Last November, the second installment of the language competition DMiSprog came to an end at the very welcoming Lyngby Gymnasium in Copenhagen.

On the 19th of November 2015, the auditorium of Lyngby Gymnasium in northern Copenhagen was decorated and covered with French, Spanish and German flags. Students from various regions of Denmark were waiting for an exciting day to start at this year’s host school for the semi-finals and finals of DMiSprog. In order to represent their schools in the semi-finals, students had to qualify in an online competition prior to the competition day. Ready to go against the five best schools in their school and language category (grundskole, gymnasium / French, Spanish or German), the students attending had come out on top of more than 4100 students and 95 schools participating in DMiSprog in 2015. In cooperation with Goethe-Institut Denmark, Institut Français Denmark and Spansk Lærerforeningen, the presenters at Lyngby Gymnasium lead the competition to a worthwhile final day.

Before the Final Day – DMiSprog step by step
Before invitations for the final day were sent out, a number of steps had been taken by the participating students and their teachers. A group of at least 10 students per class, studying German, French or Spanish and attending grundskole or gymnasium, could participate in DMiSprog. It was up to the language teachers to decide on the students’ team, regardless of grade levels in school. When deciding to enter the competition, teachers signed up online and created a platform for their students in the corresponding category. The level of language testing for German and French students in grundskole was based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) level A2. For students in gymnasium the CEFR testing level was B1. Once registered, the students took the 45 minute online DMiSprog test individually under the supervision of their teacher. The online tests took place between 25th of September 2015 and 23rd of October 2015 with questions covering grammar, vocabulary, culture as well as history and geography. Students were given the questions in random order -
therefore the test differed from student to student. Each school’s individual score was calculated based upon their top ten students’ average score. The top five schools in each category then qualified for the semi-finals.

More than 4,100 students and 95 schools took part in last year’s DMiSprog in total! Among these, 2,100 students and 49 schools (13 grundskoler and 36 gymnasier) competed in German. In French, a total number of 920 students participated in the online quiz (20 gymnasiums and 8 grundskoler). As many schools all over Denmark, including Jutland and Funen, have participated in the competition, you can tell that DMiSprog has gained nationwide importance and influence.

The grundskoler that succeeded in the German online test this year were Esbjerg Realskole, Rygaards Skole, Brenderup og Omegns Realskole, Bagsværd Kostskole and Tommerup Efterskole. French grundskoler that successfully made it to the semi-finals were Marie Mørks Skole, Katrinebjergskolen, Copenhagen Internation School, Skovshoved Skole and a second team from Rygaards Skole. It was the choice of each school to pick four students that would represent them and take part in the final day’s games. Making their way to Lyngby Gymnasium on the 19th of November 2015, students were ready to compete for the title of Danish Champion in French, German or Spanish at DMiSprog 2015.

Semifinals at Lyngby
As the semi-finalists arrived on 19th of November, they quickly filled the well-decorated auditorium of Lyngby Gymnasium. After a warm welcome from Lone Holm, Head of Education at Lyngby, each team gathered in the separated semi-final rooms neatly prepared by their hosts. In the room awaiting the students were the organizers from Goethe-Institut, Institut Français and Spansklærerforeningen, the Jury comprised of representatives from corresponding teacher associations, Sproglærerforeningen for instance, and the student presenters from Lyngby Gymnasium. In the German competition, the committed Lyngby students practiced together beforehand with the organizers of Goethe-Institut in order to lead the contestants and the audience through the program – in German of course. The students Ditte and Emma-Amalie from Lyngby Gymnasium had been involved in the organization of the semi-finals and found:

»Det var fedt at arbejde sammen med Goethe Instituttet, vi blev nødt til at tale tysk, og fik derfor virkelig gavn af vores undervisning.«

After each team had taken their places, the semi-finals began with the first challenging game, “What is it?”. Seeing three pictures in a row, the contestants had to find the right letters from the words of the pictures that would form a final word. Each school had two main players in the game while the other team members took the role of highly appreciated jokers. The second game followed the well-known principle of Memory, showing 8 pictures for five seconds one after another. The contestants needed to remember and write down the corresponding words afterwards. Finally, a sentence puzzle completed the semi-final games. In this game the students were asked to put sentence fragments in the right order. Concentrated talks,
discussions and considerations filled the room during all three game periods indicating the strong enthusiasm of all contestants. As the German students’ results never differed to a big extent, you could probably call it a neck and neck race between all German participants. Again, this showed an overall impression of the dedication that each student brought to the competition. All throughout the semi-finals there was excellent cooperation and teamwork from numerous organizations and participants.

The German grundskole pupils that ultimately made it into the finals came from Esbjerg Realskole and Bagsværd Kostskole. In the French competition, the teams from Marie Mørks and Rygaards Skole called themselves happy finalists.

**Finals at Lyngby auditorium**

After all organizers, teachers and pupils had caught a breath at lunch, the finals finally took place in the common auditorium with all groups watching and cheering each other on. Having made it this far, the contestants of Esbjerg Realskole, Bagsværd Kostskole, Marie Mørks Skole and Rygaards Skole had to face two more games in their language category. The first game required them to carefully listen to a song and figure out specific words the lyrics contained. The contestants of Esbjerg Realskole and Bagsværd Kostskole were to listen to the German band “Juli” singing their song “Geile Zeit” whereas the teams from Marie Mørks Skole and Rygaards Skole faced the song “Avenir” from the French singer “Louane”. Not an easy thing to do, hearing singers stretch words and emphasize different syllables! When it came to the last game, “Who wants to be a millionaire?” - also known as “who’s going to be the winner of DMI?” - the students faced the final challenge of the competition. The students answered questions about music, geography, history or sports. All the students successfully demonstrated their well-founded knowledge in the second language they are learning, as well as mastering topics concerning the countries where the respective language is spoken all over the world.

After two exciting audience-supported final rounds in French and German, the final winners were announced:

Rygaards Skole was the Grundskole Champion in French!
Bagsværd Kostskole was the Grundskole Champion in German!

All in all, this year’s DMI Sprog was an inspiring final day that demonstrated teamwork between all involved institutions. Highly driven students performed well during each round of the competition and showed their dedication to language learning. Thanks to the organizers’ excellent planning and to the students for their motivation to succeed, I guess one could call this day an enriching experience for everyone in attendance.

Rewards for the folkeskole finalists in French