

Norwegian on the Web

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Norwegian speech sounds compared to English

Norwegian on the Web, NTNU

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English and Norwegian speech sounds compared

Below you will find a comparison between Norwegian (NO) and English (EN) speech sounds, that is consonants, vowels and diphthongs.

Consonants

The column Consonant in the table below demonstrates Norwegian consonant sounds of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and English (EN) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the consonants in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or " in the column Overlap:

+
~
"

The Norwegian consonant is quite similar to the English one

The Norwegian consonant is in some degree similar to the English one

The Norwegian consonant has no counterpart in English

English consonants of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

Consonant Norwegian

- /p/
- /b/
- /t/
- /d/
- /tʰ/
- /d̥-/
- /k/
- /k̥/
- /m/
- /n/
- /ŋ/
- /ʌ̃/
- /f/
- /v/
- /s/
- /ʃ/
- /ʂ/
- /j/
- /h/

- på
- bi
- tå
- deg
- smart
- ferdig
- katt
- glass
- min
- nei
- barna
- ring
- fiks
- vest
- si
- ski
- kjapp
- jet
- hi
- rein
- verre
- lin
- jarl

- /r/
- /l/
- /l̥-/

English

paw

be

taw

day

-

-

caught

glass

mean

nay

-

ring

fix

vest

see

she

-

yet

he

rain

very

lean

-

Overlap

+

+

~

~

â€™

â€™

+

+

+

+

â€™

+

+

~

+

+

â€™

+

+

~

+

~

â€™

Comments

NO: dental; ENG: alveolar

NO: dental; ENG: alveolar

ENG /v/ is more fricative

ENG: /r/ is more fricative initially

ENG: /r/ between vowels ~ NO

/l/ can be velarised in EN

The table above is presented below in a shorter version using colour codes:

White:

Grey:

Black:

The Norwegian consonant is quite close to the English one

The Norwegian consonant overlaps to some degree with the English one

The Norwegian consonant has no counterpart in English

p
m

b
n

t
É³

d
Å<

Ê^
f

É–
v

k
s

É_i
Ê_f

l
Ã§

É-
j

r
h

The speech sounds in black and grey cells are sounds that English-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian.

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Vowels

The column Vowel in the table below demonstrates Norwegian vowel sounds of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and English (EN) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the vowels in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or “ in the column Overlap:

+
~
“

The Norwegian vowel is quite similar to the English one

The Norwegian vowel is to a certain extent similar to the English one

The Norwegian vowel has no counterpart in English

English vowel of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

Vowel

Norwegian

- /i/
- /i[•]/
- /y/
- /y[•]/
- /e/
- /e[•]/
- /ã/
- /ã[•]/
- /ã̃/
- /ã̃[•]/
- /é/
- /é[•]/
- /ê%o/
- /ê%o[•]/
- /u/
- /u[•]/
- /o/
- /o[•]/

- sinn
- mi
- synd
- lys
- send
- ler
- sã₃tt
- mã₃t
- vã₃rt
- mã₃di
- ta
- spa
- full
- tur
- bodd
- bod
- dott
- lã₃n

English

- sin
- me
-
-
- send
- lair
-

-
daddy
mad
-
spa
full
tour
-
-
dot
lawn

Overlap

Comments

~
+
â€™
â€™
+
~
â€™
â€™
~
~
â€™
~
~
~
â€™
â€™
~
~

In general the duration of English vowels can be compared to short and long vowels in Norwegian.

The table above is presented below in a shorter version using colour codes:

White:

Grey:

Black:

The Norwegian vowel is quite close to the English one

The Norwegian vowel overlaps to some degree with the English one

The Norwegian vowel has no counterpart in English

i
iË•

e
eË•

Ã|
Ã|Ë•

É‘
É‘Ë•

y
yË•

Ê‰
Ê‰Ë•

Ã,
Ã,Ë•

u
uË•

o
oË•

The sounds in black and grey cells are speech sounds that English -speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian.

Diphthongs

The column Diphthong in the table below demonstrates Norwegian diphthongs of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and English (EN) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the diphthongs in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or “ in the column Overlap:

+
~
“

The Norwegian diphthong is quite similar to the English one
The Norwegian diphthong is to a certain extent similar to the English one
The Norwegian diphthong has no counterpart in English

English diphthongs of the, wo first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

Diphthong

Norwegian

/é‘i/
/ei/
/hÿ/
/hÿ/ (no)
/oy/
/uy/
/hÿ/ (no)

hai
hei
hÿ
sau
soya

hoie
huie

English
hi

-

-

-

soya

-

-

Overlap

Comments

+

-

-

-

+

-

-

Sjelden i norsk

Sjelden i norsk

The table above is presented below in a shorter version using colour codes:

White:

Grey:

Black:

The Norwegian diphthong is quite close to the English one

The Norwegian diphthong overlaps to some degree with the English one

The Norwegian diphthong has no counterpart in English

/É‘i/

/ei/

/Ã,y/

/Ã!Ê%o/

/oy/

/uy/

/Ê%oy/

The sounds in black and grey cells are speech sounds that English-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian.

