

DIALECTAL DEVELOPMENT

AND COMPARISON:

Norwegian Dialects

IN THE U.S. AND

NORWAY

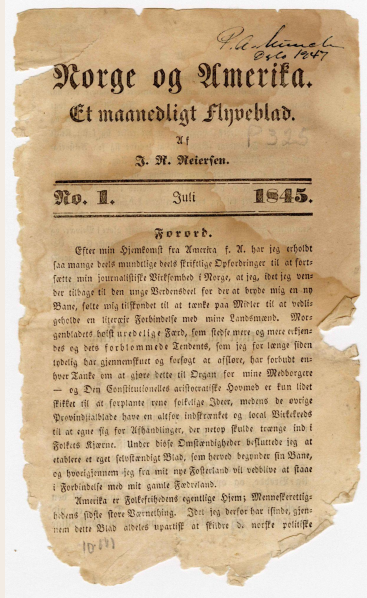
RAND SCHOLAR AWARD



Helen White '23

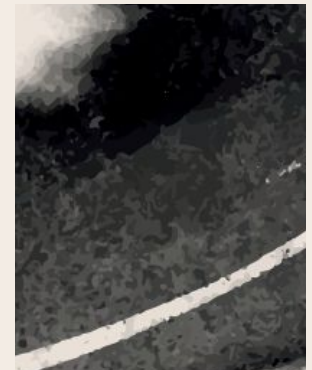
Why this research?

THE RAND SCHOLAR AWARD



Norge og Amerika newspaper, courtesy of NAHA

- Individual major and interest in linguistics and Norwegian
- Rand Scholar Award: \$5,000 towards the study of Norwegian culture and life
- Independent research course with faculty advisor
- Previous work with NAHA and archival recordings



For more information, visit:
<https://wp.stolaf.edu/rand-scholar-award/>

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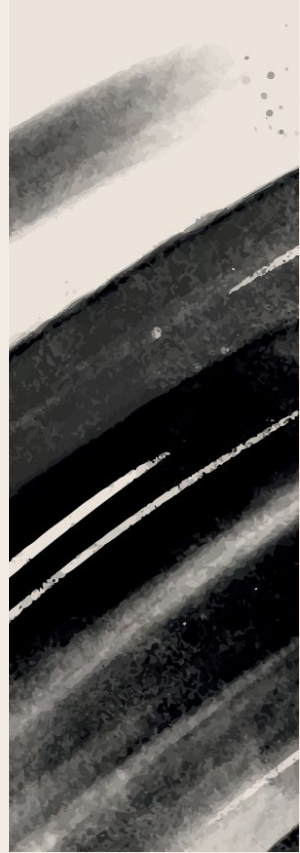
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01

About the DIALECTS

History of Norwegian dialects,
Norwegian emigration, and
influences on dialects



NORWEGIAN DIALECTS IN THE U.S. AND NORWAY

Introduction

What features would you choose to look at when comparing dialects?

What would you expect to see in Norwegian spoken by descendants of immigrants?

Which dialects do you think are the most different from one another?



Overview of linguistic history



- Between 1836 and 1915, over 750,000 Norwegians emigrated to the United States (Nerbøvik 2022)
- Meanwhile in Norway...
 - Independence from Denmark and then Sweden led to nationalism and linguistic revolution
 - Ivar Aasen gathered data to create “Landsmaal”
 - Riksmål held prestige, but local dialects began to gain more standing
- Einar Haugen (1906-1994) foremost researcher on Norwegian in U.S.
- Noted importance of dialect contact in American communities
- Development of Bygdelag movement in U.S.



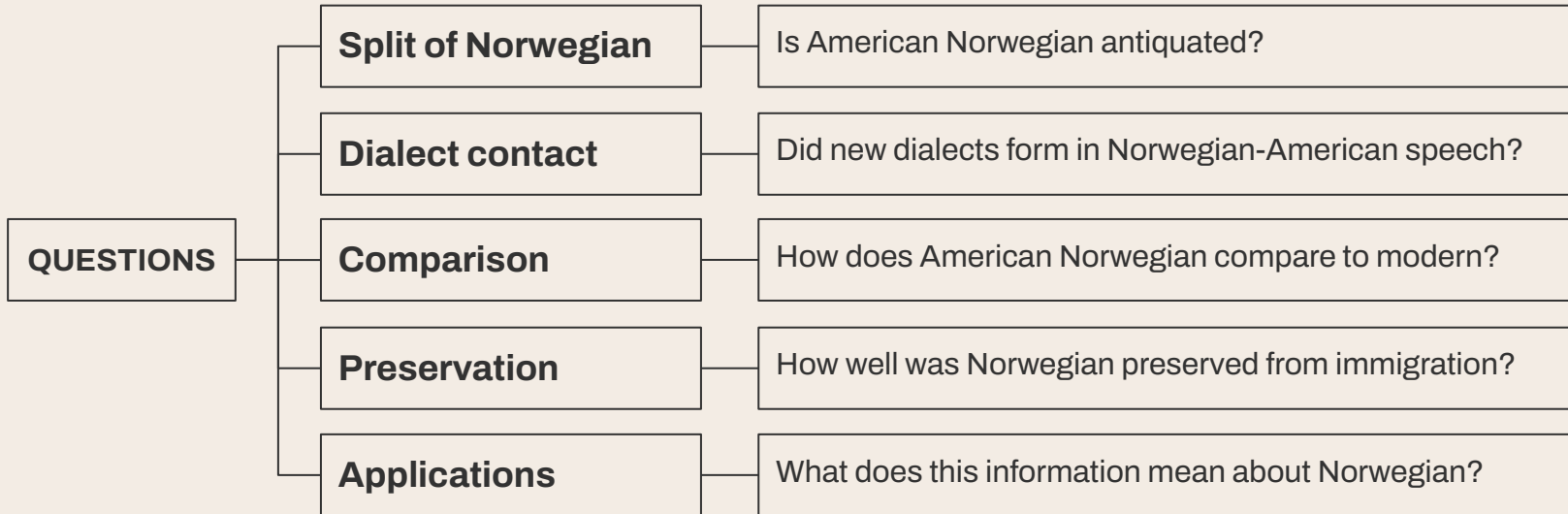
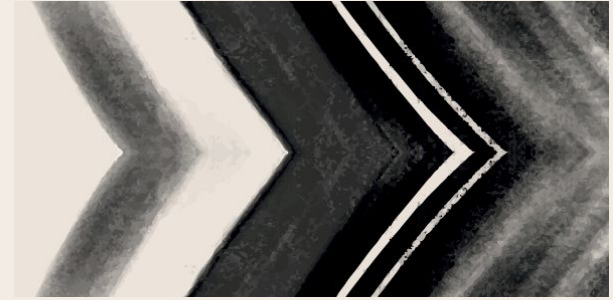
Photo: Wikipedia



“Dialects are the result of isolation. But this isolation might be due to many factors—to natural barriers, such as forests, mountains, or large bodies of water, or to social barriers, such as administrative boundaries, feudal restrictions on travel, or class distinctions. **One of the first effects of emigration was to wipe out the isolation** and thereby to upset the delicate balance of dialect against dialect which was conditioned by the social geography of the old country. **Speakers whose ancestors rarely had communicated in the course of a thousand years were suddenly thrown into close contact in an American community.**” (Haugen 1953, pg. 337-338)

—Einar HAUGEN

What can we investigate?



02

Methods and DATA

Data examined, features catalogued, how collection was done, and statistical summary



NORWEGIAN DIALECTS IN THE U.S. AND NORWAY

Datasets





Simple | Extended | CQP query Search

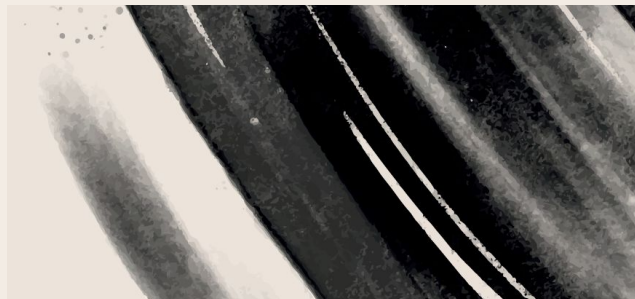
leg

Or... Show speakers

Concordance Map Statistics Found 19958 matches (400 pages)

Sort by position Download

albert_jea_MN_01gk <small>Trans</small>		jeg	er an onlybarn # jeg har ikke en # noen # bror eller sos- soster # ja	
 		e	er e ånnlibarn # e har ikkje n # no # bror e syss- sysster # ja	
albert_jea_MN_01gk <small>Trans</small>	jeg er an onlybarn #	jeg	har ikke en # noen # bror eller sos- soster # ja	
 		e	er e ånnlibarn # e	har ikkje n # no # bror e syss- sysster # ja



01

JORANGER AND LOVOLL (1995-2002)

15 respondents selected,
recordings transcribed by me



Time	Keywords
00:00:00	Start of Interview/Interviewer's Introduction.
00:00:08	TJ: Og her har vi trønderdialekt. Kå er det du heiter? DM: Jeg heiter Dennis L. Moe.
00:00:18	TJ: Kor er det du er født hen a? DM: Jeg er fødet på gårda, ned med Sioux Falls, der bestefaren min tok land.
00:00:28	TJ: Kor slags årtall er du født? DM: Jeg er født i 1917, så jeg er 79 år nå.

02

CANS

Johannessen et al. (2010-2016),
Didrik Arup Seip and Ernst W.
Selmer (1931), Einar Haugen
(1942) and Arnstein Hjelde (1987,
1990, 1992), covers 268
informants from 63 different
locations (U.S. and Canada), 15
respondents matched

Respondent data

Demographic	Percentage
Male	60.0%
Female	40.0%
Family from Østlandet region	56.7%
Family from Sørlandet region	6.7%
Family from Trøndelag region	16.7%
Family from Vestlandet region	30.0%
Family from unknown region	6.7%

Table 1. Demographic information about the informants selected for this research, including gender distribution and their family's area of origin in Norway.



QUESTION WORDS

“hv” or “k” beginning of
question words,
phonological difference



PRONOUNS

First and third person
pronouns: “jeg”, “han/hun”,
“vi”, “de”, lexical difference



NEGATION ADVERB

“ikke” versus “ikkje”, “itte”
etc., phonological and
lexical differences

Dialect features for investigation



Categorizing dialect features

Personleg pronomen
1. person eintal, subjektsform

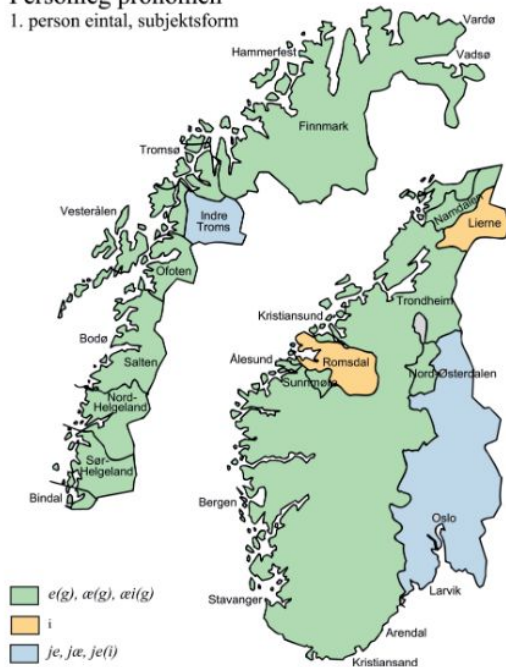


Figure 1. Mapping of dialect forms of the first person singular pronoun developed by Martin Skjeggeland (2015) and Halfrid Christiansen (1969).

Personleg pronomen
1. person fleirtal, subjektsform

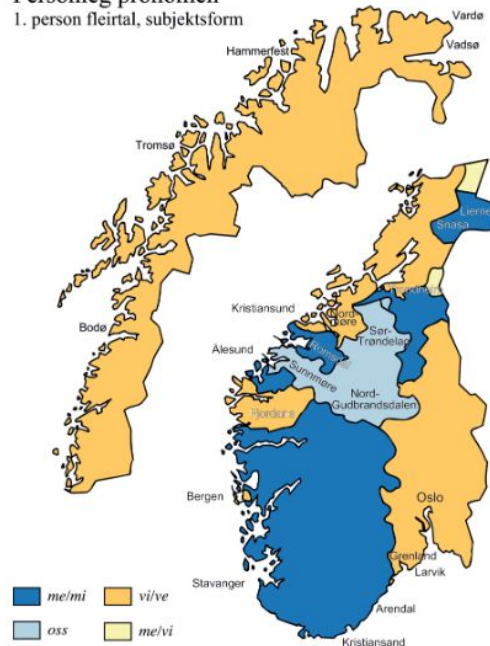


Figure 2. Mapping of dialect forms of the first person plural pronoun developed by Martin Skjeggeland (2015) and Halfrid Christiansen (1969).

Categorizing dialect features

Nordavinden og sola

[²nu:ɾɑ,ʊɪŋ' ɔ 'su:ɾɑ]

En norsk dialektprøvedatabase på nettet

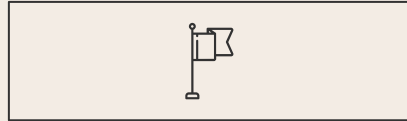


naviger:

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Almberg and Skarbø recordings of sample text

Categorizing dialect features



01

Identify dialect features brought from Norway by ancestors



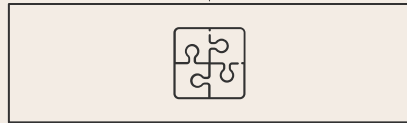
02

Identify which dialects are most present in community



03

Determine which dialect features belong where



04

Theorize about dialectal influences

Results

Based on this table, what observations can you come up with about American Norwegian?

Is there difference between the respondent's own dialect and the majority dialect?

Does the majority dialect the respondent's dialect?



Group	Average number of unique tokens	Tokens representative of respondent's own dialect	Tokens representative of majority dialect in region	Tokens unexplained by own dialect or majority dialect
Lovoll and Joranger data	9.0	69.0%	84.3%	13.3%
CANS data	9.2	79.8%	96.6%	3.4%
Heritage from Østlandet	8.6	82.2%	97.1%	2.1%
Heritage from Sørlandet	10.0	75.0%	87.5%	12.5%
Heritage from Trøndelag	8.2	71.4%	86.9%	11.1%
Heritage from Vestlandet	10.0	61.0%	83.8%	14.8%
Heritage from unknown region	10.5	N/A	93.8%	N/A
TOTAL	9.1	74.2%	90.4%	8.3%

Table 5. Statistical summary of token data collected from Joranger and Lovoll (1995-2002) and CANS.



03

Discussion and FINDINGS

Comparing dialects in the
U.S. and Norway and
implications of findings

Comparison with current literature

JOHANNESSEN AND LAAKE (2015)

Examined four respondents from Gudbrandsdal region, found incomplete koinéization process, found use of more than one dialect region within single individuals

Koiné: a dialect that has arisen from contact between multiple mutually intelligible forms of speech, usually a levelling process

HJELDE (2015)

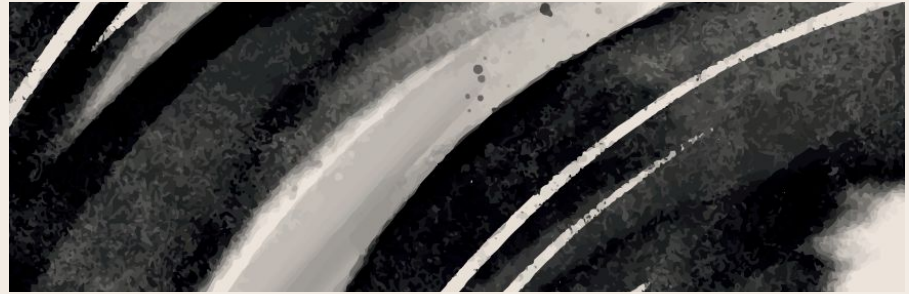
Also found incomplete koinéization process in Coon Valley, Wisconsin settlement

JOHANNESSEN (2015)

Examined attrition and regression hypothesis of Norwegian American speech in one speaker, contextualizes reasons behind phenomena



Norwegian Comparison



CATEGORIZATION

Haugen (1953) had many more categories than current four categories, was mostly divided by West and East

GOOSKENS (2005)

Norwegians not able to identify dialects as well as they think they are able to

WEST AND EAST

Biggest difference still between Østlandet and Vestlandet dialects in both regions

LUNDQUIST

ET. AL (2020)

Found that modern speakers of Trøndelag dialect switch between forms, especially when exposed to Bokmål

ENGLISH

Effects of English overtook levelling influences of different dialects in American Norwegian

LANGUAGE REFORMS

Linguistic revolution made modern Norwegian different from American Norwegian

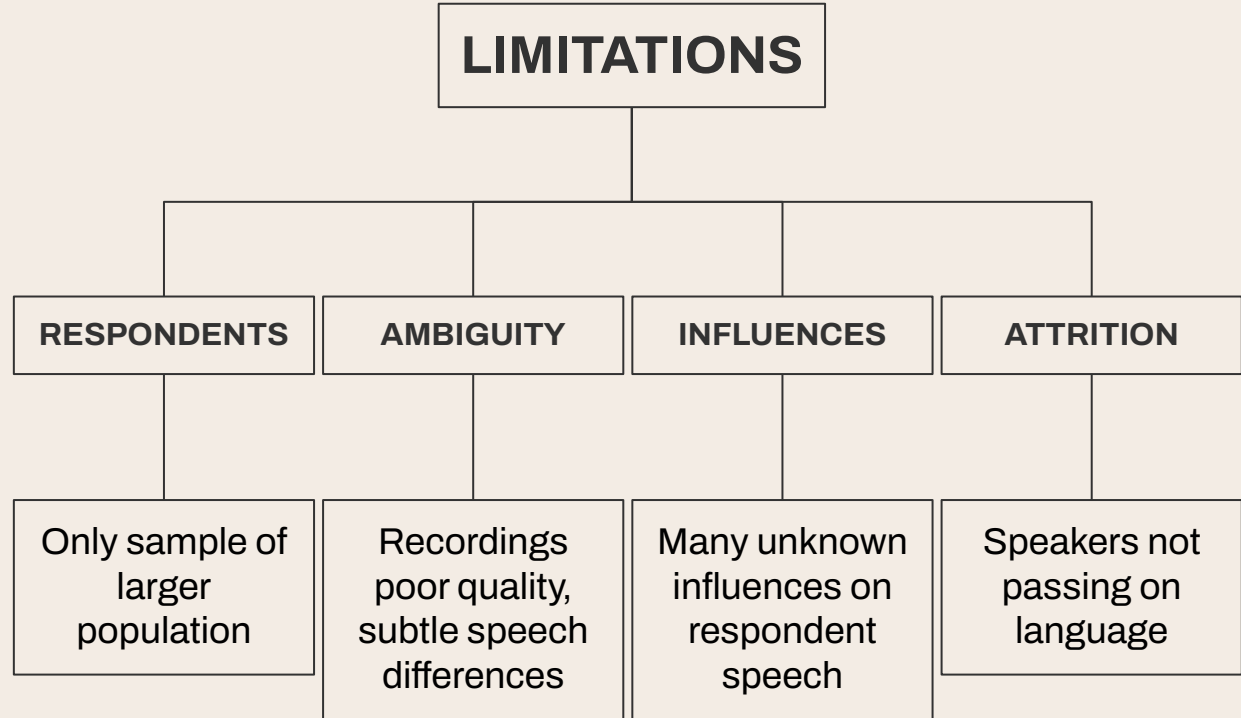


04

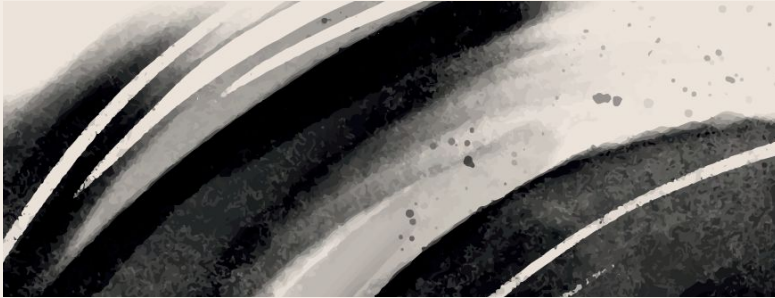
Concluding REMARKS

Limitations of study and
areas for future research

What needs to be researched more?

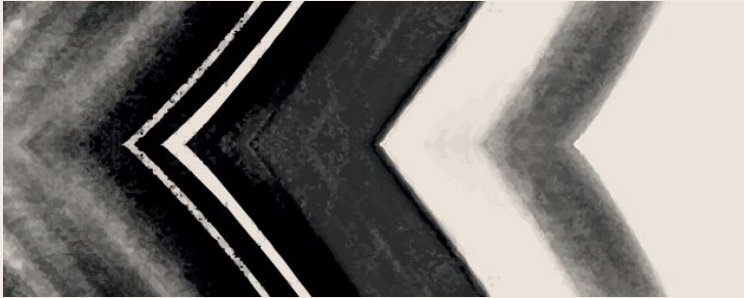


FINAL conclusions



What could be examined further?
Why do you think speakers use the dialect forms they do?
How does this apply to modern Norway?

Questions?



Do you have any
questions/comments/concerns for
me?

Thanks!

Come to my Rand Presentation to
learn more and to see my full works
cited!

May 1st, 2023

7pm

Sun Ballroom

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