

Language Change in Norwegian Secondary School Textbooks

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The diachronic perspective on language has become less visible in the Norwegian subject curriculum (Hognestad, 2019). In the current curriculum, there are ‘core elements’, consisting of ‘central terms, methods, ways of thinking, knowledge areas and modes of expression’ (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2019). One of these core elements is “linguistic diversity”, according to which pupils should learn about “the current language situation in Norway and be able to explore its historical background” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019).

In this study, we look at how two textbooks for the lower secondary level (grades 8–10) treat the topic of language change. We ask the following research questions:

- To what degree is *language change* presented, rather than synchronic descriptions of various language stages?
- What does the teacher have to know in order to help the pupils understand the material that is presented to them?
- To what degree is language change connected to other parts of the curriculum (Norwegian dialects, grammar, etc.)?

We use two types of qualitative content analysis in our analysis of the textbooks: descriptive (providing a systematic analysis of the objective of study) and thematic (synthesizing the descriptive findings in a critical, thematic manner, e.g. Akşan & Baki 2017). Our analysis is inductive, as the analytical categories emerged as we investigated the data. The materials included in our study are two commonly used textbooks for the lower secondary level, *Kontekst* (Blichfeldt et al. 2020) and *Fabel* (Horn et al. 2020, 2021a, 2021b).

The changes presented are mostly lexical, focusing on loanwords, especially from English. The diachronic perspective is mentioned several places, but often in the form of just one sentence, connected to topics like dialects, youth language and slang, and loanwords. When explanations for language change are given, societal factors such as geography, use of English for business purposes etc. are in focus. Language-internal explanations of language change are generally not mentioned.

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