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Anglicisms in the Nordic languages

As correctly stated in the *Call for papers* for this conference, “the mutual intelligibility between [Danish, Norwegian and Swedish] is asymmetrical, and many young Scandinavians prefer to use English when they meet instead of their native tongue.”

However, almost half of the new words in the Nordic languages are based on English (Gottlieb 2020 & 2023b). Does that mean that Scandinavians may in the near future no longer feel the urge to switch into English when communicating?

With this question in mind, and based on the Global Anglicism Database (GLAD), this lecture will take a corpus-based look at some recent English-induced developments in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish (Gottlieb 2023a).

No surprise, with more than 15,000 Anglicisms found in 20th and 21st-century Danish, this investigation demonstrates the unprecedented impact of English in Scandinavia – a strong impact also felt in Italy (Pulcini 2020 & 2023). Yet this study reveals that Danish, Norwegian and Swedish dictionaries of Anglicisms paint a false picture by presenting the three languages as moving in different directions regarding borrowing from English. Rather than divergence between these languages, the present study – by exploiting large contemporary Danish, Norwegian and Swedish text corpora – shows cross-linguistic convergence, and thus better chances for mutual understanding among Scandinavians.

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