

# Norwegian on the Web



Olaf Husby

**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 /ʏ/
/y:/	yr	uur	~	NL sound in between NO /y:/ og /ʏ:/
/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 /ʏ/
/ʉ:/	ur	uur	~	NL sound in between NO /y:/ og /ʏ:/
/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.