

## **The Variation of Stress Assignment in Hønefoss Norwegian**

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There are two ways of assigning stress to loan words in East Norwegian dialects. A loan word has stress as an idiosyncratic property of the lexicon, and stress can thus be assigned on the same syllable as in the language from which it was borrowed.

Alternatively, a loan word can be subject to the *Initial Primary Stress Rule* (IPSR) (Kristoffersen 2000), a rule which moves stress from the ‘borrowed’ position to the initial.

While the geographical extent of the two forms of stress assignment has been studied carefully, the relationship between other external constraints and the variable has not been examined to the same degree. Studies have shown that the IPSR is hardly ever used by speakers of the Oslo dialect (Jahnsen 2001) and that stressing loan words on the initial syllable is seen as an unattractive feature by informants in major urban centres in East Norway (Kristiansen 1995; Røyneland 2005). Røyneland (2005) suggests that stress assignment conveys social meaning, and calls for more research from different areas of East Norway.

The current study is a rare one to focus on supra-segmental variation but unique to investigate in depth the variation found in stress assignment to loan words in Norwegian. The data used for the investigation was collected from 43 speakers native to the town of Hønefoss, an urban centre in close geographical proximity to Oslo in South East Norway. South East Norway is an area currently experiencing regional dialect levelling (Skjekkeland 2005) which means that speakers of the Hønefoss dialect have a choice to stick with their traditional local dialect, where the IPSR has been the main way of assigning stress to loan words, or to abandon such stigmatised features in order to level their language with the regional dialect. My results indicate which members of the community are the driving force behind the change to the ‘borrowed’ way of assigning stress and which are the members sticking to the traditional form of stressing loan words on the initial syllable. It is found that the degree of change is tied to a subject’s relative

position in society and that the social meaning of stress assignment in Hønefoss Norwegian is strongly linked to education and occupational status.

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