

Klingon 101:
*Linguistics via
Constructed Languages*

Explore UT

March 4, 2006

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What is Linguistics?

- **Semantics/Lexicon**
 - Word meaning
- **Phonetics/Phonology**
 - Sounds
- **Morphology**
 - Word building
- **Syntax**
 - Making words into sentences
- **Sociolinguistics**
 - The interaction of language and society

What is a Constructed Language?

- Codes & Naming Languages
 - Morse code, *Watership Down*'s "Lapine"
 - Most fictional languages are naming languages
- Modified Natural Languages
 - Yodish
- Fictional/Plot-driven Languages
 - Klingon, Vulcan, Láadan
 - Tolkien's languages
- Auxiliary Languages
 - Esperanto, Ido, Novial

So, how do these two fit?

- The “four subfields” of linguistics are not easily separated in natural languages.
- Constructed languages (ConLangs) allow each subfield to be addressed without the “noise” encountered in natural languages.

Course Layout

- 2 sections: SWC and non-SWC
- “Traditional” homeworks
 - Language exercises using Klingon and Esperanto
 - SWC: 3 short essay papers
 - Final project or research paper
- Online homework
 - Discussion board on LiveJournal
 - Searching for new ConLangs
 - Created our own class ConLang
- Class Participation
 - Large participation grade (15~20%)

Semantics ~

Codes & Naming Languages

- Klingonaase (the other Klingon language)
 - John M. Ford's *The Final Reflection*
- Lingua Ignota
 - St. Hildegard von Bingen
- Lapine, the Language of the Rabbits
 - Richard Adams's *Watership Down*
 - *embleer* stinking
 - *elil* enemies
 - *frith* the sun (personified)
 - *inle* moonrise
 - *hrair* an uncountably large number
 - *rah* prince, leader, chief rabbit
 - *Frithrah!* An exclamation (lit. "The Lord Sun")

Phonetics/Phonology & Writing

- What do letters sound like?
 - Using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 1993)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d			ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ	n			ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ		r						ʀ		
Tap or Flap			ɾ			ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative			ɬ ɮ								
Approximant		ʋ	ɹ			ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant			l			ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

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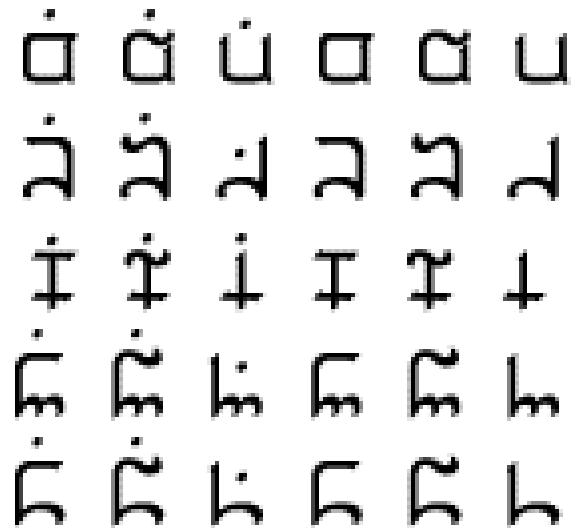
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• Klingonaase:

- *kh'ex* :: corpse
- *kilaan* :: unit of time

• Gargish

- Ultima game series, Origin Systems
- Latin derived
- Excellent orthography
- p, b, m, f, v, u (across)
- p, t, ch, kl, k (down)



Morphology

- SolReSol

- Only 7 syllables, based on musical scale
 - do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si

- Láadan

- Speech Acts

- *Bíi* :: declarative
- *Bó* :: command
- *Bé* :: promise
- *báa* :: question
- *bóo* :: request
- *bée* :: warning

- Evidentials

- *wa* :: perceived by speaker directly
- *we* :: perceived by speaker in a dream
- *wáa* :: assumed false by speaker b.c. speaker distrusts source of information

Syntax

- Yodish
 - “Sleeping he was.”
- Klingon
 - “*yaS legh puq*”
 - *yaS* :: officer
 - *legh* :: see/saw
 - *puq* :: child
 - “The child sees/saw the officer.”
 - Klingon is Object-Verb-Subject (OVS)

Sociolinguistics... the grab bag

- The sociolinguistic aspect covers nearly everything else.
 - Auxiliary languages intended for world communication
 - Theoretical implications behind different ConLangs
 - Who creates ConLangs and Why?
 - What makes a ConLang “good” or “bad”?

Auxiliary Languages (AuxLangs)

- AuxLang Boom ~1850-1930
- History of “the World” (aka Europe)
- Why an AuxLang?
 - Natural Languages have “cultural baggage”
 - Easily learnable by everyone
- Problems with AuxLangs
 - Overly simple: SolReSol
 - Euro-centric: Esperanto, Ido, Novial
 - Carry their own “cultural baggage”
- Current & Future state of AuxLangs
 - Esperanto & the E.U.

Linguistic Theory & ConLangs

- Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis
 - “linguistic determinism”
 - “linguistic relativism”
- Sexist Language
 - Láadan, the Woman’s Language
 - Suzette Haden Elgin, *Native Tongue* Trilogy
- Pragmatics & Metaphor
 - Darmok
 - Star Trek: The Next Generation, season five, episode 202
- Phonosemantics
 - Magic Languages: Abracadabra, Theban, etc.

Who creates ConLangs and Why?

- Writers
 - J.R.R. Tolkien
 - Wrote books to showcase languages
- Gamers
 - Ultima
 - Gargish
 - AD&D
 - Tons of fan-languages
- ConLanging as a Hobby
 - The vast majority of ConLangs are “hobby languages”
- Linguists
 - Test linguistic theories
 - Language acquisition
 - Computational linguistics

Critical Evaluation of ConLangs

- What was the purpose of the language?
- Are all four linguistic subfields considered?
- Are any oddities of the language explained?
- Does it claim to be something it is not?

So, how did it all work out?

- Wonderfully!
- Even so, there were problems:
 - LiveJournal participation was a bit uneven
 - Required readings were all online
 - Didn't require a basic Klingon or Esperanto workbook
 - Final projects varied widely in scope and complexity

Final Projects of Note:

- Evan Wilson's translation of a stanza of "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock" into SolReSol
- Ellen Julstrom, Carlie Zumwalt, & Troy Ruldolph's "UT Recruitment Video" in Klingon
- Andrew Adey's creation of "The Gi'th Language"
- Taylor Hardee's "Klingon Flashcards"
- Norman Friis's creation of a Lojban orthography
- Karen Brown's "Dual Translation..."
- Lasse Christensen's Orthographic extensions for Láadan

LIN 312: Invented Languages: Klingon and Beyond...

- Instructor: Doug Bigham
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- Course Websites:
<https://webpace.utexas.edu/bighamds/LIN312/LIN312WebHome.htm>
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Fall 2006 43015, T/Th, 3:30-5pm