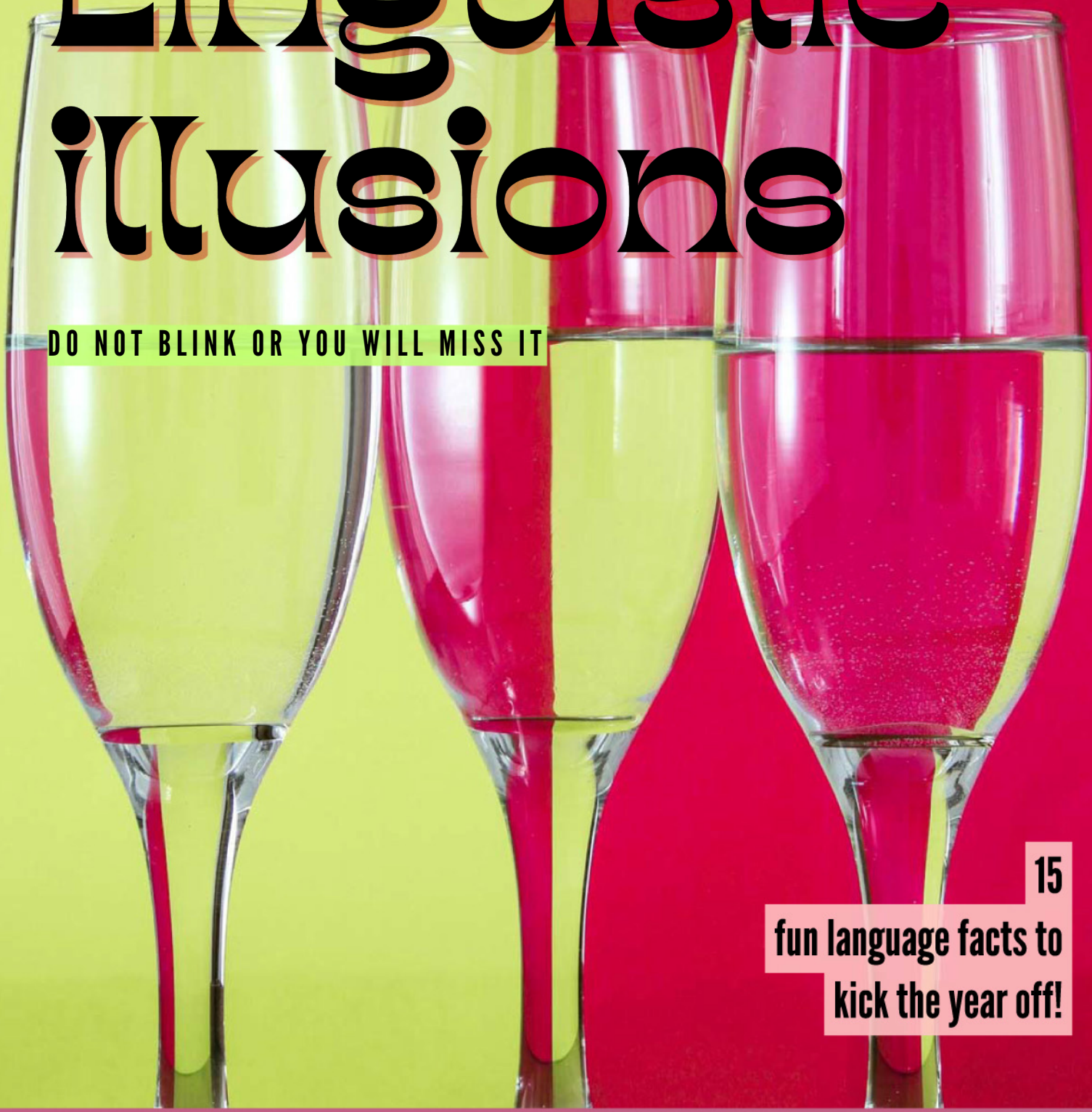
SILLY LINGUISTICS

THE MAGAZINE FOR LANGUAGE LOVERS

Linguistic illusions

DO NOT BLINK OR YOU WILL MISS IT



15 fun language facts to kick the year off!

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Cover and content page photo by Anastasia Belousova from Pexels
This week's page numbers are in Moksha!

Linguistic Illusions

Do not blink or you will miss it

BY NEDA STEFANOVIĆ

People play tricks on each other's minds using language in different ways: by lying, manipulating, twisting the truth. A large part of our perception might as well be an illusion – 'but a dream within a dream' – who knows? However, when we talk about linguistic illusions, we do not talk about an illusion of a sentence's truth, but of its grammaticality (or well-formedness). At the first glance, *More people have been to Paris than I have!* may seem like an understandable observation, and *No head injury is too trivial to be ignored* may seem like a valuable advice; but if we look at it closely... It seems that we should not blink, so that we do not miss the sentence's true meaning – or its absence.

The audience wants to be fooled, and every good magician knows how to use that to his advantage. The hearer or the reader, on the other hand, wants what they are hearing or reading to make sense – so, if they can make sense out of it, they probably will not second-guess it, as that would be an uneconomical language behavior. So, it is possible that people will not notice anything wrong in the sentence *The key to the cabinets unsuprisingly were on the table*, and the conversation will continue as if nothing problematic has happened – the show must go on, after all, and little instances of ungrammaticality will not stop that from happening... Will they?

Of course, it is never that simple (or maybe it is – but it is never that simple for us to find a simple solution). As we all know, speakers of any language indisputably have strong intuitions about whether certain structures belong to their language or not. Why would they let some instances of ungrammaticality pass, and rate those sentences as grammatical, while they are much more sensitive to some other kinds of mistakes that make a sentence ungrammatical? It could be argued that the former are, in some examples, more absurd than the latter, but it seems to go over the participants' heads in the experiments with grammaticality judgments. How does that happen? What does it tell us about the way we process language?

Many methodological difficulties may arise in dealing with the question of linguistic illusions. It is hard to make a systematization of all the occasions where grammatical illusion may appear, as it would be difficult to assume where they could be

expected, and even more difficult to find such occurrences searching for them blindly in the corpus. That makes it harder to find out what these phenomena have in common, and what makes them possible.

It can also be difficult to distinguish between a linguistic illusion, on the one hand, and certain grammatical constraints being more allowing than we initially thought, on the other. Some linguistic illusions turn out to be unacceptable upon closer examination because of semantic factors, while others are unacceptable because of syntactic rules. It appears easier to agree whether the unique meaning of a sentence exists or not. When it comes to a sentence breaking syntactic rules, we can not always be sure whether we should talk about an instance of a grammaticality illusion, or we should revise the rigidity of the rule. For example, some linguists consider the acceptability of the sentences with a voice mismatch, such as *This problem was to have been looked into, but obviously nobody did*, to be an illusion, while others think that these sentences are actually grammatical – in English, at least. Looking into interlingual differences is very important in research of linguistic illusions, or any borderline acceptable structures, as that is the only way to make universal conclusions about language processing. Finding small interlingual differences in what seems to be a negligible part of language could challenge explanations based on our understanding of fundamental principles of language structure or cognition, and that could lead to significant insights on these topics.

When it comes to finding possible explanations of why linguistic illusions are even possible, we may also come to different obstacles. Some people may say – *they are not, I would never be fooled by these examples*. That is a fair point of view, as some people probably would not be fooled indeed. On the other hand, there could be many mistakes in written and spoken language that could be overlooked simply because we are not paying enough attention, so it would also be fair to ask – *is every mistake that we miss a linguistic illusion?*

In order for a structure to be considered an illusion, we do not expect it to be rated as acceptable by everyone and in every occasion. But, we also will not consider it an illusion merely because it was rated as acceptable by anyone, in any occasion. As

with any other linguistic research, in order to find some phenomena relevant, it has to appear a statistically significant amount of times. And it does, in specific positions, such as the sentences with comparative constructions, NPIs, subject-predicate agreement, case assignment in languages with a system of cases, and others (some of which we probably have not even discovered yet). By analyzing each of this positions, we come to realize that in every one of them we can see an application of certain linguistic rules, and we can find a trigger for that application, although it turns out to be applied wrongly.

Most of us have come across some sort of an optical illusion: in real life, when we misjudged the distance in traffic or skipped the stair (which hopefully went without consequences), or on the internet, arguing whether the girl is turning clockwise or counter-clockwise, and whether the dress is gold and white or black and blue. There are drawings that are considered optical illusions because you could see two different subjects in them if you slightly change your perspective – just as ambiguous sentences could be considered as examples of linguistic illusions (if I say that *I saw a person with a telescope* – who has got the telescope?). But, in a narrower sense, typical example of an optical illusion would be the pictures where it looks like circles are moving, or where you think new objects are appearing around the dot that you are looking at, but they actually are not. These tricks are fun for most of us, no matter how many times we have already seen them; but they are actually more significant than it may appear: they helped a lot in the research of the way our visual perception and underlying cognitive processes work.

The same goes for linguistic illusions. As we said, in all sentences with this phenomenon, certain rules seem to be applied, although they are not applied correctly. Do we miss the inconsistency because we look for a structurally apropriate sentence member when applying certain rules, and miss the semantic problems in the process, or is it the other way around: do we find something seemingly meaningful because we find an interpretation and go with it, even though it does not fit all the structural parts of a sentence? Do we make assumptions during reading or listening, and then rush to find meaning that would fit into those assumptions; or do we go backwards mentally to find connections in discourse, and

rely too much on our short-term memory that is far from perfect? If we found answers to these questions, we would understand cognitive principles of language processing much better. As usual, borderline cases like these can help us look into the expanse and limits of our linguistic ability.

A good magician never reveals his secrets. But does the same apply to language? That remains to be seen. What is important is that we do not lose the magic of curiosity.

Language Overview

Moksha

BY

Steve the vagabond

Introduction
Moksha (Мокшень кяль) is the ethnic language of the Moksha people, who live in the Republic of Mordovia within the Russian Federation and in areas surrounding it. It has official status in Mordovia alongside Erzya and Russian. Estimates on the number of speakers vary from 100,000 to 250,000.

Family
Moksha is a member of the Uralic language family, which includes Hungarian, Finnish, Estonian, Mari, Udmurt, Nenets, and the Sami languages. It and Erzya are within the Mordvinic branch (often considered to be particularly close to Mari and possibly to the extinct Merya and Meshcherian languages). This has led to both languages (and peoples) being erroneously referred to as “Mordvin”.

Grammar
Moksha is an agglutinative language. It uses various affixes, mainly suffixes, to change a word's meaning and grammatical function. The basic word order in Mokshaa is SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) or SVO (Subject-Verb-Object).

Phonology
The Moksha language features a large number of consonants like its close relative Erzya. Unlike Erzya, which lacks diphthongs and there is no phonemic distinction between short and long sounds, Moksha contains many of the former. Moreover, certain sounds found in Moksha (such as x and ф or the ending o) are rare or nonexistent in Erzya.

Grammatical Gender
Like other Uralic languages, the Moksha language has no category of gender. Gender is expressed by specific words.

Pronouns
Nominative (subject)

I - Мон	You (singular) – Тон He/She/It - Сон
We - Минь	You (plural) – Тинь They - Синь

Phrases

Шумбрат - Hello
Кода тефне? - How are you?
Лац!/Цебярьста! – Fine!/Great!
Монь лемозе ___ - My name is ___
Ина - Yes
Аш – No
Шять - Maybe
Мон аф корхтан Мокшекс - I can’t speak Moksha
Тон корхтат англакс? - Can you speak English?
Аф шарькодьса – I don’t understand
Кода мокшекс __ ? - How do you say ___ in Moksha?
Кенярдян тонь няемс (sg) Кенярдян тинь няемс (pl) – Nice to meet you
Мон __ста I am from ___
Пара азан - Thank you
Аш мезенкса! - You’re welcome
Эняльдян - Please
Простямак - Excuse me
Ьарч ирдг хора альд? - Where is the toilet?
Няемозонк - Goodbye
Кельктe тонь – I love you

Linguistics 101

Part 3 - What is phonetics

By Steve the vagabond

Phonetics is the study of the mechanics of speech sound production. It is broken up into three areas: articulatory phonetics, acoustic phonetics and auditory phonetics. Articulatory phonetics is the study of the parts of the body involved in the production of speech sound and how they are used to produce speech sounds. Acoustic phonetics is the study of the transmission of speech sounds from speaker to the people listening. Auditory phonetics is the study of how speech sounds are received by the listener and how they are perceived.

There are three main areas involved in producing speech sounds: the vocal tract, the larynx (commonly known as the voice box) and the subglottal system which is everything below the glottis. An airstream is created in the respiratory organs and then passed through the larynx and vocal tract. Glottalic sounds use an airstream created by the larynx without air from the lungs. Clicks create sound using using the tongue.

The vocal tract is where most sounds are created. It includes the nasal passages, the lips, tongue, teeth, gums, palate, throat and glottis. Consonant are produced by obstructing or diverting the flow of air by using a point of articulation. This could be the tongue, which is placed in a particular position, the nasal passage which is used to produce nasal consonants or the glottis.

Consonants made using the lips are called labial consonants. If both lips are used, they are called bilabial. If one lip and the teeth are used, they are called labiodental. If the tongue and the upper lip are used, they are called linguolabial.

Consonants made with the tongue are called coronal consonants if they are made with the tip or blade of the tongue and dorsal if they are made with the back of the tongue. Tongue postures can be apical if using the top of the tongue and sub-apical if the tip if curled back. If the consonant is made with the blade of tongue, it is refered to as a laminal consonant.

Alveolar consonants are made with the blade or the tip of the tongue at the ridge just behind the teeth which is known as the alveolar ridge. Dental consonants are made with the blade or tip of the tongue and the upper teeth. Retroflex consonants are created by curling the tip of the tongue upwards and placed in the alveolar, post-alveolar or palatal regions.

Dorsal consonants include palatal consonants, velar consonants and uvular consonants. Palatal consonants are made by pushing the body of the tongue against the hard palate at roof of the mouth. Velar consonants are made using the body of the tongue against the velum which is the soft fleshy part of the mouth behind the palate. Uvular consonants are made by the body of the tongue touching or coming close to the uvula. Pulmonic sounds are those produced using air from the lungs, as opposed to air from the mouth such as click sounds. Most consonants are pulmonic.

15 fun language facts to kick the year off!

By Joana Atanasova

January is considered the most depressing month of the year. And who can blame the ones considering it? Holidays are good and done, Christmas decoration is back in the boxes and up the attic... not to mention stinging it till payday with what's leftover in our bank account from Christmas shopping. Sheesh.

Which is why we need to take every chance we can get to brighten up our days until spring knocks on our door and we get to see the sun every so often. So, folks, sit down, relax, take your D3 vitamins and let's enjoy some fun little tidbits of knowledge that'll make you go "Wow! That's amazing! No wonder I'm a language nerd!"

1. Most Spoken Language: Mandarin Chinese is the most spoken language in the world, with over 1.1 billion native speakers.

Mandarin Chinese, a tonal language, is part of the Sino-Tibetan family. It is written using characters (logograms) rather than an alphabet, and the characters often carry historical and cultural meanings.

2. Number of Languages: There are over 7,000 languages spoken in the world today. About 40% of them are at risk of extinction.

Around 43% of the world's languages are endangered, with only a handful of speakers left. Most of these are spoken by indigenous communities. By contrast, just 23 languages account for over half of the global population's first language speakers.

3. Longest Alphabet: The Khmer language (spoken in Cambodia) has the longest alphabet, with 74 letters.

Khmer's 74 letters include 33 consonants, 23 vowels, and 12 independent vowels. It is one of the oldest written scripts in Southeast Asia, heavily influenced by ancient Indian writing systems.

4. Shortest Alphabet: Rotokas, a language spoken in Papua New Guinea, has the shortest alphabet, with only 12 letters.

Rotokas is spoken by about 4,000 people on Bougainville Island in Papua New Guinea. Its phonetic simplicity (only 12 letters: A, E, I, O, U, P, T, K, B, G, V, and R) makes it one of the world's easiest languages to write.

5. Tonal Languages: In tonal languages like Mandarin, the same word can have different meanings based on its tone. For example, "ma" in Mandarin can mean "mother," "horse," or "scold," depending on the tone.

Mandarin has five tones (four distinct tones and a neutral one). Other tonal languages, such as Thai, Cantonese, and Vietnamese, can have even more tones—Cantonese, for example, has six to nine tones, depending on the dialect.

6. Clicks and Sounds: Xhosa, a South African language, uses click sounds as part of its vocabulary. Some Khoisan languages have up to 48 different click sounds!

The Khoisan languages (spoken by some ethnic groups in southern Africa) are known for their complex click consonants. Click sounds are produced by suction and are extremely difficult for non-native speakers to master.

7. Oldest Written Language: Sumerian, from ancient Mesopotamia, is the earliest known written language, dating back to at least 3100 BCE.

Sumerian was written using cuneiform, a system of wedge-shaped marks on clay tablets. It was initially developed for record-keeping, like counting livestock and crops, before being used for literature, such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

8. Invented Languages: Over 200 constructed languages, such as Klingon (Star Trek) and Dothraki (Game of Thrones), have been created for fiction.

J.R.R. Tolkien was a philologist who created multiple languages for *The Lord of the Rings*, such as Quenya and Sindarin (inspired by Finnish and Welsh). Esperanto, created in 1887 by L.L. Zamenhof, is the most successful constructed language, designed to promote international communication.

9. Longest Word: The longest word in English, "pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis," is a type of lung disease caused by inhaling fine silica particles.

While “pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis” is the longest word in English, other languages have their own record-holders. For example, German has famously long compound words like "Donaudampfschifffahrtsgesellschaftskapitän" (Danube steamship company captain).

10. Language Without a Word for "Blue": Many ancient languages, including Homeric Greek and early Japanese, didn't have a specific word for the color blue.

Ancient texts like Homer's *Iliad* describe the sea as "wine-dark" rather than blue. It's believed this is because the concept of blue as a distinct color was not widely recognized in early cultures.

11. Language Isolate: Basque, spoken in northern Spain and southern France, is a language isolate, meaning it has no known relatives.

Basque (or Euskara) has no known relatives, making it a mystery to linguists. It was spoken in the region long before the arrival of Indo-European languages, such as Spanish and French, which surround it today.

12. Fast Talkers: Spanish speakers are among the fastest speakers in terms of syllables spoken per second.

Studies have shown that Spanish speakers average 7.82 syllables per second, whereas English speakers average about 6.19 syllables per second. However, slower languages like English pack more information into each syllable, balancing the communication speed.

13. Longest Sentence: The longest sentence ever written is found in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, which is 823 words long!

The 823-word sentence in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* is a description of the Battle of Waterloo. It is filled with vivid imagery and flowing narrative but is a challenge for readers to follow without pausing!

14, Whistling Language: Silbo Gomero, spoken in the Canary Islands, is a language entirely composed of whistles. It can be heard from up to 5 kilometers (3 miles) away.

Silbo Gomero is used by shepherds in La Gomera, Canary Islands, to communicate across the island's deep valleys. The whistles replicate the Spanish language's sounds and are so distinct that UNESCO declared it a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Nice, huh? The best part is – for most of these little facts, myself and the wonderful writers of the magazine have elaborated greatly in previous issues!

Here's to a quick and painless January and may we all make it safely to payday! Cheers!



The Gaelic dialect of western Islay,



and comments on prehistoric language

Written by Linden Alexander Pentecost

Written in the UK in mid December 2024. Photos also by Linden Alexander Pentecost. *Photo above: the wild Atlantic Ocean seen in late spring from near Portnahaven, Port na h-Abhainne in the west of Islay.*

The Isle of Islay, in Gaelic: *An t-Eilean Ìle*, is a large island of the Inner Hebrides, located off the west coast of Scotland. I wrote an article some years ago for Silly Linguistics, titled: *Gaelic in East Perthshire, and other languages and dialects in Eastern Scotland* where I looked at some eastern dialects of Scottish Gaelic. I have previously written about many Gaelic dialects in a lot of detail elsewhere, but Islay I have not discussed much, so in this article I wanted to look at a specific dialect of Islay, and some other things.

Islay is linguistically speaking a part of the Argyll region, and the Gaelic dialects of Islay can be called "Argyll dialects", *Dualchainntean Earra-Ghàidheil*, although this definition is somewhat vague, and there are large differences across the different Gaelic dialects within Argyll, with the dialects of Islay being their own group of dialects in a sense.

In this article I will be looking at the dialect of informant 56 who contributed to the *Survey of Gaelic dialects of Scotland*, edited by Cathair Ó Dochartaigh, source (1). This speaker came from close to Portnahaven in western Islay, *Port na h-Abhainne*.

The broad velarised "l" is pronounced in a wide number of different ways throughout different parts of Argyll. On Islay, in initial position, this sound is often a kind of [d] sound or as [dl̪ˠ], a d followed by a broad velarised "l". For example in the dialect of informant 56, standard Gaelic *laogh* - "calf", pronounced in more standard pronunciation as [l̪ˠɯːɣ], could be written in dialect orthography as **dögh**, pronounced approximately [døːɣ]. Other examples of this "broad velarised l" in the dialect of informant 56, include in the word for "hand", spelled in standard orthography as *làmh*, commonly pronounced [l̪ãːv]. In the dialect of informant 56 I would write this word as **dåámh**, pronounced approximately as [dᵑɛ̃ːv]. The word for "strong", normally spelled *làidir* and pronounced in a more standard way as [l̪aːtʃɪrʲ], I would spell as **dàidᶻïr**, the word for "day" in standard spelling, *latha*, might be written as **daʔa**, and the word for a hollow or small valley, *lag* in standard spelling, might be written as **daǵ**.

You will notice that long vowels in this dialect tend to be released as only half-long, but are still written with a grave accent in this spelling to distinguish them from short vowels. The word **dåámh** demonstrates the different quality of vowels in this dialect. Another example is the word for "tree", *craobh* in standard spelling, and commonly pronounced [ˈkʰrɯːv]. But in the Gaelic of west Islay, it would be better written as **crïöbh**, pronounced something like [krɪ̯øːv].

There is also an [y]-like sound, written here as **ẏ** and given as [ẏ] in source (1). It occurs for example in the word *faoin* - “vain”, commonly pronounced [fɯːɲ], which I would write in west Islay Gaelic as **fẏ̀in**, pronounced approximately as [fyˑɲ].

Besides the rather complex and *fluid* vowel system of this dialect, there are also several quite unique pronunciations. For example standard Gaelic *dùisg* - “awaken”, often pronounced [t̪uːʃkʲ], might be written as **dùichg** in the Gaelic of informant 56, as the slender “s” here is pronounced [ç] and not [ːʃ].

Frequently the slender *d* of standard Gaelic, normally pronounced [tʃ] or [tʲ], is often [dʲᶻʲ], and is written here as **dᶻ**. This pronunciation also occurs on the islands of Jura, Mull and Tiree. This can be seen in the word **dàidᶻïr** mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Glottal stops, like in the word **daʔa** are relatively frequent in this dialect, and are found to varying degrees across Argyll as a whole, and to some degree in the Outer Hebrides. Another example is the word for “mark”, *comharradh* in standard spelling, but which could be spelled as **coʔora** in the Gaelic of west Islay. The **mh** is not written in this dialect spelling as there is no nasal vowel indicated in **coʔora**. The Gaelic of west Islay also has frequent instances of glottalisation.

The glottal stops in Argyll Gaelic, along with stød-like influences on the prosodic structure and a form of “creaky voice” can occur alongside glottalised consonants, in some ways akin to the glottalised consonants of northwest Pacific languages in the Americas. I write this as an apostrophe, which is also what is given in source (1) to indicate these sounds. Some examples from west Islay can be seen in the pronunciation of *creid* - “believe”, which in west Islay might be written as **crȯiˀdᶻ**, note that the spelling **ȯi** is in this case a short [ø]. In this example the glottalisation does not occur on the consonant itself, but in the already mentioned word **daǵ**, the **g** itself is glottalised from what I understand from the form given in (1).

Those of you who have read some of my writings before, might know that I tend to take a slightly different perspective of the *Indo-European* languages. Take Scottish Gaelic for example; it is an Indo-European language, yet, many of its features are not typically Indo-European in nature, for example the verb-subject-object word order.

Looking at the Gaelic of west Islay specifically, it is difficult to explain, through the generally understood evolution of Celtic languages, how a broad velarised l can become a [d] or a number of other sounds. The glottal stops, and even more so the glottalised consonants, are even harder to explain as having come from Celtic or Indo-European.

Which leads to the possibility that some aspects of the Scottish Gaelic language, particularly when it comes to local dialects, might inherit features of language on a more local level, features which could be pre-Celtic and pre-Indo-European in origin.

Article continues on next page, beginning with a photo showing the strange and mysterious coastal landscape near Portnahaven/Port na h-Abhainne, looking towards the area where informant 56 was from. More relevant description is beneath the photo.



A possible palaeolithic site is located on Islay, and close to Portnahaven, according to what I understand of a map on page 33 of source (3). From what I understand of more general information in source (3), there are also several Mesolithic sites from this part of Islay, and more generally it seems likely that Islay was one the first places in Scotland to be settled or visited after the Ice Age. The photo above on this page shows raised beaches, as briefly mentioned. These are a physical remnant of those ancient times, when Islay would have been lower. Post-glacial rebound has since caused parts of Scotland to "rise", leaving the ancient beaches and coastlines on dry land, as demonstrated in the picture on this page.

I think it quite possible, likely even, that certain features we can observe in the Gaelic of west Islay today, could have come from those people who settled the caves and bays of the ancient coastline, now raised beaches, visible in the photo on this page. Even the name Islay itself, in Gaelic: *Ìle* has an unknown origin and meaning. I hope that this article was an interesting read.

My previous article for Silly Linguistics, titled: *The Doric Scots tongue, language in Aberdeenshire, and polyandrous Attacotti*, also includes some discussion on potentially prehistoric language on the coasts of Scotland, but with regard to the cultures on the east coast.

<u>*References:*</u>

All spellings given in bold are my own dialect spellings and the approximate IPA equivalents of these Islay forms given, based upon phonetic spellings of the language of Informant 56 in the *Survey of the Gaelic dialects of Scotland*, edited by Cathair Ó Dochartaigh, mentioned as source (1). Informant 56 is from a place close to the coastline visible in the photo on this page. Note that in this article the "language of informant 56" and "Gaelic of west Islay" are used interchangeably. "West Islay" refers in this case not to the whole western half of Islay but rather to the extreme western peninsula of Islay where Portnahaven is located, sometimes referred to as the "Rinns of Islay".
Source (2) refers to information I have understood from source (2) which is the book: *Scotland's first settlers* by C. R. Wickham-Jones, first published in 1994.

WHY *PENG-* CAN'T JUST CHILL

A FUN DIVE INTO INDONESIAN GRAMMAR

BY BAIHAQI HAKIM

Baihaqi Hakim (12baihaqi12@gmail.com), December 2024

When your enthusiasm for learning a new language becomes unstoppable, you'll encounter a fairly complex set of rules. These rules seem necessary to master if you want to become a cool and proficient Indonesian speaker.

For those currently learning or planning to learn Indonesian, one particularly productive prefix to understand is *peng-*. This prefix transforms root words into nouns with the following meanings:

1. **"A person who performs an action,"** such as *pembeli* ('buyer') derived from the verb *beli* ('to buy');
2. **"A person whose profession involves the action,"** such as *penulis* ('writer') from the verb *tulis* ('to write');
3. **"A person possessing a particular characteristic,"** such as *penakut* ('a coward' or 'someone who is easily scared') from the adjective *takut* ('scared');
4. **"A tool used for a particular purpose,"** such as *penopang* ('support') from the verb *topang* ('to support').

However, the rules do not end here. Upon closer examination, you'll notice that this prefix is not consistent. Sometimes it appears as *pem-*, *pen-*, or even *pe-* instead of *peng-*. This inconsistency arises because the form of *peng-* changes based on the phoneme that follows it. There are six variations:

1. **Peng-**: When paired with root words beginning with *k*, *g*, *h*, *kh*, or a vowel (e.g., *pengrajin* – 'craftsman').
2. **Pe-**: When paired with root words beginning with *r*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *w*, *y*, *ng*, or *ny* (e.g., *pemenang* – 'winner').
3. **Pem-**: When paired with root words beginning with *p*, *b*, *f*, or *v* (e.g., *pemberani* – 'the brave one').
4. **Pen-**: When paired with root words beginning with *t*, *d*, *c*, *j*, *z*, or *sy* (e.g., *pencari* – 'searcher').
5. **Penge-**: When paired with root words consisting of only one syllable (e.g., *pengetes* – 'tester').

Now you know how to adjust the forms of these prefixes. Finally, you think—but once again, the rules don't stop there. Suppose you're tasked with combining the prefix with the root word *konsumsi* ('consume'). Using the knowledge you've gained, you might confidently suggest *pengkonsumsi*. However, your answer would be incorrect and won't be found in the Indonesian Dictionary (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*). Instead, you'll encounter the word *pengonsumsi*—without the *k*. Similarly:

- *penipu* ('cheater') drops the *t* from *tipu* ('to cheat').
- *penyakit* ('disease') drops the *s* from *sakit* ('sick').
- *pemukul* ('hitter') drops the *p* from *pukul* ('to hit').

When will this end?! You might wonder. Even after roughly 408 words, there are still rules to consider. The initial phonemes *k*, *p*, *s*, and *t* in a root word are absorbed (or let's say 'disappear') when combined with the prefix *peng-*. The forms of these prefixes, however, still follow the variations mentioned above when paired with root words beginning with *k*, *p*, and *t*:

1. *konsumsi* → *pengonsumsi*
2. *pukul* → *pemukul*
3. *tipu* → *penipu*

For root words beginning with *s*, *peng-* transforms into *peny-*: *sakit* → *penyakit*.

Stop. The explanation ends here, hehe. Finally, there are no more surprises, aren't there? Well, at least not for the prefix *peng-*.

These rules should not be seen as obstacles to your language-learning journey. Instead, view them as challenges that can spark your enthusiasm for exploring a new world. I believe language is the gateway to understanding the world.

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