

# Influences of the norwegian language



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**Task A**

Do you have a rack at home with a CD player, tuner and equalizer? Or do you simply use a discman? If nothing else you may have a walkman? What kind of clothes do you wear? Is it a sweatshirt, jeans and boots? Do you eat fast food, or use a food processor to make something good?

The Norwegian language is in relation to the majority of the world's languages a medium-sized language. Most people are probably wondering whether the Norwegian language will survive in the next thousand years, or will more and more Norwegians go on to use English, so that within a short time, Norwegian will have gone completely into oblivion? So why do we really have all those English words in our language? There are several reasons for it, and that's what I'm going to talk about in this article. I could have written 20 pages about the influence in the mass media for example, but I am going to focus on giving you a general overview of English influence instead.

One of the reasons of this influence is that we constantly get new products, with English names. Just think of all those words that has followed with computer technology. Take for example: Software, hard drive and back up. It's entirely possible to find a Norwegian name for these new products, but I am not alone when I say that most people in Norway say PC (personal computer) instead of PD (" personlig databehandler"). English has a strong position as an international language in many areas of society, as in business, in science, in technology and not least in the mass media. American culture dominates in many areas in Norway. Ask yourself these

questions: How many times a year do you go to the cinemas? On how many of those visits do you watch American films? Another thing is if you listen to a local radio station, I don't think that it's wrong to say that 90% of the music being played is English.

Previously it has been German and French who have given us the majority of foreign words, but today, it is English, which gives us the majority. It is said that English words and influence, is the biggest problem for the Norwegian language today.

Education in Norway has been far better when it comes to English and it is said that the Scandinavian countries are world champions in English!

Language Scientists believe that many English words from teaching at school go straight into the daily speech of youths. In youth environments it's easy to be influenced by English. This applies especially to such persons who enjoy music. Pop and rap artists usually sing their songs in English. The young people learn the lyrics and use the English words in their everyday speech.

Retail chains have found out that young people buy more clothes if the goods have English names, such as jeans, boots, shirts, and that young people eat chips, snacks and burgers. Advertising and marketing play a key role in the English influence. Words such as hot, happy, fun and sexy are often used to spice up their sentences and make the advertisements more attractive.

Earlier all titles of English language movies were translated into Norwegian. Today however most movies keep their original titles, and only a few titles

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are translated, mainly movies meant for kids. Science is also a contributor to this. The United States has been leading the scientific research in the recent decades, and therefore new discoveries and theories are presented in English.

Tons of new products and new product categories are created in the United States and spread worldwide with English names. Moreover, just think of something as ordinary as a car. There are many English words used. We say: gear, clutch, coil, choke, dash, etc. The technological development gives us many opportunities, but at the same time, there is no doubt that new technology and new media represent a risk for small language communities. Also local cultural activities and traditions are in danger of becoming more and more uniform in globalization's wake.

Last but not least, we have everyday language and slang. We are messengers spreading the English on to others. One can, for example, say that some new expressions have come with immigration. Another thing is that foreign words are more likely to come into the language of a big city than in a small village. There are several people in a metropolis and, not to mention, several immigrants. These are reasons why the language is affected.

We can adapt a lot of English words to Norwegian without major problems. This is especially true for words like stress, sports, bullying, plotting, tackling and smart. These words can easily be used in Norwegian, because they can follow the Norwegian inflection. But just as many words create problems in

the system. Many of the words like jeans, thriller, image, seed, slide and walkman, are difficult to adapt to the Norwegian writing rules.

We have become so accustomed to English being around us 24 hours a day, that we do not always notice it's there. It has become so uncommon making own words, that many people find it funny when people resort to our own language elements and create a new word of them. When the word "utblåsing" was launched as the replacement for the English word blow-out, there is no denying that some people wrinkled their nose a bit. Yet the word has now been through, and is an example of how words can seem a bit comical at first, but after a short time become quite natural to use.

Sitting down in front of the computer at home today, you can communicate with people from all over the world. For only a hundred years ago it would have taken weeks from a letter was sent, to the recipient in another country would receive it. New technology has made the world smaller. Norwegian media are more likely to communicate with the foreign media, and therefore gain insight into foreign news. It is no longer for granted that one must study in Norway, or work here. Norwegians have become internationalized, and we know that there is more than Little Norway. The question on whether the Norwegian language is going to disappear, I personally think no, but it is frightening to think that in the future there may be a completely different Norwegian language than the Norwegian language we speak today. You are influenced by your mother, your father, your siblings, the boss at your job, the TV program you saw last night, the commercial that was shown before the television program you saw, you heard the radio broadcast on way to school this morning, the newspaper you read at the breakfast table. All this

has given you English influence, perhaps without you even thinking of it. The world community has an impact on how language changes, and as long as people in society changes, the language will do the same.