʉ/ and /nu/   | /no/            | /nʉ/          | /nu/   |
| New system        |                 |                 |               |        |
| Bergen vernacular | Bergen standard | Oslo vernacular | Oslo standard |        |
| /nu/              | /no/ and /nu/   | /no/            | /no/          |        |

in the Bergen version of the standard, or if even those who used the iconic standard variants /jei/ and /ike/ would use /nu/ most of the time. A point to take into consideration is that the old norm, Danish, had the pronunciation /nu/<sup>9</sup> (see Table 3), and this may of course have led to the fact that many Bergeners preferred this. This dubious sociolinguistic status of the adverb is cleverly recognised by Erichsen, who lets Amandus use the same variant as Kalleman, /nu/. The Chief of Police, however, who speaks the Oslo Standard, uses /no/, and thus performs according to the modern standard of the time.

This feature is a good example of the sociolinguistics of Norwegian after 1850; the Danish norm is slowly exchanged for an east Norwegian norm. In this case, it was not before the spelling revision of 1938 that <nu> was exchanged with <nå> in writing, and the change in the spoken standard has followed even slower. The matter is further complicated by the fact that in several north Norwegian dialects, /nʉ/ is in fact the vernacular variant.

Another change in the sociolinguistics of Norwegian is that bidialectism was far more common in the heyday of K&A than it is today (Nesse 2015). Standard-speaking boys (and to some extent girls) spoke the standard at home with their parents, but shifted to the vernacular when they were outside playing with friends (Nesse 2008: 50–56). Thus the nickname for the vernacular was *gatespråk*, ‘street language’. It was the style one could use in the streets (which is where city children played). Today this pattern is less common, and Norwegian bidialectism is more of a horizontal phenomenon, due to individual moving. If a family moves from a rural area and into Oslo, for instance, the children may use the Oslo vernacular at school and with friends, but the rural dialect at home in the family. The adults will most

<sup>9</sup> The pronunciation of the letter <u> is pronounced /u/ in Danish and /ʉ/ in Norwegian. The word spelled <nu> would therefore be pronounced /nu/ in Danish and /nʉ/ in Norwegian. The Norwegian standard pronunciation /nʉ/ was one of many examples of how spoken standard Norwegian followed Danish orthography, not Danish pronunciation.

likely keep their rural dialect even if they move to the city. Vertical bidialectism between dialect and standard is very seldom heard (of), and it has been common in the Norwegian speech community to disregard bidialectism among adults as inauthentic. For children, it may be a strategy in order to avoid teasing. Sandøy (2013: 147) interprets the increased use of dialects in most domains as a characteristic of late modernity, and there is a high awareness in the country of the high status of most (but not all) dialects. The result is that – with some exceptions – the only standard speakers left in Norway, are those who learn this variety at home, as their first and only way of speaking.

### PRAGMATIC DIFFERENCES

There are clear pragmatic differences between the two boys' styles. This is not strictly connected to vernacular vs. standard, but to politeness and behaviour. And where choice of variety to describe personality builds on stereotypes in the speech community (e.g. 'gentle boys speak more standard-like than tough boys'), pragmatic choices can be linked more directly to social behaviour. The boy who is said to be the best pupil makes sure he uses the 'right' form of address, whereas the more reckless boy forgets. In Extract 3 Amandus uses both formal address and title correctly the first time, when he says *De smigrer, herr politimester*. Kallemann, on the other hand, does not use the title, and misses the first attempt to use correct address: *Du e politimeistar – omforladelse – De menar eg*. Important here is *omforladelse*, 'forgive me' – it confirms what the listeners have learned, that Kallemann is a good boy who means well, and he is forgiven both by them and by the Chief of Police himself. In 1947 formal address and titles were still obligatory in formal situations in urban Norway, at least when children spoke to adults who were strangers. Today a boy like Kallemann would be expected to say *du politimestar* or even *du Erling*, using the Chief's first name.

When the two boys quarrel, the typical pattern is that Kallemann teases or accuses Amandus for something he cannot do, or does not do well enough. Amandus complains that Kallemann is naughty or reckless – or mean. Or, as we saw in the extract above, he claims that Kallemann is an embarrassment for both of them. But the contrasts between the boys are in some programmes used positively instead of negatively. In a programme from 1966, where K&A return from summer holidays in the country with Uncle Tobias, the fact that Kallemann has steered the boat most of the way is not commented upon by Amandus. He, on the other hand, is eager to present a poem he has written about the holidays, and Kallemann comments *Heia Amandus ikkje Amandus'n søkkane go, mann*, 'Go Amandus, isn't Amandus great, man'. In this case, the two boys are presented as different, but equal.

## LEXICAL CHANGES AS A RESULT OF CHANGES IN SOCIETY

The literature on linguistic change most often emphasises structural changes; this in contrast to the folk linguistic emphasis on changes in the vocabulary. For sociolinguistic history, it is relevant to analyse the social background of the different lexical changes. Some changes may be explained by the changing status of influential languages. Other changes may be explained by changes in the lifestyles of the speakers, and data from K&A can be used to shed light on such lexical changes. First we will look at the ‘good-bye’ formula, *adjø*, that was used by all people in Bergen, probably many times a day. After that we will discuss how the noun *ris* had its connotations changed due to lifestyle changes.

*Adjø* was a common good-bye formula in Norwegian and Danish, at least from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on, and it is the only one used in K&A. Its origin is French *à Dieu*, ‘with God’, and the Norwegian pronunciation was /adj'ø:/ or /aj'ø:/. According to the primary listeners, the pronunciation with or without the /d/ was sociolinguistically relevant, connected to age – adults said /adj'ø:/ and children said /aj'ø:/. This is in line with the way this word is used in the K&A universe, so Sverre Erichsen must have been of the same opinion as the primary listeners when it came to the age difference in the pronunciation. Today, *adjø* has been replaced by the Norwegian /'ha:de/, an abbreviation for *ha det bra*, ‘have it good’. The loan translation from English *see you*, /vi 'se:s/, is also common today. The replacement of *adjø* can be seen as the last part of the replacement of many Romance features in the dialect, especially connected with address: *Måsjø* from French *Monseigneur* and *Madamm* from French *Madame* disappeared already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A change that is more connected to culture and lifestyle than to linguistic issues relates to the connotations of the word *ris*, /ri:s/. The original meaning of this word in Norwegian is ‘bundle of twigs’, and from there it came to mean ‘spanking’, since twigs (in the form of a birch rod) were used for that purpose. Later, rice, also called *ris*, was introduced into Norwegian kitchens, and the word *ris* then had both meanings, both ‘spanking’ and ‘rice’. As late as 1968 Erichsen makes a joke of this in a K&A episode, showing that even if rice had become a little more common in Norwegian kitchens, spanking was still the most obvious connotation for the boys:

### Extract 4

From *Kallemann & Amandus*, recording produced 10 May 1968.

Tante Amaile: *Ja, kor e han henne? De va no kjekt om vi kunne spise alle sammen me en gang.*

‘Yes, where is he? It would be nice if we all could eat together at once.’

Kallemann: *Amandus'n stakk av de samme han såg deg. Han e redde du ska je 'an juling.*

'Amandus ran away the moment he saw you. He is afraid you're going to spank him.'

Onkel Sverre: *Juling?*

'Spank him?'

Tante Amalie: *Ja, kan dokkar forstå ka de e så går utav guttongen, han har skydd meg i flere dagar.*

'Yes, can you understand what is the matter with the boy, he has been avoiding me for several days.'

Onkel Sverre: *E de noe galt han har jort, kanskje han går omkring me dårli samvittihet?*

'Maybe he has done something wrong, and goes around with a bad conscience?'

Kallemann: *Han innbillar seg så mykkje løgent, han. Han sa de at tante Amalie hadde lånt en bok å de va en lerebok i fosjellie måta te gi juling på. Vent bare te hon blir utlert, sa han.*

'He imagines so much strange, he does. He said that Aunt Amalie had borrowed a book and it was a text book in different ways to spank. Just wait until she is all educated, he said.'

Tante Amalie: *Hah, for en fantasi, dokkar. Han sa ikkje kordan han såg ut den boken då.*

'Hah, what a fantasy. He didn't say how it looked, that book.'

Onkel Sverre: *De må vere en merkeli bok.*

'That must be a strange book.'

Kallemann: *Nei, han hadde bare sitt at 'an låg på kjøkkenbore å der såg 'an ovarskriften. Så, åsså, åsså kom du me de samme jau eg tror de va juling på hundrede måtar eller så va de pryl på hundrede måtar han hetet.*

'No, he had just seen it lying on the kitchen table and there he saw the title. And then you came at once yes I think it was spanking in a hundred ways or it was called beating in a hundred ways.'

Tante Amalie: *Hahaha nei no jer eg meg ovar. Stakkars Amandus for en fantasi, dokkar. Boken hetar ris på hundrede måtar.*

‘Hahaha now I give up. Poor Amandus, what a fantasy. The book is called rice in a hundred ways.’

Onkel Sverre: *Jei kunne tenke mei de.*

‘I could imagine that much.’

Kallemann: *Jomen ris e jo de samme så pryl de mann.*

‘Yes, but spanking is the same as beating.’

Onkel Sverre: *Kunn' ikke du tenke dei at de va en kokebok da. Der e jo noen gryn som kalles for ris og vet du.*

‘Couldn’t you think that it was a cook book? There are also some cereals that are called rice, you know.’

Kallemann: *Åh, gå for nokken toskar vi har vært, mann! Nei, no e de visst best te seie takk for i dag.*

‘Oh my what fools we have been! No, now it’s best that we say thank you for today.’

Onkel Sverre: *Ja, de e visst de, du. Takk for idag alle sammen.*

‘Yes, it seems to be that. Thank you for today, all of you.’

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The programmes with Kallemann and Amandus are valuable as data both for investigations of linguistic and sociolinguistic change and for investigations of how different varieties were used in order to make entertaining programmes for children at a time when the ideal of the spoken standard was much stronger in the Norwegian society than it is today. The use of dialect in these programmes may be interpreted in different ways. One is to see them as exceptions from the common norm that prescribed the use of the standard for those employed as presenters and performers on the radio. Another possible angle is to see the dialect use as an early indication of the changes that were to come in the sociolinguistics of Norwegian, where dialects were to expand their domain. A third angle is to see these programmes as not first-and-foremost examples of radio entertainment, but more widely as popular entertainment with long traditions that were continued in radio. Interpreted as such,

we can put emphasis on how these and other programmes show in which way radio inherited types of entertainment from other domains/genres.

All three interpretations are valid, and in this chapter we have seen that a combined approach can be fruitful, and that data from programmes such as *Kallemann & Amandus* can be used to expand our knowledge and understanding of both linguistic history, sociolinguistic history and media history. However, such a combined approach means that several other relevant dimensions must be omitted, on grounds of practicality. Clearly, there are several sociolinguistic features that have not been mentioned here. Likewise there are several other radio programmes that would provide useful comparative evidence, and these can profitably be addressed in future research.

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