

Emotions in Norwegian language debate

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Abstract

Norway has two official Norwegian languages, Bokmål and Nynorsk. The majority of Norwegians use Bokmål as their written language (ca. 80%) which makes Nynorsk a minority language or lesser used language. Ever since the legal decision to have two official written languages (1885) there has been a public debate in Norway which may be fierce and emotional at times. After having investigated emotional expressions regarding the two written languages in the newspaper corpus of the Norwegian National Library we found that emotions are associated with Nynorsk to a much larger extent than with Bokmål. While Nynorsk may be associated with both love and hate, Bokmål can be said to be more default and neutral when it comes to opinions or emotions.

Keywords: *language attitudes, language debate, emotions, affective filter*

Introduction

The affective side of language can be somewhat mysterious and thought-provoking. Understandably, one can express affects and emotions through language. The system of linguistic signs and grammatical rules makes it possible to encode and decode all kinds of feelings, thoughts, facts and fiction. We can talk about apples and oranges, bees and birds, dreams and deeds, and we can talk about affects and emotions. We can love chocolate or each other, and we can hate mosquitos or bad weather – and we can agree and disagree about what we love or hate. These things may be interesting in itself and worth reflecting upon, but while it may sound reasonable that some people do not like string music or brass music, it may perhaps be less understandable that they might not like violins or trumpets, i.e. the instruments responsible for the sounds and music (unless, perhaps, they are somehow forced to play an instrument they do not like or feel they master). We might not like the opinion expressed by someone, but would we dislike the language through which this opinion is expressed? Of course, there may be words or expressions we could find offensive in some way, but usually not the grammatical system of the language that is used to encode these opinions. On the other hand, we might perhaps find a language “beautiful” or “ugly” depending on our experience (exposure to other languages) and preferences. In the western world, for instance, some might find that French is “beautiful” while German is “ugly” without any objective reasoning, cf. BeTranslated (2017):

At The Guardian, Matthew Jenkin explains that sociolinguistics have so far not been able to find any intrinsic reason that certain languages should be objectively “more beautiful” than others. Instead, a language’s attractiveness seems to depend entirely on our own background.

The perception of “beautiful” versus “ugly” is usually based on the sounds and melody of a language and not on certain other grammatical features. Furthermore, most of us do not necessarily think of our own language(s) in these terms, cf. e.g. Valderas (2023):

It's common to hear by foreigner [*sic*] that Swedish is a very rhythmic and 'melodic language'. It's probably one of those things that you don't reflect upon if you are a native Swedish-speaker unless you have some sort of linguistic background.

Most people do probably not spend much time on reflecting upon whether they *like* their mother tongue or not. Aesthetical or emotional perceptions would more likely rather be about a foreign language. After all, we are born and socialized into a linguistic environment where the language or languages we are exposed to feel natural to us. It is not necessarily something we like or dislike or feel anything special about. It is just "there" as a tool for communication. When we hear a foreign language, on the other hand, we might have a subjective opinion about how we feel about this language, cf. e.g. Valderas (2023):

Something that is not understood may be considered unnatural. When we hear a sound or word that is familiar, we get a warm and comfortable feeling. We can probably appreciate a language a lot more that has the same alphabet and shares words or qualities with our mother tongue – perhaps the underlying structure is recognizable and easier to comprehend. Introducing a new linguistic system with new tones and sounds would therefore go the opposite way, disrupt our learned inclination toward a certain type of sound, eventually deeming it harsh, aggressive, or even ugly. If you are used to words with few consonants such as in Romance languages, chances are you will find German and its consonants to be a challenge.

Even though we might not reflect much upon whether we like or dislike our own mother tongue *per se*, we may still respond emotionally when it comes to different dialects or accents of our language. In many western countries there is often a so-called national or official language, like, for instance, English, German, French, Polish etc. (there may be more than one official language, of course), and there may be a difference in status when it comes to the different dialects or accents compared to a national standard pronunciation. Historically, often the original dialect of the capital acquired the highest status or prestige, while urban dialects in general may have been perceived as having higher status than rural dialects (cf. e.g. Halliday 1978, Trudgill 1984). From a traditional status perspective, expectedly, there may be those who find rural dialects less appealing than their own, urban, variety of speech. Since such a view – historically – was more often expressed by those who belonged to a higher class that used standard speech, rural dialect users may actually have had negative emotions about their own language because of a real or perceive imbalance of power (cf. Bourdieu 1991). And then again, there may be those who choose to embrace their dialect which may make sociolinguists wonder "Why do people continue to use low status varieties when they know it may well be in their economic and social interests to acquire a variety of high prestige?" (Milroy and Milroy 2012, 49). Hence, there are phonetic/melodic aspects that may trigger emotions about language, and there may be social aspects that may trigger emotions about. But in most cases, this regards spoken languages and not written languages.

Norway has two official written (Norwegian) languages, Bokmål and Nynorsk, which is not anything special in itself. Many countries have two or more official languages, like, for instance, Switzerland with German, French, Italian and Romansh. However, while German, French, Italian and Romansh are not mutually intelligible languages, Norwegian Bokmål and Nynorsk are just two written standards of the same Norwegian language, and these two written varieties have only recently have been defined as separate languages (quoted from the official English translation of *Lov om språk*, Act relating to Language (Lovdata 2021):

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.

This definition as two “Norwegian languages with equal value”, however, is first of all a legal matter. Legally, but also linguistically, Bokmål and Nynorsk both represent “the Norwegian language”. This does not mean that this coexistence of the two Norwegian written varieties is unproblematic, and some might even feel (subjectively and emotionally) that the lesser used variety, Nynorsk, is as incomprehensible as a foreign language (see e.g. Haugan 2017, 2019, 2022 and references there). The historical and practical perspective of the two Norwegian written varieties is, however, not the focus of the present paper (see e.g. Haugen 1966, Jahr 2015). Ever since the Norwegian state decided to have two official written languages in 1885, there has been a public language debate. There may, of course, be many good reasons in favour of or against two Norwegian written languages, but, as Vikør (1975, 17) puts it: “The Norwegian language conflict is basically a social conflict. It is an expression of a more general struggle over political, social and economic power”.

In the present paper, we will not look at the more or less reasonable or objective side of the Norwegian language debate with arguments for and against two written languages, cf. Vikør (1975, 17): “If viewed superficially, the Norwegians are fighting over small and insignificant linguistic differences”. Instead, we will investigate whether we can detect emotions expressed by the debaters when writing about one or the other Norwegian language, Bokmål and Nynorsk. One of the main reasons for the language debate in Norway is the fact that everyone has to learn both written languages, Bokmål and Nynorsk, at school. However, one of the written varieties is handled as the main written language whereas the other one, accordingly, is the second or alternative written language (see e.g. Haugan 2017). Statistically, there are about 85-90% Norwegians who have Bokmål as their main written language and 10-15% who use Nynorsk as their main language (see e.g. Grepstad 2020), which, of course, is a huge mismatch and one of the reasons for the language debate where Nynorsk is the so-called lesser-used language (Walton, 2015), which usually puts Nynorsk users on the defence side in the language debate. The language act (law) (Lovdata 2021) recognizes the challenged position of Nynorsk and states explicitly in *Section 1: Purpose* (from the official English version): “The responsibility pursuant to the second paragraph (a) includes a special responsibility for promoting Nynorsk, as the least used written Norwegian language.” However, the official state view on the two written languages as having equal value is not necessarily shared by everyone. The public language debate is often characterized by a high degree of negativity – first of all against Nynorsk. Grepstad (2020, 580) reports:

Bokmål and Nynorsk users met very different attitudes to their own language usage. In 2015 nine out of ten Bokmål users had received few negative reactions to their writing Bokmål, and two out of three Nynorsk users when they wrote Nynorsk. Two out of three Bokmål users had received few positive reactions to their writing Bokmål, and only one in every five Nynorsk users had rarely or never received positive reactions to their writing Nynorsk.

The goal of this paper is to investigate how Norwegian Bokmål users and Nynorsk users verbally express their emotions about their own or the other written language.

Theoretical background

Motivation psychology

We want to investigate how emotions about language are verbally expressed by users of Norwegian Bokmål and Nynorsk. We will not try to investigate the phenomenon *emotions* as such and for the

present study, it will not be necessary to commit to any specific theoretical approach or definition, according to Wikipedia:

Emotions are mental states brought on by neurophysiological changes, variously associated with thoughts, feelings, behavioral responses, and a degree of pleasure or displeasure. There is currently no scientific consensus on a definition. Emotions are often intertwined with mood, temperament, personality, disposition, or creativity.

Emotions may play a role in many research fields. In our case, we will investigate debate texts in public newspapers. Given the fact that the debaters chose to express their meaning – and emotions – verbally in written texts in public, there must have been a strong motivation for doing so. Motivation psychology may, therefore, be one relevant theoretical perspective. Herbert, Bendig and Rojas (2019, 2) state that:

Language is a powerful tool of human communication; it constitutes an important medium for conveying thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions and for reflecting about them (Chomsky and Smith 2000). In particular during writing, we express emotions by putting feelings into words.

These researchers are interested in the therapeutic effect of writing, which is not a topic of the present investigation. However, since we will be looking at different verbal expressions for emotions, we may have in mind that so-called linguistic markers also play a role in applied emotion and motivation psychology, cf. Herbert, Bendig and Rojas (2019, 3):

Although the effects of writing on well-being are undisputed in the literature, it is still a matter of ongoing research how exactly these health-related cognitive processes and proposed mechanisms of expressive writing (e.g., cognitive reframing, reappraisal, self-disclosure) do manifest in writing: in particular there is ongoing research on how psychological variables can be inferred through linguistic markers and hence by the way we write and use different types of words during writing.

As stated by Herbert (2015, 56), the relationship between language and emotions or emotions and language can be measured physically:

One of the most compelling experimental demonstration of how closely related human language and emotions can be and how this can affect activity in some of the core affective systems proposed by Koelsch and colleagues comes from very recent research. This body of literature extends emotional word processing to the domains of social cognition and emotion regulation and investigates how emotions are decoded from words when these refer to the subject's own feelings (e.g., my fear, my pleasure).

Herbert (ibid.) also states that:

as predicted by the Quartet Theory, there is growing evidence that labeling one's feeling verbally (i.e. "the reconfiguration of emotion percepts into language") leads to adaptive emotion processing and emotion regulation, including down-regulation of amygdala activation and peripheral physiologic responses as well as of self-reported negative distress.

In our discussion on how emotions are expressed in Norwegian language debates we might, thus, also have in mind that the concrete verbal expression may have a self-therapeutic function, additionally to a potential polemic function, i.e. an internal and an external aspect.

Speech acts

Since Halliday (1978, 1985) it is common to not only investigate the structural side of language but also the functional side, and Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) identified and classified different speech acts. Searle (1977) operates with five such speech acts: *representatives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives*, and *declarations*.

When investigating the verbally expressed emotions or feelings about Bokmål and Nynorsk, there may be different perspectives regarding the same formulation. A sentence like, for instance: „I love the Norwegian language” could be classified as a *representative*, cf. May (2001, 120):

Representatives. These speech acts are assertions about a state of affairs in the world (hence they are also called ‘assertives’; Leech 1983, 128), and thus carry the values ‘true’ or ‘false’. This is their ‘point’; as to ‘fit’, they should, of course match the world in order to be true.

Importantly, May (ibid.) also states: “Assertions often, maybe even always, represent a subjective state of mind: the speaker who asserts a proposition as true does so in force of his or her belief.” Emotions or feelings are subjective, but true from the perspective of the speaker/writer. Naturally, declaring one’s emotions or feelings is not necessarily only done to inform someone else “about a state of affairs in the world”. While a sentence like “Bokmål and Nynorsk are Norwegian written languages” would clearly fit the classification of a *representative*, the sentence “I love the Norwegian language” would fit better into the category of *expressives*, cf. May (2001:121): “This speech act, as the word says, expresses an inner state of the speaker; the expression is essentially subjective and tells us nothing about the world.”

Beyond the speech acts *expressives* and possibly *representatives*, the perspective of *pragmatic acts* may be relevant. According to Mey (2001:214):

We can look at pragmatic acts from two points of view: that of the agent, and that of the act. As far as the individual *agent* is concerned, there are his or her class, gender, age, education, previous life history and so on. These are the factors identified by ethnomethodologists under the caption of ‘MR’ (‘member resources’), namely the resources that people dispose of as members of the community; with regard to communication, these resources are „often referred to as background knowledge” (Fairclough 1989, 141). Another way of characterizing such resources is as constraints and affordances, imposed on the individual in the form of necessary limitations on the degree of freedom that he or she is allowed in society.

Furthermore, Mey (ibid.) states:

The other point is that of the *act*; here, we are particularly interested in the language that is used in performing a pragmatic act. The question has two aspects: from the individual’s perspective, I can ask what language I can use to perform a specific act; from the perspective of the context, the question is what language can be used to create the conditions for me to perform a pragmatic act.

Following Verschueren (1987, 1999), Mey (ibid.) also points at the *adaptability* of language, which basically means that we do have and make linguistic choices in accordance with the context of the pragmatic act. Another important aspect is the fact that speech acts need to be situated, cf. Mey (2001, 219):

Speech acts, in order to be effective, have to be *situated*. That is to say, they both rely on, and actively create, the situation in which they are realized. Thus, a situated speech act comes to what has been called a *speech event* in ethnographic and anthropological studies (Bauman and Sherzer 1974): speech as centered on an institutionalized social activity of a certain kind, such as teaching, visiting a doctor's office, participating in a tea-ceremony, and so on. In all such activities, speech is, in a way, prescribed: only certain utterances can be expected and will thus be acceptable; conversely, the participants in the situation, by their very acceptance of their own and others' utterances, establish and reaffirm the social situation in which the utterances are uttered and in which they find themselves as utterers.

Applied to our investigation of emotions about Bokmål and Nynorsk in public newspapers, newspapers as an institutionalized medium of communication clearly limit what can be expressed or not, i.e. „only certain utterances can be expected and will thus be acceptable“. Even though the reader's letter genre as a at times rather polemic genre that would allow more controversial formulations than editorial material, it is likely that writers and/or editors would try to moderate utterances in accordance with the medium (cf. adaptability of language). We will try to investigate some of the emotions expressed in this discourse, cf. Edwards (2009, 236):

The discursive psychology of emotion deals with how people talk about emotions, whether 'avowing' their own or 'ascribing' them to other people, and how they use emotion categories when talking about things. Emotion discourse is an integral feature of talk about events, mental states, mind and body, personal dispositions, and social relations. It is used to construct thoughts and actions as irrational, but, alternatively, emotions themselves may be treated as sensible and rationally based. Emotion categories are used in assigning causes and motivations to actions, in blamings, excuses, and accounts. Emotional states may figure as things to be *accounted for* (in terms of prior causal events or dispositional tendencies, say), as *accounts* (of subsequent actions and events), and also as evidence of what *kind of events or actions* precede or follow them. [...]

Some emotion categories are discussed in the section below.

Emotions, feelings, and affects

Even though there is no consensus on a definition of emotions, and we are not diving very deep into the psychological aspect of emotions in the present study, a brief general definition of the terms *emotions*, *feelings* and *affects* may be fruitful in the understanding of the observed data. According to Hognestad (2018, 30, leaning on Kast 1991), *emotions* is the overall term covering both feelings and affects. *Feelings* regard a reaction we are consciously aware of and can name. *Affects*, on the other hand, are strong emotional outbursts that we cannot control and that are followed by physical expressions, like, for instance, blushing and raised heart rate. As Hognestad (ibid.) puts it: "When an affect wells up in us, we might end up hurting another person" (my translation). The genre of newspaper debates may often be driven by emotions. A reader or public debater may be triggered by certain feelings about a particular issue to the degree that it may cause an affect, i.e. an emotional state where the feelings are so strong that the debater feels he or she has to react in the form of writing and expressing his or her

feelings publicly. The personal perspective may be so narrowed in that situation that the debater may have problems seeing other perspectives than his or her own.

The decision to express one's feelings in an open forum like a newspaper is in accordance with interactional theory of emotions like e.g. Kemper (1978, referred to in Nyeng 2006), where power and status are seen as important dimensions of social interaction. Feelings, like for instance anger and shame, may be the product of loss of status in a relationship, while loss of power leads to anxiety and fear (Nyeng 2006, 91-92, referring to Kemper 1978). These are strong feelings and possibly affects that may lead to an urge to, for instance, express oneself in public debates.

Again, we are not trying to dive too deeply into the field of psychology, but according to Nyeng (2006, 227), *shame* may be an emotion caused by diffuse demands in society. Applied to Bokmål and Nynorsk in the Norwegian educational system, most pupils are concerned about their grade in written Nynorsk based on a feeling of incompetence and underachievement. A poor grade in Nynorsk may result in a poorer average grade in Norwegian as an overall subject. So, even though a pupil may have relatively good self-esteem when it comes to general achievements in school, the pupil may feel some degree of shame connected to the Nynorsk grade. This may potentially lead to negative feelings about Nynorsk in general – but maybe also to attempts to justify or excuse one's own feelings – and achievements – because of the expectations of the society to accept and integrate Nynorsk. The goal would be to deal with the felt shame over having failed collective norms (Nyeng 2006, 227). This is also called performance shame (Nyeng 2006, 228). These aspects are not further investigated in the present study.

Based on the discussion above, we can conclude that the emotions dealt with in this study are best understood as *social emotions* rather than strictly personal emotions, e.g. emotions that are more socially and culturally conditioned (Normann-Eide 2020, 32, referring to Hareli and Parkinson 2008, and Tangney and Salovey 1999). An important aspect would here be that “The social feelings are closely connected with our sense of self and our assessment of ourselves in a social context” (Normann-Eide 2020, 33 (my translation), referring to Leary 2000). Normann-Eide (2020, 33) states that “The function of the social emotions is not primarily survival in the biological sense, but is about being able to orient oneself in, and adapt to, a cultural and social community.” (my translation).

Method

Verbal expressions as visual clues

How people actually might feel about language – or other things, for that matter – is not necessarily directly accessible. It is possible to measure brain activity and the location of this activity in the brain, but emotions are still challenging to investigate directly. Doing brain measurements during more or less natural and spontaneous debates between people about language would be even more complicated. And even though it would be possible to measure the degree or location of brain activity, and this might show that a person experiences emotions of some kind, it would still be difficult to categorize these emotions. The brain activity can be stronger or weaker and the location of the activity in the brain may indicate that the emotions are experienced as positive or negative but transferring these values into linguistic terms that can be used in a discussion on emotions in language debate would be more difficult. Instead of trying a direct approach to emotions about language via the measurement of brain activity, we will take the indirect way by investigating how people express their feeling about language verbally, i.e. through their own words. And instead of trying to label emotions we will categorize the emotions on the basis of the lexical expression that is used by the individual language user. According to Normann-Eide (2020, 41), referring to Wierzbicka (1999), and Kövecses (2003), “Which words, concepts and metaphors we use to describe emotions depends on the culture in which we grow up” (my translation).

Two written languages, two different names

It is probably rather uncontroversial to claim that, somewhere in Norway, at any given time of the day, there is a debate about the Norwegian language going on. The average Norwegian is probably not necessarily more interested in language than people from other countries or speakers of other languages. But most Norwegians speak a local dialect and dialects are often used to make hypotheses about people and their background, addressing the dialect of a person can, therefore, be a conversation starter. Talking about dialects may be equally common in other countries where dialects are used alongside the standard language(s). One can even imagine conversations and discussions about dialect(s) versus standard or official language. This may also be debates on a higher, public or even national level, like, for instance, whether Austrian should have its own standardized written language instead of using a standard based on High German (see e.g. de Cillia and Ransmayr 2019), a debate similar to the Norwegian debate in the 1800s. Due to the public and political debate, Norway ended up with having two official Norwegian written standards, *Bokmål* and *Nynorsk*. Even though many people refer to Bokmål as “norsk”, i.e. Norwegian, none of the two written languages is officially plainly named “norsk”. Bokmål means literally “book language” while Nynorsk is “New Norwegian”. From a methodological point of view, this is actually an advantage for the present study. While *Norwegian, English, German, Polish* etc. can be names of languages, i.e. nouns, these words can also be just adjectives describing a noun or a noun phrase. For instance, English can be the English language as in “she speaks English”, but it can also be used as an adjective in phrases like “English breakfast”, “(the) English Patient”, “(the) English Channel”. One can speak German (*man kann Deutsch sprechen*), which is clearly marked as a noun with a capital d and with neuter gender (*Deutsch, das Deutsche*), but one can also drink “German beer” (*deutsches Bier*) and eat “German sausage” (*deutsche Wurst*) or experience “German thoroughness” (*deutsche Gründlichkeit*), just to pick some cliché expressions. The adjective/noun *norsk* (“Norwegian”) would function in the same way, for instance: *Ho pratar norsk* (“She speaks Norwegian”) versus *norske fjell og fjordar* (“Norwegian mountains and fjords”). Searching for expression that only denote the language would, therefore, be much more challenging and labour intensive was it not for the fact that the two written Norwegian languages have different names. *Bokmål* (book language) can only be used as a noun and *Nynorsk* (New/new Norwegian) is mostly used as a noun, but can be used as an adjective denoting something related to this written standard or the political movement associated with it. There would be a clear difference between *ein ny norsk medalje i langrenn* (“a new Norwegian medal in cross-country skiing”), with *ny* and *norsk* in two separate words, and *ein nynorsk tekst* (“a New Norwegian text”), with *ny* and *norsk* combined to one word.

Norwegian language debate

The Norwegian language debate may often be rather emotional. Following discussions in social media may be equally discouraging as other discussions where “trolling”, i.e. upsetting or attacking a dissenter, seems to be the main goal of the discussion (cf. e.g. eSafety 2023). These debates are not polarized in the “usual” way where each part defends his or her preferred case, for instance, A may argue FOR Bokmål and B may argue FOR Nynorsk. Normally, there is someone who argues strongly (and emotionally) against Nynorsk and then, there are those who argue for or defend Nynorsk. Very seldom there are debates where the positively loaded arguments or emotions are on the side of Bokmål.

Searching social media for language debates would be most interesting, however, it would not be that easy to conduct such a study. First of all, social media sites are technically more difficult to search due to various kinds of protections and restrictions and the ethical aspect of analyzing social media conversations. Furthermore, the use of dialect and non-standard writing on social media could also be a challenge when it comes to search criteria. How many different spellings should be included in a search? Instead, we decided to search in the newspaper archive of the Norwegian National Library (Nasjonalbiblioteket). Emotional expressions would, expectably, be more “civilized” and edited in public

newspapers. On the other hand, making the effort to actually express oneself publicly, in a printed newspaper, could indicate that the motivation for doing so is much stronger compared to spontaneous “outbreaks” (affects) on social media, that not always seem to be well thought through (cf. Hognestad 2018, 30).

Search criteria

Most of the Norwegian national and local newspapers are digitalized and searchable via the Norwegian National Library. We are interested in finding out how people who decide to express their opinion publicly in newspapers “feel” about the two Norwegian written varieties Bokmål and/or Nynorsk. There could, obviously, be different ways to design a search. One could search for the words “Bokmål” and “Nynorsk” in the newspaper corpus and investigate the context for words denoting emotions in one way or the other. However, this would be a rather time-consuming task. There were 232 861 hits on the word “Bokmål” in the Newspaper corpus and 925 209 hits on the word “Nynorsk” at the time of the practical survey. Therefore, this method is not desirable for our approach. One would have to read a large amount of texts to find possible emotional expressions. The aim of this project is not to establish a detailed, qualitative list of emotional expressions about Bokmål and Nynorsk but rather to find out which of the two sides, the defenders of Bokmål (or, possibly, attackers of Nynorsk) and the defenders of Nynorsk, would express emotions about their own written language and possibly about the other written variety. The two first search numbers do, however, already give the impression that newspaper texts deal four times as much with Nynorsk than with Bokmål. As mentioned before, “Nynorsk” can also be an adjective. Hence, the statistical relationship between the two numbers would not be exact. But even if the ratio 1:4 was adjusted it still seems to indicate a rather huge mismatch when it comes to having the need to talk about one or the other Norwegian written language.

To make the corpus more manageable we will search for certain positive or negative expressions about the two written languages. The search strings used in this survey contain the verbs/expressions: *elske* (love), *hate* (hate), *vere glad i* (being fond of), *like* (like), *føretrekkje* (prefer), *mislike* (dislike), and *avsky* (loathe). Since it is possible to negate these expressions, e.g. I do not love, hate, like, dislike, we will also need to search for the negated expressions. Additionally, we will need to consider Norwegian syntax. Since statements can be expressed in main clauses and subordinate clauses, we need to search for different phrase orders. In Norwegian, the order of subject verb and negation adverb is different in main clauses and subordinate clauses, for instance:

- 1) *Han_{SU} likar_{VBL} ikkje_{ADV} nynorsk_{DO}* (He does not like New Norwegian)
- 2) *Han seier at han_{SU} ikkje_{ADV} likar_{VBL} nynorsk_{DO}.* (He says that he does not like New Norwegian)

Only searching for “likar Nynorsk” (like New Norwegian) could, thus, equally well come from a statement that says the opposite: that X does *not* (like New Norwegian).

Norwegian syntax is not the only challenge in our search. The fact that both written varieties are used in the newspaper texts forces us to have separate searches considering the different spellings. On the other hand, the difference in spelling is also an advantage since it will tell us whether a statement comes from a Bokmål user or a New Norwegian user. For instance, the negation adverb ‘not’ is spelled differently: *ikke* in Bokmål and *ikkje* in New Norwegian. As for the verbs used in the search, we will use present tense forms. This decision is made for several reasons. The hypothesis is that emotional statements are preferably written in the present tense because it is a here-and-now topic. This also goes along with the text genre, where deciding to debate in a public newspaper is expected to be an instant “urge” to talk about something current. Furthermore, newspapers texts are usually read the same day

they are published, and they are often less interesting for each subsequent day that comes since they compete with new texts. But a technical advantage of using present tense forms in our search is that it will make it easier to identify the writer as a user of Bokmål or New Norwegian because of the different spellings:

- 3) Bokmål: (X) *elsker* – Nynorsk: (X) *elskar* ((X) love(s))
- 4) Bokmål: (X) *hater* – Nynorsk: (X) *hatar* ((X) hate(s))
- 5) Bokmål: (X) *føretrekker* – Nynorsk: (X) *føretrekkjer/føretrekker* ((X) prefer(s))

The two forms of *like/mislike* (like/dislike) have the present tense forms *liker/misliker* in Bokmål and are more frequent as *likar/mislikar* in Nynorsk even though they are also allowed to be spelled *liker/misliker*, i.e. with *-er* as in Bokmål. The expression ‘being fond of’ is the same in the present tense in Bokmål and Nynorsk but can be combined with the first-person personal pronoun ‘I’, which is different in Bokmål (*jeg*) and Nynorsk (*eg*), to make it clear whether the written variety is Bokmål or Nynorsk. The different search combinations for Bokmål and Nynorsk that are used in our search are the following (only demonstrated with the verb *elske* (love)):

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----|----------|
| 6) Bokmål: | | | |
| a) <i>elsker bokmål</i> | (love(s)) | | Bokmål) |
| b) <i>ikke elsker bokmål</i> | (love(s)) | not | Bokmål) |
| c) <i>jeg elsker bokmål</i> | (I love Bokmål) | | |
| d) <i>elsker ikke bokmål</i> | (do(es) not love Bokmål) | | |
| e) <i>jeg elsker ikke bokmål</i> | (I do not love Bokmål) | | |
| f) <i>elsker nynorsk</i> | (love(s)) | | Nynorsk) |
| g) <i>ikke elsker nynorsk</i> | (love(s)) | not | Nynorsk) |
| h) <i>jeg elsker nynorsk</i> | (I love Nynorsk) | | |
| i) <i>elsker ikke nynorsk</i> | (do(es) not love Nynorsk) | | |
| j) <i>jeg elsker ikke nynorsk</i> | (I do not love Nynorsk) | | |
| 7) Nynorsk: | | | |
| a) <i>elskar bokmål</i> | (love(s)) | | Bokmål) |
| b) <i>ikkje elskar bokmål</i> | (love(s)) | not | Bokmål) |
| c) <i>eg elskar bokmål</i> | (I love Bokmål) | | |
| d) <i>elskar ikkje bokmål</i> | (do(es) not love Bokmål) | | |
| e) <i>eg elskar ikkje bokmål</i> | (I do not love Bokmål) | | |
| f) <i>elskar nynorsk</i> | (love(s)) | | Nynorsk) |
| g) <i>ikkje elskar nynorsk</i> | (love(s)) | not | Nynorsk) |
| h) <i>eg elskar nynorsk</i> | (I love Nynorsk) | | |
| i) <i>elskar ikkje nynorsk</i> | (do(es) not love Nynorsk) | | |
| j) <i>eg elskar ikkje nynorsk</i> | (I do not love Nynorsk) | | |

As for the results given in “hits” for the search strings, it has to be mentioned that the search engine of the National Library returns the number of newspapers where the search string occurs as hits or counts, not the actual number of phrases searched for. If the same word or phrase is used several times in the same newspaper and even the same text, the number would only be 1. We still think that it will be possible to get an impression of the overall distribution and we will now look at the search results.

Results

In this section, we will present the quantitative results of the different searches. There will not be made any attempt to investigate the concrete hits/examples at this point. Even though there may be a certain margin of errors in the results below (the same text could, for instance, possibly be published in different newspapers) the numbers will still give us an indication of how Bokmål users and Nynorsk users feel about the two written varieties and how these groups compare to each other. The numbers below are the numbers of hits reported back from the search engine of the Norwegian National Library (Nasjonalbiblioteket) for the submitted search string.

8) ELSKE	(LOVE),		Bokmål:
a) <i>elsker bokmål</i>	(love(s) Bokmål)	8	
b) <i>ikke elsker bokmål</i>	(love(s) not Bokmål)	0	
c) <i>jeg elsker bokmål</i>	(I love Bokmål)	3	
d) <i>elsker ikke bokmål</i>	(do(es) not love Bokmål)	0	
e) <i>jeg elsker ikke bokmål</i>	(I do not love Bokmål)	0	
f) <i>elsker nynorsk</i>	(love(s) Nynorsk)	91	
g) <i>ikke elsker nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not love Nynorsk)	1	
h) <i>jeg elsker nynorsk</i>	(I love Nynorsk)	32	
i) <i>elsker ikke nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not love Nynorsk)	0	
j) <i>jeg elsker ikke nynorsk</i>	(I do not love Nynorsk)	0	

Note: The phrase *elsker nynorsk* (love(s) Nynorsk) is used more than ten times as often (8f) as the phrase *elsker bokmål* (love(s) Bokmål) by the Bokmål users in this corpus (8a). And while it is very concretely and subjectively stated *jeg elsker Bokmål* (I love Bokmål) three times (8c), the phrase *jeg elsker nynorsk* (I love Nynorsk) is used 32 times by Bokmål users (8h). Just to compare these results to a search on Google, we find that “*jeg elsker bokmål*” gives 7 hits, while “*jeg elsker nynorsk*” results in 152 hits. Let us compare this to the results for Nynorsk writers.

9) ELSKE	(LOVE),		Nynorsk:
a) <i>elskar bokmål</i>	(love(s) Bokmål)	5	
b) <i>ikkje elskar bokmål</i>	(love(s) not Bokmål)	0	
c) <i>eg elskar bokmål</i>	(I love Bokmål)	0	
d) <i>elskar ikkje bokmål</i>	(do(es) not love Bokmål)	0	
e) <i>eg elskar ikkje bokmål</i>	(I do not love Bokmål)	0	
f) <i>elskar nynorsk</i>	(love(s) Nynorsk)	111	
g) <i>ikkje elskar nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not love Nynorsk)	1	
h) <i>eg elskar nynorsk</i>	(I love Nynorsk)	29	
i) <i>elskar ikkje nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not love Nynorsk)	2	
j) <i>eg elskar ikkje nynorsk</i>	(I do not love Nynorsk)	0	

These results show 5 references to someone loving Bokmål (9a) but none where a Nynorsk writing person explicitly said “*eg elskar Bokmål*” (I love Bokmål) (9c). On the other hand, there are 111 references to someone loving Nynorsk (9f), and 29 concrete statements saying: “I love Nynorsk” (9h). Compared to a Google search, 1 hit says: “*eg elskar bokmål*” (I love Bokmål), while there are 221 hits for «*eg elskar nynorsk*» (I love Nynorsk). Again, there is a clear indication that few people seem to feel that they “love” Bokmål, whereas there are quite many that express strong emotions in favour of Nynorsk. So what, then, are the results for what could possibly be said to be the opposite emotion, *hate*?

10) HATE	(HATE),	Bokmål:
a) <i>hater bokmål</i>	(hate(s) Bokmål)	4
b) <i>ikke hater bokmål</i>	(hate(s) not Bokmål)	0
c) <i>jeg hater bokmål</i>	(I hate Bokmål)	3
d) <i>hater ikke bokmål</i>	(do(es) not hate Bokmål)	0
e) <i>jeg hater ikke bokmål</i>	(I do not hate Bokmål)	0
f) <i>hater nynorsk</i>	(hate(s) Nynorsk)	224
g) <i>ikke hater nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not hate Nynorsk)	3
h) <i>jeg hater nynorsk</i>	(I hate Nynorsk)	96
i) <i>hater ikke nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not hate Nynorsk)	2
j) <i>jeg hater ikke nynorsk</i>	(I do not hate Nynorsk)	1

There are three concrete incidents of “jeg hater bokmål” (I hate Bokmål) (10c) written by Bokmål users in a total of 4 hits for *hate Bokmål*. But there are 96 hits for “jeg hater nynorsk” (I hate Nynorsk) (10h) and a total of 224 hits that refer to that someone hates Nynorsk (10f). This seems to indicate that Bokmål users are not that interested in declaring their love to their preferred written language, Bokmål, but much more eager to tell the public that they hate the other written variety, Nynorsk. A Google search points into the same direction: There is one hit for “jeg hater bokmål” and 481 hits for “jeg hater Nynorsk”. On the other hand, the Google search also tells us that there are 197 hits that concretely state “jeg hater ikke Nynorsk” (I do *not* hate Nynorsk), while there was only 1 hit on this phrase in the newspaper corpus. Now to the results expressed in New Norwegian.

11) HATE	(HATE),	Nynorsk:
a) <i>hatar bokmål</i>	(hate(s) Bokmål)	4
b) <i>ikkje hatar bokmål</i>	(hate(s) not Bokmål)	0
c) <i>eg hatar bokmål</i>	(I hate Bokmål)	0
d) <i>hatar ikkje bokmål</i>	(do(es) not hate Bokmål)	1
e) <i>eg hatar ikkje bokmål</i>	(I do not hate Bokmål)	1
f) <i>hatar nynorsk</i>	(hate(s) Nynorsk)	167
g) <i>ikkje hatar nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not hate Nynorsk)	0
h) <i>eg hatar nynorsk</i>	(I hate Nynorsk)	16
i) <i>hatar ikkje nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not hate Nynorsk)	1
j) <i>eg hatar ikkje nynorsk</i>	(I do not hate Nynorsk)	1

Also here, there are 4 hits referring to someone hating Bokmål (11a), but none saying explicitly “eg hatar bokmål” (I hate Bokmål) (11c), whereas there were three hits for a Bokmål user hating Bokmål (10c above). One may be surprised by the high number, 167 (11f), of hits for “hatar nynorsk” (hate(s) Nynorsk) in the Nynorsk newspaper texts, but the result for “eg hatar nynorsk” (I hate Nynorsk), 16 (11h), shows that the higher number refers to other people (preferably Bokmål users) that hate Nynorsk. It is still notable that the number of people hating their own written language, Nynorsk, is four times higher than that of Bokmål users stating that they hate Bokmål. One Nynorsk writer felt the need to express explicitly that he or she does not hate Nynorsk (11j). A search on Google, in comparison, is somewhat surprising. There are 5 hits for “eg hatar bokmål” (I hate Bokmål), whereas there are 206 hits for “eg hatar nynorsk” (I hate Nynorsk), and, again, only one person that had to state explicitly “eg hatar ikkje nynorsk” (I do not hate Nynorsk).

Love and hate can be considered rather strong emotions. How about just being fond of your own or the other written language? The general phrase “er glad i” (is/am fond of) has the same spelling in

Bokmål and Nynorsk. Hence, it is not possible to put the numbers in different categories in a purely quantitative search. Those numbers are marked with BM/NN. Combined with *jeg* and/or *ikke*, the phrase is in Bokmål and with *eg/ikkje*, it is in Nynorsk. Apart from 12a and 12f, where the numbers may represent hits in both Bokmål and Nynorsk texts, the first part (12a-j) is for Bokmål, whereas the last part (12k-r) only is for Nynorsk.

12) GLAD	I	(FOND	OF):
a) <i>er glad i bokmål</i>	(is/am fond of Bokmål)	9	(BM/NN)
b) <i>jeg er glad i bokmål</i>	(I am fond of Bokmål)	1	
c) <i>er ikke glad i bokmål</i>	(is/am not fond of Bokmål)	0	
d) <i>ikke er glad i bokmål</i>	(is/am not fond of Bokmål)	0	
e) <i>jeg er ikke glad i bokmål</i>	(I am not fond of Bokmål)	0	
f) <i>er glad i nynorsk</i>	(is/am fond of Nynorsk)	273	(BM/NN)
g) <i>jeg er glad i nynorsk</i>	(I am fond of Nynorsk)	46	
h) <i>er ikke glad i nynorsk</i>	(is/am not fond of Nynorsk)	1	
i) <i>ikke er glad i nynorsk</i>	(is/am not fond of Nynorsk)	0	
j) <i>jeg er ikke glad i nynorsk</i>	(I am not fond of Nynorsk)	1	
k) <i>eg er glad i bokmål</i>	(I am fond of Bokmål)	1	
l) <i>er ikkje glad i bokmål</i>	(is/am not fond of Bokmål)	5	
m) <i>ikkje er glad i bokmål</i>	(is/am not fond of Bokmål)	0	
n) <i>eg er ikkje glad i bokmål</i>	(I am not fond of Bokmål)	4	
o) <i>eg er glad i nynorsk</i>	(I am fond of Nynorsk)	31	
p) <i>er ikkje glad i nynorsk</i>	(is/am not fond of Nynorsk)	0	
q) <i>ikkje er glad i nynorsk</i>	(is/am not fond of Nynorsk)	1	
r) <i>eg er ikkje glad i nynorsk</i>	(I am not fond of Nynorsk)	0	

In 12a, which may be in Bokmål or in Nynorsk, there are 9 hits saying that someone is fond of Bokmål, but only 1 says explicitly (in Bokmål, 12b) “*jeg er glad i bokmål*” (I am fond of Bokmål). In 8a, we saw that there were 8 hits for “*jeg elsker bokmål*” (I love Bokmål). There were ten times as many hits for “*jeg elsker nynorsk*” (I love Nynorsk) in 8f. 12f, then, can again be both Bokmål or Nynorsk. We can see that there is a huge amount of positive feelings for Nynorsk: 273, thirty times as many hits as for Bokmål (12a). 46 statements of Bokmål users admit explicitly that they are fond of Nynorsk (12g). A comparison with a search on Google shows that there is 1 Bokmål user stating that he or she is fond of Bokmål, whereas there are 1220 hits for the phrase “*jeg elsker nynorsk*”. However, it must be mentioned that many of them are followed by a “but” (Norwegian *men*), i.e. “I love Nynorsk, but...” There are 729 hits on Google for the Nynorsk phrase “*eg er glad i nynorsk*” (I am fond of Nynorsk). 2 hits on Google say “*jeg er ikke glad i nynorsk*” (I am not fond of Nynorsk), compared to 96 in the newspaper corpus and 481 hits on Google that say “*jeg hater nynorsk*” (I hate Nynorsk).

As with *glad i* (fond of), *like* (like) can potentially have the same form in Bokmål and Nynorsk in the present tense (*liker*), even though many Nynorsk users prefer the form *likar*. A quantitative search will, therefore, not be conclusive about the real distribution between Bokmål users and Nynorsk users. However, combinations with the personal pronoun *jeg/eg* and/or the negation adverb *ikke/ikkje* will yield clear results.

13) LIKE				(LIKE):
a) <i>liker bokmål</i>	(like(s) Bokmål)	28		(BM/NN)
b) <i>jeg liker bokmål</i>	(I like Bokmål)	4		
c) <i>liker ikke bokmål</i>	(do(es) not like Bokmål)	2		
d) <i>ikke liker bokmål</i>	(do(es) not like Bokmål)	4		
e) <i>jeg liker ikke bokmål</i>	(I do not like Bokmål)	1		
f) <i>liker nynorsk</i>	(like(s) Nynorsk)	408		(BM/NN)
g) <i>jeg liker nynorsk</i>	(I like Nynorsk)	74		
h) <i>liker ikke nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not like Nynorsk)	93		
i) <i>ikke liker nynorsk</i>	do(es) not like Nynorsk)	149		
j) <i>jeg liker ikke nynorsk</i>	(I do not like Nynorsk)	35		
k) <i>likar bokmål</i>	(like(s) Bokmål)	14 (contains l, n)		
l) <i>eg likar/liker bokmål</i>	(I like Bokmål)	1+1=2		
m) <i>likar/liker ikkje bokmål</i>	(do(es) not like Bokmål)	4+0=4	(contains	o)
n) <i>ikkje likar/liker bokmål</i>	(do(es) not like Bokmål)	2+0=2		
o) <i>eg likar/liker ikkje bokmål</i>	(I do not like Bokmål)	0+0=0		
p) <i>likar nynorsk</i>	(like(s) Nynorsk)	342 (contains q, s)		
q) <i>eg likar/liker nynorsk</i>	(I like Nynorsk)	69+8=77		
r) <i>likar/liker ikkje nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not like Nynorsk)	64+3=67 (contains t)		
s) <i>ikkje likar/liker nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not like Nynorsk)	133+15=148		
t) <i>eg likar/liker ikkje nynorsk</i>	(I do not like Nynorsk)	17+2=19		

“Like” is clearly much easier to use and a more moderate expression than “love” or “being fond of” given the higher number of hits in the newspaper corpus. The difference between liking Bokmål and Nynorsk is – again – very visible. Even though the present tense form *liker* can be used in both Bokmål and Nynorsk, there is a clear preference for *likar* in Nynorsk. The 28 hits on *liker bokmål* (like(s) Bokmål) in 13a are, therefore, first of all, Bokmål users. The difference between 13a and 13f is remarkable with 408 hits for “like(s) Nynorsk”. The personal “I like” is also clear: 13b and 13g tell us that there are 4 Bokmål hits that explicitly state that the writer likes Bokmål, whereas there 74, almost twenty times as many hits for “I like Nynorsk” written in Bokmål (13f). On the other hand, it is also easier to express that somebody does *not* like Nynorsk. There are quite many hits for combinations of “not like Nynorsk” in the Bokmål texts (13h-j). Nynorsk users, on their part, do not easily admit that they like Bokmål. There are only 2 hits that explicitly tell “eg likar/liker bokmål” (I like Bokmål) (13l). On the other hand, there is no one saying explicitly that he or she does not like Bokmål (13o). Interestingly, there are also 19 hits telling us that the Nynorsk writer does not like Nynorsk (13t). A comparison with a search on Google shows that there are 10 hits for “jeg liker bokmål” (I like Bokmål) written by Bokmål users against 399 hits for “jeg liker nynorsk” (I like Nynorsk). But there are also – not surprisingly – 278 hits for “jeg liker ikke nynorsk” (I do not like Nynorsk). As in the newspaper corpus, few Nynorsk users express explicitly that they like (1) or not like (4) Bokmål in the Google search, whereas there are many hits for “I like Nynorsk” (*eg likar* 144 + *liker* 62). There are also quite many who explicitly state that they do not like Nynorsk (83+2).

Instead of loving, hating, being fond of or liking the written languages one could also just *prefer* one over the other. The Norwegian expression would be *foretrekke* (Bokmål) and *føretrekkje/føretrekke* (Nynorsk).

14) FORETREKKE	(PREFER),		Bokmål:
a) <i>foretrekker bokmål</i>	(prefer(s) Bokmål)	346	

b) <i>ikke foretrekker bokmål</i>	(prefers(s) not Bokmål)	0
c) <i>jeg foretrekker bokmål</i>	(I prefer Bokmål)	9
d) <i>foretrekker ikke bokmål</i>	(do(es) not prefer Bokmål)	0
e) <i>jeg foretrekker ikke bokmål</i>	(I do not prefer Bokmål)	0
f) <i>foretrekker nynorsk</i>	(prefer(s) Nynorsk)	298
g) <i>ikke foretrekker nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not prefer Nynorsk)	2
h) <i>jeg foretrekker nynorsk</i>	(I prefer Nynorsk)	7
i) <i>foretrekker ikke nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not prefer Nynorsk)	1
j) <i>jeg foretrekker ikke nynorsk</i>	(I do not prefer Nynorsk)	0

Interestingly, there is almost a balance between preferring Bokmål and preferring Nynorsk amongst writers of Bokmål when it comes to the general expression. There are quite many instances of both “prefer Bokmål” (14a) and “prefer Nynorsk” (14f). Whereas there are 9 explicit hits for “I prefer Bokmål” (14c) and 7 for “I prefer Nynorsk” (14h). A Google search, however, shows 113 instances of “I prefer Bokmål” and only 6 of “I prefer Nynorsk”.

The results for the same expression written in Nynorsk show the same kind of balance, but are rather different. There are two official spellings of “prefer” in the present tense: *føretrekkjer* and *føretrekker*, but since this verb is strong in Bokmål and in many dialects, the spelling *føretrekk* can also be found in texts.

15) FØRETREKKJE/FØRETREKKE	(PREFER),	Nynorsk:
a) <i>føretrekkjer/-trekker/-trekk bokmål</i>	(prefer(s) Bokmål)	10+57+9 = 76
b) <i>ikkje føretrekkjer/-trekker/-trekk bokmål</i>	(prefers(s) not Bokmål)	0+0+0 = 0
c) <i>eg føretrekkjer/-trekker/-trekk bokmål</i>	(I prefer Bokmål)	1+0+0 = 1
d) <i>føretrekkjer/-trekkjer/-trekk ikkje bokmål</i>	(do(es) not prefer Bokmål)	0+0+0 = 0
e) <i>eg føretrekkjer/-trekker/-trekk ikkje bokmål</i>	(I do not prefer Bokmål)	0+0+0 = 0
f) <i>føretrekkjer/-trekkjer/-trekk nynorsk</i>	(prefer(s) Nynorsk)	14+38+5 = 57
g) <i>ikkje føretrekkjer/-trekker/-trekk nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not prefer Nynorsk)	0+0+0 = 0
h) <i>eg føretrekkjer/-trekkjer/-trekk nynorsk</i>	(I prefer Nynorsk)	2+0+1 = 3
i) <i>føretrekkjer/-trekker/-trekk ikkje nynorsk</i>	(do(es) not prefer Nynorsk)	0+0+0 = 0
j) <i>eg føretrekkjer/-trekker/-trekk ikkje nynorsk</i>	(I do not prefer Nynorsk)	0+0+0 = 0

There is a balance between the expressions for preferring Bokmål (15a) and Nynorsk (15f). However, overall, there are much less Nynorsk writers who use the expression ‘prefer’ in combination with the language compared to those who write Bokmål.

There are also other possible emotional expressions one could imagine finding in texts. For the sake of argument, some of them were tested in the corpus just to find out whether they were used or not, for instance *mislike* (dislike). We will also test combinations with *few*, *some*, *many* and *all*.

16) MISLIKE	(DISLIKE)	(Bokmål):
a) <i>jeg misliker bokmål</i>	(I dislike Bokmål)	0
b) <i>jeg misliker ikke bokmål</i>	(I do not dislike Bokmål)	0
c) <i>få misliker bokmål</i>	(few dislike Bokmål)	0
d) <i>noen misliker bokmål</i>	(some dislike Bokmål)	0
e) <i>mange misliker bokmål</i>	(many dislike Bokmål)	0
f) <i>alle misliker bokmål</i>	(all dislike Bokmål)	0
g) <i>jeg misliker nynorsk</i>	(I dislike Nynorsk)	3
h) <i>jeg misliker ikke nynorsk</i>	(I do not dislike Nynorsk)	0

i) <i>få misliker nynorsk</i>	(few dislike Nynorsk)	0
j) <i>noen misliker nynorsk</i>	(some dislike Nynorsk)	0
k) <i>mange misliker nynorsk</i>	(many dislike Nynorsk)	8
l) <i>alle misliker nynorsk</i>	(all dislike Nynorsk)	0

The combinations with *få*, *mange* and *alle* *could* potentially also be in Nynorsk since the forms/spellings are the same. There are 3 clear statements that a Bokmål user personally dislikes Nynorsk (16g), and 8 general statements that *many* dislike Nynorsk (16k). Compared to Nynorsk users, there are no instances of “eg mislikar/misliker bokmål” (I dislike Bokmål), «eg mislikar/misliker ikkje bokmål» (I do not dislike Bokmål), nor «eg mislikar/misliker nynorsk» (I dislike Nynorsk), «eg mislikar/misliker ikkje nynorsk» (I do not dislike Nynorsk). There is no *mange mislikar nynorsk* (many dislike Nynorsk) either, which would be a clear Nynorsk spelling.

A much stronger expression, maybe even stronger than “hate” – or at least less frequent in use – would be to “loathe” the written language (*avsky*).

17) AVSKY			(LOATHE):
a) <i>jeg avskyr bokmål</i>	(I loathe Bokmål)	0	
b) <i>jeg avskyr ikke bokmål</i>	(I do not loathe Bokmål)	0	
c) <i>jeg avskyr nynorsk</i>	(I loathe Nynorsk)	1	
d) <i>jeg avskyr ikke nynorsk</i>	(I do not loathe Nynorsk)	0	
e) <i>eg avskyr bokmål</i>	(I loathe Bokmål)	0	
f) <i>eg avskyr ikkje bokmål</i>	(I do not loathe Bokmål)	0	
g) <i>eg avskyr nynorsk</i>	(I loathe Nynorsk)	0	
h) <i>eg avskyr ikkje nynorsk</i>	(I do not loathe Nynorsk)	0	

There is only one instance with the verb *avsky* (loathe), (17 c), and this is a Bokmål user loathing Nynorsk.

To conclude the investigation, we will just check the first emotional expressions (love, hate, like and prefer) with quantifiers like *all* and *many*.

18) ALLE	(ALL)		(Bokmål):
a) <i>alle elsker bokmål</i>	(all love Bokmål)	0	
b) <i>alle elsker nynorsk</i>	(all love Nynorsk)	0	
c) <i>alle hater bokmål</i>	(all hate Bokmål)	0	
d) <i>alle hater nynorsk</i>	(alle hate Nynorsk)	6	
e) <i>alle liker bokmål</i>	(all like Bokmål)	0	(potentially Nynorsk)
f) <i>alle liker nynorsk</i>	(all like Nynorsk)	0	(potentially Nynorsk)
g) <i>alle foretrekker bokmål</i>	(all prefer Bokmål)	3	
h) <i>alle foretrekker nynorsk</i>	(all prefer Nynorsk)	0	
19) ALLE	(ALL)		(Nynorsk):
a) <i>alle elsker bokmål</i>	(all love Bokmål)	0	
b) <i>alle elsker nynorsk</i>	(all love Nynorsk)	1	(poetry)
c) <i>alle hatar bokmål</i>	(all hate Bokmål)	0	

d) <i>alle hatar nynorsk</i>	(alle hate Nynorsk)	1	
e) <i>alle likar bokmål</i>	(all like Bokmål)	1	
f) <i>alle likar nynorsk</i>	(all like Nynorsk)	2	
g) <i>alle føretrekkjer/-trekker bokmål</i>	(all prefer Bokmål)	0/0	
h) <i>alle føretrekkjer/-trekker nynorsk</i>	(all prefer Nynorsk)	0/0	
20) MANGE	(MANY)		(Bokmål):
a) <i>mange elsker bokmål</i>	(many love Bokmål)	0	
b) <i>mange elsker nynorsk</i>	(many love Nynorsk)	0	
c) <i>mange hater bokmål</i>	(many hate Bokmål)	0	
d) <i>mange hater nynorsk</i>	(many hate Nynorsk)	4	
e) <i>mange liker bokmål</i>	(many like Bokmål)	0	(potentially Nynorsk)
f) <i>mange liker nynorsk</i>	(many like Nynorsk)	0	(potentially Nynorsk)
g) <i>mange foretrekker bokmål</i>	(many prefer Bokmål)	1	
h) <i>mange foretrekker nynorsk</i>	(many prefer Nynorsk)	1	
21) MANGE	(MANY)		(Nynorsk):
a) <i>mange elsker bokmål</i>	(many love Bokmål)	0	
b) <i>mange elsker nynorsk</i>	(many love Nynorsk)	0	
c) <i>mange hatar bokmål</i>	(many hate Bokmål)	0	
d) <i>mange hatar nynorsk</i>	(many hate Nynorsk)	1	
e) <i>mange likar bokmål</i>	(many like Bokmål)	0	
f) <i>mange likar nynorsk</i>	(many like Nynorsk)	0	
g) <i>mange føretrekkjer/-trekker bokmål</i>	(many prefer Bokmål)	1/0	
h) <i>mange føretrekkjer/-trekker nynorsk</i>	(many prefer Nynorsk)	0/0	

What can these results tell us about emotions about Bokmål and Nynorsk?

Discussion

In this survey, we have only investigated the emotional expressions: *elske* (love), *hate* (hate), *være/vere glad i* (being fond of), *like* (like), *foretrekke/føretrekkje* (prefer), *mislike* (dislike), and *avsky* (loathe) in combination with the terms *bokmål* and *nynorsk*. There may, of course, be other lexical ways of expressing an emotional state about a written language.

From an overall perspective and as a first impression, it may be a little surprising that there are relatively few examples of the expressions searched for given the fact that there were almost 250 thousand hits for the word *bokmål* and almost one million hits for the word *nynorsk* in the newspaper corpus of the Norwegian National Library (Nasjonalbiblioteket) at the time of the survey. But then again, most newspaper articles are supposed to be referential and neutral. Emotional expressions would be more frequent on the debate pages and not all newspapers do have public debate pages. The numbers of the terms *bokmål* and *nynorsk* respectively are still interesting on their own. They tell us that Nynorsk is referred to four times as often as Bokmål in newspaper texts. We need to consider that *nynorsk* may be an adjective whereas *bokmål* only functions as a noun, though. Nevertheless, Nynorsk as a topic seems to be of much more interest in general than Bokmål in newspaper texts. This means that it is expected that Nynorsk, in general, has a somewhat higher news value than Bokmål. The reason for this is the fact that 85-90% of the readers use Bokmål as their written language and Bokmål would in most cases be perceived as the default and neutral written language. Nynorsk, as the lesser used and “marked” written language, would be a “better” newspaper topic from one perspective or the other. For instance, it has been more common since 1945 that municipalities change their written language from

Nynorsk to Bokmål and usually there have been public polls or votes beforehand that were reported in the newspapers. Furthermore, there have been many political debates around the question whether Nynorsk should be a mandatory subject in school or not. In the culture/literature sector, Bokmål would be perceived as the default language and would usually not be mentioned when reviewing a novel, whereas it more or less always would be mentioned when a novel is published in Nynorsk (on average, only approx. 7% of books and pamphlets are published in Nynorsk (Grepstad 2020)). Hence, Nynorsk is in general a more frequent topic in the public debate than Bokmål.

As mentioned before, there is a long history of Norwegian pupils complaining about having to learn Nynorsk as their alternative or second written language at school (see e.g. Haugan 2017, 2019). Even though originating in the field of second language learning, Krashen's (1986) *Affective Filter Hypothesis* may account for some of the reasons why Norwegian language debate and especially Nynorsk as a topic can be somewhat emotional at times. The three important parts of the Affective Filter Hypothesis are motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Applied to the Norwegian classroom, one could simply say that most pupils are not motivated to learn a second written Norwegian variety. To 80-85% this second Norwegian language would be Nynorsk. Since the pupils lack motivation they do not necessarily make an effort to learn Nynorsk and, therefore, lack self-confidence, which again may lead to anxiety since there is a separate grade for Nynorsk at the end of lower secondary and higher secondary school, that may influence the choices for a future career. The lack of self-confidence and anxiety connected to Nynorsk may be enhanced by the fact that Nynorsk is highly underrepresented in public texts and every day life. From that perspective, it may be understandable that many pupils (and consequently adults) develop more of a hate relationship to Nynorsk – which may also be connect to a feeling of shame, as mentioned above (cf. Nyeng 2006, 227). The „default“ language Bokmål, on the other hand, does not represent a „threat“ in any way. To most people it is just a tool for written communication and, therefore, not necessarily something one *feels* anything about. For some Nynorsk users who have learned Nynorsk at school as their main or first written language, Nynorsk may possibly have the same neutral status as a tool for written communication. However, as a Nynorsk user one has to accept the fact that public communication is dominated by Bokmål. 85-90% of all written text would be in Bokmål (Jahr 2015, 136), and even more in the business sector (Sanden, 2020). Hence, a Nynorsk user is daily reminded of the fact that Nynorsk is not the default language or a common written language at all. Furthermore, most Nynorsk users would sooner or later get the question *why* they use Nynorsk, whereas it is less common to ask a Bokmål user the same question. Therefore, many if not most Nynorsk users will consider when and where they would choose to write Nynorsk, and there are also quite many Nynorsk user who change their main written language and decide to use Bokmål instead. While there were almost 40% Nynorsk users before 1940, there are now only roughly 10% (Grepstad 2020). Nynorsk users are a minority and as such, they would often feel they have to defend themselves and their choice of written language. On the background of this scenario, our hypothesis would therefore be that most Bokmål users would not necessarily express emotions regarding Bokmål, but rather about Nynorsk. Nynorsk users, on the other hand, are expected to be more emotional about their own written language, and at the same time they would not necessarily express any negative emotions against Bokmål. So, what do we find in the newspaper corpus?

Love

The examples 8) and 9) in the result section above show combinations of *love* with *Bokmål* and *Nynorsk* respectively in the newspaper corpus. Love can be said to be strong emotion. However, probably influenced by the English use of the verb *love*, it has become relative common to read and hear “I love” this or that in Norwegian meaning “I really do like something a lot”. Many would probably find it easier to say or write “I love chocolate” than “I love you” in Norwegian.

A little bit surprising, perhaps, is 8a) that shows eight occurrences for “love Bokmål” written by Bokmål users, which is, of course, not that many, but still a few. Three instances (8c) claim explicitly: “I love Bokmål”. The hypothesis is that Bokmål would be the default language for most Bokmål users and that we would not expect many emotional expressions regarding Bokmål from Bokmål users in general. One of the examples comes from a local newspaper text (Hamar Arbeiderblad 2013) where secondary school pupils were asked to write about the Norwegian “Language Year” in 2013 celebrating the 200 year anniversary of Ivar Aasen who was responsible for the first norm of Nynorsk (at that time called *Landsmål*). The pupil interpreted the language year as a celebration of Nynorsk and felt the urge to defend his own written language, Bokmål. Interestingly, he notes that “Det er altfor få som sier at de elsker bokmål», i.e. there are way too few who say that they love Bokmål, which may be a correct observation. So, this pupils repeats four times in his text that he loves Bokmål and explains why. Apparently, this emotional reaction is because he perceived that loving the language is something that is reserved for Nynorsk users. There is simply no tradition for feeling or expressing that one loves Bokmål. This is a void that the pupil tried to fill. The other examples of *love + Bokmål* also show this tendency. Even though “elsker bokmål” is a Bokmål phrase (Nynorsk would have the spelling *elskar*), the second hit for the phrase “jeg elsker bokmål” is in a Nynorsk text where the writer (a Nynorsk activist) asks rhetorically: “Men kven kan med handa på hjertet seie ‘Jeg elsker bokmål’?”, i.e. “Who can with the hand on his heart say ‘I love Bokmål’?” (Fredrikstad Blad, 2007). The third occurrence of “I love Bokmål” is written in Bokmål but deals with the same rhetoric question: “I alle fall har jeg aldri hørt noen andre, kongelige eller vanlige borgere, si ‘Jeg elsker bokmål’, i.e. “In any case, I have never heard anyone else, royal or ordinary citizen, say ‘I love Bokmål’” (Dagbladet, 2006). This is not from a debate text. The reviewer commented among other things on the Norwegian queen (also a Bokmål user) having said “I love Nynorsk”. It seems relatively uncontroversial to claim that it is not very common to read or hear the phrase “I love Bokmål” used by a Bokmål user. In stark contrast, one can find 91 occurrences of “love Nynorsk” (8f) and 32 explicit “declarations of love”, i.e. “I love Nynorsk” (8h) written by Bokmål users. How can this be explained? One explanation is statistics. Some of the hits for “jeg elsker nynorsk” occur several times because the same text was an insert in different newspapers. This text is an interview (in Bokmål) with an immigrant who had chosen Nynorsk. Another text is an interview in Bokmål with someone who started working as an actor at Det Norske Teatret, a theatre in Oslo where only Nynorsk is used. It would demand too much space to comment on each and every occurrence of “jeg elsker nynorsk”. Some texts deal with the fact that Bokmål users may find it strange or controversial that other Bokmål users would say that they love Nynorsk. Here, the writers try to defend the lesser used variety. Another explanation may be *politeness*. According to Grundy (2000, 146), politeness phenomena are related to pragmatic usage:

Among the aspects of context that are particularly determinate of language choice in the domain of politeness are the power-distance relationship of the interactants and the extent to which a speaker imposes on or requires something of their addressee. In being ‘polite’, a speaker is attempting to create an implicated context (the speaker stands in the relation x to the addressee in respect of act y) that matches the one assumed by the addressee.

Combined with Krashen’s (1986) Affective Filter Hypothesis, and Nyeng’s (2006) approach to shame, one could assume that many Bokmål users do have low self-esteem when it comes to their mastering of the Nynorsk language. Getting credit for expressing their love for Nynorsk might relieve some of the anxiety or possibly bad consciousness (shame) related to Nynorsk. One occurrence (Østlandets Blad 1996) says: “Jeg elsker nynorsk, men jeg hater sidemålskarakteren!”, i.e. “I love Nynorsk, but I hate the separate Nynorsk grade.” This is written by a young politician who argues against being graded explicitly in the alternative written language, Nynorsk. So this is a typical example of those trying to appear neutral

and rational in their argumentation. Many writers claim that they love Nynorsk while at the same trying to explain why they do not use Nynorsk themselves or why they think Nynorsk should not be obligatory in school. But there are, of course, also those who actually do love Nynorsk. The search statistics are at least clear when it comes to showing that it is much more common for a Bokmål user to state “I love Nynorsk” (32) than “I love Bokmål” (3). A quick search on Google, reporting actual phrase hits yielded a result of 152:7, i.e. Bokmål users choose to express their love for Nynorsk substantially more often than for their own written language.

How does it look on the Nynorsk users’ side, then? There are no occurrences of “I love Bokmål” written by a Nynorsk user (9c), but there are five instances of “love Bokmål”. Some of them are – again – the rhetorical question: “Når hørte du sist nokon seia at dei elsker bokmål?”, i.e. “When was the last time you heard someone say that they love Bokmål?” (Klassekampen, 2013). The same question is asked in Vest-Telemark Blad (1991). The interesting result on the Nynorsk side are the 111 occurrences of “love Nynorsk” and 29 direct expressions “I love Nynorsk”. Hence, both Bokmål users and Nynorsk users *love* Nynorsk, whereas rather few on both sides express their love for Bokmål explicitly. It also seems to be easier and more “normal” for a Nynorsk user to explicitly admit the love for Nynorsk (29 (9h)) than for Bokmål users to say the same about Bokmål (3 (8c)). A quick Google search showed one occurrence of “eg elsker bokmål” (I love Bokmål) and 221 occurrences of “eg elsker nynorsk” (I love Nynorsk). As for *love* as an emotion, it is statistically clear that both Bokmål users and Nynorsk users associate it with Nynorsk and not with Bokmål.

Hate

Interestingly, also the opposite(?) emotion to love, *hate*, is associated with Nynorsk and not with Bokmål. The results in (10) for Bokmål users show 4 occurrences of “hate Bokmål” (10a) against 224 occurrences of “hate Nynorsk” (10f). There are three hits for “I hate Bokmål” (10c) and 96 hits for “I hate Nynorsk” (96). From our knowledge of the language debate in Norway, this is expected. We “know” that many pupils and adults do have ambivalent or negative emotions associated with Nynorsk due to their school experience. The interesting fact is here – again – that Nynorsk is an emotional topic whereas Bokmål is more or less neutral. If you do have an opinion or an emotion, whether positive or negative, it is about Nynorsk and not about Bokmål. A quick Google search showed the same tendency: there was 1 hit for “I hate Bokmål” and 481 hits for “I hate Nynorsk”. But when looking at the results for the Nynorsk users we may get a little surprised. It is not surprising that there is no occurrence of “I hate Bokmål” (11c), but there are 16 occurrences of “I hate Nynorsk” (11h). Some of these texts refer to Bokmål users who hate Nynorsk, and some are written in Nynorsk to make a point, cf. politeness considerations mentioned above. So, the occurrences of “I hate Nynorsk” do not reflect Nynorsk users’ emotions. The 167 occurrences of the combination “hate Nynorsk” written in Nynorsk deal mainly with the fact that other people, i.e. Bokmål users, often hate Nynorsk.

Fond of

The use of the Norwegian expressions for *love* and *hate* are probably influenced by the English use. It has become much easier to say or write “I love” or “I hate” something. The Norwegian expression for *being fond* often implies that one actually cares a lot for something. But this is not the place to determine whether loving or being fond of is a stronger emotion in different contexts. The statistical results show that while there are three hits for “I love Bokmål” written by Bokmål users (8c), there is only 1 for “I am fond of Bokmål” (12b). Further investigation shows that this formulation is from an interview with a Nynorsk user (Levanger-avisa 1988) and can be put into the category of politeness. While being known as a Nynorsk user, the interviewed person stated that he was fond of Bokmål (and Danish and Swedish) too. There are 9 hits for the phrase “being fond of Bokmål” (12a), which can be both Bokmål and Nynorsk since there is no genuine Bokmål or Nynorsk word that would identify it

without checking the actual texts. In comparison, there are 273 occurrences of “being fond of Nynorsk” (12f), which can also be Bokmål or Nynorsk. However, 46 occurrences state clearly “I am fond of Nynorsk” written in Bokmål (12f), i.e. 46:1 in favor of Nynorsk, which is in line with the 32:3 result “I love Nynorsk” versus “I love Bokmål” written by Bokmål users. Nynorsk users on their part do not often state that they are fond of Bokmål, 1 hit (12k), whereas being fond of Nynorsk is more frequent, 31 hits (12o). The statistical result shows – again – that emotions are more likely associated with Nynorsk than with Bokmål. A quick search on Google strengthens this claim: there was only one Bokmål user who wrote “I am fond of Bokmål” compared to 1220 hits for the search “I am fond of Nynorsk”. There were no Google hits for the phrase “I am fond of Bokmål” written by a Nynorsk user, whereas there were 729 hits for “I am fond of Nynorsk”. Interestingly, there is only 1 occurrence of “I am not fond of Nynorsk” written in Bokmål in the newspaper corpus (12j) while there are 96 clear statements “I hate Nynorsk” (10c). In this respect, there is not much politeness to find in the newspaper corpus. In comparison, there are 4 instances of “I am not fond of Bokmål” written by Nynorsk users (12n), and no instances of “I hate Bokmål” (11g) written by a Nynorsk user.

Like

When it comes to *liking*, which may be considered a much less controversial expression in this context, the results are similar to those commented on above. The combination “like Bokmål” (13a) is much more frequent (28 hits) than “love Bokmål” (8 hits (8a)) or “being fond of Bokmål” (9 hits (12a)). Here, it has to be taken into account that the Norwegian verb *liker* (present tense) potentially could reflect both Bokmål and Nynorsk users. However, there are only 4 explicit occurrences of “I like Bokmål” written in Bokmål. In comparison, there are 408 occurrences of “like Nynorsk”, which again could reflect both Bokmål and Nynorsk writers. But there are 74 clear statements by Bokmål users that they like Nynorsk (13g). There is also a very high number of combinations with *ikke* (not) (13h and 13i). Then there are 35 explicit statements saying “I do not like Nynorsk” (13j). Even though there are twice as many Bokmål users who express that they like Nynorsk, there are quite many who explicitly say that they do *not* like Nynorsk (still only a third of the number that states “I hate Nynorsk” (10h). In comparison, two Nynorsk users express that they like Bokmål (13l) whereas there are 77 for the phrase “I like Nynorsk” written in Nynorsk. There are also – as with the results for Bokmål – relatively high numbers for combinations with *not*, i.e. do not like Nynorsk (13r and 13s). In these cases, there is usually a discussion on whether *other* people like Nynorsk or not. There are 19 clear instances written in Nynorsk that state “I do not like Nynorsk” (13t). But most of these are references to other people who do not like Nynorsk and not the view of the writer. The verb *like* as an emotional expression displays a greater variety of results, but the main impression is clear: there are more occurrences of someone liking or maybe not liking Nynorsk in both Bokmål and Nynorsk texts, whereas there are comparably fewer occurrences of liking and not liking Bokmål. The emotions are – again – on the side of Nynorsk and not of the side of Bokmål. A quick search on Google supports this: while there were 10 hits for the Bokmål phrase “I like Bokmål” there were 399 hits for the Bokmål phrase “I like Nynorsk”, and there were 278 hits for the Bokmål phrase “I do not like Nynorsk”. For Nynorsk users, the results were 1 hit for «I like Bokmål» and 4 hits for «I do not like Bokmål», and 206 hits for “I like Nynorsk» and 85 for “I do not like Nynorsk”.

Prefer

Preferring something is a much more modest way of expressing emotions compared to *loving*, *hating*, *being fond of* or *liking*. It is also a much more “technical” term, i.e. it can be used in more objective texts and references to third persons. This is reflected in the results of the search. There are 346 occurrences of “prefer Bokmål” (14a), telling us that the topic of who would prefer Bokmål or Nynorsk is debated. But there are only 9 explicit occurrences of “I prefer Bokmål” (14c). There is an almost equally high number of occurrences for “prefer Nynorsk”, 298 (14f). These do probably belong to the same kind of texts

where the relationship between Bokmål users and Nynorsk users is discussed. There are only 7 explicit occurrences of “I prefer Nynorsk” written in Bokmål (14g). In the newspaper corpus, then, there is a balance. A quick search on Google, however, yields 113 hits for “I prefer Bokmål” and only 6 for “I prefer Nynorsk” written in Bokmål. The newspaper search for the Nynorsk versions also shows a balance, but it also shows that it does not seem to be equally important to discuss whether someone prefers one or the other language. There were 76 occurrences “prefer Bokmål” (15a) and 57 occurrences of “prefer Nynorsk” (15f). There was only 1 occurrence of “I prefer Bokmål” (15c) written in Nynorsk and 3 occurrences of “I prefer Nynorsk” (15h). One might ask whether the verb *prefer* is not “strong” enough to express the emotions of a Nynorsk user. Three Nynorsk users *prefer* Nynorsk (15h), while 77 *like* Nynorsk (13q), 31 are *fond of* Nynorsk (12o), and 29 *love* Nynorsk (9h).

At the end of the survey, some other expressions and combinations were investigated. Whereas three Bokmål users explicitly chose to write “I hate Bokmål” and 96 wrote “I hate Nynorsk”, there were no occurrences of “I dislike Bokmål” (16a) and only three occurrences of “I dislike Nynorsk” (16g). On the other hand, there were a few more (8) occurrences of “many dislike Nynorsk” (16k). There are no occurrences of combinations with *dislike* in Nynorsk texts. The verb *loathe* expresses a rather strong emotion. There was one occurrence written in Bokmål, “I loathe Nynorsk” (17c), but no other combinations and no occurrences in Nynorsk texts. The search results 18) to 21) applied the quantifiers *all* and *many* to investigate whether some writers would choose to externalize their emotions to a third person, possibly to achieve a rhetorical effect. There were 6 occurrences of “all/everybody hate(s) Nynorsk” (18d), and 4 occurrences of “many hate Nynorsk” (20d), functioning as some kind of excuse for not liking Nynorsk oneself, and 3 occurrences of “all/everybody prefer(s) Bokmål” (18g) as a mass argument for Bokmål as the “better” language. All in all, the search for combinations with third person quantifiers was not as fruitful as expected. Apparently, it is relatively easy to express the personal opinion and emotion instead of referring to unidentified others.

Conclusion

In this survey, we have investigated how users of the Norwegian written varieties Bokmål and Nynorsk may express their emotions about their own or the other written language in public newspaper debates. The results show clearly that the majority language Bokmål can be considered neutral when it comes to personal feelings about the language. Simply said, most Bokmål users neither love nor hate Bokmål. Emotions regarding language are, first of all, triggered in the context of a debate on Nynorsk. Nynorsk, on the other hand, is a clear topic for both positive and negative emotions. A survey like this shows that there is a clear mismatch between Bokmål and Nynorsk as objects for emotions. Possible explanations for this can be found in the power imbalance between the two written languages, where Bokmål is the de facto default Norwegian written language and, therefore, does not need to be defended in any way. Nynorsk, on the other hand, may be perceived as a “threat” to Bokmål users due to demands at school and the feeling of underachievement and possibly shame in a grading context, which may extend into adult life. Nynorsk users, representing a minority language or lesser used language, frequently need to defend themselves as individual users of Nynorsk, and they also feel they have to defend the existence of Nynorsk itself. The ambivalence in this survey may perhaps be expressed by the statistical generalization that both Bokmål users and Nynorsk users like, love or hate Nynorsk, whereas neither Bokmål users nor Nynorsk users feels anything particular for Bokmål. Nynorsk may be an identity, whereas Bokmål is, first of all, a more or less neutral communication tool.

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