

# Language Policy: What, Where, Why, How, Who

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**300h of free « Norwegian for foreigners » classes**

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## LP: Everywhere, everyday

Bokmål Nynorsk English

**Want to apply**  
You are applying to live in or visit Norway.

**Have applied**  
You are waiting for an answer to your application.

**Received an answer**  
You have received an answer to your application.

**Want to renew**  
You wish to extend your stay in Norway.

**Checklists**

See what documents you must hand in when you apply.

**Case processing times**

Check how long it takes the UDI to process different types of applications.

6 The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration
Application Portal

## What?

It is the set of orientations (implicit or explicit) taken by a political authority or by other public stakeholders, in order to regulate the use of languages within a given social space. It can include measures and strategies which are not necessarily enshrined in law. (Loubier, 2008)

The main choices made in terms of how society and languages interact. (Calvet, 1996)

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## Where?

- All states have one, whether officially stated or implicit. Where it is not stated, (eg. USA), the majority language is favoured. This is the language of the State and its administration.
- Therefore, very few countries do not have a language policy.

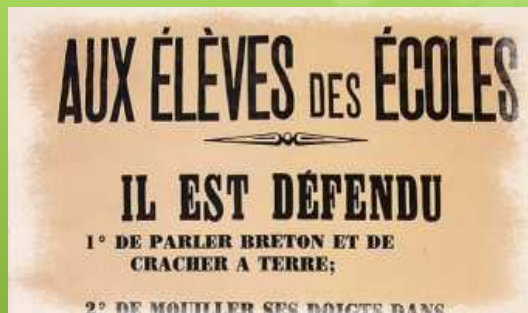
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# Why ?

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## 1. Sociocultural reasons

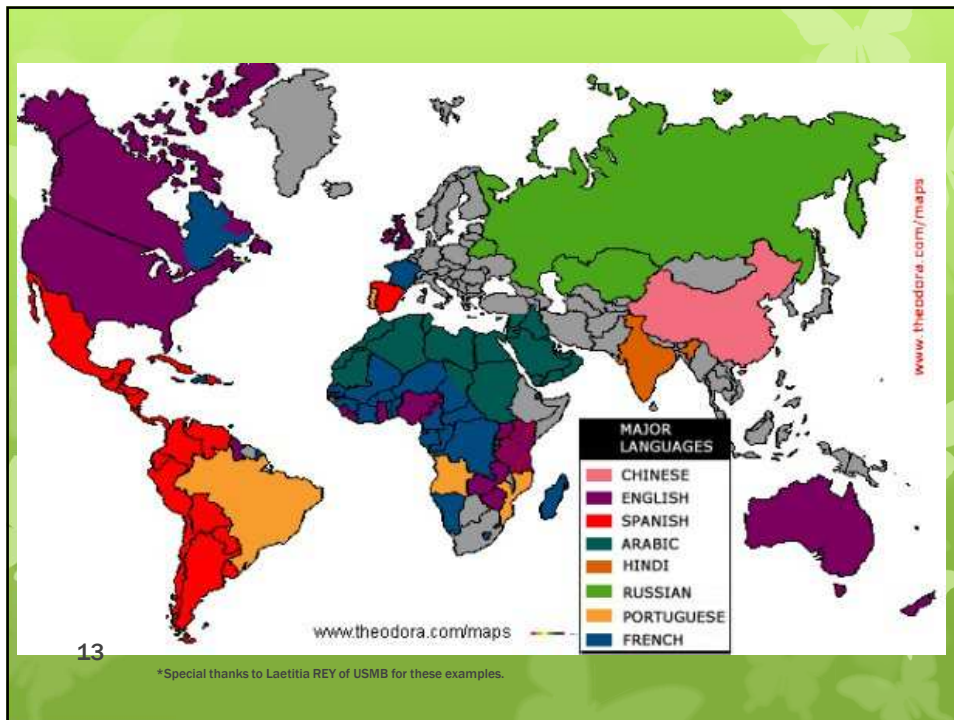
- Limit/spread a language
- Modify the status of a language
- Eradicate a language
- Promote social domination OR unity



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\*Special thanks to Laetitia REY of USMB for these examples.





- Approx. 6 000 languages spoken in the world
- 10 - 20 disappear every year (mostly in the grey zones)
- 1% of all languages are used for 99 % of interactions (UN)
- Mandarin = most widely used mother tongue (approx. 1.3 billion speakers)
- Spanish: 427 million speakers
- English: approx. 340 million speakers + the most widely understood language
- Arabic: 267 million speakers
- French: approx. 76 million speakers

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Source, unless otherwise stated: <https://www.ethnologue.com/about>

## 2. Structural identity

- Recreate a « lost » language: Welsh, Modern Hebrew
- Provide a written system for an oral language
- Modify spelling: the French circumflex, 1996 German *Rechtschreibreform* ß and ss
- Officially promote new norms amongst users: *e-mail/courriel/mél.*
- Normative interventions: prescribe grammar rules, regulate loanwords

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## Example: 1990s, loanwords backlash

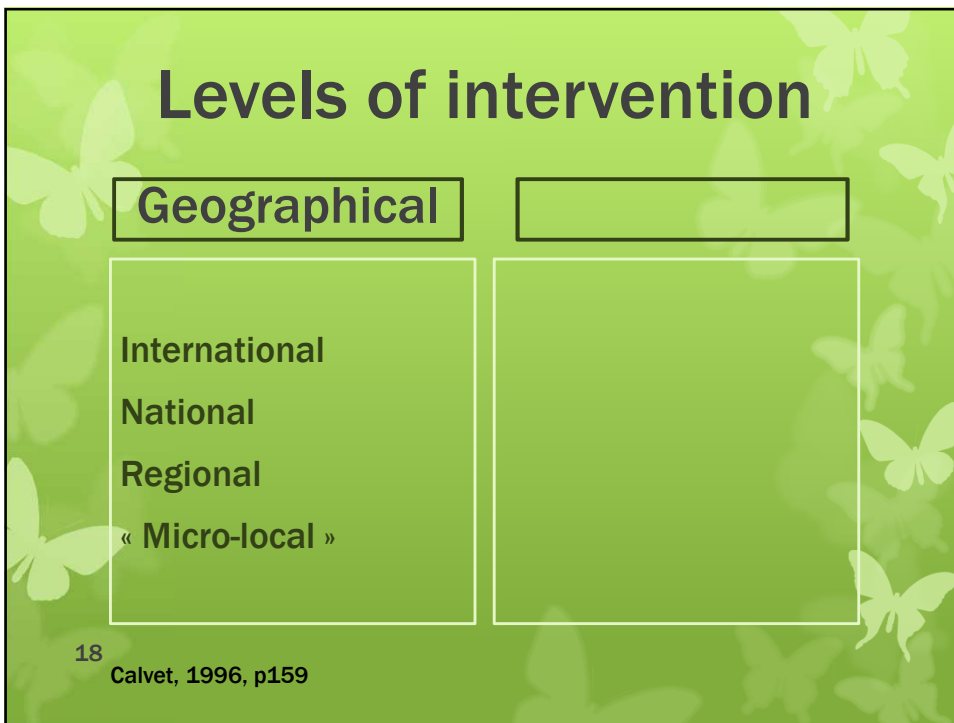
- Norwegian Language Council's spelling recommendations for English loanwords
- Aksjonen for språklig miljøvern (Campaign for the Protection of the Linguistic Environment)
- NorskSprakrad, suggests substitutions, such as *datamaskin/* computer, *nakkesleng/* whiplash

General arguments AGAINST loanwords:

- Hard to integrate Eng spelling & phonology into the Nor system
- Extensive use of Eng loanwords contributes to a non-egalitarian US vs THEM mentality
- Using Nor terms in a field maintains the status of Nor in that field (\*\*powerful symbolic function)

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## Geographical example: Schooling in Nynorsk, Bokmal, or both?

National?

Regional?

Municipal?

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## Levels of intervention

**Geographical**

**Legal**

International

National

Regional

« Micro-local »

Constitution

Law

Decree

Resolution

Recommendation

...

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Calvet, 1996, p159

## Legal example: *courriel*, June 23, 2003

Official text (directive) of the *Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France* states that *courriel* must be used by all administrative bodies and public services. Followed August 28 2003 by the Ministry of Education in its Official Bulletin (*Bulletin Officiel*).

The French government's *Journal Officiel* confirmed that « Mél. » can be used like « Tél. », on a business card or at the head of a letter. but must **never** be used as a noun.

**\*\*\*HOWEVER, people frequently misuse the term, confusing the English « mail » with « Mél. ».**

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## Langue-fr.net

« Par amour de la langue française, au service de tous ses usagers »

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### Courriel, E-Mail, Mél.

lundi 18 août 2008

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Comment désigner le **courrier électronique** : courriel, E-mail, mail, mël ?

À l'« E-mail », nous préférons le joli « courriel » créé par les Québécois. Au passage, rappelons ici pourquoi « Mél » n'est pas approprié.

Sur le modèle de *courriel*, l'indésirable courriel non sollicité (*spam* en anglais) est dénommé *pourriel*.

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En France, d'un point de vue juridique, l'emploi des termes est libre pour les personnes et les entreprises privées [1]. L'emploi de termes officiels est en revanche **obligatoire** pour les administrations et les organismes chargés d'une mission de service public [2]. (Décision du [Conseil constitutionnel](#) du 27 juillet 1994.) [...]

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## Modes of intervention

Incite  
Encourage

Oblige

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Calvet, 1996, p159

## Content of intervention

**Form of a  
language**

**Use of a  
language**

**Protection  
of a  
language**

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Calvet, 1996, p159

## Examples: LP Acts in Norway

*Norwegian Language Council Act (1979)*: regulates the work of the Norwegian Language Council

*Language Usage in Civil Service Act (1980)*: ensures that both forms of the official languages are used in public service

**FORM****USE**

*Place Names Act (1990)*: determines the spelling of place names to be used by public authorities

**FORM****USE**

*Sàmi Act (1987)*: regulates the public use of Sàmi

**USE****PROTECTION**

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## What about other stakeholders?

- Citizens: individuals, groups
- Media: newspapers, TV stations, Web sites & blogs, etc.

... and their coordinated or individual actions

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# Who ?

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### Exemple: *Courriel*

L'usage de *courriel* s'est développé (des **organes de presse comme *le Monde* ou *l'Express***, par exemple, l'emploient pour des références au courrier des lecteurs : « Mme Durand (par courriel) ». ... dans l'usage courant, *mail* (bien plus qu'*e-mail*) est dominant.)

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### Exemple: *Courriel*

*courriel* a passé le cap des recommandations officielles : la France s'est alignée sur le Québec.

Au-delà des questions de norme juridique ou administrative, *courriel* est **tellement plus joli** !

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## WHO?

- **Government** bodies, institutions, leaders (eg. *Académie Française*, Norwegian Language Council)
- **Private lobbies:** English Only (USA), ...
- **Educational sector:** administrators at all levels, school heads, teachers, parent-teacher councils, teacher trainers
- **Economic sector:** company directors, HR departments, professional bodies

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Past, Present, Future: Norway



## COE 2004 Country Profile, Norway: Existing & potential multilingualism (p15)

Thus, by the end of ten years of compulsory education, all young people have at least:

- an ability to read and write in two varieties of Norwegian, Nynorsk and Bokmål
  - an ability to use a spoken variety of Norwegian and understand other people speaking their own varieties
  - productive and receptive competence in written and spoken English
  - receptive competence in spoken and written forms of Swedish and Danish
- and some have in addition one or more of the following:
- competence in at least one variety of Sami or Kven/Finnish
  - competence in one of the many recently arrived languages, often from another continent and language family
  - competence in a second foreign language, e.g. French or German or Spanish.

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## Objectives

- **100% literacy**
- **Maintenance of 2 languages in all fields & functions**

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## Objectives

- 100% literacy
- Maintenance of 2 languages in all fields & functions
- Language rights: minorities, immigrants
- Internationalisation of higher education
- Impact of economic changes, transition from « the end of oil » to a « knowledge economy »

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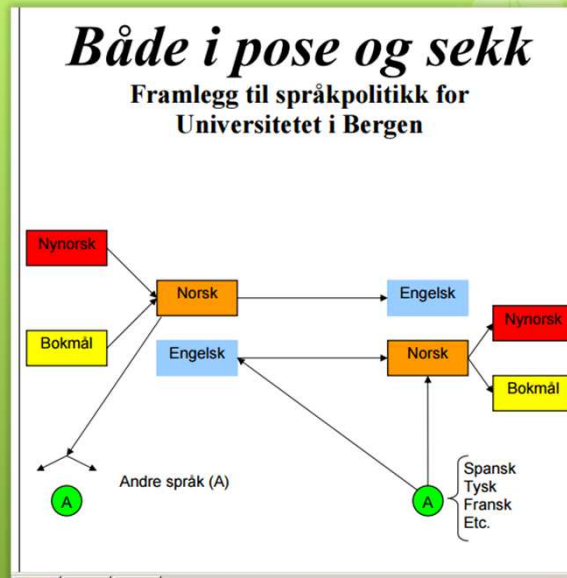
## Diglossia

- A form of **societal bilingualism** « where the use of languages in co-existence leads to a repartition and hierarchisation of the functions of each language (functions, fields and areas of use).
- Often a strong socio-economic value is attributed to one language in particular, esp. if it also covers the most prestigious functions, fields and areas of use.

(Loubier, 2008, 193)

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The best of  
both worlds



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To conclude ...

For those who have to make the decisions in multi/plurilingual contexts, it's not a question of **HOW** to promote languages, but rather **WHICH** languages to promote and for which **OBJECTIVES**, and esp. **HOW** and **WHY** to promote local or at-risk languages in relation to more widely diffused or global languages.

(Hornberger, 2006)

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### Criteria for choosing

(Correspondence, *Nature*, 12.11.2015, p165, letter about evidence-based policy making)

“Policymakers are influenced by a much greater range of factors than are considered by [many people]- including public opinion, inheritance of policies and institutional rules, finance, unpredictable events, and trust in actors.”

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**Focussing on immediate economic criteria, may « blind » us to other values (eg. symbolic, aesthetic, ecological)**

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## All the eggs in one basket?!



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**Strength and robustness in diversity**

Thank you /  
Takk for at dere lyttet

### Bibliography

- Calvet, J-L. (1996), Les Politiques Linguistiques (Que sais-je?), Paris: PUF.
- Hornberger, N. (2006), *Frameworks and Models in Language Policy and Planning*. In Ricento, T. An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory & Method. Oxford : Blackwell. pp 24-41.
- Loubier, C. (2008), Langues au Pouvoir: Politique et Symbolique. Paris: Harmattan.







## Languages Open Doors

Languages Open Doors: one motto from the 2001 European Year of Languages

2005-09 Strategic Plan Language for promoting foreign languages in primary and secondary education and training

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## To conclude

« (La diversité) des langues n'est pas un problème tant que ce n'est pas utilisée comme un fondement pour de la discrimination » (Haugen, 1973)

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## Dominante/dominée Majoritaire/minoritaire

- Pas synonymes
- Dominante = statut socioling.
- Majoritaire = n° de locuteurs
  
- Québec, années 70s
  - n° d'anglophones inférieur
  - MAIS anglais domine sur plan socio-éco.
- Suisse? Belgique? Inde? Afrique du Sud?

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