

### **A Brief History of Constructed/Artistic Languages:**

Constructed languages date back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when Hildegard van Bingen created her *Lingua Ignota*, but they did not really gain momentum until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the creation of *Volapük* and *Esperanto* as auxiliary languages. Still, artistic languages--those constructed for use in literary works--did not gain notability until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *A Princess of Mars* by Edgar Rice Burroughs is thought to be the first fictional work published in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to use a constructed language, though the most notable piece of 20<sup>th</sup> century fiction containing constructed language is J.R.R. Tolkein's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and partner works. (Wikipedia 2005:10,14–16)

Since then, constructed language has become more and more frequently used in fiction, particularly fantasy and science–fiction, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is so commonplace readers barely register it as an interesting phenomenon. Artistic languages have found their way into films and television programs, like *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and *Stargate: SG1*. (Wikipedia 2005:17)

### **My Project – tspfkhtj:**

The purpose of this project was to create my own artistic language for a fantasy trilogy/series I've written. The language is one of many languages spoken or alluded to in the novels, and is the language of the denizens of Hell and the Coldak, who invaded centuries prior to the main plotline from the west of the Known World, where the books take place. The need for a language had presented itself, but the idea came from an entirely different venue.

This is not the first language I have created. Previously, I'd written a science–fiction novel with a friend, a collaborative work entitled Epilogue, which is pending revision and publishing. In it were two constructed languages, Zyphyr, which is spoken by reptilian aliens, and Bluithian, the language of sentient beings made of compacted photons or crystallized light. Zyphyr is a hissing language heavily reliant upon sibilants, and in it the letter *s* is a vowel, lending the language a snake–like tenor. Bluithian, spoken by crystalline beings, had no vowels and sounded like static, which seemed fitting, since the speakers were made of light. However, during Epilogue's overhaul, both of these two species, and consequently their languages, were cut from the storyline due to them being irreparably lame, far–fetched and eroding the already tenuous credibility of the storyline. (Epilogue 2002:1–298, Zyphyr 2002:1–5)

Left with two unutilized and imperfect languages that shared a similar premise and a need for a unique and auditorily intimidating language for my own novel, I decided to splice the two using my knowledge of constructed language to create one well–formed language. The language has no vowels, like Bluithian, and employs fricatives to take the place of vowels, like the *s* in Zyphyr. Phonetically, the language relies solely on voiceless consonants, where voiceless plosives and clicks take on the role of traditional consonants while vowels are replaced by unvoiced fricatives. This phonetic premise, along with my need for a language to use in my novels, was the inspiration for this project.

## The Three Problems:

### One:

Overall, I feel that the project went very well. I set out to create an interesting and fully functional language, and I succeeded. The first significant problem I encountered was which phonemes to include in the language and which to abandon. Through a highly subjective process where I sat about making strange noises to see if I could pronounce the sounds, I cut those that I deemed too hard to say or too similar to other sounds, later coming up with cultural and anatomical reasons why the speakers lacked the phonemes in their language. The phonemes I cut were the bilabial fricative and the uvular fricative and plosive. In addition to these plosives, I added two clicks, a bilabial and an alveolar, and a cluck.

### Two:

With ten plosives and nine fricatives to work with, my next problem was what type of orthography to have and how to design it. Deciding to create iconic symbols for the each of the nineteen phonemes, I set to work, and eventually developed these:

f	ʘ	p	-The first row contains the labial sounds, the fricative, the click, and the plosive.
θ			-The next row is the dental row. No plosive is made here, and I did not include the dental click, so the fricative is alone.
s	ɸ	t	-This third row shows the alveolar sounds, in the same order as the first row.
ʃ			-Like the dental fricative, the post-alveolar has no corresponding plosive or click and is alone.
ʂ	ʈ	ʈ	-The fifth row displays the retroflex fricative, click, and plosive.
ç	c		-This row contains the palatal fricative and plosive; there is no click for this location in the mouth.
x	k		-The seventh row is the velar row, with the fricative and plosive.
ħ	i .		-In this row are the pharyngeal fricative and the cluck, which is made in the back of the mouth.
h	ʔ		-Finally, the glottal fricative and plosive comprise the ninth row.

Note how the click and plosive are distinguished from each other with the direction of their central sticks, the clicks suggesting airflow down into the mouth, the plosives suggesting the air moved up out of the mouth. Also note how each row has its own curve, which differs from the curve of any other row and is shared between members of the same row. The fricatives which fall between these four areas of the mouth have a deviated curve from the row above it.

-  bilabials and labiodentals
-  alveolars
-  retroflexes
-  palatals

From this set-up of symbols, the idea for fricative-plosive overlay surfaced, and I developed the following syllabic alphabet of fricative-based symbols with plosive diacritics:

I left the original symbols in this far left column of the chart to illustrate what the diacritic markings on each symbol were.

The far right column shows the consonant-final symbols for when a consonant ends a word.

	f	θ	s	ʃ	ʒ	ç	x	h	h	final
◌ <sup>o</sup>										
◌ <sup>p</sup>										
◌ <sup>ɸ</sup>										
◌ <sup>t</sup>										
◌ <sup>l</sup>										
◌ <sup>ɹ</sup>										
◌ <sup>c</sup>										
◌ <sup>k</sup>										
◌ <sup>i</sup>										
◌ <sup>ʔ</sup>										

This overlay was painstaking and problematic as I tried to be systematic but encountered problems with combining some of the symbols. Irregular ones formed; they are only semi-logical instead of simplistic and obvious. These irregular symbols include **oħ**, **pʃ**, **ɸç**, **tx**, **ks**, and others, where the fricative curve and the plosive curve would collide and become muddled. The need for distinction overrode regularity, and some symbols warped. However, the diacritic is always the marker to change; the fricative symbol is retained throughout its entire column without exception (the **h** symbol was originally a simple line, which is carried through. Only later was the small horizontal dash added, to distinguish the lone fricative from a bare line).

**Three:**

With the orthography developed, the next real issue was to develop, well, everything else. I had no clue where to begin, and after some thought I decided to write

out a document to translate into the language, mostly so I could write it in my new orthography. I wrote out a myth from the deamon scripture, their creation myth, and from there decided the morphology, syntax, and vocabulary as I went.

### Aftermath:

From that point onward, the process was smooth and relatively easy. I created things in interesting ways that still seemed logical to me, mostly drawing from or expanding upon languages I knew so nothing would be too extreme or complicated.

Zyphyr vocabulary→the first morphology, pronouns and noun class endings  
Klingon's three noun classes (language users, body parts, other stuff)→my four noun classes (edibles, inedibles, peers, betters)

Latin noun declension (Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Ablative)→my revised noun declension (Nominative, Genitive, Vocative, Objective) with breakdown of Objective case (Direct Object, Indirect Object, Object of Preposition)

Sanskrit's three numbers (singular, dual, plural)→my four numbers (singular, dual, trial, plural)

Sanskrit's vowel elision→fricative elision in verbs

Klingon's topic morpheme 'e'→topical use for reflexive marker

Klingon's state-of verbs rather than adjectives→my verbalized adjectives

Sanskrit's grammatical politeness (passive voice is more polite)→certain conversational rules and syntactical things are highly offensive

Sanskrit's clause marker *iti* (used for direct quotation) + Java's compiling parentheses and brackets→my relative clause and subjunctive clause markers.

### Grammatical Breakdown:

#### Phonology and Epenthetics:

F and PF are acceptable. If two consonants come into contact, use the epenthetic [x] unless otherwise indicated. Glottal plosive syllables cannot begin words; glottal plosives cannot be final consonants. No two same fricatives can follow each other inside a word, and if they come into contact, use the epenthetic [k] unless otherwise specified.

#### Noun Classes:

The *edibles* class is used when referring to items you a) eat and b) loathe. While it might seem strange to categorize food and filth together, it must be recalled that many of the species speaking this language actually eat other sentient species speaking the same language. The cultural justification for this apparent barbarism is that an edible being is inferior and isn't actually sentient, deserving of contempt. Food, just as refuse, is not to be respected. This noun class ending is **-skh**.

The *inedibles* class indicates your indifference toward the item, a rather aloof and apathetic attitude, neither contemptuous nor disrespectful. This noun class ending is **-tf**.

The *peers* class is used when addressing or discussing your peers. This noun class ending is **-k<sup>h</sup>tʃ**.

The *betters* class is used when addressing or discussing your betters, to convey your respect for the item, or during apologies or confessions. This noun class ending is **-k<sup>h</sup>tʃtʃ**.

### Number Indication:

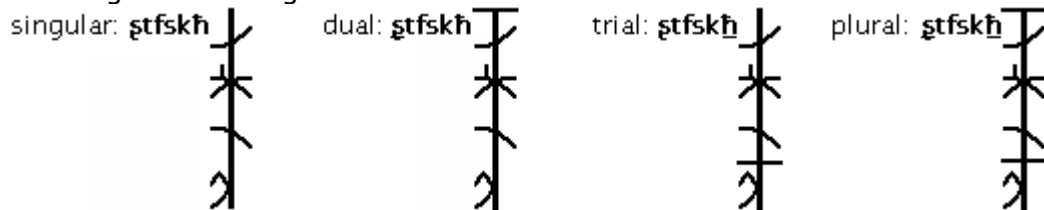
Numbers are marked with fricative length, denoted in transliteration as an underscore and in the orthography as a horizontal bar above the syllable.

*Singular* has no added long fricatives

*Dual* has the first syllable of the root noun become long.

*Trial* has the last syllable of the noun class ending become long.

*Plural* has both the first syllable of the root noun and the last syllable of the noun class ending become long:



### Pronouns:

Pronouns are regular, take noun class endings and are declined just like any other noun.

**ʃ** – 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun (will always take the *peers* class)

**x** – 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun

**h** – 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun

### Noun Declension:

Nouns are declined through a series of prefixes to indicate case.

Nominative (Nom): no prefix

Genitive (Gen): **t**-

Objective (Obj): **k**-

Vocative (Voc): **!**-

The Objective case uses suffixes to distinguish between types of objects.

Direct Object (DO): no suffix

Indirect Object (IO): **-o**

Object of Preposition (OP): **-t**

Object of Prepositions will take one of two prepositions.

Positive (+OP): **cθ**-

Negative (-OP): **tʃ**-

### Verb Tense:

Verb tense is denoted with a tense marker placed at the beginning of the verb root.

Default: **ʃ**- (elides to **ʃ** preceding **ʃ**)

Past: **x**- (elides to **x** preceding **x**)

Future: **f**- (changes to **θ** preceding **f**)

Imperative: future tense with 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun in nominative

### Infinitive Construction:

The *primary verb* is in the tense you want the sentence to have. Following the *primary verb* is the infinitive or *secondary verb*, which is in default:

"He causes it to fly." → **xkḥtj kxtj ftçθ fspf** (He (*peer*) it (*inedible*) causes to fly).

"He caused it to fly." → **xkḥtj kxtj xtçθ fspf** (He (*peer*) it (*inedible*) caused to fly).

"He will cause it to fly." → **xkḥtj kxtj ftçθ fspf** (He (*peer*) it (*inedible*) will cause to fly).

### Deverbalized Nouns:

Any verb root, with no tense marker, can become a deverbalized noun by taking on a noun class ending, and can then be declined just as a noun can.

**fspf** = to fly (default verb) → **spf** = fly (verb root) → **spfkḥtj** = flying/flying peer (*peer* class) → **tspfkḥtj** = of flying/flying peer (Genitive *peer* class) → **tspfkḥtj** = of flyings/flying peers (plural Genitive *peer* class)

### Adjectives:

The language has no adjectives, but rather state-of verbs. For instance, the word "good" is instead expressed as a verb, **fḥh**, "(be) good". Deverbalized nouns of adjectival verbs, when used, are used as objects of a sentence, never as subjects; however, it is much more common in the classical language to simply employ a *secondary verb*:

"(Being) Good enjoys," or "Gooding enjoys." →

**fḥhtj ffpj** (Gooding (*inedible*) enjoys).

← BAD.

"He enjoys (being) good," or "He enjoys gooding." →

**xkḥtj kfḥhtj ffpj** (He (*peer*) gooding (*inedible*) enjoys).

← OKAY.

"He enjoys to (be) good," or "He enjoys to good." →

**xkḥtj ffpj fḥh** (He (*peer*) enjoys to (be) good).

← GOOD.

### Adverbs:

Because there are no adjectives, but rather state-of verbs, all adverbs are derived from verbs, which much match the tense of the verb they modify.

Adverb: **h** + matching verb tense + verb root

### Negation:

Verb: **çf-** (elides to **çf** preceding **f**)

Noun: **çç-** (rare; avoid whenever possible)

see Helpful Chart for proper affix order

### Passive Voice:

Verb with tense marker + **-çç**. Agent of action is in +OP; subject of action is in Nom. Other cases remain unchanged.

### Subjunctive:

For ability, use **sts** as the *primary verb* and the subjunctive verb as the *secondary verb*:

"He is able to fly," or "He can fly." →

**xkḥtj fsts fspf** (He (*peer*) is able to fly).

"He was able to fly," or "He could fly." →

**xkḥtj xsts fspf** (He (*peer*) was able to fly).

"He will be able to fly." →

**xkhtj fsts fspf** (He (*peer*) will be able to fly).

For intention, use **sts** as the *primary verb* and the subjunctive verb as a *secondary verb* in **future** tense.

"He plans to fly," or "He intends to fly." →

**xkhtj fsts fspf** (He (*peer*) is able will fly).

"He planned to fly," or "He intended to fly." →

**xkhtj xsts fspf** (He (*peer*) was able will fly).

"He will plan to fly," or "He will intend to fly." →

**xkhtj fsts fspf** (He (*peer*) will be able will fly).

### Reflexives:

Almost directly equivalent to "-self", the morpheme **!s-** can be placed on any noun or deverbalized noun, and can also be used on more than one noun in a sentence without problem, though rarely is it present more than once per sentence.

Another usage of the reflexive is for emphasis on nouns other than the subject:

"He threw the *ball*," vs. "*He* threw the ball."

And finally, when a noun is both the subject and object of a sentence:

"He made himself sick," or "The ball rolled on its own (itself)."

see Helpful Chart for affix order

### Augmentatives and Diminutives:

Augmentative: **h-** (changes to **x** preceding **h**)

Diminutive: **ç-** (changes to **s** preceding **ç**)

see Helpful Chart for affix order

### Syntax:

Word order is free, except for the following:

Genitive nouns must follow the noun they modify:

"The flight of Father," or "Father's flight." →

**fpkhtjtf ts?hkhtjtf** (flight (*betters*) of Father (*betters*)).

In infinitive constructions, the *secondary verb* must immediately follow the *primary verb*.

When listing pronouns, the order is 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and then 2<sup>nd</sup> person.

When listing nouns and pronouns together, the nouns must always follow the pronouns.

### Conversational Rules:

Nouns in lists should be listed in order of noun class ending, from *betters* to *edibles*.

Objects should not begin sentences. To do so is a much ruder version of using the reflexive to show topicality.

### Complex Sentences:

#### Clause Markers:

Adjectival/relative clause marker: **txt**

Causal clause marker: **kçk**

Each clause marker will both begin and end a clause, much like open and closed parentheses. Like parentheses, they can compile (see Myth Excerpt).

### Relative Pronouns:

The relative pronoun is **ih̄tʃ** and is declined based upon its function in the relative clause (see Myth Excerpt).

### Adjectives and Relative Clauses:

A noun can be described in a true adjectival sense using a **tx̄t** clause:

"Good life" → **cʃstʃskh̄ ih̄tʃ tx̄t ʃf#h̄ tx̄t** (life (*edible*) which is good).

In this construction, the adjectival verb inside the **tx̄t** markers must be in default.

Relative clauses can be thought of as more complex adjectives, and follow the same construction:

"The life which he wanted" → **cʃstʃskh̄ ih̄tʃ tx̄t xk̄h̄tʃ xkxtʃ tx̄t** (life (*edible*) which he (*peer*) wanted).

Note that, though adjectival verbs must be in default, relative clauses can take any tense, typically the same tense as the independent clause.

### Compound Sentences:

The only conjunctions in the language combine independent clauses, and often indicate more than simple English conjunctions. For example, the word **h̄i** is the closest equivalent to the English conjunction "and" in the language, but **h̄i** indicates a resultant event, translating more correctly to "and thusly" than a simple "and".

Because of the strange nature of these conjunctions, the language can have very long sentences that are chains of events, long strings of cause and effect. Traditionally, the only time a sentence is broken is when the following independent clause is not a result of the preceding one. Due to English's grammatical restraint on run-on sentences, many of these causal nuances are lost in translation.

When using these conjunctions, a subject can be omitted if it is the same as the subject of the independent clause preceding it. Similarly, verbs can also be omitted if they match the verbs preceding them. Objects, however, can never be omitted even if they are the same and must be restated, typically in full and not as a pronoun, though pronoun objects are occasionally seen.

Because **h̄i** is such a common word, it has a special rule for elision that must be used whenever applicable. If following a word ending in **h̄**, the conjunction will elide without lengthening the fricative. For example, the two words **sh̄ h̄i** would elide into **sh̄i**.

### Myth Excerpt:

1) Our Father, who came before all was all and there was nothing, awakened and split in two, and out of Father came Mother, and then all became all.

**s?hk̄h̄tʃtʃ ih̄tʃ t̄k̄h̄tʃ xs#h̄i pxts̄ tx̄t c0k̄h̄tʃk̄h̄tʃt̄ ih̄tʃ xsh̄ tx̄t xsth̄ tx̄t h̄i cʃc̄x̄h̄ xsh̄ tx̄t h̄i t̄s̄ks̄?hk̄h̄tʃtʃt̄ s?hsk̄h̄ xsh̄i h̄tʃk̄h̄tʃ xt̄c̄0c̄c̄ ʃsth̄:**

*Father-B [who] our-P awakened and thusly split in two (+all-P [who] came (was itself) and thusly nothing-N existed) and thusly -Father-B Mother-E came and thusly all-P was caused to be itself.*



"Our Father, who came before all was itself and so nothing existed, awakened and split in two, and from Father came Mother and so all was created."

2) But then Father saw that Mother had made life without death, had made light without darkness, had made peace without struggle. And Father saw that all was hungry and could not sleep or make good for allself.

**s7hkhtftf ks?hskh ihtf xfkx txt xtçθ kxcfstfskh tskstftft hi kxcfxccskh tskxcctft hi tskfθtft kxcffθskh txt hi khtfkhtf ihtf txt xçth hi xcfsts fkxts hi !sçkhtf ftçθ ff#h txt:**

*Father-P Mother-E [who] saw (caused life-E -death-I and thusly light-E -darkness-I and thusly -battle-I peace-E) and thusly all-P [who] (was hungry and thusly was not able to sleep and thusly it-P itself to cause to be happy).*

"Father saw Mother who caused life without death, light without darkness, and peace without battle, and so saw all who was hungry, was not able to sleep, and was not able to cause itself to be happy."

3.1) Life would not die, and so all hungered.

**xcfstfs cfstfskh cfs#hi htfkhtf xtçθcc fçth:**

*Was not able life-E to die and thusly all-P was caused to be hungry.*

"Life was not able to die and so all became hungry."

3.2) Light would not fade, and so all tired.

**xcfstfs cfxccskh cfs#hi htfkhtf xtçθcc fçth:**

*Was not able light-E to dim and thusly all-P was caused to be weary.*

"Light was not able to dim, and so all became weary."

3.3) Peace would not end, and so all grew listless and angry.

**xcfstfs cffθskh cfs#hi htfkhtf xtçθcc fskxçç hi fskh:**

*Was not able peace-E to end and thusly all-P was caused to be bored and thusly angry.*

"Peace was not able to end, and so all became bored and angry."

4) Father saw all and saw that all was unhappy, and so he spoke to Mother and said that it was time for war, so that there would be death and all would have food, so that there would be darkness and all could sleep, so that there would be battle to ease the boredom and anger of all.

**s7hkhtftf khtfkhtf xfkx hi khtfkhtf !htf txt xcf#h txt hi xkhç ks?hskh hi kfθfθkhtftf ihtf txt xkçtfcc kçk kçstftf ftçθ fsh; htfkhtf ftçfçç kçk kçk kxcctf ftçθ fsh; htfkhtf fkxts kçk kçk kfθtj ftçθ fsh; fftj khtfkhtf ihtf txt fskx hi fskh txt kçk txt:**

*Father-B all-P saw and thusly all-P [who] (was not happy) and thusly spoke Mother-E and thusly war-B [who] (was needed <death-I will cause to exist and thusly all-P will be fed> <darkness-I will cause to exist and thusly all-P will sleep> <battle-I will cause to exist and thusly will soothe all-P [who] (is bored and thusly is angry)>)*

"Father saw all and that all was unhappy, and so he spoke to Mother and said war was needed to cause death so all will be fed, to cause darkness so all will sleep, and to cause battle so all, who is bored and angry, will be appeased."

## Helpful Chart:

### Nouns:

Neg: <b>cç-</b>	Aug: <b>h-</b> (x/_h)	OP+: <b>cθ-</b>	Nom: -	Refl: <b>lç-</b>	root noun E: <b>-skh</b>	Pas: <b>-cç</b>	DO: <b>--</b>
Dim: <b>ç-</b> (s/_ç)		OP-: <b>tç-</b>	Obj: <b>k-</b>	(b:k)	I: <b>-tç</b>	IO: <b>-e</b>	
			Gen: <b>t-</b>		P: <b>-khtç</b>	OP: <b>-t</b>	
			Voc: <b>l-</b>		B: <b>-khtçtç</b>		

### Verbs:

Adverb: <b>h-</b>	Default: <b>ç-</b>	Neg: <b>-cç-</b>	Passive: <b>-cç</b>
	Past: <b>x-</b>		
	Future: <b>f-</b> ( <b>θ/_f</b> )		
	Imp: form of <b>h</b> + future		

Subj (abl): form of **sts** + default

Subj (int): form of **sts** + future

Deverbalized Nouns: non-tensed verb roots declined as nouns

Relative pronouns: **ihçf** (b:x)

Relative clause marker: **tçt** (takes no class)

Resultant clause marker: **kçk** (takes no class)

Resultant conjunction: **hi** (joins independent clauses)

### Syntax:

Genitive nouns immediately after the word they modify (behind reflexive pronouns)

Pronoun list: 1<sup>st</sup> person, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, 2<sup>nd</sup> person

Nouns follow pronouns in class order

Objects don't begin sentences

Sentences cannot begin with long fricatives