

Learners' attitudes towards Norwegian accents

Kamil Malarski & Magdalena Wrembel

Notwithstanding popular opinions, accents in Norway are stratified socially (Johnsen 2015), e.g., the Western Oslo accents are perceived as more prestigious than the working-class or multicultural Oslo accents (Aasheim 1995, Johnsen 2015, Svendsen and Røyneland 2008), or accents in Northern Norway (Sollid 2014). Despite previous research on language attitudes to Norwegian accents (Gulbrandsen 1977, Lund 2006), we lack a more up-to-date perspective accounting for the context of multicultural and multilingual speakers or learners of Norwegian.

In this study, therefore, we aim at bridging this gap, comparing the perceptions towards Norwegian accents by three groups of respondents, including Polish learners of Norwegian living in Poland, Polish learners of Norwegian residing in Norway, as well as Norwegian native speakers as controls. We are interested in across-group differences to address the question to what extent the changing perceptions of these accents are dependent on social attributions of the speakers representing the accents. Through an online survey in Qualtrics, the respondents listened to ten samples of read speech (*Nordavinden og sola*) coming from five regions in Norway, i.e. the Tromsø area, Trondheim, Stavanger, Kristiansand, and Oslo, as well as four non-native accents of Norwegian of different strength. Each region was represented with two speech samples of middle-aged native speakers of Norwegian. The respondents were asked to identify the region of origin and to evaluate the samples according to perceived level of education, intelligence, nativeness and other criteria. Based on the preliminary results, we investigate the following: 1) Do learners of Norwegian attribute similar aesthetic judgments to Norwegian speech as Norwegian speakers do? 2) Are some accents of Norwegian perceived differently than others? 3) Are there any acoustic correlates of these judgments like high-pitched voice, female/male voice, the presence of uvular /r/ phonemes?

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