The project Second-language communication in workplace settings — the case of Polish migrants in Norway (NorPol) examines factors that enhance or inhibit communication between Poles and Norwegians in workplace interaction.

About the project

Language skills are often assumed to be crucial for success in working life. The NorPol project highlights the importance of language and communication for understanding inclusion and exclusion in professional settings. One of the central dimensions of our contemporary working life is the object of study: the communication involving speakers of Norwegian as their second language (L2). More specifically, we look into the case of Polish migrants in Norway. Being the largest migrant group in Norway, speaking a first language (L1) in many ways structurally different from Norwegian, Poles constitute an important case to gain better knowledge of the interplay between language skills and integration.

The project sets out to investigate socio-cultural, interactional and linguistic factors that enhance or inhibit communication between Poles and Norwegians, by asking questions like:

- Which types of linguistic practices are especially challenging for Polish L2 speakers of Norwegian?
- What are the characteristics of Poles' L2 Norwegian when communicating, and how does this communicative style affect communication and social relations?
- To what extent do different stereotypes of Poles and Norwegians affect negotiations of legitimacy and agency in interaction?

We also involve Norwegian L1 speakers by asking how they design their utterances in order to ascertain adequate comprehension in professional settings involving Poles.

By providing knowledge of the factors that enhance or inhibit communication, with an emphasis on workplace interaction, the project is likely to have impact on policy and practice pertaining to inclusion, welfare and secure working life for all citizens.
Objectives

Primary objective: Which socio-cultural, interactional and linguistic factors enhance or inhibit communication in Norwegian workplace interaction between Poles and Norwegians?

Secondary objectives:

1. To identify and explain communication styles and linguistic patterns when Poles use Norwegian as their second language (L2) in and across professional settings
2. To evaluate what aspects of Poles' use of their L2 that account for (un)successful communication
3. To examine how the L2 speakers cope with communication challenges, and how their interlocutors contribute to mutual understanding
4. To explore the role of attitudes and negotiation of identity in situated interaction
5. To extend knowledge about the character of intercultural interactions in professional settings
6. To suggest implementation of the findings in Norwegian L2 training aimed primarily at workplace communication.

Sub-projects (to appear)

- Sub-project 1
- Sub-project 2

Financing

Research council of Norway, FRIPRO scheme.

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project website

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