

# Driving forces in language change – in the Norwegian perspective

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## **PURPOSE**

One of the characteristics of ‘late modernity’ is a reduction of orientation or subjection to traditional authorities and standard values, unlike ‘modernity’, in which centralisation, regulation and standardisation were means to strengthen economic progress and social welfare. The primary aim of the SLICE-project is to determine whether the same time span displays a parallel cultural shift in the domain of language. The evident expression of language authority is a standard language (SL), to which a wide range of social and cultural values is attached in a standard language ideology (SLI). Consequently, we should expect to see changes in cultural values with respect to SL, i.e., in SLI – and perhaps in the use of SL.

SL can be defined in two ways: either as a language variety with prestige, or as a language variety that people use in order to communicate with a broader society (cf. Ammon 2004; Swann et al. 2004; Sandøy 2009, 2011). The former notion refers to overt attitudes, the latter to a pattern of actual language use. In this chapter, I take both notions into account and refer to the former as the *prestige language* variety of the Norwegian capital city of Oslo and the latter as *spoken standard languages* (SSL), corresponding to the reading style versions of the two written standards Bokmål and Nynorsk, which to some extent have been codified in guidelines to be used by the national broadcasting company for news broadcasts and announcements (Bokmål is the dominating language; see more about the Norwegian language situation in Sandøy 2011). In Norway, usage of SSL in this sense of ‘reading style’ has been quite normal in certain contexts. It is a way of speaking which typically preserves features of local accent or local phonology and thus ‘reveals’ the speakers’ geographical origin. The prestige language variety of Oslo is traditionally associated with the higher social classes

in ‘Western Oslo’ and has quite a lot of linguistic peculiarities as opposed to the demotic and non-prestigious variety of the capital.

For the study of (de)standardisation at the level of language use, at least two approaches are relevant: we can study whether the SSL is spoken in more or fewer domains in society, and we can study structural changes in SSL and/or dialects. SSL can be studied for possible ‘demotisation’ phenomena (i.e. inclusion of previous dialect features), and dialects can be studied for how they are influenced by SSL features. This latter process is ‘structural standardisation’, and I want to distinguish it from ‘language levelling’, which is a more general term for reduction of linguistic differences between varieties. Standardisation in this sense is a more limited phenomenon because the notion of SSL is related to *specific* standard language varieties, which in the Norwegian case are Bokmål and Nynorsk.

In this chapter, I first focus on structural change in a series of local western dialects in order to examine whether they seem to be influenced by the Oslo-west prestige variety, by one of the two SSLs, or possibly by other varieties (the Oslo-east demotic variety, or the variety of a regional centre) – over the same time. Then I approach the issue of cultural values by studying how local youth relate to these varieties in terms both of *overt* (*conscious*) attitudes and *covert* (*subconscious*) attitudes. Finally, a comparison of the Norwegian results with previous Danish results allow for a discussion of our theoretical notions.

## FORCES AND EFFECTS

The main objective of the sociolinguistic approach to linguistic change is to understand the interplay of linguistic and social aspects, and there is a long tradition of implying that the socio-psychological notion of attitude is an essential explanatory factor for what happens structurally in the language: attitudes are an important driving force.

If we want to study the role of attitudes, a transnational project can provide a useful ‘laboratory’ for forging relevant categories and theoretical models as it allows for comparison of results from different communities. The results from one language community can shed light on the results from another community because relevant theoretical distinctions can be veiled or obscured in one culture but not in another. Therefore, comparison is a most useful approach in any effort to develop theory. The most well-known results thus far from this branch of so-

ciolinguistics are the Danish ones (Kristiansen 2009a), which convincingly demonstrate a positive correlation between subconscious upgrading of Copenhagen SSL and linguistic change in the Danish speech community toward Copenhagen SSL. Kristiansen's conclusion is that '[I]anguage change is governed by subconscious values' (*ibid.*: 167). In this chapter, I present results from Norway, a society that is analogous to Denmark both linguistically and socially, but not in language culture.

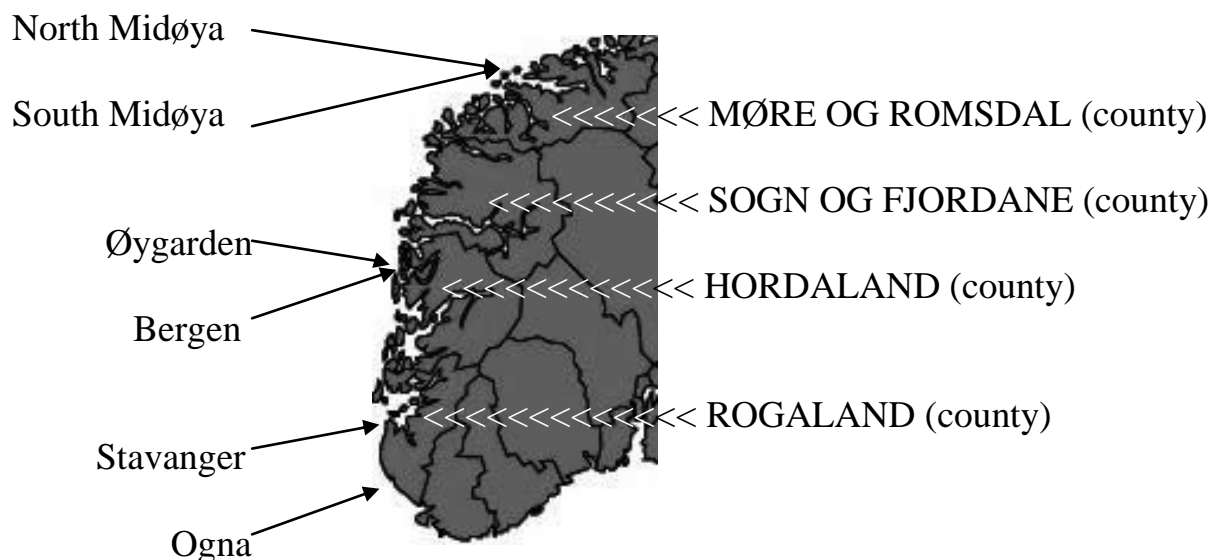
The results are from an on-going project, *Processes of dialect change* (<http://folk.uib.no/hnohs/DEP/>), which involves real-time studies of linguistic change in six different communities in Western Norway (see Figure 1) as well as extensive attitudinal studies in the same communities. The main goal of the project is to study the social conditions of linguistic change. Hence, the communities selected for the study have different structures in terms of size, social change and migration. In all six communities, we have conducted traditional sociolinguistic interviews with representative informants and tested both overt attitudes by use of a questionnaire and covert attitudes by use of the verbal guise technique. The overall design of the project is similar to the Danish LANCHART project (<http://dgcss.hum.ku.dk/>), and we took great care to apply exactly the same methodology in all communities.

Our six subprojects are all based on real-time data. The actual time-spans for the field works are 1969–2009 (South and North Midøya), 1976–2011 (Ogna), 1978–2009/2010/2011 (Bergen), 1983–2009/2010 (Stavanger and Øygarden).<sup>1</sup>

A central issue in studies of linguistic change in Norway is whether and to what extent dialects today are changing in the direction of the prestigious dialect of Oslo. In public discourse there is a general claim that such a strong influence on spoken language exists throughout the whole country. This claim has also been supported by sociolinguists referring to (overt) attitudes as explanation (e.g. Mæhlum 2009: 14, 17). However, our empirical results from Western Norway give little support to this claim and therefore indicate that we need a more complex and sophisticated model to understand forces and effects in the process of linguistic change.

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<sup>1</sup> The projects on North and South Midøya are presented in Grytten (1973) and Fossheim (2010); Øygarden in Antonesen (1988) and Villanger (2010); Bergen in *Talemål i Bergen* (1983–1988) and Nornes (2011); Stavanger in Gabrielsen (1984) and Aasen (2011); and Ogna in Friestad (1976).



**Figure 1:** Western Norway with the location of the six communities under study

## LINGUISTIC CHANGES AND THEIR POSSIBLE SOURCES

So far, results concerning frequencies of use can be presented only for five of the communities: North Midøya, South Midøya, Øygarden, Stavanger and Bergen. (The linguistic change data for Oгна have not yet been analysed.) The results of the former four, on the variables that were analysed in each community, are shown in Table 1. The results for Bergen Centre are shown in Table 2.

In this section, the first step of the analysis is to make clear what the possible sources are for each of the changes that were found. In each of the communities, *possible sources* for an incoming feature are the varieties of Norwegian that traditionally do have that feature. Those varieties are marked with + in Tables 1 and 2. Varieties without the incoming feature are marked with –. In cases where such a correspondence is irrelevant, the cell is unmarked, which is often the case for the two written languages, as these in their spoken versions (SSL as defined above) do not always prescribe a specific pronunciation. The varieties that are addressed in Tables 1 and 2 are the ones that are normally mentioned as possible sources of change in the debate about this issue. These include – in addition to the rural dialect of the area in which the studied community is located – the regional centre variety, the demotic language variety of Oslo, the traditional prestige variety of Western Oslo, Bokmål SSL, and Nynorsk SSL.

For most of the variables, several sources are possible. For instance, all of the possible source varieties may have triggered or caused the ‘loss of dative’ (vari-

able 6 under both South Midøya and North Midøya) from a structural point of view. However, a + signals no more than structural equivalence, and we need further arguments to determine whether a possible source is a real source for the change in a specific community. The drop of the dative case in Norwegian dialects started in the Middle Ages well before the two modern written languages were established, a fact that indicates that these two possible sources are not necessary to explain the change. Thus, we need to differentiate between *possible* and *necessary* sources.

The influence that other Norwegian language varieties potentially exert on our dialects under study can only be an *effect of a social force* in a language contact situation where one community has some ‘power’ to dominate socially and culturally over another community. Basically, a *social force* as such is unlikely to influence a variety with respect to only specific linguistic variables. We would rather expect that the influence is the same on all structural items or variables. In contrast, the characteristic of *linguistic structure as a force* (discussed below in the section on ‘social and structural explanations’) is that it is specific with respect to the variables which can be influenced.

This line of reasoning may be helpful in clarifying how sociolinguistic patterns should be interpreted and it underlines that ad hoc explanations should be avoided. An explanation that there is influence from a particular source on only one variable and not on others is entirely ad hoc. Especially so if other variables demonstrate opposite tendencies, as when Bokmål-like forms with postvocalic *p, t, k* increase in frequency in Stavanger while the Bokmål-like form /ike/ ‘not’ at the same time decreases in frequency (see Stavanger variables 5 and 3 in Table 1). Bokmål cannot be both a winner and a loser as we refer to the same social force in the language contact situation in Stavanger. At least, such an inconsistency triggers new theoretical challenges that have not yet been satisfactorily solved. If one and the same possible source shows both correspondence (+) and non-correspondence (–) with the dialect under study (as exemplified by Bokmål in relation to South Midøya in Table 1), then those results must be considered contradictory, unless we can provide independent data and arguments that the contradiction is only apparent (exemplified below in the section on ‘social and structural explanations’). *The most likely sources* should therefore be those that are consistently marked with a + throughout the whole set of variables.

If the same variety appears to be the only possible source for the change on a variable, it is the *necessary source* for that particular change – a finding which can be taken to indicate a dominating-source status for the variety in question. If

this necessary source is also a possible source for changes on the other variables, we can move on to a discussion of *why* this particular variety has a dominating status.

Are there data and arguments that can justify a deviation from this strict line of reasoning? As already mentioned, linguistic structure represents a variable-specific force (a topic to be discussed further below), but there can also be some particular social values assigned to one specific variable in a community. I think my line of reasoning here corresponds to what is implied in Labov's definition of 'pressures from below' rather than 'from above'.

Pressures from below operate upon entire linguistic systems, in response to social motivations which are relatively obscure and yet have the greatest signification for the general evolution of language. [...] social pressures from above [...] represent the overt process of social correction applied to individual linguistic forms. (Labov 1972: 123)

'Social correction' is specific with respect to linguistic variables and can be documented by independent data on, say, how parents or teachers correct Norwegian children for saying *sjøtt* instead of *kjøtt* ('meat'; the illustrated phonetic/phonological change is spreading rapidly in young speech all over Norway), or how newspaper readers write letters to the editor to complain about specific linguistic items (cf. 'the complaint tradition' in Milroy and Milroy 1985). In accordance with scientific standards such documentation by independent data is fundamental for establishing exceptions to a more general pattern. This is imperative in order not to immunize claims from being disprovable and in order not to argue in a circular fashion. When linguistic features spread, some of them can, of course, be reallocated in the new community, i.e. be assigned a new specific social value, but this has to be demonstrated empirically. It is not satisfactory to claim that a result is an effect of a reallocation only because a variable shows up a deviant frequency pattern. Such an explanation is only ad hoc or a *deus ex machina*.

Now, Tables 1 and 2 present in a schematic way the main results from the five communities we have studied so far. (For details on variables and linguistic analysis, see Sandøy forthcoming). By looking at the columns of + and –, we see that Table 1 points to a single candidate as the most likely source for the changes

**Table 1:** Linguistic changes in four communities and possible sources<sup>2</sup>.

The figures for ‘change rate’ show the change in the percentage of the new variant.

<i>Community</i>	<i>Variables</i>	Rural dialect in the district	Regional centre	Demotic Oslo variety	Prestige Oslo variety	Bokmål	Nynorsk	Change rate
South Midøya	1+2: 1.pers.pron.sg. <i>ei</i> > <i>i</i>	+	+	–	–	–	–	92
	3: Retroflex flap (new)	+	+	+	–			76
	4: Retroflex stops (new)	+	+	+				100
	5: Loss of palatals	–	+	+	+	+	+	65
	6: Loss of dative	–	+	+	+	+	+	84
N. Midøya	1+2: 1.pers.pron.sg. <i>i</i> > <i>ei</i>	+	+	–	–	–	–	14
	3: Retroflex flap > lateral approx.	+	+	+	–			4
	4: Retroflex stops (new)	+	+	+				–5
	5: Loss of palatals	–	+	+	+	+	+	52
Øygarden	6: Loss of dative	–	+	+	+	+	+	89
	1: Merger Ö–Å, Ø	–	+	+	+	–	–	86
	2: DN > RN, NN	–	+	+	+	+	+	59
	3: Loss of pal. velars	–	+	+	+	+	+	89
	4&5: > Two genders	–	+	–	+	–/+	–	40
	6: Pres. -a > -aR	–	+	–	–	–	+	4
	6: Pres. -a > -e	+	–	–	–	–	–	20
	7: Past. -a > -et	–	+	–/+	+	–/+	–	25
8: Inf. -a > -e	–	+	+	+	+	+	27	
Stavanger	1+2: 1.pers.pron.sg <i>je</i> > <i>eg</i>	+	+	–	–	–	+	58
	3: negative adverb <i>ike</i> > <i>içe</i>	+	+	–	–	–	+	34
	4: Infinitive -a > -e <sup>3</sup>	–	+	+/-	+	+	+/-	–12
	5: postvocalic <i>b, d, g</i> > <i>p, t, k</i>	–	+	+		+	+	43
	6: ç > ʃ	–	+	+/-	–	–	–	68
	7: sj > ʃ	–	+	+	+			66

<sup>2</sup> Based on analyses in Fossheim (2010), Villanger (2010) and Aasen (2011).

<sup>3</sup> The results for the infinitival suffix shows up a complex pattern: For the elderly people in 1983 and 2010 the new variant *-e* has decreased in frequency (76% > 42%), whereas it among the young informants has increased from 27% to 64% over the same period of time. The direction of changes seems thus to have reversed, and the change among young people is the basis for the interpretation here.

in the five dialect communities, namely the regional centre<sup>4</sup>, which is Molde for South and North Midøya and Bergen for the other communities.<sup>5</sup> Neither the prestige Oslo variety nor the two SLLs, Bokmål and Nynorsk, have any obvious influence on the studied dialects. There is no result on any variable that makes these latter sources *necessary*. The same is true for the demotic dialect of the national centre. The most consistent source of linguistic change is the regional centre.

The regional centre of the southern and middle part of Western Norway is Bergen, which is and always has been the region's biggest town. (The northernmost county of Møre and Romsdal is not subordinate to Bergen to the same extent because of travelling distance and the hierarchy explained in footnote 5.) As Bergen is subordinate to the national capital, Oslo, in the national hierarchy of size and economic importance, we can easily imagine a model where Bergen itself receives linguistic influence from Oslo and thereby indirectly mediates the

**Table 2:** Linguistic changes in Bergen Centre and possible sources<sup>6</sup>.

The figures for 'change rate' show the change in the percentage of the new variant.

<i>Variables</i>	Rural dialect in the district	Demotic Oslo variety	Prestige Oslo variety	Bokmål	Nynorsk	Change rate
1: $\zeta > \jmath$	–	+/-	–	–	–	94
2: $sj > \jmath$	–	+	+			28
3: $e > \text{æ}$ in front of R	–	+	+	+	–	86
4: $eR > aR$	–	–	–	–		9
5: refl.&pers.pron. <i>sei, dei, mei</i> > <i>seg, deg, meg</i>	+	–	–	–	+	24
6: 1.pers.pron.sg. <i>jei</i> > <i>eg</i>	+	–	–	–	+	40
7: negative adverb <i>ike</i> > <i>içe</i>	+	–	–	–	+	17
8: determinator <i>nåkken</i> > <i>noen</i>	–	+	+	+	+/-	14

<sup>4</sup> The one instance of – in the column for regional centre will be commented on below in the section on 'social and structural explanations'.

<sup>5</sup> This 'allocation' to either Molde or Bergen as regional centers follows from a 'hierarchisation' of communities based on criteria to do with size/population, educational institutions, administrative authorities and patterns of migration. The centre for Midøya is Molde, which in turn is subordinated to Trondheim according to the criteria, and not to Bergen even though it is traditionally reckoned as a part of Western Norway (cf. Sandøy 1998). Stavanger is in the Norwegian context a relatively big city (126 000 inhabitants), but is dominated by Bergen (265 000 inhabitants) in the hierarchy.

<sup>6</sup> Based on Nornes (2011).



influence exerted from the national centre. Let us therefore look at the results from the sociolinguistic study of Bergen (Table 2).

From Table 2, we see that there is no obvious or general influence from the national centre on Bergen Centre, from either the prestige variety or the demotic variety. The one variable where either Bokmål or the national centre is a necessary source is the lexical variable 3 ‘e > æ in front of R’ where the change was already prevalent in our 1978 study in Bergen and is likely a change of the Modernity period (Nornes 2010). Variables 1 and 2 represent a recent merger of the two phonemes /ʃ/ and /ç/ (recall the *sjøtt* vs. *kjøtt* example above) which has appeared in several towns and centres in Southern Norway over the last generation and emerged first in Bergen, then in Oslo.<sup>7</sup>

On the whole, Table 2 provides a rather confusing picture of the possible sources of linguistic change in Bergen. At the same time, it is important to notice that the two towns of Bergen and Stavanger, which have been well-known for their traditional clear socially stratified variation, demonstrate a substantial increase in the use of low-status variants over the three decades that separate the studies we draw on, cf. Tables 3 and 4. Furthermore, the direction of these changes is away from the national centre varieties and from the SSL Bokmål.

**Table 3:** Increase of the low prestige variants in Bergen Center.

<i>Variables</i>	Average elderly 1978	Average adolescents 2010–11
1: ç > ʃ	0	94
4: suffix -eR > -aR	65	74
5: refl.&pers.pron.sg. <i>sei, dei, mei</i> > <i>seg, deg, meg</i>	73	97
6: 1.pers.pron.sg. <i>jei</i> > <i>eg</i>	60	100
7: negative adverb <i>ike</i> > <i>içe</i>	51	68

**Table 4:** Increase of the low prestige variants in Stavanger.

<i>Variables</i>	Average elderly 1981	Average adolescents 2010
1+2: 1.pers.pron.sg. <i>je</i> > <i>eg</i>	42	100
3: negative adverb <i>ike</i> > <i>içe</i>	66	100
6: ç > ʃ	0	68

Figures are percentages.

<sup>7</sup> Noticed first in the speech of the 1964-cohort in the 1978-data from Bergen (Johannessen 1983). In Oslo a corresponding merger was discovered in the 1990’s (Papazian 1994). The phonological origin of the two mergers was not identical, but the mergers were (Sandøy 1989).

The described tendency of dialect change in Western Norway diverges from what has been observed in Denmark, where ‘Copenhagen is Denmark’s only linguistic norm centre’ (Kristiansen 2009a: 167). Nonetheless, the regional centre, Bergen, plays a similar role as a norm centre in its region, i.e., a source for linguistic change. Thus, it seems that a regional centre in Norway may have the same role as the national centre in Denmark. (The pattern is likely to be different in the lexical domain, but lexical items have not been focused in these studies.)

### POSSIBLE FORCE 1: OVERT ATTITUDES

Thus far we have looked for likely sources for the observed changes. What about the possible forces? One possible force is the ‘social status’ or ‘overt prestige’ which people agree on attributing to language varieties. In the same six West Norwegian communities, we gave our respondents a list with eight ‘dialect names’ – representing Eastern Norway, Bergen, Southernmost Norway, Trøndelag, Northern Norway, the local dialect, the regional centre [if not Bergen], and a rural neighbouring area – and asked them as follows:

Please rank the dialects in the table below based on your belief about how *Norwegians in general* evaluate their status. What we mean by *status* is whether these dialects are highly valued or disparaged in the society. Let 1 stand for the highest value, 8 for the lowest.

We asked this question with the intention of obtaining a more precise understanding of the general notion of ‘prestige’, which is often used in everyday discussions as people refer to a ‘prestigious dialect’. At this imprecise level, it seems to be a kind of consensus among researchers and interested laymen about which dialects are considered prestigious (Western Oslo on top, urban dialects higher than rural, high-class varieties higher than low-class varieties, cf. Sandøy 1985: 162; Mæhlum 2009: 14). However, it is desirable to obtain more tangible and empirical data to support this notion. By encouraging respondents to reflect on the opinions of *others*, we intended to prevent the respondents from ‘filtering’ their answers through an idealised self-image and from involving their personal commitments. Thus, we expected that the answers would yield honest reflections based on the respondents’ experience of a collective stereotype about ‘language prestige’.

The results from the analysis of the about 1200 respondents' answers are not surprising and they correspond to the consensus mentioned above. In Tables 5 and 6 below, the results are presented in the same 'general terms' for all six communities: *national centre variety* is Central East Norwegian (i.e. from the Oslo area); *regional centre variety* is Molde dialect for the two Midøya communities and Bergen dialect for Øygarden, Stavanger and Ogna; *rural district variety* is the rural dialects of the region in question. The stereotypes of language prestige are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Ranking of varieties in terms of *overt prestige*<sup>8</sup>

	<i>Midøya</i> <sup>9</sup>	<i>Øygarden</i>	<i>Bergen</i>	<i>Stavanger</i>	<i>Ogna</i>
1	National centre	Regional centre	National centre	National centre	National centre
2	Regional centre	National centre	Regional centre	Regional centre	Regional centre
3	Rural district	Rural district	Rural district	Rural district	Rural district.

Shaded cells indicate the communities' own variety

It seems important to notice that the answers demonstrate a rather homogeneous pattern in all communities. We might claim that our 'prestige-ranking-of-varieties' task is a valid operationalisation of some aspect of how cultural hegemony (or *prestige hierarchy*) functions in Norwegian society, although knowledge of the prestige hierarchy seems to be irrelevant for an individual's learning and practice of the vernacular.

These results correspond to the expected prestige hierarchy with the one exception of Øygarden, where the regional centre has been ranked higher than the national centre. We notice that the rural dialect is lowest irrespective of the rural or urban background of the respondents.

The high ranking of the regional centre, Bergen, corresponds to the direction of actual linguistic change in the Øygarden community. However, since the national centre is awarded the highest position in all the other communities, the conclusion is that this kind of shared idea about variety-prestige has no general or obvious impact on language use in Western Norway. As no equivalent analy-

<sup>8</sup> In Tables 5 and 6, 'regional centre' refers to Stavanger (and not Bergen) in Stavanger and Ogna. (This is different from the use of 'regional centre' in Table 1.) Stavanger is a regional centre for Ogna on a lower level and the trial was designed to test that contrast. The results are provided by Fossheim (2010) (Midøya), Aasmundseth (2010) (Øygarden) and Anderson (forthcoming).

<sup>9</sup> For practical reasons, we had to collect data in audiences (school classes and gatherings) that included people from both communities, so we were unable to differentiate between the respondents from South and North Midøya.

sis of the notion of prestige has been carried out in Denmark, we are unable to compare the two countries in this respect.

To obtain the respondents' own 'aesthetic' evaluations of the same dialects that they had ranked for 'overt prestige', we posed this question:

*How beautiful do you think the dialects mentioned below are? Let 1 stand for 'most beautiful', and 8 for 'least beautiful'.*<sup>10</sup>

**Table 6:** Ranking of varieties in terms of *beauty*<sup>11</sup>

	<i>Midøya</i>	<i>Øygarden</i>	<i>Bergen:</i> <i>Rå, Slåtth.,</i> <i>Gimle</i>	<i>Bergen:</i> <i>Rothaugen</i>	<i>Bergen:</i> <i>Ytre Arna</i> <sup>12</sup>	<i>Stavanger</i>	<i>Ogna</i>
1	Rural dstr.	Rural dstr.	Regional c.	Regional c.	Rural dstr./	Regional c.	Rural dstr.
2	Regional c.	Regional c.	National c.	Rural dstr.	Region. c. <sup>13</sup>	National c.	Regional c.
3	National c.	National c.	Rural dstr.	National c.	National c.	Rural dstr.	National c.

Shaded cells indicate the communities' own variety

The generalised results are shown in Table 6 and show a homogeneous pattern in that the respondents' own dialect is always highest. These results cannot in any way be claimed to correspond to the direction of linguistic change in the respective communities unless the changes had in some way enhanced differences from other dialects – and this is not the case.

Studies of aesthetic evaluation based on the same methodological approach have found the same pattern in Denmark (Kristiansen 2009a), namely that people place their own local dialect highest. This kind of direct questioning almost unavoidably seems to trigger a reaction of loyalty to the respondents' own community. However, in neither of the two countries do the overtly expressed attitudes seem to be a driving force in language change.

<sup>10</sup> Norwegian text: 'Kor fine synest du dialektane som er nemnde nedafor, er? La 1 på skalaen vere finast og 8 minst fin.'

<sup>11</sup> Cf. notes to Table 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ytre Arna is a traditional rural part of the municipality of Bergen, which is not integrated in the town either with respect to dialect or identity.

<sup>13</sup> Two dialects are in the same cell because there is no significant difference between them; in the sample, the dialect before the slash has a higher score than the one after the slash.

## POSSIBLE FORCE 2: COVERT ATTITUDES

Prior to answering the direct questions which elicited conscious responses about language varieties, all our respondents took part in a ‘speaker evaluation experiment’ (SEE), based on the verbal guise technique (Kristiansen 2009a; Garrett 2010), without having received any information about the ‘language attitudes’ purpose of the experiment. To determine whether the respondents had guessed the purpose during the experiment, the last item on the questionnaire asked them to suggest what they thought it was all about. Few guessed correctly, and the forms of those who did were excluded from the analyses (Anderson 2010). The respondents were asked to listen to and evaluate fifteen audio-recorded speakers on a number of personality traits. The fifteen voices represented five different varieties, i.e. there were three voices per variety. The experiments were conducted in strict accordance with the design that had been used in the Danish attitudes studies.

A huge amount of data was collected from 1200 respondents. I can only present some preliminary and general results here (see Table 7, which makes use of the same variety categories as Tables 5 and 6 above).

**Table 7:** Subconscious ranking of varieties<sup>14</sup>

<i>Midøya</i>	<i>Øygarden</i>	<i>Bergen:</i> <i>Rå</i> <i>Ytre Arna</i>	<i>Bergen:</i> <i>Årstad</i> <i>Rothaugen</i> <i>Slåtthaugen</i>	<i>Stavanger:</i> <i>Kannik</i> <i>St. Svithun</i>	<i>Ogna</i>
Rural dstr./	National c.	Regional c.	National c.	Rural dstr	Rural dstr
National c.	Regional c.	National c.	Regional c.	Regional c.	Regional c.
Regional c.	Rural dstr	Rural dstr	Rural dstr	National c.	National c.

Shaded cells indicate the communities’ own variety

What we notice first of all in Table 7 is that there is not a general pattern; all categories have both highest and lowest ranking.<sup>15</sup> Once again, we have difficulties finding obvious correspondences between these results and the linguistic

<sup>14</sup> Here I draw on Aasmundseth (2010), Fossheim (2010), and Anderson’s forthcoming work, which will give the full analysis.

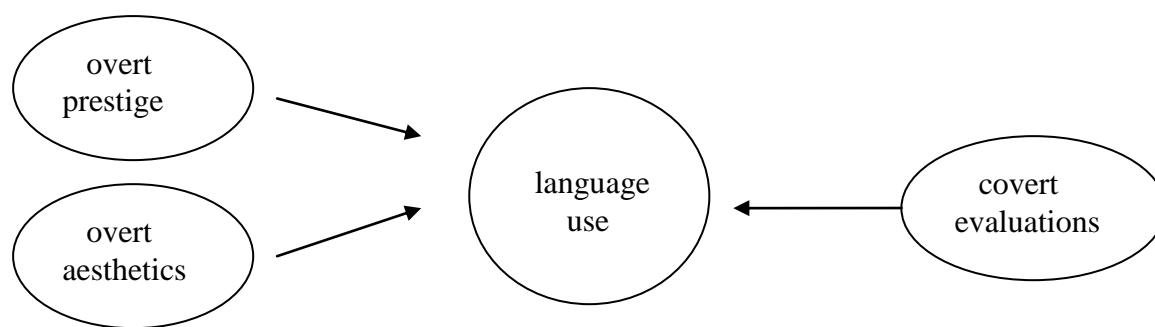
<sup>15</sup> In order to investigate a potential differentiation between high and low varieties of the Oslo area/Eastern Norway, we used an alternative test in some schools, in which these two varieties were used and only one for the local rural dialect. In these tests East Norwegian ‘low’ always ranked on the second top, well above East Norwegian ‘high’. On the whole this was true for both superiority scales and dynamism scales, cf. Anderson (2010).

changes presented above (in the section on ‘linguistic changes and their possible sources’) – both on the whole and for each locality. We may conclude that there are no straightforward correspondences between linguistic change and covert attitudes. This is very different from the Danish results, and on the basis of Norwegian results, we cannot in the same way argue for a driving force role for covert attitudes in language change.

The Norwegian results are compatible with the Danish ones with respect to the following conclusion: ‘There are two value systems at two levels of consciousness’ (Kristiansen 2009a: 167). Like in Denmark, the subconscious SEE responses differ greatly from the overt responses to the aesthetic question. However, the Norwegian SEE results differ from the Danish ones in that the national centre variety is not consistently the highest in rank, and the rural district dialect is not consistently the lowest in rank. While the Danish results ‘strongly confirm’ the hypothesis that ‘language change is governed by subconscious values’ (Kristiansen 2009a: 167), our conclusion is that subconscious/covert values show no clear influence on language change in Norway.

### NO CORRESPONDENCE. NEW QUESTIONS?

The methods used for our data gathering and our analyses which have been presented above build on a hypothesis about the influence of social evaluations upon language use which can be visualised as in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Possible ideological forces affecting language use

However, from the various results presented above, we are unable to discern any obvious and unambiguous general correspondence between social evaluations and the observed linguistic changes. Loyalty to one’s own local dialect in the *aesthetics* test (Table 6) should have counteracted changes in the direction of the

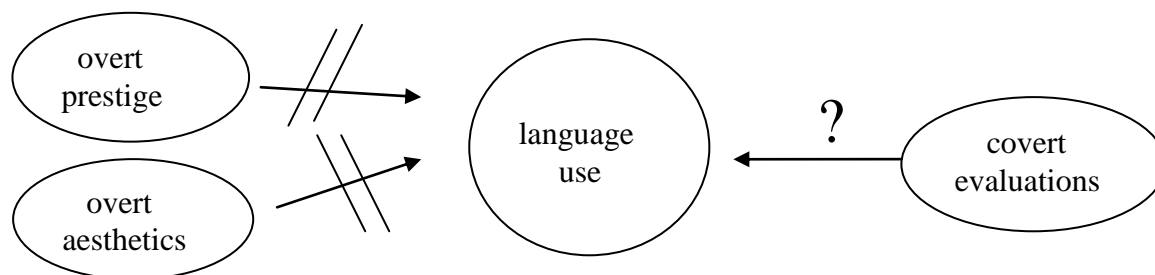
regional centre, which is not what happens. The fact that the national centre is in all but one case highest with respect to *prestige* (Table 5) should have resulted in linguistic changes in that direction, which is not the case either (as it appears from Table 1).

Actually, the Øygarden respondents do rank the regional centre variety (Bergen dialect) highest in terms of prestige, but this is the only instance of a correspondence between actual linguistic change and a top prestige ranking, and does not allow for a generalisation. We therefore conclude that there is no general influence from overt judgements of beauty and prestige on language use.

Overt loyalty has nevertheless proved to be relevant in other studies. Røyneland (2005), for instance, found a tendency for lower dialect change rates with young informants who planned to live locally. However, the loyalty data of that project were elicited in a different way, and were analysed at the individual, not collective, level. The role of local loyalty in Norway undoubtedly needs further investigation.

In Denmark, subconsciously elicited evaluations correspond with linguistic changes away from local varieties toward the national centre speech of Copenhagen (Kristiansen 2009a). This is not the case in Norway. In our data, the national centre variety is ranked highest in Øygarden and parts of Bergen (see Table 7), but the dialect changes in these locations are different. In Ogna, Stavanger and Midøya, the rural district variety is ranked highest, but the dialect changes are in the direction of the regional centre. In sum, the Norwegian results demonstrate a heterogeneous pattern and no clear correspondence between actual linguistic change and attitudes. We may notice, though, that the SEE data for the Rå and Ytre Arna areas of Bergen place the regional centre variety in top position, and thus yield a result that can be said to correspond to the absence of a clear outer source for the dialect changes observed in Bergen (cf. Table 2).

The above reasoning leads then to a provisional conclusion that can be visualised as the modified Figure 3. In aiming to create a universal theory of driving forces in linguistic change, we must, on this background, assume that the different results from Norway and Denmark can be explained by the presence of other decisive parameters that differentiate the Danish and Norwegian linguistic situations. Norway seems to differ from Denmark in subconscious evaluations (as obtained in SEEs) in these ways: (1) It is not a general pattern that the national centre speech is more positively evaluated than the local dialect; (2) in cases where the national centre speech is more positively evaluated, it does not seem to influence the local dialect.



**Figure 3:** Possible ideological forces affecting language use in Norway according to results from empirical investigations

As for the second specification, we can suggest tentatively some factors that can make covert evaluations relevant as a driving force: a) There should be enough direct social contact with the highly evaluated language community, b) there cannot be any great structural difference between the highly evaluated variety and the relevant dialect, and c) when a structural feature is already present as a variant in a dialect it is more likely for the feature to increase in use if it is identical with a corresponding feature in the highly evaluated language variety. These factors may constitute necessary conditions for the individual's conception of relevant linguistic options, and they would make it probable that language use data from Eastern Norway should demonstrate a different pattern from our West Norwegian data.

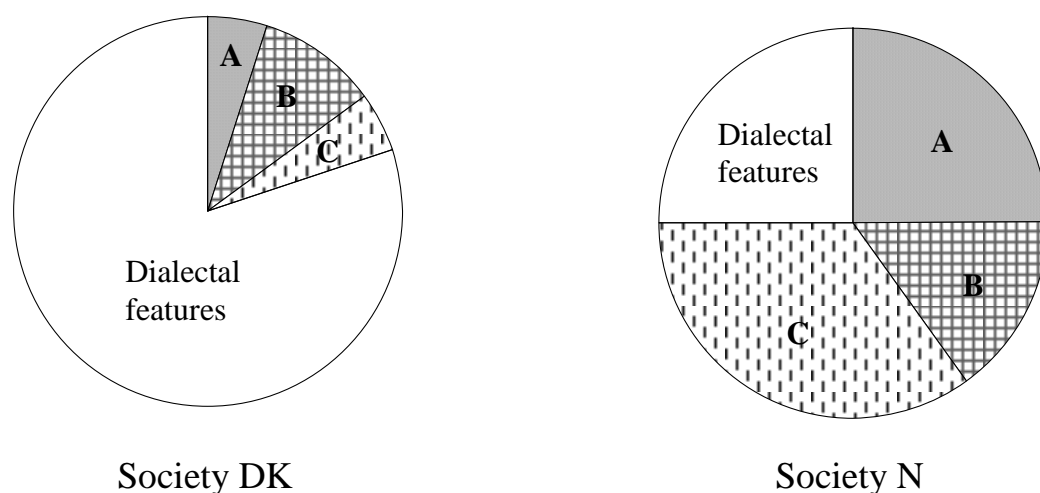
The first specification about general patterns is more interesting. How can the Norwegian community provide different conditions for speech evaluations? The positive correspondence between subconscious evaluations and language change in Denmark can be reasonably accounted for with reference to accommodation theory, which suggests that covert attitudes can reveal what informants are motivated to practise linguistically (Giles 1973; Giles, Taylor and Bourhis 1973). Accommodation theory assumes that speakers are *strategic* in their linguistic options and prefer the alternatives that most easily lead to social acceptance or success. In this light, the internalized social values that are revealed in the SEEs may be taken to indicate the individuals' conception of which linguistic options lead to social acceptance and success, and in Denmark these are the Copenhagen varieties. The individuals' internalized values are an effect of long-term exposure to patterns in social life, where success and specific language varieties are related.

If we assume that Norway is a society where most dialects are compatible with social acceptance and success, we would not expect dialect features to be a hindrance in terms of such social valuation. Not all dialects are equally evaluat-



ed in Norway either, but the point here is that compared to other European language communities very many dialects are actually used in Norway by people having successful careers and taking part in public life and discourse. To the extent that Norwegian society shows tendencies of ideological upgrading of certain dialects, these tendencies do not have the character of a general and unambiguous principle (as in Denmark). For the strategically oriented individual, the benefits of opting for a vague pattern are therefore less than the costs of deviating from local values. At least, this is a possible interpretation of the inconsistency of the SEE assessments in Western Norway (Table 7) – which indeed invite us to consider other factors than dialect features of the test voices as responsible for the obtained results. Such factors include the words chosen by the stimulus speakers, their ‘communication techniques’, the speed of speech, voice pitch, etc. Our tentative conclusion at this point is therefore: The extent to which dialect characteristics play a role among all possible factors may differ from one society to another, therefore allowing the test to reveal *cultural differences*.

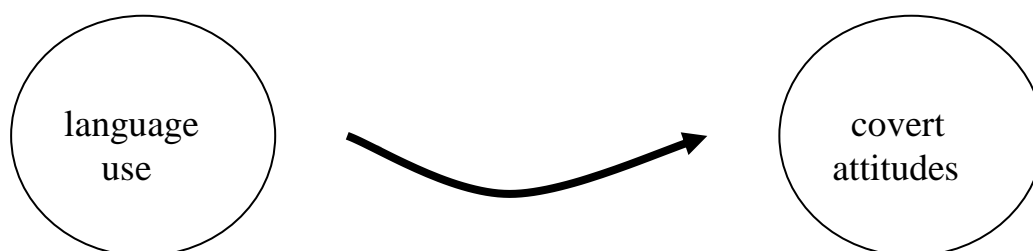
The difference in how much the various cultural factors influence the overall evaluation – i.e. the difference in their explanatory power – may be visualised as in Figure 4. The above interpretation of the Norwegian results assumes that the situations in Denmark and Norway are different in a way that corresponds to the picture in the figure. In Sandøy (2011) I gave a description of the Norwegian language community in which dialects are increasingly used in all types of social situations and in various kinds of media. The use of a dialect is less and less



**Figure 4:** Possible societal differences in how much cultural factors – including dialect features – influence language use.

an obstacle to success; rather, it is a personal and favourable characteristic of a successful individual's image. Another characteristic of the Norwegian language community, in contrast to the Danish example, is that Norwegian schools have not implemented a spoken standard. On the contrary, it is a teacher's duty to adapt his or her individual language to the dialect of the children. Arguably as a consequence of this policy, code switching between dialect and SSL has never been common practice in Norway in the way that has been reported from various other language communities, as for instance Ostrobotnia in Finland (Ivars 2003: 51f.), and Bornholm and Sønderjylland in Denmark (Kristiansen et al. 1996: 192). Code switching to SSL has been a rare linguistic behaviour and has had an elitist character. In general, it is certainly safe to say that there is a significant difference between the Norwegian and Danish language communities in what concerns tolerance towards and exposure to linguistic variation (cf. Kristiansen 1996). This may be the explanation why dialect differences do not seem to convey social values in the same obvious and homogeneous way in the two communities.

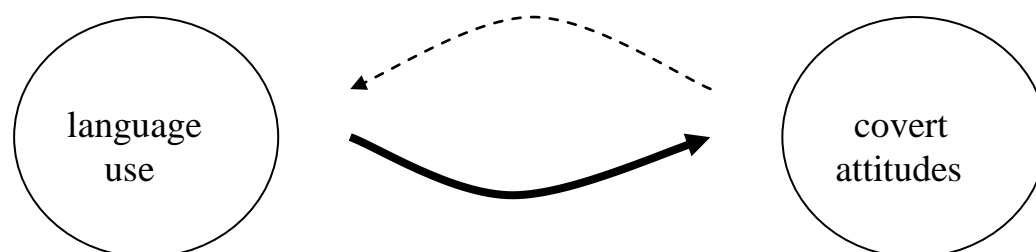
The Norwegian results invite us to reassess the theoretical model in which covert attitudes are a driving force in language change. Our results and the discussion above lead us to suggest that language use affects covert attitudes, and changes in use may cause changes in these attitudes (Figure 5). In order to determine the direction of causation – from use to attitudes or from attitudes to use – we need observations from a sequence in time to see what comes first. This is hardly possible to organize as a test (although see Kristiansen and Jørgensen 2005; Kammacher, Stæhr and Jørgensen 2010 for Danish indications), but it is possible to conceive of occasional 'experimental' opportunities. For instance, in the case where a popular politician enters the public scene with a low-prestigious dialect, or in the case where a stigmatised dialect is used in TV entertainment for a period. Such events pop up now and then in the real world, but



**Figure 5:** The suggestion that the direction of influence goes from use to evaluation

it is hard to foresee their coming and thus secure comparable pre- and post-event data. But it is not inconceivable that comparable data somehow show up by chance and thus provide the basis for a longitudinal study. We can also hope that comparison of results from many different societies will enable us to shed further light on the direction-of-influence issue.

The model in Figure 5 does not contradict a feedback model in which changed covert attitudes represent changed conditions under which new language changes can develop further and enhance tendencies that already exist. This would correspond to a model where community members negotiate by testing and pushing limits (see Figure 6).



**Figure 6:** A feedback modification of Figure 5

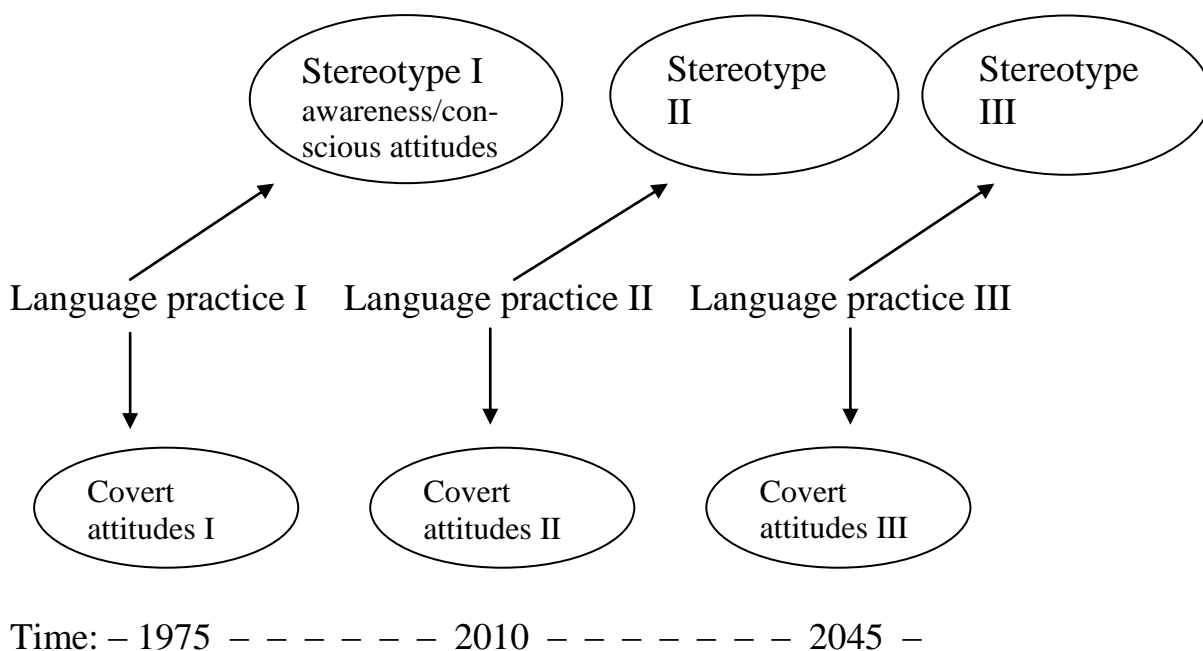
As substantiated by the evaluative patterns shown in Table 5, a stereotypical prestige hierarchy certainly exists in Norway, but no corresponding, commonly shared, subconscious hierarchisation seems to exist (Table 7). It is tempting to suggest that the stereotypical hierarchisation is a remnant from a previous period, only a generation ago, when people were more used to hearing only the SSLs (Bokmål and Nynorsk) in many public settings, while dialect use in the same settings, e.g. in radio and television, appeared a striking and demonstrative breach of both stipulated and tacit norms. The stereotypical prestige hierarchy reflects society's general treatment of language varieties at that time. What I suggest here is that some stereotypes can be carryovers from previous practices. A parallel interpretation was judged to be pertinent in a project where people all over the Nordic countries, in 2003, expressed as their opinion that Norwegians were more purist than Swedes and Danes (cf. Kristiansen and Sandøy 2010: 4). This judgement corresponds badly to the contemporary situation, if analysed in terms of frequency of 'imported words' (mostly from English) in newspapers, but corresponds well to what was the situation in 1975. While Norwegian journalists used fewer 'imports' than their Swedish and Danish colleagues in 1975,

they had surpassed them in the year 2000 (Graedler and Kvaran 2010: 34). An explanation of this kind, in terms of a time-lag for social evaluations, seems justifiable when we recall that awareness and conscious attitudes to a great extent depend on public discourse, which *must* show inertia if we as community members are to experience a sense of stability, consistency and integrity. In contrast, covert attitudes are not 'ideologically filtered' by individuals, and therefore likely to be more immediate consequences of changes in language practice.

It is likely that overt attitudes change over time; and this is indicated by results from projects in the 1970's which showed that respondents did not consider their own dialect as a beautiful one – as opposed to the results visualised in Table 6 (e.g. Hovdenak 1978).

The above reasoning can be modelled as in Figure 7. This model still leaves open the issue of what the driving force in language change is. I have suggested that a general pattern of using dialect in public settings may be a decisive factor. On this parameter, Denmark and Norway are very different (Pedersen 2003: 22–25, Pedersen 2005). In order to understand the general relation between practice and attitudes we need results from mappings of these two aspects in many countries.

What role does language in the media play in this context? It is part of language practice in the sense that people observe language use in the media along-



**Figure 7:** Hypothesized 'reaction-time' difference for overt and covert attitudes in relation to changes in language use.

side everyday language use. Media language as an object of study has the advantage that it is to a large extent both recorded and filed and provide us therefore with reliable historical data. In order for us to test the interesting question of whether the media influence everyday language or not, we have to assume that there was a difference between everyday language and media language at some previous stage and that this difference has disappeared or diminished. If everyday language has changed in the direction of media language, the assertion of influence is supported. Since we have accessible historical data about both media and everyday language, it should be possible to investigate this question.

However, the general opinion in Norway is that the language of the media has approached everyday language, not the other way round. This has been focused very much in general public discourse for the last couple of decades. In other words, we have to be aware that there may well be an influence in both directions. In order to investigate and document this closer, we need to establish variables that can reveal unambiguously an influence in one or the other direction. Whether previously SSL-dominated media have opened up for a broader gamut of variation is the easiest question to investigate. Whether the media have been instrumental in spreading SSL features in the community is a more complex question, as many SSL-features are also found in dialects that people meet in their everyday life outside of the media, and therefore an analysis depends on a complex discussion of prerequisites and conditions. Unambiguous criteria are therefore not easy to find. In the Norwegian context one possible variable could be the system of counting, which the Norwegian Parliament decided to change in 1951. (In the old counting system, the ones are pronounced before the tens, whereas in the new system the pronunciation follows the row of digits.) The new system was imposed on the mass media (the national broadcasting company), while everyday language maintained the traditional counting system for a generation. From the 1990s on, the new counting system seems to win out also in everyday language among young people. The media have certainly played a role in this process, but the importance of their contribution is blurred by the fact that most elementary school teachers loyally followed the official request to use the new system and may have had an influence on adolescents.

## SOCIAL AND STRUCTURAL EXPLANATIONS

If neither overt attitudes nor covert attitudes play obvious roles as driving forces in Norwegian linguistic changes, how are we to explain the changes that invariably occur? Several studies of new industrial towns have demonstrated that the product of koineization processes is dependent on proportions in the volume of in-migration from different dialect areas (Sandve 1976; Sandøy 2004). If in-migration exceeds a threshold level of 30%, it seems to have a noticeable influence. This indicative finding can, of course, be problematized in several ways, including taking into account the length of the in-migration period. The koineization model is relevant for the community of Øygarden because the in-migration has increased its population with 45% over the period from 1980, and two thirds of the in-migrants have come from Bergen over the last generation (Villanger 2010: 8). Compared to this level of in-migration, the rate of change in the Øygarden dialect in the direction of the Bergen dialect has been surprisingly small (explained in more detail in Sandøy forthcoming). Strictly speaking, then, this single *demographic* factor is sufficient as a driving force in the Øygarden case, and the more general pattern of Bergen's role as *regional centre* is not necessary as an explanation (only a *possible* force).

One linguistic change in Øygarden does not have its source in the regional centre of Bergen (see Table 1): the present tense suffix *-e* instead of the previous complex pattern in which the suffixes *-e* and *-a* depended on the conjugational classes. (The Bergen dialect has *-aR*.) This is an instance of grammatical simplification, and this innovation has appeared in several centres in both Rogaland and Hordaland over the 20th century, i.e., in the southern part of Western Norway, the town of Stavanger included. This change has the character of regional levelling without having its source in Bergen. The innovation needs not be an effect of the in-migration of a specific dialect group; it is rather a grammatical simplification that emerges in contact situations where a community is not linguistically focused in people's awareness. Migration (demographic instability) facilitates grammatical simplification – independently of the dialect background of the in-migrants.

'Regional levelling' (as referred to in the above paragraph and in the conclusion of the section on 'linguistic changes and their sources') is hardly more than a descriptive notion that is used to characterise a certain stage of diffusion. It is difficult to demonstrate in this case, as elsewhere, that the levelling is the result of a common regional identity. The two counties in question, Rogaland and

Hordaland (see map in Figur 1) do not constitute a common region which is conceived of as being unlike the other counties in Western Norway. There is nothing unique about this area with respect to administration, identity, etc. It is easier to imagine that the present diffusion is the result of a traditional geographic spreading in a combination of wave movement and jumping between centres, and ‘region’ as such has no analytic meaning beyond ‘neighbouring’. Thus, as these two diffusion patterns represent only a description, we still lack a satisfying socio-psychological explanation.

Some other features in our results can also be described as patterns of long-lasting waves. For instance, the depalatalisation in Midøya is marked + in Table 1 for having the regional centre, Molde, as its possible source. However, this is part of a change (simplification) which has moved northwards from Hordaland via the county Sogn og Fjordane to the county of Møre og Romsdal over the course of the 20th century. The gradual move over the map indicates that a new feature also diffuses independently of centres.

## QUESTIONS AND LATE MODERNITY

With respect to *language use*, Norway is markedly moving away from the modernity ideal of a SSL and towards the greater tolerance of variation which may indeed be a characteristic of late modernity (cf. the section on ‘linguistic changes and their possible sources’; and Sandøy 2011).

The explanations discussed in the above section concern traditional *social* factors (demographics and regional centres) and the question of *grammatical* complexity vs. simplicity, and we found these to be relevant. As to overt and covert attitudes (discussed in the previous sections), the conclusion for Norway was that we have not yet gained satisfactory insight into how linguistic changes can be understood at the *sociopsychological* level. We merely demonstrated that the proposed Danish picture needs further theoretical and methodological scrutiny – including the development of other measurement instruments that might capture possibly different evaluative dimensions and social values in the Norwegian community.

As for overt attitudes, we must say that the Norwegian situation is still at a ‘modernity’ stage, as the majority of our respondents thought that people in general consider the Oslo variety as the most prestigious language. But so far we lack the solid longitudinal data that would allow us to investigate whether this

comprehension has changed over time (cf., the notion of ‘time-lag’ as represented in Figure 7). Whether overt attitudes are more conservative (or time-lagged) than covert attitudes – and thus reflects a society of the past – is a question worthy of further study.

As it turns out, Norway is far from having a commonly accepted ‘best language’ at the level of covert attitudes as this has been shown to be the case in Denmark. We may ponder whether the different covert attitudes situation in Norway represents an advanced late modernity stage, or whether it should rather be seen as a pre-modernity phenomenon. If we focus on the complex situation in terms of national language authorities and see Norway as a society which is ‘moving away from’ language authorities, the perspective smells of late modernity characteristics. According to Kristiansen’s rendering (2009b) of Fairclough’s thoughts (1992), this new era is characterised by cultural democratisation, including ‘a value levelling that will secure access to public space for a wider range of speech varieties’. As a possible outcome of this development, Kristiansen points to an ‘eventual abandonment of the ‘standard ideology’ itself’. It is difficult to document the direction of the development of covert attitudes because of the lack of longitudinal data. However, Husby (1987) is an early study which offers relevant and comparable findings from Northern Norway, and we can discern there a stronger pattern of ‘loyalty’ towards national level authorities (i.e., high status Oslo speech) than in the data from 2010 presented in this chapter. And it may be added that the SEE data from Midøya show the adults to rank the Oslo prestige variety highest (Fossheim 2010: 108), in comparison with which the adolescents’ result represents a downgrading (Table 7). Of course, no strong conclusions can be drawn on the basis of this limited and vague evidence. More research – not least in other parts of the country – is needed in order to clarify the language ideological situation in Norway.

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