

REFERENCE
GRAMMAR
&
DICTIONARY
of
Sutlun

– Redo Title Page at some point...
By Samuel Pearce

– TODO Tuesday: – Make sure nothing is ambiguous – Convert examples
to glosses – Unfinished Syntax sections – Add missing words – Try translating
NW&S again?

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0.1 Introduction

Sutlun is a constructed language, or conlang, which was created in 2021 for a school assignment as an experiment. The goal was to create a language which was as small and as easy to learn as possible. It began as a series of small languages, each being smaller than the last. I was looking for the point where a language becomes impractically small and no longer useful in day-to-day life. Sutlun is the final result of this.

Part I

Grammar

Chapter 1

Phonology

1.1 Consonants

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Palatal
Nasal	m	n	
Plosive	p	t	k
Fricative	ɸ [f]	s	x
Liquid	w	l	j

1.2 Vowels

	Front	Back
Close	i · y	u [ʌ] · u
Middle	e	
Open	a [æ] · œ	

1.3 Phonotactics

In Sutlun, roots are bi-consonantal and the vowel determines what part of speech the word is. For these root words, the consonant structure is **CVC** Where V is any vowel except /ə/, C is any consonant.

1.4 Orthography

1.4.1 Romanisation

The romanisation used might seem quite strange to an outside observer, but it was designed to emphasize the duality of the main vowels (y, ú, a) with their rounded equivalents (ý, u, á) which represents a change in meaning for the roots. Please note that the unrounded 'u' is marked, whereas the other two unrounded main vowels aren't, this is due to front vowels typically being unrounded, while

back vowels are typically rounded [1]. The more “typical” vowel is the “default” form, while the less typical form is the inflected one. Though given that this might be difficult to understand and not as easy to type as it is on a QWERTZ keyboard, a more phonetic alternative is also provided with digraph alternatives to the diacritics used.

IPA	Rom.	Alt.	IPA	Rom.	Alt.
p	p	p	w	w	w
t	t	t	l	l	l
k	k	k	j	j	j
m	m	m	a	a	a
n	n	n	œ	á	ö/oe
ɸ	f	f	i	y	i
s	s	s	y	ý	ü/ue
x	x	x	ʊ	ú	ue
ə	e	e	u	u	uu/oo

1.4.2 Writing System

Given the rigidly structured syllables, I experimented with the idea of writing systems that used this to their advantage for more regular and compact glyphs, but found this too complicated and received feedback that confirmed this fear. So I decided to go for a simpler alphabetic system for the writing system. I definitely wanted to make it a featural system though, because I had layed the phonemes out in a systematic manner for this purpose.

Chapter 2

Morphology

2.1 Universal Inflections

These are a few inflections (mostly prefixes) which can be applied to any root, no matter the part of speech. Though these changes may not always yield a result that fully makes sense.

2.1.1 Opposites

You can form the opposite meaning of a word by flipping the root's consonants:

“taf” → “good”
“fat” → “bad”

2.1.2 Negation

To negate anything, simply prefix it with “ke-”. For nouns, this forms the phrase “not X”, where X is the negated noun e.g.

“pux” → “food”
“kepux” → “not food”

For Verbs, this means to not do the action:

“pýx” → “eat”
“kepýx” → “don't eat”

And for adjectives, it means not like the adjective:

“pax” → “delicious”
“kepax” → “not delicious”

It is important to bear in mind the difference between negation and opposites, as they often seem to share the same meaning, but “not good” is not the same as “bad”.

2.1.3 Binary Question Prefix

– Add ‘ek-’ to verb makes it a yes/no question

2.2 Nouns

2.2.1 Number

In FSutlun, Nouns all have the “u” sound in the root which is unrounded for singular and rounded for plural. For example:

“mun” → “a game”
 “mún” → “many games”

2.2.2 Case

Sutlun has 4 grammatical cases which are all formed with a simple suffix according to the following table:

Case Name	Suffix	Example
Nominative	-	puX
Accusative	-e	puXe
Dative	-em	puXem
Genitive	-es	puXes

2.2.3 Definitiveness

By default, nouns are indefinite and if they are definite, it can be parsed through context, but if you wish to define a noun as being definite, you can give it the ‘-te’ prefix.

“mun” → “a game”
 “temun” → “the game”

2.3 Verbs

2.3.1 Mood

FSutlun has two verb moods: Indicative & Imperative. These are also formed by the root-sound’s roundness. All Verbs use the “y” sound for their roots. “Y” is indicative, while “ý” is imperative:

“ut kyn” → “You go.” / “You are going.”
 “ut kýn” → “You, go!”

2.3.2 Tense

FSutlun has 3 tenses which are all formed with a simple suffix according to the following table:

Tense Name	Suffix	Example	Meaning
Past	-et	pixet	ate, were eating
Present	- (-ef)	pix	eat, are eating
Future	-ej	pixej	will eat

The present tense is the default tense and needn't be marked, but if it is, it emphasizes that the action is taking place now. E.g.:

“ut kyn kumem?” → “Where are you going?”
 “ut kynef kumem?” → “Where are you going now?”

2.4 Adjectives

2.4.1 Positive & Superlative

Adjectives in FSutlun all have the “a” sound in their root which is rounded to form the superlative form of the adjective.

“taf pux” → “good food”
 “táf pux” → “the best food”

Adjectives may also be used alone in the position of the verb of the sentence to mean “to be like X”. i.e.:

“ut taf” → “You’re good.”
 “mukmun mán” → “This game is the most fun.”

2.4.2 Comparing

To form the comparative of an adjective, you add the augmentative or diminutive prefix, depending on whether you want the positive or negative form:

“upes xul jutaf.” → “My house is better.”
 “ukes puxe ujtaf utes puxem” → “Their food is worse than your food.”
 “ut kenik juwas mun?” → “Did you get a newer game?”

Chapter 3

Syntax

3.1 Phrases

All forms of phrase follow the same order for dependents:

Preposition/Demonstrative → Possessor → Adjectives (No internal order) →
HEAD

An example of all of these together would be:

“xel upes taf jumukmajxul” → “In my good, big house.”

3.2 Conjunctions

– xel -> and

3.3 Compounds

– What order things are compounded

3.4 Sentence Order

The most common order for a sentence is SVO in Sutlun, but because it has case marking, the order is almost completely free:

- (1) ukes majxulem up kin puxe
3S-GEN house-DAT 1S-NOM move-to food-ACC
“I take food to his house.”

The only exception is that a genitive must always be placed immediately before its possesum:

- (2) ukes majxulem up ...
- (3) *majxulem up ukes ...

3.5 Conditionals

- A uwu, B

3.6 Subordinate Clauses

- en is like ni

“xel upes taf jumajxul” → “In my good, big house.”

Part II

Lexicon

P

P-X – Food, Drink

Antonym: “Excretion, Expelling” See X-P

- pux** – /'pux/ *n. sg.* • Food, Drink, an item of food, a meal
púx – /'pʌx/ *n. pl.* • Food, many items of food/drink
pyx – /'pix/ *v. ind.* • to eat, to drink, to consume
pýx – /'pyx/ *v. imp.* • eat!, drink!, consume!
pax – /'pax/ *a. pos.* • delicious, tasty
páx – /'pœx/ *a. sup.* • most delicious

T

T-F – Good, Positive

Antonym: “Bad, Negative” See F-T

- tuf** – /'tuf/ *n. sg.* • a good deed/thing, the concept of goodness
túf – /'tʌf/ *n. pl.* • many good things
tyf – /'tif/ *v. ind.* • to improve, fix, better
týf – /'tyf/ *v. imp.* • fix!, improve!
taf – /'taf/ *a. pos.* • good, well
táf – /'tœf/ *a. sup.* • the best

T-S – Quiet, Still

Antonym: “Noise, Sound, Loud” See S-T

- tus** – /'tus/ *n. sg.* • quiet, peace, stillness
tús – /'tʌs/ *n. pl.* • much stillness, much peace
tys – /'tis/ *v. ind.* • to be quiet, calm down, make peace
týs – /'tys/ *v. imp.* • be quiet!, calm down!
tas – /'tas/ *a. pos.* • good, well
tás – /'tœs/ *a. sup.* • the best

K

K-M – Query, What?

Antonym: “Demonstrative, Thing, That” See M-K

- kum** – /'kum/ *n. sg.* • what thing?
kúm – /'kʌm/ *n. pl.* • what things?
kym – /'kim/ *v. ind.* • doing what?
kým – /'kym/ *v. imp.* • (special case) what are you doing?
kam – /'kam/ *a. pos.* • like what?
kám – /'kœm/ *a. sup.* • most like what?

kem – /'kem/ *excl.* • What!/? (General indicator of confusion)

K-N – Go, Move, Give

Antonym: “Come, Bring” See N-K

kun – /'kun/ *n. sg.* • a walk, a motion/movement, a journey

kún – /'kʌn/ *n. pl.* • many walks, many motions/movements, many journeys

kyn – /'kin/ *v. ind.* • to walk, to move, to go

kýn – /'kyn/ *v. imp.* • walk!, move!, go!

kan – /'kan/ *a. pos.* • in motion, moving, going, living

kán – /'kœn/ *a. sup.* • moving the most, the most alive

ken – /'ken/ *prep.* • to, toward

K-F – Fantasy, Unreal, Fake

Antonym: “Thing, Real, Exist” See F-K

kuf – /'kuf/ *n. sg.* • a fantasy, something fake/unreal

kúf – /'kʌf/ *n. pl.* • many fantasies, unreal things

kyf – /'kif/ *v. ind.* • imagine, picture

kýf – /'kyf/ *v. imp.* • iamge!, picture!

kaf – /'kaf/ *a. pos.* • fake, unreal, fantasy, fictional

káf – /'kœf/ *a. sup.* • the most fake, unreal, fictional

M

M-K – Demonstrative, Thing

Antonym: “Query, What?” See K-M

muk – /'muk/ *n. sg.* • this/that thing

múk – /'mʌk/ *n. pl.* • these/those things

myk – /'mik/ *v. ind.* • doing this/that

mýk – /'myk/ *v. imp.* • do this/that!

mak – /'mak/ *a. pos.* • like this/that

mák – /'mœk/ *a. sup.* • most like this/that

M-N – Entertainment, Fun, Game

Antonym: “Work, Task, Boring” See N-M

mun – /'mun/ *n. sg.* • a game, book, film, TV-show, play, etc.

mún – /'mʌn/ *n. pl.* • many games, books, films, etc.

myn – /'min/ *v. ind.* • to play, entertain, relax

mýn – /'myn/ *v. imp.* • go play!, have fun!

man – /'man/ *a. pos.* • fun, entertaining

mán – /'mœn/ *a. sup.* • most fun, entertaining

M-L – Soft, Weak, Clay

Antonym: “Solid, Strong, Rock, Metal” See L-M

mul – /'mul/ *n. sg.* • a soft thing, some clay, sand, paste, powder

múl – /'mʌl/ *n. pl.* • many soft things, clay, sand, paste, powder
myl – /'mil/ *v. ind.* • to soften, weaken, mould
mýl – /'myl/ *v. imp.* • soften!, weaken!, mould!
mal – /'mal/ *a. pos.* • soft, weak
mál – /'mœl/ *a. sup.* • most soft, weak

N

N-M – Work, Task, Boring

Antonym: “Entertainment, Fun, Game” See M-N

num – /'num/ *n. sg.* • a task, job, craft, skill
núm – /'nʌm/ *n. pl.* • many tasks, jobs, crafts, skills
nym – /'nim/ *v. ind.* • to work, make, craft
ným – /'nym/ *v. imp.* • work!, maake!, craft!
nam – /'nam/ *a. pos.* • mandatory, boring, arduous
nám – /'nœm/ *a. sup.* • most boring, arduous

N-F – Like, Desire, Want

Antonym: “Dislike, Hate, Must” See F-N

nuf – /'nuf/ *n. sg.* • a desire, want
núf – /'nʌf/ *n. pl.* • many desires, wants
nyf – /'nif/ *v. ind.* • to like, desire, want
nýf – /'nyf/ *v. imp.* • like smth.! (special case:) exclamation of joy “wow!”, “yay!”
naf – /'naf/ *a. pos.* • nice, boring, arduous
náf – /'nœf/ *a. sup.* • most boring, arduous

F

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