

Norwegian on the Web



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Norwegian speech sounds compared to **Dutch**

Dutch and Norwegian speech sounds compared

Below you will find a comparison between Norwegian (NO) and Dutch (NL) speech sounds, that is consonants, vowels and diphthongs.

Consonants

The column **Consonant** in the table below demonstrates Norwegian consonant sounds of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and Dutch (NL) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the consonants in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or – in the column **Overlap**:

- + The Norwegian consonant is **quite similar** to the Dutch one
- ~ The Norwegian consonant is **to a certain extent similar** to the Dutch one
- The Norwegian consonant has **no counterpart** in Dutch

Dutch consonants of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

| Consonant | Norwegian | Dutch | Overlap | Comments |
|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|---|
| /p/ | penn | pen | + | Unaspirated in NL |
| /b/ | båt | boot | + | |
| /t/ | tal | taal | + | Unaspirated in NL |
| /d/ | di | die | + | |
| /t̥/ | smart | - | – | |
| /d̥/ | ferdig | - | – | |
| /k/ | katt | kat | + | Unaspirated in NL |
| /g/ | goal | goal | – | Only in loanwords in NL |
| /m/ | matt | mat | + | |
| /n/ | nok | nok | + | |
| /n̥/ | barna | - | – | |
| /ŋ/ | lang | lang | + | |
| /f/ | faktor | faktor | + | |
| /v/ | voll | wol | + | |
| /s/ | same | samen | + | |
| /ʃ/ | sjal | sjaal | + | |
| /ç/ | kjapp | tjokvol | – | |
| /j/ | jeg | jij | + | |
| /h/ | har | haar | + | |
| /r/ | realist | realist | + | |
| /l/ | låt | lood | + | NO /l/ is not velarized (flat tongue in NO) |
| /l̥/ | jarl | - | – | |

Below you will find the same data in a shorter version using colour codes:

- White: The Norwegian consonant is quite close to the Dutch one
- Grey: The Norwegian consonant overlaps to some degree with the Dutch one
- Black: The Norwegian consonant has no counterpart in Dutch

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|
| p | b | t | d | t̥ | d̥ | k | g | l | l̥ | r |
| m | n | ŋ | ɲ | f | u | s | ʃ | ç | j | h |

The speech sounds in black and grey cells are sounds that Dutch-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian.

Vowels

The column **Vowel** in the table below demonstrates Norwegian vowel sounds of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and Dutch (NL) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the vowels in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or – in the column **Overlap**:

- + The Norwegian vowel is **quite similar** to the Dutch one
- ~ The Norwegian vowel is **to a certain extent similar** to the Dutch one
- The Norwegian vowel has **no counterpart** in Dutch

Dutch vowel of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

| Vowel | Norwegian | Dutch | Overlap | Comments |
|-------|-----------|--------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| /i/ | inn | in | + | |
| /i:/ | rik | riek | + | |
| /y/ | tylle | tule | ~ | NL sound in between NO /y/ og /ʉ/ |
| /y:/ | yr | uur | ~ | NL sound in between NO /y:/ og /ʉ:/ |
| /e/ | penn | pen | + | |
| /e:/ | lek | leek | + | |
| /ø/ | løkke | lukken | + | |
| /ø:/ | løk | leuk | + | |
| /æ/ | vært | - | – | |
| /æ:/ | lær | - | – | |
| /ɑ/ | lapp | lap | + | |
| /ɑ:/ | mat | maat | + | |
| /ʉ/ | tulle | tule | ~ | NL sound in between NO /y/ og /ʉ/ |
| /ʉ:/ | ur | uur | ~ | NL sound in between NO /y:/ og /ʉ:/ |
| /u/ | bukk | boek | + | |
| /u:/ | bor | boer | + | |
| /o/ | som | som | + | |
| /o:/ | lån | loon | + | |

In general the duration of Dutch vowels can be compared to short and long vowels in Norwegian.

The table above is presented below in a shorter version using colour codes:

- White: The Norwegian vowel is quite close to the Dutch one
- Grey: The Norwegian vowel overlaps to some degree with the Dutch one
- Black: The Norwegian vowel has no counterpart in Dutch

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| i | e | æ | ɑ | y | ʉ | ø | u | o |
| i: | e: | æ: | ɑ: | y: | ʉ: | ø: | u: | o: |

The sounds in black and grey cells are speech sounds that Dutch-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian. Observe that /æ/ and /ɑ/ are two different sounds in Norwegian. The Dutch /ɑ/ is somewhere in between, maybe a little closer to Norwegian /ɑ/.

Diphthongs

The column **Diphthong** in the table below demonstrates Norwegian diphthongs of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and Dutch (NL) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the diphthongs in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or – in the column **Overlap**:

- + The Norwegian diphthong is *quite similar* to the Dutch one
- ~ The Norwegian diphthong is *to a certain extent similar* to the Dutch one
- The Norwegian diphthong has *no counterpart* in Dutch

Dutch diphthongs of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

| Diphthong | Norwegian | Dutch | Overlap | Comments |
|-----------|-----------|-------|---------|--|
| /ɑi/ | hai | haai | ~ | NO /ɑ/ is somewhat shorter |
| /æi/ | reis | reis | + | |
| /øɣ/ | høy | - | – | |
| /æu/ | haus | huis | ~ | |
| /oy/ | koie | nooit | ~ | NO /o/ is somewhat shorter than the NL |
| /uy/ | hoie | roeit | ~ | Rare in NO |
| /ɥy/ | huie | - | – | Rare in NO |

The table above is presented below in a shorter version using colour codes:

- White: The Norwegian diphthong is quite close to the Dutch one
- Grey: The Norwegian diphthong overlaps to some degree with the Dutch one
- Black: The Norwegian diphthong has no counterpart in Dutch

| | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| /ɑi/ | /æi/ | /øɣ/ | /æu/ | /oy/ | /uy/ | /ɥy/ |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

The sounds in black and grey cells are speech sounds that Dutch-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian.