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Internordic communication from a sociolinguistic perspective

In the Nordic countries there are nowadays hundreds of languages being spoken, but most people have Danish, Norwegian or Swedish as their mother tongue. As these so-called neighborhood languages are closely related it is often possible to use them for communication within the Nordic countries (receptive multilingualism). To this group of speakers can be added people from the West Nordic countries where Danish is being taught at school and in Finland where Swedish is a compulsory subject. For more recently arrived citizens in the Scandinavian countries Danish, Norwegian or Swedish might have been acquired as a second language. Therefore, inhabitants in all Nordic countries can be expected to use one of those languages mentioned above in what we call a *Scandinavian language community*. This is also the goal of the common Nordic language policy, see *Deklaration om nordisk språkpolitik (2006)* below.

This may seem unproblematic, but reality seldom is. Sometimes the receptive capacity is too poor, and for various reasons some people tend to use English, the internationally preferred lingua franca. Still, the problems should not be exaggerated. Often Internordic communication via Danish, Norwegian or Swedish is the best solution, especially at repeated contacts with people from other Nordic countries.

In this paper, I will give an updated picture of a complex situation where attitudes not seldom play a significant role.

Recommended reading

Deklaration om nordisk språkpolitik (2006). Utg. av Nordiska ministerrådet 2007. Med versioner på alla inhemska språk i Norden, also in English.
<https://www.norden.org/sv/node/57726>

Börestam, Ulla, 2015: *Excuse me, but can you tell me where the Nordic House is located? Linguistic strategies in inter-Nordic communication in Iceland illustrated through participant observation*. I: *Linguistics* 53:2. S. 219–254. Enclosed PDF