10. Research in Norwegian language history 1850–1950. An overview

Norwegian linguistics has to a large extent been characterized by a historical approach. Many scholars have contributed by presenting results and ideas in a great many smaller but important publications, but extensive surveys are few.

The great interest in language history derives from the political struggle for independence and the general cultural conflicts of the country.

"This discipline, like all research, conveys a conviction of being connected with the life we experience today and with the future we create." (Magnus Olsen, a speech 1908)

1. The dream of a Golden Age

1.1. P.A. Munch and a national reconstruction

The foundation of historical linguistics in Norway was laid by Peter Andreas Munch (1810–1863). The political programme he was committed to, National Romanticism, was the framework for his early scholarly work. Munch's main goal was to demonstrate the national characteristics of Norwegian language, culture and history, and thereby legitimate the Norwegian claim for independence. His main field was the history of the Middle Ages. Whereas his older history colleague, R. Keyser, was interested in the Old Norse (Old West Nordic, OWN) language as an instrument for historical research, knowledge of the language was part of a cultural and political program for Munch.

The aim of Norwegian history and linguistics at that time was to link "our Norway and Norway of the past" as "two halves of a ring". The Union period after 1319 had been a national disaster and was perceived as "the false soldered joint" which should be removed. The written language had disintegrated during the late Middle Ages, and Munch was convinced that it should be restored.

Studies of OWN were to prove that the rich medieval literature was Old Norwegian and not Old Common Nordic. For Munch it was essential to prove that the Old Nordic language was divided into two branches: East Nordic and West Nordic. The West Nordic branch he called Old Norwegian or Old Norse ("norrønt"), and he emphasized the importance of respecting each nation's right to its historic relics. The national demarcation in language and literature was obviously important, especially in relation to Denmark, and the Golden Age demonstrated that Norwegians had been superior to Danes and Swedes in producing medieval literature.

In 1845 OWN became an optional subject for the final university examination in Arts. In order to meet the demands of this new curriculum, Munch started giving lectures on Norwegian language history, and thus this subject was taught for the fist time at the university. The lectures were based on his thesis about the form of the oldest Common Nordic language (1846). The following year attention was focussed on Old Norse as he and C.R. Unger published *Det oldnorske Sprogs eller Norrønasprogets Grammatik* and *Oldnorsk Læsebog med tilhørende Glossarium*. These two books were standard textbooks for the next generation. The grammar, of which Munch was the main author, to a great extent followed the ideas and arrangement of Grimm's *Deutsche Grammatik*, and thus Grimm's linguistic insights were applied to OWN.

Munch accepted the Icelandic way of spelling OWN, and he considered it to be an adequate expression of what was typical Old Norwegian, or "the OWN language spirit". Variation in the orthography was regarded as accidental. He assumed that OWN was pronounced more or less like modern Norwegian, because the language was one and the same in the past and in the present. According to the ideology of National Romanticism, languages had a static and national nature. This view is also reflected in the so-called "restoring orthography" which he developed for some mythical texts that he published and which M.B. Landstad used when writing down ballads. Munch considered the data Ivar Aasen (1813–96) collected from Norwegian dialects to be proof of "the almost unchanged existence of our old language". For some time he argued that Unger and Aasen should edit a common dictionary of OWN and modern Norwegian dialects.

However, several other university men started their OWN studies in the middle of this century. During the period 1886–96, Johan Fritzner (1812–93) published his big *Ordbog over Det gamle norske Sprog*. Marius Nygaard (1838–1912) completed his OWN Syntax in 1906, and thereby finished a pioneering work that demonstrated a very systematic approach and used extensive excerpts from OWN texts. From the publication of Munch's 1847 grammar up to World War I, i.e. in about two generations, Norwegian linguistics had managed to obtain new and thorough insights into OWN.

1.2. Unity or dialects?

During the last half of the 18th century scholars had become aware that there were orthographic differences between Icelandic and Norwegian medieval manuscripts; a bit later it became known that there were variations even in the Norwegian ones. By about 1850 Munch was more willing to accept that there was some dialectal variation in OWN; this was a logical consequence of the unity he assumed between OWN and Modern Norwegian. He supposed that, for instance, OWN *ll* was pronounced *dl, dd* and *ll* in the same dialect areas that have these pronunciations today (e.g. *adle, adde, alle* < OWN *allir*); however, everybody "knew very well" that it should be written *ll*!

However, the idea of unity was predominant. Ivar Aasen tried to look for OWN dialect variation, but concluded (1885/1953) that "dialect forms have neither been many nor of any significance". Moreover, the opinion that Modern Icelandic was almost identical to OWN was strong. Rasmus Rask had, however, pointed out in 1818 that Icelandic *u, y, ý, au* and *ey* were not "genuine", as they had been changed from OWN. Aasen stressed in 1854 that *ö* in (the Icelandic spelling of) OWN should be pronounced approximately as *o*, and not as *ø* like in Modern Icelandic. This refers to the sound that is transcribed *ǫ* in modern OWN standard orthography (i.e. the *u*-umlaut of *a*), which has merged with *ø* to become *ö* in Icelandic (cf. OWN *bǫrn* > Mod. Icel. *börn*).

Contemporary dialects were widely looked upon in the 19th century as a national treasure – and not as a language misfortune. As the interest in dialects increased, scholars became more occupied with looking for dialectal influence on the OWN spelling variants – which, moreover, could be a means of deciding the provenance of the manuscripts. For instance, in 1878 Johan Storm (1836–1920) brought to light the fact that there was vowel weakening (*a* > *e*) in eastern dialects in the 13th and 14th centuries in unstressed positions (*senda* > *sendæ*). Aasen proved in 1885 that this vowel weakening followed OWN long syllables.

It was above all Marius Hægstad (1850–1927) who established the fact that Old Norwegian was represented by several dialects. In 1899 his monograph *Gamalt trøndermaal* appeared, and in the following years he described all West Norwegian dialects (including Faroese and Icelandic) in his series of books: *Vestnorske maalføre fyre 1350* (1907–1942). This monumental work of more than 1000 pages was based on thorough and extensive studies of medieval charters. It transformed our knowledge of the OWN language.

Hægstad's method was to try and trace modern dialect features in the OWN texts in order to attest geographic differences in the old language. As early as in his first publication (1899), he criticized Adolf Noreen for having distinguished between Old Norwegian and Old Icelandic. Hægstad found this distinction inadequate since Old Norwegian was not itself a homogeneous language. He demonstrated that the Trøndelag dialect had *æ* for a with *i*-umlaut (e.g. *hæfir* = standard OWN *hefir* 'has'), which represents a more archaic language stage than existed in either Icelandic or other Norwegian dialects. He proved that the Trøndelag dialect had the privative prefix *ó-*, not *ú-*, and still kept the *a*-suffix in about 1270, whereas East Norwegian at that time had weakened this vowel to *-e*. Hægstad pointed out, too, that the late *u*-umlaut (i.e. where the *u* triggering umlaut is non-syncopated) did not exist in Trøndelag and the inner areas of eastern Norway during the 13th century. All in all – in his opinion – this tells us that there must have been dialect differences in Norwegian long before the oldest written sources came into being.

Hægstad described thoroughly in *Vestnorske maalføre fyre 1350* a pattern of vowel harmony which existed in OWN, with the exception of south-west Norwegian (including Faroese and Icelandic). In the southwest dialects the vowel suffixes were either *e-o* or *i-u*, whereas OWN elsewhere varied between *i* and *e* and between *u* and *o* depending on the preceding root vowel.

This theory of vowel harmony has created great scholarly interest. Both A. B. Larsen and

D.A. Seip had doubts concerning his conclusions on southwest dialects; however, Hægstad's assertion remained dominant. Magnus Rindal (1984) maintained that Hægstad's argument was circular since he classified his texts as southwestern using linguistic criteria. Egil Pettersen (1989) proved that vowel harmony did dominate in OWN letters from the inner dialects of southwestern Norway by studying all charters containing the svarabhakti vowel *u* or *o*, as these charters can only be from this area. Hægstad classified them as being from the northwest – even though they were issued in Voss and in Hardanger. It has also been proved that even in letters from Stavanger, i.e. outer dialects from southwest Norway, there was vowel harmony. The present view is that there seems to have been no dialectal difference in this respect in classical OWN.

The principles for vowel harmony seem to be complicated: Middle-high root vowels trigger *e* and *o*, high vowels trigger *i* and *u*. The theoretical problems are, however, caused by the low vowels, as *æ* triggers *i* and *o*/*u*, whereas *a* and *ǫ* trigger *e* and *u*. Jan Ragnar Hagland (1978) has presented the most precise description so far in an analysis of documents from Trøndelag before 1350 where he found that connecting harmony to vowel weakening and describing the vowel variation in unstressed positions using four different phonological rules is most adequate. He, too, demonstrated that vowel weakening prevails in the final years of that period.

Vowel harmony disappeared from Norwegian before the end of the Middle Ages. Hægstad (1908), however, demonstrated that the principle of harmony continued to exist in the modern dialect of Stod in Trøndelag, and he considered the suffixes in some modern East Norwegian dialects (e.g. *biti – viku – hoso* 'bitten-week-trousers') as vestiges of vowel harmony.

1.3. A written standard?

For a long time historians often idealized the OWN language situation by projecting modern conceptions of standardized national languages on to medieval times. The historian Ernst Sars (1835–1917) assumed that the aristocracy spoke a standard language and that the written language was a homogeneous standard; he believed both these factors restrained language changes. Seip (1934/1938) maintained that there was a standard for reading according to which, for instance, consonants that had disappeared in spoken language should be pronounced.

The dialectologist Hægstad concluced that a national written standard developed during the period 1200–1350, during which the Royal Chancellery moved from Nidaros to Bergen. Thus the standard became a compromise between the dialect of Trøndelag and the dialect of western Norway. This claim was presented in 1902 in his thesis *Maalet i dei gamle norske kongebrev*. Hægstad's opinion totally prevailed up to 1986, when Jan Ragnar Hagland in his thesis rejected this view of a common national standard.

1.4. Language shift

After Munch's time there was an increasing interest in studying the period following the High Middle Ages, i.e. the period of union with Denmark. In the latter half of the 19th century it became more essential to look for continuous development than to restore the unity of the past and the present (cf. the contemporary philosophical ideas on evolution).

Many scholars have been preoccupied with what caused the Norwegian written language to become obsolete by the end of the Middle Ages. Aasen's opinion (1885) was that the Danish public servants in Norway were responsible, and that the Norwegian leaders wanted "to be in favour with the rulers and to demonstrate a certain superiority towards common people". Seip (1931) maintained that the Norwegian literary language did not have the strength to survive under this foreign pressure because the Norwegian scribes' centres were too dispersed. In his extensive language history (1951), Indrebø stressed the effect of the Black Death and the fact that foreigners married into the Norwegian nobility. In a way, he moralized about this issue and accused the medieval Council of the Realm of not having cared about the national language.

It has been argued that the language itself was disposed to this disintegration because people in the late Middle Ages felt it to be archaic. Indrebø refuted this by referring to Norwegian charters from about 1500 in which tendencies of language "modernization" can be witnessed, i.e. the fact that scribes used new forms from the spoken language.

There has been no fundamental discussion about how many of these problems concerning the disintegration of the written language

are anachronistic – whether, for instance, language users in medieval times and in the 16th century had a different conception of the notion of "language" under which the "Norwegian language" was not a relevant category (Sandøy 2000).

The language situation in the 16th century has been studied in depth. Indrebø, for instance, examined how long Norwegian names were kept on land registers (1927) and concluced that they dominated up to approximately 1530. He also documented (1951) the fact that Norwegian was used in charters issued by peasants until 1584, and this tradition remained for the longest time in inner Østfold, Telemark and Vest-Agder.

Trygve Knudsen (1962) demonstrated that Norwegian civil servants in the 16th century translated OWN legal texts into Danish mixed with features from Norwegian in order to make the texts comprehensible. In the latter half of the 16th century, the Humanists translated the kings' sagas into Danish with the same purpose in mind.

1.5. The languages of the western islands

There have been tendencies to include the old languages of the colonized western islands under Old Norwegian. The dream of Norway as a great power in the past may have stimulated research interest in these languages. Hægstad included Faroese and Icelandic in his work on Old West Norwegian dialects, and he published *Hildinakvadet* from Shetland and an analysis of the linguistic features of the OWN dialect *Norn*.

Moreover, the interest in these emigrant languages may be founded on the ambition of throwing light on the Norwegian language situation; these island languages might have retained archaic features from OWN since emigration took place during the 9th and the 10th centuries, a period for which we have almost no written sources. Methodologically, using these sources is a very complex task, as the new language communities were made up of people with different dialects, which could certainly have resulted in a kind of language mixture with levelling tendencies. Phonologically this is illustrated by the fact that Norwegian had several archaic features which Icelandic had lost, cf. section 1.2. on *e* and *ę*.

A puzzle that has preoccupied some scholars is the fact that many innovations are alike or very similar in two or more of the West Nordic languages, e. g. diphthongization (*bát* > *baot*), lowering of vowels (*vit* > [vɪt]), segmentation (*fjall* > *fjadl*) and differentiation (*karl* > *kadl*). Some scholars have doubted that the intercommunication between the countries could have been sufficiently intense to cause linguistic features to spread from one language to another. Therefore, e. g. Indrebø (1951, 267) claimed that similar changes may arise because the phonological starting point was the same for all these languages. Haugen (1970, 54) argued the same point more precisely by saying that there were "predispositions towards the innovations in the form of an allophonic split in Old Norse". This has been supported by other researchers committed to the structuralist approach to language change. This discussion (cf. art. 209) has focussed on a challenging question in the context of a more theoretical discussion on possible internal and external factors in language change.

2. Explaining Modern Norwegian

After 1905 there was no further need for using historical and cultural uniqueness as arguments for political independence. After Norway's independence the cultural conflict was to a greater extent a question about what was "genuine Norwegian". The linguistic aspect of this conflict became apparent in the struggle between the language varieties Bokmål and Nynorsk. For the purpose of this struggle it was relevant to prove which forms existed in OWN, and as a result quite a few theses on language history in the 20th century have tried to legitimate modern language elements as coming from OWN.

2.1. The OWN heritage

Linguistic features from Southeast Norway, which often correspond with the Danish ones, were especially in need of legitimization. A central concern of Didrik Arup Seip (1884–1963) in his most important work, *Norsk språkhistorie til omkring 1370* (1931), was to demonstrate that such dialect features had their origin in the OWN period – and that they were not a result of Danish influence during the Union period. This concerns, e. g., the changes *kn* > *gn* (*reikna* > *reignæ*) and *tn* > *nn* (*vatn* > *vann*) along the coast of the Oslo fjord. He also found evidence dating from the time before 1300 for monophthongization and for the present form of irregular verbs without *i*-umlaut (*komr* for *kømr*/*kemr*). As Hægstad's work on OWN did not include eastern Nor-

way, Seip's language history of 1931 completed the description of OWN dialects.

Among Seip's most controversial assertions was his 1947 claim that the *else*-suffix was mainly of Norwegian origin because many words could be traced to corresponding OWN words with the suffix *-sl*, and these words might have undergone metathesis. He supported this with instances from as far back as the 12th century.

A part of the process of national restoration was to give place-names a Norwegian form. This task led to both conflicts and research concerning which forms were correct from a historical viewpoint. This applies, e.g., to the name of the country, *Noreg* or *Norge*, a topic on which Seip published a thesis in 1923 in order to support the claim that *Norge* was a form developed in Norwegian, i.e. as a contracted form in the dative (and the genitive) of *Noregi(s)*. Indrebø (1925) tried to reveal weaknesses in Seip's linguistic arguments, and he stressed the probability of Danish influence. Naadland (1954) supported the same view by a thorough study of medieval charters.

The strongest opponent of Seip was Gustav Indrebø (1889–1942), who presumably was motivated to publish a Norwegian language history in order to counterbalance Seip's works. A short version was published as early as 1926, but his great *Norsk Målsoga* was published after his death in 1951. Indrebø characterized Norwegian language history as being "strongest at both ends", i.e. in the study of OWN and of Modern Norwegian. He himself improved this situation by presenting studies from the intervening periods. In his language history he provided data from the Middle Norwegian stage, and in articles published in 1954 and 1956 he described the situation in the dialects in the early 16th century (at the time of the Norwegian Reformation). It is generally accepted that the language at that time had reached the New Norwegian stage; however, Indrebø demonstrated that there still are many widespread archaic features in the dialects, in both morphological and lexical forms. He found that several dialect areas were different from today's, e.g. the areas with the infinitive in *-a*, and with *eg* and *me* as personal pronouns (1. pers. sg. and pl.). Unfortunately, his analysis is characterized by mechanical listing, a rather uncritical use of sources and a lack of perspective on language as a system, which may have resulted in an exaggeration of what had been living forms in the speech of that time.

2.2. Early linguistic changes

Nordic linguists joined the circle of neogrammarians at an early date. The Norwegian scholars Sophus Bugge (1833–1907), Alf Torp (1853–1916) and Hjalmar Falk (1859–1928) involved themselves in these new ideas. The latter two studied in Leipzig for a while, the neogrammarian "headquarters". Even before the Neogrammarians themselves, Bugge started using their approach when he published a thesis on consonant changes in Norwegian in 1852.

From the 1860s Bugge was mainly involved in runic studies; he reinterpreted several inscriptions and improved linguistic insights into Ancient Nordic. Munch considered the runic language to be Gothic with a centre in southern Scandinavia. His opinion was in full accordance with the prevailing view that the North Germanic tribes had migrated into Norway from the north. This view was not refuted until 1867 when Bugge and the Danish runologist Ludvig Wimmer proved that the runic language was an earlier stage of OWN.

In 1891 Bugge started publishing *Norges Indskrifter med de ældre Runer*, which made runic data easily available for researchers. Magnus Olsen (1878–1963) was a leading runologist, and he demonstrated in his studies of the Eggja-stone in Sogn that the period of syncope must have ended at about 700. This insight has made several historians of the language, e.g. Indrebø (1951), move the OWN period back one century.

Onomastics has often represented a challenge to historical linguistics. Oluf Rygh (1833–99) started publishing *Norske Gaardnavne* in 1897 and established through this an academic discipline which has supplied the national revision of place-names with essential knowledge. Rygh also elaborated a chronological typology of such names. After Rygh's death Bugge, among others, helped complete *Norske Gaardnavne*.

The Middle Norwegian period is essential for understanding the linguistic innovations leading from classical OWN to the modern dialects. The publication of *Diplomatarium Norvegicum* (1847–), a collection of medieval charters and letters, has provided favourable conditions for the study of written sources from this period. Per Nyquist Grøtvedt, as one of many, has recorded a large number of varying written forms and discussed how they may reflect dialect innovations in Southeast Norway in the period 1350–1450 (1969–74). He

concluded, for instance, that in the 15th century assimilations (*rl, rn, rs* > *ll, nn, ss*) were rather consistently used in the charters, and that vowel harmony disappeared in this area. Vowel lowering appears in this area after 1420: *fyrst, fylgja, þriðja, mik* > *først, følgia, trædia, mek*.

2.3. Influence from abroad

Gradually research interests have been extended to external conditions of language change. Seip, among others, published two special studies on loanwords, and he included this topic in his 1931 language history, where he demonstrated the influence from Middle Low German on Norwegian in the High and Late Middle Ages. He concluded that words are often borrowed directly into Norwegian and not via Danish.

In their dialect monograph Larsen/Stoltz (1912) discussed the heavy influence from English and especially Low German on the Bergen dialect, and they include a long list of loanwords which are the result of language contact. Of special interest is the impact of the Hanseatic merchants in Bergen on both grammar and vocabulary. As for the vocabulary, there is a pattern that words accepted in Bergen spread into the western and northern dialects. The same pattern of diffusion is observed for a syntactic structure, i.e. the genitive expressed by the pronoun *sin*.

Characteristic phonological and morphological features of the Bergen dialect are discussed both in Larsen/Stoltz (1912) and Sørlie (1969), who preferred to interpret them as the result either of influence from other Norwegian dialects or of internal changes. As far as these grammatical features are concernd, there has been little interest in discussing the effect of a language melting pot.

2.4. Written language

An important change in perspective was introduced by Torp/Falk in *Dansk-norskens lydhistorie med særligt hensyn paa orddannelse og bøining* (1898) and Falk/Torp, *Dansk-norskens syntax i historisk fremstilling* (1900) in which they focussed on the language of the Union period. The latter work in particular has been frequently referred to in historical linguistics. The beginning point for the discussion is OWN, and the book goes on to document the historical lines of Danish literary language used by Norwegians.

Ragnvald Iversen (1882–1960) studied the Danish used by Norwegians after the Reformation and concluded that the Norwegians during this period did not follow the norms for the written language in Denmark. The Norwegians stuck to the Danish models from the Pre-Reformation period, and dialectal elements appeared more often in their texts than in the texts written by Danes (Iversen 1921–23).

3. Innovations in the dialects

Dialects have played an important cultural role in political life in Norway, and this has stimulated the production of extensive research on dialects. A bibliography of dialectology (Nes 1986) comprising approximately 3000 printed publications displays a solid geographic correspondence between the number of dialect descriptions and the support of Nynorsk. The great interest in dialects seems likewise to have been an incentive for trying to understand the innovations leading to dialectal characteristics. In the dialect studies there are, therefore, many attempts at historical reconstruction. Phonology has been the area for the most intensive scrutiny in historical linguistics. There are fewer studies of morphology, and syntactic changes have received the least attention.

A central topic in historical phonology has been the changes in the vowel system. In 1843 C.R. Unger revealed the quantity system of OWN, which consisted of 8 short and 8 long monophthongs. In most dialects today the quantity distinctions have changed into quality distinction. Aasen, in his earliest publications of Landsmål, used a spelling system with accents that enabled him to differentiate between vowels that reflected quantity distinctions in OWN (cf. *vìk – vík*). In this respect he had the advantage of speaking a dialect that retained 15 of the 16 old vowel distinctions – the maximum set of distinctions in Modern Norwegian as *ǫ* and *o* merged in all dialects during the Middle Ages. In other dialects the vowel system has undergone more radical changes because of mergers.

In both Swedish and Norwegian a shift in vowel quality has taken place; it is most characteristic for *ó* and *ú*, which have been displaced one step upwards in *o* > [ʊ] and one step to the front in *ú* > [ʉ]. Amund B. Larsen (1885) was the first to propose an explanation for this change; he described the innovation

as a push-chain movement that began with *á* changing into a rounded back vowel, which is near *ó* in quality and thus exerted pressure on *ó*, causing language users to raise the latter vowel in order to ensure an articulatory distance. This movement triggered a further change where *ú* was fronted, and Larsen assumed that this movement had exerted pressure on *ý* so that it was delabialized to *í* in some dialects (Larsen 1885). Larsen's method of reasoning was structural – before structuralism had been introduced as a linguistic theory – as it implied that phonemes constitute a system of distinctive members.

This theory has been the prevailing one in Norwegian language history, though it has some weaknesses: As the rounding of *á* led to its merger with *ǫ́*, there was no new phoneme to create a stronger push than before. Moreover, it is dubious that *ý* > *í* should be involved in this chain of changes as it represents a derounding and does not relate to place of articulation. The alternative theory is that the innovations form a drag-chain movement, as Arne Torp (1977, 25) proposed, where fronting of *ú* was the first change, and this created space for the raising of *ó* and *á*.

The neogrammarian tradition was strong in Norway, and most scholars in historical linguistics have worked within this framework. The dialectologist Olai Skulerud (1881–1963) in his early publications was a loyal neogrammarian who tested "sound laws" systematically against dialectal evidence. In 1934, for example, he published a study on diphthongization in the Sunnmøre dialect in which he investigated regular vowel changes caused or modified by the surrounding consonants. On the other hand, he did not discuss whether the structure of the vowel system had any impact, a factor which at that time had become known in general linguistics.

One of the few syntactic features that scholars have taken an interest in is the double definite, a feature which arose in Central Scandinavian after the Ancient Nordic period. Einar Lundeby (1965) studied this, and he concluded that the construction appeared as early as about 1200, and before 1400 the usage in speech must have been like that of modern Norwegian dialects, i. e. that the definite form of the noun is obligatory after the definite article (*den mannen*). Lundeby interpreted the innovation as both a syntactic and stylistic change, where "stylistic" refers to a popular tendency of enhancing the demonstrative content.

This feature does not characterize the written language of Norwegian authors in the Danish period. Especially in the last decades before 1814, Norwegian authors had a good command of the Danish standard norm. However, the author Henrik Wergeland started using the double definite, and so did the collector and publisher of folk-tales, P. Chr. Asbjørnsen, in the 1840s in order to mark an informal style. Lundeby demonstrated how this usage has increased in Bokmål. In Nynorsk it has become almost "mechanical", as in the dialects.

4. Methods

Structuralism was accepted late into Norwegian linguistics, though some rudiments of this method of reasoning appear early on (cf. sect. 3.). Hallfrid Christiansen (1886–1964) used the structuralist approach in her *Norske dialekter* (1946–48), e. g. in her theory that palatalization and segmentation of alveolars (*kalla* > [*kaɭe*], *kadla*) are a result of the great quantity shift, in which old long and short consonants were kept apart by this change and thus made the quantity feature redundant.

The most consistent analysis using a structuralist approach is Trygve Skomedal's work on the Setesdal dialect (1972); he argued for a relative chronology of 5 stages for the changes in the vowel system from classical OWN to the modern dialect. Several consonant changes can be related to this scheme by structural logic, and as they are easier to give an absolute dating from the evidence of the old charters, the whole chronology of phonological changes can be tested.

Hagland (1978), cf. above, provides one of several examples of the framework of Generative Phonology being used in Norwegian historical linguistics. Recently, there has been an increasing interest in studying historical changes within the perspective of modern syntactic theory. Jan Terje Faarlund (1990) discussed the theoretical aspects of some changes by comparing classical OWN and Modern Norwegian, primarily the case system, passive voice and impersonal sentences. He underlined the fact that "modern Norwegian is configurational", which for the case system means that "there is always total correspondence between structural position and morphological case: nominative for the subject and accusative in all other positions, regardless of semantic role". As with other modern historical studies, this is a comparison of two language

stages with an interval of seven centuries. There is no attempt to trace and analyse data from the periods in between, whereas, for instance, Falk/Torp (1900) provided an ample database but displayed only modest ambition with regard to a theoretical approach.

Lexical studies have not played the same central role in Norwegian historical linguistics as in the neighbouring countries. The German research programme *Wörter und Sachen* was well-known, but it has resulted in few publications. The most extensive lexical study taking a historical approach has been carried out by the Swiss scholar Oskar Bandle (cf. art. 14).

5. Society and language

Sociolinguistics in Norway, as elsewhere, has primarily been a synchronic discipline. However, several studies on language change have used a diachronic approach in their discussion of how society influences language change. There has been major interest in the linguistic consequences of industrialization and urbanization. Steinsholt (1964 and 1972) has carried out two studies using this approach, and his work is unique in having investigated the same area using the same method after an interval of about 30 years.

Historical sociolinguistics has a special problem in obtaining relevant evidence. However, many historical interpretations have applied a sociolinguistic perspective, as in the case of the shift in written language, cf. sect. 1.4., and not least in A. B. Larsen's accounts of urban dialects; i. e. the dialects of Oslo (Larsen 1907), Bergen (Larsen/Stoltz 1912) and Stavanger (Berntsen/Larsen 1925). Here the discussion of both social stratification and "neighbour opposition" has been of great importance.

The language struggle in Norway has been a subject of many theses, and monographs have presented analyses of political strategy, organizations and ideology. No less than five extensive biographies have been published on Ivar Aasen, three of them appearing in 1996, a century after his death. The most thorough documentation is in Kjell Venås' biography (1996), whereas Stephen Walton's (1996) is, with respect to genre, more creative in stressing more that a description is an interpretation. Walton emphasizes a social and psychological understanding of Aasen as a person who grew up in the local tradition of the Enlightenment and Rationalism and became dependent on the cultural elite promoting National Romanticism.

As in other European countries, the study of nationalism has been central during the last two decades, and the ideological establishment of a cultural and political entity during the 19th century has been a central concern.

6. Literature (a selection)

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