

Norwegian on the Web



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Norwegian speech sounds compared to **Spanish**

Spanish and Norwegian speech sounds compared

Below you will find a comparison between Norwegian (NO) and Spanish (SP) 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 shows words of Norwegian (NO) and Spanish (SP) 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 Spanish one
- ~ The Norwegian consonant is **to a certain extent similar** to the Spanish one
- The Norwegian consonant has **no counterpart** in Spanish

Spanish consonants of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian.

Consonant	Norwegian	Spanish	Overlap	Comments
/p/	pastor	pastor	~	Unaspirated in SP
/b/	basta	basta	+	
/t/	ti	tí	~	Unaspirated in SP
/d/	dato	dato	+	
/t̥/	smart	–	–	
/d̥/	ferdig	–	–	
/k/	kaos	caos	~	Unaspirated in SP
/g/	global	global	+	
/m/	mamma	mama	+	
/n/	normal	normal	+	
/ŋ/	barna	–	–	
/ɲ/	bank	banco	+	
/f/	faktor	factor	+	
/v/	vil	–	–	
/s/	si	si	+	
/ʃ/	ski	–	–	
/ç/	kjapp	–	–	
/j/	major	mayor	+	
/h/	han	–	–	
/r/	regatta	regata	+	
/l/	liga	liga	+	
/ʎ/	jarl	–	–	

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

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

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

The speech sounds in black and grey cells are sounds that Spanish-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 shows words of Norwegian (NO) and Spanish (SP) 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 Spanish one
- ~ The Norwegian vowel is **to a certain extent similar** to the Spanish one
- The Norwegian vowel has **no counterpart** in Spanish

Spanish vowel of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian.

Vowel	Norwegian	Spanish	Overlap	Comments
/i/	sinn	sin	+	
/i:/	sin	–	–	
/y/	synd	–	–	
/y:/	lys	–	–	
/e/	Ester	este	+	
/e:/	lese	–	–	
/ø/	søtt	–	–	
/ø:/	møt	–	–	
/æ/	vært	–	–	NO /æ/ is more front than SP /a/
/æ:/	lær	–	–	
/ɑ/	lass	las	~	NO /ɑ/ is more back than SP /a/
/ɑ:/	spa	–	–	
/ʉ/	full	–	–	
/ʉ:/	tur	–	–	
/u/	nummer	numero	+	
/u:/	bod	–	–	
/o/	lokket	loco	+	
/o:/	lån	–	–	

In general the duration of Spanish vowels can be compared to short vowels in Norwegian. In stressed open syllables in Spanish the duration of vowels is somewhat longer. Thus Spanish words like "si, se, la, tu, no" may sound close to Norwegian "si, se, la, to, nå".

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

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

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

The sounds in black and grey cells are speech sounds that Spanish-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian. Note that /æ/ and /ɑ/ are two different sounds in Norwegian. The Spanish /a/ 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 shows words of Norwegian (NO) and Spanish (SP) 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 Spanish one
- ~ The Norwegian diphthong is **in to a certain extent** to the Spanish one
- The Norwegian diphthong has **no counterpart** in Spanish

Spanish diphthongs of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian.

Diphthong	Norwegian	Spanish	Overlap	Comments
/ai/	mai	mayo	+	NO /a/ is more back than SP /a/
/æi/	hei	–	–	
/øy/	høy	–	–	
/æu/	sau	–	–	
/oy/	oi!	hoy	+	
/uy/	hoie	–	–	Rare in NO
/uɣ/	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 Spanish one
- Grey: The Norwegian diphthong overlaps to some degree with the Spanish one
- Black: The Norwegian diphthong has no counterpart in Spanish

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