

FrameLang Experiment

Your language sketch must account for the following data, taken from *Sushi for Beginners* by Marian Keyes. You need to treat it as an unknown entity, as romanized forms an author created to represent a language without actually having created a language structure to support it. It is, effectively, consistent gibberish.

Character Names

- Ashling Kennedy [ˈaʃ.lɪŋ ˈken.ne.dy]
- Yvonne Hughes [ˈy.von.ne ˈhu.ɣes]
- Clodagh Kelly [ˈtʰo.daɪ ˈkel.ly]
- Lily Headly-Smythe [ˈli.ly hea.ˈdʒys.my.θe]
- Bicycle Billy [ˈbi.tʃy.tʰe ˈbil.ly]

Other Names (Place Names, Brand Names)

- Dublin [ˈdu.blin]
- Colleen [ˈtʰol.le:n]
- Trix [ˈtrɪx]
- Mercedes [ˈmer.tʃe.des]

Short Phrases

- ominous silence [ˈo.mi.nows ˈsi.len.tʃe]
- surefire success [su.ˈre.fi.re ˈsʉtʃ.tʃes]
- soap opera [soap ˈo.pe.ra]
- sweet sixteen [ˈswet ˈsɪx.te:n]

Full Clauses

- Rancor and regret generated insomnia.
- Extreme familiarity and empty distance hung together.

- rancor [ˈran.tʃor]
- and [and]
- regret [ˈre.gret]
- generated [ge.ˈne.ra.ted]
- insomnia [ˈin.som.nja]

- extreme [ˈex.tre.me]
- familiarity [fa.mi.ˈlja.ri.ty]
- empty [ˈemp.ty]
- distance [ˈdis.tan.tʃe]
- hung [hʌŋ]
- together [ˈto.ge.θer]

Decisions of note

- Most characters were mapped to their IPA equivalent, including some unusual: ⟨x⟩ was mapped to /x/, ⟨y⟩ to /y/.
- Other standard choices include ⟨ng⟩ to /ŋ/, ⟨sh⟩ to /ʃ/, ⟨gh⟩ to /ɣ/, etc.
- ⟨c⟩ was mapped to /tʃ/, while ⟨cl⟩ was mapped to /tʃl/. This relies on an imagined sound change of [tʃl] → [tʃ], the most common source of /tʃ/ in the modern language.
- ⟨dl⟩ (in *Headly*) became the voiced counterpart /dʒ/
- ⟨ss⟩ word finally in *success* was ignored as a potential distinct phoneme to ⟨s⟩, and mapped simply to /s/, while mid-word doubled consonants are treated as geminates.
- ⟨u⟩ and ⟨i⟩ following or preceding other vowels are treated as glides: /w/ and /j/.

In the template that follows, sections marked in purple indicate the minimum (for David and Jessie—anyone else who participates can do as much or as little as they choose!) and sections marked in green with asterisks are entirely optional for all involved.

Eshlent: A Language Sketch

By Jason L

Phonology

Consonants

	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	p/b		t/d		k/g	
Affricates			tʃ/dʒ	tʃ/dʒ		
Fricatives	f/v	θ/ð	s/z	ʃ/ʒ	x/ɣ	h
Approx.	w		l, r	j		
Nasals	m		n		ŋ	

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	i, y		u
Mid	e, eː		oː, o
Low		a, aː	

Diphthongs

oɔ, ow, eɔ, ej

In the above charts, black phonemes are derived directly from the data, while those colored blue are additions to flesh out the phonology further.

Stress:

- Primary stress falls on the antepenultimate syllable, as shown below:
Insomnia ['in.som.nja] *Familiarity* [fa.mi.'lja.ri.ty] *Yvonne* ['y.von.ne]

Syllable Structure:

- The maximum syllable structure is CCVCC, where the vowel (V) may be a diphthong, long, or short. There are significant phonotactic rules restricting consonants:

$\{C(G)/SL\}V\{C/NS\}$

- In onset clusters, while any consonant (C) can be followed by the glides (G) [j] or [w], only the stops [p], [b], [t], [d], [k] and [g] can be followed by the liquids ([r] or [l]). No other onset clusters are permitted.
- The only coda clusters permitted consist of nasals (N) followed by homorganic stops (S), such as [mb], [ŋk], and [nt].
- Almost all consonants can be solo codas, with the exception of the glides [j] and [w] (though they appear following vowels in diphthongs), the glottal fricative [h], and the consonants which emerged as phonemes in relatively recent sound changes and only in onset positions: [tʰ], [dʒ].
- All consonants which can be codas can be geminates word-internally, where the next syllable onset is the same consonant as the coda.

On the analysis:

- My phonotactic rules around clusters are pretty much as restrictive as I could make them, based on the data.

Headly-Smythe at first appears to be an exception, with an [sm] cluster. I analysed this as [heɹ.dʒys.my.θe]—an [sm] cluster is not permitted, but in compounding with *Headly*, I have imagined the origin being a word such as [is.my.θe], with the initial [i] vowel being fully omitted when directly following its rounded counterpart.

Morphology and Typology

- Eshlent is a predominantly head-initial language with SVO word order and light fusional tendencies.
- The basic phrasal structures of FrameLang are:
 - noun-demonstrative
 - noun-adjective
 - noun-relative clause
 - preposition-noun phrase
 - noun-possessor
 - verb-adverb

Phrasal and Clauses Analysis:

- I revised my analysis a few times and settled on something fairly simple. Focusing on the two full clauses:

Rancor and regret generated insomnia.

Extreme familiarity and empty distance hung together

- I decided that ‘and’ would be the agentive pronoun, directly following the verb in the first clause, and following two verbs in the second clause: the first an auxiliary.
- The language heavily uses suffixes, including for some noun cases, and verb tense and aspect.
- ‘Regret’ and ‘generated’ were broken into *regre+t* and *genera+t+ed*, the ‘-t’ representing a nominalization for stative verbs and the ‘-ed’ a conjunction similar to ‘and’ in English.
- The ‘-ty’ shared by ‘*familiarity*’ and ‘*empty*’ indicate infinitive verb forms.
- Unique word endings (amongst the clauses) were assigned meanings as needed:
 - ‘cor’ in ‘rancor’ to indicate the future tense;
 - ‘nia’ in *insomnia* to indicate the locative case;
 - ‘me’ in *extreme* for the past tense;
 - ‘ce’ in *distance* for a possessed noun, perhaps specifically for a 3rd person possessor; and
 - ‘ther’ in *together* indicates the habitual aspect.

Familiari is imagined as deriving from a compound of *fami* + *liari*, perhaps from old noun incorporation, being literally ‘hunt’ and ‘large animal, game’.

Rancor and regret generated insomnia.

[ˈran.tʃor and ˈre.ɡret ɡe.ˈne.ra.ted ˈin.som.nja]

<i>ran</i>	<i>-cor</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>regret</i>	<i>generat</i>	<i>-ed</i>	<i>insom</i>	<i>-nia</i>
ignite	-FUT	3SG	wise one	shining one	CONJ	sky	-LOC
			(moon)	(star)			

‘She will ignite the moon and the stars in the sky.’

Extreme familiarity and empty distance hung together.

[ˈex.tre.me fa.mi.ˈlja.ri.ty and ˈemp.ty ˈdis.tan.ce huŋ ˈto.ɡe.θer]

<i>extre</i>	<i>-me</i>	<i>familiari</i>	<i>-ty</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>emp</i>	<i>-ty</i>	<i>distan</i>	<i>-ce</i>	<i>hung</i>	<i>toge</i>	<i>-ther</i>
AUX:try	-PST	hunt*	-INF	3SG	feed	-INF	child	-POSS	REL	hunger	-HAB

‘She tried to hunt large animals to feed her child who always hungers.’

A few more examples using some of the same patterns:

Peeme lily generat hung ishme.

[ˈpeɪ.me ˈli.ly ˈge.ne.rat huŋ ˈiʃ.me]

‘The mouse watched the star that fell.’

Glame graxton pymet ith sunia seety.

[ˈgla.me ˈgrax.ton ˈpy.met iθ ˈsu.nja ˈseɪ.ty]

‘The cat crept into the house to sleep.’

Cangther neghyt kru.

[ˈtʃaŋ.θer ˈne.ɣyt kru]

‘The rabbit eats grass (*habitually*).’

The short phrases and character names would match the patterns described above, primarily being noun-adjective, but other than *lily* (‘mouse’), I have not assigned meanings, specific parts of speech, or fleshed out detailed naming strategies.

Historical Notes*

Non-comprehensive, but a few include...

- Coda nasals harden and gain a homorganic stop when followed by a heterorganic stop
*an.pa → [ant.pa]
- Onset stops, affricates, and fricatives spread their voicing to the preceding coda
*ag.ta → [ak.ta]; *as.ba → [az.ba]
- Lateral affricates emerge from palatal affricates clustering with /l/, and then subsequently alveolar stops
*a.tʃla → [a.tʃla]; *a.tla → [a.tʃla]
- Weak fricatives voice intervocalically
*a.fa → [a.va]; *a.xa → [a.ɣa]
- Coda [h] disappears
*ah.fa → [a.fa]