Norwegian Pronunciation, Rhythm and Tone

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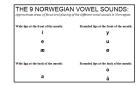
Lecture 2

Today's Topics:

- Vowels
- Stress at word and sentence levels
- Consonant omissions and merging

Something we didn't have time for last week was to go through the vowels, so we will do that today.

Stress at sentence level: Shifting stress in a sentence changes the rhythm. In essence, stress means stretching one word at the expense of



the other words in an utterance, which conversely become scrunched/compressed instead. The word that is stretched corresponds to what the speaker mentally considers the most important word (i.e. if you had to reduce the utterance to *one* word, what would that be?).

<u>Stress at word level:</u> Normally this refers to what *syllable* of a word is stressed, i.e. lengthened. The default for Norwegian words is stress on the *first* syllable. For instance, all these words are stressed on the initial beat, long vowel or long consonant:

Lørdag, bursdagsselskap, gammel, flere, søsken, hjemme, Bergen, kommer, barna, jenta, gutten.

These have stress on the second: Teater, dessverre, foreldrene,

Some words are stressed on the third or fourth, but relatively few:

Serviett, maleri, akademiker/akademisk, demokratisk, demokrati, redaksjon

All words have an unstressed and a stressed version, most are almost the same, just lengthened/shortened a little, but there are many that you need to know about:

Jeg, seg, deg, han, noen \rightarrow [jæi - jæ], [sæi - sæ], [dæi - dæ], [hann - an/'n], [noon - non]

But when unstressed words follow each other, words also join, vowels disappear, consonants merge, etc. Two vowels following each other are often reduced to one (usually the first), e.g. u–i:

Vil du ikke **bli** med? [vidukke-blii-med], Har du ikke **peng**er? [hadukke-pener]

In unstressed words that end in -l (particularly commonly used ones), the l disappears in front of a consonant. In front of a *vowel* it is heard, because it is useful to keep the rhythm up. If the word is stressed, the -l will be pronounced anyway. Pay particular attention to common words like <u>skal</u>, <u>vil</u>, <u>til</u>,

Vil du **ha**? = [vidu-ha]. Jeg skal til **Gunn**ar. [jæskati-gunnar] Skal ikke du **bli** med? = [skalikke-du-blii-me]

The same is the case for words that end in -r. But if the consonant next is one of these: d, t, n, l, s – then a new (retroflex) sound replaces them both.

Hvordan = vodan • Vært = væt • Barn = ban • Herlig = hæli • Forsiktig = fåfikti

Fordi, lørdag, cardigan, har du Vært, fart, kort, for tiden, har tenkt Barn, du sier noe, har noen Herlig, farlig, har lenge, Forsiktig, forske, Mars, har sagt, er sant (Oslo, fisle, rasle, slapp av, anslag) pronounced: fådi, løda(g), kadigen, hadu pronounced: væt, fat, kåt, fåtiid'n, hatent pronounced: ban, du-sienoe, hanoen pronounced: hæli, fali, halene pronounced: fåſikti, fåſke, maaſ, haſakt, æʃant pronounced: oʃlo, fiʃle, raʃle, ʃlappa(v), anʃlag

NB: Hvordan går det? pronounced: Vodan-gååde?

Listening Exercises:

A: Hva skal vi gjøre nå?

B: Hva skal vi **gjøre** nå?

C: Hva skal vi gjøre nå?

D: Hva skal vi gjøre nå?

E: **Hva** skal vi gjøre nå?

Where is the stress (stretch) in these words?

Words taken from Stein på Stein, chapter 1:

- 1. Sjåfør
- 2. Gjøre
- 3. Jobben
- 4. Firma
- 5. Barnhehage
- 6. Forskjellige
- 7. Foreløpig
- 8. Matematikk
- 9. Gratulere
- 10. Eksamen

Spelling to phonetic symbol:

rd = d
rt = t
rn = n
rl = l
ng = n
skj/sj/rs =
$$\int$$

kj = φ

In order to understand what Norwegian *tonemes* (bønder/bønner) are about, we need to first get a grasp of other variables like stress, and vowel and consonant length, so we will deal with these in detail first.