

# Finwol

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I present a language I constructed called Finwol, a clipping of English “final world” and a compound of the Finwol words meaning the same. Finwol is an isolating *a posteriori* language that represents one possible syncretism of major world languages.

## 1. Background and Motivation

Finwol was originally conceived under the working name Final-World as an *a posteriori* international auxiliary language designed with features from multiple of the world’s dominant languages. This would allow anyone speaking any of these languages to have some advantage when learning Finwol.

### 1.1. Context, Significance, and Inspiration

The conception of this constructed language idea came from our class activity on Esperanto, the most successful practically constructed language. One major criticism of Esperanto was that it was too Eurocentric, with a grammar that too closely resembles English and vocabulary that derives mainly from Romance languages. In order to make a truly international auxiliary language, I looked beyond the languages spoken in Europe.

Finwol was intended to in Esperanto’s footsteps as an *a posteriori* international auxiliary language, basing itself on the languages which are dominant in international affairs in recent times. These have traditionally been English and French, so I planned to focus the core of my language on these two. However, there are also major contributions from the regionally dominant Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese, with sprinklings from other languages. With a global set of language features, people from all over the world can learn Finwol relatively easily to communicate across language gaps.

This language is created with people from all cultures and all walks of life in mind: a flourishing linguistic ecosystem must involve as many people as possible. However, the more urgent use of the language will be in international business and politics. Within this context, Finwol seeks to minimize linguistic confusion and promote simple, efficient communication. The features of the language will be designed with an understanding of the current world cultures, as well as simplicity.

Over time, as I continued to develop the language, my focus shifted away from being an auxiliary language and more toward being a fun, artistic language. I learned about languages like Loglan, which used several of the same techniques I did, but its overbearing syntax made it hard for even “fluent” speakers to form sentences. I knew that in today’s constructed language

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community, it would be extremely difficult for a language like Finwol, especially because its haphazard, *a posteriori* nature, to genuinely take off and develop a community of enthusiasts. I would instead continue my plan and build a language that was fun for me. Only when I felt confident it could stand on its own would I encourage speakers to form a community around it. However, it was still a language formed by diffusion of all languages, so the global inspirations were still a major part of the creation of Finwol.

## 1.2. Language Details and Planned Features

To create this language, I planned to research language interaction and evolution, especially on the linguistic patterns of pidgins. I wanted Finwol to sound like a possible organically produced pidgin of the major world languages. I will then polish this pidgin into a language that is complete, as well as simplify the vocabulary and grammar to make the language easy to learn. Like Esperanto, there may be a suffix indicating part of speech and one suffix for plurality. I can expand this to a larger collection of grammatical cases.

One feature Finwol may have is a deference for technical terms in the language they are currently dominant in. For example, the common name for plants and animals will match closely their Latin scientific forms. Cultural-specific concepts will follow the language of the culture in which they originated. This not only makes the language more universal and more widely accepted in niche circles, it will also make it easier to add loanwords.

## 2. Phonology

I present the phonemic inventory and phonotactic rules for Finwol.

### 2.1. Phonemic Inventory

#### *Consonants*

		Bilabial	Labiodental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Velar	Glottal
<b>Stops</b>	<i>Voiceless</i>	p		t		k	
	<i>Voiced</i>	b		d		g	
<b>Fricatives</b>	<i>Voiceless</i>		f	s	ʃ	x	h
	<i>Voiced</i>			z	ʒ		
<b>Nasals</b>		m		n		ŋ	
<b>Liquids</b>				l			
<b>Glides</b>					j	w	

## Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e, ε	ə	o
Low	a		

Finwol noticeably lacks affricates and diphthongs. It has a much smaller vowel set than English to encourage differentiation of sounds.

Finwol encourages a broad array of allophones to allow people of different native languages to communicate in Finwol. For example, /l/ can be realized by [l] or by any rhotic. Voiced and voiceless consonants are distinguished not only by voicing but also by aspiration: voiceless consonants are aspirated.

## 2.2. Phonotactics

Finwol's syllables follow a (C)V(C) syllable structure. There are no consonant clusters in Finwol. In addition, V or VC syllables appear only in word-initial or word-final positions. To account for this, Finwol has several phonotactic repair mechanisms such as epenthesis and consonant deletion. In general, loanwords that are shorter and more formal will be repaired with epenthesis. Likewise, longer and less formal words will be repaired with deletion.

Only nasals can act as coda consonants.

## 3. Morphosyntax

Finwol is an isolating language, which places limitations on morphological and syntactic design decisions.

### 3.1. Morphology

Finwol has a weak word class distinction. Any word in any open lexical class can be **converted** to a word in another class. This parallels natural conversion processes in English. For example, ['ba.lu], meaning 'blue' in Finwol, can also refer to a subgroup of blue items in a larger group ('the blue ones').

Compounding is also prominent in Finwol, as demonstrated by the name of the language.

### 3.2. Syntax

Finwol is a rather isolating language; the exceptions are compound words and ‘-s’ after a noun to mark whether it is plural. Nouns have 4 cases (nominative, accusative, genitive, and dative), each with its own modifying particle after the noun.

Verbs are not modified for the number of the noun, but they do have particles for past and future tense.

Finwol is head-initial in relative placement of particles, but adjectives may come before or after the nouns they modify. All adjectives have a genitive particle following them.

Case markers for nouns and adjectives are optional but highly recommended and should be in common use. The word order is generally SVO, but if case markers are used then words may be reordered for poetic purposes.

Finwol has one indefinite and one definite article. They are optional.

### 4. Sample Passages

*bobə i dɛ il to sətolas dejipula*

Bob NOM PST go to store yesterday

“Bob went to the store yesterday.”

The second example is adapted from Act IV, Scene 2 of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. The line in the play ends with “Run away, I pray you!”, but I have yet to figure out the syntactic representation for this in Finwol.

*ma, hi i dɛ zu molut a mi. u kulan faw!*

mother 3SG NOM PST do death to 1SG IMPER run(SG) away

“He has kill’d me, mother: Run away!” (adapted from Macbeth)

## APPENDIX: Lexicon

### Particles

Word	Meaning
(1) [dɛ]	Past tense
(2) [ɛ]	Definite article
(3) [i]	Nominative
(4) [u]	Imperative

### Basic Words

Word	Gloss
(1) [a]	'to' (indirect object)
(2) ['a.wa]	'water'
(3) [an]	'year'
(4) ['ba.lu]	'blue'
(5) ['de.ji]	'day'
(6) ['de.zi]	'desire'
(7) ['fa.fə]	'five'
(8) ['fan.tə.zi]	'fantastic (not real)'
(9) [faw]	'far'
(10) ['fi.til]	'future'
(11) [hi]	'he'
(12) [il]	'go'
(13) [ju]	'best'

(14) [ki]	'life'
(15) [ku]	'freezer'
(16) ['ku.pa]	'guilt'
(17) ['ku.lan]	'run'
(18) [loŋ]	'dragon'
(19) [lun]	'moon'
(20) [ma]	'mother'
(21) ['mas.kə]	'mask'
(22) ['me.le]	'sea'
(23) [me]	'more'
(24) ['mɛ.si]	'thank you'
(25) [mɛ]	'May'
(26) [mi]	'I/me'
(27) ['mo.lut]	'death'
(28) [nən]	'none'
(29) [nɛn]	'nine'
(30) [no]	'no' (exclamation)
(31) [oj]	'you' (informal, optional)
(32) [ol]	'alcohol'
(33) ['pu.la]	'past'
(34) ['sa.la]	'desert'
(35) ['sa.lə]	'salad'
(36) [sam]	'psalm'

(37) [san]	'without'
(38) [saŋ]	'blood'
(39) [sə.'to.las]	'store'
(40) ['so.lo]	'loner'
(41) [to]	'to' (directional)
(42) [tu]	'you' (formal)
(43) ['zo.lo]	'fox'
(44) [ʒu]	'do'

### Derived Words

Word	Gloss
(1) ['ba.lu.'saŋ]	'hypoxia'
(2) ['ba.lu]	'the blue things'
(3) ['de.ji.'pu.la]	'yesterday'
(4) ['de.zi.ol]	'alcoholism'
(5) ['fan.tə.zi.'me.le]	'mirage'
(6) ['fan.tə.zi]	'fantastic things'
(7) ['fi.til]	'the future'
(8) ['ju.ki]	'best life'
(9) ['ju.ol]	'fine wine'
(10) [ma.'de.zi]	'motherly instinct'
(11) [ma.'ku.pa]	'feeling inadequate to raise a child'
(12) ['me.le.'sa.la]	'open ocean'

(13) ['sa.la.an]	'drought'
(14) [san]	'people in poverty'
(15) [saŋ.'so.lo]	'only child'
(16) ['so.lo.'ma]	'single mother'