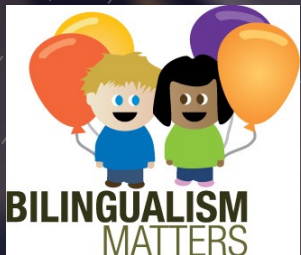


# Multilingualism in Norwegian universities

Research, realities, and role models



Flere Språk til Flere

Nicole Busby



**NTNU**

Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology

# Bilingualism Matters in Trondheim

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- Our branch specialises in:
  - Bi- and multilingualism in children and adults
    - Spoken and signed languages
  - Multilingualism in Norway
  - The relationship between Norwegian and English in Norway

Flere Språk til Flere

<https://site.uit.no/flerespraaktiflere/>

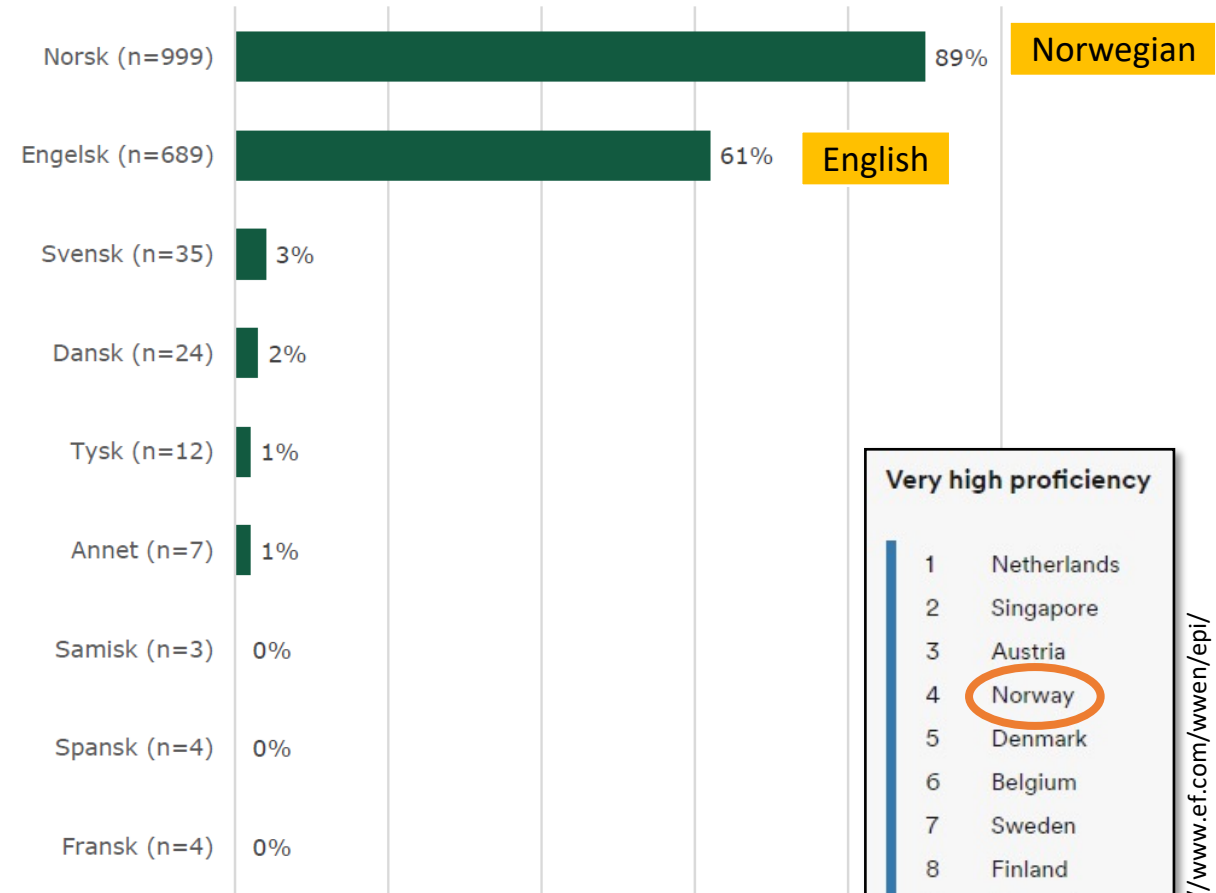
<https://www.bilingualism-matters.org/network/trondheim>



# Language in Norwegian universities

- Norwegian is “the main language” (Language Policy Guidelines, NTNU)
  - Teaching and administration expected to be conducted mainly in Norwegian
- English also plays an important role in Norwegian universities
  - English is global lingua franca in academia
  - High percentage of international staff and students
- Bachelor level teaching = Norwegian
- Master level teaching = often English
- Concern about ‘domain loss’ of Norwegian in academia

## What language do you use in teaching?



Undersøkelse om norsk fagspråk og terminologi i universitets- og høyskolesektoren (2022)

Very high proficiency	
1	Netherlands
2	Singapore
3	Austria
4	Norway
5	Denmark
6	Belgium
7	Sweden
8	Finland
9	Portugal
10	Germany
11	Croatia
12	South Africa
13	Poland



# Language debate in Norway

## Mer enn hvert fjerde emne undervises på engelsk: – Går greit, men blir ikke like bra som på norsk

Stadig mer av undervisningen ved universiteter og høyskoler foregår på engelsk. Det kan føre til at studentene lærer dårligere, advarer språkeksperter.

<https://khrono.no/mer-enn-hvert-fjerde-emne-undervises-pa-engelsk-gar-greit-men-blir-ikke-like-bra-som-pa-norsk/726788>

27.10.2022

This can lead to students learning less well, warns a language expert.

«More than a quarter of courses taught in English: - It's okay but not as good as in Norwegian»

«Must learn university Norwegian in two years. This creates reactions»

## Må lære universitetsnorsk på to år. Det skaper reaksjoner

International staff must pass a Norwegian exam after 2 years

Ved flere fakulteter på Universitetet i Oslo vil internasjonale ansatte som får fast jobb, måtte bestå en norsktest etter to år.

<https://khrono.no/ma-laere-universitetsnorsk-pa-to-ar-det-skaper-reaksjoner/748964>

15.01.2023

## Anwasha behersker ikke norsk — uaktuell for akademi for unge forskere

Akademiet for yngre forskere har vedtektsfestet norsk som arbeidsspråk. — Ekskluderende, mener seniorforsker Anwasha Dutta.

12.10.2022

<https://khrono.no/anwasha-behersker-ikke-norsk-uaktuell-for-akademi-for-unge-forskere/724164>

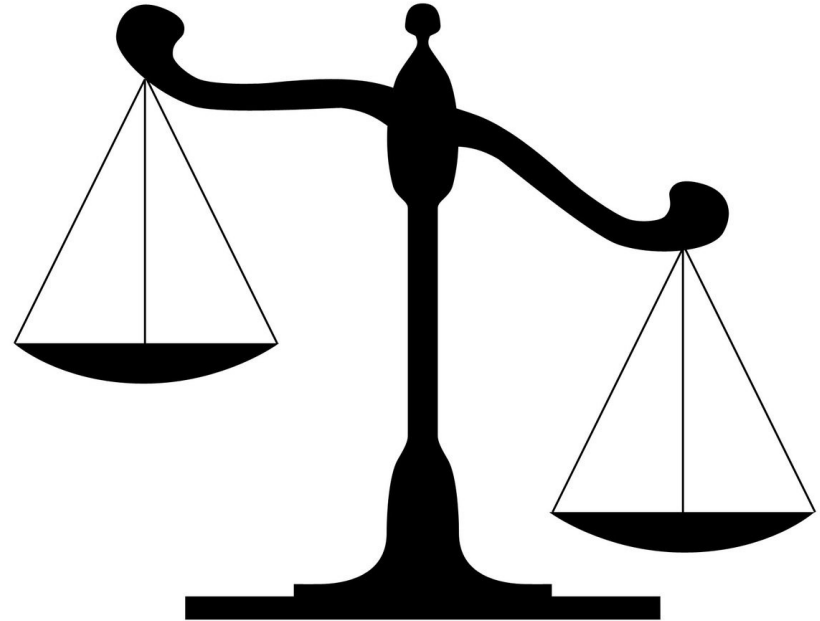
«Anwasha does not speak Norwegian — ineligible for the academy for young researchers»



# Parallel languages

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- “The use of parallel languages refers to a situation in which two languages are **considered equal** in a particular domain, and where the **choice of language depends on what is deemed most appropriate** and efficient in a specific situation” (CIP, Copenhagen)
- “NTNU must practise parallel language use. In practice, this means «Norwegian when you can, English when you must».” (Language Policy Guidelines, NTNU)
- Assumptions of sufficient competence in both English and Norwegian
- “on the practical level, parallel language use is only possible when both students and teachers have adequate language competences in English and in the local language” (Kuteeva, 2014, p.333)

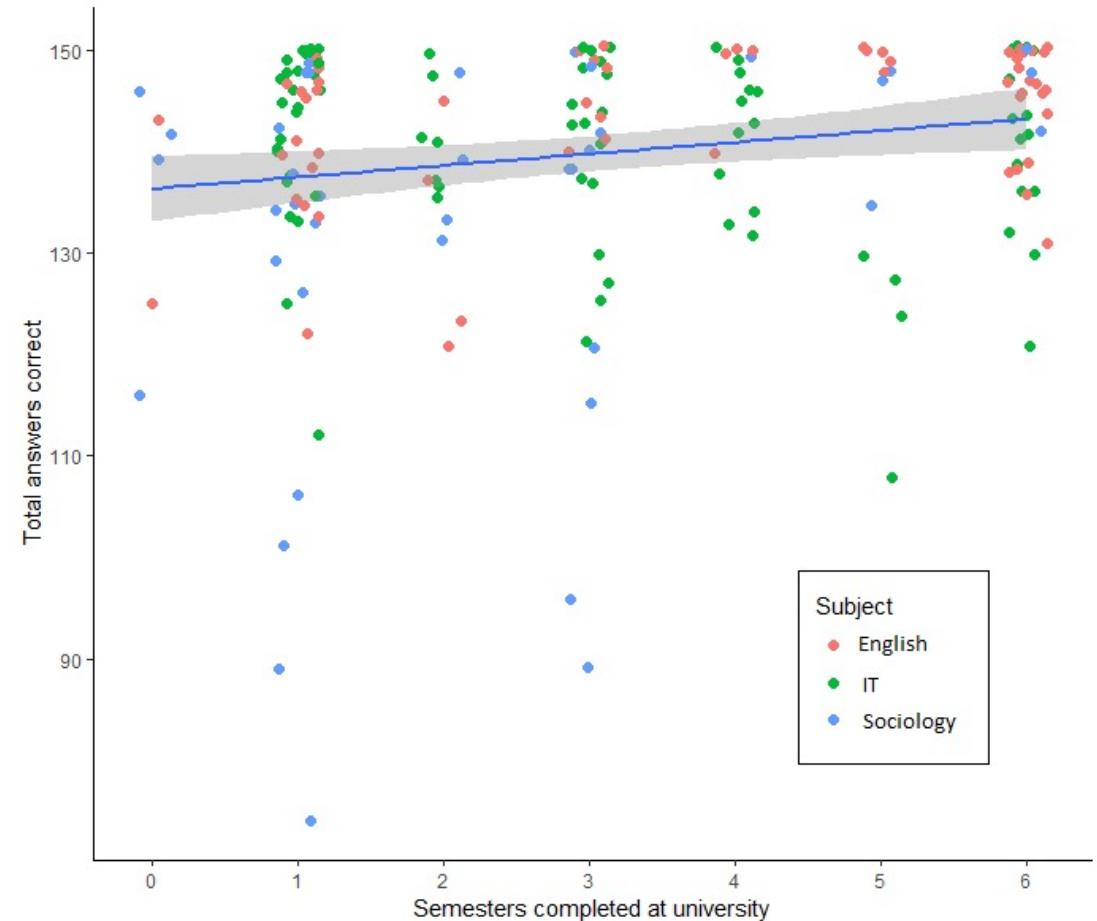


# Realities

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- Challenges for Norwegian students in reading academic texts in English (Busby, 2021; Busby & Dahl, 2021)
  - Not all students have enough English competence to read academic L2 texts
- Challenges for international staff in acquiring L2 Norwegian (Gujord et al, 2022)
  - Adult L2 acquisition, variation in outcomes
- Challenges for students (and staff) who have other language backgrounds
  - Need to learn both Norwegian and English to a high level to participate in higher education
  - Education for refugees tends to focus mainly on Norwegian (Dahl et al, 2018; Krulatz & Dahl, 2021)

English vocabulary scores for Norwegian university students in different study programs



# Research

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- Current projects connected to BM:
  - L2 Norwegian among international staff ([Voclex](#))
  - Multilingual language practices among staff and students in Norwegian universities ([AELPP](#))
  - Investigating L2 English reading among university students in Norway
- Aiming to gain a clearer picture of actual language practices, the effects of language policy, and the needs of staff and students



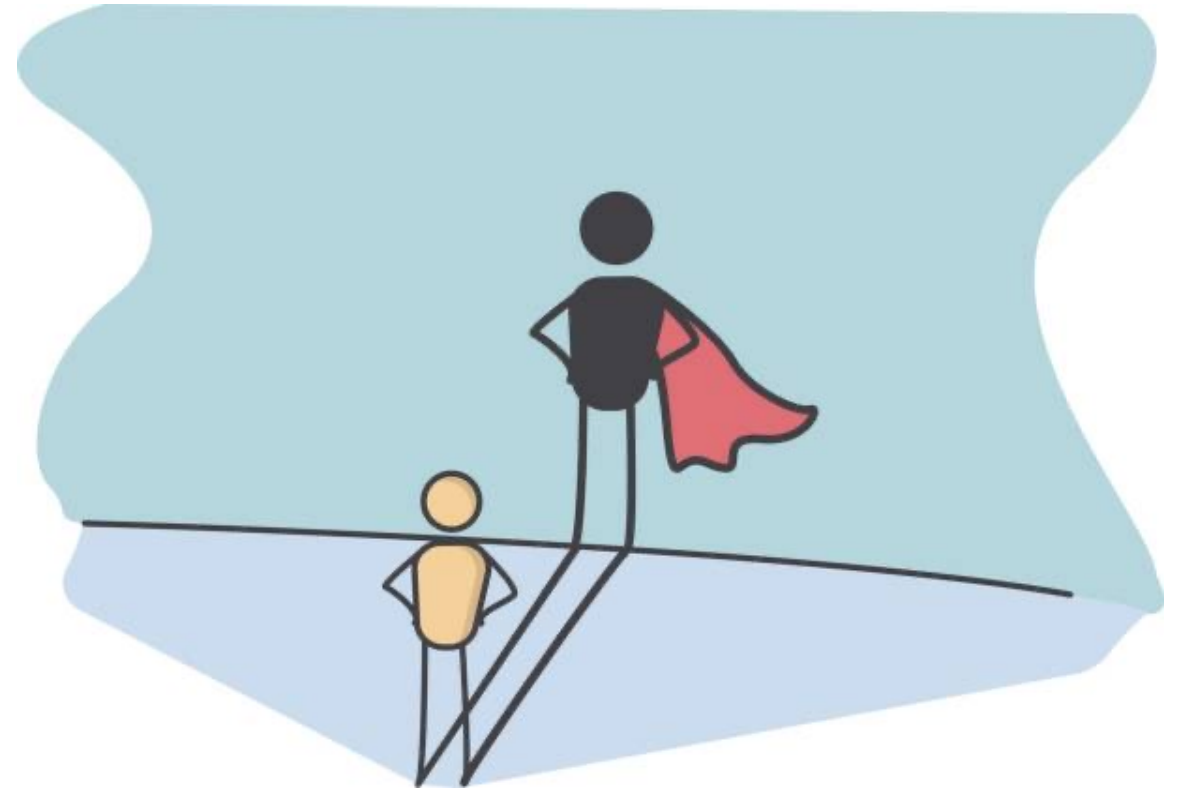


# Role models

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Roles of universities in bridging research on multilingualism and society:

- Conducting and disseminating research about multilingualism and language acquisition
  - Contributing empirical evidence to policy and debates
- Role in teacher training, educating teachers to be aware of multilingualism in the classroom
- Acting as a role model for acknowledging, accommodating for, and celebrating multilingualism 😊





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