

Orthographical description of Finglish

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1 Introduction

Finglish is an artificial language created for a linguistics class at the University of South Carolina in spring 2001. It borrows much of its grammar and vocabulary from Finnish[1] so it could be considered to be in the Finno-Ugrian family of languages.

The simplicity of Finglish phonology[2] allows the orthography to be quite simple. Actually Finglish orthography is completely phonemic.

2 Grapheme set

Finglish uses basically a subset of the Latin alphabet with additional characters ä and ö. The complete set of Finglish graphemes is shown in table 1. All graphemes have two allographs, lower and upper case, that have distinct meaning in written texts.

Lower case	a	e	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n
	o	p	r	s	t	u	v	y	ä	ö
Upper case/Capital	A	E	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
	O	P	R	S	T	U	V	Y	Ä	Ö

Table 1: Graphemes and allographs of Finglish

3 Grapheme-Phoneme mapping

Finglish writing is totally phonetic. The spelling is based on formal speech that is taught in schools to all Finglish speakers. This written form is quite different from casual Finglish that often shortens or even omits some of the inflectional suffixes.

Grapheme	a	e	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n
Phoneme	ɑ	e	ŋ	h	i	j	k	l	m	n
Grapheme	o	p	r	s	t	u	v	y	ä	ö
Phoneme	o	p	r	s	t	u	v	y	æ	œ

Table 2: Grapheme-Phoneme Mapping

In table 2 there is the complete one-to-one mapping of Finglish graphemes and phonemes. Notable features of the alphabet is the somewhat surprising phoneme /ŋ/ for grapheme g and two graphemes ä and ö with diaeresis.

4 Spelling

All Finnish words are spelled as they are pronounced in formal speech. The long vowels are written by doubling the corresponding short vowel, for example /ti:na/ is written “Tiina” (a woman’s name).

There is a blank space between words, except in compound words which are written together or with a hyphen between the parts if the preceding word ends with the same vowel as the next word starts. For example “linja-auto” (“linja” a line, “auto” automobile, together a bus) is pronounced as /linja auto/ not as /linja: uto/. The rule for hyphens does not apply with consonants as /korvan:ipukka/ (ear lobe) is written “korvannipukka” (“korvan” ear-gen., “nipukka” tip)

A sentence begins with an uppercase letter and ends with a period. Also proper names, including names of countries, begin with a capital letter. Names of languages are written all lower case. For example “Suomi” means Finland but “suomi” means Finnish. The pronunciation of the both words are the same so in speech the meaning has to be inferred from the context.

References

- [1] H. Sulkala, M. Karjalainen: Finnish, Routledge, (1992)
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- [3] K. Palin: Morphological description of Finnish, University of South Carolina, (2001)
- [4] K. Palin: Description of Finnish Syntax, University of South Carolina, (2001)