

# Norwegian on the Web



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**Norwegian** speech sounds compared to **Polish**

## Polish and Norwegian speech sounds compared

Below you will find a comparison between Norwegian (NO) and Polish (PL) speech sounds, that is consonants, vowels and diphthongs.

### Consonants

The column **Consonant** in the table below demonstrates Norwegian consonant sounds of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and Polish (PL) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the consonants in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or – in the column **Overlap**:

- + The Norwegian consonant is **quite similar** to the Polish one
- ~ The Norwegian consonant is **to a certain extent similar** to the Polish one
- The Norwegian consonant has **no counterpart** in Polish

Polish consonants of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

Consonant	Norwegian	Polish	Overlap	Comments
/p/	på	po	+	Aspiration in PL is weaker than in NO
/b/	bank	bank	+	
/t/	takk	tak	+	Aspiration in PL is weaker than in NO
/d/	dom	dom	+	
/t̥/	smart	-	–	
/d̥/	ferdig	-	–	
/k/	kott	kot	+	Aspiration in PL is weaker than in NO
/g/	gå	go	+	
/m/	mamma	mama	+	
/n/	nummer	numer	+	
/n̥/	barna	-	–	
/ŋ/	lang	-	–	
/f/	film	film	+	
/v/	vass	was	+	
/s/	sokk	sok	+	
/ʃ/	sjal	szal	+	
/ç/	ikkje <sup>1</sup>	Isie	~	PL is close to NO, but not identical
/j/	ja	ja	+	
/h/	hakk	hak	–	Approximately as “ch-” as in “chata”
/r/	radio	radio	+	
/l/	lass	las	+	
/l̥/	jarl	-	–	

Below you will find the same data in a shorter version using colour codes:

- White: The Norwegian consonant is quite close to the Polish one
- Grey: The Norwegian consonant overlaps to some degree with the Polish one
- Black: The Norwegian consonant has no counterpart in Polish

p	b	t	d	t̥	d̥	k	g	l	l̥	r
m	n	ŋ	ŋ	f	u	s	ʃ	ç	j	h

The speech sounds in black and grey cells are sounds that Polish-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian.

## Vowels

The column **Vowel** in the table below demonstrates Norwegian vowel sounds of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and Polish (PL) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the vowels in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or – in the column **Overlap**:

- + The Norwegian vowel is **quite similar** to the Polish one
- ~ The Norwegian vowel is **to a certain extent similar** to the Polish one
- The Norwegian vowel has **no counterpart** in Polish

Polish vowel of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

Vowel	Norwegian	Polish	Overlap	Comments
/i/	i	i	+	
/i:/	-	-	–	
/y/	ty	ty	~	Not NO /i/ nor /y/, but in the vicinity.
/y:/	-	-	–	
/e/	gjest	jest	+	
/e:/	-	-	+	
/ø/	-	-	–	
/ø:/	-	-	–	
/æ/	-	-	–	
/æ:/	-	-	–	
/ɑ/	takk	tak	~	PO /ɑ/ is more front than NO /ɑ/
/ɑ:/	-	-	–	
/ʌ/	-	-	–	
/ʌ:/	-	-	–	
/u/	bukk	buk	+	
/u:/	-	-	–	
/o/	tonn	ton	+	
/o:/	-	-	–	

In general the duration of Polish vowels can be compared to short and long vowels in Norwegian.

The table above is presented below in a shorter version using colour codes:

- White: The Norwegian vowel is quite close to the Polish one
- Grey: The Norwegian vowel overlaps to some degree with the Polish one
- Black: The Norwegian vowel has no counterpart in Polish

i	e	æ	ɑ	y	ʌ	ø	u	o
i:	e:	æ:	ɑ:	y:	ʌ:	ø:	u:	o:

The sounds in black and grey cells are speech sounds that Polish-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian. Observe that /æ/ and /ɑ/ are two different sounds in Norwegian. The Polish /ɑ/ is somewhere in between, maybe a little closer to Norwegian /ɑ/.

## Diphthongs

The column **Diphthong** in the table below demonstrates Norwegian diphthongs of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and Polish (PL) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the diphthongs in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or – in the column **Overlap**:

- + The Norwegian diphthong is *quite similar* to the Polish one
- ~ The Norwegian diphthong is *to a certain extent similar* to the Polish one
- The Norwegian diphthong has *no counterpart* in Polish

Polish diphthongs of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

Diphthong	Norwegian	Polish	Overlap	Comments
/ai/	mai	maj	~	PO /a/ is more front than NO /a/
/æi/	jeg	jej	~	PO /ei/ can replace NO /æi/
/øy/	-	-	–	
/æu/	-	-	–	
/oy/	boikott	bojkot	+	
/uy/	hoi	kuj	+	Rare in NO
/uɥ/	huie	-	–	Rare in NO

The table above is presented below in a shorter version using colour codes:

- White: The Norwegian diphthong is quite close to the Polish one
- Grey: The Norwegian diphthong overlaps to some degree with the Polish one
- Black: The Norwegian diphthong has no counterpart in Polish

/ai/	/æi/	/øy/	/æu/	/oy/	/uy/	/uɥ/
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The sounds in black and grey cells are speech sounds that Polish-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian.

<sup>1</sup>The word “ikkje” is Nynorsk, the Bokmål form is “ikke”. However, the sound /ç/, here represented by the letter sequence <kkj>, will occur in many Bokmål words (“kjøpe, bekjenne”). The “kj” sound - /ç/ - is not found in Polish, but the <dźc> of “idźcie”, the <ć> of “grać”, and the <ci> of “ciapa” is some kind of approximation to the Norwegian sound.