LangTime Chat

Episode 34

KEZHWA

Paper Girls

THE COMIC BOOKS

- 🐀 Created by Brian K. Vaughan & Cliff Chiang

- 🐀 Published 30 issues

THE COMIC BOOKS

🐀 Four newspaper-delivering teenage girls

THE COMIC BOOKS

🐭 Four newspaper-delivering teenage girls

🐭 Oh, and time travelers

THE CIPHER

🐀 It was an intentional use of a cipher.

🐀 They wanted readers to be able to break it and read the dialogue.

Amazon's Paper Girls

Kezhwa Language

THE LANGUAGE

🐭 Time traveling speakers

THE LANGUAGE

🐭 Time traveling speakers

🐭 Spirit of original cipher in novels

OUR VISION

- Worldwide creole of sorts

OUR VISION

🐛 Worldwide creole of sorts

🐛 Unique phonological and grammatical systems as base of the conlang

BORROWINGS

🦎 From any language at any time in history

BORROWINGS

- From any language at any time in history

- Filtered through the conlang's phonological system

BORROWINGS

- From any language at any time in history

- Filtered through the conlang's phonological system

- Semantically "coded"

Kezhwa Sounds

	Labial	Dent.	Alv.	Pal.	Velar	Glot.
Stops	p/b		t/d		k/g	ʔ
Fric.	f/v	θ/ð	s/z	ʃ/ʒ		
App.	w		l, ɾ	j		
Nasal	m		n		(ŋ)	

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		ʊ
Mid	e~ɛ	ə	o~ɔ
Low		a	

KEZHWA STRESS

🐭 Basic: penultimate syllable

🐭 Borrowed words may differ

SHOYÁ   "to follow"

GENZHÍN   "to track"

KEZHWA STRESS

🐁 Stays on root when suffixes added

KEZHWA STRESS

- Stays on root when suffixes added

- Cannot fall beyond antepenultimate syllable

KEWI   "to help"

KÉWIGA   "help"

AKWAT "to know"

AKWÁDEGA "knowledge"

KEZHWA SYLLABLES

- CCVC

- C_2 in clusters restricted to approximants

BORROWING

🐀 How would non-native speakers hear this word?

BORROWING

🐀 How would non-native speakers hear this word?

🐀 How does that perceived unit shift to fit Kezhwa phonology?

Semantics & Borrowings

saga

English *it's all good*

[ɪtsalgʊd]

saga

🐀 English *it's all good*

[ɪtsalgʊd]

saga

English *it's all good*

[ɪsagʊd]

saga

🐀 English *it's all good*

[ɪsagʊd]

saga

English *it's all good*

[saɡʊd]

saga

🐭 English *it's all good*

[sagʊd]

saga

🐁 English *it's all good*

🐁 Kezhwa *saga* [sagə]

saga

🐭 English *it's all good*

🐭 Kezhwa *saga* [sagə] "it's okay, it's alright"

semantic gist retained

datep

🐀 English *duct tape*

[dəktep ~ dəʔtep]

datep

🐀 English *duct tape*

🐀 Kezhwa *datep* [dɑtɛp]

Any schwa-like sound is [ɑ] in a stressed syllable.

datep

🐀 English *duct tape*

🐀 Kezhwa *datep* [datɛp]

[e > ɛ] in closed syllable

datep

🐀 English *duct tape*

🐀 Kezhwa *datep* [datɛp] "to repair, to fix, to patch up, to heal, to ameliorate"

datep

"Duct tape can fix anything."

🐁 English *duct tape*

🐁 Kezhwa *datep* [datɛp] "to repair, to fix, to patch up, to heal, to ameliorate"

duma

🐁 Swahili *duma* "cheetah"

🐁 Kezhwa *duma* [dumə]

duma

🐆 Swahili *duma* "cheetah"

🐆 Kezhwa *duma* [dumə] "to hurry, to hustle"

tika

🐭 Finnish *ti**kk**a* "dart"

🐭 Kezhwa *ti**k**a* [tikə]

tika

🐁 Finnish *tikka* "dart"

🐁 Kezhwa *tika* [tikə] "to try"

Trying something is like throwing a dart at a dartboard.

genzhín

🦎 Mandarin *gēn* "to follow"

🦎 Czech *stín* "shadow"

🦎 Kezhwa *genzhín* [gɛnʒin]

genzhín

🦎 Mandarin *gēn* "to follow"

🦎 Czech *stín* "shadow"

🦎 Kezhwa *genzhín* [gɛnʒin]

only allowed clusters with approximants

genzhín

- Mandarin *gēn* "to follow"
- Czech *stín* "shadow"
- Kezhwa *genzhín* [gɛnʒin]

[n] caused voicing of following [ʃ]

genzhín

🦎 Mandarin *gēn* "to follow"

🦎 Czech *stín* "shadow"

🦎 Kezhwa *genzhín* [gɛnʒin] "to track"

Kezhwa Grammar

KEZHWA GRAMMAR

🦓 SVO

🦓 Prepositions

🦓 Aj N

🦓 N RelCl

KEZHWA NOUNS

	C-Initial		V-Initial		I-Initial	
	Singular	**Plural**	**Singular**	**Plural**	**Singular**	**Plural**
Definite	*tamagó*	*an damagó*	ala	*an ala*	iga	*an iga*
Indefinite	*i-damagó*		*y-ala*		*zh-iga*	

kid   *walkie talkie*   *target*

KEZHWA NOUNS

Demonstratives	C-Final	V-Final
Proximal	yambwa*zagí*	ala*gí*
Distal	yambwa*zayá*	ala*yá*

foot   *walkie talkie*

KEZHWA VERBS

V-Initial	Plain	Present	Non-Present	Imperative	
				Singular	Plural
Positive	*akwat*	*im**akwat*	*l**akwat*	*akwa**d-a*	*akwat-**u*
Negative	*'akwat*	*i'akwat*	*la'akwat*	*'akwa**d-a*	*'akwat-**u*

to know

KEZHWA VERBS

V-Initial	Plain	Present	Non-Present	Imperative	
				Singular	Plural
Positive	*akwat*	*imakwat*	*lakwat*	*akwad-a*	*akwat-u*
Negative	*'akwat*	*i'akwat*	*la'akwat*	*'akwad-a*	*'akwat-u*

to know

KEZHWA VERBS

V-Initial	Plain	Present	Non-Present	Imperative	
				Singular	Plural
Positive	*akwat*	*im*akwat	*la*kwat	akwa*d-a*	akwat-*u*
Negative	'*akwat*	*i*'akwat	*la*'akwat	'*akwa*d-a*	'*akwat-*u*

*ima 'now'
*la 'then'

to know

KEZHWA VERBS

C-Initial	Plain	Present	Non-Present	Imperative	
				Singular	Plural
Positive	kewi	igewi	lagewi	kewi-na	kewi-zu
Negative	'agewi	i'agewi	la'agewi	'agewi-na	'agewi-zu

*ima 'now'
*la 'then'

to help

KEZHWA VERBS

V-Initial	Plain	Present	Non-Present	Imperative	
				Singular	Plural
Positive	*akwat*	*im̄akwat*	*lakwat*	*akwad-a*	*akwat-u*
Negative	*'akwat*	*i'akwat*	*la'akwat*	*'akwad-a*	*'akwat-u*

to know

ha 'not'

KEZHWA VERBS

C-Initial	Plain	Present	Non-Present	Imperative	
				Singular	Plural
Positive	*kewi*	*igewi*	*lagewi*	*kewi-na*	*kewi-zu*
Negative	*'agewi*	*i'agewi*	*la'agewi*	*'agewi-na*	*'agewi-zu*

to help

*ha 'not'

KEZHWA VERBS

inená 'to breathe'

↓

i'inená 'don't breathe'

KEZHWA VERBS

inená 'to breathe'

↓

🤨 *i'inená* 'don't breathe'

KEZHWA VERBS

inená 'to breathe'

↓

e'inená 'don't breathe'

KEZHWA VERBS

inená 'to breathe'

↓

😌 *e'inená* 'don't breathe'

KEZHWA VERBS

V-Initial	Plain	Present	Non-Present	Imperative	
				Singular	Plural
Positive	akwat	**im**akwat	**l**akwat	akwa**d-a**	akwat-**u**
Negative	'*akwat*	*i*'*akwat*	*la*'*akwat*	'*akwa**d-a***	'*akwat-**u***

na 'you (sg)'
su 'you (pl)'

to know

KEZHWA VERBS

C-Initial	Plain	Present	Non-Present	Imperative	
				Singular	Plural
Positive	kewi	igewi	lagewi	kewi-na	kewi-zu
Negative	'agewi	i'agewi	la'agewi	'agewi-na	'agewi-zu

na 'you (sg)'
su 'you (pl)'

to help

Kezhwa Sentences

KEZHWA SENTENCES

🐁 Era idanagí.

🐁 "They are coming."

KEZHWA SENTENCES

🦓 Era idanagí.

🦓 "They are coming."

KEZHWA SENTENCES

🐭 Era idanagí.

🐭 "They are coming."

KEZHWA SENTENCES

Era idanagí.

"They are coming."

Swahili *tanga* 'to wander'

Spanish *aquí*

KEZHWA SENTENCES

🐁 Ozu lamaba Gami si memesis.

🐁 "We have located the Folding to 2019."

KEZHWA SENTENCES

🐭 Ozu lamaba Gami si memesis.

🐭 "We have located the Folding to 2019."

KEZHWA SENTENCES

- Ozu lamaba Gami si memesis.

- "We have located the Folding to 2019."

KEZHWA SENTENCES

🦓 Ozu la**maba** Gami si memesis.

Spanish *mapa*

🦓 "We have **located** the Folding to 2019."

KEZHWA SENTENCES

Ozu lamaba Gami si memesis.

"We have located the Folding to 2019."

KEZHWA SENTENCES

🐭 Ozu lamaba Gami si
memesis.

Japanese *origami*

🐭 "We have located the
Folding to 2019."

KEZHWA SENTENCES

🐁 Ozu lamaba Gami si memesis.

🐁 "We have located the Folding to 2019."

KEZHWA SENTENCES

🦗 Ozu lamaba Gami si memesis.

🦗 "We have located the Folding to 2019."

KEZHWA DATES

🐀 Convert to Roman numerals

🐀 Convert Roman numerals to sounds

KEZHWA DATES

 I

 V

 X

 L

 C

 D

 M

KEZHWA DATES

I > [i]

V > [v]

X

L > [l]

C

D > [d]

M > [m]

KEZHWA DATES

I > [i]

V > [v]

X > [s]

L > [l]

C > [k]

D > [d]

M > [m]

KEZHWA DATES

🐝 Epenthetic [e] breaks clusters

🐝 Epenthetic [ʔ] breaks [ii] segments

🐝 [iii] > [iji] > [izhi]

🐝 [s] voices when preceding [v]

KEZHWA DATES

2019 >> MMXIX

KEZHWA DATES

🦓 2019 >> MMXIX

🦓 MeSIS

KEZHWA DATES

🦓 2019 >> MMXIX

🦓 MeMeSIS

KEZHWA DATES

🦎 2019 >> MMXIX

🦎 M**e**M**e**SIS

🦎 *memesis*

KEZHWA DATES

1988 >> MCMLXXXVIII

KEZHWA DATES

🐀 1988 >> MCMLXXXVIII

🐀 MKMLSeSVIII

KEZHWA DATES

🐀 1988 >> MCMLXXXVIII

🐀 MeKMeLSeSeSVIII

KEZHWA DATES

🐀 1988 >> MCMLXXXVIII

🐀 MeKMeLSeSeSVIzhI

KEZHWA DATES

🐁 1988 >> MCMLXXXVIII

🐁 MeKMeLSeSezVIzhI

KEZHWA DATES

🦎 1988 >> MCMLXXXVIII

🦎 MeKMeLSeSezVIzhI

🦎 *mekmelsesezvizhi*

Kezhwa... a ton of fun!