

2024

EARLY CHILDHOOD SEMINAR SERIES

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK

Assoc. Professor Carola Kleemann

THE ARCTIC UNIVERSITY OF NORWAY, NORWAY

MONDAY

13

MAY

4.30 - 5.30pm

Via Zoom

Play in two languages

Bilingual roleplay in a Sámi kindergarten in Norway

Sápmi, the Sámi homeland and cultural region, transcends the modern borders of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The Sámi minority was exposed to the modern nation building processes of the various countries, in Norway called *fornorskning*, in English: *Norwegianisation*. This has led to all Sámi speakers on the Norwegian side of the border being bilingual in their Sámi language and Norwegian, or monolingual Norwegian (Todal, 1998). To correct this situation, several measures have been taken with a goal to reverse language shift (Fishman, 1991), among them, creating institutions like Indigenous Sámi kindergartens to strengthen Sámi language and culture (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). *Dávvisámegiella*, North Sámi language, is the majority language of the three remaining Indigenous Sámi languages in Norway.

This presentation is based on video material from fieldwork in a Sámi kindergarten, where children used North Sámi and Norwegian in child-child interaction during free roleplay. Children playing roleplay are aware of the different levels of reality used to divide play and the real world (Sutton-Smith, 1997). To divide these levels, they use a number of signals, or metacommunication, to convey the meaning 'this is play' (Bateson, 1982 [1956]). The Sámi children used both their languages in their own stylized language of bilingual roleplay consisting of different codified utterance types signifying the different levels of reality. Codeswitching between these utterance types could be with or without language alternation (Kleemann, 2013, 2015). The transgression of named languages used in their stylized language performance, could be described as spontaneous translanguaging (Wei, 2017).



Carola Kleemann, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in linguistics. She teaches Norwegian language and literature in ECE and general teacher education at UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Alta campus. Her research is mainly within multilingualism, language vitalization, outdoor activities, and play in Sámi kindergartens. She aims to use and develop methodologies for kindergarten research that are in line with Sámi traditions and perspectives.

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