

Taal
fan it
hert

Everything about Fryslân, Frisians
and their language of the heart

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LANGUAGE OF THE HEART

Frisian plays an important role in the province. It is the *first language* of more than half of the province's inhabitants and is used to the full in everyday life. Frisian is spoken in many places: in the supermarket, at schools, at the doctor's surgery and at sports grounds; *you'll come across Frisian everywhere*. It is the language of home and hearth – the language you use for laughter or for expressing your anger. It is the language that comes closest to your feelings – **the language of the heart.**

INTRODUCTION

The past few decades have witnessed a considerable increase in the use of Frisian in a variety of spheres, such as education and healthcare. Frisians have fought to improve the status of Frisian, which has resulted today in substantial changes concerning attitudes to Frisian within Frisian society.

Whereas it was once the case that people felt it inappropriate to use Frisian in conversations with their doctor or in a court of law, nowadays people's views are quite different on the matter. What better way is there of expressing yourself than in your own language? Indeed, scarcely anywhere could this be more important than in the courtroom or in healthcare.

Frisian now also has a clear status within education. Children are straightforwardly taught several languages side-by-side, and their mother tongue is seen as an important part of their development.

The objective of the Province of Fryslân is not only to preserve the Frisian language, but also to support and promote its use.

The intention of this publication, **Taal fan it hert (Language of the heart)**, is to provide a deeper understanding about Frisian and about the role of the language in everyday life, ranging from education to healthcare and from culture to government. We have included interviews with Frisian speakers, as well as background information concerning the historical origins of Frisian. Moreover, we shall also be discussing the role played by the Province of Fryslân, such as its policy directed towards increasing public awareness about and acceptance of Frisian.

The app **Taal fan it hert** has been designed to accompany the booklet. The app contains additional information (including photos and video footage) on subjects covered in the booklet. For example, you can explore in greater detail the Frisian regional languages of Bildts and Stellingwerfs, or you can discover more about Old Frisian law and the ancient Wijnaldum brooch, and there is information available about various famous Frisians of great significance to the Frisian language and to Frisian culture, such as Eise Eisinga, Marijke Muoi and Douwe Kalma.

As you read through the booklet you can simultaneously pick up further information via the app. Icons like this appear alongside different topics.

theatre

By scanning these icons with your smartphone your app will take you straight to more information on that subject. Isn't that useful?



The app also includes a walking route, which guides you past different buildings in Leeuwarden. All these buildings house important Frisian institutions, such as the Afûk, the Fryske Akademy and Tresoar, or else have played an important role in the history of Frisian or Frisian culture, such as the Court of Appeal and the Fries Museum (Museum of Fryslân) on the Wilhelminaplein. You'll also pass by many statues in the city centre: sculptures of Frisians of major significance to the Frisian language, such as Waling Dijkstra, as well as other famous Frisians such as Pieter Jelles Troelstra and Mata Hari.

In short, read the booklet, watch the videos, do the walking route and in no time you'll become an expert about Fryslân, the Frisians and their language of the heart.

“It begjint by de *Friezen* sels
om de taal te brûken
en dêr *grutsk* op te wêzen.”

The King's Commissioner for the Province of Fryslân, drs. A.A.M. Brok

“The initiative to use the language and take pride in
it starts with the Frisians themselves.”

SPEAKING AND TEXTING

People can be heard speaking Frisian throughout the province. Most Frisians speak Frisian, and almost all of the province's approximately 650,000 inhabitants can understand the language. This means that you'll come across Frisian everywhere in everyday life.

Some Frisians find it difficult to persist with speaking Frisian when the other party is speaking to them in Dutch. Out of politeness the Frisian speaker will then switch over to Dutch. However, this is unnecessary; as mentioned previously, most of Fryslân's population can understand Frisian very well.

Half of all Frisians are able to read Frisian easily. Written Frisian is encountered in a variety of situations. This could be in the Frisian media and Frisian-language literature, but equally you might find it on any street. Examples include the province's Frisian place-name signs.

However, a small proportion of Frisians have a good written command of their language. This proportion has been steadily increasing in recent years. The explanation for this positive trend lies with the increasing use of social media. When communicating

via WhatsApp, for example, many people are using the language that they actually speak in everyday life with their friends and family. Consequently, they often write out Frisian words that reflect how they pronounce them, producing a sometimes less than faultless result.

Some Frisians are upset by this, but the alternative view is that the increasing use of Frisian in social media may also be a sign of the great vitality of the Frisian language. A language is constantly in evolution. In informal interactions people are less 'anxious' about writing in their native language, even if they write it imperfectly. It lowers the perceived barrier to writing Frisian. After all, it would be rather odd to message your friend or mother in Dutch when, under normal circumstances, you always speak to them in Frisian.



FRISIAN IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Along with the increasing number of Frisians who are writing in Frisian, there is also an increasing need for tools designed to help people with writing their language. Various apps and tools have been developed, such as spellcheckers and online dictionaries.

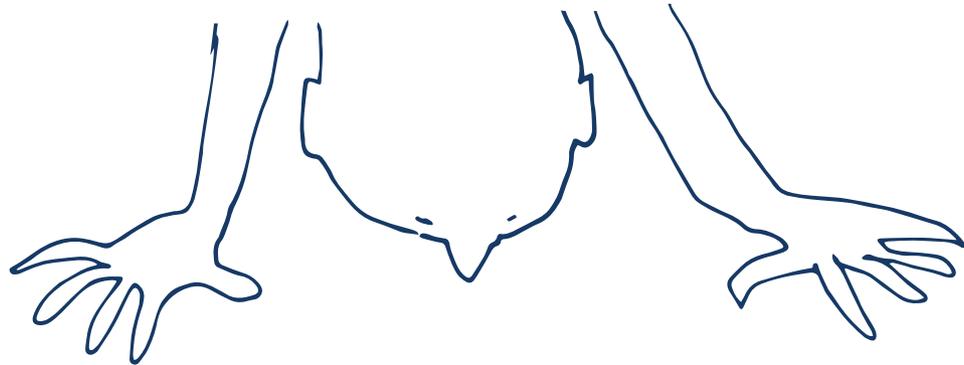
For a minority language such as Frisian it is important to have a platform in the digital world. It demonstrates not only the language's vitality, but also its contemporary relevance. Moreover, it helps to expand the use and visibility of the language.

This is why it's so important that Frisian is among the languages offered by the Google Translate translation machine. Google Translate allows you to translate words and sentences from and into more than 100 languages, and since 2016 this has also included Frisian.

Frisians have invested a huge amount of time and energy to achieve this. In the 'Fryske Google Translate Wike' (Frisian Google Translate Week), more than one million words were translated from English to Frisian thanks to hard work put in by Frisian men and women. Enough for the inclusion of Frisian in Google Translate. That shows just how great a small-scale language can be!

Frisian words
 oersette = to translate
 geef = correct
 snoadfoan = smartphone
 grutsk = proud
 memmetaal = mother tongue
 heitelân = fatherland
 bakje kofje = cup of coffee
 staveringshifker = spellchecker





LANGUAGE OR DIALECT

Many Frisians feel annoyed when their language is referred to as a dialect. The fact is that Frisian is not a dialect but an officially recognised language. But what is the difference exactly between a language and a dialect?

The debate about languages and dialects often touches on raw nerves. From a linguistic perspective there is no difference between the two. Each one has a grammar, its own sounds and its own pronunciation. People can construct sentences and be clearly understood as much in a language as in a dialect.

So in that case just what is the specific difference between a language and a dialect? Above all else it is tied up with politics, the value that people attach to a language and the way in which people use the language. Linguistic divergence also plays a role in this. The more a given language resembles another, the greater the

likelihood that both languages will be seen as variants of each other. In such cases, it may be that one language comes to be viewed as a dialect of the other. One such example is Zeelandic, which is a regional variant of Dutch.

Frisian is the only language in the Netherlands, alongside Dutch, to have been recognised as the official second national language. Historically, Frisian has undergone a linguistic evolution and possesses a rich vocabulary that differs from Dutch. This is different in the case of dialects, which are regional variants of a language.

Frisian meets a number of important criteria relating to its status as a language:

- political recognition
- the language has a status
- it has evolved linguistically over time
- it has a rich vocabulary that differs from Dutch
- it has its own combinations of vowels and consonants
- it has its own rules concerning the formation of words
- it has standardised spelling and grammar
- it is spoken and written
- it is spoken not only in the private sphere but also officially in public life and in other contexts, e.g. in the cultural sphere like on television and in literature

What a charming dialect you all speak.

No, Frisian is a language!

A RICH LANGUAGE

The Frisian language is often singled out for its wealth of sounds and tonal musicality. The reason for this is that Frisian has more vowel sounds than, say, Dutch. For example, Frisian contains diphthongs (buorlju; woartel = neighbours; root/carrot) and even thriphthongs (muoike; boaiem = aunt; bottom/ground). Certain consonantal compounds at the beginning of words are also typically Frisian: stj- (stjoer; stjer = steering (wheel)/handlebar; star); tsj- (tsjettel; tsjuster = boiler/kettle; dark); sj- (sjippe; sjerp = soap; syrup); sk- (skelk; skoalle = apron; school), and gn- (gnize; gnibbelje = to laugh; to nibble).

On the other hand, some consonants are not used as initial letters in Frisian: c, q, v, x and z. However, v or z can appear in the middle of a word (drave; raze = to run; to scream/shout) and c is used a great deal in 'ch' compounds (each = eye). This results in Frisian not using 26 letters in its alphabet, as in English, but 24 instead, because q and x are superfluous.

Another immediately noticeable feature of any Frisian text is its use of many diacritical marks: circumflexes and accents above vowels. These are used to indicate pronunciation and where to place the stress in a word. Circumflexes can be used above an a, e, o or u (bêd; mûs; âlde; rôle; sûn = bed; mouse; old; role; healthy). The acute accent can be used above either an e or u (grouwêlich; út = excessive; out/from). The

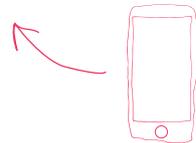
grave accent is used only in foreign loan words (appèl = appeal).

Frisian is spoken throughout the whole of Fryslân, but there are identifiable regional differences within the language. A notable three-way split exists in Frisian based on geographical differences in pronunciation: Klaaifrysk (Clay Frisian), Wâldfrysk (Wood Frisian) and Súdwesthoeksk (Southwest Quarter). Despite these differences all Frisians are able to understand one another with ease.

The map on the next page shows phonetically written examples of pronunciation differences.

Frisian language

Are 'kompjûter' and 'koese' really Frisian words?



Komst saterdei
ek op it feest?

Are you coming to the party, too,
on **Saturday**?

Jawis, ik haw
sin oan sneon!

Definitely, I'm looking forward
to **Saturday**!

Mei ik de
tusearten?

May I have some **beans**?

Lekker hin,
dy beantsjes?

Those **beans** taste good, don't they?

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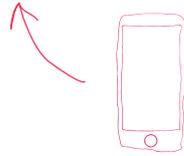


IN EDUCATION

Being taught in the *mother tongue* is **important to children's** development. Children learn more easily and get to grips with *reading* and *writing* faster when they do this first of all in their mother tongue. Nowadays, Frisian has become a *permanent feature* within education.

education

Is Frisian
education boring?
Not in the slightest!



FROM BABYHOOD TO ADULTHOOD

All Frisians are confronted with multiple languages in their everyday lives. Linguistic diversity is seen as an asset and as an opportunity for children's educational development. Children are introduced to Frisian from the very day of their birth.

When registering their new-born child with the municipality, the parents receive a gift that includes a multilingual first reader as well as information about language development and bringing up children in a multilingual environment.

■ www.heitenmem.nl

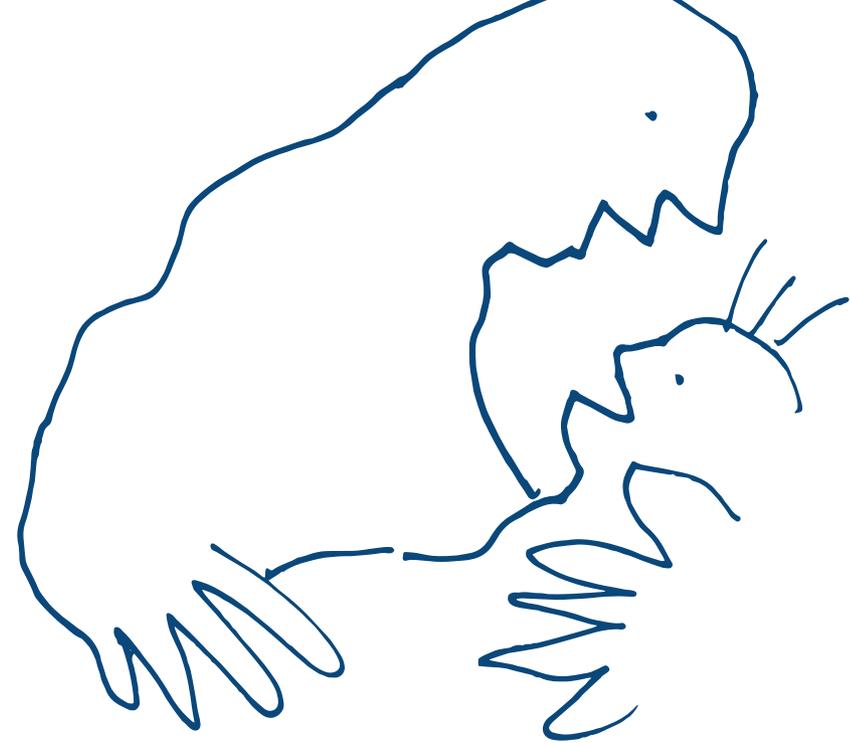
Frisian also plays an important part at preschools and nurseries that look after toddlers and very young children. At many such places, Frisian is also spoken in addition to Dutch. There are also several Frisian-speaking preschools and nurseries, where nothing but Frisian is used. Nursery teachers speak to the children in their own language and use songs and books to help introduce the children to Frisian.

■ www.sfbo.nl/engels

All children attending primary school in Fryslân learn Dutch and Frisian. This applies equally to children who were not born in Fryslân or who speak another language at home. In Fryslân there are also 'trilingual primary schools'. Pupils at these primary schools attend classes given in Dutch, Frisian and English.

In secondary education, the subject of Frisian is mandatory for all students in their first year at the very least. At a number of schools Frisian can be chosen as an examination subject. There are also schools that offer multilingual secondary education. These schools use Frisian and English as the language of instruction when teaching other subjects, just as in the trilingual primary schools.

■ www.sintrummeartaligens.nl



At Primary Teacher Training Colleges (PABOs) students in Fryslân take classes in Frisian language proficiency. In addition, they take classes in multilingual didactics: how to handle the diversity of languages in the classroom. They can also gain a special qualification required for primary teaching in the Frisian language. The NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences offers training for teachers of Frisian in secondary education.

■ www.nhlstenden.com

At the university level, the University of Groningen (RUG) offers specialisation in Frisian within its Minorities and Multilingualism study programme. The RUG also allows students to opt for a qualification as a tutor of Frisian (master's degree teacher training programme). Various members

of staff at the Fryske Akademy (the scientific centre for research and education concerning Fryslân) offer Frisian-related subjects at the University of Amsterdam (the minors Frisian for Non-Frisian Speakers and Writing Skills for Frisian Speakers) and medieval Frisian history at Leiden University.

■ www.minorities.nl

The Afûk (General Frisian Educational Committee), founded in 1928, provides Frisian language courses for adults. Additionally, the Afûk develops teaching material for primary and secondary education.

■ www.afuk.frl

Hans de Haan, director of the De Tsjelke Public Primary School in Holwerd

FRISIAN IS MORE THAN MY WORKING LANGUAGE

"I come from the island Terschelling and didn't speak any Frisian as a child. At that time it just wasn't done. My father and mother did speak Frisian, so I grew up with the language. In my work at the school, I think it's important to speak the children's language; roughly eighty percent of the children here have Frisian as their mother tongue. Frisian is more than my working language. Over the years it has become my first language and I also think in Frisian. I speak in it with my own children and grandchildren."

De Tsjelke has been a trilingual school since the 1995/96 academic year, making it one of the first schools of its kind in Fryslân. "The educational body CEDIN (Centre for Educational Services) asked whether we wanted to be involved in a pilot scheme for trilingual primary education. The Fryske Akademy was to monitor the scheme. I felt it would be good for the children but that there was absolutely no scientific basis for it. It was thought that the children's Dutch would suffer as a result. However, it emerged from research that it wasn't at all detrimental to the children. And it also had a positive effect on Frisian. At the Junior Dictation of the Frisian Language – a biennial provincial event – we found ourselves winning prizes year after year. Young children pick up languages in no time; the younger they are the easier it is for them. That's just what we've seen among originally non-Frisian-speaking children. And you see this reflected in terms of English as well; the children have a head start; it goes more smoothly for them."

Frisian words

poppe = baby

pjut = toddler

beuker = pre-schooler/infant

bern = child

bernsbern = grandchildren

skoalle = school

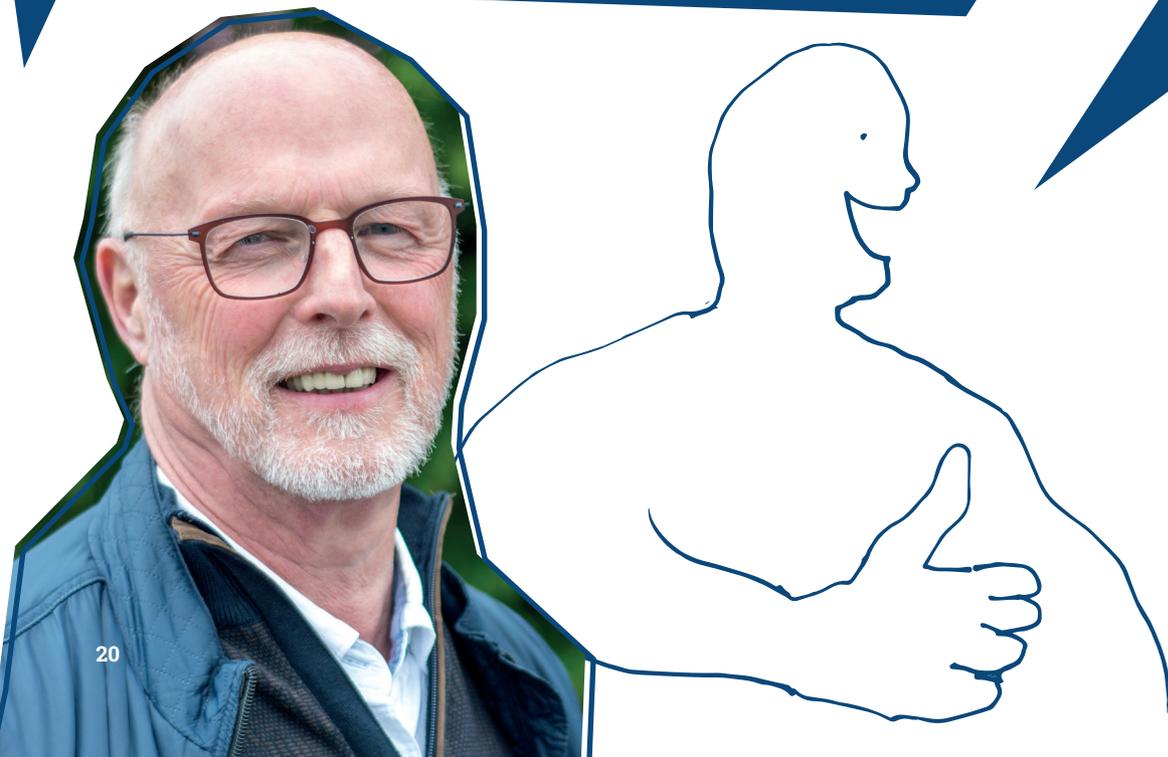
poppeslok = a visit to a mother and new-born baby

pjutteboartersplak = preschool

HISTORY OF FRISIAN AT SCHOOLS

Frisian at school now seems the most natural thing in the world, but for a long time this was far from the case. It was preceded by years of hard struggle. In 1907 the provincial government extended the first grant for Frisian at schools, but educational legislation required that such classes be given only after school hours. The Afûk (Algemeene Fryske Underrjochtkommisje/ General Frisian Educational Committee) was founded in 1928. Its goal was to organise Frisian courses for adults and to develop

Frisian-language teaching material for children. In 1937 Frisian was afforded a modest place within language teaching at primary schools, although it was optional. After 1955, it became possible to use Frisian as the language of instruction in primary education. Teaching was also possible in regional languages (Bildts, Stellingwerfs and Hindeloopen Frisian). In 1980 Frisian became a mandatory subject in primary education, and in 1993 it also became a mandatory subject in secondary education.



SINGING AND READING

Children come into contact with the diversity of the Frisian language and Frisian culture in a variety of ways, both at home and at school. This might be through a wide range of teaching methods, but it can also be via books, the internet or television.

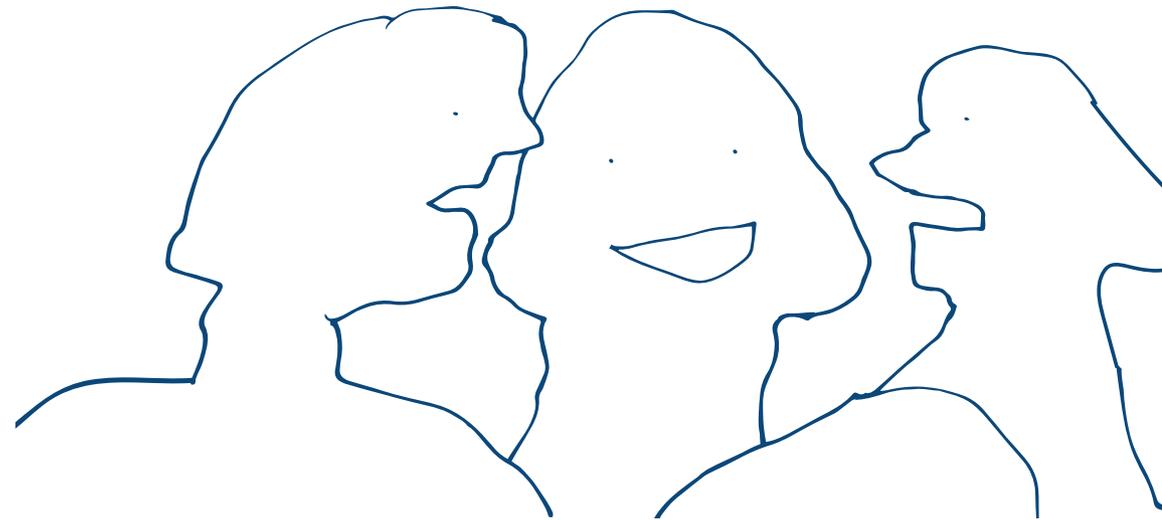
Teaching material

A wide variety of Frisian teaching methods and materials have been developed for use in primary and secondary education. This teaching material consists of such things as online teaching materials, school books and magazines. Schools are able to use this as supplementary material for the subject of Frisian. Moreover, there is topic-based material available for other subjects, such as biology and world orientation, where Frisian is used as a language of instruction.

Schools television

Omrop Fryslân produces television programmes for schools aimed at students in various age groups: e.g. **Wat tekenje ik**, **Witwat**, **Kening Hert en Harry Hazze** for younger children and **Tsjek** for older children. A few drama series have also been made for the 12–15 age group: e.g. **Bosk**, **De Koers** and **De Útflecht**. Books aimed at this age group have also been published to accompany and expand on these drama series.

■ www.skoal.tv



FeRstival

The poetry recital competition FeRstival has been held annually since as long ago as 1942. Secondary school students recite a Frisian poem from memory and are appraised by a panel of judges. There are three categories: beginners, go-getters and top-of-the-class. The objective is to promote the importance of literature in general and of Frisian in particular. Celebrated winners include: cabaret artist Rients Gratama (in 1949), singer Nynke Laverman (in 1992) and actor Theun Plantinga (in 1996).

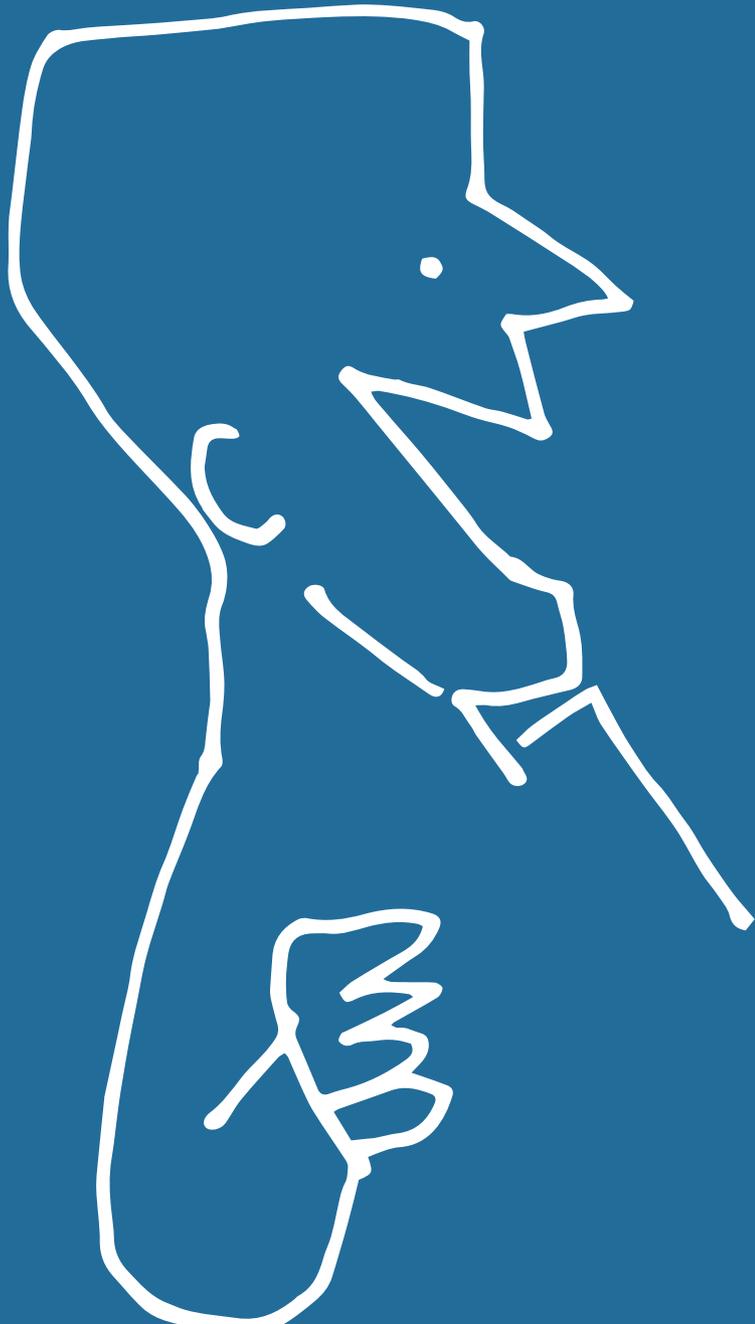
■ www.ferstival.frl

SjONG

SjONG is a biennial Frisian-language song festival for young people aged 12 to 18. Entrants write Frisian lyrics to an existing chart hit, performing an audition in the process. They either play their own instrument as an accompaniment or else they sing accompanied by a backing track. The best entrants from the preliminary rounds go through to the final. Prizes can be won at SjONG for the best three acts, the best lyrics and, what is more, there is also a YouTube prize.

■ www.sjong.nl

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IN PUBLIC LIFE

The goal of affording Frisian an *official status* in public life emerged over the course of the twentieth century. It proved to be **no simple task**. Language is a *sensitive issue* and can spark fierce emotions. The right to be able to express yourself in your own language, e.g. with a solicitor, at school or at a *Provincial Council* meeting, has had to be *fought for* – sometimes literally.

RIGHTS AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Accused parties and witnesses have the right to speak Frisian at court hearings and trials in Fryslân. Frisian may also be spoken at hearings and trials outside of Fryslân whenever accused parties or witnesses can establish a prima facie case that they would otherwise be unable to express themselves adequately in Dutch.

Use of the Frisian language in the courtroom was established as a right in 1956. This came about as the result of an incident that has entered the history books as Kneppelfreed ('Baton Friday').

Accused in 1951 of using insulting language towards the judiciary, journalist Fedde Schurer's aim in the case against him was to elicit a judicial decision on the position of Frisian in the law courts. Given that the case against Schurer was being held in a small courtroom, many of the interested parties were unable to be present at the trial. Instead, they assembled in front of the courthouse. The overwhelming level of interest in the case against Schurer ultimately resulted in a confrontation between the police and the demonstrators. Using batons and firehoses, the police succeeded in dispersing the crowd.

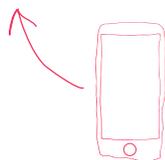
The incident resulted in a major outcry. Following Kneppelfreed, three ministers visited the province and two committees of inquiry were appointed at the insistence of the House of Representatives: one

committee for Frisian in education and another for the use of Frisian within the judicial system. The upshot of this was that from 1955 onwards it became possible to use Frisian as the language of instruction in primary education. This was followed one year later by the right to speak in Frisian when before the court.

The right to speak Frisian in courtrooms set positive developments in motion. In 1995 Frisian was recognised as an official language alongside Dutch. This meant that the written use of Frisian in judicial matters was now firmly established in law. Since 1997, all official registration documents have been drawn up in both Frisian and Dutch. As of 2001, all notarial instruments can be drawn up in Frisian and entered in the public registers. A special dictionary has been developed by the Fryske Akademy containing the Frisian version of all legal terms.



Police officers using batons to disperse people from Zaailand ...



Tjalling van der Goot, lawyer at the legal firm Anker&Anker in Leeuwarden

IT'S PRECISELY AT TIMES OF EMOTION THAT PEOPLE REVERT TO THEIR MOTHER TONGUE

"In my line of work, Dutch is the first language. All our laws have been drafted in Dutch. But, as a lawyer, you're not simply dealing with laws – above all, you're dealing with people. These people are being accused of criminal offences. And that gives vent to emotions. It's precisely at times of emotion that people revert to their mother tongue. When in court, I encourage Frisian-speaking clients to speak to the judge in Frisian. It's their right, after all, and it exists for a good reason. It's in your mother tongue that you can best express yourself, and what's more it's beneficial to a diligent criminal trial.

I think it's important for Frisian to have official recognition in the legal sector, but it's even more important for that recognition to be visible in actual practice. Establishing a right in law is only the start. It then has to join up with working practice. The Leeuwarden District Court has been merged within the North Netherlands District Court and this means that cases in Leeuwarden are also handled by judges from Groningen or Assen. Not all of them understand Frisian. Conversely, there are instances when Frisians have to appear before courts outside of Fryslân. They're also able to speak Frisian there, but it's not something that happens very often."



Simone Scheffer, marriage officiant and registrar for the municipality of Harlingen

DE LAPEN GEARSMITE

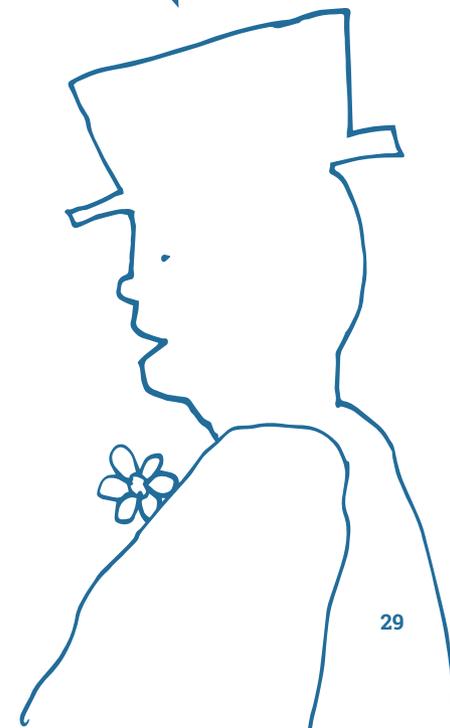
'Wy smite de lapen gear' (a Frisian expression that means: 'we're getting married'. The literal translation is: 'we're throwing the rags together'). Is there any better equivalent expression in Dutch? I don't think so. When formality is required, Frisians switch rather quickly to Dutch; it's a habit they might try breaking. It's nice that people can choose the language they're emotionally attached to, even on that type of occasion. After all, events such as registering the birth of a child, a marriage or being in court can be tense enough as it is. It's a good thing that in precisely those circumstances you can speak your mother tongue. That way it makes it personal to you. A potentially overwhelming situation is transformed into one on a human, intimate scale. I've experienced a case where a couple wanted to do their civil ceremony in Frisian. However, a lot of the guests couldn't speak Frisian and so had to ask what had been said after the ceremony was over. Actually, I find speaking Frisian easier than speaking Dutch. I also think in Frisian – I've been speaking it so long now – even though I wasn't really brought up as a Frisian speaker. At home we spoke the Bolsward dialect, the language that my mother spoke. When I was at my grandparents' place in Witmarsum, everything that I said in the Bolsward dialect was repeated in Frisian. Frisian was on my father's side. So I hear, he was very pro-Frisian, as was my grandpa too. He'd simply march out of the shoe shop if the staff didn't understand the word *skeoch* ('shoe')."

Frisian is also part of her work as a reporter for the regional public broadcasting network Omrop Fryslân. "Language is in part emotion; how can I best tell a story? Frisian is a good medium for that. Frisian is a part of me, I'm proud of it. We must use the language, nurture it, cling on to it and pull out the stops for it."



Frisian words
boaskje = to marry
brulloft = wedding
breid = bride
fereale = in love

dûnsje = to dance
tsjoch = cheers
houlik = marriage
tûtsje = kiss
brêgeman = bridegroom





GOVERNMENT

The province of Fryslân is literally a Frisian land. Citizens can speak in Frisian to an official or director, or send them a letter or email in Frisian. Generally speaking, the government in the province of Fryslân (the province, the municipalities and the water board) is language-compliant: i.e. if a citizen speaks or writes in Frisian, the authorities then respond in the same language.

Frisian is also used at the policy and administrative level. For example, policy papers can be drawn up in Frisian, the minutes of meetings can be taken in Frisian, and Frisian is spoken and written at municipal council meetings and at the Provincial Council.

Statutory provision has been made for the use of Frisian by and in dealings with government. Frisian has been recognised as an official administrative language and as the official language of Fryslân. In 1997, the province of Fryslân changed the name of province officially from Friesland to Fryslân. From now on Dutch-language documents must state the province's name as 'Fryslân' (including documents at national level).

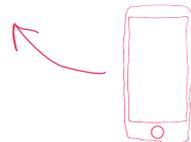
A number of municipalities in the province also have a Frisian municipal name

(e.g. Waadhoeke and Tytsjerksteradiel) and Frisian place names (e.g. Feanwâlden, Húns and Wergea). Municipalities can also elect to have a bilingual place-name policy, using both the Frisian and Dutch names on their place-name signs.

Frisian is spoken on occasion in national politics as well. For example, at the time of their inauguration it is possible for members of the House of Representatives or Senate to take their oath or make their solemn affirmation in the Frisian language. The words used are either 'Dat ferklearje en ûnthjit ik' ('I so declare and promise') or 'Sa wierlik helpe my God almachtich' ('So help me Almighty God').

place names

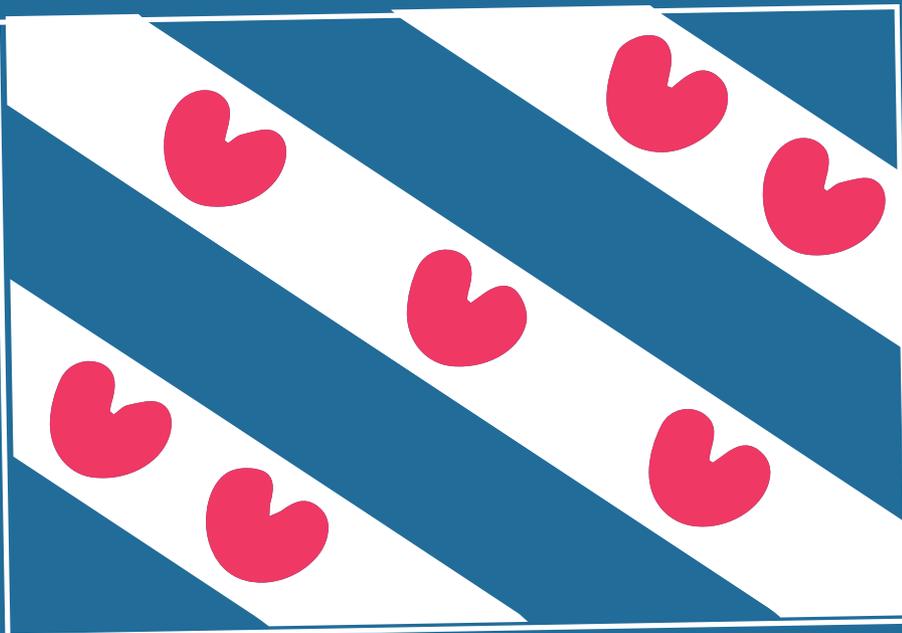
Reduzum of Roordahuizum?
You do need to find your way,
one way or another



*“Yn de Steaten sil ik it Frysk
as earste taal brûke,
net omdat it moat,
mar omdat it heart.”*

The King's Commissioner in the province of Fryslân, drs. A.A.M. Brok

*“I shall be using Frisian as my first language in the Provincial Council,
not because I must, but because I should.”*



THE FRISIAN FLAG

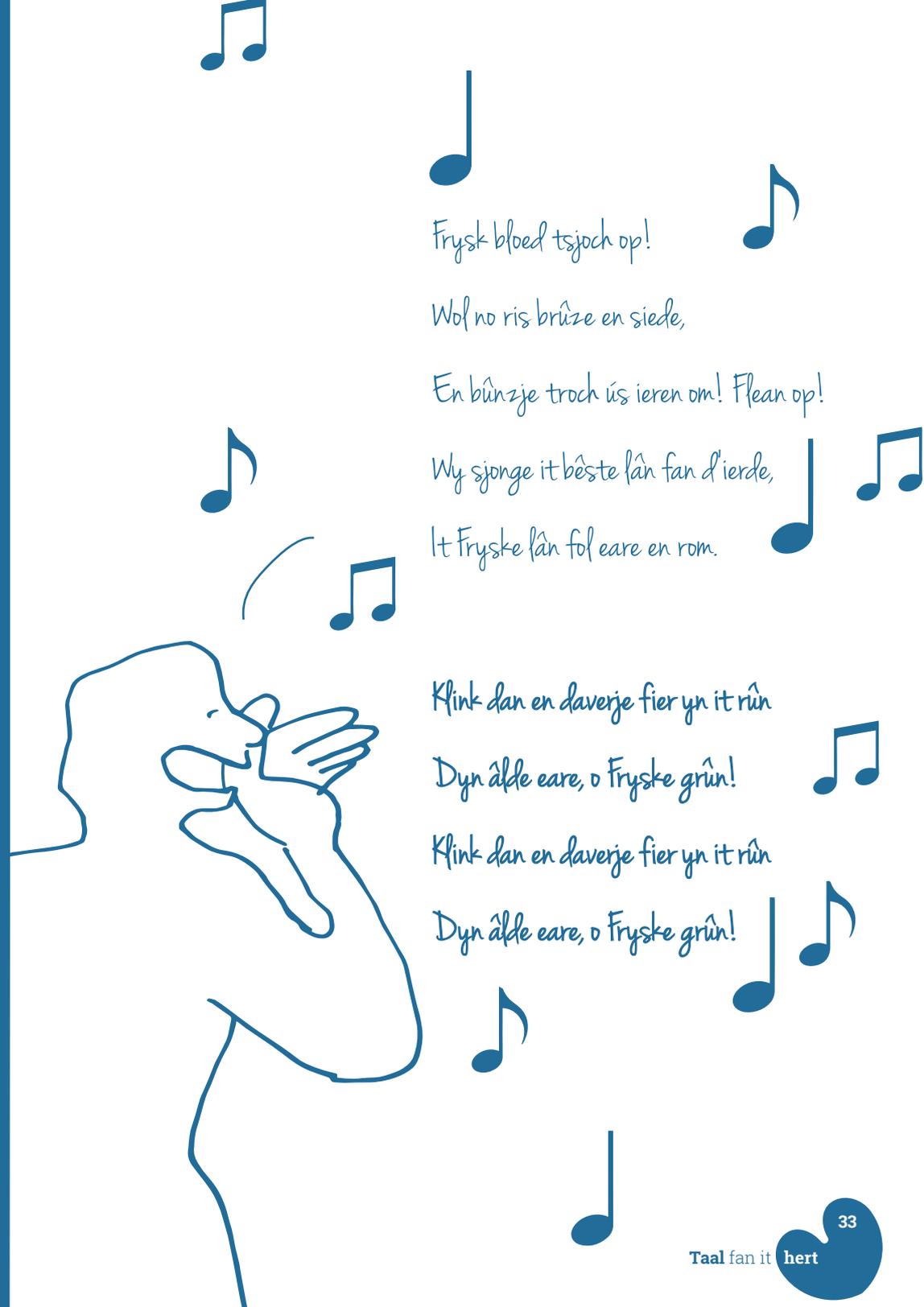
The Frisian flag consists of four blue and three white diagonal stripes, the white stripes containing in total seven red pompeblêden. The pompeblêden (the stylised leaves of the yellow water-lily) symbolise the seven medieval Frisian independent regions, also referred to as 'sea countries'.

The flag was recognised by the Provincial Executive in 1897. It was officially raised

for the first time above the Provincial Government Building in 1927.

The words to the Frisian national anthem were written by Eeltsje Halbertsma (from Grou) under the title **De âlde Friezen** (1829).

anthem Sing along!



Frysk bloed tsjoch op!

Wol no ris brûze en siede,

En bûnzje troch ús ieren om! Flean op!

Wy sjonge it bêste lân fan d'ierde,

It Fryske lân fol eare en rom.

Klink dan en daverje fier yn it rûn

Dyn âlde eare, o Fryske grûn!

Klink dan en daverje fier yn it rûn

Dyn âlde eare, o Fryske grûn!

HEALTHCARE SECTOR

In the past, the doctor, minister and headmaster ranked as the 'dignitaries' of a town. Back then, it would have been unthinkable to use Frisian when speaking to your doctor about a complaint. In recent years there has been a growing consensus that communicating in a person's own language is actually better. The elderly residents of nursing homes prefer speaking in their mother tongue: not only because they are then better able to express what they mean, but also because it gives them a sense of security.

In the healthcare sector, language has become an increasingly important component in professional contact between healthcare workers and their patients and clients. The patient or client comes first, and addressing people in their own language is an express part of that ethos. Vulnerable people benefit greatly from being spoken to in their own language. By that means, language helps contribute towards the quality of care being offered. Older people, who sometimes have difficulty with Dutch, can simply express themselves in Frisian. Children can be reassured in their own language. Moreover, patients and clients can express themselves in their own language when, for example, emotional matters are involved, such as an illness. In other words, language is a determining factor for a person's well-being.

Dat wie doe sa

The website of the project Dat wie doe sa (How things were back then) provides stories, videos, photos, music and other soundbites on subjects from the past. This material comes from the region and in the language of the region. Dat wie doe sa draws attention to the use of the mother tongue in healthcare and works together with healthcare providers to encourage healthcare recipients to use their own language in healthcare situations. This can be done by making the language in question visible at the healthcare location through the use of posters and badges, for example, as well as through workshops for the use of healthcare providers.

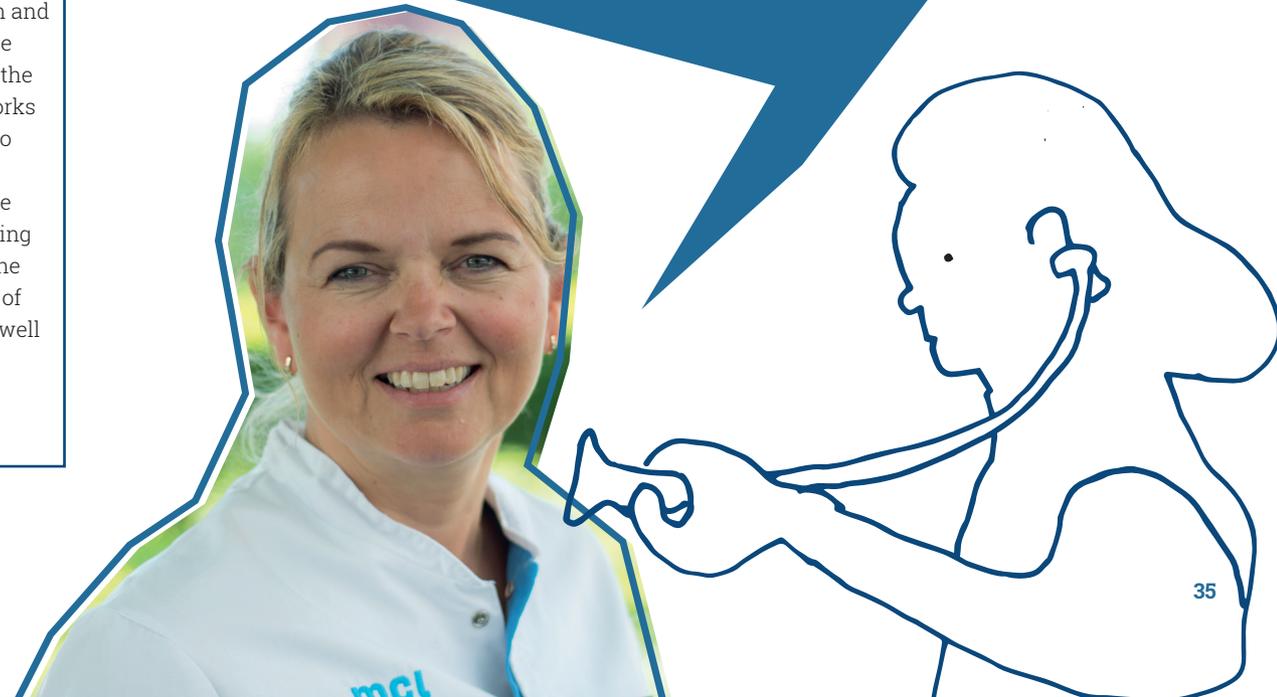
■ www.datwiedoesa.nl

Corry Ludema-van der Valk, doctor's assistant at the Leeuwarden Medical Centre

YOU'RE THERE TO SUPPORT THE PATIENT

"Frisian is my mother tongue and it means a great deal to me. I can express myself better in Frisian as far as emotions are concerned and also in terms of giving the right emphasis to things." In her work as a doctor's assistant in the plastic surgery outpatient clinic at the Leeuwarden Medical Centre (MCL), she has noticed the difference that Frisian makes. "It gives patients a huge amount of confidence. People feel immediately at home and more at their ease because of being able to speak their own language. As a care provider you're there to support the patient. Patients are going to tell you a good deal more if they feel comfortable."

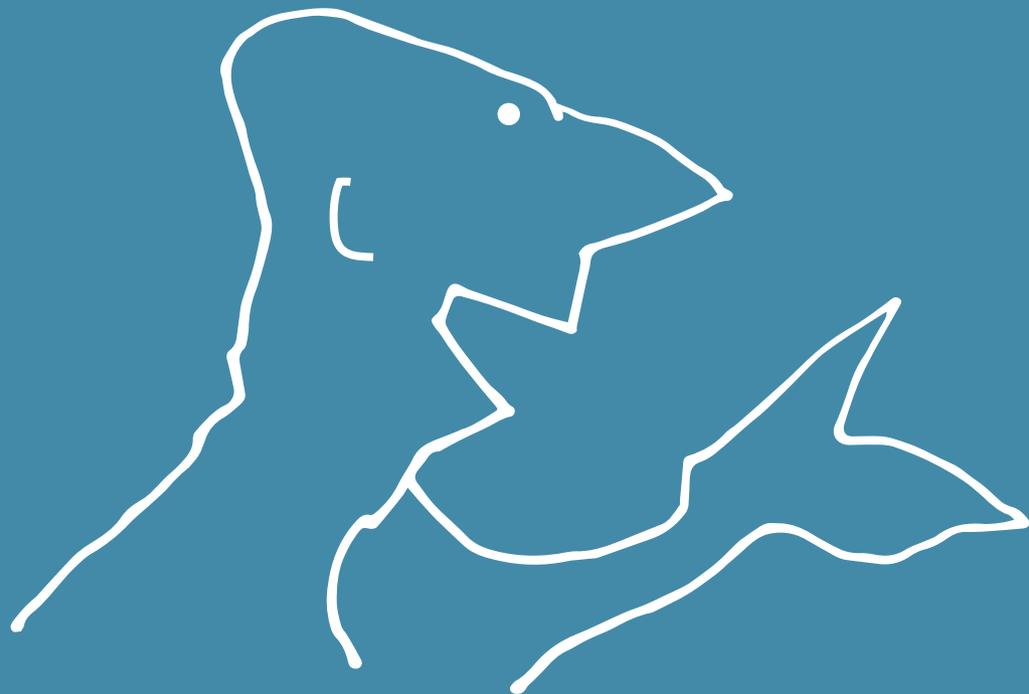
The hospital recognises the importance of Frisian when in contact with patients. "Staff are open to Frisian and do their best to learn Frisian expressions. All the same, a patient can hear from the doctor's accent whenever he or she is someone from 'outside' (i.e. not Frisian), and I've been in situations like that when, as a result, the patient doesn't tell the doctor everything that they normally would. One patient, who was a regular visitor, told me she had a pain in her belly and had lost fifteen kilos in hardly any time at all. That was important information; the alarm bells start ringing straightaway and an explanation has to be investigated. However, she told me this only after the doctor had left the room. In spite of everything, it seems that people are more comfortable coming out with something like that to someone who speaks the same language. Given the great importance of language in our contact with patients, I give new recruits to our team my homemade 'course': a sheet of A4 with Frisian words such as earmtakke (elbow), kaaibonke (collarbone) and knibbel (knee). When you ask someone for their date of birth you also need to be able to understand figures, such as trijentritich (thirty-three) for example. My colleagues have really got into it and they'll call down the corridor to me: 'Hey Corry, could I just borrow the skjirre (scissors)?'"



Taal
fan it
hert

IN LEISURE TIME

The Frisian language exists in a various forms of cultural expression, extending from *books and films* to theatre and music. Writers, directors, actors and musicians all use the Frisian language because it is integral to their identity and because they are better able to express themselves in their *mother tongue*. Moreover, **its range of vowels** makes Frisian well suited to singing. Increasingly, Frisian is also gaining ground in spheres such as the *media, sport and the church*.



LITERATURE

Frisian has evolved markedly as a cultural language. For example, by translating the works of Shakespeare into Frisian, writers such as Douwe Kalma wanted to show that an equivalent literature was also possible in Frisian. Nowadays, many Frisian publishers are producing books in Frisian that cater to every type of genre: novels, chick lit, crime fiction, travelogues, anthologies of poetry, and children's and youth books.

A variety of social subjects are raised in contemporary Frisian literature. Authors use the medium to show things going on in Fryslân and in the world at large. Examples include political satire in **In aap klimt út 'e beam** (2017) by Koos Tiemersma and in a love relationship between a brother and sister in **Swarte ingels** (2004) by Willem Schoorstra.

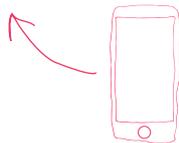
Some books are written in Frisian from the outset, while others are translated from other languages. This extends from children's books about a puppy called **Stip** (**Spot** in English) to works of classical literature such as the **Iliad and Odyssey** by the Greek poet Homer and from the Dutch children's books **Jip en Janneke** to **The Lord of the Rings**.

The reverse also arises: successful novelists such as Hylke Speerstra have had their original works in Frisian translated into Dutch (and other languages).

A trend among the younger generation of (native Frisian) writers is that they write in Frisian and in Dutch; this includes Tsead Bruinja, Elmar Kuiper, Nyk de Vries and Albertina Soepboer. Some of their works are even bilingual, while at other times they release a translated version of their writing. You can find a concise overview of Frisian literary history in **As Long as the Tree Blooms** (2018).

literature

Everything about Frisian writers and their work



Frisian literature enjoys a rich tradition of poetry, which can be seen even in Old Frisian texts. Although this material is not considered to be literature, it does contain poetic traits, such as alliteration and the use of metaphor. Over the following centuries, most published literature was in the form of poetry; Gysbert Japicx, for example, chiefly wrote occasional verse and songs. Modern Frisian literature still includes a great deal of poetry in which multilingualism and performance are playing an ever-increasing role.

The clatter of the dyke

We hear her in the clatter of the dyke,
sea-bound horse's small blue eye,

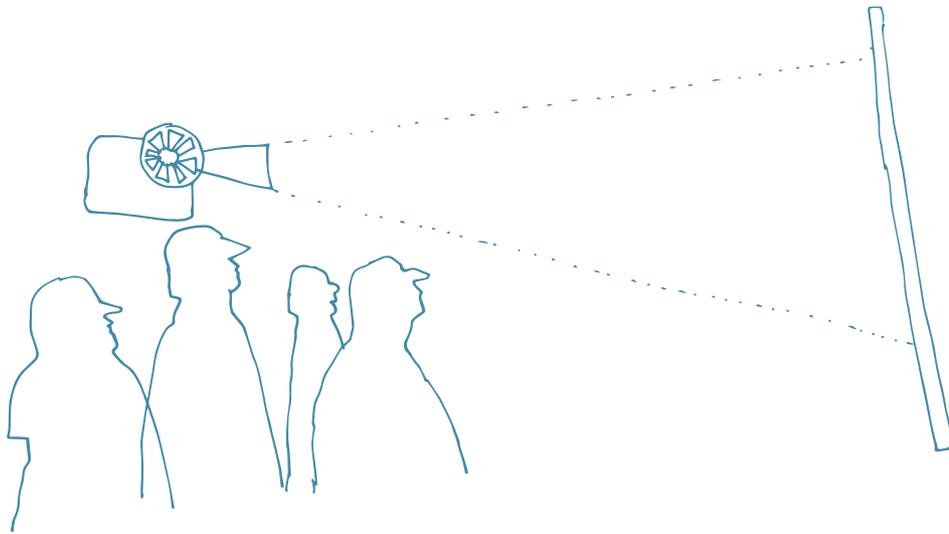
trotting on the brick road, dream-drunk,
horseshoes striking sparks in twilight.

Giddyup, girl, giddyup, calls the wind
and give voice to the inland ocean

of your heart, become the snorting of
the waves, the current off the coast

and all the water's stories, deep
as the sainted silence of the things.

Eeltsje Hettinga
Dichter fan Fryslân 2017-2019
Translation: David Colmer



FILM

The films **De Hel van '63** and **De schippers van de Kameleon** about the twins Hielke and Sietse Klinkhamer are celebrated Dutch-language films about Frisian subjects. Additionally, a variety of Frisian-language films have also been made.

The film **Nynke** (2001) by Pieter Verhoeff, about the wife of Pieter Jelles Troelstra was a great box-office hit both at home and abroad. Previously, Verhoeff had already made the Frisian film **De Dream** (1985). Other Frisian films, such as **De Gouden Swipe** (1996) and **De Fûke** (2000), both by Steven de Jong, have been screened on Dutch television with subtitles.

The oldest Frisian feature film was **Kar út Twa** (1937), a black-and-white silent with

Frisian intertitles and Dutch subtitles. The Noordelijk Film Festival held annually in Leeuwarden frequently premieres Frisian-language productions.

The broadcaster Omrop Fryslân also makes various Frisian-language documentaries concerning current affairs in the province. These programmes are broadcast on national television with Dutch subtitling.

THEATRE

Fryslân loves the theatre; virtually every town has its own theatre company: from Achlum to Ysbrechtum, and some places have even more theatrical groups and societies.

Most of these companies perform in Frisian. Some 150 companies are affiliated to the Stichting Amateuroaniel Fryslân (Fryslân Amateur Dramatics Foundation), which provides courses and holds competitions to improve people's skills.

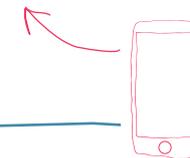
Frisian theatrical culture began in Koarnjum in around 1860, when the first theatrical society was founded. Companies that have been running since the late nineteenth century include Halbertsma from Wergea, Tesselschade from Hurdegaryp, and Rjucht en Sljucht from Tijnje.

Tryater was founded in 1965, making it the oldest (existing) professional theatre company in the Netherlands. Through an alternating repertoire of (translated) classics and brand new plays the company is able to appeal to a broad public in theatres, village

halls, schools and on site. In addition to performing for adult audiences, Tryater also stages productions specifically aimed at children and young people, including specially developed educational material. In the productions that tour through the province, Tryater also seeks to connect with the general public by entering into dialogue with members of the audience about topics that arise in the course of the performance. Tryater performs in Frisian and in other languages to reflect the multilingual nature of society. In cities such as Leeuwarden and Sneek plays are performed with Dutch surtitles.

■ www.tryater.frl

theatre Indoors and outdoors;
the whole world's a stage



Cabaret

There are very few cabaret artists who include Frisian in their act when treading the boards. Tetman de Vries (1915–1988) and his company were very popular in the 1950s. Riens Gratama (1932–2017) was quite a sensation and was also highly creditable as an actor, singer and writer. For years now, Teake van der Meer (1937) has also been making people laugh at his extraordinary caricatures.

MUSIC

The upsurge of pop music in the Netherlands was accompanied by an equivalent upsurge of Frisian-language pop music. In the Netherlands, Frisian bands such as De Kast and Twarres have had big Frisian-language hits with **In nije dei** and **Wêr bisto**.

This Frisian music expressed itself in every kind of genre, ranging from singer-songwriters such as Gurbe Douwstra and Jaap Louwes to the punk pathétique bands Strawelte and De Hûnekop, and from songs for children by Hindrik van der Meer to rock by Jitiizer.

1943 saw the publication of the songbook **Fryslân Sjongt** ('Fryslân Sings'), which contained Frisian songs old and new, such as **Wat bisto leaflik rizende simmermoarn**. This song that continues to be sung to this day and which was written by Waling Dijkstra (1821–1914), an important figure in Frisian culture.

Singers such as Doede Veeman, Piter Wilkens, Adri de Boer, Anneke Douma

and Griet Wiersma have been popular for years. The pop group Reboelje has released several CDs that are more literary in tone. Nynke Laverman began her career singing Frisian fados and was responsible for the song **Seis oere thús** at the opening event in 2018 to celebrate Leeuwarden (Fryslân) as the European Capital of Culture. **Cohen yn it Frysk** includes songs by singer Leonard Cohen (from Canada) translated into Frisian and recorded by various Frisian musicians. Frisian music is played regularly at funerals, such as the song **In part fan dy** by Marcel Smit and Gerbrich van Dekken. The duo Die Twa achieved a high chart position in the Frisian top 100, which in line with tradition is broadcast by Omrop Fryslân on New Year's Eve based on its listeners' votes.

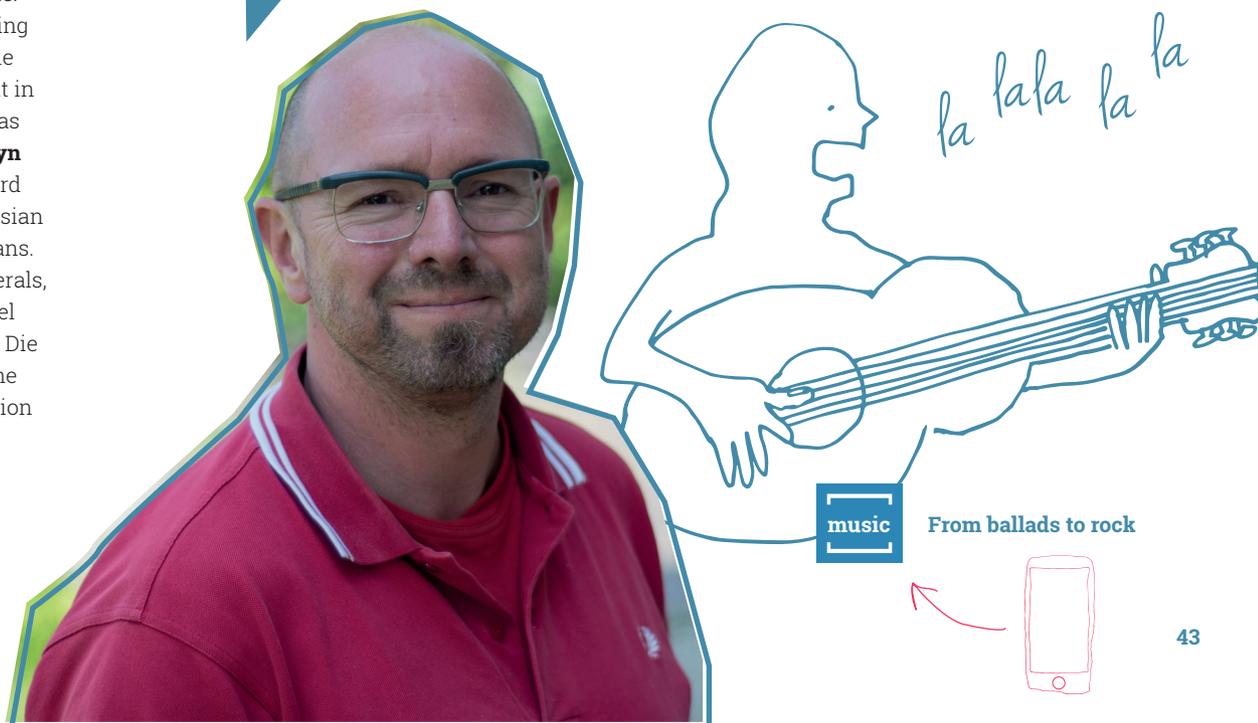
■ www.frysketop100.nl

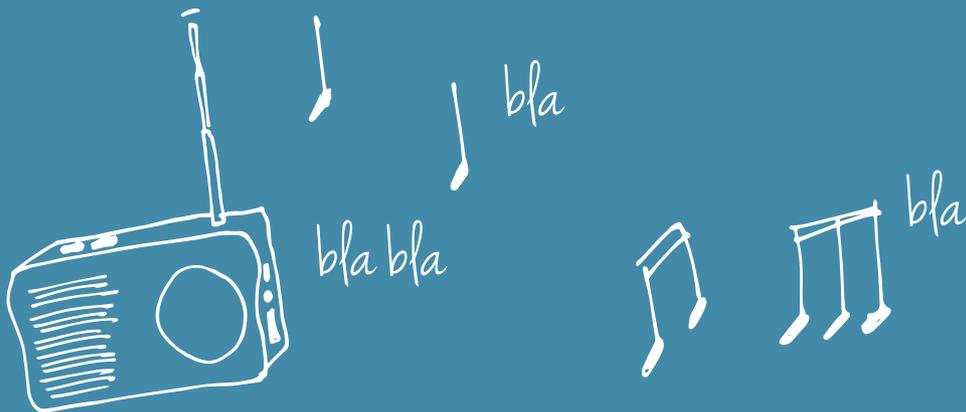
Peter Sibbenga, musician, composer, writer and translator

I'M A TOTAL OMNIVORE

"I wasn't a Frisian speaker originally. We lived in Leeuwarden and spoke standard Dutch. I 'cobbled together' my Frisian through working as a musician with Rients Gratama. At the same time I was involved with the band It Dockumer Lokaeltsje and we made a very conscious decision to write Frisian lyrics. Our inspiration came from English-speaking punk and new wave bands, but German punk also played a part at that time. We also felt it would be fun to use Frisian to prove we were able to combine contemporary punk with a minority language."

Peter Sibbenga has a deep fascination for language as a phenomenon. "I'm a total omnivore. As a kid I'd pore over the atlas and read the most superb place names in it. For me I need to get both a visual and audible connection; in other words, it's about the look and sound of a word. When I came to live in Reduzum in 1987, I felt it was important for me to be able to speak to people in Frisian. It was a sort of social contract; if I wanted to belong, then Frisian was a good way in." He still thinks and reasons in Dutch, "but Frisian comes a close second. Frisian lends itself very well to the work that I do: writing prose, lyrics, plays and doing translations. Frisian is supple, unlike Dutch; it's a lot more like English."





MEDIA

Frisian is encountered throughout many forms of media, such as radio, television, newspapers and the internet. Omrop Fryslân, Fryslân's regional broadcaster, produces programmes for radio and television (news, sport, documentaries and entertainment) in Frisian. The operative language is Frisian. In actual practice, conversations are very often bilingual.

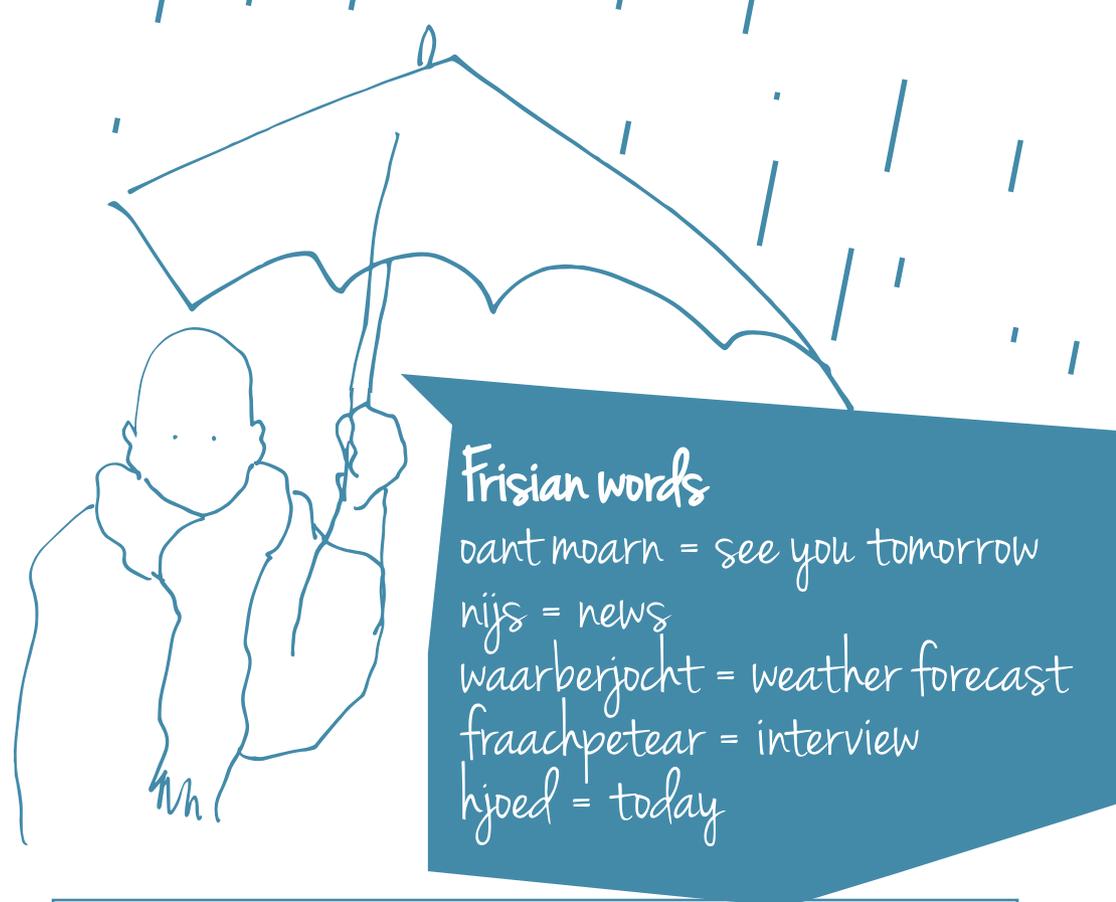
The internet also plays an important role in the media. Thanks to the internet the Frisian language and culture are also kept alive outside of Fryslân. Frisians are able to listen to and watch Omrop Fryslân and can catch up on the latest Frisian news anywhere in the world. News stories on the website and on the app are bilingual (Frisian and Dutch). Social media are becoming increasingly important and they're being used to bring young people into contact with Frisian. Many municipalities have their own local radio station and their broadcasts are often in Frisian.

■ www.omropfryslan.nl

Frisian appears in both of Fryslân's regional newspapers, the **Leeuwarder Courant** and **Friesch Dagblad**; in columns and pieces submitted by readers the Frisian language is often used. People are also often quoted in Frisian in Dutch-language articles. Frisian is also used with regularity in the cultural supplements to both newspapers. Articles and reviews about Frisian literature, theatre, art and music tend in particular to be written in Frisian.

■ www.lc.nl

■ www.frieschdagblad.nl



Frisian words

oant moarn = see you tomorrow

nijs = news

waarberjocht = weather forecast

fraachpetear = interview

hjoed = today

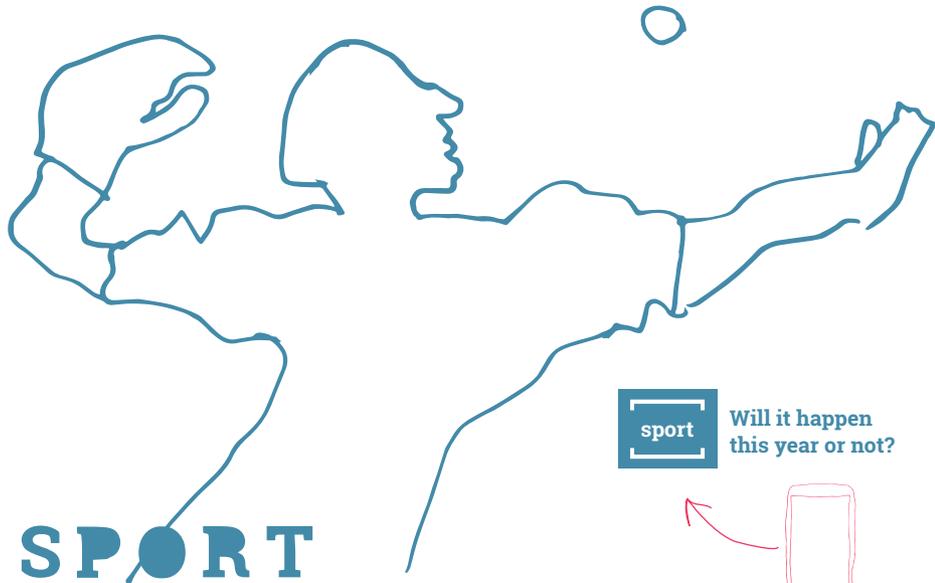
Fryske tydskriften

• The bilingual magazine **Heit & Mem** is aimed at parents in Fryslân with children up to the age of 12. The intention is to make (prospective) parents aware of the opportunities that growing up in a multilingual environment can offer and to encourage them to raise their children to be multilingual. One way of doing this is to get children to read more Frisian (or to read it aloud to them more often). The magazine also provides information on topics concerned with child rearing. ■ www.heitenmem.nl

• **Ensafh** is an entirely Frisian literary magazine, the product of a merger between the magazines **Hjir** and **Farsk**. It contains Frisian prose and poetry, and entries in Bildts or the Stadsfries dialects are also included on a regular basis. There are also reviews and background articles on Frisian literature. ■ www.ensafh.nl

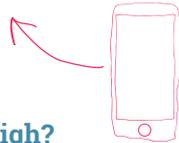
• **De Moanne** offers a broad a creative platform for newsworthy and reflective articles on culture and the arts and these appear in both Frisian and Dutch. The publication tells people what is happening in and concerning Fryslân through language, visuals and new media.

■ www.demoanne.nl



SPORT

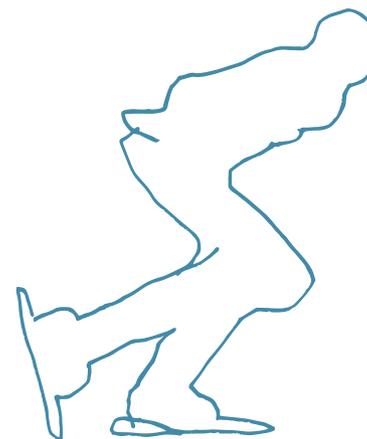
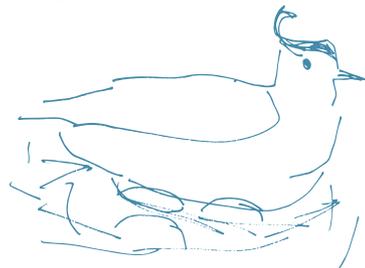
sport Will it happen this year or not?



Where else other than in sport do emotions run so high?

At SC Heerenveen in the Abe Lenstra Stadium or at SC Cambuur in Leeuwarden, the football supporters shout themselves hoarse when their team scores a goal. However, what about those sports seen as quintessentially Frisian? Tensions can also run high in relation to Frisian handball, skûtsje sailing regattas, fierljeppen (Frisian pole vaulting), ice-skating, equestrian sports and, last but not least, Frisian draughts. Over the course of time these 'popular entertainments' have come to represent a part of Frisian identity every bit as important as the Frisian language. Before SC Heerenveen matches, the Frisian national anthem is always played and the pompeblêden (the seven red stylised lily pads adorning the Frisian flag) decorate the

team shirts. Frisian handball and skûtsje sailing have a vocabulary all their own. Examples include boppe (above), kwea (wrong), boppewynse tonne (windward buoy) and healwynse rak (halfwinds leg). However, even hunting for birds' eggs has its own idiom: twake (two lapwing eggs in a nest), broedsje (four lapwing eggs in a nest), oer de wjuk (the swerving of a lapwing in flight), hijke (male lapwing), sijke (female lapwing) and lotterje (checking to see if lapwing eggs are fresh by floating them in water). These are the things that help enrich the Frisian language. Some words have even been borrowed by Dutch: e.g. klunen (meaning 'to walk on land on skates').

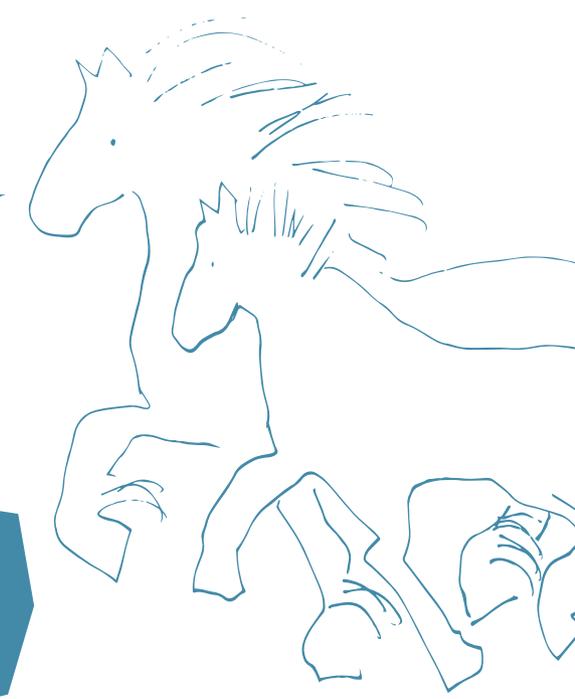


Frisian words
 keatse = Frisian handball
 partoer = a team
 in Frisian handball
 boppeslach = top stroke

reedride = ice-skating
 houtsjes = type of wooden
 Frisian ice skate
 poeiermolke = hot chocolate

fôle = foal
 Frysk hynder =
 Frisian horse

aaisykje = egghunt
 fjip = lapwing
 skries = godwit



CHURCH

Nowadays it is quite acceptable for a church service to be conducted in Frisian or for readings from the Bible to be in Frisian and for a few Frisian hymns to be sung. However, that was not always the case. Translation of the Bible and psalms into Frisian came about only in the first half of the twentieth century. Some people had felt that 'rustic Frisian' was hardly a language fit for use during a religious service.

In 1908 the church ministers Sipke Huisman and Geert Aeilco Wumkes founded the Christlik Selskip for Fryske Tael- en Skriftekennisse (later renamed the Kristlik Frysk Selskip: the Christian Frisian Association) to promote the use of Frisian within the context of religion. 1943 saw the publication of the first complete Frisian translation of the Bible, produced by Minister Wumkes and Eeltsje Boates Folkertsma. The anthology of **Psalmen en Gezangen** ('Psalms and Hymns') came into print in Frisian in 1955. The **Nije Fryske Bibeloversetting** ('New Frisian Bible Translation') and the **Lieteboek foar de Tsjerken** ('Hymnbook for the Churches') were published in 1978. Using this material, virtually all local churches, municipalities and parishes were able to hold a modest number of services in Frisian. By 1990 a climate had emerged in which ministers were being given

increasing freedom to give church services in the language of their choice, with many of them seizing upon the opportunity. Various municipalities seek to include at least one Frisian component in each church service. The Frisian Ecumenical Platform Krúspunt is a repository of material and serves as a platform for initiatives relating to Frisian in the religious sphere. Its focus is on raising awareness about the opportunities created by multilingualism and on developing a tradition of hymns specific to the Frisian language. They advocate not only Frisian-language church services, but also bilingual or multilingual versions. Thanks to the advent of Frisian liturgical works (such as the hymn anthology **Tuskentiden**), it has become easier to incorporate Frisian elements within the service.

■ www.kruspunt.frl

Liuwe Westra, minister

FRISIAN IS MY INNERMOST LANGUAGE

"I'm becoming increasingly aware of the fact that I'm constantly thinking and expressing feelings in Frisian. Some people are capable of becoming so at home with a second language, which they hear all around them every day, that they even start dreaming in it. I'm not that far. All my communication starts off with Frisian; so, even if I'm speaking Dutch, I'm in a process of translation. It never extends beyond Frisian. For that reason I feel at my best when I'm able to express myself directly in Frisian. I've learned plenty of other languages, and I can get by fine in them, but when in Frisian-speaking company I always feel more at my ease. Frisian is my innermost language."

He also makes regular use of Frisian in the church, which over the years is something that has become increasingly accepted and treated as normal. "In Lollum, an elderly member of the congregation was completely won over when I gave the Lord's Prayer in Frisian for the first time. Even though that gentleman had been sceptical about it to begin with. A few years ago I was giving a sermon in the municipality of Het Bildt and I'd had the text translated into the Bildts regional language. A few weeks later, a man approached me to talk about it. He was still feeling very moved that he'd been able to hear the Gospel in his own language. It seems to affect people more profoundly when in their own language. In the past you had the same reactions when people heard Frisian, but nowadays it's considered fairly commonplace."



The village of Tzum was first to set the trend in 1915

church

Taal
fan it
hert

THE HISTORY OF FRISIAN

Frisian dates back as far as the *Early Middle Ages*. It began to become a language distinct from other North Sea Germanic languages, such as *Old English*. During the High Middle Ages, *Old Frisian* was used as a written language (e.g. in legal texts) and as the official *regional language*. During the course of the 16th century, Frisian practically fell out of use as a *written language*. The 19th century saw a return to Frisian as a written language and a **vibrant literary climate emerged.**

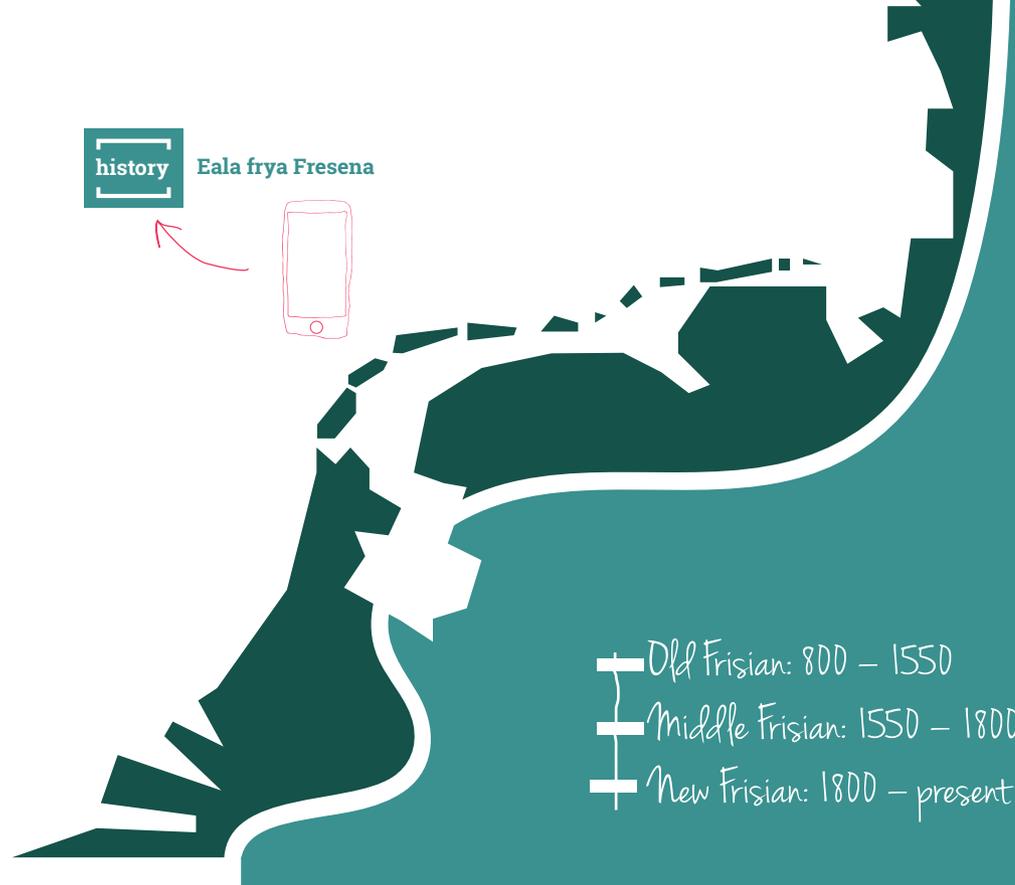
FROM OLD TO MIDDLE AND NEW FRISIAN

References to Fryslân date back as far as the time of the Roman Empire. The Romans named the tribes living in the region the 'Frisii'. In the 7th and 8th centuries, after the fall of the Roman Empire, an extensive Frisian kingdom emerged that stretched from northern Belgium to the River Weser in Germany. We refer to the language spoken at that time as Old Frisian and it was also used for the drafting of laws. Fryslân was self-governing from the 11th century, a period of Frisian freedom from serfdom and feudalism. This was brought to an end in 1498, after which Old Frisian gradually receded as the dominant language.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, power in Fryslân was restored in large part to native Frisians, but the Dutch language assumed increasing importance. Government, judicial authorities, schools and churches all used Dutch as the written language. Frisian became the colloquial language of the 'common folk'. Gysbert Japicx (1603–66) helped return Frisian to the cultural sphere; the language of his time is referred to as Middle Frisian. He is considered the founding father of Frisian literature.

The nation states of Europe as we know them today had more or less emerged by

1815. Under the influence of the Romantic Movement, people were becoming more aware of their cultural roots. Everywhere there was increasing interest in the identifying character, language, history, folklore and literature of the region or nation that people felt of as home. In the nineteenth century Fryslân was a province of the Netherlands and Dutch was the nation's only official language. Frisian was for speaking at home. Schools were advised not to permit the use of 'rustic' Frisian, because it would stand in the way of creating a Dutch unitary state.



Taking its cue from Romanticism, a Frisian language and emancipation movement arose which aimed to prevent the demise of the language and sought its recognition. New Frisian writers appeared, such as the Halbertsma brothers. They encouraged the Frisian people to read and sing in their own language. Joast Halbertsma performed research into the Frisian language; he started off with a learned dictionary of Frisian and corresponded with many European scholars. Furthermore, he collected all manner of Frisian artefacts (which he considered to be distinctively Frisian).

Old Frisian: 800 – 1550
Middle Frisian: 1550 – 1800
New Frisian: 1800 – present

Thanks to these writers' publications, and also because of the first Frisian dictionary, the spelling of Frisian gradually acquired greater uniformity. The first official Frisian orthography was published in 1879. This was followed in 1900 by the first volume (A-H) of the **Friesch Woordenboek** ('Frisian Dictionary'), which was compiled by Waling Dijkstra based on information gleaned from Joast Halbertsma. We refer to the Frisian written and spoken after 1800 as New Frisian.

English
us/our
cheese
church
sheep
year
two

Frisian
ús
tsiis
tsjerke
skiep
jier
twa

Dutch
ons
kaas
kerk
schaap
jaar
twee

German
uns
Käse
Kirche
Schafe
Jahr
Zwei

Frisian belongs to the family of Germanic languages, which includes Dutch, English and German. Given its historical geographic range along the North Sea coast, Frisian has a close relationship to English. Dutch has a close relationship to German.

Butter, bread and green cheese
is good English *en goed Frysk!*

FRYSLÂN IS MULTILINGUAL

In addition to Frisian and Dutch, a sort of hybrid language is spoken, particularly in towns and cities; this is a language that chiefly uses Dutch words but with a Frisian sound. These Stadsfries dialects can be heard in Leeuwarden, Dokkum, Bolsward, Sneek, Harlingen and Franeker. The dialects sometimes differ slightly from one another. Stadsfries arose in the 16th century through commercial merchants.

In Het Bildt, a region of reclaimed land (polders) to the northwest of Leeuwarden, the inhabitants speak the regional language of Bildts. During the most recent redrawing of municipal boundaries, Het Bildt was amalgamated within the municipality of Waadhoeke. The language of the North and South Holland farmers who drained Het Bildt in the 16th century became mixed with the Frisian spoken by the agricultural labourers. This gave rise to a new hybrid language. Bildts speakers are proud of their own language and are also fighting for its preservation and continued existence. Many Bildts speakers write, perform on stage and sing in their own language.

■ www.bildtsaigene.nl

The two Stellingwerf municipalities, bordering the province of Drenthe, have their own language: the Stellingwerfs dialect, which more closely resembles the Drents and Gronings dialects. An interest group promotes the language: "the Stellingwarver Schrieversronte is the most important institute for the language, literature, history, popular culture and identity of Stellingwerf".

■ www.stellingwarfs.nl

Bildts
maisy
beltsyblom
sûp
luwt
ant kikens
skaapy

Frisian
famke = girl
beltsjebfom = fuchsia
sûpe = buttermilk
ljouwert = Leeuwarden
oant sjen = see you later
skiepke = sheep (singular)

**HET
BILDT**

**DE STELLING-
WERVEN**

Stellingwerfs
maegien
bellegiesbloeme
soepe
luwadden
tot kiekelberes
schaopien

multilingualism

Each district
with its own language



Frisian words
skiednis = history
wrâld = world
útfanhûzje = to stay as a guest
fânferfarre = to emigrate
Fries om utens = a Frisian living
outside of Fryslân



FRISIAN AROUND THE WORLD

Frisian is also spoken across the border in Germany: in North Frisia (in Schleswig-Holstein up to the Danish border) and East Frisia (Lower Saxony). From the 6th to the 8th century both regions were part of the Frisian Realm of Greater Frisia. Inter-relationships dissipated after the disintegration of the Frisian Realm. The Frisian spoken in Fryslân and that spoken in Germany developed along different lines. Over the centuries, German Frisian became strongly influenced by German and Low German.

North Frisian consists of a number of dialects that differ markedly from one another. These are subdivided into 'Insular North Frisian' and 'Mainland North Frisian'. The differences are sometimes so great that its roughly 8,000 speakers can barely understand one another. East Frisian Low Saxon (Saterland Frisian) is spoken in a few small towns and villages. It is largely spoken only by older inhabitants, numbering around 2,000.

Frisian is also spoken in other places around the world. We might take a moment to consider all the many thousands of people who emigrated to the 'promised land' of the United States in the late nineteenth

and early twentieth century. More than 20,000 Frisians sought out a new life in the United States. Another surge of emigration ensued after the Second World War, this time focussed chiefly on Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Some 18,000 Frisians booked a passage to another country. Most Frisians formed communities in their new homelands and tried to maintain their own national identity by, for example, setting up Frisian associations. They retained a love for their mother tongue, which was an important way of still feeling 'at home'. Frisian speaking had usually been lost by the time of the third generation.

Taal
fan it
hert

PRESER- VATION AND PROMOTION

The twentieth century was a time of great emancipation movements involving groups of people eager to improve their lot. Speakers of minority languages also became organised in order to preserve and **develop their language and culture.** The objective was to gain official recognition of their language. Thanks to *growing awareness* across broad swathes of Frisian society, *Frisian became increasingly visible* in education, the arts and culture, academia, government and in religion. This resulted in the creation of many initiatives and institutions that remain important to the *Frisian language and culture* to this day.



THE FRISIAN MOVEMENT

Various societies were founded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Frisian Society of History, Antiquities and Linguistics (Friesch Genootschap van Geschied-, Oudheid- en Taalkunde, 1827) was the first society.

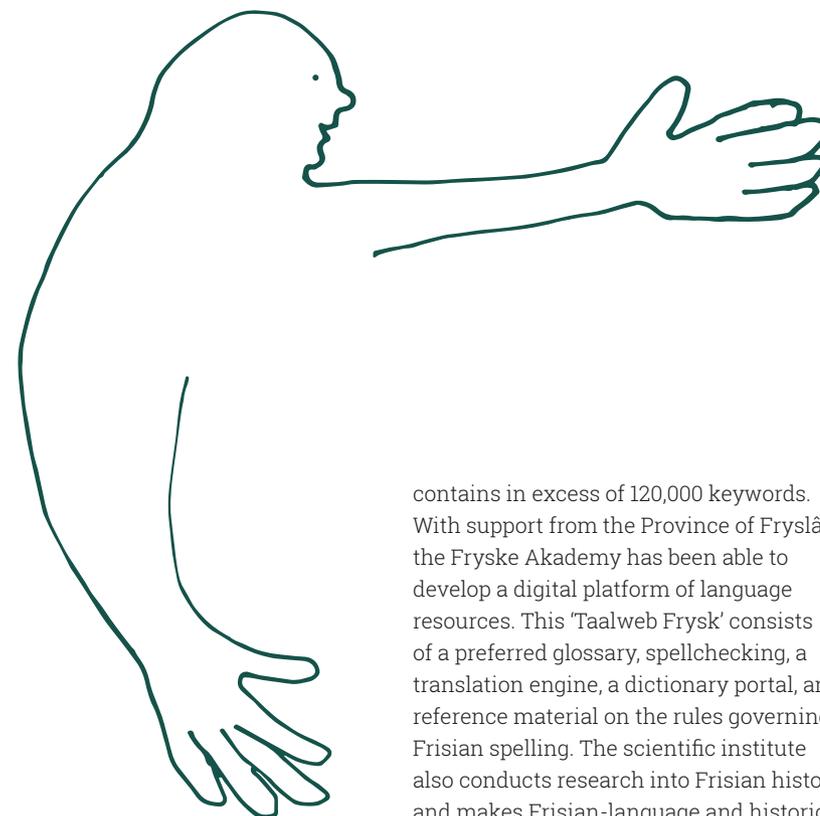
In the following century many other societies were founded, such as the Young Frisians Society (Jongfryske Mienskip), founded by Douwe Kalma in 1915. And even though the societies often had different identities, they all shared a common goal, which was to study, to protect and to promote the Frisian language and culture in all its forms.

The people affiliated with these societies played an important part in producing a constant stream of literature and in standardising the Frisian language by working on, for example, grammars and dictionaries. These societies taken as

a whole are referred to as the 'Frisian Movement'.

The Algemeine Fryske ûnderrjochtkommisje (General Frisian Educational Committee or Afûk) was founded in 1928 and its goal was to organise Frisian courses for adults and to develop teaching material for children. Nowadays, as well as providing study programmes, the Afûk also works to promote the language through campaigns such as Praat mar Frysk (Just Speak Frisian), and in addition it publishes Frisian books.

■ www.afuk.frl



An institute was founded in 1938 for the purpose of scientific research into the Frisian language and culture: the Fryske Akademy. It started out with a scientifically based description of the Frisian vocabulary. The project concluded in 2011. The **Wurdboek fan de Fryske Taal** was published in 25 volumes and in total

contains in excess of 120,000 keywords. With support from the Province of Fryslân, the Fryske Akademy has been able to develop a digital platform of language resources. This 'Taalweb Frysk' consists of a preferred glossary, spellchecking, a translation engine, a dictionary portal, and reference material on the rules governing Frisian spelling. The scientific institute also conducts research into Frisian history and makes Frisian-language and historical heritage accessible to academia and society at large.

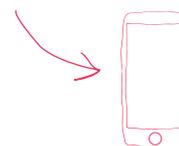
■ www.fryske-akademy.nl

■ www.taalweb.frl

The Frisian Movement developed in stature after 1945. Many groups and organisations were created whose focus was on the direct or indirect promotion of Frisian. Their goal has been for an official status for Frisian in public life and parity of the language in relation to Dutch.

emancipation

Frisian forwards!



RECOGNITION

The recognition of Frisian in the Netherlands has resulted in a boost to Frisian language and culture. In the absence of an active language policy the development of Frisian would have taken a downturn in spite of any sense of pride and status.

On the basis of European treaties, national legislation and regulations, and the resulting provincial policies, the Province of Fryslân has subsidised and commissioned a variety of bodies, organisations, businesses and individuals to strengthen the position and use of the Frisian language. The Province of Fryslân takes responsibility for providing facilities, coordination, encouraging initiatives and for its own part sets an exemplary standard. Examples include grants for the development of teaching methods in the Frisian language, for the performing arts, for Frisian-language publications, and for Frisian-language television and radio broadcasting.

Another major stimulus for Frisian has come from the European policy relating to lesser-used and regional languages. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was called into being in 1992. This charter, ratified by the Netherlands

in 1996, is concerned with protecting and promoting lesser-used and regional languages in the sectors of education, justice, public administration, the media and culture, socio-economic life and in international relations. In ratifying the charter, the Dutch government committed itself to the adoption of a variety of measures aimed at strengthening Frisian. The charter came into force 1998.

More than 6,000 languages are spoken worldwide. Linguistic diversity is in evidence in many places. Within the European Union ten percent of the population speaks a minority language. Examples include Belgium (Flemish and Walloon), Spain (Catalan and Basque) and Great Britain (Welsh, Scots and Scots Gaelic).



There are various European organisations dedicated to the preservation and promotion of regional and minority languages. Examples of such organisations include:

Until its discontinuation in 2010, the Europeesk Buro foar Lytse Talen (European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages: EBLUL) was responsible for promoting and protecting Frisian and Low Saxon in the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Netherlands. To that end it sought legislative and political support at the European and national level.

■ www.eblt.nl

The European Language Equality Network (ELEN) was established in 2010. This network has continued the work performed by the former European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages. Its aim is to strengthen the position of minority languages within

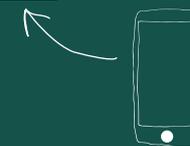
Europe, to promote regional languages and to bring people in contact with one another.
■ www.cracking-the-language-barrier.eu/organisations/elen

The Mercator Research Centre, a division of the Fryske Akademy, conducts research into all of Europe's regional and minority languages. It also shares its expertise in terms of learning languages at school, at home and through cultural engagement. It is responsible for ensuring that developments of potential interest in other minority languages are made available to the relevant interested parties in Fryslân.

■ www.mercator-research.eu



Languages in Europe





Taal
fan it
hert

LANGUAGE OF THE HEART

Familiar and personal are words often used by people when discussing their *mother tongue*. A sense of *pride* also comes into the equation.

Frisian is a language of the heart. Where *emotions* are concerned, we *revert instinctively* to our first language.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MOTHER TONGUE

Thanks to the resolve of all the many advocates for Frisian over the centuries, such as Gysbert Japicx, Douwe Kalma and Fedde Schurer, we are now able to use Frisian in a variety of spheres. This could be in a courtroom, or standing before a registrar, or in church or when receiving healthcare. The Frisian language has acquired an official status in an increasing number of situations, and Frisian speakers are also able to use their mother tongue in public life.

What, though, of the pessimists who have been telling us for years that Frisian is in decline? Children no longer hear Frisian straightaway from their mother's knee, language standards are in free fall, and so on and so on. Do they have a point? It is clearly the case nowadays that children are no longer growing up in a monolingual Frisian world as they would have done in the past. Society has undergone considerable change; our entire life is not spent living in just one place any more, and the whole world is now brought to our doorsteps digitally. Multilingualism is everywhere in evidence, in our own families, on the high street, at schools and in the media. And yet, your

mother tongue is something that you keep forever; it is the very first language we will have learned and arouses a trusted, familiar feeling in us.

It is because Frisian is not only a language of the heart but also a language of official public life that it has an impact on people. The standing of Frisian in the world of literature and other forms of cultural expression is increasing by the day. We are able to enjoy Frisian in all manner of cultural formats: plays, songs, books and films are more keenly felt in our own language and truly touch our hearts.

**“Ast mei in minske praatst
yn in taal dy’t er ferstiet dan
komt it yn syn holle.**

**Ast mei him praatst yn syn
eigen taal dan rekket
it yn syn hert.”**

Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head.
If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.”

COLOPHON

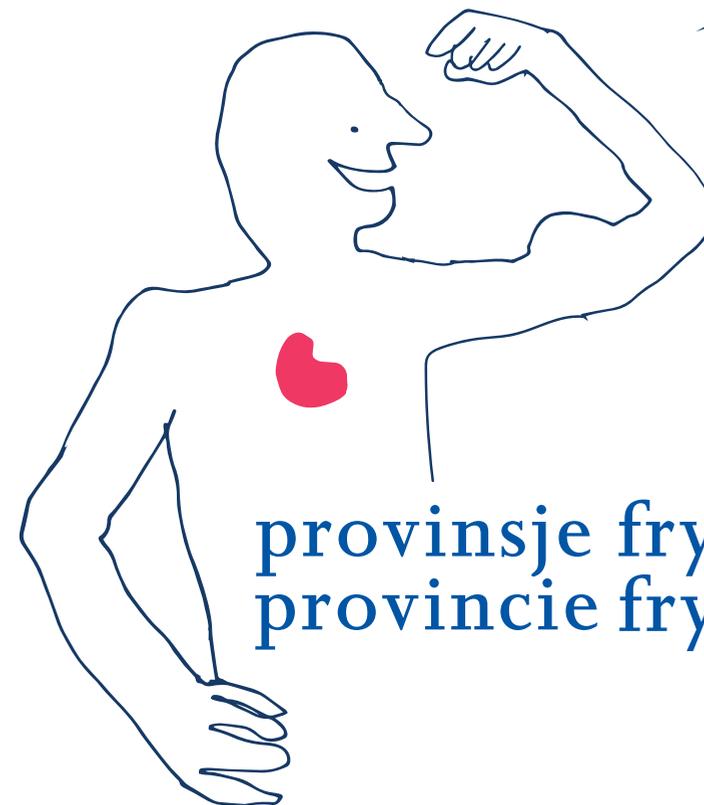
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