When the linguistic L1 context is linguistic diversity – Norwegian language policy and education

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Jens Haugan
Inland University of Applied Sciences, Norway; jens.haugan@inn.no

Abstract
From a 21st century perspective, one would typically expect that linguistic diversity in education would refer to the multiethnic and multilinguistic diversity found in most classrooms of today. During the last decades, L2 research has grown into a huge research field and teaching a country's official language(s) as second language(s) has become an integrated part of teacher education. Diversity within the first language, on the other hand, usually does not receive that much focus. In this paper, attention will be drawn to the development of the Norwegian written language(s) and its place in society and education. Furthermore, some of the paragraphs of the recent Norwegian language act of 2022 will be discussed. The present paper focuses on the formal development of the written language(s) during the last 100 – 150 years on the background of linguistic input/exposure and tries to show that despite the official (state) view that the two Norwegian written languages, Bokmål and Nynorsk, are equal and can be used in all parts of society the actual unequal use constitutes a mismatch in input/exposure which challenges the status of Nynorsk and leads to less linguistic diversity. Furthermore, the actual use of Bokmål, and thereby the exposure to Bokmål, leads to more homogeneity/conformity within Bokmål and, hence, less linguistic diversity despite an official standard that officially allows optionality and linguistic diversity.

Keywords*: linguistic diversity, L1 learning, L1 teaching, L1 diversity, language planning, language policy*

Introduction

The linguistic context of the 19th and 20th century was in many countries influenced by Herder's nation-building approach to language (see e.g. Hárs 2008), cf. e.g. Ferguson (2006: 17-18):

> For Kedourie, the intellectual roots of nationalist ideology lie in the work of German Romantics, specifically, Herder (1744-1803), Fichte (1762-1814) and von Humboldt, W. (1767-1835), who – writing at a time when Germany as no more than a geographical expression of a German nation – saw in the German language the most plausible evidence for the existence of a German nation, which, because it was a nation, was entitled to its own state. This linkage of language and nation, with a distinct language taken to be an important defining characteristic of a nation, had a profound influence on succeeding generations of nationalist thinkers and can be seen as giving language a foundational role in European nationalism.

Norway, just having gotten out of the union with Denmark in 1814 and having had Danish as the only official written language for several hundred years, was a typical representative for a nation who sought to establish/reestablish itself and build a national identity on the ground of one common language (see e.g. Ferguson 2006: 23 and Haugan 2020 and references there). However, even though the demand for a national language based on certain criteria may come from the people, i.e. certain individuals, groups

or communities with personal or national interests, language policy is usually a state matter. Furthermore, the most typical case of deciding on one or a few official national languages is a choice between linguistically distant languages, like e.g. German, French, Italian and Romansh in Switzerland, and languages that actually "exist", i.e. they do have an established written standard and a history of use in culture and literature. In this respect, Norway was "the odd one out" in 1814 where there had not been any official Norwegian written standard for several hundred years. Since the end of the 19th century (or the beginning of the 20thcentury), then, there have been two official Norwegian written standards. The purpose of this paper is to follow the language-planning history from 1814 until 2022 and problematize the educational aspect of it. The overall question is how the educational system is supposed to deal with the internal linguistic diversity of Norwegian, i.e. the fact that there are two Norwegian written standards and that there is no official oral standard. Due to the nature of this question, it is not possible to reach a final conclusion. The only conclusion possible is to state that the linguistic situation is in many respects demanding but not impossible from an educational or theoretical point of view. Depending on what the real agenda of the policy makers might be, it is clear that much more could be done if the goal is linguistic diversity and inclusion in the Norwegian society. A crucial factor for the maintenance of linguistic diversity is the visibility of and exposure to linguistic diversity.

Theoretical background

In this paper, it is claimed that the Norwegian policy makers are not doing enough to support linguistic diversity even though official language policy seems to state this as a goal. This claim is based on maybe the most important and obvious aspect of more or less all common language-acquisition theories: *exposure*. Exposure is here understood as sufficient exposure to linguistic data or input in accordance with Krashen's (1981, 1985) view on language acquisition and his Input Hypothesis. Even though the Input Hypothesis is developed to explain second language acquisition (SLA), it is equally valid for first language acquisition, cf. also Krashen's (1985: 79) Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis where it is stated that "'Acquisition' is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language, while 'learning' is a conscious process that results in 'knowing about' language." The basic point of the Input Hypothesis is "that humans acquire language in only one way – by understanding messages, or by receiving 'comprehensible input'" (Krashen 1985: 80). Krashen (ibid.) also states:

> If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided. The language teacher need not attempt deliberately to teach the next structure along the natural order – it will be provided in just the right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input.

In order to acquire a language – may it be a first or a second language, one needs "enough" or "a sufficient amount" of linguistic input. From a teaching context/environment point of view, the curriculum and the teacher need to ensure that the learners get sufficient/enough input, i.e. that they are exposed to a sufficient amount of linguistic data. From an educational perspective, *exposure* may, therefore, be an adequate term for *input*. Krashen (1985: 80) himself notes that his approach is in line with Chomsky's universal approach, i.e. a cognitive approach, to language acquisition.

> To be more precise, input is the essential environmental ingredient. The acquirer does not simply acquire what he hears – there is a significant contribution of the internal language processor (Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device: LAD). Not all the input the acquirer hears is processed for acquisition, and the LAD itself generates possible rules according to

> innate procedures (e.g. 'operating principles') (Slobin 1973); see Krashen 1983 for one possible schema). Moreover, not all comprehended input reaches the LAD (see discussion of the 'affective filter', below).

Krashen's use of "enough" or "a sufficient amount of" input is, of course, not very concrete. Krashen discusses this himself (1982: 73):

> "How much input?" remains an empirical question, one that can probably be adequately answered by research. To be more precise, we would like to know: "How much low filter/comprehensible input is necessary for students to acquire enough competence in the second language, so that they can use the informal environment to continue improving?" Despite our current paucity of data, what seems clear to me now is that we are not using enough of the available instruction time for supplying comprehensible input, and that we will be able to stimulate more rapid (and more comfortable) second language acquisition if we put greater focus on input.

Using a modern slogan, one could say that "more is more", cf. also Krashen (ibid.):

> Before concluding this section, I should point out that what I am suggesting is not at all new: along with Newmark (1971), I am suggesting that the "extensive" side of the extensive-
> intensive reading debate is correct, that students profit more from reading for meaning, and
> reading great quantities of material, than from what Newmark calls "cryptoanalytic decoding" of difficult paragraphs, and that students gain more from participating in conversations, many conversations, than from focused listening comprehension exercises.

The importance of input and exposure is also in line with, for instance, usage-based approaches to language acquisition, where *exposure* can be translated into *frequency*, cf. e.g. Wulff & Ellis (2018: 40): "Research in psycholinguistics demonstrates that generally, the more frequently a construction (or combination of constructions) is experienced, the earlier it is acquired and the more fluently it is processed (Ellis 2002)." While frequency is the actual occurrence of word forms or grammatic structures in a given linguistic context, i.e. the potential input, exposure is here understood as the actual exposure to this input, i.e. a linguistic context where the language user is consciously or subconsciously exposed to linguistic input. This distinction would, for instance, mean that a given text may contain certain linguistic structures, but this text would not have any effect unless the learner is exposed to the text by listening to it or reading it. And – again – one could say "more is more", cf. also Ellis & Ogden (2015: 283):

> Learning, memory, and perception are all affected by frequency of usage: the more times we experience something, the stronger our memory for it, and the more fluently it is accessed. The more recently we have experienced something, the stronger our memory for it. The more times we experience conjunctions of features, the more they become associated in our minds and the more these subsequently affect perception and categorization; so a stimulus becomes associated to a context and we become more likely to perceive it in that context. The POWER LAW OF LEARNING describes the relationship between practice and performance in the acquisition of a wide range of cognitive skills –

> the greater the practice, the greater the performance, with effects of practice larger at early stages of leaning. The power function relating probability of recall and recency is the FORGETTING CURVE.

Ellis uses the first sentence of this paragraph in several other publications, e.g. Ellis (2012: 7), Ellis et al. (2014: 62), Ellis (2015: 51). One could perhaps say that "frequency of usage" would be the active part, while "exposure" would be the passive counterpart. However, Ellis does not seem to distinguish these two perspectives, since "experience" also is a part in his perspective on "frequency of usage".

Another perspective on language acquisition may be that of Dörnyei (2009) and/or Norton (2013) where the desire to acquire a language is driven by motivation. The will to invest into acquiring another language is related to a vision of oneself or certain benefits within a language community. Related to the notion of *exposure*, one may say that a language that does not have a high status or is not very visible in a broader linguistic context will not be easy to visualize related to a future life or linguistic community.

Method

In order to demonstrate the linguistic context and diversity of the Norwegian (L1) society, the development of the Norwegian language will be outlined from 1814 until 2022 when the most recent language policy action, *The Language Act* (*Lov om språk* (*språklova*), came into force (Lovdata 2022a, b). One may wonder whether language policy and the school curriculum acknowledge language acquisition theories, or whether pure political issues may be more dominant in the Norwegian language planning policy. Research on first and second language acquisition highlights the importance of input and frequency of usage, i.e. *exposure* to linguistic data. This is a general topic in language acquisition and language teaching. However, there is usually less or no focus on how we acquire diversity within one and the same language. How do we deal with a language context where, instead of strict conformity, diversity may be said to be the norm rather than the exception?

Ernst Håkon Jahr (2015: 9) divides Norwegian language policy after 1814 into three main periods (my translation):

> I: The language-national period 1814-1917
> II: The language-social period 1917-1966
> III: From one-standard strategy to permanent two-standard state

The discussion below will follow Jahr's (2015) division.

Results and discussion

I: The language-national period 1814-1917

Danish and "educated speech"

In retrospective, Norway is "famous" in the linguistic literature for having two official Norwegian written standards. However, Jahr (2015: 13) states that "the language situation in Norway was 'normal' – and that it has never been more 'normal' than in 1814 and in the time immediately after" (my translation). This is based on the fact that Norway had a written standard (Danish), and that the civil service and the upper class spoke relatively uniformly and heavily influenced by the written Danish standard. Furthermore, it was generally accepted that this speech was considered "educated" and had high status (also referred to as *educated casual style*, cf. Torp 2005: 1428, or "cultivated standard speech", cf. Nes 2005: 1298). On the other hand, in 1814, the higher social classes were less than 5%

whereas the peasantry, together with fishermen and workers, was more than 95% of the people. These used their local dialects – that had low status. The local/rural dialects where direct developments from Old Norwegian with little or much less influence from the Danish language compared to the urban dialects or the educated speech of the upper class (see e.g. Nes (2005)). In that respect, the situation in Norway at that time was comparable to many other countries (Jahr 2015: 13.).

From a practical point of view, it would have been rather unproblematic to continue using Danish as the official written language in Norway. From a political point of view, however, this got more complicated after the dissolution of the union. While it was less controversial to look at Danish as the common language of Denmark-Norway, Denmark had now become a foreign country at the same time as romanticism came to the Nordic countries. This made it not very "attractive" to use the language of a foreign country as its own national language – among other things, because it would not have been easy to name this language in accordance with romantic values. One could not continue calling it Danish, and the Danish protested against calling the language Norwegian. Instead, "mother tongue" (*Modersmaalet*) was used and later "the common book language" (*det almindelige Bogsprog*) (Jahr 2015: 14).

In 1814, then, there was great linguistic diversity regarding the varieties of Norwegian since the vast majority of the Norwegian people spoke their (hundreds of) local dialects. At the same time, there was also great linguistic conformity since the people with political power wrote Danish and used a speech variety heavily influenced by (written) Danish. From the perspective of *exposure*, most people did not travel much compared to modern societies, hence, the exposure to other dialects was minimal. Furthermore, in more formal settings, one was expected to use "normalized" speech, i.e. the "educated" Danish-based speech of the upper class. From the perspective of social constructivist learning theories, like e.g. Dörnyei (2009) and Norton (2013), an imagined future self/identity would normally imply that one had to acquire the high-status oral variety. Hence, one would have to change or give up one's linguistic identity in order to climb on the public ladder.

The lexical approach of Wergeland, Asbjørnsen and Moe

In the 1830s, then, first of all with the poet and public debater Henrik Wergeland (1835), the idea of a Norwegian written language based on modified Danish was discussed in public. The romantic writers started using Norwegian words that did not exist in Danish, e.g. *foss* instead of *vandfald* (waterfall). The first form of more linguistic diversity in the written language was, thus, a lexically augmented form of Danish. Wergeland (ibid.) quoted the reaction from the Danish readers: "now we don't understand the Norwegian writers anymore" (my translation). From a Norwegian perspective, this was not necessarily "more" linguistic diversity since the Norwegians already knew these "new" words. The words were only new to the standard Danish written language that was used in Norway. The next step was to modify the spelling of Danish words that were pronounced differently or where the spelling was not in accordance with the pronunciation. Even though Wergeland (1833) presented a list of eight points in the newspaper *Statsborgeren* with concrete suggestions for changing the Danish written language into a more Norwegian direction, Wergeland himself continued writing Danish for the most part.

The Norwegian fairytale collectors Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe (cf. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in Germany) contributed to the new linguistic diversity when they tried to capture the Norwegian "flavor" in their written versions of Norwegian fairytales (*Norske Folkeeventyr*, 1841-1844). These texts may have reached a broader audience than Wergeland and other romantic writers, but the changes were still mostly on a lexical level.

Knudsen's approach to a standard Norwegian language

Wergeland's ideas for a written Norwegian version of Danish were followed up by Knud Knudsen (1812-1895) who was particularly interested in the relationship between speech and writing, cf. his first

major article (1845): "On the sounds, the sound signs and spelling in the Norwegian language" (my translation). Knudsen proclaimed that the written language should reflect the pronunciation of Norwegian oral speech (i.e. as orthophonic as possible). Knudsen was a teacher, and his reform project was among other things grounded on the hypothesis that schoolchildren would manage to learn to write much easier and faster if the written language was more in accordance with oral speech. Knudsen's efforts led to the first minor official language reform in 1862, i.e. an official new Norwegian writing standard that deviated from the official Danish standard. Now there was "official linguistic diversity" in the way that most people kept on writing Danish the way they had learned, but soon the new written forms appeared in public texts. Hence, readers were exposed to double forms of the same words. One would, for instance, read both *Miil* and *Mil* (mile), *Huus* and *Hus* (house) or *Philosoph* and *Filosof* (philosopher). Even though this was not planned or foreseen as a result, more than 150 years later, Norwegian may still have two or more forms of the same word as the official standard. Knudsen's reform or linguistic project was based on the "educated" speech of the less than 5% that used this oral variety. These were officials and the upper class, and they usually lived in cities (at the beginning of 1800, Oslo (Christiania/Kristiania), the capital of Norway, only had 12 000 inhabitants). From that perspective, a reform attempt that was meant to make the (Danish) written language easier to learn and use for Norwegian pupils was not necessarily very much easier since 95% of the Norwegian people spoke their local dialects that were much less influenced by Danish. So-called "educated" speech was (to some degree) learned at school as part of the education in reading in writing.

Aasen's approach to a standard Norwegian language

The one person that made Norway "famous" in a linguistic context, was Ivar Aasen (1813-1896). His vision of a genuine Norwegian language was founded on a national and democratic perspective. A Norwegian written language should be the more or less direct result of the development from the Old Norwegian language. Danish (or German) influences should be avoided as far as possible (linguistic purism). Since the so-called "educated" speech and urban dialects were more influenced by Danish, these varieties should not be model for a new official Norwegian written standard. Instead, Ivar Aasen travelled around most rural parts of Norway for some years and collected dialect samples in order to find a common linguistic essence for a new Norwegian written language. In 1848, Aasen published a Norwegian grammar (*Det norske Folkesprogs Grammatik*), and in 1850 a Norwegian dictionary (*Ordbog over det norske Folkesprog*). It may be noted that the grammar was written in Danish and that the dictionary was a list of Norwegian words and their Danish counterparts. At the peak of romanticism in Norway, these works were met with enthusiasm, also by the upper class, especially intellectuals, who represented the so-called "educated speech", whereas many turned against Knudsen's moderate approach, even though Knudsen's standard would have favored the language variety of the upper class (see e.g. Jahr 2015: 43). While Knudsen envisioned a Norwegian written standard developing through several or many minor revisions over a long period of time, Aasen had presented a ready-made new Norwegian written standard that clearly showed the close roots to Old Norse. So far, there were some practical challenges, though. Ivar Aasen's Norwegian was not an official national standard at that time, it wasn't used anywhere (besides in Aasen's examples), it was not taught at school, and trying to use this new written language would require a lot of effort (*investment* in Norton's (2013) terminology). So, to begin with, there was no *exposure* to the new written variety at all.

One of the first active and influential users of Ivar Aasen's standard was the journalist and writer Aasmund Olavsson Vinje (1818-1870). He had written Danish for several newspapers but after 1858, he started his own weekly magazine *Dølen* where he used the new Norwegian language explicitly distancing himself from the Danish written language in Norway. The Norwegian linguistic context still had not changed very much, though. Even though some people started to use the new Norwegian

language presented by Ivar Aasen, the only official written language was still Danish, and every other scenario was first of all idealistic thinking – which – as a romantic project – didn't represent any "danger" to anyone at that point.

The party Venstre and the second written language

The political "danger" (seen from the perspective of the existing system) emerged when the basic idea behind Ivar Aasen's approach, namely that the peasantry was the real Norwegian people and bearer of the Norwegian culture and language since the medieval ages, made the peasantry as the rising political force embrace the new Norwegian language. In the 1860s and -70s, there was a growing resistance against the government's conservative politics. The political power was concentrated around the established upper class who held themselves closely to the king in order to keep their power. Now, the people wanted more control; they aimed for a parliamentary system. In 1884, parliamentarism was introduced and the newly formed political party *Venstre* (Left) got 84 out of 114 mandates in the new government. One of Venstre's major political reforms was to make Ivar Aasen's standard official written language – but not as the only official written language – no, alongside with the existing modified Danish written language. Now, Norway had to official written languages and the linguistic context was changed also on a legal level. Those who had hesitated to use Ivar Aasen's standard until then, now had the legal right to use it in public. The linguistic context also resulted in a situation where language had the power to divide the people into conservatives and radicals. Before, the new Norwegian language as a romantic ideal could unite people across political borders. Now, the new Norwegian language could have the potential power to change the whole structure of the political society. This made most conservatives hold on to the Danish language and look at Knud Knudsen's approach instead. By making Danish more and more Norwegian, the new political party Venstre would lose their powerful argument that Ivar Aasen's standard was the only Norwegian alternative (Jahr 2015: 45).

Despite the fact that Venstre seemed to favor Ivar Aasen's standard that now had become a real official alternative, the modified Danish written language was still the de facto written language in 1885. Furthermore, the so-called „educated speech" still was the only generally accepted standard for oral speech in public settings. Although the school law was changed already in 1878 instructing teachers to teach in the local dialects of their pupils as far as possible, in 1887, it was officially decided that the standard for reading aloud in school should be „educated speech". For the pupils, the situation got „better" in the way that they did not have to read Danish letter by letter in an unnatural way. On the other hand, most pupils that did not live in cities hardly ever heard educated speech as an oral variety in a natural linguistic context (Jahr 2015: 45), i.e., they were not exposed to it or not exposed sufficiently.

In 1907, then, the Danish written language was revised again on Norwegian linguistic ground. For instance, the consonants *p, t, k* replaced *b, d, g* in the Danish spelling (e.g. *pibe > pipe* (pipe), *bog > bok* (book)), double consonants were used to mark short vowels (e.g. *hat > hatt* (hat), *tak > takk* (thank)), and several other minor changes (see e.g. Jahr 2015: 56). Written linguistic diversity increased again since old and new forms existed side my side in public texts.

From one to two written languages in school

As for Ivar Aasen's standard, it was implemented in upper secondary school from 1887. From 1890 it was taught in teacher education and from 1892, municipalities could choose which language to teach in school as "the main written language", the new Norwegian standard or the modified Danish standard. From 1902 it was obligatory in teacher education to use both languages on the final exam while the students could choose one of the written standards as the "main language". From 1907, then, upper secondary pupils could choose their "main language". From 1908, the new Norwegian language was approved in civil service examination at universities (Hagland 2002). The written linguistic context and

linguistic diversity changed quite radically between 1885 and 1908. With regard to *exposure* to linguistic input, conservative Danish, the modified Danish version and the new Norwegian language existed alongside each other. However, when it comes to the amount of input, most people were still first of all exposed to written Danish and modified Danish.

From the beginning of 1900, both written languages had to be taught at school. At first, some teachers argued that time was too precious to spend on teaching two written languages (this argument can still be heard in 2022). However, there was also an economical aspect of having two languages (see e.g. Grepstad 2006: 163), an argument that has constantly followed the debate up till today. Still, from 1885 till 1940, the new Norwegian language was a "rising star" when it comes to municipalities who chose to teach and use Ivar Aasen's standard as the main written language. "The language-national period", however, only lasted from 1814-1917 (Jahr 2015). From 1917-1966, we had "The language-social period" (ibid.).

II: The language-social period 1917-1966

From an official policy perspective, much was in place at the beginning of 1900 since the new Norwegian language had been approved as an official standard in 1885 and it was taught at school, either as the main written language or as the alternative written language. However, the Danish variety was still also an official national language, and it was still dominant in all public communication, and so-called "educated speech" was still the Danish-influenced speech used by the upper class. There were much fewer texts available in Ivar Aasen's standard compared to Danish and the modified Danish variety, and people who did not learn the new Norwegian standard as their main written language at school, were not necessarily exposed to this written variety very much. Hence, right from the start, the new Norwegian language had a huge disadvantage when it comes to input/exposure compared to the established written language.

From a motivational point of view, more and more municipalities and individuals chose the new Norwegian language even after "the language-national period" (Jahr 2015) was over (1917). Seen on the background of motivational learning theories, like e.g. Dörnyei (2009) and Norton (2013), this could be explained by referring to the vision of a nation and a national identity tied to one national language that could be called Norwegian. On an idealistic level, the only legitimate candidate was still only Ivar Aasen's standard. Envisioning oneself as a user of a genuine Norwegian language might furthermore be strengthened after the union with Sweden ended in 1905. Hence, from a motivational point of view, the new Norwegian language had "good cards" at the beginning of 1900.

However, "The language-social period" (1917-1966) (Jahr 2015) turned out to be much more "complicated" than expected. Not everyone envisioned the "new" Norway as a nation with a genuine Norwegian written language at any cost. The positive development measured in political "victories" for the new Norwegian language became a threat for many within the established upper classes. Not only wasn't Ivar Aasen's standard as a reflection of the language of the people considered "educated language" (it wasn't established as an oral variety at all), giving power to the people would mean risking losing one's own power. If it had not been for the element of social and political power, Norway might have had one Norwegian written language as the only written standard today. Since Norway has had parliamentarism since 1884, all governments had to collaborate on democratic principles and suggesting too radical changes could overthrow a government. One might say that the bold decision to approve Ivar Aasen's standard as an official standard in 1885 was the first and last really radical political step. One might add the decision from 1907 that every pupil had to be able to write in both languages at the end of upper secondary school, which led to fierce public debates – and is still an issue in 2022. Many other sides of language policy had an aspect of freedom of choice, which made them much less effective

than they could have been. From a learning and motivational point of view, one could ask the rhetorical question: why would I want to change habits if I do not have to?

It must be mentioned that the Norwegian school system at the beginning of the 20th century was not like the educational system of today when almost every pupil has to go to upper secondary school. In the beginning of 1900, upper secondary school wasn't obligatory, and those who went to upper secondary school were typically recruited from the upper classes and urban youth, i.e. the social layers that were most influenced by Danish and "educated speech" and least positive to the new Norwegian language. The heated discussions between 1906 and 1910 when pupils and parents protested against obligatory exams in both languages lay the ground for the division into two layers in the Norwegian language society and in language policies. Still today, a hundred years later, pupils, parents and politicians protest against being "forced" having to learn the new Norwegian language as an obligatory subject at school. Seen from today's educational context, one might wonder whether the situation could have been different if the new Norwegian language hadn't been reduced to an obligatory school subject and a topic of heated discussions where the main point often seems to be as simple as being able to skip an extra school subject.

The 1917 reform

With the founding of two opposite national language organizations, *Norigs Maalag* (1906) for the new Norwegian language, and *Riksmaalsforbundet* (1907) for the modified Danish written language, the political division got very visible. It was rather obvious that the linguistic and political context with two official written languages was complicated and challenging. In 1908, then, a committee (the so-called *Eitrem committee,* named after its leader Hans Eitrem (1871-1937)) was established in order to look at the possibilities to collaborate and potentially merge the two written languages into one in a long perspective. The committee's work resulted in the 1917 reform of both languages.

From the perspective of national policies, the reform was still liberal with great consideration for the established linguistic habits and the conservatives allowing them to continue more or less like before. From the perspective of linguistic diversity and language acquisition, the reform created huge diversity exactly because one could continue to write more or less like before or choose to use so-called "radical forms". The whole principal idea behind the reform of both languages was to offer word forms that were the same in both languages. For instance, while Danish had a two-gender system with a merged morphological category for masculine and feminine nouns (*manden* (the man), *kvinden* (the woman)), Norwegian had a three-gender system with separate masculine and feminine forms (*mannen, kvinna*). Now, it was possible to use feminine declension of nouns in the modified Danish language, too. In the new Norwegian language, there was a division in weak and strong feminine nouns (*kvinna* (the woman), *handi* (the hand)). Now, it was possible to use the *a* ending for both forms, hence both languages could have exactly the same word forms – if desired. While the new Norwegian language had the infinite ending *a* only (*skriva* (write), *lesa* (read)), now it was also possible to use *e* infinitive like in the modified Danish version (*skrive, lese*). The 1917 reform was the first official reform that aimed at uniting the two languages (in a long-term perspective) and ending the "war" between the two written languages. However – maybe this was difficult to foresee, but the reform actually started a new "language war", the war against "samnorsk", the vision of a merged form of Dano-Norwegian and the new Norwegian language which set its mark on the linguistic context of the 20th century.

Instead of embracing the possibility to choose word forms that were common for both languages, there were huge protests, and, in the end, the conservative forms still dominated in public texts and also in textbooks for schools. Hence, there was a mismatch regarding the *exposure* to the new, so-called radical forms. Schools that tried to implement the radical forms were often "forced" to go back to the conservative forms because of protesting parents (see e.g. Torp & Vikør 1993:124). From a political and

democratic point of view, then, there was linguistic diversity within both written languages and the official right to practice linguistic diversity (even though the long-term goal was more conformity and one written language). Still, there was substantial pressure within the society to use conservative forms instead of radical forms, and the "easiest" target was the educational system, i.e. schools. Applied to the theories of Dörnyei (2009) and Norton (2013), it would only be understandable that pupils would avoid using radical forms in accordance with what they would perceive as "the ought self" or how they expected the imagined future society to look like. Freedom of choice may be a legal right, but socio-cultural power is still a very strong force (cf. e.g. Bourdieu 1986). The classes representing "educated speech" considered the reform being "vulgarization" and even "rape" of the standard written language (Jahr 2015: 81). These were strong words that show how people may feel about language and identity. And, again, pupils meeting this kind of discourse at home and outside school are likely to avoid forms that are not acknowledged by anyone else than the teacher or the curriculum. Hence, official diversity is limited by the public discourse.

In 1930, there came a law that could have had much to say for input and exposure to diversity in the society. However, the law only applied to state communication. According to the law, public servants had to be able to use both written languages, and both languages were supposed to be used in state communication. In the 1930s, a standardized way of pronouncing the new Norwegian language could be heard on national radio. This was the first *exposure* to speech based on the new Norwegian language on a wide-reaching national level and many people complained that they didn't understand or didn't want to listen to this variety on the radio (Jahr 2015: 119).

The 1938 reform

In 1934, the work on a new language reform started which was ratified four years later. The so-called 1938 reform was more radical than the 1917 reform since many of the optional forms from the previous reform now were made obligatory. Through that, the government tried to "force" the development of the two written languages into the same direction, i.e. a development into only one written language. However, there were still many "peculiarities" when it comes to linguistic diversity and how one was supposed to teach the standards at school. In the modified Danish language, which had been named *Bokmål* (book language) in 1929, many (but not all) of the most frequent feminine nouns now had to have the feminine marker *a* in the determined form (*kua* (the cow), *melka* (the milk)). In the new Norwegian language, in 1929 actually officially named *Nynorsk* (New Norwegian), forms with *i* (e.g. *soli* (the sun), *ha vori* (have been)) now only could be used by the pupils, while *sola* and *ha vore* with *a* and *e* had to be used by the teachers and in the text books. Hence, despite linguistic diversity and a certain degree of optionality, the pupils had to learn that some forms were not allowed in certain texts. This also meant that the teachers had to acquire knowledge of the different forms in order to being able to decide which forms to mark and which forms the pupils were allowed to use even though the forms were not an approved part of the official standard for school. Nynorsk, in many respects, got a more general Norwegian look whereas Bokmål deviated much more from the educated speech of the upper classes (Torp & Vikør 1993: 124).

The war years 1940-1945 did not play a very important (long-term) role in Norwegian language history when it comes to diversity and standards. However, from an overall perspective, it can be noticed that after the war, the number of municipalities that chose Nynorsk as their main language that had reached a peak of 34,1% rapidly decreased and has kept decreasing ever since until it reached a percentage of approximately 12% today. After WWII, "the national argument" was not very easy to use any more in the public debate. However, in the 1950, the effect of the 1938 reform really became an issue. While the schools in Oslo had implemented the radical Bokmål reform already in 1939, the public debate became that hot at the end of the 40s and the beginning of the 50s that they had to go back on

that decision in 1954. Many parents had united in 1951 in a huge protest wave *Foreldreaksjon mot samnorsk* (parents' action against merged Norwegian) where they, among other things, crossed out all radical forms in their children's textbooks. The writers' association of 1952 (*Forfatterforeningen av 1952*) published their own conservative word list that was immediately adopted by the conservative press (Hagland 2002: 24). From the perspective of input/exposure, it is clear that so-called radical forms and linguistic diversity really had to struggle all the way since they found their way into the official standards. Conformity was a strong force, and the linguistic conservatives made the rules. There was also a quite strong opposition against the government's attempts to plan language development. Many of the language activists of that time argued for free language development led by an independent elite, first of all writers. The Norwegian language was supposed to develop on its own grounds and not through state-organized reforms (Torp & Vikør 1993: 227). This public debate alone polarized the value of the different written varieties, where the most conservative form of Bokmål, called Riksmål (language of the kingdom), was supposed to be the only "legitimate heir" after the writers from the "golden age" (Ibsen, Bjørnson etc.) (Torp & Vikør ibid.).

The 1959 reform for textbooks

Already in 1952, the government decided to launch a Norwegian language council (*Norsk språknemnd*) to try to reach a "language peace" of some sort and to work on a new reform for textbooks with fewer optional word forms. Linguistic diversity within the two written languages and great optionality was considered problematic for school children (Torp & Vikør 1993: 125). Apparently, the government saw at language policy as something that concerned the educational system to a greater extent than the linguistic context in the general society. The next language reform, then, came in 1959. One could say that the result of the reform were fewer alternative forms, but the language planners still followed a quasi-democratic principle with parentheses and (square) brackets indicating that some forms were optional for everyone whereas the bracket forms could be used by the pupils but not by the textbook writers. The reason for this kind of indirect language planning was probably all the heated discussions that had followed each and every previous language reform. The government wanted to avoid new language debates. On the other hand, from a language learning perspective, it would not be easy for the pupils to understand whether they were allowed to use bracket forms or whether they should avoid those forms because the linguistic society – now or in the future – did not approve of those forms. What was the hidden agenda of the authorities? Why would I want to use a form that I might possibly not be allowed to use in the future? The underlying psychology of the system with parentheses and brackets has not been discussed much from the perspective of the pupils. From a language planning point of view, one could say that input/exposure was the main goal. By reducing the variety of forms in the textbooks the pupils would be exposed to more conformity (harmonization) and hereby develop a sense of style that led to more conformity on their behalf. In the first years of learning how to write, the pupils could use forms that were closer to their own dialects, but hopefully(?) they would stop using them after some time when they got more confident in their writing skills.

III: From one-standard strategy to permanent two-standard state

The 1981 reform for Bokmål

The so-called "language dispute" (*språkstriden*) still did not vanish. The government appointed a new committee (the Vogt-committee named after the chairman Hans Vogt) in 1964 to assess the situation which, then, led over into the third period that Jahr (2015) named "from one-standard strategy to permanent two-standard state" (my translation). As a result of the Vogt-committee, the previous language council was replaced by a new language council (*Norsk språkråd*) in 1972 and the work on yet another language reform started (which was only for Bokmål). A new "peculiarity" arose in Norwegian

language planning when each member of the new language council voted for or against every single proposal with varying degree of qualified decisions (Jahr 2015: 129).

The new reform applied from 1981. One of the main changes regarded the much-disputed feminine nouns in the Danish-based Bokmål. Danish does not have feminine inflection as a category at all (feminine forms have merged with masculine forms) and the use of feminine declension has traditionally been associated with Norwegian dialects and uneducated ("vulgar") speech (opposed to the Danish-influenced educated speech of the upper classes). In the 1959 reform of Bokmål, about 1100 nouns got obligatory feminine declension in the determined form (e.g. *boka* (the book), *klokka* (the clock)) in accordance with Nynorsk and most Norwegian dialects. In 1981, then, 440 of these nouns could again be used in the masculine form (e.g. *boken, klokken* (the book, the clock)). In some cases, certain words were marked with an asterisk (*) to indicate that they preferably should be used as feminine nouns (e.g. verbal nouns with the morpheme *-ing* (e.g. *helsing* (greeting)) (Hagland 2002: 48). Again, from the perspective of input/exposure and motivational learning theories, it would not be easy for a pupil to navigate in this linguistic landscape. Most writers of their so-called mother tongue would not find it natural to look up each and every single noun in the dictionary in order to find out what declension is supposed to be correct at any given time. In fact, in recent years, many younger speakers of Norwegian urban dialects are reported to use masculine forms of traditional feminine forms, even, for instance, *jenten* (the girl) instead of *jenta* (see e.g. Busterud et al. 2019 and references there). There is already an input unbalance since there are substantially more masculine nouns than feminine nouns in the language (lexicon) as a whole. However, this input unbalance has been there for several hundreds or thousands of years since the three-gender system has been common for all Germanic languages (see e.g. König & van der Auwera 1994). The gender system of, for instance, Icelandic or German, is relatively stable compared to the Norwegian system. Among other things, there is usually no or very little optionality connected with gender in Icelandic or German written standard language. In Danish, on the other hand, masculine and feminine gender merged into one form during the medieval ages. As we have seen, the development of Bokmål started with Danish and incorporated feminine declension of nouns slowly and in – one might say – "intriguing" ways by making feminine forms obligatory at some point and optional at another point in time. Cf. also Askedal (1994: 229pp.):

> Both *Bokmål* and New Norwegian have masculine, feminine and neuter gender, but feminine is not of equal standing in the two varieties. It is firmly rooted in New Norwegian due to its general presence in the dialects. Dano-Norwegian, on the other hand, had no feminine gender, but a common gender resulting from the merger of the old masculine and feminine. Feminine gender was reintroduced into *Bokmål* through the language reforms of this century. With many words the feminine is the more colloquial, and the common gender the more literary option (*ei bok – boka* vs *en bok – boken* '(a/the) book). There is thus in *Bokmål* a certain competition between the more indigenous three-gender system and the traditional Dano-Norwegian two-gender system. The latter is more strongly favoured in the unofficial *Riksmål* variety.

Public texts are predominantly written in Bokmål. Most of the larger national newspapers have until recently been quite conservative when it comes to the use of feminine declension and other so-called radical forms. From the perspective that pupils are more exposed to texts outside the school context than to textbooks it is only natural that they will unconsciously perceive a norm within the linguistic context that feminine declension is less acceptable than masculine declension in written texts. According to Busterud et al. (2019) (quoted in Lilleslåtten 2020), some young (urban) people find using the feminine forms "uncool". One suggested explanation for the loss of feminine gender in some urban

linguistic contexts is the norm effect coming from Oslo, i.e. the capital of Norway. The oral variety around the Oslo region is generally referred to as *Standard East Norwegian*, which is relatively closely related to the written language Bokmål. Hence, there is both written and oral linguistic input that may create unofficial norms.

The end of the merging policy

In 2002, after almost hundred years, the government officially ended the policy to merge the two written languages into one standard. From that time on, both languages were supposed to be standardized on their own ground more or less independently of the other language. In this lay the acceptance that Norway would have two official written standards also in the future and that this was undisputed. In 2005, the language council was renamed again (to *Språkrådet*) and got a new mandate. The same year, the report *Norsk i hundre!* (Norwegian in hundred) (Språkrådet 2005) was published, an almost 200 pages long report to form a new strategy for language policy in Norway, which was followed by *Stortingsmelding 35, 2007-2008, Mål og meining – Ein heilskapleg språkpolitikk* (Regjeringa 2007-2008), a parliament paper for a holistic future language policy. The new approach to language policy had its background in a more globalized society where the Norwegian language among other things needed to be protected against the growing influence of English in more and more domains. However, it was also stated very clearly that the Norwegian language has both Bokmål and Nynorsk as its official written representatives and, furthermore, that Nynorsk needed extra support as the lesser used written language. 2005 also presented a new reform of the Bokmål standard, the first independent reform. Some really "old", traditional forms that had vanished from Bokmål in 1938 or 1959 made their way back into the standard and some forms that were considered little used disappeared (Jahr 2015: 132). Parentheses and brackets also disappeared, meaning that all listed forms were principally accepted in all texts. As for feminine nouns, now it was accepted to use all feminine nouns with the common masculine declension, i.e. *melka* or *melken* (the milk), *kua* or *kuen* (the cow). Nynorsk got a new reform in 2012, after a long democratic process were literally anyone could send in suggestions before the committee landed on a new standard. For instance, even though the committee wanted to reduce the number of ways the infinitive could be inflected (*a* ending, *e* ending or divided *a/e* ending, e.g. *lesa/skriva, lese/skrive, lesa/skrive* (read/write)) by removing the third option, heavy protests led to the fact that there are still three different ways of using the infinitive in Nynorsk (compared to Bokmål, which has only one, i.e. *e* infinitive, *lese/skrive*). This shows that the divided form has an important signal effect within the Nynorsk movement. Statistically, it is not very much used in written texts, but it is still a strong identity marker in many dialects.

Linguistic diversity in written Norwegian in the 21st century

Almost hundred years of language planning has not led to one merged Norwegian written language, and it hasn't led to (much) less linguistic diversity within the two written standards (on an official level). There is still a great amount of optionality, i.e. there may be two or more so-called equal forms that potentially can be used. For instance, one can write *melk* or *mjølk* in Bokmål, and with the options for the definite article, this would generate four possible forms *melka, melken, mjølka, mjølken* in Bokmål, all meaning "the milk". However, since the form *mjølk* is associated with dialects and/or Nynorsk, this form is very little used in Bokmål. In Nynorsk, *mjølk/mjølka* is the only possible form. Declension variety can also be found with verbs. For instance, one can write both *kaste, kaster, kastet, har kastet* or *kaste, kaster, kasta, har kasta* (cast, cast, cast, have cast (throw/threw/thrown)) in Bokmål, but only *kasta/kaste, kastar, kasta, har kasta* in Nynorsk. To blow dry (your hair) can have three declension variants in Bokmål: *føne, føner, fønte, har fønt,* or *føne, føner, fønet, har fønet,* or *føne, føner, føna, har føna,* and also three variants in Nynorsk: *føna/føne, føner, fønte, har fønt,* or *føna/føne, fønar, fønte,*

har fønt, or *føna/føne, fønar, føna, har føna.* Hence, the Norwegian linguistic context is great linguistic variety. But regarding the relationship between Bokmål and Nynorsk, Bokmål is the absolutely dominant language when it comes to input and exposure. In the society, Bokmål dominates with 85-90% in all written texts (Jahr 2015: 136). And according to Sanden (2020), only 5 out of the 492 largest Norwegian companies used Nynorsk in their financial statements in 2015. Between 2015 and 2019, as little as 6% of children books were published in Nynorsk (Skifeld & Millan Eide 2021). However, within the regions where Nynorsk got established early (in parts of western Norway), Nynorsk is used and present in every-day life, which strengthens the claim that enough input/exposure is necessary to maintain the language.

The language act

In 2022, Norway agreed on an act related to language (*Språklova*, Lovdata 2022a/b). In section 1, *Purpose*, it is explicitly stated that Bokmål and Nynorsk are equal languages in Norway:

> The purpose of this Act is to strengthen the Norwegian language in order to safeguard it as a complete language, serving and uniting our society, which can be used in all areas of society and in all parts of civil society in Norway. The Act shall promote equality between Bokmål and Nynorsk and ensure the protection and status of the languages for which the state is responsible.

However, as in all previous language policy, the responsibility for using both written languages is only put on public authorities and institutions cf. *Section 3, Scope*:

> Unless otherwise stipulated, the Act applies to
> a. the state, the county authorities and the municipalities
> […]
> The rules in sections 12 to 18 apply only to the administrative part of the activities at the universities, the state university colleges and other state schools, upper secondary schools, the courts, conciliation boards and prosecuting authorities.

On the other hand, the educational system is responsible for the education of future Norwegian citizens that are well prepared to function in the society. Hence, the curriculum and the teachers need to ensure that the pupils learn both Bokmål and Nynorsk, and that they are exposed to "a sufficient amount of input" (cf. Krashen) to experience that both languages "can be used in all areas of society and in all parts of civil society in Norway" (cf. section 1 of the language act). Additionally to learning the standards of the two written languages, teachers would also have to address the issue of language conflict that has followed the development of both written languages during the past century in order to ensure that Norwegian as a language is uniting the nation instead of dividing it (cf. section 1).

As for the definition of the Norwegian language, language policy is still somewhat "schizophrenic", cf.:

> **Section 4. *Norwegian language***
> Norwegian is the primary national language in Norway.
> Bokmål and Nynorsk are Norwegian languages with equal value that can be used in all parts of society. Bokmål and Nynorsk have equal standing as written languages in public bodies.

where Norwegian is used as the name for the "national language", while Bokmål and Nynorsk are referred to as "Norwegian languages". According to the law, section 11,

> A municipality or a county authority may itself decide to require that state bodies shall use only Bokmål or Nynorsk in all written communication with the municipality or county authority, or that the municipality or county authority shall be linguistically neutral. A municipality or a county authority shall be considered linguistically neutral as long as no such decision has been made.

This means that the distinction between main or majority language and minority language is maintained. Hence, for most municipalities and public areas, there will still be an input/exposure dominance of Bokmål. However, for central state bodies, section 13 specifies:

> Over time, central state bodies shall use at least 25 per cent of both Bokmål and Nynorsk in publicly available documents. Regional state bodies that have either Bokmål or Nynorsk as the majority language in their area of service shall use the majority language in publicly available documents.

Given the situation where Bokmål is the most used (or only used) written language in more or less all domains, the use of at least 25% typically refers to Nynorsk, the lesser used language. As of today, almost none of the central state bodies have managed (been willing(?)) to use 25% Nynorsk. The most important state organization when it comes to influencing people's attitude to language is the state radio/tv Nrk (Norsk rikskringkasting). But Nrk hardly ever reaches the magic percentage of 25 when it comes to the use of Nynorsk. Hence, there is a persistent exposure deficit regarding Nynorsk also in state communication.

The law is rather clear when it comes to the simultaneous use of texts in Bokmål and Nynorsk in certain areas:

> **Section 14.** ***Parallel use of Bokmål and Nynorsk by state bodies***
> State bodies shall make forms and other self-service services simultaneously available in Bokmål and Nynorsk.
> If a private legal person requires that permits and standardised forms that directly apply to the legal person shall be in either Bokmål or Nynorsk, state bodies shall comply with the requirement.
> State bodies shall simultaneously publish documents intended for use in schools in both Bokmål and Nynorsk.

According to the law, the state has to respect the choice of language of a private legal person, section 15:

> In documents addressed to a private legal person, state bodies and county authorities shall use the written Norwegian language which the private legal person itself has used in communication with the body, or which the private legal person has otherwise stated that it wishes to use.

And in section 16, it is specified that the state must ensure to have the necessary writing competence:

> State bodies and county authorities shall ensure that they have the necessary writing competence to be able to use Bokmål and Nynorsk in accordance with this Act.

The Norwegian linguistic context in 2022 is, thus, (in principle) great linguistic diversity. The legal status of the two written standards has been explicitly confirmed by law. However, the law is mainly concerned with state matters and not with private matters. So far – and still, only state television and radio (Nrk) is compelled by law to use at least 25% Nynorsk in their broadcasting. The private channels do not have to follow any language regulations and conservative newspapers can still refuse their journalists to use Nynorsk if that is their language policy. Even though the official status and the rights of the languages are strengthened, the linguistic context with regard to input/exposure hasn't changed much. Bokmål is still the majority language and Nynorsk may be almost invisible in certain domains.

To many, Nynorsk is first of all a school language. According to the curriculum (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2020), the pupils have to learn both languages at school, one as the so-called main written language and the other one as the alternative written language. Since the majority of municipalities has Bokmål as their main language, most pupils learn Nynorsk as the alternative written language. Even though the curriculum specifies that the pupils shall listen to texts in Bokmål and Nynorsk and try to look at differences between Bokmål in Nynorsk in primary school, the Nynorsk part is usually extremely underrepresented seen from the perspective of input/exposure. Normally, the pupils will not have to learn to write Nynorsk (as their alternative written language) before lower secondary school. And this will often also only happen in certain parts of the teaching cycle. At the end of 10th grade, then, the pupils are tested in Bokmål and Nynorsk separately. In the new curriculum (2020), it is emphasized that the teacher during the assessment shall take into consideration that the pupils have had less formal teaching in their alternative written language. During upper secondary school, the pupils are supposed to, among other things, learn about the Norwegian language situation and develop their writing skills in both written languages. As for the assessment, it is again emphasized that they have had less formal teaching in their alternative language. Hence, the curriculum planners clearly know about the importance of input/exposure, but they choose not to do something about it with regard to the situation of the lesser used written language, Nynorsk.

Seen from the perspective of Dörnyei (2009) and Norton (2013), Nynorsk in school is tied to the vision of an "ought self" and does not usually fit into the conception of a future or ideal self. Motivation for learning Nynorsk is low and the input/exposure context makes it difficult to achieve a competence level where the pupils feel they master Nynorsk sufficiently. Since they are graded separately and explicitly in Nynorsk at the end of upper secondary school, Nynorsk is often associated with low achievements and grades. This may be the reason why the curriculum planners added the assessment modification in 2020 and specified that the pupils should be graded more mildly in their alternative written language. On the other hand, indirectly, this may reinforce the perception that Nynorsk is a less important language, which may threaten the status of Nynorsk in the society – against the official policy stated in the language act.

Conclusion

In this paper it has been shown that the development of the Norwegian written languages from the 19th century till today has led to great linguistic diversity (on a formal or official level). Linguistic diversity comes in the form of two official written standards (that live side by side with earlier standards and non-official standards), both with internal optionality and great variety when it comes to inflectional forms.

Even though there exists – technically and officially – a great potential linguistic variety, the public discourse is dominated by moderate Bokmål. Furthermore, even though there is an unofficial East Norwegian oral standard and there is some leveling against this oral variety from other dialects, there is great dialectal variation in oral communication. However, since the East Norwegian standard is heavily based on Bokmål, which is the dominant language in all written communication, this is the easiest standard to use in linguistic orientation and the search for a linguistic identity. While dialect-influenced writing can be used in social media, standard writing may have a tendency to become more conform (homogenous) and even conservative (i.e. returning to Danish influenced morphology/orthography), despite the longtime of language planning where, for instance, the feminine declension had been favored in several writing reforms. The language act of 2022 may serve as an official statement that Bokmål and Nynorsk have equal status and rights, but as long as the government is not interfering with language contexts outside state matters, and violation of the language act doesn't lead to fines or other legal actions within state matters, Nynorsk is not supported explicitly like it is stated in the law, and the overall language context might not change much in the future – either. Input and exposure will be on the side of Bokmål, and Nynorsk will have to struggle like before. According to language learning theories (like e.g. those of Krashen and others discussed above), exposure to linguistic data is a crucial part of language acquisition and language learning. Even though the two Norwegian written languages Bokmål and Nynorsk are equal by law and are supposed to be used in all parts of society, the reality is quite diff erent. In many domains, Nynorsk is absent or practically more or less invisible, hence, there is little or no exposure to Nynorsk in those domains. The state (legally) only tries to secure the status and use of Nynorsk in official communication. Furthermore, where there are legal demands regarding the use of language, the other written language (in most cases Nynorsk) only needs to be used to a percentage of 25 to fulfil the demands. This means that even though both written languages might be represented Nynorsk would still be less visible and, thus, get less exposure. The organization of the educational system does not support linguistic diversity sufficiently either. Even though the pupils are supposed to learn both written languages and even get separate grades in Bokmål and Nynorsk at the end of 10th and 13th grade, exposure to Nynorsk as the alternative language is minimal compared to Bokmål.

Another challenging aspect in this context is the fact that Nynorsk as an oral standard (compared to so-called Standard East Norwegian) has not gained status as a neutral oral variety. From a learning perspective based on input and exposure, thus, the conditions are poor. This situation is fortified by the fact that the lesser use and visibility of Nynorsk may lead to lower status of the language, which, then, may influence the motivation to learn and use Nynorsk outside the school context (cf. Dörnyei 2009). The language act does not address the educational system. However, in order to turn the vision of Bokmål and Nynorsk as equal languages that can be used in all parts of society into reality there is much left to be done. The only reasonable solution would be to expose pupils and generally all members of the society to more linguistic variety. In order to achieve this, the curriculum and the language act should be much bolder and radical. However, the language planning history of the 20th century has shown that this is a rather challenging endeavor.

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