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LANGUAGE

ABOUT THE FRISIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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HEART

*Not in my villages and my eleven cities
Not in my lakes and my domains
am I most myself
but in my language:
the instrument through which I breathe.*

Poem by Ed Hoornik (translated)

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Language of the heart



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Introduction

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Both familiar and unique

The largest province in the Netherlands (water surfaces included), Fryslân also has the most villages of any province and the tallest inhabitants. Here is a land of open spaces, panoramic views, billowing sails and ancient little churches perched atop manmade mounds. But also appearing on its horizons are office towers, industrial parks and new housing estates. Fryslân: both familiar and unique. But what really differentiates Fryslân from the rest of the Netherlands – and what both born and bred Frisians and more recently arrived newcomers are so proud of – is that Fryslân has its own language and culture: Frisian. Practically all of its 642.000 inhabitants understand the language, and the vast majority speak Frisian in addition to Dutch. This means that you will encounter Frisian and use it everywhere in the province: at the baker's, at the supermarket, at the library, at the doctor's office, at school, at the card club, on the sports fields, on signs for cities and villages, in the media, in the theatre and at work.

For Frisians, being bilingual is simply a part of life. For many Dutch people, the fact that Fryslân has its own language is a bit like having a foreign country within their own borders; they think of Fryslân as something special and even somewhat exotic. When you consider Europe as a whole, however, being multilingual is more the rule than the exception. Belgium has Flemish and Walloon; Spain has Catalan, Basque and Spanish; and Great Britain has not only English but also Welsh and Gaelic. And these are just a few examples.

Frisians also have their own mentality: down to earth yet full of emotion. Averse to flattery, bragging and insincerity, they are also more convinced than the average person of the equality of everyone. Reserved? While never scientifically proven, there might be relatively more people of few words (when it comes to Dutch) living in Fryslân. Not so strange, though, when you consider that the first language you learn as a child is the language in which you can express yourself best. This is the language in which you can put your feelings into words, and is thus the language that offers you the richest vocabulary.

When driving into the province and switching the car radio to the Frisian broadcasting station, Omrop Fryslân, ‘monolingual Dutch people’ will soon find certain words quite confusing: the Frisian word for ‘road’ sounds like the Dutch word for ‘meadow’, Frisian for ‘glass of buttermilk’ sounds like ‘soup’ in Dutch, Frisian for ‘cows’ sounds like ‘boulder’ in Dutch. And the Frisian word ‘heal’ (half) does not sound like any particular word in Dutch. People from other provinces will also have to get used to the road signs that give the names of cities and villages in Frisian: Hurdegaryp instead of Hardegarijp, Reahús instead of Roodhuis.

Would you like to know more about this ‘foreign country right here in the Netherlands’? Or, are you Frisian and would like to learn more about the roots of your native language? This booklet, ‘Language of the heart’, provides information about the roots of the Frisian language and culture and their place in today’s society.

Frisian words

Frisian	Dutch	English
Fryslân [frislɔ:n]	Friesland	Fryslân
it Frysk [ɔtfrisk]	het Fries	Frisian
wei [vaj]	weg	road
sûpe [supə]	karnemelk	buttermilk
kij [kɛj]	koeien	cows
heal [hɪ.əl]	half	half
Hurdegaryp [hødəgərip]	Hardegarijp	Hardegarijp
Reahús [rɪ.əhu:s]	Roodhuis	Roodhuis

Frisian in Dutch

Frisian has had little influence on Dutch. Certain words related to sports, however, have become integrated into Dutch: skûtsjesilen and klunen.

Skûtsjesilen (skutsjəsɪlən)	sailing races for legendary Frisian freighters built early in the 20th century
Klunen (klünən)	stepping off the ice and crossing land on skates

A rich past

8 The Frisian language and culture can boast a long tradition. Their evolution has long been characterised by times of rich development and times of stagnation, by heydays and declines. Determining factors were often the 'governing powers' and the presence of 'influential examples'.

A language of power

Fryslân was populated long before the time of Christ, the Romans calling the Germanic tribes who lived here the Frisii. After the Roman era, a Frisian kingdom developed and spread far beyond the boundaries of what is now the Province of Fryslân. At the time when it stretched along the coastal regions of the Low Countries from northern Germany to Flanders there were so many Frisian merchant's ships that the North Sea was known as the Mare Frisicum. While Holland was still insignifi-



Royal golden fibula (cloak pin) from the early seventh century. The foot plate with geometric animal motifs was found in 1953 when drainage work was being conducted on the Tjitsma terp in Wijnaldum. Fragments of the head plate then turned up during the years that followed. Originally, the bow that connects all the parts of the brooch must have been adorned with an ornamental disk. Unfortunately, this fragment has not been found. The fibula is almost 17 cm. long and is on display in the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden.



The Frisian writer of children's books and guide/story teller, Mindert Wijnstra, in action on the Rode Klif in Gaasterland in 2000.

cant in those days, Old Frisian was the language spoken by those in power and Frisian culture was flourishing.

During the later Middle Ages, Fryslân was a remote corner of the Carolinian Empire but felt little of the emperor's power. In 1165, he divided Fryslân between the Bishop of Utrecht and the Count of Holland. Neither of these rulers, however could establish continuous authority over the land to the north. The last time that the Count of Holland came to Fryslân to try and exercise his rights as a ruler was in 1233 (the bishop had already given up trying). Once his attempt failed, the period known as the Era of Frisian Freedom dawned. Even though it remained officially part of the Carolinian Empire, Fryslân governed itself. In 1345, William IV, the Count of Holland and Zeeland, again endeavoured to enforce his authority by sending his soldiers across the Zuiderzee, the current IJsselmeer. Tradition has it that this action resulted in a bloody battle near Warns where the count himself was killed. Fryslân remained Frisian. Commemorating this battle is the memorial stone at Warns carved with the saying, *Leaver dea as slaaf* (Death rather than slavery).

10 The language used in government and in the administration of justice remained Old Frisian while Middle Frisian would be in use from 1530 to 1800. Fortunately, much written material from these periods has survived.

During the Era of Frisian Freedom, Fryslân had no strong central authority. In spite of this, its economy flourished due to intensive trade with countries along the Baltic Sea all the way to Russia. The Eleven Frisian Cities thank their glory to the fall of the Hanseatic League, the western European trading alliance that included such German cities as Lübeck and Wismar. This was a time of great prosperity and lasted until around 1400 when quarrels between various parties erupted. It was during these struggles between two feuding parties, the Schieringers and the Vetkopers, that Duke Albrecht of Saxony was finally appealed to for assistance. When he took power in Fryslân in 1498, an end came to both the internal war and Frisian Freedom.

Albrecht of Saxony appointed many foreign governors in Fryslân, and this was one of the factors leading to the disappearance of Old Frisian as the most commonly used language. Even so, official documents were still written in this language until around 1530. Yet another factor in the change to Middle Frisian was the growing influence of Dutch.

The language of the people

In 1514, Albrecht of Saxony sold Fryslân to Charles V. In 1579, the Netherlands, including Fryslân, withdrew from the authority of his son, Philip II. From that time onward, the Seven Provinces were politically independent. During the Eighty-Years' War, Fryslân was a powerful ally within the Seven Provinces. Just as today, money meant power, and Fryslân could make a significant financial contribution to the struggle against the Spanish.

Although much of the power within Fryslân was again back in the hands of the Frisians during the 16th and 17th centuries, Dutch as a language was becoming increasingly important. The government, the judiciary, schools and churches used Dutch as a written language while Frisian became the spoken language of the common people. Due to the



The writings of Gysbert Japicx put Frisian culture on the map again. Due to Gysbert's impressive oeuvre, he is considered the founder of Frisian literature. Here was a man who was admired even in his own era for his works' classical qualities and as someone who wrote according to the rules of the art of Frisian. He was also a master at the harmonious blending of language and music. Vondel, Huygens and many other poets of his time, as well as the classics, often served as a point of departure for his writings while local circumstances provided enlivenment. In 2003 Fryslân organised several musical and literary events to celebrate the 400th anniversary of his birth.

more limited use of Frisian and due to the many contacts that Frisians had with Dutch-speaking people, the Frisian language became a watered-down version of its former self. But Gysbert Japicx (1603-1666), the son of a mayor and himself a schoolmaster living in Bolsward, gave Frisian a leading position in culture. With his prominent oeuvre, he is considered the founder of Frisian literature.

Romanticism

The European states as we know them today were established in 1815 after the final defeat of Napoleon. It was at this time that the peoples of these countries were becoming more aware of their own roots. And this awareness of a mutual past became the basis for a national consciousness, and language was seen as the breath of a nation's spirit. An interest in one's own national character, language, history, folklore and literature was increasing everywhere. Although this period of Romanticism was a true heyday for Frisian language and culture, an official recognition was not yet forthcoming.

During the 19th century, Fryslân was a province of the Netherlands. Dutch was the only official language there while Frisian was the language used at home. Schools were advised not to tolerate the use of 'peasant-like' Frisian. But inspired by Romanticism, a Frisian language movement emerged with the purpose of halting the loss of this language and calling for its official recognition. New Frisian writers emerged such as the Halbertsma brothers: Joost Hiddes Halbertsma (1789-1869), Tsjalling Halbertsma (1792-1852) and Eeltsje Halbertsma (1797-1858). These writers stimulated the Frisian population to read and sing in their own language, and their collection of Frisian stories, songs and poems are still popular today. But the Halbertsmas were not the only ones; many others started publishing in Frisian as well. Obe Postma (1868-1963) from the Frisian village of Kornwerd is still considered the most important Frisian poet since Gysbert Japicx. His poems about his love for the Frisian countryside have a universal quality. It was the publications of these writers and the publication of the first Frisian Dictionary that gradually led to more universality in how Frisian would be written. Frisian written and spoken since 1800 is known as Modern Frisian.

Emancipation

The twentieth century was a time of great emancipation movements, of groups striving to improve their positions. No longer were certain social domains reserved for the higher classes, men, women, or monolingual Dutch people living in the urbanised western part of the Netherlands. Many speakers of minority languages organised themselves to preserve and develop their languages and to have their languages officially recognised. Due to a growing self-awareness among large groups of Frisian society, the Frisian language increasingly found its way into education, art and culture, science, government and religion. This led to taking many measures and founding many institutions that are still important for Frisian language and culture.

In addition to the 19th century language associations known as Genoatskip (Society, 1827) and Ald Selskip (Old Association, 1844), another one with a Protestant identity was founded in 1908: the Kristlik Frysk Selskip (Christian Frisian Association). A group of Frisians who disagreed with the conservatism of the Ald Selskip established the Jongfryske Mienskip (Young Frisian Fellowship) in 1915 for the purpose of focusing on the language used in government and in administering justice.

In 1907, Frisian was used for the first time in a meeting of the Provincial Council. It was also during this year that the provincial administration awarded the first subsidy for teaching in Frisian at schools, but these lessons were given only after regular school hours. After hundreds of Frisians had engaged in demonstrations advocating the use of Frisian in education, the language was given a modest place as an elective in language education in the primary schools in 1937. The first church service in Frisian was held in 1915 and the first Frisian translation of the Bible followed in 1943. Amateur theatre using plays originally written in Frisian or translated from it had been flourishing for years both within Fryslân and beyond its borders. Frisian songs were being composed and sung by the many Frisian choirs. Societies such as the Jongfryske Mienskip and a magazine known as *De Tsjerne* (1946) stimulated literature. The Afûk (Algemeine Fryske ûnderjocht kommisje) was founded in 1928 for the purpose of organising courses in Frisian

for adults and developing teaching material in Frisian for children. An institute for scholarly study into the Frisian language and culture was founded in 1938: the Fryske Akademy. During its first year, this institution started a scholarly description of the Modern Frisian vocabulary that is still being continued into the 21st century. During the 1940s and 1950s, however, more abridged versions of Frisian-Dutch and Dutch-Frisian dictionaries were published. And finally, Frisian culture was no more limited to language and was spreading to art as well. Frisian Expressionism represented by such painters as Gerrit Benner was also earning a name for itself outside of the province.



Gerrit Benner (1897-1981) is considered one of the most important Dutch neo-expressionistic landscape painters. He received many awards for his work including the Resistance Award from the Stichting Kunstenaarsverzet 1942-1945 in 1955, the second prize at the São Paulo Biennial in 1955, the Guggenheim Prize for the Low Countries in 1958, and the International Hallmark Art Award in New York. His work is found in many public and private collections that include the Stedelijke Museum in Amsterdam, the Van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven, Museum Twente in Enschede and the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden. Shown here: "Paardjes, Boom", ca. 1950, oil paint on panel.

The second official language of the Netherlands

The Frisian movement became even better defined after 1945 when all kinds of groups and organisations were established to promote Frisian either directly or indirectly. At that time, efforts started focusing on achieving an official status for the use of Frisian in public life – efforts that turned out to be quite a struggle. As post-war history demonstrated, language is a sensitive issue in which emotions can run high. The right to express oneself in one's own language at the civil-law notary; the registry of births, deaths and marriages; school, the Provincial Council, and other places in public life was a right that had to be won.

An important event in this struggle for language has come to be known as Kneppelfreed. On 16 November 1951, Fedde Schurer appeared before the court charged with insulting Heerenveen subdistrict court judge S.R. Wolthers. Schurer, a journalist, politician and poet, had made some scathing remarks in the *Friese Koerier* in regard to the judge's acting as if he did not understand Frisian during a trial. With his biting commentary, Schurer provoked a trial aimed at generating a judicial decision about the position of the Frisian language. When a crowd assembled in front of the courthouse curious to know the outcome, the police became nervous and the situation escalated into a brawl in which the policemen made heavy use of their clubs ('kneppels' in Frisian). The Frisian issue was picked up by the press and appeared on the national political agenda. Three ministers went to Fryslân in person, and fact-finding committees – one for education and one for justice – were set up at the insistence of the Lower House. This led, in 1955, to permitting the use of Frisian in primary education. In 1956, it became permissible by law to speak Frisian in the courtroom.

The right to speak Frisian in the courtroom was a positive development in starting the ball rolling in other areas. The written use of Frisian in judicial matters was legally established in 1995. Since 1997, all documents for the registry of births, deaths and marriages have been written in both Dutch and Frisian. Since 2001, it is been possible to have notarial instruments for foundations and associations written and registered in Frisian in public registers. By now, there are so many statutory provisions and rules that Frisian has become the second national language.

A European language

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Another major incentive for Frisian has been European policy related to regional languages. The European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages was approved in 1992 and then ratified in the Netherlands in 1996. This charter addresses the stimulating of minor and regional languages within the sectors of education, justice, public administration, the media and culture; in social and economic life; and in international contacts. By ratifying the charter, the Dutch government is obliged to take a variety of measures including financial ones to strengthen Frisian. The charter went into force in 1998.

Within the current member states of the European Union, ten percent of the population speak a minority language. The European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages established in Brussels devotes its efforts to reinforcing the position of minority languages in Europe by bringing people into contact with each other, managing a documentation centre, organising study tours and publishing a newsletter. There is also a European network of minority languages at work in the areas of education, the media and legislation.

Incentive

The recognition of Frisian in the Netherlands and Europe is an incentive for the preservation and development of Frisian language and culture. A growing market for literature, music and theatre productions has developed. Books in every literary genre are being written in Frisian and later translated into Dutch: Piter Terpstra (historical novels), Froukje Annema (psychological novels), Sietse de Vries (crime novels), Hylkje Goïnga (feminist stories), Douwe Kootstra (travel stories), Albertina Soepboer (poetry) and Eppie Dam (children's literature). Frisian bands such as De Kast and Twarres are popular outside of the province. Frisian films such as *Nynke* and *De Dream*, and productions performed by the Tryater theatre company are attracting a wide public in both Fryslân and the rest of the Netherlands.



During its 2003/2004 season, Tryater put on a family production of “Hansje Brinker” (photo). Every year, around 60,000 people attend theatre productions produced by Tryater, Fryslân’s only professional theatre company. Tryater offers both an international repertoire and original works given in the Frisian language for adults, young people and children. The performances – more than 700 a year – are given in various theatre halls, community centres, schools, gymnasiums, on location and in the company’s own theatre building in Leeuwarden.

Grutte Pier [grötəpi.əɾ]	‘Big Peter’
Leaver dea as slaaf [ljɛvərdl.əʊsla:f]	Death rather than slavery
Wurdboek [vödbuk]	dictionary
Jongfryske Mienskip [jɔŋfriskəmi.ənskɪp]	Young Frisian Fellowship
Fryske Akademy [friskəakade:mi]	Fryske Akademy
De Ried fan de Fryske Beweging [dəri.ətʃəndəfriskəbəve:gɪŋ]	Council for the Frisian Movement
Kneppelfreed [knɛpəlfre:t]	Truncheon Friday

Top ten best-sellers written in Frisian and translated into Dutch (listed here by their Dutch titles)

De Fuik (1966) is the classic written by popular author, Rink van der Velde. A sober story about a fisherman during World War II who refuses to give the Germans information even when it is obvious that his refusal no longer makes any difference, and in doing so becomes a 'hero without hope and glory'. Filmed in 2000 by Steven de Jong (also famous for his filming of *Kameleon*). Another book set against a World War II backdrop, *Gevaarlijk Ijs* (1981) by Tiny Mulder, is about the adventures of a family as seen through the eyes of a teen-age girl who gradually becomes involved in the resistance herself. A subtle book with a feeling for the absurd sides of life, *Vrijende Kikkers* (1985) written by Hylkje Goïnga is the story about Martha's struggle and the therapy she undergoes to disentangle herself from her selfish and deceitful husband. *Helden van de Armoe* (1984) by Hylke Speerstra provides fascinating stories about skating heroes – the kind of stories Dutch people love to read: rough and ready and full of deliciously written tall tales that are so good that you hope at least some of them are really true. Completely unlike this book is *Kikkerjaren* (2001) by Josse de Haan: a raw, grotesque book about the grim post-war years in a village where things were somewhat rougher than another book about village life (*Hoe God verdween uit Forwerd*) describes them. Also anti-idyllic is *Na de Klap* (2001) by T. Riemersma, the fascinating but oppressive story about a group of children who wander around in France *na de klap* ('after the blow' in reference to World War III). For an entertaining read written with a sense of humour similar to that of Havank (the pseudonym for Dutch author, H. van der Kallen), try the crime novel, *Moord in het Provinciehuis* (1999) by Frans and Tineke Steenmeijer. Included in the genre of children's literature are Akky van der Veer's *Zwart op Wit* (1985), a book written in the form of a diary of a 16-year-old girl who tells about her search for herself in which the events of her days are spoken of with a light-hearted touch, and Lida Dijkstra's *Wachten op Apollo* (2000) which is an ingenious and beautifully written update of six classic metamorphosis stories by Ovid. And those who would like to have a comprehensive collection of Frisian poetry down through the ages should get their hands on the substantial poetry anthology, *Fries Stamboek* (2000), compiled by Alpita de Jong.

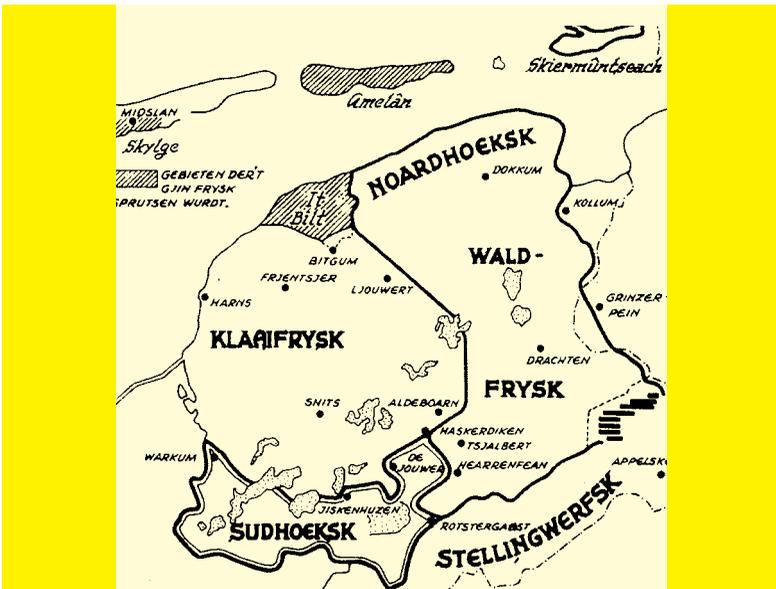
Frisian: a separate language

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Frisian meets a number of important criteria for being considered a separate language:

- It enjoys political recognition
- It has developed as a language over many centuries
- It has a rich vocabulary that differs considerably from Dutch
- It has its own combinations of vowels and consonants
- It has its own rules for word formation
- It has a standardised spelling and grammar
- It is spoken, sung and written
- It is used at home, in cultural expression and in public life
- It enjoys an official status

These are sound reasons indicating that Frisian is not a dialect but a real language. Dialects are simply regional versions of a language; Frisian also has its own versions: Klaaifrysk (or Clay Frisian, spoken



Language map from Nij yn Fryslân.

generally in the northwest), Wâldfrysk (spoken generally in the east), and Súd-Westhoeks (spoken generally in the southwest).

Relationship to other languages

Like Dutch, English and German, Frisian is a Germanic language. But as a coastal language, it is more closely related to English while Dutch is more closely related to German.

Frisian	English	German	Dutch
ús [üs]	us/our	uns	ons
tsiis [tsi:s]	cheese	Käse	kaas
boek [buk]	book	Buch	boek
skiep [skiəp]	sheep	Schafe	schapen
jier [(j)i.əɪ]	year	Jahr	jaar
twa [tva:]	two	zwei	twee

Frisian does not sound the same everywhere in Fryslân, but this does not mean that people can't understand one another.

Differences in pronunciation

Dutch	Klaaifrysk	Súd-Westhoeks	Wâldfrysk
zondag	snein	snain	sneen
zaterdag	sneon	sneon	saterdy
school	skoalle	skölle	skoalle
oog	each	each	êch
duim	tomme	tomme	túme

Urban Frisian (Stedsfrysk)

In Leeuwarden, Dokkum, Bolsward, Sneek, Stavoren, Harlingen and Franeker, in addition to Frisian, Urban Frisian is spoken, a mixed dialect composed predominantly of Dutch words with Frisian pronunciation. For monolingual Dutch people, this is fairly easy to understand. Urban Frisian developed during the 16th century as the result of trading con-

Stellingwerfs

Stellingwerfs is not a dialect. In addition to Frisian and Dutch, it is the third language spoken in Fryslân, namely in a small area consisting of the municipalities of Oost-Stellingwerf and West-Stellingwerf. The roots of the people living in these two municipalities differ from those of the rest of the province because with the conquering of Fryslân in 1498 by Albrecht of Saxony, this land was actually occupied. Modern Stellingwerfs is thus more closely related to certain other dialects (Drents, Gronings and Plautdietsch) than to Frisian.

Stellingwerfs is a very small language region: about one-third of the inhabitants in these two municipalities speak Stellingwerfs as their mother tongue, another third Frisian, and the rest Dutch. Like Frisian, Stellingwerfs has its own dictionary (published in 1994).

tacts. The city of Hindeloopen also has its own separate dialect of Frisian.

Bildts

Het Bildt is a polder region located to the northwest of Leeuwarden and dates back to the 16th century. It was here that the language spoken by the peasants from South Holland who came to work on creating these polders mixed with the Frisian spoken by the local farm workers to create this new mixed language: Bildts.

The Wadden Island dialects

People living on the Wadden Islands speak versions of Frisian, each of the mixed languages spoken on Ameland, Schiermonnikoog and Terschelling having their own characteristics. Terschelling has even more dialects, and the language spoken on Vlieland can hardly be considered Frisian or any dialect of it.

The guardian of the Frisian language

22

Since the borders between countries in Europe have fallen away, the country from which a person hails is becoming less important. Instead, people are focusing more on their own region, and this is why there is more attention being devoted to the languages spoken in these regions. Frisian has been recognised as a language not only within the Netherlands but also within Europe. No longer is Frisian just the language of hearth and home but also an official language used in public life. And this is having an impact. Frisian is becoming more and more the language of higher cultural expressions such as literature and theatre, and this provides a feeling of pride.

Turning the tide

But in spite of all the pride and status, without an active language policy, Frisian would be heading toward a downward spiral. And its existence is still being threatened. Frisian, just like other regional languages, is having a difficult time because its former boundaries have been flung open and mobility has increased enormously. While Fryslân was predominantly an agricultural province until the second half of the 20th century, the service sector is now the largest employer. People come to Fryslân to work while others leave it to study elsewhere or because they have found jobs elsewhere. While people used to organise on a provincial scale, today's organisations reach across provincial boundaries. And while marriages used to unite people who lived close to one another, today's marriage partners have often grown up in widely separated parts

Of all the people aged 12 and older living in Fryslân, the following percentages can:

	1994	1980	1967
understand Frisian	94%	94%	97%
speak Frisian	74%	73%	85%
read Frisian	64%	65%	69%
write Frisian	17%	11%	11%

Source: Taal yn Fryslân 1995 (Fryske Akademy)

of the country, many of these marriages involving partners who speak different languages. It is also known that the language spoken in these mixed-language marriages is usually Dutch.

To turn the tide against this negative development, the Province of Fryslân is stimulating agencies, organisations, companies and individuals to



Tsjêbbe Hettinga (born in 1949) is one of the most well-known Frisian poets today. This has much to do with his unique performance skills and the exceptionally high quality of his work. Hettinga achieved his international breakthrough during his performance at the Frankfurter Buchmesse in 1993. This was followed by many readings given at poetry festivals in such cities as Rotterdam, Brussels, Swansea and Barcelona. Hettinga's many published collections of poems include "Vreemde kusten/ Frjemde kusten" that was then translated into an English version. In 2001, he was awarded the most important prize for Frisian literature, the Gysbert Japicx Prize.

Various provincial awards named after famous Frisians who have made a name for themselves in a certain area include:

Gysbert Japickx Award: for the best literary work in Frisian in any genre

Fedde Schurer Award: for the best literary debut

Obe Postma Award: for the best literary translation

Simke Kloosterman Award: for the best Frisian children's book

Joost Halbertsma Award: for an exceptional scholarly achievement in the area of the Frisian language and culture

Pyt van der Zee Award: for the best Frisian amateur theatrical production

Vredeman de Vries Award: for the best design in Fryslân in the area of architecture and design

Bernlef Award: for the best song written in Frisian

strengthen the position of the Frisian language. The objectives for doing so in the upcoming period are re-established every few years, and the province provides the facilities, coordinates and encourages moves being made in this direction, and is even a model example itself. There are also subsidies for many developments and projects with this goal in mind.

Many projects are being supported at the provincial, national and European levels. Some examples are projects for the development of teaching methods for teaching Frisian, projects for the performing arts, for Frisian pages in dailies, and for Frisian television and radio broadcasts. And these opportunities are being seized left and right. There are also many provincial awards available within the cultural arena.

Frisian in government

25

Speaking and writing Frisian is a legal right, and everyone can make use of it. More and more Frisians see this as simply obvious. After all, by having as many people as possible speak Frisian, the language can continue to develop. The Province of Fryslân welcomes having Frisian spoken whenever possible. And this really is possible since more than ninety percent of the people living in Fryslân understand the language. All Frisians get – and take – the opportunity to express themselves in their own language. Sometimes, however, being able to understand one another requires some flexibility. Bilingual conversations and meetings occur on a regular basis. This is especially true when emotions run high – emotions that are difficult to express except in your own mother tongue.

Between government and citizen

Questions, complaints and the sharing of information: citizens who have something to tell the government can do so in Frisian. And the municipalities and the province also have the right to address citizens in Frisian. Bilingual meetings of the municipalities and the province are more the rule than the exception. What is said in Frisian is also recorded in the minutes in Frisian. Provincial civil servants and often municipal civil servants who do not speak Frisian are attending Frisian language courses (as required or not) so that they can at least understand Frisian-speaking citizens.

Naturally, consideration is taken of people who do not speak Frisian. Nevertheless, they are expected to master the language as soon as possible and, in any case, to understand it.

Official documents

Official written documents such as byelaws, policy regulations, notarial instruments and judicial decisions may be written in Frisian. The law also stipulates that documents must be translated for interested parties as necessary.

Toponyms

Many toponyms have been heavily influenced by Dutch over time. Nowadays, municipalities can choose whether to keep the more Dutch version of their name or to use a more Frisian version. A number of



Municipality limits sign for Ferwert/Ferwerderadiel. The Municipality of Ferwerderadiel chose to use official Frisian names for this purpose.

them – Boarnsterhim, Littenseradiel, Ferwerderadiel and Tytjerksteradiel – have already opted for the Frisian version. This means that the Dutch name of Roordahuizum has now become Reduzum on official road signs marking the village's boundaries, Grouw is now Grou, and Oosterend has become Easterein. The province, too, officially changed its name from Friesland to Fryslân in 1997. Waterways have also regained their original Frisian names, and a number of municipalities now have official Frisian street names. The result is that route plans and road maps are also becoming more Frisian.

Family names

Like toponyms, many family names have also been changed to make them more Dutch over time. Families who once wrote their name as Dykstra began being included in the register of births, deaths and mar-

riages as Dijkstra. It is now possible, however, to change these families names officially back into their Frisian versions.

Marriage

Civil marriages in Fryslân can be conducted in either Frisian or Dutch, and the marriage certificate can be drawn up in both Frisian and Dutch. Couples can request a Frisian-speaking civil servant to conduct the ceremony, and newly married couples receive a bilingual marriage booklet as well.

Documents drawn up by civil law notaries

Many notarial instruments such as wills, mortgages, divorce documents, guardianships, etc. can be drawn up in Frisian.

In court

Defendants and witnesses have the right to speak in Frisian during court sessions in Fryslân. Frisian can also play a role before the family court, civil court, subdistrict court and the administrative court. The court determines whether an interpreter is needed. When it comes to criminal sessions conducted outside of Fryslân, Frisian may be spoken but only when a defendant or witness can demonstrate that he/she cannot express him/herself adequately in Dutch.

Frisian at school

28

As stated in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, every child has the right to be educated in his/her mother tongue. Education conducted in a child's mother tongue is important for the child's development. After all, we learn to read and write easier and faster in the language spoken at home. In addition, education in Frisian also plays a general educational role: children who already speak Frisian can expand upon their possibilities in the language while children who do not come from Frisian-speaking homes will be able to orient themselves to a bilingual society and Frisian culture. Frisian for all children and young people – from pre-school through secondary school and vocational education – is simply a part of life in Fryslân.

Advantages

Because Frisian is a standard part of the education received by everyone aged 6 through 20, children can prepare effectively for life in a bilingual society. A person's position on the Frisian labour market is simply stronger, particularly in social and commercial professions, if he/she has a thorough knowledge of this language. A mastery of Frisian is also useful for engaging in sports and for memberships in various associations and clubs. Finally, a sound education in Frisian is important for the survival of the language.

The young child

In many cases, preparations for a bilingual society start even before primary school. In addition to Dutch, Frisian is spoken at many pre-school and childcare facilities. There are also a number of decidedly Frisian-speaking agencies.

Primary education

All children attending primary school or special education in Fryslân, including those who were not born in Fryslân or who speak another language, learn both Dutch and Frisian. In the lower grades of secondary education (a national core curriculum for the lower secondary level), Frisian is a required subject.

The key objectives for learning both Frisian and Dutch are the same: the

pupils should achieve a complete mastery of both languages: comprehension and speaking, reading and writing. In practice, however, this goal is usually not achieved. Only one hour a week devoted to teaching Frisian is not sufficient for this. Helping to balance this situation, however, is the fact that Frisian is often the language used in teaching environmental studies and music education in the primary schools.



Tomke is the name of a long-term project intended to promote language skills among children up to four years of age. Because language is an essential element for communication, this project is being implemented throughout the province and is intended to promote the use of the second official language of the Netherlands, Frisian, in an entertaining way among parents, pre-school teachers and children. Elements in the project include books for children to read (and to be read to) at home and television broadcasts of the adventures of the little hero Tomke, his dog Romke and the book kangaroo Kornelia. Informational evenings, workshops and supplementary material are available for the pre-school teachers. Frisian libraries devote attention to the project during their special pre-schooler month. By now, it's almost impossible to find a pre-schooler who doesn't know who Tomke is!

The broadcasts of educational radio and television programmes in Frisian are also useful in promoting this language among pupils, as are the special magazines that accompany the TV programmes.

With the introduction of English in primary education, the trilingual school has made its debut in Fryslân. A number of primary schools are currently experimenting with a model in which, in the upper grades, 40% of the teaching and speaking is done in Dutch, 40% in Frisian and 20% in English. This trilingual model is also being used in other European regions where a minority language is spoken.

Secondary school

In the upper classes of pre-vocational secondary education, senior general secondary education and pre-university education, Frisian is an



De Tsjelke in Holwerd is one of the seven Frisian primary schools where the Trilingual Primary School Project is in operation.

elective course for the final examination. The dozens of pupils who choose to include Frisian in their examination subjects every year should form a social elite – the ones who can use Frisian at a high level in both speech and writing. Such an elite group is necessary for the development and thus the preservation of the language.

Vocational education

Frisian as a required subject requires instructors who can teach in Frisian. Teacher training courses for those teaching in primary schools in Fryslân thus devote attention to Frisian. These students can obtain a special qualification in Frisian that is necessary for teaching in primary schools.

The Institute for Professional Education NHL offers a course of study to become an instructor of Frisian at the secondary school level. The University of Groningen offers a course of education leading to a grade one teaching qualification (grade one teachers are qualified to teach at all levels of secondary education) and a post-doctoral education.

Frisian at work

32

At many workplaces, both Frisian and Dutch can be heard, these languages functioning side by side without any problems. Often, however, it is handy to use Frisian. After all, for effective communication with another person, it is simply sensible to be open to his or her mother tongue. Frisians really appreciate it when Dutch-speaking people take the effort to address them in their own language.

Effective salespersons are good at sensing which language their customer would prefer to speak and can then enthusiastically and convincingly commend their wares in the customer's mother tongue.

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Advertisement in the Leeuwarder Courant for an office clerk.

People who work for the government or in the schools cannot do their work without good writing and speaking skills in Frisian. Personnel advertisements placed by the private sector regularly request knowledge of Frisian as well.

In the physical and mental health care sector, Frisian is increasingly seen as part of being able to deal professionally with patients and clients. Vulnerable people are benefited by being approached in their own language. A focus on the patient or client has been the motto of this sector for many years, so approaching them in their own language is essential as well. Caregivers, physicians, social workers and nursing personnel are taking lessons in Frisian if they are not already competent in the language. This way, they can simply use Frisian when explaining things to the elderly who often have trouble with Dutch. This is also important when calming children who may be afraid of a medical procedure. Frisian also plays an important role in certain care projects. Aphasia patients (people who can barely if at all speak due to medical reasons), for example, who speak Frisian can then receive speech therapy in Frisian during their rehabilitation. For this purpose, Frisian exercise methods as well as testing and exercise material have been developed.



Language has become a quality aspect in the care-giving professions. Caregivers, doctors, social workers and nurses are taking lessons in Frisian if they do not as yet have a command of the language. In this way, they can explain things to the elderly who often have trouble with Dutch. They can also reassure children who might be afraid of a medical procedure by speaking in the child's own familiar language.

Frisian in the media

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You will be confronted with Frisian in the media everywhere in Fryslân. Anyone tuning in to the regional radio broadcaster will hear it straightaway: “This is Omrop Fryslân”. Practically all of its broadcasts, including educational television and radio programmes for the schools, are in Frisian. Omrop Fryslân attracts many viewers and listeners. Several municipalities have their own local broadcasting station that often broadcasts in Frisian.



With a daily listening audience of 150,000 and a daily viewing audience of 93,000, Omrop Fryslân is a popular broadcasting company that would be sorely missed if it were to disappear from the Frisian media. Officially, Omrop Fryslân broadcasts in Frisian but it often has to include Dutch as well. After all, people being interviewed for the radio and TV have to be able to answer in Dutch. But whenever possible, programmes are presented in Frisian. The broadcasting company is also one of the most important means of upholding Frisian language and culture. Omrop Fryslân has an annual turnover of 12,000,000 euros and its annual income from advertising is 1,500,000 euros (2004). The broadcasting company's website at www.omropfryslan.nl provides news and background information.



There is no escaping the Friesian language in the newspapers published in Fryslân – both dailies and regional circulars. They carry features, advertisements, and columns written in Friesian, and articles written in Dutch often quote people in Friesian. There are also magazines written in Friesian for various target groups.

New media are providing new opportunities. The Internet is helping to keep the Friesian language and culture alive beyond the borders of Friesland as well. Frisians from the United States to Kuala Lumpur can experience their Friesian identity easily and inexpensively simply by surfing the net. There are even start pages in Friesian, examples being www.fryskebeweging.nl/frysyk, www.fryhoo.nl and www.frysk.cjb.net. Tresoar's website at (www.tresoar.nl) attracts an enormous number of visitors from Friesland and elsewhere who want to know more about their Friesian forefathers. The same goes for Omrop Fryslân's website (www.omropfryslan.nl) and those of both dailies, the Leeuwarder Courant (www.leeuwardercourant.nl) and the Friesch Dagblad (www.frieschdagblad.nl) . The websites run by the Fryske Akademy (www.fryske-akademy.nl) and the Afûk (www.afuk.nl) are also consulted frequently in regard to questions about the Friesian language and culture.

Frisian in culture

36

Culture is the result of human activity that involves both creators and performers on the one hand and audiences on the other. The more people who participate, the richer the culture. And the fact that Frisian culture is very much alive is absolutely undeniable. With Fryslân's many professionals and 175 amateur drama societies, 250 bands and 500 choirs, the province has a resplendent Frisian-speaking cultural life.

Theatre and cabaret

Fryslân has always had its share of theatrical companies. Perhaps the most famous professional theatrical company to perform in Frisian these days is Tryater (founded in 1966). Performing a variety of classics as well as popular drama (both of which are sometimes translated into Frisian), this company reaches a large public: with an audience of more than 50,000 to 60,000 a year, Tryater is one of the best attended companies in the Netherlands. Its special on-site spectacle pieces given in such locations as a football stadium, and an equine centre attract both national and international attention.

Fryslân's many amateur companies throughout the province often have their roots in the 19th century. Many villages – and there are lots of villages in Fryslân – have their own drama society. Theatre is also included in the activities of other kinds of associations. In earlier days, temperance groups and socialists propounded their ideas by means of theatrical productions. Sports associations enlivened their season with farces and comedies – and still do so today. Also helping to keep Frisian traditions alive are the drama societies located outside of the province that perform in Frisian.

Every year, many Frisians look forward to the summer, the time for the Iepenloftspul. These open-air performances are now known throughout the Netherlands and also attract many tourists. The roots of the Iepenloftspul go back to 1953 when an open-air performance was given in the garden of the civil-law notary in the village of Jorwert for the purpose of thanking the population for contributing money to restore the collapsed church tower. Another open-air theatrical performance for children has been given every year since 1989 in the village of



Tens of thousands of people in Fryslân attend open-air theatre productions every year. This is a scene from “Romeo and Juliet” produced by Iepenloftspul Burgum.

Oosterwierum. Other villages where open-air performances are given include Wergea, Burgum, Dronryp and the Municipality of Opsterland.

Cabaret is an art form that, although less practised in Fryslân, is of very high quality. During the 1950s, Tetman de Vries and his company were all the rage. Today, Rients Gratama, Leny Dijkstra and Teake van der Meer are bringing the house down.

Frisian books

Fryslân has its own literary tradition that includes literature in every genre. There are also writers of Frisian origin such as Theun de Vries who describe daily life in Fryslân in beautiful Dutch. In addition, many books for children and youth have either been written in Frisian or

translated into Frisian from other languages. Every year, the five publishing companies in Fryslân publish a total of about one hundred books written in Frisian, and more than 60,000 people buy 90,000 books in Frisian.

Frisian books are highly promoted, a good example being the annual *Sutelaksje*. During this campaign, volunteers take wheelbarrows filled with Frisian books and sell them door to door for six weeks. The *Sutelaksje* is followed closely in the media, and sales figures indicate a strong involvement among the Frisian people. It is also during this period that a diversity of lectures and literary evenings are held. Another event is the book week devoted to Frisian books. Just as in the rest of the Netherlands, an author is invited to write a book (in Frisian, of course) to be given away as a gift by bookshops during this week. During another period of the year, activities focusing on children's books written originally in Frisian are held, and the writing of a children's book is commissioned every year.

Music

People have been singing in Frisian for centuries. Musical lyrics written in Frisian have been popular since the end of the 19th century, and pop music written in Frisian has been listed on the hit parade since the end of the 20th century. Music with Frisian lyrics ranges from classical, to blues and jazz, to the very latest musical movements. Many children's songs have also been written in Frisian. At this time, pop songs in Frisian are particularly popular, both nationally and internationally. Naturally, there are also many bands in Fryslân that play and sing in Frisian. A pop group by the name of *Reboelje* is even creating Frisian rock operas. And to stimulate Frisian song writing, a Frisian song festival (*Liet*) is held every year.

Film

Frisian film is popular within Fryslân and beyond its borders. Frisian films such as *De Fûke* (2000, about a Frisian fisherman during World War II), *De Gouden Swipe* (1996) and *De Dream* (1985, about the Hogerhuis trial) were broadcast with subtitles on national TV. The

Frisian film *Nynke* (2001, about the wife of Piter Jelles Troelstra) played in many cinemas in the Netherlands and other countries.

Iepenloftspul [i.əpənloftspöl]	open-air theatre
Wergea [vɛrgl.ə]	Wergea
Dronryp [dronrip]	Dronrijp
Sutelaksje [sütəlaksjə]	annual book promotion activity
In nije dei [ənɛjədəi]	A new day
Wêr bisto? [vɛ:(r)bɪsto:]	Where are you?
De Fûke [dəfukə]	The trap
De Gouden Swipe [dəɡɔ.udənsvipə]	The golden whip
De Dream [dədrɪ.əm]	The dream

Frisian in sports

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When emotions run high in Fryslân, Frisian will soon be heard – especially when it comes to sports. Fryslân has a number of typical Frisian sports: keatsen, fierljeppen, ringriden with pitch-black Friesian horses, and skûtsjesilen with a running commentary in Frisian provided by Omrop Fryslân being an essential element. Whether or not aaisykjen should also listed as an official sport is questionable, but you cannot escape around the fact that finding the first lapwing egg is just as characteristic for Fryslân as its other sports. And where is a better place to practice a popular national sport such as skating than in Fryslân with its world-famous Eleven-City Race?

Keatsen [kɪ.ətsən]

ball game resembling 'Fives'

Fierljeppen [fi.ərɫjɛpən]

pole jumping over ditches

Aaisykje [aɪsɪkjə]

lapwing egg hunting



During their visit to Fryslân in 2001, Crown Prince Willem-Alexander and Princess Máxima also stopped to look at the Eleven-city Monument located along the route of the Eleven-City Tour. Willem-Alexander's photo also appears at the bridge as a reminder that he once skated this gruelling ice skating marathon when he was 18 years old. Artists Bas Lugthart and Maree Blok invited everyone who had ever skated in this tour to send them a photo of themselves. The artists then created individual ceramic tiles with these images and used them to create a much larger assembly of tiles representing a skater on the bridge.

Frisian in the arts and sciences

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The Frisian language and culture is being subjected to scholarly study at various institutions.

Fryske Akademy

Since 1938, Fryslân has had its own scientific research and educational centre: the Fryske Akademy in Leeuwarden.

Scholarly research into the Frisian language and culture is important not just for accumulating scholarly information but also for Frisian identity, the Frisian cultural community and the status of Frisian as a language. Studied at the Fryske Akademy are the Frisian language and literature, the history of Fryslân, and the socio-cultural developments within the province. The institution employs such professionals as linguists, literary scholars and social scientists.

Almost all studies correlate and compare the language and culture in Fryslân with those in such countries as the Netherlands or other European minority populations. These studies show that the Frisian language and culture, as unique as they are, are not an island unto themselves.

The Fryske Akademy is also responsible for compiling and publishing the *Woordenboek van de Friese Taal / Wurdboek fan de Fryske Taal* (dictionary of the Frisian language).

Tresoar

Tresoar is an institution devoted to preserving the Frisian cultural heritage, exhibiting it to the public, and making it available on loan when possible. Tresoar was created by a merger of the Provincial Library, the National Archives in Fryslân, and the Frisian Literary Museum and Documentation Centre. Here is the place where all kinds of items of interest for Fryslân are collected: from literary and historic background material about writers using Modern Frisian; to historic pictorial material about Fryslân; to old charters, documents and books published in or about Fryslân. Tresoar also has many databases and archives available for such purposes as genealogical or history research by both amateurs and professionals.



Tresoar is a unique archive, library and museum all in one with a large collection in the field of Frisian history, linguistics and literature. Its educational personnel act as a public information service for such recipients as schools (as seen here). Tresoar has more than 600,000 books in its catalogue and around 250,000 descriptions of items in its archive. In addition, it has 200,000 prints, maps and photographs and a museum collection containing 2000 objects. Altogether, Tresoar has about 25 kilometres of material on its shelves and in its cabinets. With its oldest object dating back to the year 836 A.D., Tresoar's collection bridges almost twelve centuries. The collection can be consulted in a special reading room as well as at its website at: www.tresoar.nl. This website attracts an enormous number of visitors from Friesland and elsewhere who want to know more about their Frisian forefathers because Tresoar also has an easily accessible archive of marriage and birth certificates.

Frisian across the border

43

Frisian is spoken not just in Fryslân but also in the German states of Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen. And it is also spoken in countries such as the United States, Australia and Canada – the countries to which many Frisians emigrated in the 1950s.

In Germany

From the 6th to the 8th century, Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen were part of the Frisian kingdom on the coast of the North Sea, a kingdom that stretched from Zeeuws-Vlaanderen to Denmark. Like the Frisian used in Fryslân, German-Frisian originated from Old Frisian. Once the Frisian kingdom had collapsed, however, contacts between Fryslân and these German states disappeared so that the Frisian used in Fryslân and in Germany followed their own paths of development. Over the centuries, German-Frisian has been heavily influenced by German and Plautdietsch.

North Frisian

People living in an area known as North Friesland within the German state of Schleswig-Holstein speak what is known as North Frisian. This language consists of many dialects that are very much unlike one another. These differences are sometimes so great that people speaking different dialects can scarcely understand one another. In general, these dialects can be classified into two groups: 'island North Frisian' and 'continental North Frisian'. Only 10,000 people speak a form of North Frisian. In the coastal region, North Frisian is an instrument used by the local population to maintain its own identity among the thousands of tourists.

North-Frisian	Frisian	Dutch
<i>Ströntistel is min bloom</i>	<i>Strântiksel is myn blom</i>	<i>Stranddistel is mijn bloem</i>
<i>Ströntistel neem's uk mi</i>	<i>Strântiksel neame se ek my</i>	<i>Stranddistel noemen ze ook mij</i>
<i>Jü gröört üp dünemsôn</i>	<i>Hy groeit op it dunesân</i>	<i>Hij groeit op het duinenzand</i>
<i>Ik üp des leewents-strôn</i>	<i>Ik op myn libbensstrân</i>	<i>Ik op mijn levensstrand</i>
<i>En proter haa wat biid!</i>	<i>En stikels ha wy beide!</i>	<i>En stekels hebben wij beiden!</i>

Poem by Jens E. Mungard (1885-1940)

44 Saterlandic

Today's Saterland lies not fifty kilometres beyond the Dutch border in Germany. It is a region that includes three villages and is the last remaining area of what used to be a very large region where people spoke East-Frisian. For a long time, Saterland itself was quite isolated from other populations since its surrounding high moors were almost impenetrable. During the French occupation, however, a road to the south was built so that the land was no longer so cut off from the outside world. Later, early in the twentieth century, peat diggers came to Saterland from other regions to excavate the peat from the high moors. Although these events provided the people living in Saterland with more and more contacts with others, Saterlandic was still the colloquial language until around 1950. Nonetheless, more and more parents started having their children educated in German so that Saterlandic is now spoken only by around 2250 people, most of them being elderly.



An enormous Frisian reunion was held in Fryslân during the summer of 2000. Tens of thousands of Frisians from every continent in the world returned to their fatherland with one of their leading priorities being to hear their native language being spoken once again. Activities for this reunion were organised throughout Fryslân, from village reunions to the Slachte Marathon, from photographic exhibitions to spectacles of music and dance. One of the most impressive productions was an opera production of "Orfeo Aqua" that was presented on and in the water.

From Siberia to Mexico

Due to emigration to faraway lands, Frisian or closely related languages and dialects are now spoken in the far corners of the world. Well-known emigrants were the first Mennonites who left around 1530 from the Dutch-German border region to Prussia, taking their Low Frankish, Low Saxon and Frisian dialects with them. Due to their contacts with the Prussian population, a mixed dialect developed known as Plautdietsch.

Invited by Catherine the Great, many of these Mennonites settled in the south of Russia at the end of the eighteenth century. Later, around 1870 when their original privileges were encroached upon, many left to settle in Canada. Another wave of emigration took place after the Russian Revolution of 1917. From Canada, many Mennonites later emigrated to Mexico; other groups settled in Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. In this way, Plautdietsch has spread to regions all over the world. Recent emigrants have also distributed the Frisian language to places throughout the world. In the 1950s, many Frisians emigrated to

Fragment of a song, 'De farjoasnaacht' (The spring night), written in a Siberian Mennonite village:

Plautdietsch	Fries	Nederlânsk
<i>Daun bliide kretjt de aapelbim de tulpe en de fleida.</i>	<i>Doe bloeiden krekt de apelbeam de tulpen en de flier.</i>	<i>Toen bloeiden net de appelboom de tulpen en de vlierbes</i>
<i>Daun sjtunde aule krusjtjebim en eare wundaboare drim en wite blumetjeida.</i>	<i>Doe stiene alle parrebeammen yn harren wûnderbaarlike dream yn wyt blommekleed.</i>	<i>En alle perenbomen stonden in hun wonderbare droom in wit bloemenkleed.</i>

Australia, Canada and the United States. Some of them chose to speak English, even among themselves. Others, however, cherished their *memmetaal* (mother tongue) as being a worthwhile part of *thús* (feeling at home) away from home. Some returned to Fryslân with homesickness in their hearts. Others stayed on and became successful immigrants. Now, with the many means of communication available, their Frisian may have become influenced by English but can still be kept up to date. Often, however, the third generation no longer speaks Frisian.

Feeling at home in Fryslân

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Anyone moving to another part of the country hopes to make new friends and acquaintances quickly. A good way to feel at home soon in Fryslân is to learn the Frisian language. Anyone can learn Frisian. The language itself is not difficult, and the Afûk has excellent courses for both newcomers and for Frisians who want to delve more deeply into their own language.

The Afûk's bookstore is the only bookstore specialised in Frisian books. Everything that is both available and related to the Frisian language is sold in this shop at the foot of the Oldehove in Leeuwarden. In addition, the Afûk also publishes Frisian books itself; these are primarily Frisian teaching materials, books for children and young people, and literary works.

The Stipepunt Frysk provides information and advice about the use of the Frisian language by government agencies, companies, institutions and private individuals. Since 1994, the Stipepunt has also been filling an entire page ("the F page") written in Frisian in the Leeuwarder Courant and the Friesch Dagblad. In addition, since 2002 it has been publishing a quarterly multilingual magazine in the series entitled "Fryske Tematydskriften". These magazines are available free of charge at Frisian town halls and libraries.



Most newcomers to Fryslân will be advised to start tuning in to the radio broadcasts provided by Omrop Fryslân as soon as they settle in and to take lessons in Frisian at the Afûk. This is sound advice, too, since these are the fastest and easiest ways to be able to understand Frisian and then to be able to read and speak the language. There are even special classes for newcomers, for more advanced learners and for people who want to teach or who want to dig deeper into history and literature. And there are even more specialised courses for police officers, medical personnel and civil servants.

Important addresses and websites:

Province of Fryslân

Address: Tweebaksmarkt 52, 8911 KZ Leeuwarden/Ljouwert

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