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En Grammatik for Folkspraak

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Daan Goedkoop

Preface

This is the Digisk Grammatik von Folkspraak, my attempt to write a grammar for Folkspraak. That language aims to be a language that most speakers of other Germanic languages can read, without learning the language. In this way you can write something in the language, reaching a large group of potential readers.

A problem under which the language suffered, was that it did not have a complete grammar. It had a simple draft grammar, which was by no means complete or even accurate. That is the reason why I chose to start all over again and write a new grammar. This is what has become of it until now.

> Waar men in eene wetenschap tot eene stemopneming zijne toevlucht moet nemen, is de evidentie der waarheid niet groot.[1]

There have been a lot of polls on the yahoogroups website of Folkspraak, about how the language of Folkspraak should be. This might not be a good idea. But as the results of the polls should be supported by the most of us, I did take them as a guideline.

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[1]Te Winkel (1863) *De grondbeginselen van de Nederlandsche spelling*, page 17. http://www.dbnl.nl/tekst/wink003gron01/

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Chapter 1

Phonology

This chapter describes the Folkspraak phonology, which mainly results from the polls on yahoogroups.

1.1   Consonants

The consonants are quite plain. To keep the spelling of Folkspraak as simple as possible, dicult feautures like the letter c and the cluster ph have been anbadoned. The consonants and their pronunciation can be seen in table 1.1.

1.2   Vowels

Folkspraak has six vowels, of which four have a short form (written with one letter) and a long form (written with two letters). All vowels are listed in table 1.2.

The sound [y] can be difficult to pronounce for English people. Linguists call it a ronded front vowel. To pronounce it, start with the short [e]. Then round your lips, as if you would make the sound [o], but keep your tongue in the same position. If you do that, you should hear yourself producing a proper [y] sound.

Please remember that the spelling in the table is only used to clearly indicate how the different vowels are pronounced. In practice, the long vowels are almost never written with two letters; other spelling rules give clues whether a vowel is short or long. These rules are discussed further below, in the section about spelling.

Consonant	Pronunciation
b	As English
ch	As in Scottish and German loch, Dutch doch
d	As English
f	As English
g	Always hard, as in good
h	As English
j	As in yet, not as in just
k	As English
l	As English
m	As English
n	As English
ng	As English
p	As English
r	Rolling, as in German or Dutch
s	As English
sk	As English, or [S] as in shoe
t	As English
v/w	Between English **v** and **w**
z	As English

Table 1.1 : Folkspraak consonants

Vowel	Pronunciation
a	As in English father
aa	As in Dutch and German haar
e	As in English bed
ee	As in English lake
i	As in English hip
ie	As in English sea
o	As in English pork
oo	As in English boat
u	As in English boot
y	Rounded u, as Scandinavian y, Dutch uu or German ü
-	Schwa, as in English a

Table 1.2 : Folkspraak Vowels

1.3 Spelling rules

In the lists above, only a generic representation of each sound is given. Some sounds are written differently depending on the context.

1.3.1 Long and short vowels

In fact, there is no need to double vowels. A vowel is short if it is followed by two or more consonants, and it is long if it is followed by zero or one consonant. This makes conjugating words quite easy: **mann** is short, so the conjugated **mannen** too. **Grot** is long, and so is **groter**.

For sake of recognisability, **i** is sometimes written as **ie**.[1] Also, **e** is sometimes written as **ee** and **o** sometimes as **oo**.

1.3.2 Schwa

A non-stressed long **e** should be pronounced as schwa. If two of them come next to eachother, they merge: **werde** + **en** = **werden**.

1.3.3 Adjacent vowels

You should always break up **iee** as **ie+e**, and likewise **eee** is always composed of **ee+e**. If you might ever come accross **aee**, it should also be broken up as **ae+e**.

1.3.4 The letter **x**

The letter **x** is pronounced as **ks**.

1.3.5 The letter **ä**

In some cases, **ä** might be written instead of **e**. This is to increase the recognisability for speakers of other Germanic languages.[2] If you cannot reproduce this letter, you should write **ae** instead.[3]

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[1]An example of this is **tien**, because Danish has tien pronounced as [ti], Dutch has tien pronounced as [ti:n] and English has the suffix -teen, pronounced as [ti:n].

[2]This is the case when one big language has **e** and another big language **a**, especially when English has **a** which is pronounced as **e**.

[3]Sometimes this spelling is actually preferred, that is in borrowings where English has **ae**, German has **ä** and Danish has **æ**. Examples are **praesident**, **encyklopaedie** and **arkaeologie**.

1.3.6   Spelling of loanwords

For loanwords, it is preferable to write them using the regular Folkspraak spelling. However, in the following cases an exception is allowed:

- If the loanword has sounds which Folkspraak does not have, the sound is retained and written in the original ortography: **genereus**

- In words of Latin origin, the letter **c** is preserved before **e**, **ee**, **i**, **ie** and **y**. It is then pronounced as [s]. The letter **c** is then also preserved in other forms of the same word, and is pronounced as [k] when it is not followed by one of the aforementioned vowels. If the **c** would always be pronounced as **k**, it is not preserved but written simply as **k**.

  Examples are **kommuniceren/kommunication** and **produceren/product**.

Chapter 2

Morphology

After the phonology we arrive at the morphology, the chapter about the conjugation of words.

2.1 Verbs

The verb conjugating is one of the most important sections within the morphology, as it can be quite complex though being used very often.

2.1.1 Infinitive

The innitive of the verb is the form which appears in the dictionary. Forming it is really simple: you just need to add the innitive suffix **-en** to the verb. We have already seen the example of **haven**, another one is **singen**.

2.1.2 Present simple

The most used form of a verb is the simple present tense. In Folkspraak, this is just the stem of the verb. This means that when you lookup a verb in the dictionary, the only thing you need to do to form the present tense, is chopping the **-en** suffix. To conjugate the examples: **hav**, **sing**.

If necessary because of awkward consonant clusters, you can leave the **e** at the end. Thus, the present simple of **reknen** becomes **rekne**.

Verbs that consist of another verb with a preposition in front of it, for example **utfyren**, are a special case. In the simpel present tense, the order is switched and a space comes between them: **Ik fyr ut**.

2.1.3 Imperative

The imperative is the same as the present tense, you can recognise it by the exclamation point and the absence of a subject of the sentence. Examples are: **Sing! Fyr ut!**

2.1.4 Past simple

There is also a simple past tense, which is formed by taking the stem and appending the suffix fw-de, for example **havde** and **singde**. In case the stem already ends in **d** or **t**, an extra **e** is inserted: **findede** and **slaktede**.

2.1.5 Present and past perfect

In addition to it, there is also a present and a past perfect, which is constructed as a form of **haven** followed by the past participle. The latter is formed by adding the suffix **-t** to the verb, again inserting an **e** if necessary: **havt, singt, findet**.

Example for the past perfect: **Du havde singt**.

2.1.6 Future and conditional

The future tense is formed in a similar way as the perfect tenses, except it uses **skall** as auxiliary verb combined with the infinitive. The conditional tense is formed with the past tense of **skall**. All of these forms can also be combined with the verb **haven**.

Ik skall finden - I will find

Ik skallde finden - I should find

Ik skall findet haven - I will have found

Ik skallde findet haven - I should have found

2.1.7 Other auxiliary verbs

Instead of **skall**, other auxiliary verbs can be used, for example **mut** to indicate an obligation, or **gaen** to indicate intentions of the subject:

Ik mut finden - I have to find

Ik must finden - I had to find

Ik skall muten finden - I will have to find

Ik ga det dun - I will do it

Ik gang det dun - I went to do it

2.1.8 Passive tenses

The past participle can be used as an adjective.

De bitet ku är rod - The bitten cow is red

It can also be used to form the regular passive tenses:

De ku war slaktet - The cow has been slaughtered

De ku är slaktet worden - The cow has been slaughtered

De ku werd slaktet - The cow is being slaughtered

De ku mut slaktet werden - The cow needs to be slaughtered

2.1.9 Irregular verbs

The following verbs are irregular:

English	Infinitive	Present tense	Past tense	Past participle	Noun
to be	ar	är	war	bin	-
to do	dun	du	dude	gedan	-
to go	gaen	ga	gang	ganget	gang
to become	werden	werd	word	worden	-
to have to	muten	mut	must	-	-
may	mogen	mag	mocht	moget	-

Table 2.1 : Irregular verbs

2.2 Nouns

The noun system is a lot simpler than the verbal system. Nouns have a singular and a plural form. Furthermore, in addition to the nominative case they have a genitive case to indicate possession.

The singular nominative is the form you can find in the dictionary. The plural is formed by adding the suffix **-en** to the word. The genitive case is formed with the **-'s** suffix. A few examples are given in table 2.2.

2.2.1 Compounds

Compounds should be written without spaces. Spaces are only allowed between adjectives and nouns. If a combination of an adjective and a noun is used as the first

Nom. sing.	Nom. pl.	Gen. sing.	Gen. pl.
alder	alderen	alder's	alderen's
diev	dieven	diev's	dieven's
fogel	fogelen	fogel's	fogelen's
tren	trenen	tren's	trenen's

Table 2.2 : Examples of noun conjugations

part of a compound, the entire combination (the adjective and both nouns) should be written together, without spaces. Some examples:

Folkspraakwordbuk - Folkspraak dictionary

hochsnelhedtren - high speed train

To remember this rule, just think about the meaning hoch snelhedtren has - it does not say the speed is high, but that the train itself is high!

2.3   Adjectives and adverbs

The adjective and adverb-system of Folkspraak is as simple as that of the nouns. In fact, adjectives and adverbs never decline to anything. Basically the only dierence between adjectives and adverbs is that adjectives say something about a noun, and adverbs say something about adjectives or verbs. However, any adjective can be used as an adverb, and vice-versa.

Adjectives come before the noun they belong to. For example, **de hoch trenn**. If an adverb belongs to an adjective or to another adverb, it comes before that adjective or adverb. If an adverb belongs to a verb, it depends on the situation where it should be placed. With the simple present, it comes just after the verb:

De ku spring hoch.

In the complex tenses, it comes before the intive or before the past participle.

De ku hav hoch springet. - The cow jumped high into the air.

De ku skall hoch springen. - The cow will jump high into the air.

De ku skallet hoch springen. - The cow would jump high into the air.

De ku skallet hoch springet haven. - The cow would have jumped high into the air.

2.4 Derivations

Below are listed all suffixes which can be used to derive certain words from others, and to turn words into other kinds of words. There is a seperate section for each kind of word you want to convert.

Beware of one thing: do not think a combination of **de werk** - **werken** is wrong and that it should be **de werking**. Both words exist, and **werken** is derived from **de werk**, and **de werking** is based on **werken**.

2.4.1 General

- **mis-** indicates wrong purposes: **bruken** (use) - **misbruken** (misuse, abuse)

- **un-** indicates the opposite: **brukbar** (usable) - **unbrukbar** (unusable)

2.4.2 Creating nouns

- **-er** indicates the person or machine that performs the action: reknen - de rekner

- **-hed** indicates a condition: **brukbar** (usable) - **brukbarhed** (usability) and **skon** (beautiful) - **skonhed** (beauty).

- **-ing** indicates the process: **bruken** (use) - **de bruking** (usage)

- **-d** indicates a measure: **hoch** (high) - **hochd** (height)

2.4.3 Creating adjectives and adverbs

- **-bar** indicates an ability: **bruken** (to use) - **brukbar** (usable)

- **-lik** and **-ig** to form adjectives. The choice for the one or the other suffix depends on the particular word and can be looked up in the dictionary.

- **-los** indicates the lack of something. **seel** (soul) - **seellos** (soulless)

- **-(i)sk** to form adjectives from proper names.

2.4.4 Creating verbs

- You can simply use an adjective or adverb as if it were a verb: **syfer** (clean) - **syferen** (to clean).

2.5   Articles

Folkspraak has two articles. The definite one is **de**, the undefinite is **en**. Note that the undefinite article can only be used for singular words. You should not use it with words in plural form, or words that can never be plural, like water or rice.

2.6   Personal pronouns

The best thing you can do with these, is to learn them by head. However, you should beware for one thing: personal pronouns do decline by case. These pronouns have a special form for the accusative and the dative. You should use this form if the person is not the subject but one of the objects of the sentence, thus when you would not use I but rather me. There is also a genitive for the personal pronouns, though it is not regular as with nouns. [1]

Person	Nominative	Accusative	Dative	Genitive	Reflexive
I. pers. sing.	ik	mig	mig	min	mig
II. pers. sing.	du	dig	dig	din	dig
III. pers. sing. masc.	hi	hem	hem	sin	sig
III. pers. sing. fem.	si	hen	hen	har	sig
III. pers. sing. neutr.	det	det	den	det's	den
I. pers. pl.	wi	uns	uns	uns	uns
II. pers. pl.	u	je	je	je's	je
III. pers. pl.	der	dem	dem	der's	sig

Table 2.3 : Personal pronouns

Notes:

1. The reflexive is essentially the same as the dative form, except for the third person forms. Here, a clear distinction between the object form and the reflexive is necessary, and the form used for these is always **sig**.

2. The words **ik**, **hem**, **hen** and **det** (and **det's**) have a short **e**, even though their last consonant is not doubled. The word **je** is pronounced with schwa. All other personal pronouns have a long vowel.

3. The words **mig**, **dig** and **sig** are pronounced with [ch] instead of [g].

[1]Cognates are the formal Dutch second person pronoun U, and the English leet-speak way of writing you. Personally, I find that last fact very funny, because English youths who try to write informally actually appear to be writing very formally to Dutch people.

2.7   Correlatives

This is the table of correlatives, "stolen" from Esperanto. It gives a handy reference on many function words.[2]

	general	person	object	time	place	reason	method
what	welk	wem	wat	wan	war	warfor	hu
this	-	-	des	nu	her	herfor	so
that	-	-	dat	dan	dar	darfor	-
every	alle	alle	alles	alltid	overall	-	-
some	som	somwem	somwat	somwan	somwar	-	-
none	ne	niewem	nix	nie	niewar	for nix	-

Table 2.4 : Correlatives

2.8   Comperative and superlative

You know the English big, bigger, biggest? In Folkspraak these forms are made in exactly the same way, thus by adding **-er** and **-est**. There is one thing you should beware of: always use this form, even with long words, thus not **de mest intelligent** but rather **de intelligentest**.

As you have seen with **mest**, there are some exceptions:

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
gud	better	best
mänge	mer	mest

Table 2.5 : Comparative and superlative of gud and mänge

In this table, **mänge** looks a bit like many, but quite similar to German menge, Danish mange and Swedish många.

2.9   Numbers

The basic numbers are the following: **nul, en, twae, dre, fier, femf, sex, seven, acht, nen, tien, elf, twaelf**. To form the numbers until twenty, you can use a simple number

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[2]Unlike in Esperanto, the Folkspraak correlatives are not very logical, because the words resemble the source languages as good as possible. Only words which are totally different in all languages have some kind of logical construction.

and add **-tien**: **dretien, fiertien, femftien, sextien, seventien, achttien, nentien**. To form numbers of ten, you take a simple number and add **-tig**: **twaentig, dretig, fiertig, femftig, sextig, seventig, achttig, nentig**. Notice that **twaentig** is slightly irregular.

To form the numbers between them, you use the simple number, then **ond** and then the ten number. Place dashes between them: **en-ond-twaentig, sex-ond-sextig**. These dashes are really needed, otherwise two end dretig could mean thirty-two or two and thirty, which is quite a difference.

To form cardial numbers, you add the suffix **-de**, for example: **tiende, elfde, twae-ond-fiertigde**. However, there is one exception: it is not **ende** but **erste**. To form divisions, you first use a normal number for the numerator, and then a cardinal number for the denominator. For example, one third is **en derde** and two sixth is **two sexde**.

Another suffix is **-(e)n** which is used with certain prepositions.

in twaen - in twain

in dren - in three pieces

Chapter 3

Syntax

3.1 Word order

The basic word order is SVO, that means Subject Verb Object. However, there are some exceptions to this rule, which are discussed in the rest of this section.

3.1.1 The verb comes second

To stress a particular part of a sentence, it can be placed at the beginning. Yet the verb still comes second, so the subject of the sentence is pushed behind the verb in this case. This applies as well to questions starting with an interrogative pronoun:

Du find de bok nu.

De bok find du nu.

Gester findede du de bok.

Wat är dat?

Hi är wem?

3.1.2 Auxiliary verbs

Any auxiliary verb comes at the second place, all other verb forms (infinitives and past participles) are generally pushed to the end of the sentence. Thus to translate Tomorrow you will have to find the goat on the mountain:

Du skall de bok morgen op de berg muten finden.

Morgen skall du de bok op de berg muten finden.

De bok skall du morgen op de berg muten finden.

Op de berg skall du morgen de bok muten finden.

These translations are all equally correct, and note that in each of them **skall** comes at the second place in the sentence. Also note that the subject of the sentence comes at the first or the third place, thus just before or just after the verb.

3.1.3   Yes-no-questions

Simple yes-no-questions can be formed by putting the verb first. The subject needs to follow immediately; word order changes like those described above are not possible in questions. Examples:

Du skall de bok morgen op de berg muten finden.

Skall du de bok morgen op de berg muten finden?

Chapter 4

Background information

In this chapter you will find additional information, which does not have to do directly with the language itself.

4.1   On constructing words

In this section, I will describe the three principles behind the Folkspraak idiom.

You should treat these principles as guidelines. It is a good idea to follow them whenever possible, but it is allowed to deviate from them in certain cases.

4.1.1   The first principle: similarity

To construct Folkspraak words, generally four languages are considered: English, German, Dutch and Swedish (the other North-Germanic languages are considered to be represented well enough by Swedish). When enough languages share the same word, an intermediate form is used for Folkspraak. Thus, for example, the combination of English all, German alle, Dutch alle and Swedish alla results in the Folkspraak word **alle**.

4.1.2   The second principle: consistency by analogy

The source languages are not always consistent. However, it often occurs that one language is consistent with some forms of one word, and another language is consistent with other forms of the same word. If these two groups overlap, the Folkspraak word is chosen in the overlapping part and the other words are constructed consistently.

For example, English meaning, German Bedeutung, Dutch betekenis and Swedish

betydelse look very different at first sight. However, the German and Swedish roots (deut- and fswtyd-) do have a cognate in Dutch: duid-. Thus we can construct the Folkspraak root **dyd-** and by analogy the word **bedyding** (meaning).

4.1.3   The third principle: consistency by history

Another very powerful principe for archieving consistency is by looking at history, and borrowing similar words in the same way from the same source.

For example, scientists have compared all Germanic languages with eachother, and constructed a Proto-Germanic language from that. Folkspraak should derive as many words as possible from this Proto-Germanic in an ordered and consistent way. This prevents unnecessary inconsistencies, which could easily be introduced when one language does not use a cognate for a certain word, or when using different ideas about similarity when working on different words.

Table 4.1 lists the changes that should be made to Proto-Germanic words for including them into Folkspraak.

Folkspraak	Proto-Germanic	Condition
a	a	stressed
e (@)	a	unstressed (for example in the suffix -an - **-en**)
e (e:)	ai	
o	au	
i (or e)	i	
ie (or y)	iu	
u	ô	in most cases
o	ô	before two consonants (but not consonant + j)
o	u / û	in most cases
y	u / û	before r or consonants + i or consonants + j
d	ð	
C	j	consonant + j changes to double consonant
ng	nx	
ch	x	
v	b	between two vowels
r, w	hr, hw	at the beginning of a word
r	z	
		inflections on nouns, adjectives and adverbs are lost
		add schwa's to ease pronunciation (bôðm - **bodem**)

Table 4.1 : Sound changes from Proto-Germanic to Folkspraak

This principle can also be used for other sources, for example for all words of French origin.

4.2 Changes

In this section all changes between different revisions of this document are listed.

5/9 July 2003:

- Initial revision

11 July 2003:

- Added information about the present-tense conjugation of verbs which are pre-fixed with a preposition

- Completed the table of correlatives

- Indicated that **sk** may be pronounced as [S]

- Corrected spelling errors in the "Nouns" section

- Realized a distinction between short and long **a** is really useful to have, it has thus been re-added

- Added information on the imperative

- Added some more information about auxiliary verbs and the word order in sentences using them.

30 November 2003:

- Expanded the preface

- Added the letter **j**

- Substantially expanded the verbal morphology

- Added the irregular verbs **gaen** and **werden**

- Expanded the derivational morphology

14 November 2009:

- Small rewordings here and there

- Introduced **ch** as representation for [X]

- Reworded the section on derivational morphology -- the content remains unchanged

- Added the irregular verb **muten**

- Added an **-e-** in the past simple for words ending in **-d** or **-t**: **findede**, **slaktede**

- Little adjustment to the case system of the personal pronouns. For **det** the nominative and accusative are identical now. For all other personal pronouns, the accusative and dative remain identical, just like before.

- The recreation of the dictionary (which was lost after publication of the previous version of this grammar) induced changes to some words, mostly in the table of correlatives.