

K-a-tt-e-p-i-n-er

On complex letter-to-sound correspondences in Danish words

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The article presents a study of letter-sound correspondences in Danish orthography. A total of 565 letter-sound correspondence types were needed to align letters and sounds in a list of more than 47,000 Danish word forms. Seven principles of letter-sound alignment are formulated and discussed. The word list included nearly all word forms with one or two syllables which occur in *Den Danske Ordbog* or can be derived from occurring words by inflection. Two thirds of the letter-sound correspondence types were “complex”, meaning that they related a string of letters to a single sound, or (less commonly) a string of sounds to a single letter. Complex correspondences are clearly a challenge to learners of Danish orthography. However, Danish orthography is still dominated by simple correspondence, as more than 50 % of the word forms consisted entirely of simple correspondences in which a single letter is related to a single sound.