

GRAMMATICAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DUTCH AND ENGLISH

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Abstract: English and Dutch are two different languages from the same family tree, and over the course of time, there has been a lot of interaction between the two. Maybe you do not know it, or maybe you do because you read my blog on this subject, but there is many Dutch in English. Were you aware, for example, that many English words actually have been adopted from the Dutch language?

Keywords: word order, verb tenses, auxiliaries, Latin, articles, neuter, specific rules.

Introduction: Let's take a look at how the German and English languages are similar and how they differ. Both languages are based on Latin. There are 27 letters in German, including ß (escet) + umlauts Ää, Öö, and Üü. In English - 26. However, the phonetics of German is much simpler than English, and even somewhat resembles Russian pronunciation. ¹In addition, there are 3 genders in German (male, female, and neuter). It is imperative to learn which gender a particular noun belongs to in order to know which article to use. In English there are also 3 of them, but they do not have the same effect on nouns as in German. If in English there are 3 articles - a, an (indefinite), and the (definite), and you have to remember specific rules, then in German there are 5 of them: 3 definite (der / die / das) and 2 indefinite (ein / eine).²

Materials and methods: Firstly, the Dutch use many English words in their day-to-day conversations, many of which have even been included in the Dutch dictionary. Even if Dutch is not your native language, you can easily learn it over several months to an advanced level because it has many similarities with English. Just have a look at some of these words: appel, peer, tomaat, banaan, koekje, schoen, blauw, groen, bruin, rood. Can you guess what they are? Of course, there are some differences between these two languages. Fairly obvious ones are of course differences in vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, phrases, and expressions. Even the grammar of both languages is alike.

¹ "Hammer's German Grammar" Marti20D

² "Basic German grammar and Workbook" Xayner. SH.

English	Dutch
Hello	Hallo
Good morning	Goedemorgen
Good evening	goedenavond
Goodbye	vaarwel
Excuse me	Excuser mij
Train station	Treinstation
How much is it?	Hoeveel is het?

1. Word order

The word order in Dutch is the same as in English (Subject +Verb +Object) but has some exceptions. The difference in word order **occurs when sentences don't start with the sentence's subject**. So, for example, you can say 'on Friday *we eat* Belgian fries' (which was actually one of the few traditions in my childhood home). In Dutch, this would translate to 'op vrijdag *eten we* Belgische frietjes'. If you know how to speak a bit of Dutch, you would have noticed that **the subject 'we' and the verb 'eat' have swapped places here**.³

2. Usage of Verb Tenses

A **common mistake** that Dutch people make while they speak English is using the present perfect where the past simple should be used. For example, in English, you would say: '*she learned some Afrikaans yesterday*'. But a Dutch person might **easily make the mistake of using the present perfect here** and say '*she has learned some Afrikaans yesterday*'. This is because of how you would structure this sentence according to Dutch grammar rules. **In Dutch you would use the present perfect: 'zij heeft gister Afrikaans geleerd'**.

Furthermore, don't be surprised when a Dutch person tells you '*I live in Utrecht since 2012*'. In Dutch, the present simple is used in this kind of sentence ('*ik woon in Utrecht sinds 2012*'), but in English, the present perfect should be used ('*I have lived in Utrecht since 2012*'). Learn more about Dutch verb tenses.⁴

3. No Auxiliaries in Dutch

As opposed to English, Dutch does not use any auxiliary to form an interrogative sentence. So to form a question in Dutch, there is no need to add an auxiliary like 'do' to the sentence. And since auxiliaries aren't present in the Dutch language, the use of 'do' and 'did' might be a bit tricky for a Dutch beginner learning to speak English.

³ "English Grammar for students of German" Sesil. Z

⁴ "Complete German Grammar" Eduard. S

Results: Therefore, you might hear a Dutch person say: ‘*like you this language course?*’ (‘vind je deze talencursus leuk?’) instead of ‘*do you like this language course.*

So, it means that for learning Dutch, students need a detailed comparison between English and Dutch grammar: that is enough. It does not even require too much time to teach and learn.

Conclusion: during the research, I learned that there are many similarities between English and Dutch but we cannot say that these languages are the same. As a result, for students who know English, it is easy to learn Dutch.

References:

1. “Hammer`s German Grammar” Martin D
2. “Basic German grammar and Workbook” Xayner. SH.
3. “Complete German Grammar” Eduard. S
4. “ English Grammar for students of German” Sesil. Z