

<b>Norwegian Pronunciation, Rhythm and Tone</b> Erik Skuggevik, 16 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2022 <b>Lecture 5</b>	<b>Today's Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tonemes</li> <li>• Repetition of variables covered</li> <li>• Practice</li> </ul>
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*We will go over long/short vowels and consonants again and also rehearse some other pronunciation – in order to deal with this week's main topic:*

### **Tonemes in Norwegian**



Of the variables we have covered so far, there are two we need to understand before we look at what tonemes are about in Norwegian: 1. Stress at word level. 2. Long/short vowels and consonants. A reminder:

1. Stress within a multi-syllable word. This is fixed, and you need to learn it (see Handout Lecture 2). Compare two similar sounding words, *alle* (all) and *allé* (avenue), they have the same vowels and consonants and both have two syllables. But *alle* has stress on the first syllable and *allé* has stress on the second, transcribed thus: [alle], [alee].
2. When stress falls on a syllable, there are two ways this can happen, lengthening of the *vowel sound*, or lengthening of the *consonant sound* (more on long consonants in Lecture 3 handout). For example, the words *fine* and *finne* have the same sounds and both have stress on the first syllable. But *fine* has a long -i- (and a short -n-), and *finne* has a short -i- (and long -n-).

Tonemes come *on top* of these two variables. That is to say there is a *third* variable pronunciation that can take place even when stress and length are identical. Tonemes only happen in words that are two syllables or more and have stress on the first syllable.



The classic example is:

*Bønder* (farmers) vs *bønner* (beans). Both words have stress on the first syllable, and they both have a short -ø- and long -n-. Both could then be transcribed [bønner]. To most foreign students they sound virtually identical. But Norwegians are sensitive to tonal variation, and will hear an extra distinguishing feature, and thus separate the two words. This is toneme.

Most Norwegians, as well as Wikipedia, draw the two Norwegian tonemes more complicated than they are (e.g. low-rising vs falling-rising), and some people will draw the tonemes like  or . This is only true when saying a word in isolation, and most importantly involve tonal shifts people typically do exactly when giving an example. This happens equally for either toneme. What we need to isolate is the *minimal* difference, which is the difference between the two tonemes when the word is in the middle of a sentence. Then we see that there is only *one* difference, and it happens on the *first* syllable. What happens after that is irrelevant. Either the first syllable is *flat* (toneme 1) or there is a *drop* (toneme 2). That is all!

Compare these nearly identical sentences involving the words *løvet* (the leaves (silent t)) toneme 1 (flat), and *løve* (lion) toneme 2 (drop). The sentences mean: “What are we supposed to do with leaves/a lion in the living room?”

Hva skal vi med **løvet** i stuen? vs Hva skal vi med **løve** i stuen?

1:  **Løvet** (the leaves) has a *flat* tone on Lø-. 2:  **Løve** (lion) *drops* on Lø-.

So, back to farmers and beans:

**Bønder** is flat on the first syllable  $\rightarrow$  [bønner].

**Bønner** has a drop on the first syllable.  $\rightarrow$  [bønner].

We need to know that ALL Norwegian words of two syllables or more, have either toneme 1 or 2 – there is no neutral. This means that tonemes are not about separating two otherwise identical words, we simply always have one or the other. Unfortunately there is no good way of knowing what words have what toneme. The best attempt at grouping them is that (almost) all verbs in the infinitive have T2 (drop) and most definite neuter nouns have T1 (flat). Apart from that, listen and learn.

Here are a few T1 (flat) and T2 (drop) words, some in pairs and some random ones:

<u>Toneme 1, flat</u>	<u>Toneme 2, drop</u>	<u>Toneme 1, flat</u>	<u>Toneme 2, drop</u>
Været	Være	Hvordan	Lekser
Hoppet	Hoppe	Hvorfor	Lampen
Skapet	Skape	Radio	Briller
Gjenta	Jenta	Sofa	Penner
Løpet	Løpe	Veggen	Grønne
Printer (noun)	Printer (verb)	Døra	Røde
Google (name)	google (verb)	Stolen	Vasen
Tenner (teeth)	Tenner (verb)	Låret	Mage
Voksen (the wax)	Voksen (adult)	Håret	Hodet
Kommer	Komme	Parken	Flasken
Teamet	Time	Liter	Mange
Jernet	Gjerne	Kilo	Pærer
Allah	Alle	Kaffe	Bare
Hindu	Vindu	Sammen	Sommer
Svingen	Ingen	Ibsen	Hamsun
		Ferie	Kjæreste
		Vinter	Vinterferie
		Mandag	Påske
		Tirsdag	TV
		Onsdag (etc)	Våre
		Juni	Mine
		Juli	Noen
			Klokka*

\* but flat toneme (T1) in “klokka fire”

### Glottal stop in Norwegian

A glottal stop ['] is when the air flow is stopped for a very short time at the back of the throat. In spoken Norwegian this can happen when a vowel is followed by another vowel in a word that is stressed, but it is not a universal feature. (Remember: unstressed *jeg* is pronounced [jæ]):

Jeg *er* jo her! [jæ'æjjo-hær]

Jeg *aner* ikke! [jæ'aanerikke]