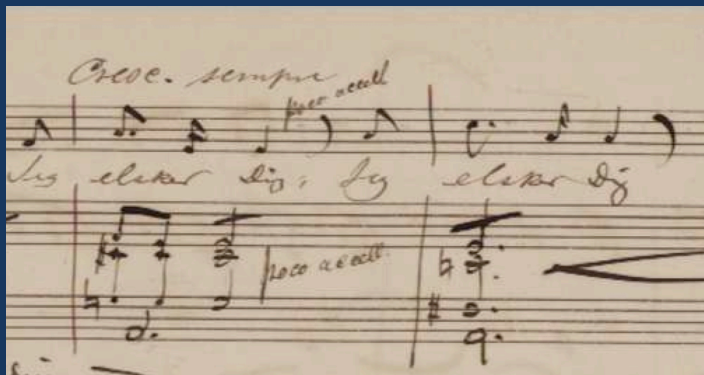


“Jeg elsker dig”



- No. 3 from Op. 5, *Hjertets melodier* [Melodies of the Heart], composed 1864 by Edvard Grieg (published Copenhagen, 1865)
- Text in Danish by H. C. Andersen (1805-1875), “Min Tankes Tanke,” 1833, from *Samlede Digte - Epigrammatiske Digte*
- “Singable translation” to German

“Jeg elsker dig”



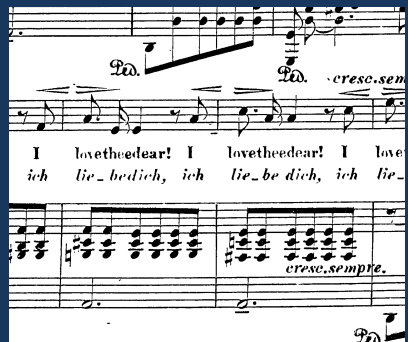
Original Grieg Manuscript (1864 - Bergen Public Library)

“Jeg elsker dig”



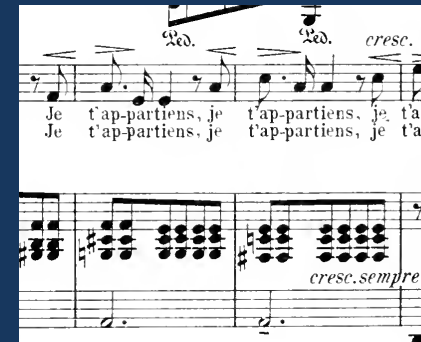
First edition (1865), published in Copenhagen by Hornemann

“Jeg elsker dig”



1881 English/German edition (published in New York by Prüfer)

“Jeg elsker dig”



1895 French edition (published in Paris by Edition Peters)

“Jeg elsker dig”



1895 German/English edition (published in Leipzig by Edition Peters)

Why are “singable translations” problematic?

- Distorts the meaning

Why are “singable translations” problematic?

- Pre-existing rhythmic and melodic pattern



Why are “singable translations” problematic?

- Pre-existing rhythmic and melodic pattern

Definite nouns in Scandinavian language:

flicka girl

en flicka a girl

flickan the girl

Why are “singable translations” problematic?

flickan the girl



1. Set “the” on the downbeat

Why are “singable translations” problematic?

flickan the girl



2. Add a pickup note

Why are “singable translations” problematic?

flickan the girl



3. Devise a different word order or change the meaning

Why are “singable translations” problematic?



Why are “singable translations” problematic?

- Results in a loss of the sounds of the original text: onomatopoeia, rhyme, alliteration, etc.

*Og det er Rull-i-Ring,
og det er Sull-i-Sving,
og det er Lett-på-Tå,
og det er Sprett-på-Tå,*

*And it's roll-in-the-ring,
and it's hum-in-the-swing,
and it's light-on-the-toes,
and it's run-on-the-toes,*

Why are “singable translations” problematic?

- Loses the intimate link between the text and the music

Why are “singable translations” problematic?

- Research in the area of text/music relationship:
 - Aniruddh D. Patel, *Music, Language, and the Brain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
 - Explores the music-language connection in terms of cognitive and neural processing using a variety of methods, including brain imaging, behavioral experiments, and acoustic research
 - Using these methods, vocal music (and even *instrumental* music) can be linked to prevailing pitch patterns of a composer’s native language

Why are “singable translations” problematic?

- Research in the area of text/music relationship:
 - Leigh vanHandel, “Setting a Menu to Music: Prosody and Melody in 19th Century Art Songs” (doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 2005)
 - Melodic range of French songs versus German songs was seen to parallel average frequency variation in the spoken language

Why are “singable translations” problematic?

- Research in the area of text/music relationship:
 - Sampsa Konttinen, “Another Language - Different Sound?” Paper presented at the International Congress of Voice Teachers, Brisbane, Australia, July 2013.
 - Compared stylistic and structural differences in the song output of polyglot Finnish composers (such as Sibelius)
 - Revealed some correlation between acoustic properties of the language used (Swedish, Finnish, or German) and compositional technique

The musical intentions of a composer are best served when vocal music is performed in the original language.

“Jeg elsker dig!”

Merete Hjortsø, soprano
Tom Ernst, piano



Scandinavian Repertoire

- Performance in the original language is preferable

This is now made possible by:

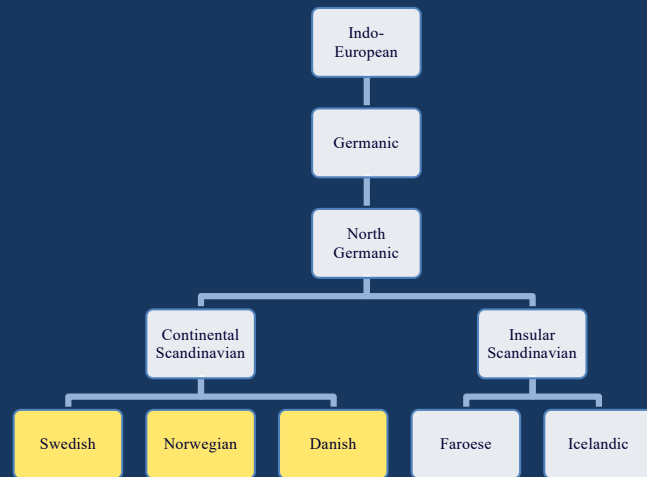
- Recent initiatives on publication of scores in the US, digitization of scores
- Recent increase in sources on Scandinavian diction

Scandinavian Repertoire

But the languages can still be intimidating!

The Scandinavian Languages

Classification



Swedish and Norwegian

Swedish Speakers

- Swedish is the official language of Sweden (population 10 million)
- Swedish is one of two official languages in Finland

Swedish-Speaking Counties in Finland



Norwegian Speakers

- Norwegian is the official language of Norway (population 5 million)
- Norway has two official written languages: Bokmål (“book tongue”) and Nynorsk (“New Norwegian”)
- There is no official pronunciation norm

Norwegian and Swedish Alphabets

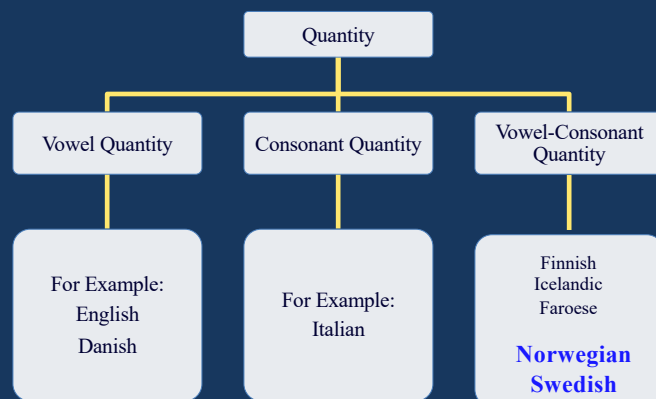
- The Swedish Alphabet has 29 letters:

å ä ö

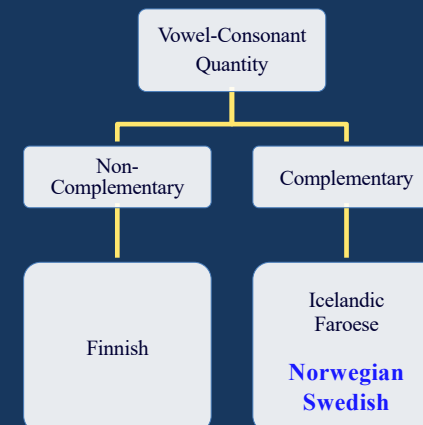
- The Norwegian Alphabet has 29 letters:

å æ ø

Linguistic Traits



Background - Linguistic Traits



The Principle of Complementary Quantity

A stressed syllable always includes *either* a long consonant or a long vowel (but never both)

Where V=Vowel and C=Consonant, a stressed syllable in Swedish or Norwegian can have two possible structures:

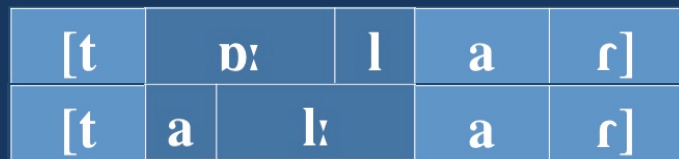
(C) V: (C)

(C) V C:

talar
(Swedish: “speaks”)



tallar
(Swedish: “pines”)



beten
German: “to pray”



Betten
German: “beds”



The Principle of Complementary Quantity

- Makes the mapping of orthographic spelling to phonetic spelling in Swedish and Norwegian quite straightforward
- Transcription can be accurately accomplished in a few easy steps

3 Steps to IPA Transcription

- Step 1: Determine stressed syllables
- Step 2: Apply the “Complementary Quantity” principle

In general, in a stressed syllable a vowel followed by a single consonant is long. A vowel followed by multiple consonants is short. In the case of multiple consonants, linguistic convention transcribes the first consonant in the cluster as long.

Outside the stressed syllable, all other phonemic elements are short.

- Step 3: Apply vowel/consonant occurrence rules

3 Steps to IPA Transcription

dagen

Step 1: Determine stress

3 Steps to IPA Transcription

dagen

Step 1: Determine stress

Step 2: Apply Quality of Complementary Quantity


3 Steps to IPA Transcription

dagen


Step 1: Determine stress

Step 2: Apply Quality of Complementary Quantity

Step 3: Apply occurrence rules



Occurrence in a stressed syllable/word	Example	Occurrence in an unstressed syllable/word	Example
[ɔ:] a final or followed by a single consonant	<i>dagen</i> [ˈdɔ:ɡɛn] (the day)	a; occurs as an exception in some one-syllable words; short [ɒ] occurs rarely as an exception	<i>jag</i> [jɔ:g] (I) <i>varav</i> [ˈvɔ:rɒv] (of which)
[a] a followed by more than one consonant	<i>stranden</i> [ˈstrændɛn] (the shore)	a	<i>speglades</i> [ˈspe:ɡlədɛs] (is reflected)
[e:] e final or followed by a single consonant	<i>eviga</i> [eːvɪɡə] (eternal)	e; occurs as an exception in one-syllable words; short [ɛ] occurs rarely as an exception	<i>med</i> [mɛd] (with) <i>emellan</i> [eˈmɛːlən] (among)
[ɛ] N/A	N/A	e in some unstressed prefixes	<i>betaga</i> [bɛtɔ:ɡə] (deprive)



Occurrence in a stressed syllable/word	Example	Occurrence in an unstressed syllable/word	Example
[ɔ:] a final or followed by a single consonant	<i>dagen</i> [ˈdɔ:ɡɛn] (the day)	a; occurs as an exception in some one-syllable words; short [ɒ] occurs rarely as an exception	<i>jag</i> [jɔ:g] (I) <i>varav</i> [ˈvɔ:rɒv] (of which)
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[ɛ] N/A	N/A	e in some unstressed prefixes	<i>betaga</i> [bɛtɔ:ɡə] (deprive)

3 Steps to IPA Transcription

dagen
[ˈdɔ:ɡɛn]

Step 1: Determine stress

Step 2: Apply Quality of Complementary Quantity

Step 3: Apply other occurrence rules

3 Steps to IPA Transcription

stranden

Step 1: Determine stress

3 Steps to IPA Transcription

stranden

Step 1: Determine stress

Step 2: Apply Quality of Complementary Quantity


3 Steps to IPA Transcription

stranden

Step 1: Determine stress

Step 2: Apply Quality of Complementary Quantity

Step 3: Apply occurrence rules



Occurrence in a stressed syllable/word	Example	Occurrence in an unstressed syllable/word	Example
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Occurrence in a stressed syllable/word	Example	Occurrence in an unstressed syllable/word	Example
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[a] a followed by more than one consonant	<i>stranden</i> [ˈstrɑːndɛn] (the shore)	a	<i>spegglades</i> [ˈspeːɡlɑːdɛs] (is reflected)
[e] e final or followed by a single consonant	<i>eviga</i> [ˈevɪɡɑː] (eternal)	e; occurs as an exception in one-syllable words; short [e] occurs rarely as an exception	<i>med</i> [mɛd] (with) <i>emellan</i> [ˈɛmɛːlan] (among)
[ɛ] N/A	N/A	e in some unstressed prefixes	<i>betaga</i> [ˈbɛtɔːɡɑː] (deprive)

3 Steps to IPA Transcription

stranden
[ˈstrɑːndɛn]

Step 1: Determine stress

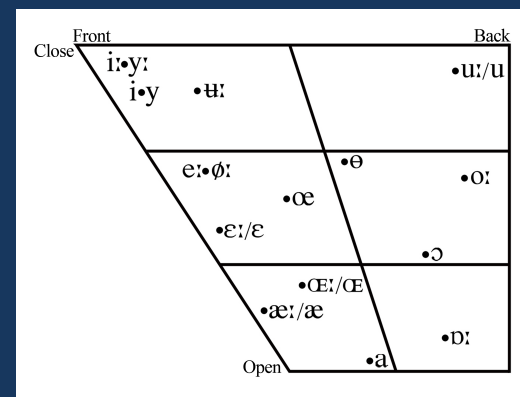
Step 2: Apply Quality of Complementary Quantity

Step 3: Apply other occurrence rules

Vowels

- Both Swedish and Norwegian have large vowel inventories
- Swedish: approximately ten short-long vowel pairs, in addition to several unpaired vowels
- Norwegian: approximately eight short-long vowel pairs, in addition to an unpaired vowel and several diphthongs
- Although the members of each pair may differ (sometimes marginally) in quality, the quantity (or length) is the most relevant difference in Swedish and Norwegian

Swedish Vowels

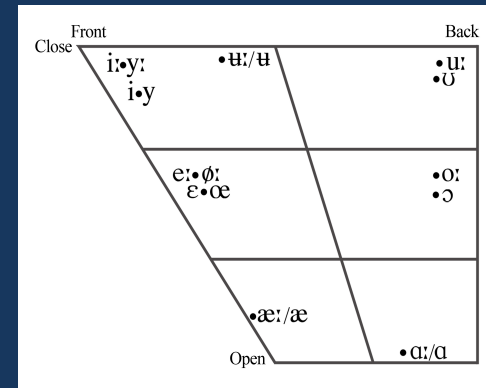


[u:] in Swedish

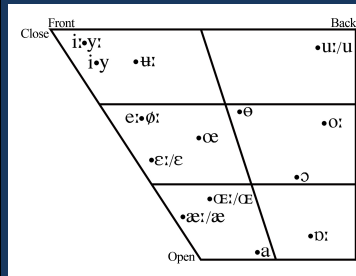
- The close front vowels demonstrate an interesting three-way contrast.
 - [y:] (and short counterpart [y])
 - [i:] (and short counterpart [i])
 - [u:]
- Lip position:
 - [y:] (protruded)
 - [i:] (neutral)
 - [u:] (compressed)
- Examples:
 - ryta* ['ry:ta] (roar)
 - rita* ['ri:ta] (draw)
 - ruta* ['ru:ta] (box)

(Ladefoged, *World's Languages*)

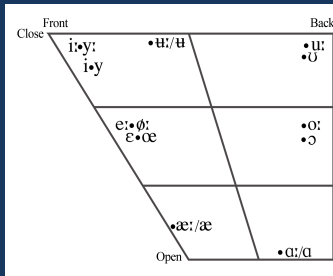
Norwegian Vowels



Comparison



Swedish



Norwegian

sju-ljudet and *tjugo-ljudet*

[ɧ] (voiceless dorso-palatal/velar fricative)

[ç] (voiceless alveolo-palatal fricative)

Swedish - *sju-ljudet* and *tjugo-ljudet*

[ɧ] (voiceless dorso-palatal/velar fricative)

[ç] (voiceless alveolo-palatal fricative)

- *Sju-ljudet*
- Definition with regard to pronunciation is a source of contention even among linguists
- *The Handbook of the International Phonetic Association* describes it as simultaneous [j] and [x]
- Ladefoged and Maddieson, however, dispute that it is a doubly-articulated fricative.
- Ladefoged and Maddieson call it a variant of [j], and I recommend this substitution in singing
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shaM1Hb0fkw>

Swedish - *sju-ljudet* and *tjugo-ljudet*

[ɧ] (voiceless dorso-palatal/velar fricative)

[ç] (voiceless alveolo-palatal fricative)

- *Tjugo-ljudet*
- Sound is similar to ich-laut in German but is pronounced with the tongue slightly more forward and a greater force of expelled air
- Again, I recommend substituting [j]

Swedish - formality

Differences between

högsvenska

&

talad svenska

<i>mig</i>	[mi:g]	vs.	[mɛj:]
<i>dig</i>	[di:g]	vs.	[dɛj:]
<i>säger</i>	[sɛ:gɛr]	vs.	[sɛj:ɛr]



Swedish - formality

Gunnar de Frumerie:

“Som en våg” (Like a wave)

<i>mig</i>	[mi:g]	vs.	[mɛj:]
<i>dig</i>	[di:g]	vs.	[dɛj:]

Som en våg sköljd upp mot stranden/ vilar du hos mig
(As a wave washed up on the shore/ you rest in me)

När jag smeker dig med handen/ skälver havet ini dig
(When I caress you with my hand/ the sea trembles within you)

Swedish - formality

Differences between
högsvenska
&
talad svenska

- Composer's wishes
- Year of composition of the song/poem
- Style of the song/poem

Norwegian – two written forms

- Bokmål (book tongue)
- Nynorsk (new Norwegian)
- How did this unique linguistic situation evolve?
- In 1814, as part of a post-war treaty, Norway was transferred to Sweden. Norway resisted, declaring its independence on May 17, 1814.
- In the summer of 1814, however, Sweden invaded, and a few weeks later Norway surrendered.

Norwegian – two written forms

- Bokmål (book tongue)
- Nynorsk (new Norwegian)
- The *written* language of the upper classes at this time was Danish, which is most accurately called Dano-Norwegian.
- Populations in rural areas and those in lower socioeconomic classes spoke a wide variety of dialects.
- Although nationalist sentiment supported a written language that was distinctly Norwegian, two opposing camps emerged.
 - On the one side, spoken dialects were considered most purely Norwegian
 - On the other side were those who supported a version of Danish with orthographic variation to reflect the spoken language of the upper classes

Norwegian – two written forms

- Bokmål (book tongue)
- Nynorsk (new Norwegian)
- In the end, both of these options came to fruition:
 - *nynorsk*, developed in the mid-nineteenth century, was based on Norwegian dialects (primarily southwest and south-central).
 - *Bokmål* was based on Danish but underwent “Norwegianization” via spelling reforms.

Norwegian – two written forms

- Bokmål (book tongue)
- Nynorsk (new Norwegian)
 - For a short time in the middle of the twentieth century, a movement developed to try to merge *bokmål* and *nynorsk* into *samnorsk* (common Norwegian).
 - Today a moderate form of *bokmål* is most commonly seen in Norway.
 - About 15 percent of Norwegians choose to conduct written business in *nynorsk*.

Norwegian – two written forms

- Bokmål (book tongue)
- Nynorsk (new Norwegian)
 - What does this mean for us as singers?
 - You will encounter much variation in song texts, both with regard to spelling and to vocabulary
 - Even examining a single text you may find differing spellings depending on the publisher

Norwegian – two written forms

- Bokmål (book tongue)
- Nynorsk (new Norwegian)
- *In general*, standard pronunciation in singing for *both* written forms is Standard East Norwegian (spoken in the greater Oslo region)
- Differences in pronunciation exist for some vocabulary words, and for pronouns

Norwegian – two written forms

- Bokmål (book tongue)
- Nynorsk (new Norwegian)
 - *How do I know which one I'm looking at?*
 - Check your pronouns
 - First person pronoun “I”
 - Nynorsk *eg*
 - Bokmål *jeg*

“Norwegianization” Controversy

- Many nineteenth century texts by Danish and Norwegian writers are technically “Dano-Norwegian” (neither Danish nor Norwegian)
- Some Norwegian singers assert that all these texts should be “Norwegianized,” modifying vocabulary and pronunciation

“Norwegianization” Controversy

- “The poetry of German, Danish and Norwegian poets is for the attentive observer so thoroughly different, that the music demands an equally different expression for the nationality in question, without however finding it possible to express this difference in words.”
- --Edvard Grieg, in correspondence with Henry Finck (music critic at the *New York Post*), original in Bergen Public Library.

“Norwegianization” Controversy

- “When the poet is Danish, [the text] should of course be sung in Danish, even if the composer is Norwegian.”
—Opera Singer Bo Skovhus

Idiosyncracies of Swedish and Norwegian

- Absence of voiced alveolar fricative [z]

Idiosyncracies of
Swedish and Norwegian

Betoning



**BORK
BORK
BORK**

The Swedish Chef

Idiosyncracies of
Swedish and Norwegian

- Retroflex consonants (combinations with “r”)

Norwegian:				
	<i>rd</i>	<i>rt</i>	<i>rl</i>	<i>rn</i>
spoken:	[d:]	[t:]	[l:]	[n:]
sung:	[r:d]	[r:t]	[r:l]	[r:n]

Swedish:					
	<i>rd</i>	<i>rt</i>	<i>rl</i>	<i>rn</i>	<i>rs</i>
spoken:	[d:]	[t:]	[l:]	[n:]	[s:]
sung:	[r:d]	[r:t]	[r:l]	[r:n]	[r:s]

Idiosyncracies of
Swedish and Norwegian

- Retroflex consonants (combinations with “r”)

Norwegian example:	Swedish example:
<i>perle</i> “pearl”	<i>kors</i> “cross”
[ˈpæ:lɛ] (spoken)	[ˈkɔs:] (spoken)
[ˈpær:lɛ] (sung)	[ˈkɔr:s] (sung)

Grammar

- bleka* “whiten”
– [ˈble:ka]
- bleknat* “whitened”
– [ˈblek:mat]

Grammar

- *bleka* “whiten”
— [ˈble:ka]
- *bleknat* “whitened”
— [ˈblekˌnat]
— [ˈble:knat]

Danish

Danish Speakers

- Danish is the official language of Denmark (population 5.6 million)
- Danish is also a recognized minority language in Greenland (~20% of the population speaks Danish at home) and an official language of the Faroe Islands.

Danish

- Good news! There are no sounds in sung Danish that are completely foreign or unfamiliar to a student who is versed in diction of the “singing languages.”
- Bad news! Orthographic to phonetic correlation is inconsistent in Danish, making transcription for non-natives quite difficult.

Danish Alphabet

- The Danish Alphabet has 29 letters:
æ ø å (aa)

Rødgrød med fløde



Rødgrød med fløde

- “Red porridge with cream”
- Tongue-twisting litmus test

[ˈʁœːð̥ˀ, ɡʁœːð̥ˀ mɛ ˈfløːð̥ˀ]

- Native speakers: 🗣️

Stød

- Stød* (literally “blow” or “hit”), the most distinctive characteristic of spoken Danish, is the truncation of a syllable or word with irregular vibration of the vocal folds (“creaky voice”).
- Sometimes defined as a glottal stop, *stød* is actually a *succession* of glottal stops.

Stød

- Linguists believe that *stød* in Danish is a remnant of the tonal accent still present in Swedish and Norwegian, because both traits are distributed similarly in their respective languages.

Danish IPA transcriptions for singers

- Stød* is not used in singing

[ˈkœ:ð̥, ɡœ:ð̥ mɛ ˈflø:ð̥] (spoken Danish)

[ˈkœ:ð̥, ɡœ:ð̥ mɛð ˈflø:ð̥] (sung Danish)

Danish IPA transcriptions for singers

- Fortis/Lenis
 - distinction of “articulatory strength” are not familiar to American singers, but it’s important in Danish
 - in English, fortis-lenis corresponds to unvoiced-voiced (and also to aspirated-unaspirated)

Danish IPA transcriptions for singers

- Fortis/Lenis
 - in Danish, fortis-lenis *does not* correspond to unvoiced-voiced
 - it’s actually possible to have [b̥]
 - why not just use [p]?
 - an American singer would pronounce that as [p^h] (with aspiration)
 - difficult choices with regard to transcription

Danish IPA transcriptions for singers

- Active Vowel Modification

The *schwa* may be modified by vowel harmony conventions to assimilate to nearby (even non-adjacent) stressed vowels, especially in singing.

[^htʰaŋkəs] *tankes*

“Var det en dröm?”

(text, translation, and IPA on your handout)

“Mor synger”

(text, translation, and IPA on your handout)

Questions?

Tack!

Takk!

Tak!

hersey.anna@gmail.com