The languages of Kahal and Troil, at the time of the great war

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1 General description

This document describes some languages as they were spoken in the time of the war between the empires of Kahal and of Troil, and it is limited to some languages of the two empires. I mainly describe Sar and Troil’s language, with an extra section about what are commonly called the Koromlindi languages (but I do not limit myself to the variant of the eastern mountains, and, in fact, I say more about the variant of the plains, which lack a specific name). A last section describes some other languages of note.

1.1 Geopolitical situation

In order to understand the linguistic landscape, some remarks about the political divisions are in order.

The region covered by this document consists of a vast plain in the east and a mountain range in the west. The lands north and south are less hospitable, with mostly arid deserts; and there are no political entities to speak of there.

The plains are completely incorporated into the Empire of the Sun, governed from Khlyv —officially called “the Eternal City of the Goddess of the Sun”. It is a theocracy, with the High Priest being head of state. He gets instructions and guidelines directly from Kahal, the Sun Goddess herself. Sar, the language of the capital, is used as a lingua franca throughout the empire.

In the mountain range of the west, few people live. There used to be a thriving civilization, but the expansion of the Empire of the Sun into the foothills has incited the most powerful country there—the Empire of Earth—to pull back deeper into the mountains. The other countries have been overrun by the Sun, and only the Empire of Earth itself does still exist, remotely and without any contact with the outside world. Its capital is Gël, where Troil’s language—or Troilgulm—is spoken. This is also the language used in interethnic contacts within this empire. The country is governed by the Earth Goddess Troil, who communicates with her priests in the main underground temple in Gël.

Among other important peoples are the Koromlindi, or just the Lindi for short. They originated in the mountains, but in times immemorial a branch split off, migrating to the plains. Their language is an important interlanguage in the regions where they live, both in the Sun and in the Earth lands.

One last notable kingdom is Gaishu, which used to be an ally of Earth, but which is now subjected to Sun. Its language is still used as a lingua franca in the former sphere of influence of the Gaishu kingdom.
1.2 General linguistic situation

The linguistic landscape is everywhere very diverse. Almost all languages are isolates, and the few groupings that do exist must usually be considered as dialects, rather than as different languages. The reason is, of course, that the active meddling of the deities of the planet has accelerated the natural evolution, and spoken language has emerged in literally thousands of independent places. There has not yet been time for a natural equilibrium to form. Sprachbundes, however, have formed already.

Common traits shared by the languages under consideration are lack of tones, the use of glides, the liberal use of /l/ and /r/ to make complicated consonant clusters, scarcity of special vowels (other vowels than front unrounded and back rounded are very rare), and the rareness of flection and fusion (using isolation and agglutination instead).

The languages from farther north usually have tones. In the mouth of the River Sur, front rounded vowels abound and fusion is more the norm. And, finally, in the foothills between the mountains and the plains, the linguistic diversity is very high, resulting in different exotic features every second village. Near the territory of the former kingdom of Gaishu retroflexes and simple syllable structure have become areal features.

1.3 Final notes

In the time of the war, writing was not yet invented. Anecdotal accounts of “making scribbles in wax, and suddenly remembering just about anything” seem to point at the private development of some proto-writing. In this document, I use IPA to write down the languages under consideration.

2 Sar

Sar is the language of Khlv, the capital of the Empire of the Sun, and of the surrounding area. It is used as a lingua franca throughout the empire.

2.1 Phonology

The phonology of Sar stands out by its excessive use of consonant clusters. Non-Sar-speaking tribes often make fun of the language, saying one must “hate vowels” in order to speak it well. A famous tongue-twister is “tsrqtkt/kfpqzqfs” (“he really just kept counting them”).

Native speakers and grammarians distinguish four “lasters” or “klxkr” /v, o, l, r/ which play the role of vowels, two “colorers” or “ve-cqk’akr” /w, j/ and a series of “ornamentals” or “ve-regggr”, which are ordinary consonants.

The exact realisation of lasters and ornamentals depends on the dialect, and even within dialects on the speaker, and often one speaker mixes different realisations. In the accent of Khlv, the colorers are usually realised as labialisation or palatalisation of the consonant coming before, while other dialects would rather merge colorer and laster to make other vowels. For example, for the word “nxjel” (“to wait”) the realisation may vary from [nxml] over [nxjel] to [nxel]. In this document I will transcribe the vowels and consonants with their underlying representation, and the glides as superscript (“nxjel”).

It often happens by adding affixes that two identical consonants come together. In that case, one geminated consonant usually results, as in “hek” (“to go”) plus “-kf” (past tense marker) giving “hekkf” (“went”), realised as [’hek]. Mark that this is not valid for t plus ts, as these must be considered as different sounds. In the locative ending they come together as “-tts”, usually realised somewhat like [’tts].

Voicedness is not contrastive for the starting consonants of suffixes. If a suffix is appended to a word ending in a voiced consonant, the suffix turns voiced as well. For example:

\[g’rnz \text{("to despise") + -kf \text{(past) + -qs (third person masculine singular subject) + -qs (third person masculine singular object) \rightarrow g’rnzgqgqgz \text{("he despised him")}.}\]
In this example one can also see that uvular consonants are velarised when voiced, as Sar has no voiced uvulars.

2.2 Nominal system

Sar nouns distinguish three genders: divine, common, and neuter. Adjectives have to agree with the gender of the noun they belong to. The common gender has the two sub-genders masculine and feminine, depending on the sex of the person under consideration. If the sex is unspecified, there is no general preference on which gender to choose.

There are two numbers: singular and plural. Number is expressed by suffixes, but it is possible not to mark it, as is often done in the singular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>generic</th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“divinity”</td>
<td>q®arl</td>
<td>q®arl</td>
<td>q®arl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“male inhabitant”</td>
<td>mp³o-vedzerlkır</td>
<td>mp³o-vedzerlkır</td>
<td>mp³o-vedzerlkır</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“female inhabitant”</td>
<td>l-vedzerlkır</td>
<td>l-vedzerlkır</td>
<td>l-vedzerlkır</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“stone”</td>
<td>x®er</td>
<td>x®er</td>
<td>x®er</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are three fundamental cases (nominative, accusative and genitive) and an oblique infix used to append a variety of other suffixes. Other relations are expressed by using postpositions, which always govern the genitive case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>nominative</th>
<th>accusative</th>
<th>genitive</th>
<th>locative (with oblique infix)</th>
<th>inessive (with postposition)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“divinity”</td>
<td>q®arl</td>
<td>q®arlıs</td>
<td>q®arlıklí</td>
<td>q®arlıttísl</td>
<td>q®arlıklí détts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“inhabitant”</td>
<td>vedzerlkír</td>
<td>vedzerlkírs</td>
<td>vedzerlkírlí</td>
<td>vedzerlkírlíts</td>
<td>vedzerlkírlí détts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“stone”</td>
<td>x®er</td>
<td>x®erls</td>
<td>x®erklí</td>
<td>x®erklíts</td>
<td>x®erklí détts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Verbs

Sar inflects verbs for subject, object, aspect and mood, all with a variety of suffixes. (Mark that “aspect” is not separate from tense, and “mood” is likewise conflated with other stuff.) Verbs can also take prefixes of motion and location (like lek “to go” → sodav-lek “to rise”), and there exist some suffixes of derivation (like belent “to speak” → belentna “to tell”). These are always immediately attached to the root.

The third person suffixes for subject and object differentiate the three genders, and in the singular also the two sexes. Mark that these personal suffixes can be omitted if they are clear from the context.

Aspect affixes come in front of the personal conjugation. If the aspect is generic, not important or clear from the context, there is no affix. The affixes are:

- -tst: continuous
- -kř: past/perfective
- -ş: perfect
- -f: inceptive
- -h®: prospective

Mood affixes come between aspect and conjugation. No affix implies an ordinary positive statement. There is an affix for negation, for stressed positivity, for possibility (potential) and
for marking hearsay (reportative). Note that it is, for example, not possible to combine hearsay with negation—in such cases, an auxiliary verb must be used, usually *ad* (“to be”). The existing affixes are:

- **-ps**: positive
- **-x**: potential
- **-5G**: negative
- **-m/α**: reportative

One example using all possible slots is:

\[ \text{Tēŋk-tf}'an-\text{weq-f-m}'α-\text{has-qs} \]

\[ \text{upwards-dig-back-incp-rep-3pl-c-3.N} \]

I heard they are starting to dig it back up.

There also exists an infinitive suffix *-fαN*. In order to form the participle, the adjectival suffix *-ts* must be added. With this last suffix, the object conjugation comes last, and there can be no subject conjugation.

### 2.4 Syntax

The syntax of Sar is rather free. It has mostly head-last tendencies, which are sometimes stricter (postpositions always come after) than in other cases (the positions of subject and object are almost completely arbitrary).

Compound sentences usually involve the particle *je* in some way.

\[ L-\text{fog} \ \text{addγα}, \ \text{je} \ \text{tewenklx}'ats'α-\text{jakr} \ \text{ad}, \ \text{r}'wlg, \ \text{je} \ \text{leputsarpl} \]

\[ l-\text{fog} \ \text{ad-dγα}, \ \text{je} \ \text{tewenkl-x}'ts'α-\text{jo-kr} \ \text{ad}, \ \text{r}'wlg, \ \text{je} \ \text{leps-αr-pl} \]

\[ m-\text{person} \ \text{be-2sg}, \ \text{CONJ hide-PASS-ADJ-REFL-C} \ \text{be}, \ \text{but}, \ \text{CONJ watch-HBL-1SG-2SG} \]

You are the man who was hiding, but I still managed to see you.

### 2.5 Longer example

The following text is an excerpt from the High Priest’s speech before the war against the lands of Troil.

\[ L'pplw'spnw'e \ \text{zlp fajrawef}. \ Lnpplw sngdl jafjsnmas, yveymas qeqw'epn'latts, tewenklx-w'sapts'α daihsnshs vedyerklrpxawef p'lnd-qqeqxw'ats'α pemkl fonjatts. Ndzweyklx fajsw'ef voyo-tshqimo, je tfomfmts'sα mvxrs rd-qok'α x'ershα tēŋk-tf'αn. Ndzweyklx fajsw'ef ye-reŋqymno. . . \]

\[ R'wlg, \ \text{je adhos rd-q'αrley}. \ Nsα xes ye-sqhos ndyeufew, \ \text{je} \ g'r'mzvαq \ \text{ad}, \ \text{r}'wlg belent-nnowq rd-pex'ekel Kehelyw'e. \ Pljkl k'ežis naggw'αqrf jekplw'αn pemafe, jemlje, jenikl ye-nts'ajatts nklld-yetsm'lαfy; \ \text{ad}, \ \text{zlp fajroffe fajbyfnf wes}. \ Lajegs mreqj-dzawqoons \ \text{ad} \ r'welf, \ r'wlg, \ \text{je ad}, \ ye-frineyhos'αn wqf. \ P'lnd-lot'αdplshos xes, \ \text{je} \ dzawq, \ r'wlg, \ \text{je} \ \text{Pewuf y'end} \ \text{devyhos}. \]

She showed me this land. She showed its cities, the hamlets in the vales, the hidden corridors the citizens have hewn out of the flesh of the earth. They have mines where they dig up precious metals and coloured stones. They have art...
But they are godless! They hold nothing but disdain for the sun, glorious Kahal told me. Every day, She sends Her rays down to the earth, to us, to the peoples in the empire, and even to the people in that realm. She gives us and them the gift of life, but still they don’t honour Her. They reap what She gives them, and they do not thank Her in return.

The languages of Kahal and Troil, the time of the war, typeset in LaTeX, see-APPL-3SG,D-1SG this land-OBL-INS. see-APPL it-GEN city-PL-ACC; hamlet-PL-ACC qeqy-n-ma-t-ts,twu-nkl-x*a-aj-ts*a-0 dansi-ma-s vedzurl-kx-px-a-wef valley-PL-OBL-LOC, hide-PASS-PRF-ADJ-N tunnel-PL-ACC live-NMLZ-PL-OBL-INS pl5hd-qeqy-x*a-0 pem-kl fag-a-t-ts. ndzep-px-kl fag-wef vaya-tslqz-ma, inwards-hew-PASS-ADJ-N earth-GEN body-OBL-LOC. he-PL-GEN body-INS stone-pit-PL, je tjamf-ts*a-0 mvrx-s rd-qak/a-0 x*er-s=ha tenk-t*f*a. on. ndzep-px-kl CONJ few-ADJ-N metal-ACC with-colour-N stone-ACC=and upwards-dig. he-PL-GEN fag-wef ye-reg-vag-ma...

body-INS make-beautiful-INV-PL...

r*e lg, je ad-hos rd-q*e-rl-ey. njo xe-s ye-sap-has ndze-wef, je but, CONJ be-3PL.C with-god-NEG. one thing-ACC make-midriff-3PL.C sun-INS, CONJ g*ruz-vag ad, r*e lg belent-na-wag rd-pex*e-kl kehel=y*we, pl5p-kl kezl-s despise-INS be, but say-ATT-3SG.D with-light=D Kahal= NOM. self-geny-ACC nagg*y-ar-aj lek-pl-wag pem-aj-fu, jemf-fu, jemf-kl ye-nts*[j-a-t-ts day-every go-APPL-3SG.D earth-OBL-LET, we-LET, we-GEN make-rule-NMLZ-OBL-LOC nklld-yetsr-mi-je; ad, 3lp faprr-a-t-ts fag-by-e-je w93. lejeg-rs live-river-PL-OBL-LET; be, this land-OBL-LOC person-PL-OBL-LET also. gift-ACC mpox-kay-wag-has ad r*e-ek-f, r*e lg, je ad, outwards-give-3SG.D-3PL.C be live-NMLZ, but, CONJ be, ye-frm-ey-was-wag w93. pl5hd-lat *adzl-ps-has xe-s, je make-honour-NEG-3PL.C-3SG.D also. inwards-take-POT-3PL.C thing-ACC, CONJ d9ay-wag, r*e lg, je pe-wef y*end ad-ey-has. give-3SG.D, but, CONJ She-INS grateful be-NEG-3PL.C.

2.6 Vocabulary

This list gives the words, particles and affixes used in the examples above.

-ve (noun suffix) singular suffix for common nouns
-ve oblique infix common gender
-ey (mood suffix) negative
belent (verb) to talk
belentna (verb) to tell
detts (postposition) inside
dansl (noun) path, tunnel, corridor
dgaw (verb) to give
-o oblique infix neuter gender
ad (verb) to be
ad, w93 even
anx (pronoun) it
-op (aspect suffix) perfect aspect
marker
-or (conjugational suffix) 1st person singular subject
-sf (aspect suffix) inceptive aspect
marker
fag (noun) land, country, realm
-fag (suffix) definitive
g*ran (verb) to despise
g*ranzvog (noun) contempt
ye- (prefix) to make something such
ye-nts*fl (verb) to rule
ye-nts*ff (noun) kingdom, empire
ye-qakho (verb) to colour
ye-qakokr (noun) “colours”, the glides of Sar
ye-reg (verb) to make beautiful
ye-regfr (noun) “ornamental”, consonant
ye-regvog (noun) art
ye-sap (verb) to feel, to have feelings
ye-frm (verb) to honour
yetsr (noun) river
y*end (adjective) grateful
-y*e (clitic) nominative marker
-luv (noun suffix) singular suffix for neuter nouns
-ha (clitic) and
-hass (conjugational suffix) 3rd person plural common, both subject and object
-b*e (aspect suffix) prospective
marker
je conjunction
jemf (pronom) we, our people
-jo (conjugational suffix) reflexive suffix
jofojr (noun) city
Kahal (proper noun) Kahal, the Goddess of the Sun
-kul (adjectival suffix) divine
gender marker
-kl (aspect suffix) past tense
marker
k*a (noun) sun rays
kl (case suffix) genitive
klx (verb) to last
klixr (noun) “laster”, sound that can be a syllable nucleus
-kr (suffix) somebody who, something which ●
(adjectival suffix) common
gender marker
-kl (verbal suffix) continuously
-r (noun prefix) feminine

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3 Troilgulm

The language of Troil, or, by its native name, Troilgulm, is originally the language of the people living in and around Gēl—which has become the capital city of the realms of Troil. It used to be the lingua franca of the entire mountain range west of the plains, but the expansion of the empire of Kahal and the subsequent shrinking of the sphere of influence of the Empire of Earth has seen the use of Troilgulm been abandoned in all regions closest to the plains.

3.1 Phonology

Troilgulm has a very rich syllable structure. There is a great variety of vowels, both long and short, and there are plenty of diphthongs and even triphthongs. The consonant inventory is rather ordinary, but it allows for some interesting consonant clusters.

The language possesses eight simple vowels /a, e, i, o, u, ø/. Five of these can also be long: /æ, e, i, o, u/. The two glides /j, w/ can come in front or after the vowel, resulting in a great variety of combinations. There are closing diphthongs, as in xloj (a kind of animal), liwr (“beautiful”), Trojil (the goddess Troil) and haw (“come on”); opening diphthongs, as in dljok (“good”), zmve (“to talk”), twa: (“leg”) and lwii: (“seven”); and there are also triphthongs, as in mjow (“forty-nine”) and wajjp (“stone”).

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Consonant clusters often involve /l/ and /r/, as in vrjul (“colour”), scrmp (“habitation”) and glwirt (“to fall”). Nasals also often combine with other sounds, as in vmoat (“to come after”) and ?ojats (perfect aspect marker). This can result in words starting with voiced stops with nasal release, like bmoat (“Earth magic”), dnjsasrf (“invader”) and gypa: (prospective aspect marker).

One last remark concerns the glottal stop. This is not really a phoneme in Troilgulm, but it is used at the beginning of a particle starting in a vowel, when it comes at the beginning of a lexeme. For example if the combination dzurl (“you”) plus i (topic marker) is expressed in this order, one gets dzurali; while if the order is inverted, the result would rather be i? dzurl. Sometimes a glottal stop is also inserted if such a particle comes after a vowel, but less consistently so.

3.2 Nominal system

Nouns in Troilgulm normally take one of four “articles”, except when the noun is undetermined. An example of this last case is the sentence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TO</td>
<td>dz?h tall being be.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dz?h are tall beings.

If the noun is determined, it takes an article, which indicates its number.

- i: singular
- go: paucal (only used with people)
- mork: plural
- tsaj: all of the...

To i-gi:s tsajj-wers-font gerwl-znwc.
NOM SG-man INCL-child-with CONT-speak
A man is talking to his children.

Adjectives can come in front of the article, or in between the article and the noun. In the first case they determine which of the noun is meant, while the second positioning is used when they could be left out without changing the meaning. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perx</th>
<th>i-wajp? We?k vwe?cs i-wajp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>which SG-stone? that ochre SG-stone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which stone? That ochre stone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perx</th>
<th>i-vwe?cs-wajp? We?k i-vwe?cs-wajp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>which SG-ochre-stone? that SG-ochre stone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which ochre stone? That ochre stone.

Furthermore, noun phrases can get prepositions and postpositions. There is one adposition that can come either in front or after the noun phrase it belongs to: the topic marker i. There are two prepositions: the nominative marker to and the accusative marker wal. These two can often be omitted. In normal speech, sentences will often start with the subject without preposition, and go on with the object with preposition. Other ways of building sentences, however, are possible, and will be used more or less often depending on register of speech, dialect, speaker, etc. All other adpositions come after the noun phrase.

3.3 Verbal system

Verbs are not conjugated for person. They can only get a preparticle indicating tense or aspect. Some examples:
That used to be my house.

I've never yet climbed that mountain over there.

Some verbs can function as auxiliaries. In that case, they get the tense particle, and the main verb comes after or before them in its bare form.

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That used to be my house.

I've never yet climbed that mountain over there.

Some verbs can function as auxiliaries. In that case, they get the tense particle, and the main verb comes after or before them in its bare form.

That used to be my house.

I've never yet climbed that mountain over there.
defend yourself, I will give you power. Go northwest during three days and you will
find a volcano. The molten stone is sufficiently hot to kill a dzêh right away, so watch
out! The mountain will also spit Earth magic. Harvest it with Sun magic. Take all
Sun magic you can find for this. You will harvest too much Earth magic for one person
to bear. So bring enough people. Even then, you will not yet be able to carry it all.
You will have to go to and fro. Store all this Earth magic under the temple hill in Gêl.
I will choose someone who knows enough of Sun magic to carry it all, and to destroy
the capital city and all the armies of Yelng. Now wake up.

wêm-krwe: ?î-loj f jëh-i , slaj-bet menj , wal hi-bet mork-dlurn
I-of SG-brother Jêng-top , sun-of god , ACC top-of pl-army
gwêl-mwe:xsut , tswef zew glama:ojn wal wêm-bet tsaj-loj. tsaj-dzûl-balm
CONT-prepare , goal be invade ACC I-of INCL-land. INCL-you
zwîrpraks , sar wal bmjotsjap gqa:j-hirn:qwo tsaj-dzûl-balm-vo. jajkner-vi: njo
defend , so ACC power PROS-gift INCL-you-to. northwest-direction go
sîrjing uj , ramp zlémp-valtstswêj ?ê-tirkgrod. ?î-mumpbarn-wajji-i sjar xî sar
day three , then FUT-find SG-volcano. SG-molten-stone-top sufficiently hot so
wal dzax gqwa fok , sar zrejtgwâç. ?î wal bmact to i-grozlj
ACC dzêz immediately kill , so be-careful! TOP ACC Earth_magic NOM SG-mountain
zlémp-znaj kjur. wal hi hrewntsle: zri-bit. 
so rorl , sar le: zri
FUT-spirit also. ACC TOP harvest Sun_magic-with. so do , so take Sun_magic
glajc so:z tswenj. wal bmact-i zlémp-hrewntsle: tjo:d gqax , sar bolm hej
all that find. ACC Earth_magic-TOP FUT-harvest too much , so person one
swark bmjots. sar, le: dnu:ljts sjarx gqax. sar kjur , wal i-gljaj swark tsom
carry can. so , take people sufficiently many. so also , ACC SG-all carry not
zlémp-bmjots. njô-rajmpnûa zlémp-vwe: . ?î wal wejk bmact lenaw gal-srots
FUT-can. go-return FUT-have-to. TOP ACC that Earth_magic store Gêl-in
vjôlmhrewnt-waj. to wcm zlémp-zram kwe:ç so:z zri-bit mels
temple hill-under. NOM I FUT-choose someone who Sun_magic-about know
?î-sjarsxhiws tswef wal i-gljaj swark , tswef bewsut jëh-bet ?ê-rwen t swaj-dlurn.
SG-enough to ACC SG-all carry , goal destroy Yelng-of SG-capital INCL-army.

3.6 Vocabulary

This list gives the words, particles and affixes used in the examples above.

bolm (noun) person
bet (postposition) genitive
marker
bewsut (verb) to destroy, to break
bit (postposition) about
bmact (noun) bmaat, Earth magic
bmon (determiner) over there
bmjotsjap (verb) can, to be able
bmjots (noun) power
bmjuij (verb) to see
de (adverb) now
dljok (adjective) good
dlacr (noun) troops, army
dnu:jsor (noun) invader
dnu:ljts (noun) people
dzax (noun) a dzêh, the hominid
species inhabiting the planet of the empires of
Troil and Kahal, the ones
speaking the languages

fag in Sar

dzurl (pronoun) you, singular
informal
dzûlbalmb (pronoun) you, singular
formal

fut (postposition) with
fo (verb) to be located
fok (verb) to kill
brots (pronoun) he, she
bejes (particle) negative perfect

tense marker, never before
gwêl (particle) continuous
aspect marker
gl (article) paucal article
Gôl (proper noun) Gêl, the
capital city of the Empire
of Earth
gis (noun) man

glamno:jn (verb) to invade

glajc (numeral) all
giwirt (verb) to fall

gqax (particle) prospective aspect
marker, going to
gqaj (pronoun) it
gqax (numeral) much, many, a
lot

gqax (verb) to use
gqwa (adverb) immediately, right
away
grozlj (noun) mountain

gu:j (numeral) three
da:w (particle) come on
hrewntsle: (verb) to harvest
hej (numeral) one
hi (pronoun) referer to the topic
hirn:qwo (verb) to gift, to give
i (particle) topic marker
Je:j (proper noun) Yelng, the
God of the Sun, analogous
to the goddess Kahal in the
Sun empire

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Koromlindi or just Lindi is a language spoken by a variety of tribes, living in both the empires of Sun and Earth. There are two main dialect groups, which I will here denote by the plains and the mountains variants. They differ only in phonology and some vocabulary (especially in loanwords they took from Sar or from Troilgulm), making them mutually intelligible with some goodwill from all speakers.

The example sentences below are given in the plains variant, and the longer example text uses the mountains variant.

### 4 Phonology

The plains variant has five-vowel system (/a, e, i, o, u/), while the mountains variant has seven vowels, two of which can be long or short (/a, e, i, ı, ə, o, u, u:/). Diphthongs are not used, but two can be reconstructed: they correspond roughly to the mountains vowels /ɛ/ and /ø/. In the plains variant they are often /æs/ and /æf/. A comparison is made in the table below.

In the Lindi language, consonants can be labialised. In the plains variant this is realised as a labiodental /v/ (as in svek “to be able, can”) and /dvaf/ (“that, which”), while the mountains variant has the labiovelars /kʰ/ and /gʰ/ (as in skʰek and dgʰo). Further processes can, however, make the situation more complex, as in Mal (a proper name), which corresponds to the mountains gloss Mqʰəl, and skuk (“all”), which has the plains cognate stvuk.

Another point of interest are the aspirated stops /pʰ/, /tʰ/, /kʰ/, which are realised as fricatives (/f/, ɵ, x/) on the plains. In the plains variant, this can give rise to clusters such as /fʰ/ and /sʰ/, which, in many dialects, are subject to more sound changes. There is, however, no unified pronunciation at all, and this document will write the clusters without further changes reflected.

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A last remark concerns the epenthetic vowels used on the plains to break up consonant clusters, as in Kvandar (proper name, mountains: K\textsuperscript{w}\textit{ndr}) and bva\textit{sul} (“to attack, to aggress”, mountains: b\textit{g}w\textit{osl}). When endings are added, the epenthetic vowel can move or disappear altogether, as in the verb \textit{a st\textsuperscript{h}Endli} (“to feel”), which has the past imperfective plural \textit{mundr st\textsuperscript{h}Endlist} (“we felt”) and the future form \textit{kve st\textsuperscript{h}Endli} (“I will feel”). The mountains variant has for these forms: \textit{a st\textsuperscript{h}Endli}, \textit{mundr st\textsuperscript{h}Endlst} and \textit{k\textsuperscript{w}e st\textsuperscript{h}Endli}.

### 4.2 Nominal system

The Lindi language uses inflection very sparingly. Nouns only get a diminutive and a plural suffix. In the plains variant, phonological processes can give rise to more irregular forms —the epenthetic vowel can move (as in \textit{gifpir} (“half”), diminutive: \textit{gifpri}). In both variants, words originally ending in a diphthong are also subject to changes in the diminutive. The table below gives the nominal inflexion of the word \textit{rvos} (a kind of animal) in plains Lindi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>default</td>
<td>\textit{rvos}</td>
<td>\textit{rvost}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diminutive</td>
<td>\textit{rvosi}</td>
<td>\textit{rvosit}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More interesting are the personal pronouns. The first person has a singular form (\textit{kve}), a plural exclusive form (\textit{mundur}), an inclusive form which includes a singular second person (\textit{kvas}) and an inclusive plural form (\textit{ves}). The second person had a singular (\textit{tal}) and a plural form (\textit{naf}). The third person distinguishes in both singular and plural a masculine (\textit{fi}, \textit{fit}), feminine (\textit{os}, \textit{ost}), non-personal animate (\textit{lem}, \textit{best}) and inanimate form (\textit{jek}, \textit{it}), and there is also a gender-neutral plural form (\textit{akar}).

### 4.3 Verbal system

Verbs in Lindi are conjugated for tense/aspect and for the number of the subject. The table below gives the conjugation of the verb \textit{a zvem} (“to do, to make”).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>present</td>
<td>\textit{zvem}</td>
<td>\textit{zvemt}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past imperfective</td>
<td>\textit{zvems}</td>
<td>\textit{zvemst}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past perfective</td>
<td>\textit{zvema}</td>
<td>\textit{zvemat}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td>\textit{zvemi}</td>
<td>\textit{zvemit}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infinitive</td>
<td>\textit{a zvem}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperative</td>
<td>\textit{zvemu}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in the nominal inflection, verbs can be irregular due to phonological processes. In the plains variant, the epenthetic vowel can change place, as in the example of \textit{a st\textsuperscript{h}Endli} above. In
both variants, words originally ending in a diphthong are also irregular. For example, the verb a ľpasā/a ľpē (“to say”) has the past perfective singular kve ľpaza/kve ľpāje (“I said”).

4.4 Syntax

The syntax of Lindi is SVO, prepositional and has adjectives in front of nouns.

Yes-no questions are formed by putting the particle il after the word being put to question. Other questions are formed with an interrogative word in situ. The formation of questions in the mountains variant is of note, in that all questions have to end in the particle bes.

θal  sθaqdil il ḡvant wo kve  Ᶎ?
Tb\(a\)l st\(b\)ndl il q\(w\)ant jemp k\(w\)e bes?  
you feel q love for me Q?  
Do you love me?

4.5 Longer example

The text below is something Rokoy told Kvandar on their way to the capital of Troil’s realm. Rokoy is not a native speaker of Lindi, but he learned the mountains variant from a young age. His being with Kvandar for such a long time also influenced their speech. This excerpt, however, is given in correct Lindi.

Akr nutrzg\(w\)ent riŋkriŋk: “Zof  kīŋjoŋ\(x\) bx\(w\)oslt ves xk\(w\)en gast bes?  Ves yg\(w\)e-zq\(w\)em\(w\)ē xk\(w\)en jemp ak\(r\) bes?” Fk\(e\) e k\(w\)e hust va p\(h\)o. Yestl\(z\)ir fp\(b\)a n\(g\)\(w\)ema rempr jemp n\(f\)f. I mesr os fp\(b\)olq\(w\)ema t\(i\)s a vur a nomblzg\(w\)em, dq\(w\)o w\(e\) ro\(st\) u\(f\)r\(f\) a v\(a\) Trojl dq\(w\)o i nomblzg\(w\)em p\(u\)k. Zes-zess\(s\), n\(o\)f yg\(w\)e-zq\(w\)em\(n\)t os. N\(o\)f dem\(p\)r sk\(w\)\(s\) as t\(i\)s dq\(w\)\(o\) os va p\(h\)\(e\)s, f\(k\)\(e\) w\(e\) h\(u\)ŋk\(l\) h\(e\)n. Int\(l\)\(t\) va r\(o\)n, t\(b\)al hust bes? Os fp\(b\)olq\(w\)ema t\(i\)s dq\(w\)o Trojl nomblzg\(w\)em\(i\) sk\(u\)k p\(u\)k, k\(b\)ok fp\(b\)a os va w\(e\). Ɂ\(u\), os yg\(w\)\(s\)a fp\(e\)n\(d\)\(t\)\(l\)\(m\)a\(t\) fp\(b\)a os w: tk\(w\)ek fp\(b\)a mundr. Jemp i dq\(w\)o mundr bot n\(o\)f sk\(w\)ek.

Os Trojl fp\(a\)je jemp k\(w\)e e!

They always ask: “Why do those king\(n\)yo\(o\)rk\(h\) [d\(e\)mon] attack us? What did we do them wrong?” But I know why it is. It’s your goddess who told you to do so. She decided one day she would stop ruling, that it’s really Troil who should rule the earth. And anyway, you treat her badly. You even think she’s a woman, but she’s not. The sun is a man, you know. She decided Troil would rule all of the earth, also her part. So she sent her armies into our trap. So we can destroy you.

Troil told me so herself!

akr nutrzg\(w\)em-t riŋkriŋk : “zof  kīŋjoŋ\(x\) bx\(w\)oslt ves xk\(w\)en gast bes? ves\(\) they ask-PL always : “those dem\(\)\(a\)nt attack-PL us why reason \(q\)? we yg\(w\)e-zq\(w\)em-a-t xk\(w\)en jemp ak\(r\) bes?” \(f\)k\(e\) e k\(w\)e hust va p\(h\)o. yestl\(z\)ir fp\(b\)a n\(g\)\(w\)ema wrong-PST.PFV-PL what to them \(q\)? but I know why, goddess of you zq\(w\)\(e\)m-a rempr jemp n\(f\)f. i mesr os fp\(b\)olq\(w\)em-a-t s\(i\)s a vur a make-PST.PFV command to you. one day she fix-PST.PFV thoughts to stop to nomblzg\(w\)em , dq\(w\)o we ro\(st\) u\(f\)r\(f\) a v\(a\) trojl dq\(w\)o i nomblzg\(w\)em p\(u\)k. rule , that in root ought to be Troil who ANT rule p\(u\)k. zes-zess\(s\) , n\(o\)f yg\(w\)e-zq\(w\)em-t os. n\(o\)f dem\(p\)r sk\(w\)\(s\) as t\(i\)s dq\(w\)\(o\) os va p\(h\)\(e\)s , such-not such , you wrong-PL her. you have-PL even thoughts that she is woman , f\(k\)\(e\) w\(e\) h\(u\)ŋk\(l\) h\(e\)n. int\(l\)\(t\) va r\(o\)n , t\(b\)al hust bes? os fp\(b\)olq\(w\)em-a-t t\(i\)s dq\(w\)o trojl but in right not-be, sun is man , you know \(q\)? she fix-PST.PFV though that Troil nomblzg\(w\)em-i sk\(u\)k p\(u\)k , k\(b\)ok fp\(b\)a os va w\(e\) . \(f\)u, os yg\(w\)\(s\)a fp\(e\)n\(d\)\(l\)\(t\)\(m\)a\(t\) fp\(b\)a rule-FUT all earth , part of her is in. so , she send-PST.PFV army-PL of os w: tk\(w\)ek fp\(b\)a mundr. jemp i dq\(w\)o mundr ba-t n\(o\)f sk\(w\)ek. she to trap of we. to nailz that we destroy-PL you can.

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4.6 Vocabulary

Below is given the vocabulary used in the examples. The words are first given in the plains form, and then in the mountains form. Mark that some words, and especially prepositions and particles, cannot always be straightforwardly translated from one variant to the other, making the translations sometimes rather free.

a (preposition) to, used to form the infinitive form
-a (tense suffix) past perfective suffix
akar/akr (pronoun) they (for people)
bas/bes (particle) sentence-final question marker
best (pronoun) they (animate non-personal)
bvafsr/blg ost (verb) to attack, to aggress
dvaf/dg o (conjunction) that, who, which
fan/ufr (verb) ought, should
fl (pronoun) he
fin/u: (preposition) toward, into
fit (pronoun) they (masculine)
fpas/fpE (verb) to say
fpendltma/fpendltma (noun) army
fka/fp (noun) love
fzvem/fplbg/em (verb) to fix, to attach
gast (noun) reason
gfpr/gipr (noun) half
gvant/gangnt (noun) love
has/hes (numeral) one
hen (verb) not to be
huks/hukkl (adjective) true, right
hust (verb) to know, to be able
i (numeral) one ● (pronoun) pronoun referring to an antecedent of a subordinate clause ● (particle) nominaliser
-i (noun suffix) diminutive suffix ● (tense suffix) future tense suffix
il (particle) question marker
it (pronoun) they (inanimate)

jastrzial/jestlizr (noun) god, godness, divinity
jek/ik (pronoun) it (inanimate)
jenetl/intl (noun) sun
kindir/fk e (conjunction) but, however
kisvez/ba (verb) to destroy, to ruin
–/–koromindi (proper noun) Koromindi, a language consisting of two dialect groups
Kvandar/Kandnr (proper name) Kvandar, a boy’s name
kvxz/ksx (pronoun) we
lubker/empr (noun) command, order
luikiki/rikgirkj (adverb) always
maf/fmo (adverb) more
Mal/Mgul (proper name) Mal, the founder of the Mal tribe
meser/mesr (noun) day
mundur/mundr (pronoun)
naft/naf (pronoun) you (plural)
nam/nom (noun) blanket
nombolzvem/nblgz/em (verb)
to rule
nutupas/nutrg/em (verb) to ask
os (pronoun) she
ost (pronoun) they ( feminine)
puk (noun) earth, ground, the world
pvas/mur/vur (verb) to stop
phes/phos (noun) woman
fo/fpO (adverb) why
ron/ron (noun) man
rost/rost (noun) root
ru/ru (conjunction) so, thus
rvoz/reus (noun) the reos, a kind of animal kept for its milk, flesh and wool, xloj in Trolgulm
-s (tense suffix) past imperfective suffix
stvsk/stsk (adjective) all
vbldn/vblndl (verb) to feel
svr-stersus/zess-uzzius (adverb) anyway, by the way
svas/skz (adverb) even, also
svaf/spkop (verb) to protect
svek/skcek (particle) to be able, can
-u (suffix) plural suffix for nouns and verbs
tis (noun) thoughts, idea
tvash/tkcek (noun) trap
wa/whal (adverb) you (singular)
-w (suffix) imperative marker
va (verb) to be
vzvem/vg/em (verb) to wrong, to maltreat
vbves/vgEs (verb) to send
ves (pronoun) we (inclusive plural you)
waz/aw (preposition) in
wos/jmp (preposition) for, to
zof (determiner) that, these, those, these
zvem/zg/em (verb) to do, to make

5 Other languages

5.1 Va’epa

Va’epa is a language widely spoken in the delta of the River Sur. Its speakers mostly live of fishing and of crops that grow in water. They eat all kinds of river life like shellfish and algae, resulting in their being looked at askance by the people living outside the delta.

The region where Va’epa is spoken typically has languages with front rounded vowels, and Va’epa is no exception. It has a five-vowel system: /a, a, i, y, u/, and vowels can be long or short. Often, however, the length distinction goes together with a difference in quality, resulting in pairs like /y/ versus /y:/ and /a/ versus /ao/. In this document only the length distinction will be marked. Furthermore the language distinguishes four points of articulation in its consonant
inventory. The voiceless stops, for example, are /p, t, c, k/, and /c/ contrasts with /tf/. A last point of note are the intervocalic consonant clusters as in tapts@n (“to see”, past root) and bynu (“to dance, to behave like a fool”, non-past root).

As with Sar, Va’ępta has an agglutinative grammar with a wealth of suffixes. Postpositions are almost always suffixed to the nouns they belong to. Verbs, for their part, agree with the subject and all kinds of possible objects, and besides aspect they also show tenses, distinguishing hodiernal, hesternal and distal pasts, and similar tenses in the future. Adjectives are almost all derived from nouns and verbs, making it a nearly adjective-less language.

The following is a Va’ée proverb.

Ra:S t@ f@:g-atpin: nu:k-az@-t ñamaRu-P@N, Sajip byNn@-tuk s@:pi:t.

A chief is like a fek-boat: he can float above all of us, but if he dances too much, he’ll sink.

In the vocabulary below, verbs are given with their non-past root first, followed by the past root.

bygne/bykta (verb) to dance, to behave like a fool
-soq (nominal suffix) our
f@k (noun) a fek-boat, a flat-bottomed rowing boat used by the people in the river delta
-maru (nominal suffix) above
m@ (verb) to be, a highly irregular verb
nu:k/mufi (verb) to float
pas (noun) all, everyone
ra:f (noun) chief
soqip/socqtsan (verb) to sink
fajip (conjunction) but
-t (verbal suffix) third person singular subject marker for people
-tpin (nominal suffix) like, resembling
-uk (verbal suffix) if

5.2 Gamfi Gaishu

The language of Gaishu, or gamfi Gaishu, used to be the language of the Gaishu realm when that was still independent from the Sun Empire. Even after the lands were completely conquered by the empire of Kahal, however, the language remained in general use as a lingua franca, and often even as the language of government. The people of Gaishu ever remained hostile towards Sar.

The language has relatively simple phonotactics, allowing only nasals (always assimilated with what comes after), glides, and /l/ and /r/ to appear at the end of syllables. It has retroflexes, which are typical of that region. Also of note are the palatalised consonants, which are in complementary distribution with retroflexes and velars.

It is isolating with a rather simple grammar. Of note is its SVO structure in most cases, becoming VSO after certain particles.

The text below is the beginning of an explanation about the Gaishu pantheon.


In Gaishu, the main goddess is Shaimu, the Goddess of Fertility. Our stories say she was the daughter of Pidivuiru, the earth herself, and of Zehikkan, the sky-god.

foy gašu, ni viokala cinsai wun şamu, ni viokala n’ tødžioxupu. dao bapi cir in Gaishu, sg goddess main be Shaimu, sg goddess sg fertility. pl story we waraman zu wun ko ni tciozo pidiviura, ni banai hadir, zočikkan jiltci, ni tell conj be she sg child Pidiviura, sg self earth, Zehikkan also, sg viokala šundriu.

god sky.

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5.3 Himozylu

The language of the Himozy tribe is spoken not far from the old Gaishu kingdom, and it has seen some influence by the Gaishu language. The most notable feature the two languages share are the retroflex consonants. Himozylu has developed consonant harmony concerning them, disallowing a retroflex and an alveolar with only one monophthong in between within one word. For example, when the suffix -íu (genitive ending) is added to HimOz1 (“Himozy”), one gets HimOz1lu (“the Himozy language”).

The most interesting feature of the language is its use of infixes for derivation. The word hukai (“light”), for example, is derived from hai (“light, bright”) with the infix -uk- (a nominaliser infix).

The following text is a morning prayer.

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Si } t^3\text{ai meve } & \text{hukai, } \quad \text{The sun gives us light,} \\
\text{Si } \text{fimhe } & \text{dükëna, } \quad \text{The sun gives warmth,} \\
\text{Si } t^3\text{ai meve } & \text{joŋki, } \quad \text{The sun gives us magic,} \\
\text{Si } \text{fimhe } & \text{guraugë. } \quad \text{The sun gives life.}
\end{align*}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{sun give we } & \text{light, sun give } \text{warmth, sun give we } \text{magic, sun give life.}
\end{align*}\]

5.4 KloTákuanka

KloTákuanka is the language spoken by the Tákuanka tribes, who live in the regions north of the Lindi tribes. Its speakers are almost all bilingual and speak Troilgulm for communicating with outsiders. Nonetheless the language is still very much alive.

It is, like the other languages from the north, a tonal language. It does not yet have the tonal richness encountered in the languages from north of the mountain range proper, however. It possesses two tones (high and low, the low tone will be unmarked in the following), and only one syllable per morpheme can get a high tone. Furthermore it is special in that it distinguishes voiceless stops (/p, t, k/), voiced stops (/b, d, g/) and implosive stops (/ɓ, ɗ/)...

The language is slightly fusional. It is topic-prominent, like Troilgulm, and also shares Troilgulm’s system of articles.

The following sentence shows the language at work.

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Rokojbu, } & \text{brufu-sú Klo-fêkehenyo, ke-kloniaw-sú srala } \text{êsre-law.}
\end{align*}\]
Rokoy, our son, went with the foreigner to the capital, where they faced the goddesses.