

Norwegian on the Web



Olaf Husby

Norwegian speech sounds compared to **Italian**

Italian and Norwegian speech sounds compared

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

Italian 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	Italian	Overlap	Comments
/p/	pest	pesto	~	Unaspirated in IT
/b/	bank	banca	+	
/t/	test	testa	~	Unaspirated in IT
/d/	da	da	+	
/t̥/	smart	–	–	
/d̥/	ferdig	–	–	
/k/	komma	comma	~	Unaspirated in IT
/g/	galla	galla	+	
/m/	modell	modella	+	
/n/	nummer	numero	+	
/ŋ/	barna	–	–	
/ŋ/	bank	banca	+	
/f/	familie	famiglia	+	
/v/	vest	veste	+	
/s/	salto	salto	+	
/ʃ/	ski	scia	+	
/ç/	kjapp	–	–	
/j/	majones	maionese	+	
/h/	ha	–	+	
/r/	radio	radio	+	
/l/	le	le	+	
/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 Italian one
- Grey: The Norwegian consonant overlaps to some degree with the Italian one
- Black: The Norwegian consonant has no counterpart in Italian

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 Italian-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 Italian (IT) 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 Italian one
- ~ The Norwegian vowel is **to a certain extent similar** to the Italian one
- The Norwegian vowel has **no counterpart** in Italian

Italian 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	Italian	Overlap	Comments
/i/	nikkel	nichel	+	
/i:/	mi	–	–	
/y/	synd	–	–	
/y:/	lys	–	–	
/e/	fest	festa	+	
/e:/	ler	–	–	
/ø/	søtt	–	–	
/ø:/	møt	–	–	
/æ/	vært	–	~	NO /æ/ is more front than IT /a/
/æ:/	lær	–	–	
/ɑ/	bank	banca	~	NO /ɑ/ is more back than IT /a/
/ɑ:/	spa	–	–	
/ʉ/	full	–	–	
/ʉ:/	tur	–	–	
/u/	nummer	numero	+	
/u:/	bod	–	–	
/o/	komma	comma	+	
/o:/	lån	–	–	

In general the duration of Italian vowels can be compared to short vowels in Norwegian. In stressed open syllables in Italian the duration of vowels is somewhat longer. Thus Italian 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 Italian one
- Grey: The Norwegian vowel overlaps to some degree with the Italian one
- Black: The Norwegian vowel has no counterpart in Italian

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 Italian-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 Italian /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 show words of Norwegian (NO) and Italian (IT) 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 Italian one
- ~ The Norwegian diphthong is *to a certain extent similar* to the Italian one
- The Norwegian diphthong has *no counterpart* in Italian

Italian 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	Italian	Overlap	Comments
/ɑi/	pai	baia	+	NO /ɑ/ is more back than IT /a/
/æi/	sei	sei	~	
/øy/	høy	–	–	
/æu/	sau	–	–	
/oy/	paranoia	noia	+	
/uy/	hoie	–	–	Rare in NO
/ɥy/	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 Italian one
- Grey: The Norwegian diphthong overlaps to some degree with the Italian one
- Black: The Norwegian diphthong has no counterpart in Italian

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