



From Intentions to Action



Language policy at the University of Bergen

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What language policy at UiB primarily is about

- The relationship between English and Norwegian
- The relationship between Nynorsk and Bokmål

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Language policy guidelines at the University of Bergen (2019)

The official basis for language policy at UiB

The language policy committee (2020)

Language regulations in strategic documents

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Structure of this paper

- A. Language policy of higher education in Norway
- B. Language policy guidelines at the UiB
- C. Three domains
 - Education
 - Research
 - Administration
- D. Three cases
- E. Concluding remarks

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A. Language policy of higher education in Norway



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General background: The language conflict

Nynorsk vs. Bokmål

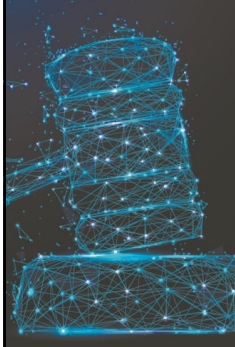


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Since the 1990s:
From language corpus planning to language status planning

- At the Nordic level: «Engelska språket som hot och tillgång i Norden» (Höglin 2002), «Mål i mun» (Sweden, 2002), «Sproget i spild» (Denmark, 2003), «Tänk om...» (Swedish Finland, 2003)
- An official Norwegian report on power and democracy: «Makt og demokrati» (2003)
- Report from the Language Board: Norsk i hundre (2005)
- White paper on language policy, 2007 («Mål og mening»)


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Act relating to universities and university colleges

- Universities and university colleges are “responsible for maintaining and further developing Norwegian academic language” (2009)

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Letters of allocation from the Ministry of Education and Research

- 2019 + 2020:
- It is expected that all universities have developed their own language policy strategies

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The role of English

- In science, medicine etc. about 95–100 % of all scientific publications are in English
- 90% of all PhD dissertations are in English
- Publications in Norwegian 2011–2019 in humanities (from 42% to 27%) and social science (from 33% to 24%)




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B. The language policy of UIB



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About UIB


- About 20 000 students and 4 150 employees (2550 academics)
- 7 faculties with a wide range of subjects.
- Internationalisation:
- People with foreign citizenship: 16% of all employees, 15% of all students, 37% of all doctoral candidates
- UIB candidates that have been exchange students abroad: 29% of all candidates (goal: 40%)
- (Numbers from dhs.nsd.uib.no)

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Degrees in nine foreign languages are offered

- English
- German, Spanish, Italian, French
- Russian
- Chinese, Japanese
- Arabic
- (+ Icelandic)

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Western Norway and Nynorsk

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Language policy guidelines (adopted 2019)

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Ambitions of the UIB

- The university shall have a distinct language policy and stand out as a linguistic role model for education, culture and social life in Norway.

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Five parts

- General principles
- Education
- Research and dissemination
- Administration
- Implementation and follow-up


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General principles

1. Linguistic quality
2. Linguistic clarity
3. Linguistic equality
4. Parallel use of language variants
5. Language skills enhancement


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Three areas of LP



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Education



- Regulates the relationship between Norwegian and English, primarily at the bachelor level.


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At the BA level

- As a general rule, teaching in compulsory courses shall be in Norwegian.
- The curricular literature in the compulsory courses shall be in Norwegian if Norwegian textbook exists that are as good as available foreign language textbooks.


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MA and PhD: Parallel use of languages



- Teaching in master's studies and PhD programmes shall practice parallel use of languages

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What happens if there is a foreign exchange student in the BA-classroom?

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Digital survey among the heads of departments (2020)



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Why is English chosen at the BA-level?

A questionnaire among heads of departments at the UiB

"In order to take care of international students" 30%

"The teacher is not able to use Norwegian/Scandinavian" 55%

"To prepare students to study abroad" 10%

"Some courses just are in English" 5%


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3. Research and dissemination

- Employees are free to choose the language in which they publish
- UiB's corporate social responsibility entails that a significant part of the dissemination [...] is aimed at a Norwegian-language audience.
- UiB shall offer courses in Norwegian language for staff members.

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4. Administration (management)

- Norwegian is the main language
- Nynorsk and Bokmål are to be used about equally
- Relevant informant is received in Norwegian or English


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5. Implementation and follow-up



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Three cases



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Case 1

All PhD dissertations shall include a summary in both Norwegian and English

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Background: PhD dissertations at UiB, 2020

- 37% of all PhD dissertations are made by candidates with a foreign citizenship (37%)
- 90% of all PhD dissertations are written in English
- Very few of these have a summary in Norwegian: 5% at UiB

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Needs to be regulated at another level

- **Regulations for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) at the University of Bergen**
- Currently: A proposal for regulatory change is sent from the Language policy committee to the University Board

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Today

- Media coverage on the issue ("DAG og TID", October, 22)
- Pro-rector: The case goes the University Research Committee, then to the University Board (happened today!)

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Case 2:
Language skills among employees:


- «All permanent employees who do not know Norwegian when hired shall be given an opportunity to complete Norwegian courses and shall have mastered Norwegian at B2 level at the end of three years.»
- «The individual units shall make provisions so that the employee's overall work tasks do not preclude achieving this.»

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What are the consequences....?


- The employee is fired: 0%
- The employee is given customized work assignments: 56%
- The employee is given time to follow language courses: 28%
- It does not have any consequences: 11%
- I do not know: 6%

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More practical arrangements?

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Control and monitoring

- “We are tired of monitoring and control”
- This is how policy is followed up when it comes to internationalisation, gender equality, sexism, health, environment and safety work, etc.
- Why should language be excluded from control mechanisms?

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Control and monitoring: management by objectives

- The university board
- Faculty
- Departments

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Case 3 Language policy

Language policy has to be integrated in the overall strategies of the university

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The basis for language policy at UiB

Language policy guidelines at the University of Bergen (2019)

The language policy committee (2020)

Language policy formulated in strategic documents

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Strategy documents, such as

- The overall strategy (2016-2022)
- Action plan for internationalisation (2016–2022)
- Action plan for HSE (2016–2021)
- Diversity and Inclusion plan (a revised plan)

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Gregersen et al. 2019 on LP in HE

- 1. «[I]t is important **to involve** everybody who will be affected by it, and equally important that they become aware just what it entails.»
- 2. «[S]omeone **must be responsible for implementing** the policy once it has been drawn up, and the policy must be firmly **embedded in the university management** to facilitate regular revision and follow-ups. Otherwise, there is a risk that the policy just becomes a dead document full of good intentions.»

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