

*THANK YOU*

***Mathea and Ulrik***

*for putting up with me throughout this process. I love you.*

***Daniel***

*for all your help and guidance – I would be lost without you.*

***Mom***

*for being an inspiration in tough times. Stay strong and keep on fighting.*

***“Kari”***

*for your cooperation and goodwill.*

***Robert***

*for so willingly proofreading this thesis.*



# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Contextualization .....	1
1.2	Thesis outline.....	2
1.3	Delimitations .....	3
<b>2</b>	<b>Literature Review.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Clarifications .....	6
2.2	Language policies .....	7
2.2.1	Scandinavian context.....	7
2.2.2	Norway .....	7
2.3	Language management at the MTS .....	10
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1	Study design and institutional authorization .....	13
3.2	Data collection.....	14
3.2.1	Observations.....	14
3.2.2	Interviews .....	14
3.2.3	Video-recording.....	16
3.2.4	Results .....	16
3.3	Analysis method .....	17
<b>4</b>	<b>Results and Discussion .....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1	Language policies and language management .....	19
4.1.1	Macro-level.....	19
4.1.2	Meso-level (MTS).....	21
4.1.3	Micro-level (MTK).....	22
4.2	Challenges in developing thorough language management strategies .....	23
4.2.1	Communication problems .....	23
4.2.2	Varying competence levels.....	24
4.3	Language management realization .....	26
4.3.1	An unwritten rule .....	27
4.3.2	Congruent teaching strategies .....	28
4.3.3	Inappropriate language strategies .....	29
4.3	Perceptions of a mixed language input.....	30
4.4	Summary.....	32

<b>5</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>35</b>
5.1	Implementation of macro-level language policies .....	35
5.2	Realization of language management in MTK.....	36
5.3	Perceptions of language management in MTK .....	36
5.4	Concluding remark .....	37
	<b>References .....</b>	<b>39</b>
	<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>41</b>
Appendix A	Observation template.....	42
Appendix B	Teacher interview guide .....	43
Appendix C	Student interview guide .....	44
Appendix D	Background and competence level form.....	45

# 1 Introduction

This thesis addresses the implementation and realization of macro-level language policies concerning minority students at the educational meso- and micro-levels. The tripartite division of societal structures is used in this study to illustrate the division between the state-level (macro), school institution-level (meso), and classroom-level (micro). To approach an answer to the overall research of *how language policy is realized at the MTS* (receiving school), three aspects concerning language management were necessary to investigate further, namely: 1) to what extent are macro-level language policies implemented in language management at the MTS? 2) how is language management realized in MTK (receiving class)? and 3) are communication strategies used in MTK perceived as appropriate by the students and teachers?

Macro-level language policies are the framework by which educational meso- and micro-level practitioners develop and realize language strategies towards their minority students, and the theoretical framework of this study is based on the tripartite division of societal structures in relation to language policies and language management. This study investigated to what extent macro-policies were implemented at a ‘Mottaksskole’ [Receiving school] in Trondheim – which is a school that offers newly arrived minority students the opportunity to receive adapted teaching in a ‘Mottaksklasse’ [Receiving class] of up to one and a half years duration until they reach a sufficient competence level in the Norwegian language to attend ordinary subject training. Further, this study aimed to look at how teachers approached language management in the multilingual classroom, and how these language approaches were perceived by both the teachers and students in ‘mottaksklassen’. Two (2) teachers and three (3) students actively participated in this study. Alongside of this, observations and informal talks with the school management and teachers it resulted in the data upon which this thesis is based.

## 1.1 Contextualization

According to Statistics Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2017), almost 17 percent of the population in Norway is either migrant or Norwegian-born with migrant parents. 80 percent of these migrants are under the age of 20, which entails that a large number of students are enrolled in secondary-level education. In addition, Statistics Norway notes that 49,000 students received special training in Norwegian in 2016 (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2016), which

means that they receive special training until they are proficient enough in Norwegian to follow regular school teaching (Opplæringsloven, 1998, § 2-8).

From a historical perspective, the Norwegian educational system has adopted various approaches when dealing with cultural diversity. In the 1970s, most of the minority students were enrolled into classes where there was a minimum of adapted teaching in consideration of these students' competence levels. There was a strategy to place both minority and majority language students in the same classroom where all teaching was conducted in the majority language (Hauge, 2007, p. 13). The minority students were subjected to poor learning conditions, thus 'mottaksklasser' were introduced as an initiative to improve their learning environment in order to strengthen students' Norwegian language competence to the extent that they could attend ordinary classes (Hauge, 2007, p. 13). This initiative aimed at attending to students' individual needs in order to facilitate a better Norwegian language acquisition. During the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century laws and regulations concerning minority students were introduced, which emphasize that minority students need to receive adapted teaching. Contemporary approaches to minority students are rooted in the view that cultural and linguistic diversity is an asset in the educational context (Hauge, 2007, p. 14), which is illustrated by the fact that minority students are given substantial rights and guidelines on how these rights can be facilitated.

This research was conducted at a 'Mottaksskole' (MTS hereafter) in Trondheim, and had participating students and teachers from 'Mottaksklassen' (MTK hereafter). Gaining knowledge about macro-level language policies aimed at minority students was a necessary starting point before conducting the study. In this regard The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training's website and 'Lovdata' (Norwegian laws online) were consulted in order to extract the key points in so much as they relate to minority students from the relevant curricula and the Education Act. A qualitative approach to this research was preferred in order to observe authentic language management strategies used by teachers and students in the classroom context, and in order to get in-depth knowledge about language management issues from both meso- and micro-level practitioners.

## **1.2 Thesis outline**

*Chapter 2* provides the theoretical and contextual framework on which this research is based, including an overview of macro-level language policy documents concerning minority

students and an overview of the meso-level language policy framework which became apparent during the research at the MTS. *Chapter three* explains methods and approaches used in the study, which includes study design and institutional authorization, data collection, and a presentation of study participants. This chapter also includes the three research questions concerning language management which were necessary to investigate further in order to approach an answer to the overall research question. *Chapter four* presents and discusses the findings in this study, which includes discussions about the extent to which macro-level language policies are implemented at the MTS, challenges in developing thorough language management strategies, teachers' approaches to language management in the MTK classroom, and teachers' and students' perceptions of the mixed language input they experience in the classroom. *Chapter five* recapitulates the most important findings in this study, and discusses these up against the three underlying research questions. The paper ends with a concluding remark where a conclusion to the research question will be provided.

### **1.3 Delimitations**

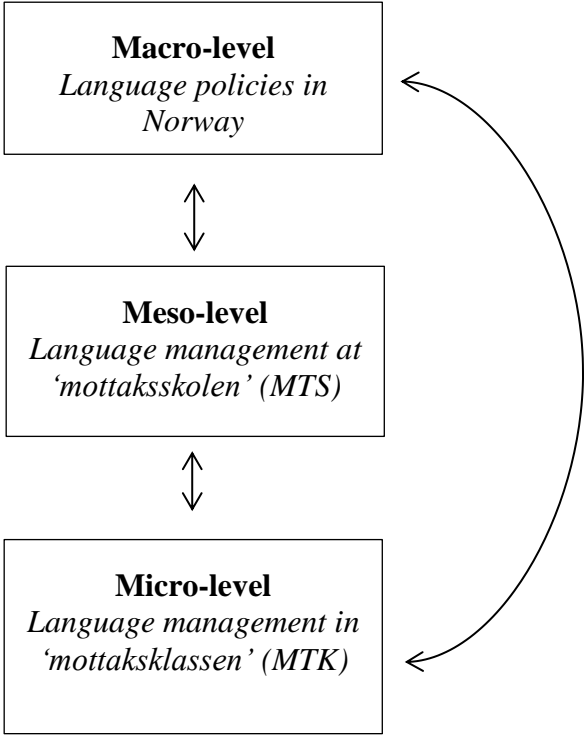
It should be noted that this study has examined how macro-level language policies are implemented and realized at the MTS based on observations in essentially two subject-classes in 'mottaksklassen', namely English and Social studies, and interviews with teachers and students in these classes. Thus, generalizing the findings in this study to suggest how implementation and realization of language policies are conducted in other subjects and to other facilitation measures towards the school's language minority students would not be appropriate.





## 2 Literature Review

Language policy is loosely defined by Spolsky (2003, p. 9) as “the language practices, beliefs and management decisions of a community or polity.” Spolsky’s definition involves the wide range of societal structures, from national level down to individual level, and includes all the areas in between where language is a relevant issue. Language policies are constructed out of social and historical contexts, ideologies and beliefs, and the de facto language use by the people of a speech community. Dividing these aspects of language policy construction to fit the macro, meso and micro terminology we can arguably say that social and historical contexts are given great emphasis at state level (macro-level), ideologies and beliefs are to a greater extent more prominent in larger communities and institutions (meso-level), while actual language practices are more actively used to form language policies in small groups of society (micro-level). The theoretical framework of this study is based on the tripartite division of societal structures in relation to language policies and language management (Diagram 1). The distinct parts are as follows: state language policies at macro-level, language management at ‘mottaksskolen’ (cf. ‘Introduction’, p. 1) at meso-level, and language management in ‘mottaksklassen’ (cf. ‘Introduction’, p. 1) at micro-level.



**Diagram 1.0:** The tripartite division of societal structures in relation to language policies and language management

Conducting a top-down approach was necessary considering the significant influence state policies have on the educational system in terms of laws and regulations. The Education Act relates to primary and secondary education, and provides guidelines to what the educational institutions should give its students in terms of cultural and professional knowledge, social involvement, and self-development. The Education Act also addresses the statutory rights language minorities have concerning adapted language tuition and mother tongue instruction. Educational institutions are mandated to adopt and follow these laws and regulations, but at the same time certain liberties exist in designing their own pedagogical approaches related to their minority language students in so much as they do not contradict the given legislation. Considering this, policies regarding the educational mandate, language strategies, and students' rights are regulated at top-level and unfolds in practice downwards in the system, thus an understanding of the macro-level resolutions is necessary in order to understand meso- and micro-level practices.

The theoretical framework of this study is based on language policies and language management at different levels of the societal structure, from state policies down to school institutional level, and further down to the classroom context. The main focus of this study was to look at how language policies at macro-level were implemented and realized at meso-, and micro-level, namely at 'mottaksskolen' (MTS) and in 'mottaksklassen' (MTK).

## **2.1 Clarifications**

Considering Spolsky's definition of language policy we see that three terms stand out, namely language management, language beliefs, and language practices. Language management refers to the formulation and proclamation of an explicit plan or policy about language use (Spolsky, 2003, p. 11). Such formulations and proclamations are often (but not always) written in a formal document. Language practices, Spolsky (2003, p. 9) argues, are the choices that individuals make in communicative contexts. In considering language beliefs: the members of a speech community often share a general set of beliefs about appropriate language use, which in turn contributes in shaping language management decisions.

Language management, beliefs, and practices are terms that correlate with the tripartite macro-, meso-, and micro-level structure. The term language management, in particular, has been given great emphasis in this study, and is used to refer to meso- and micro-level practitioners' strategies and approaches to language, both at an institutional level as well as in

the classroom context. The remainder of this chapter will have a detailed discussion about two levels of the tripartite structure, starting with a contextualization of language policy in a Scandinavian context, following with a presentation of Norwegian language policies and an overview of laws and regulations concerning minority students. Following this, an overview of the MTS' language policy management will be provided. A discussion about language management realization in MTK will be provided in the 'Results and discussion' chapter.

## **2.2 Language policies**

### **2.2.1 Scandinavian context**

Norway, along with its Scandinavian neighbors, has during the latest centuries developed to be a well-functioning and peaceful welfare-state. A reason for this democratic development is presented by Korpi (as cited in Alestalo, Hort, & Kuhnle, 2009, p. 2) who claims that the Scandinavian countries have avoided coercive oppression of a ruling class, and instead have had different classes functioning "as an agency through which society can be reformed." The similarities concerning culture, language and society in the Scandinavian countries have led to policies that do not differ appreciably from one another. It is especially so that social, public, and institutional matters are relatively alike between these countries; building on the principle of universalism – extensive public services, universal social rights and economic fairness. In the regard of language policy aims; all the Scandinavian countries' parent policy is to strengthen their language reputation and status both among its citizens and also in a more international perspective. The Language Council of Norway (Språkrådet, n.d.) also points to the importance of ensuring the language's position as a good and well-functioning medium for cultural purposes and general use – which is a view all the Scandinavian countries support in regards to their own language. The following section will elaborate on the aims and policies regarding language in Norway.

### **2.2.2 Norway**

Norway has articulated its language policy aims in a parliamentary report from 2008 called *Mål og Mening* [Purpose and Meaning], which is regarded as the overall macro-level language policy of Norway. The main aim of this language policy is to ensure the Norwegian language's position as a well-functioning cultural and societal language. What is meant by a well-functioning cultural and societal language is clarified in the report where it stated that the language is meant to be the common language used in administration and public debate and

dialogue, one which holds society together and constructs identities, and also gives sustainable conditions around which linguistic subcultures can develop (Kulturdepartementet, 2008, p. 5).

In the ‘Purpose and background’ section of the parliamentary report there is stated a concern about the English language’s influence on the status and function of the Norwegian language. The report states that there is a growing tendency in many countries to implement the English language in communicative situations even though the context does not necessarily demand this strategy (Kulturdepartementet, 2008, p. 5). The prevalent use of English increases the risk of domain loss – a situation where the primary language weakens in status and use (Kulturdepartementet, 2008, p. 5). These trends are visible throughout society, and are to some extent unavoidable in terms of globalization, immigration, and technology. One can argue that these developmental factors reflect the contemporary state of the world, and that they constitute a movement towards greater linguistic and cultural homogeneity. If we adopt these views on the “imperialism” of the English language we see the necessity for each state to ‘protect’ themselves, both in terms of language and culture.

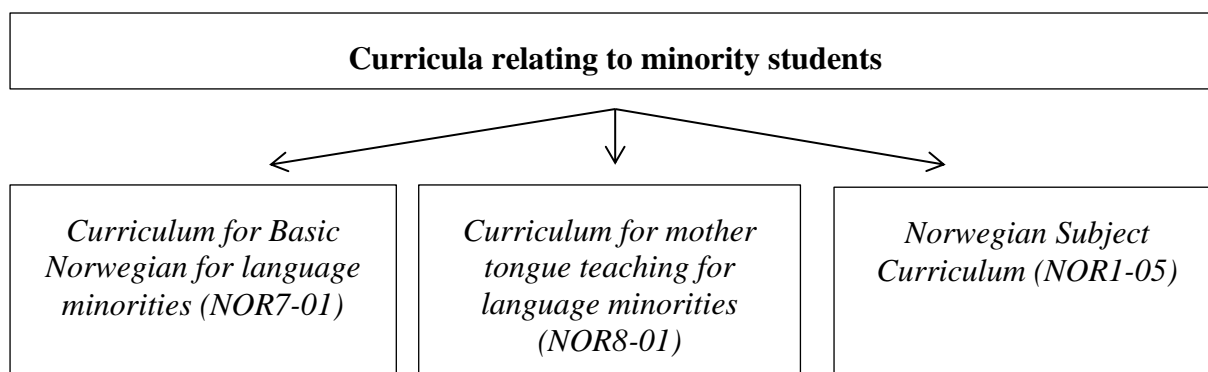
While *Mål og Mening* describes the overall language policy in Norway, other language policy programs set guidelines for language planning at institutional level, in this case the educational sector. *Språk bygger broer* [Language builds bridges] articulates the strategy for language planning and language learning for primary and secondary education. The parliamentary report states in its introduction that Norwegian is the national common language which everybody needs to master in order to become full members of society, and which is a central element as an identity- and cultural-bearing force in Norwegian society (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2008, p. 7). The emphasis on the importance of a diverse linguistic and cultural environment is embodied in the report where it is stated that the development of a national multilingualism requires awareness of the relation between global and local culture, and that Norwegian educational language policy needs to have a “global” foundation in its language strategy.

It can be seen that this creates a tension with that which is stated in *Mål og Mening* where English is singled out as a source of concern. This suggests that the educational sector to a greater extent acknowledges the growing trend of globalization and the importance of implementing a lingua franca in its language strategy. *Mål og Mening* and *Språk bygger broer* do not necessarily conflict in views about the importance of the English language and approaches to a more global culture, only that *Mål og Mening* is more concerned about the

status of the Norwegian language, whereas *Språk bygger broer* has a more holistic approach in terms of education, language, and culture.

When addressing immigrants and second language learners, *Språk bygger broer* extracts the key paragraphs from the Education Act where these issues are mentioned. Education Act § 2-8 (Opplæringsloven, 1998, § 2-8) states that students in primary education with a mother tongue other than Norwegian and Sami are entitled to special tuition in Norwegian until they have the competence to attend ordinary classes. This section also states that these students are entitled to mother tongue training, bilingual subject-instruction, or both.

Language management aims and guidelines regarding minority students are rooted in 3 different curricula (diagram 2). *Curriculum for Basic Norwegian for language minorities* (NOR7-01) is age-independent and level-based, meaning that it relates to everybody who is new to the country, and that the students' competence in both Norwegian and subject knowledge should be mapped before they are categorized into their appropriate learning level. *Curriculum for mother tongue teaching for language minorities* (NOR8-01) is also age-independent and level-based, which aims at helping the students to reach a competence in their mother tongue similar to that which they learn in Norwegian subject curricula. These two curricula should be approached in relation to each other as research shows that it is beneficial for students to learn reading and writing skills in the language they know best in order to enhance their development potential in the target language (Utdanningsdirektoratet & NAFO, 2009, p. 12). *Norwegian Subject Curriculum* (NOR1-05) is the regular subject curriculum which provides guidelines in terms of purpose, basic skills, competence aims, and assessment in the subject. In regard to what curricula language minority students should follow, *The Curriculum for Basic Norwegian for language minorities* states in its purpose section that “the school owner / the school decides whether mother tongue teaching shall be given in accordance with the curriculum for basic Norwegian for language minorities or in the form of special adaptation within the regular curriculum in Norwegian” (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2007a, p. 1).



**Diagram 2:** Curricula relating to minority students

### 2.3 Language management at the MTS

Stephen May (as cited in Wright, 2008, p. 243) defined a school language policy as “a policy document aimed at addressing the particular language needs of a school.” This implies that the mapping of student language needs is a vital key to language policy development and formation. May’s definition of a school language policy is arguably an idealized formulation that demands a solid effort by the school authorities to achieve. As will be evident, not all schools have a formal language policy document; thus the question then concerns what guidelines and which approaches form the basis of their language management strategies?

The school where this research was conducted is an ordinary secondary school in Trondheim that is also in addition a ‘receiving school’. This means that migrant students receive adapted education in a ‘receiving class’ for up to one and a half years, in order to acquire sufficient competence in the Norwegian language to attend ordinary subject training. This school is also a FOKUS-school, which means that it has close cooperation with *The National Centre for Multicultural Education* (NAFO). NAFO contributes to competence development in both lower and higher education, and assists schools in developing good educational models with respect to multilingual students (Trondheim Kommune, 2013). FOKUS-schools commit themselves to working with the development of multicultural and bilingual teaching and cooperating with neighboring schools (Trondheim Kommune, 2013).

Conversations with both the school principal and the head of MTK highlighted that the school did not have any internal language policies. The lack of a formal language policy is not uncommon according to Spolsky (2003, p. 8), who argues that

*[...] language policy exists even where it has not been made explicit or established by authority. Many countries and institutions and social groups do not have formal or written language policies, so that the nature of their language policy must be derived from a study of their language practice or beliefs. Even where there is a formal, written language policy, its effect on language practices is neither guaranteed nor consistent.*

Even though no clear language policy was apparent at the MTS, the ‘mottaksteam’ – a team of teachers who deal with issues concerning ‘mottaksklassen’ – had however developed strategies considering the facilitation of language management towards the minority students in this class. This information made it necessary to investigate to what extent macro-level language policies were implemented at the meso- and micro-levels, and whether clear realization strategies concerning language management towards minority students were in any way apparent at the school. These were two of the research aspects which had to be studied in order to answer the overall research question in this study. These aspects will be discussed further in the ‘Results and discussion’ chapter.





## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Study design and institutional authorization

Results in this study are based on data from classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers in MTK. A qualitative approach to this research was appropriate in order to get in-depth knowledge of language management at the MTS in general and language management strategies towards minority students in particular. Along with the MTK student's and teachers' perceptions of these strategies, this methodology made it possible to approach an answer to the overall research question: *how is language policy realized at MTS?* In this study it was important to observe communication strategies and approaches used in the classroom and to interview minority-language students and their teachers in order to get a perspective on language management from insiders of the micro-level classroom context. This was helpful in terms of getting insight into how macro-level language policies and meso-level language management strategies affect language approaches at micro-level.

Initiating contact with MTS was first attempted in June 2016 by an e-mail request to arrange a meeting in order to present the study to the school management. This initially desired meeting proved not possible, thus the period leading up to September was used instead to initiate contact with MTS through e-mail and telephone correspondence. At first the school was hesitant to authorize the study as they normally did not accept inquiries of this sort, but after scheduling a meeting where the study was presented to the Head of MTK (HMTK hereafter) the attitude changed. The meeting with the HMTK initiated the research at the MTS, and the author was put in contact with a teacher (addressed as the pseudonym "Kari" hereafter) who teaches English in MTK. Kari became a close contact at the MTS, and regular contact occurred with her during the data-collection period. No formal documents were prepared either by the author or the school in regards to authorizing the study at the MTS. However, a continuous dialogue between the author, the school management and Kari ensured that there were no misunderstandings. It also ensured that all parties had a good overview of the research process. After gaining institutional authorization the project was reported to the Data Protection Official for Research through the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), and by the end of November the research was approved.

## **3.2 Data collection**

### **3.2.1 Observations**

The observations performed aimed at examining communication in MTK, with a special focus on language strategies and communication approaches used by both the students and teachers. Due to this relatively wide focus of observations, an open-ended observation template was constructed (Appendix A) – which meant specific phenomena or strategies were not sought to be observed, but rather that which was sought was an observation of how and when different communication strategies were used, and the appropriateness of the use of these strategies. Communication strategies in this study's purpose concerns language management approaches that relate to the overall language aim for the minority students in MTK. This allowed interesting findings to be addressed and a narrowing of the focus of the research after doing the observations. The observation template also included sections such as general impression of the class, impression of student behavior, teaching methods and approaches, and framework factors. These sections were included in order to get a better overview of the classroom dynamic in MTK, both in terms of communication, social behavior, and pedagogical approaches. The observations aimed at being somewhere in between open-ended and structured in order to have some freedom in the observing role, but also at the same time to allow a narrowing of the focus of the observation if interesting situations arose. The observer role was non-participatory in order to authentically observe the classroom situation. Individual behavior as well as group behavior was observed, and dimensions of variation among both individuals and the group as a whole were thus identified.

The students were not informed about the purpose of the observation in the classroom beforehand. After consulting with Kari, the MTK English teachers, about the issue of whether to inform the students or not, an agreement was reached that it would be best for the observation that the students did not know about the observer purpose for being in the classroom in order to maintain as authentically as possible the classroom dynamics.

### **3.2.2 Interviews**

All of the five interview participants were either students or teachers in MTK. The student participants were selected based on their competence level in Norwegian and English – with competence levels varying from high to low in order to get perceptions of classroom communication by students with different prerequisite skill. The teacher participants were selected based on the fact that they actively taught MTK classes. It was also desirable to interview a teacher who was a part of the 'mottaksteam' – a team of MTK-teachers who deal

with issues concerning MTK – in order to gain insight into their language management strategies. The five participants have been provided with invented names so as to ensure their anonymity:

**Kari:** Teaches English in MTK – 3 classes per week. Not part of the ‘mottaksteam’.

**Per:** Teaches Social Studies in MTK – 3 classes per week, in addition to several hours of special tuition with MTK-students per week. He is part of the ‘mottaksteam’.

**Alice (16):** Arabic-speaking student in MTK with low competence in both Norwegian and English.

**Bella (15):** Arabic-speaking student in MTK with medium competence in both Norwegian and English.

**Cristian (13):** Romanian-speaking student in MTK with a relatively high competence in both Norwegian and English.

The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended which aimed to map the students’ and teachers’ perceptions and experiences about language management strategies and communicative approaches, both at the MTS in general and in MTK in particular. Semi-structured interview guides (Appendices B and C) were preferred in this study because of the many aspects that could potentially be of interest to the research, allowing follow-up questions to be asked when interesting information was presented. The students were also asked to fill out a form (Appendix D) which asked them to state their mother tongue, educational background, and to rank their level of English and Norwegian language competence within a grading system according to their self-perception.

The interviews with the teachers lasted for approximately 40 minutes, and were taped with an audio-recorder. Before conducting the interviews the teacher interviewees were asked to read through and sign an information letter where information was presented about the study’s purpose, research questions, data collection approaches, and on confidentiality. The student selection process was itself done by Kari who was the individual most familiar with the students and their competence levels. HMTK was also involved in the student selection process due to the special considerations concerning immigrant students – a process which limited the selection of students who could potentially partake in the study. The interviews with the students lasted for approximately 30 minutes and were taped with an audio-recorder. All the interviews were conducted in Norwegian – however, various language approaches were utilized during the student interviews. The interviewed students had to some extent

competence in both the Norwegian and English language, but they had a more adequate competence level in the former language than the latter. Due to these students' varying language competence levels the interviews were primarily conducted in Norwegian, but English was used as a clarifying approach when uncertainties arose.

An ethical concern arose when dealing with the issue of written consent from the students' parents or guardians. The students did not sign an information letter before participating in the interviews, but this approach to conducting the interviews without initial written consent was based on an adherence to school management's advice on the issue. Another ethical issue arose concerning the students' language competence, both when it came to whether they fully understood the purpose of the study or not, and how adequate their answers were during the interviews. The language barriers were a potential bias-factor in the research because of the aforementioned issues, thus it would have been convenient to have an interpreter or a mother tongue teacher assisting these students both before and during the interviews.

### **3.2.3 Video-recording**

An English-class in MTK of 50 minutes was recorded. The process of getting approval for using camera-equipment in the classroom was strict and required thorough planning on both the author and the school's part, as both NSD and the school had strict guidelines considering student anonymity. Due to some internal misunderstandings between teachers in MTK on the day of the recording only three students attended the recorded class. Classroom dynamics were thus very different to a regular-sized class, thus the data of the recording was considered deficient and were not used to a significant degree in this research.

The students were not informed about the camera-installation beforehand – again after adhering to the school management's advice. The installation was set at the back of the classroom which was a measure to lessen the intrusiveness of my presence. The ethical consideration of informing the students about the purpose of recording them in class was again relevant, but a decision not to inform the students was based on advice from the school management as well as from consultation with Kari.

### **3.2.4 Results**

Data from the observations and the interviews formed three questions which needed to be analyzed in order to answer the overall research question, namely:

1. To what extent are macro-level policies implemented in language management at the MTS?

2. How is language management realized in MTK?
3. Are communication strategies used in MTK perceived as appropriate by the students and teachers in this class?

### **3.3 Analysis method**

After the observations were conducted, all the potentially important findings were marked and placed into a compilation scheme identical to the observation template. As observations were done in three different subject areas in MTK, this method was used for all three subject areas separately. By the use of this methodology, similarities and differences were studied in both the language strategies and communicative approaches used by the teachers and students in the different subjects. After placing the findings into a compilation-scheme each finding was annotated and sorted into possible categories in order to get a better picture of how to analyze the findings. The same strategy was used with the interview-transcriptions in order to more easily be able to link the observations and the interviews together. Color-codes were utilized in the transcription document in order to more easily navigate between interviewee and interviewer, and between questions and answers. These approaches made it easy to navigate through all of the findings and to compare and contrast the information gathered through the observations and interviews. The video-recorded material was not analyzed as it was considered deficient and not applicable to this study.



## 4 Results and Discussion

This chapter will present and discuss the findings of this study, which in turn forms the basis to approach an answer to the overall research question: *how is language policy realized at MTS?* Firstly, an elaboration of the framework curricula concerning minority students will be provided in order to highlight the main aims and guidelines that are stated in these documents. This section will also present an overview of the MTS' language management strategy towards their minority students. Following this, a presentation and discussion concerning challenges in developing thorough language management strategies at the MTS will be provided, which is based on the observations and interviews. Then there will be a presentation of how teachers in MTK approach language management in the classroom, along with a discussion about the appropriateness of the teachers' approaches. Lastly, an insight into teachers' and students' perceptions concerning language input in the classroom will be provided in order to get a better understanding of the appropriateness of the current language management situation at the MTS. It should be noted that all interviews were conducted in Norwegian, but all quotations from the participating teachers and students are translated into English in order to maintain a natural flow in the text.

### 4.1 Language policies and language management

#### 4.1.1 Macro-level

As we saw in the 'Literature Review' chapter *Mål og Mening* articulates the overall language policy in Norway, while *Språk bygger broer* articulates the strategy for language-planning and language-learning for primary and secondary education. These governmental documents lay the macro-level foundation on which educational institutions develop and manage their language strategies. With regards to language minorities, the *Mål og Mening* report states that Norwegian has a superior position as the cultural and societal language, but linguistic subcultures should be given sustainable conditions in order to develop. Additionally, even though *Språk bygger broer* also emphasizes that Norwegian is the natural common language which everybody needs to master in order to become full members of society, this report also elucidates that the educational sector has a more "global" foundation in its language strategy by emphasizing the importance of a diverse linguistic cultural environment. Even though these parliamentary reports point out the importance of linguistic diversity, there is a growing

concern about the English language's influence on the status and function of the Norwegian language, a point that is stressed in the *Mål og Mening* report in particular.

Further, the Education Act articulates language minority students' statutory right to special tuition in Norwegian, mother tongue training, and bilingual subject-instruction – this substantiates the claim that the educational sector has a holistic approach to its language strategy. Furthermore, the various curricula regarding language minority students (cf. 'Literature review', p. 10) articulate the aims and purposes concerning language tuition and language learning for these students, which in turn function as guidelines for schools and teachers when they plan their language strategies.

The three different curricula (concerning language minority students) articulate the aims, intentions, and guidelines; the purpose of these being to help these students reach the overall aim of learning Norwegian well enough to attend regular classes in order to follow ordinary subject training. *Curriculum for mother tongue teaching for language minorities* (NOR8-01) states that the main goal of teaching is to strengthen students' qualifications for gaining command of the Norwegian language, and that teaching should promote insight into the students' own language learning. It also states that students should have knowledge about their mother tongue and that this knowledge should play an integral part in learning the Norwegian language, and that the students should be able to choose strategies and work methods that are appropriate for learning the language (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2007b, p. 1). *Curriculum for basic Norwegian for language minorities* (NOR7-01) states that the main goal for instruction in basic Norwegian is the development of linguistic confidence and self-assurance, and that teaching should promote development in the Norwegian language (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2007a, p. 1). It further states that the students should be helped – through the development of good learning strategies and insight into their own language learning – to develop their Norwegian language skills as quickly as possible (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2007a, p. 1). This curriculum also emphasizes the importance of the students' previous language learning as a point of departure when learning a new language. The *Norwegian Subject Curriculum* (NOR1-05) articulates that linguistic diversity is an asset in the development of linguistic competence, and further that Norwegian subject training should develop the students' linguistic competence according to the abilities and potential of each individual student (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2013, p. 1).

We see that macro-level language policy documents are thorough and precise with respect to minority students' language aims in the educational context. These documents lay the



framework for meso- and micro-level language management approaches, which are interpretable within boundaries that do not conflict with any statutory laws and regulations. The MTS consult the abovementioned curricula actively when dealing with its minority language students. However, as will be seen, the school does not implement the guidelines set by these curricula in such a manner that would allow it to form effective language management strategies vis-à-vis the minority student. This could be a challenge for both the students and teachers due to the uncertainty that could result from not having thoroughly developed strategies or guidelines to follow. This assumption will be substantiated through presentation and discussion of collected data later in this chapter.

#### **4.1.2 Meso-level (MTS)**

No clear language policies were apparent when this research was initiated at the MTS (the receiving school). After conversations with both the school principal and the HMTK (Head of ‘mottaksklassen’) it became clear that the school did not have an internal language policy concerning their minority students; rather, they stated that they consulted the aforementioned macro-policies when dealing with language issues related to these students. The school’s online homepage also showed that they used *Curriculum for basic Norwegian for language minorities* as their foundational framework concerning language minority students. The following section will discuss to what extent macro-level language policies concerning minority students are implemented in language management approaches at MTS based on data from teacher interviews and informal talks with the school management.

Even though the MTS adhere to macro-level language policies, they had not developed a comprehensive internal language policy concerning their minority students. After an e-mail correspondence with a contact person in MTK, however, an *approach* to language management concerning minority students was presented. This contact presented an ‘achievement of objectives’ formulation – which functioned as a series of guidelines towards the school’s language minority students. It reads: *Our multilingual students should feel integrated, motivated, and be able to follow the ordinary subject training at the lower secondary level.* This formulation implicitly states the aim of getting all multilingual students to follow ordinary subject training. Enhancing language minority students’ Norwegian language competence is thus arguably the overall objective in MTS’s language strategy, which correlates with the macro-level language policy documents concerning language minority students. Further, this contact presented a language management strategy towards their minority students which stated that in order to succeed in transferring language minority

students into ordinary classes: the MTS must ensure that their organizational- and working-methods foster quality in Norwegian language learning, and that this language learning should be linked up to the other subjects in the course curriculum. The contact stressed the responsibility that every teacher at MTS has in teaching minority students the Norwegian language, and that these students should be taught the language in every subject, not just in Norwegian subject training. The contact stated that systematic effort by the teachers is a key factor concerning students' language competence development, meaning that all teachers – not just language teachers – are responsible for facilitating minority language students' linguistic development. This language management strategy is arguably organizational guidelines only – meaning that the emphasis is on how to facilitate language management internally at the MTS rather than how to realize language management in the classroom.

#### **4.1.3 Micro-level (MTK)**

Aims and strategies regarding language management in MTK (the receiving class) are directed by governmental laws and regulations, such as the curricula relating to language minority students (cf. 'Literature Review', p. 10) and the Education Act, which in turn are interpreted and realized by meso- and micro-level practitioners. At micro-level the language management issues relating to MTK are mainly dealt with by the team of teachers who constitute the pedagogical foundation of this class, namely the 'mottaksteam'. As emphasized in the language management strategy presented by the contact in MTK, effective cooperation between teachers is one of the most important elements in facilitating the students' language development in order to reach the overall aim of getting these students to transfer to regular classes. However, when conferring with Kari, who is not a part of the 'mottaksteam' but is nonetheless teaching this class on a regular basis, the reality was described somewhat differently. She was not aware of any language strategies regarding this class, and further to this she stated that her approaches to teaching and language management were based on personal pedagogical beliefs rather than any overarching strategy towards the minority language students. This suggests that communication across the collegium of teachers is not as effective as intended, which can be interpreted as that those issues being discussed and dealt with by the 'mottaksteam' are not transparent to teachers who are not a part of this team. Based on Kari's statement it would seem that language management in MTK is to some extent based on micro-level practitioners interpreting macro-level language policy guidelines.

## 4.2 Challenges in developing thorough language management strategies

Macro-level policies concerning minority students provide regulations and guidelines which are interpreted and realized by practitioners at the meso- and micro-levels. Even though the MTS adheres to macro-level language policies, no internal language policy was developed. In its place they operate with a language management strategy which is arguably organizational only – meaning that the emphasis is on how to facilitate language management at the MTS rather than how to realize language management in the classroom context. This section will present and discuss language management challenges that became apparent during this research – which can be seen as contributing factors that hinder the development of thorough language management strategies towards the minority students.

### 4.2.1 Communication problems

*Curriculum for Basic Norwegian for Language Minorities* articulates the overall language aim for language minority students – namely to enhance these students' Norwegian language proficiency to the extent that they can follow ordinary subject training. This aim is evidently established in the MTK teachers' consciousness as both Kari and Per, who teach English and Social studies respectively, pointed to this aim in their interviews. Per stated that: *the purpose of the year in 'mottak' is that the students should learn Norwegian, rather than subject content*, while Kari said: *It is a rule, actually, that they should speak Norwegian, because that is what they primarily should be learning*. These statements, along with the 'Achievement of objectives' formulation – which functioned as a series of guidelines at both MTS in general and in MTK in particular – suggest that the most important aspects of the macro-level language policy framework is established at the meso- and micro-levels. To approach the macro-level policy aims, the contact person in MTK emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation and a collective teacher effort in order to reach the overall language aim for the minority students at MTS.

Conflicting with this view, Kari, the MTK English teacher, expressed the view that she felt somewhat alone when approaching language management in MTK because she was not familiar with the issues being discussed in the 'mottaksteam' (cf. 'Methodology', pp. 14-15). Kari said that it was unfortunate that there was such little communication between her and the team concerning the pedagogical issues in this class. She explained: *what is unfortunate in my situation is that I'm mostly in other classrooms at the school, in other classes. I only have the three classes in MTK – I do not participate in the 'mottaksteam'-meetings*. She expressed that she just "comes-and-goes" in MTK without having either the time or the knowledge about the

issues relating to this class to do anything other than to teach her subject the best way she can. She elaborated her expression of helplessness concerning the lack of communication between the teachers in MTK by saying that: *everything happens in passing* [discussing issues related to MTK with other teachers]. *We do not really talk about language; there are other things we just have to deal with. It's basically just me and my thoughts about the issue* [of language], *and unfortunately I don't get to talk to the 'mottaksteam' very much.*

As Kari's statements above suggest, language management is left to the ad-hoc approaches of the classroom teacher without an underlying basis of internal guidelines or strategies.

Interdisciplinary cooperation and a collective teacher effort were presented as an ideal approach concerning facilitating minority students' Norwegian language acquisition, but such an approach would arguably require clear realization strategies in order to be effective. The lack of communication between teachers in MTK is arguably a contributing factor in creating uncertainty relating to language approaches towards the minority students, which in its turn could hinder the development of a thorough language management strategy.

#### **4.2.2 Varying competence levels**

Even though the lack of effective communication between the teachers in MTK is a challenge concerning the development of a thorough language management strategy towards the minority students, this study did reveal that the teachers in MTK found the immensely varying student competence levels especially challenging with regard to the facilitation of the students' Norwegian language acquisition and subject knowledge. A relevant point to add to the discussion is at the time when conducting this study at the MTS many of the students in MTK had to some extent competence in both the Norwegian and English language. This meant that they were more or less able to communicate with teachers and fellow students using these languages. Even though many students were able to communicate in Norwegian and English, the students' language competence was immensely varied in this class, partially due to the fact that students are enrolled continuously during the school year without necessarily having any competence in these languages when they first are enrolled at the MTS. Even though the language composition in this class varies to a great extent, the density of Arabic speaking students remains relatively high while the density of students who have an English-speaking background is relatively low. This entails that for most of the students in MTK the communicative lingua franca will be Norwegian, despite Arabic being a prominent language in this classroom.

Kari, the MTK English teacher, expressed that the biggest challenge she experienced teaching in MTK was the substantial variation in student competence. She said: *the language [teaching] is simple, especially at the start of the year when I have to find out where the students are [competence-wise], the teaching is really simple – I have to adapt it a little bit. But it is a bit challenging when every student is in the same class. I have to find a middle way – maybe somebody doesn't understand everything, but most of them understand a little bit.* Kari expressed frustration that she could not give to all the students the pedagogical challenges they should be receiving, and that she did not have the time to adapt her teaching to meet every student's needs. This variance in competence levels was arguably the biggest challenge the teachers in MTK met, and with this issue in mind Kari presented an idea which could be seen to be an approach in dealing with this challenge: *it would be beneficial to have pre-developed subject courses where you can decide at which level each student is [in order to adapt the teaching based on each student's competence level]. For example, you have a developed course spanning one year, that is level-based up to four levels [four competence levels], and theme based [each level dealing with certain themes which matches the student's competence level – and that these themes were interdisciplinary [themes being taught simultaneously across subjects].* Kari supported this idea by expressing that she did not feel that she got a coherent progression in her classes, and that she struggled every week to come up with teaching material for the students in MTK.

Per, the MTK social science teacher, also addressed the challenging issue of having substantial variation in students' competence levels in the classroom, and said that: *having many languages in the classroom is not a problem in itself, the biggest challenge is that they [the students] have varying competence levels when it comes to Norwegian and thus in designing the teaching accordingly. What they really need is their own individual plan.*

Kari and Per's statements create the assertion that the MTS has no clear approach to the issue of dealing with the immensely varying competence levels in MTK, essentially when it comes to dealing with this issue in the subjects dealt with in this study. Both the *Curriculum for basic Norwegian for language minorities* and *Mother tongue teaching for language minorities* state that students should be mapped according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language, and based on this mapping a decision should be made for each student as to what level in the curriculum the teaching should serve as a starting point. In this study there have been found no basis to suggest anything about how this level-oriented approach to teaching is realized in other subjects than the ones dealt with in this study. Based

on the statements from teachers in English and Social studies, however, good reasons were established to assert that the mapping and categorization of students in these subjects were not sufficiently implemented and realized.

Having students sorted into different pre-developed levels in all classes would be an ideal approach in terms of these students' need to receive adapted teaching: but such an approach would arguably be challenging to implement due to the high student turnover this class experiences. New students are enrolled into this class at different times throughout the year, while regular students are transferred to ordinary classes when they reach a high enough competence level in Norwegian. Kari addressed this challenge, and expressed the difficulties relating to students who are enrolled into MTK at various times during the school year in terms of the progression in the subject and adapting the teaching: *then you have the students who are enrolled in the middle of the year. New students are enrolled all the time.* Due to the high student turnover this class experiences it is arguably extremely important to have clear strategies and approaches in order to facilitate new students' language development, and to effectively approach the aim of getting the minority language students enrolled into regular classes.

### **4.3 Language management realization**

The data covered so far has revealed that there are challenges considering the development of thorough language management strategies towards the minority students at the MTS. Arguably, because of these challenges – and the assertion that the language management strategy the MTS does have arguably only deals with how to facilitate language management rather than how to realize it – language management approaches towards the minority students varies between the teachers in MTK. Initially, this section will look at how the students in MTK themselves play an active role in facilitating language acquisition. Following this, a presentation of teachers' approaches to language management in MTK will be provided, discussing how these correspond to the macro-level language policy aims concerning language minority students. The discussion will also revolve around similarities and differences in teacher approaches, in such that they could help indicate whether there are congruent language strategies that are appropriate and effective towards reaching the overall language aim for students in MTK.

#### 4.3.1 An unwritten rule

In order to learn the Norwegian language as quickly as possible the students arguably need to play an active role in reaching this aim, and both the observations and the interviews made it clear that the students in MTK were encouraged by the teachers at MTS to speak Norwegian as much as possible, both inside and outside of the classroom. When asked about the approach of motivating students in order to facilitate language development, Kari, the MTK English teacher, said that: *it is sort of a rule that the students should try to speak Norwegian amongst themselves in order to learn the language as quickly as possible, because that is the emphasis when they first come here.* One of the interviewed students also pointed to the teachers' encouragement towards the students to speak as much Norwegian as possible at school, which indicates that this language "rule" is communicated to the students in MTK.

Since the minority language students are encouraged, and in fact subject to a "rule", to speak as much Norwegian as possible both inside out outside of the classroom, they necessarily need to develop strategies in order to communicate with each other. At the time when this research was conducted, many of the students in MTK had to some extent competence in both the Norwegian and English language, thus they were more or less able to communicate with teachers and fellow students using these languages. Both the observations and the interviews revealed that the students use each other's language competence actively both inside and outside of the classroom – both in order to facilitate Norwegian acquisition and also in order to understand the subject content. The interviewed teachers also expressed that the variance in student competence in this class had its positive side, namely that students helped each other with subject content and language learning. Per, the MTK Social studies teachers, said that: *sometimes I give messages and instruction in both English and Norwegian, [...] if it is hard to understand, some of the students who know [the languages] better help to translate it [the message/instruction] to Arabic, or Dari, or Thai etc..* Kari also emphasized the positive aspect of student translation, and said that: *we see sometimes that some students know a little more [language and subject matter], so these students help those who know less. It works fine for them; it is practice for those who help as well, that they explain things and perhaps have to explain it in English.*

The fact that there exists a "rule" concerning encouraging students to take an active part in facilitating language development creates the assertion that this approach is a clear realization strategy concerning language management in MTK. This in turn indicates that there is a common understanding about certain aspects of language management among the teachers in

MTK, namely a common understanding of the overall macro-level language policy aim of facilitating students' language development to the extent that they are able to follow ordinary subject training.

#### 4.3.2 Congruent teaching strategies

This study revealed that there were congruent realization strategies between the teachers in MTK with the goal of reaching the overall language aim for the minority students, despite the fact that there were not developed any clear strategies of how to approach language management in the classroom. This study revealed that the teachers in MTK used – to varying degrees – both mime and drawing in their communication with the students (in addition to oral communication). Per, the MTK social studies teacher, stated that these alternative methods of communicating had a positive effect on the students, and especially the new students: *I use it more now, maybe not as much with the groups that have been here for some time, but with the new students I use a lot miming and drawing. [...] no matter how many ways I say something in Norwegian, they just stare blank back at me without understanding what I said, but if I begin to mime it dawns on them.* As both teachers actively used these alternative methods of communicating suggests that approaches to language management in MTK are to some extent synchronized between the teachers in this class.

Further, implementing the students' mother tongue in a teaching context is arguably appropriate in order for the students to fully understand terms and concepts that are being dealt with, and all of the teachers that were observed used Google Translate actively in this regard. Per, the MTK social studies teacher, expressed in the interview that he saw many positive aspects in using Google Translate, which were helpful in the classroom context: *I have also used Google Translate quite a lot actually, because most languages have a playback-function so you can hear the word that is typed in. Then we try to find the right word, because often the wrong word comes up, but then the students get a better contextual understanding of what we are dealing with.*

Translation technology is arguably a helpful tool in a language learning context, but Per, the MTK Social studies teacher, also mentioned a challenge relating to this issue surrounding translation applications on mobile devices. Many students in MTK apparently used this tool in the classroom, and Per said that the 'mottaksteam' had decided to ban the use of mobile phones in the classroom for a short period because they did not think it was appropriate that the students used these translation applications. The 'mottaksteam' justified this decision by claiming that using translation applications would be an "easy" way to learn the subject



material, but because these kinds of applications normally entail that the language itself is “corrupted” when translated it would not be appropriate to use in terms of language learning – which after all should be the emphasis in every subject according to the internal language management strategy at the MTS (cf. ‘Results and Discussion’, pp. 21-22). The ‘mottaksteam’s’ decision to ban mobile phones in the classroom in order to facilitate a better language learning environment is another example of a clear, but not formalized, strategy towards approaching the overall language aim of the students in MTK.

The alternative methods of communicating (i.e. mime and drawing), in addition to the ban of mobile phones in the classroom and the language “rule” discussed earlier, are all examples of clear language strategies used by teachers in MTK in order to facilitate the students’ Norwegian language acquisition. This again indicates that there are functional and appropriate realization strategies concerning language management towards the minority students at the school, which could be beneficial for both the school management and teachers in MTK to implement in the already existing language management guidelines in order to get a more consistent and transparent approach to realizing macro-level language policy aims.

#### **4.3.3 Inappropriate language strategies**

Even though some approaches to language management were congruent between the teachers in MTK and appropriate in terms of reaching the overall language aim for students in this class, inappropriate strategies also became apparent when observing classes in MTK. This study revealed that there were different strategies used by each teacher when either giving messages, instructions, or when reprimanding students. Even though these approaches were more or less consistently used by each teacher, they varied between the teachers. In the English classes the teacher reprimanded students both in English and Norwegian, but the teacher shifted more often to Norwegian when giving instructions or important messages. On the other hand, the teachers in Mathematics and Social studies were consistent in their use of Norwegian when reprimanding students, but shifted more often to English when giving instructions or important messages.

At the time when this research was conducted, many of the students in MTK had to some extent competence in both the Norwegian and English language, thus they were more or less able to communicate with teachers and fellow students using these languages. When presented with the abovementioned strategies, both the interviewed teachers expressed that they were consciously thinking about these communicative approaches in the classroom. When asked about why he to a greater extent used English in communicative situations where

messages were given, Per, the MTK social studies teacher, said that: *then it is no longer the aim to teach them Norwegian – there the aim is that the students should understand the message*. This strategy used by the Social studies teacher could potentially cause a problem in the facilitation of students' language development because they would not get a consistency in "important" language input – "important" language input being Norwegian due to the overall micro-policy language aim. Kari, The MTK English teacher, on the other hand, was more or less consistent in her use of Norwegian when giving messages to the students, even though she almost exclusively used English when teaching subject content, and she explained this approach by stating that: *I feel that I have to say it in Norwegian for it to count*. She also drew parallels to ordinary classes she taught at MTS, and said quite humorously that: *it doesn't count if you say it in English – it's like a "silly" language – but if I say it in Norwegian I mean it*.

Kari's statements contradict what Per said about using English in communicative situations where messages were given, indicating that there are consistent, but inappropriate language management approaches used by the teachers in MTK. Even though the teachers use consistent language strategies in certain communicative situations, based on the teachers' statements above, a "wrong" use of consistent strategies can make the approach problematic in reaching the overall language aim of minority language students.

### **4.3 Perceptions of a mixed language input**

Seemingly, the teachers in MTK have a more or less individual approach to language management towards the minority students in this class, whilst at the same time being conscious about the overarching macro-policy aim of facilitating the students' Norwegian language acquisition in order for them to attend ordinary subject training. Even though congruent language strategies were observed in this study, one can assert that the individual approach to language management caused it to be more mixing of languages in the classroom than it would have been if clear realization strategies concerning language management in MTK had been developed. According to teachers' and students' statements it is evidently the case that the mixed language input the students in MTK experience is a challenging factor considering facilitating language acquisition and learning subject material. This section will elaborate on the teachers' and students' perceptions of the mixed language input in the MTK classroom.

Kari, the MTK English teacher, expressed that she felt a bit overwhelmed on the MTK-students' behalf because of all the new languages they have to learn in order to be fully integrated in the educational context. She said that: *they don't have a [linguistic] basis in English because they should focus on Norwegian, but when they come to class and should be learning English... it is a difficult transition. When they have learnt a new alphabet and a new language, I am supposed to teach them yet another language. Is too much.* Kari's thoughts about the issue of linguistic overload were shared by Cristian, a Romanian-speaking student with a relatively high language competence in both Norwegian and English, who said that: *English and Norwegian – it's hard. My head is exploding.* He expressed that it was difficult to learn two languages more or less simultaneously and that he found it difficult that there were language shifts in the classroom because he needs time to cognitively shift between the languages: *I don't respond, I need time to respond.* Even though all the interviewed students indicated that they understood English, they expressed divergent opinions about the use of English alongside Norwegian in the classroom. Both Cristian and Alice, an Arabic-speaking student with low competence in Both Norwegian and English, expressed that too much linguistic input was a disturbing factor in the classroom. This can be interpreted as being that the students in MTK want a focused language input, implying that the teachers should aspire to minimize the mixing of languages in the classroom.

The students' and teacher' statements suggest that too much linguistic input can be challenging on the students' part, which suggests in turn that the linguistic input the students receive should be focused in order to reach the intended purpose, namely, to enhance the students' Norwegian language competence to the extent that they can follow ordinary subject training. As a possible approach to the issue of increasing Norwegian input in the MTK classroom, Per, the MTK Social studies teacher, presented a positive aspect of having many languages in the classroom that might function as catalyst in facilitating better language acquisition in MTK: *it is often better when there are many languages in the classroom rather than one dominant language group, because then Norwegian becomes a more appropriate and natural language for the students to communicate in. The fact that the students come from different places makes it easier to conduct language learning because the students can't communicate in their mother tongue. I notice that in groups where there is a mix in students in terms of where they come from, they learn the language more quickly than if it is a large group of students who come from the same place.*

Even though the MTK has a relatively large number of Arabic-speaking students, the majority of students in this class do not share mother tongue or other common languages – other than Norwegian – in which they can communicate, thus the classroom lingua franca more or less presents itself. However, due to the lack of thoroughly developed realization strategies concerning language management in MTK (which entails that the teachers use varying language approaches towards the minority students) one can assert that the classroom lingua franca is not appropriately established. Based on this assertion, a strengthening of the classroom lingua franca could suggest that students develop their Norwegian language competence faster and more effectively, thus contributing in easing the process of reaching the overall language aim for minority students at the MTS.

#### **4.4 Summary**

Macro-level language policies are the framework for which educational meso- and micro-level practitioners develop and realize language strategies towards their minority language students. Even though schools are bound to implement the governmental laws and regulations, they are to some extent free to interpret the guidelines concerning language approaches stated in the macro-level reports and documents. The MTS had no internal language policy concerning their minority students, which is not uncommon according to Spolsky, who states that the nature of such institutions' language policies must be derived from a study of their language practice or beliefs (Spolsky, 2003, p. 8). However, there was developed a language management strategy at the MTS, which arguably functioned more as organizational guidelines of how to facilitate language management at the MTS rather than guidelines of how to realize language management towards the minority students.

Underlying the MTK-teachers' approach to the minority student was an 'achievement of objectives' formulation, which implicitly implemented a strategy concerning language management in MTK. This formulation stated that the minority students at the MTS should be able to follow the ordinary subject training at the lower secondary level. This creates the assertion that this is the school's overall language aim for their minority students, corresponding in turn to what is articulated in the framework curricula (i.e. *Curriculum for Basic Norwegian for language minorities* and *Curriculum for mother tongue teaching for language minorities*).

Further, the language management strategy that was developed stated that the most important elements in reaching the abovementioned language aim was in the responsibility that all teachers in MTK have in terms of facilitating the students' language development as well as a close and effective cooperation between the teachers in this class. But even though there exists an understanding among the teachers in MTK of what the overall achievement goal is, it was evidently the case that approaches to teaching and language strategies were mostly based on personal pedagogical beliefs rather than any clear realization strategies concerning language management in MTK. As one teacher in MTK said; *we do not really talk about language; it is other things we just have to deal with. It's basically just me and my thoughts about the issue.*

Both of the teachers who were interviewed in this study expressed the view that the biggest challenge they face when teaching classes in MTK is related to the immense variation in students' subject and language competence. Both teachers expressed that it would be most beneficial to have the students sorted into different pre-developed competence levels in order to give these students adapted teaching. In fact, both the *Curriculum for basic Norwegian for language minorities* and *Mother tongue teaching for language minorities* state that students should be mapped according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language, and based on this mapping a decision should be made for each student as to what level in the curriculum the teaching should serve as a starting point. In this study there has been found no basis to suggest anything about how this level-oriented approach to teaching is realized in other subjects than the ones dealt with in this study. Based on the statements from teachers in English and Social studies, however, good reasons were established to assert that this level-oriented approach to teaching was not sufficiently implemented in the subjects dealt with in this study.

Even though there were apparent challenges related to the development of thorough language management strategies towards minority students at the MTS, this study revealed that there were several congruent and appropriate approaches to language management between the teachers in MTK, namely the teachers' use of mime, drawing, and digital aids. Along with the unwritten "rule" about language use in MTK and restrictions on the use of translations applications on mobile devices, these approaches to language management indicates that there arguably exists a common understanding about certain realization strategies that could facilitate a better language acquisition for the minority students.

Due to the lack of clear realization strategies concerning language management in MTK, the language input the students in this class receive varies to a great extent based on the teacher's ad-hoc language management approach. There was evidently an extensive use of both English and Norwegian simultaneously in the classroom context, and both the students and teachers in MTK expressed themselves that this was a challenging factor concerning facilitating language development and learning subject content. It can thus be seen that the language input the students receive should be more focused in order to reach the intended purpose of enhancing these students' Norwegian language competence. This would allow them to attend ordinary subject training. Per, the MTK Social studies teacher, expressed that it would be beneficial to have one natural and appropriate communication language in this class, indicating that one must aspire to further strengthen Norwegian as the classroom lingua franca.

## 5 Conclusion

This study has examined to what extent macro-level language policies are implemented at the MTS ('Mottaksskolen', cf. 'Introduction', p. 1), and how these policies are interpreted and realized by meso- and micro-level practitioners. In order to answer the overall research question of how language policy is realized at the MTS, 3 aspects concerning language management were necessary to investigate further:

1. To what extent are macro-level policies implemented in language management at the MTS?
2. How is language management realized in MTK?
3. Are communication strategies used in MTK perceived as appropriate by the students and teachers?

### 5.1 Implementation of macro-level language policies

Macro-level language policies are the framework for which educational meso- and micro-level practitioners develop and realize language strategies towards their minority language students. Even though no clear language policy was apparent when this research was initiated at the MTS, this study revealed that there had been developed a language management strategy concerning the school's minority students. This strategy pointed to interdisciplinary cooperation and effective communication between teachers in MTK as the most important aspects in reaching the overall language aim of enhancing the minority students' Norwegian competence to the extent that they are able to follow ordinary subject training (an aim which is articulated in *Curriculum for Basic Norwegian for language minorities* (NOR7-01)). However, even though a language management strategy was developed, this was arguably organizational guidelines only – meaning that the emphasis in this strategy is how to facilitate language management at the MTS rather than how to realize language management in MTK. Further, it was a stated aim from the school management's side that the teachers in MTK should consult the NOR7-01 curriculum, and that this curriculum would be their guidance to language management towards the minority students.

The participating teachers in this study were all aware of the overall language aim towards minority students, and they expressed views that they were conscious about this aim in their approaches to language management in MTK. However, despite the fact that there existed

congruent strategies between the teachers, approaches to language management in MTK were arguably based on the teachers' personal pedagogical beliefs rather than any clear realization guidelines concerning language management in this class. No thoroughly developed language management strategy towards minority students was apparent at the MTS, and the lack of this could in part be due to the challenges that became apparent in this study, namely that there is a lack of communication between the teachers in MTK and the challenge in dealing with the immensely varying competence levels among the students in this class. As an approach to dealing with the latter challenge, both the participating teachers expressed a wish of having students sorted into level-oriented curriculum plans in order to ease the process of adapting the teaching according to the students' competence levels. The NOR7-01 curriculum – which is the MTS' foundational framework concerning language minority students – states that the students' competence in both Norwegian and subject knowledge should in fact be mapped before they are categorized into their appropriate learning level. There was no basis to suggest how this objective was realized in subjects other than English and Social studies and no clear realization strategy considering this objective were apparent in this study.

## **5.2 Realization of language management in MTK**

The observations revealed that congruent strategies were in fact used by the teachers in this class; however, these strategies were arguably more or less based on their personal pedagogical beliefs rather than with a basis in developed guidelines or transparent strategies. This creates the assertion that there is a common understanding among the teachers in MTK about certain aims of the macro-level language policy and how to approach these aims. As many of the congruent strategies were seemingly efficient in terms of approaching the overall language aim: it is indicated that it would be beneficial to implement these strategies into the already existing language management guidelines, in order to develop a more thorough framework of how to realize language management in the MTK-classroom.

## **5.3 Perceptions of language management in MTK**

The students' and teachers' perceptions of communication approaches in MTK revealed that they found the mixing of languages challenging in the classroom context. It was evident that the teachers in MTK to varying degrees implemented English in their communication with the students. At the time of this study most of the students in MTK could to some extent



communicate using both the Norwegian and English language, however, both the teachers and students in MTK expressed views that the mix of languages in the classroom context was challenging considering the facilitation of language acquisition and learning subject content. This indicates that the language input the students receive in this class should be more focused – in other words – that Norwegian language input should be the emphasis. The use of other languages should thus be minimized – in order to more efficiently reach the overall language aim concerning minority students.

#### **5.4 Concluding remark**

This study has revealed that the MTS has no thoroughly developed language management strategy towards their minority students. Thus, teachers in MTK arguably approach language management based on their personal pedagogical beliefs rather than with a basis in any clear realization strategies or guidelines. The findings in this study indicate that the lack of realization strategies in the existing language management guidelines at the MTS could in part be due to the evident challenges the teachers in MTK experienced: namely, the lack of communication between the teachers and the problem of dealing with both the immensely varied students' language and subject competence levels. However, congruent and appropriate approaches to language management in MTK became apparent during this research, indicating that the MTS has appropriate classroom approaches to language management that could help to develop their guidelines further in order to more efficiently reach the overall language aim of enhancing the minority language students' Norwegian competence to the extent that they are able to follow ordinary subject training.



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## **Appendices**

**Appendix A:** Observation template

**Appendix B:** Teacher interview guide

**Appendix C:** Student interview guide

**Appendix D:** Background and competence level form

**Appendix A      Observation template**

<b>General impressions</b> (class environment, student focus, engagement, dynamics)
<b>Students</b> (attitudes, engagement, competence, differences, similarities)
<b>Teaching</b> (approaches, methods)
<b>Framework factors</b> (size and design of the classroom, facilitation towards adapted teaching, composition of the student group)
<b>Communication/language</b> (strategies, mixing of languages, most used languages, appropriateness)
<b>Other</b>

## **Appendix B      Teacher interview guide**

### **1. General questions**

- For how long have you been teaching at the MTS?
- How many classes in MTK do you teach per week?

### **2. Language focus and language awareness**

- Do you have a language focus?
- Language focuses among colleagues / at the school?
- Are there any language guidelines or strategies you follow in your teaching?
- Experiences of teaching in a multilingual classroom – challenges/possibilities

### **3. Language shifts**

- Language shifts in the classroom – how/when/why
- Self-awareness concerning language shifts?

### **4. Appropriate/suitable communication (Language, other methods of communication)**

- What do you perceive as the most appropriate/suitable method considering communication in the MTK classroom?
- Do the students express what they find most appropriate/suitable?

### **5. English in the classroom**

- Self-awareness – is English a conscious choice?
- How/when/why
- Does it feel natural to use English in communication with the students in MTK?

### **6. Culture and language**

- Cultural differences among the students: does this affect your language approaches towards the student in MTK?

## **Appendix C          Student interview guide**

### **1. Educational background / language competence level**

- Student fills out form

### **2. Language comprehension**

- Which language is most comprehensible, apart from your mother tongue?
- Reading/listening – what is preferable?
- Digital aids – helpful? How/why?
- Body language – helpful? Why?

### **3. Language shifts**

- To what extent?
- Repetition of messages in both Norwegian and English – appropriate? Why?
- What is preferable?
- Perception of language shifts

### **4. Mother tongue**

- To what extent, and in what contexts?
- Thoughts about the use of mother tongue at school

### **5. English in the classroom**

- To what extent? When, how, why?
- What is perceived as most appropriate – English or Norwegian? Used together?

### **6. Learning outcomes**

- Languages in the learning context – what is most appropriate in terms of language acquisition and learning the subject content?



**Appendix D Background and competence level form**

<b>NAME</b>	
<b>AGE</b>	
<b>NATIONALITY</b>	
<b>MOTHER TONGUE</b>	
<b>WHICH LANGUAGES DO YOU SPEAK?</b>	
<b>EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND BEFORE YOU CAME TO NORWAY?</b>	
<b>HOW MANY YEARS?</b>	

*How well do you speak **Norwegian**? Mark according to you self-perception*

<b>Nothing</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Well</b>	<b>Very well</b>

*How well do you understand written/spoken **Norwegian**? Mark according to your self-perception*

<b>Nothing</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Well</b>	<b>Very well</b>

*How well do you speak **English**? Mark according to your self-perception*

<b>Nothing</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Well</b>	<b>Very well</b>

*How well do you understand written/spoken **English**? Mark according to you self-perception*

<b>Nothing</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Well</b>	<b>Very well</b>