# Trokh
## AT A GLANCE

Thursday, February 29, 2024

Trokh is the common Aslan language. It was previously the trade language of the Tlaukhu: the twenty-nine ruling clans of the Aslan Hierate. It developed into its present form over 4,500 years ago on Kusyu (Dark Nebula 1226). After the Wave, Trokh splintered, but before Imperial year 1400 the language was tightly controlled by the Tlaukhu, and remained almost entirely free of offshoots, local dialects, or corruptions. Today, the Republic of Regina is host to an Aslan population who speak a variant that is recognizably Trokh, though separated from the original by 700 years.

The complexity of Trokh hampers foreign speakers. A linguist once wrote: "The tongue spoken by the Aslan is both attractive and repellent to the human ear, combining sonorous and melodic vowel sounds with throaty snarls and animal growls, all accompanied by a fair amount of spitting when spoken at any volume." Proper pronunciation of vowels has often proved the most difficult aspect of the language for humans, as some are pronounced while inhaling rather than exhaling. A Trokh speaker can talk faster than a human. He doesn't need to pause for breath in the midst of his speech. Instead, the language itself paces the speaker's breathing, necessitating rapid movement of the diaphragm to change the direction of breath. Indeed, the word trokh means "belly," referring to the motion of the Aslan stomach when speaking.

**Introduction**

Trokh is a polysynthetic verb-based language. What this means is that the Trokh verb has a number of classes of prefixes and suffixes (twenty classes, to be specific) which modify the verb in a way that can fully express a wide variety of concepts, often without the need for supporting noun phrases. Trokh also has separate grammars based on the gender-role of the speaker: martial-male and economic-female. By necessity this overview is only a brief sketch. In addition, many elements of the Trokh verb – a highly daunting construct – have not yet been recorded, or are only indicated but not translated or itemized here. The documenting of Trokh is a continuing work.

**Trokh Sound Inventory**

Vowels: A AE AO E EA I O U YA YE IY YO YU
Consonants: F FT H HF HK HL HR HT HW K KH KHT L LR R RL S ST T TL TR W '
Note: the ' is a glottal stop.

**The Trokh Verb**

Trokh verbs come with 19 ordered classes of affixes. For example, "TAM" prefixes modify the tense, aspect, or mood of the verb, and come first. Most classes have a few affixes in them. Some are singletons, with only one affix. A few classes have a dozen or more affixes. (This type of construction is called a templatic verb structure.)

**Negativizer**. There is one affix which can show up anywhere in the verb: the Negativizer affix I'. It negates the sense of the element **after** it. Think of it as the English word "not". For example, I' at the front of the entire verb essentially sticks a "not" in front of its meaning.

**Templates**. While Trokh vocabulary is gender-neutral, the verb template itself is gender-specific, resulting in two completely different verbal constructions for the exact same meaning.

Female roles use the following verb template:

TAM – P – Ti – Du – Ap – An – M – U – Di – L – O – C – Tr – Verb Stem – Ca – Ad – Ci – It – In – T/A

Male roles have a different affix order:

TAM – Ca – Ap – Du — Ti — P — Ad — In – L — O — C – Tr – Verb Stem – It — Ci – M – U – Di — T/A

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| TAM: Tense/Aspect/Mood | (see TAM examples) | |
| P: Person | (see Person examples) | |
| Ti: Interval | | |
| Du: Durative | | |
|     'eiei- | for a while (used by companies as an "LIC") | |
| Ap: Applicative | Use "person" + tto add a dative agent to an intransitive verb | |
| An: Animative Patient | | |
|     kaowea- | animate | |
|     ktealea- | sophont | |
| M: Manner | | |
|     i'a - <verb> | in the manner of <verb>/being <verb> | |
| U: Absolute Numeracy | | |
| Di: Distributive | | |
|     hkei- | variously in time or location | |
| L: Locative | (see Locative examples) | |
| O: Posture | | |
| C: Continuous Motion | | |
|     tiysa- | e.g. rolling or sliding | |
| TR: Transitivizer | | |
|     reaai- | "carrying" sense | |
|     toi- | "following" sense | |
| Verb Stem | (see Verb Stem examples) | |
| Ca: Causative | | |
|     -ktali | to cause subject to ~ | |
| Ad: Andative | used with hortative TAM. | |
|     -tlel | "let ~ go off to do ~" | |
|     -kheat | "I'm going off to do ~" | |
| Ci: Cislocative | | |
|     -aei | already / yet / beforehand | |
|     -ea | diminutive "a little", "unimportantly" | |
|     -kaola | expansive "a lot", "importantly" | |
| It: Iterative | | |
|     -ftal(i) | simple iterative; at intervals | |
|     -riht | always / continual / eternal | |
| In: Intentive | | |
|     -toeyee | "be going to ~", "preparing to" | |
| T/A: Tense/Aspect | (see T/A examples) | |

## TAM Examples

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Past | A' + <affix> | WHY question | Reio |
| Future | E' + <affix> | Yes/No question | Eiiy' |
| Perfect | Khuia | Imperative | Hloe |
| Infrequently/Seldom | Eai | NOW Imperative | Hti |
| Resultative | Wia | Hortative | Khiy |
| Indicative | Ke' | Prohibitive | Heaw |
| WHAT question | Tloaei | Potential | Ya |
| WHERE question | Tliya | Belief | Oa |
| WHO question | Syelra | Mirative | Ea |
| HOW question | Htearui | Quotative | Siy |

## Person Examples

The agent of the action, if there is one, comes first. Next comes the patient or recipient of the action – if there is one.

| Person | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ai | Ao |
| 1 plural | Wai | Wao |
| 2 | Yei | Yao |
| 2 dual | Tyei | Tyao |
| 2 plural | Ayei | Ayao |
| 3 | Hei | Hao |
| 3 plural | Khei | Khao |

## Locative Examples

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Above, Up | kiyoi | Join | fya |
| Advancing | yaei | Land, ground | uiiy |
| Air | leisiy | Liquid | hlirea |
| Arrive/Enter | wao | Middle | aio |
| Around | htowaa | Nearby | ra |
| Behind | tuiaui | Out of sight | raoua |
| Beside | iu | Over | kteae |
| Circling | htarai | Retreating | waw |
| Crossing | raiai | Split | hwarl |
| Depart/Leave | kha | Sticking up | khehe |
| Downward | eaea | Suspended | aye |
| Flame-ward | waaoya | Together | hlaie |
| Following | iyaoi | Under | iye |
| In | yeui | | |

## T/A Examples

| | |
|---|---|
| Future, simple | hei'ui |
| Habitual | ee |
| Imperfective* | tlaiye |
| Perfect, simple | seha |
| Perfect, "over there" | kaosiy |

*(the Imperfective, when combined with the indicative mood or progressive or habitual aspect, is a progressive marker).

## Verb Stems

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Appropriate, be | tai | Grandparent, be | teya |
| Ask permission | toawe | Handle Carefully | hkheiyaftyai |
| Bargain for | wyoea | Haunt | 'ao |
| Be (estar) | 'e | Hunt | lifakht |
| Be (ser) | s'e | Inspect | hrolye |
| Border sth | soiste | Interdict | hleaa |
| Born, be | feiao | Jump | ktyaea |
| Chase; Pursue | tyew | Land (planetary) | ryukha |
| Civilized, be | wihtea | Named, Called (be) | kto'yu |
| Confirm sth | khoa | Negotiate for | hkilroue |
| Confuse sth | htarii'kh | Pardon | lao |
| Defend sth | khya | Pass through | uaeuhrekh |
| Dishonor | kta | Pilot; Fly | fiyai |
| Divide | eau | Pounce; Attack | ktir |
| Drink | khtaw | Repair sth | tyus |
| Eat | hkaos | Return | kesiy |
| Encounter; fight | wea' | Shine | haloia |
| First, be | teisi, htasi | Shoot at | laryeea |
| Float | yayuue | Strong, be | ftaei |
| Free, be | tyer | Third, be | hihte |
| Game, play a - | tlea | Trade | sa'i |
| Gather | ftier | Understand | khar |
| Gathering booty | tlesi | Wait for sth. | uitoye |
| Go | oui | | |

## Building New Verbs

Trokh verb morphology has a rich set of productions that lets people create new verbs within its own grammar rules. In this example, we create a new verb "to confuse something".

| | |
|---|---|
| Stem: | khar, understand |
| Negative: | i'khar, not understand |
| "Circling" locative: | htaraii'khar, head-spin-worthy non-comprehend = confuse. |

That can be used as-is. But, that's a long verb. If you want a shorter verb root, just erode it a bit. For example, assume the center 'a' goes first.

htarii'khar

Next, maybe the final -ar

htarii'kh

Nice. Let's keep it. So:

htarii'kh: To confuse something.

## Adjectives

Prefixing ua' to a verb stem often makes it an adjective. Adjectives (and other nouns) modify nouns in the same manner as English (ice box, house cat, rubber band, broken arrow).

Examples:

| Verb | Adjective |
|------|-----------|
| Haloia (shine) | Ua'haloia (bright) |
| Ktyaea (jump) | Ua'ktyaea (jump-capable) |
| Hwarls'e (split) | Ua'hwarls'e (broken) |
| Hta (galaxy) | Ua'hta (galactic) |

## The Trokh Sentence

The structure of the Trokh sentence is: Verb – Object – Indirect Object, with the subject (and sometimes the applicative object) embedded into the "Person" slot of the verb, or its pronoun.

## Nouns

Nouns can modify other nouns, in the same manner as English (ice box; house cat; rubber band).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anglic; human | (Tr)arlaaya | Gvurrdon | (Tra)warliiya |
| Barbarian | Tahiwihteakhtau | Head of Pride | Khtyei |
| Battle; encounter | Wea'khto | Land | Hatei |
| Belly | Trokh | Land Defender | Hateikhyair |
| Borough, district | Ha | People | Hyu |
| Clan | Huiha | Pride | Ahriy |
| Council | Tlaukhu | Rights | Hyah |
| Day | Aloiakht | Rite of Passage | Akuaeuhrekhyeh |
| Defender | Khyair | River | Lay |
| Duel of honor | Aisailaokhe | Squadron | Hryo |
| Dewclaw | Aisai | Story; Tale | Ktaee |
| Empire | Akhwihteair | Sun | Tye |
| Equipment | Steasyo | Traitor | (Ao)uoauye |
| Family | Ekho | Valley | Kteli |
| Galaxy | Hta | Vassal | Fiy |

**Noun Classifiers**

**Noun Prefixes**

An optional class of prefixes can nuance the meaning of nouns.

| Prefix | Meaning | Example |
|--------|---------|---------|
| Ahk- | Honorable | Akhuaeuhrekhyeh, rite of passage |
| Ekh- | Honorable disagreement | |
| Akya- | anti; a threat | Akyafteirleao, a heresy or threat to Aslan culture |
| Tah- | without; lacking | Tahwihteakhau, barbarians lacking civilization |
| Khih- | with | |

**Verb Nominalization**

A verb stem can be turned into a noun.

| Suffix | Meaning | Examples |
|--------|---------|----------|
| -le | Gerund, -"ing" | ftierle, a gathering |
| -leao | Quality, nature, culture, -ness | ftierleao, Aslan culture; ftaeileao, strength |
| -khto | Event | ktirkhto, a pouncing |
| -tyu | Land | ktirtyu, pouncing grounds |
| -sea | Land, uncultivated | ktirsea, wilderness pouncing grounds |
| -stea | Land, conquered | ktirstea, newly acquired pouncing grounds |
| -khau | People | ktirkhau, a pouncing people |
| -ir, ua | Honorable actor | ktirir or ktirua, honorable pouncer person |
| -'hao | Dishonorable actor | ktir'hao, dishonorable pouncer person |

**Numbers**

Numbers here are given in base ten.  When going over Aslan accounting books, please remember that Aslan write in base eight.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | Khte | | 19 | Iyr-kheh |
| 1 | Alr | | 20 | Iyr-hryeh |
| 2 | Hlai | | 21 | Iyr-khu |
| 3 | Kheh | | 22 | Iyr-yo |
| 4 | Hryeh | | 23 | Iyr-koih |
| 5 | Khu | | 24 | Tlau |
| 6 | Hryo | | 29 | Tlaukhu |
| 7 | Koih | | 30 | Tlauryo |
| 8 | Tea | | 32 | Starl |
| 9 | Te-alr | | 40 | Hea |
| 10 | Te-hlai | | 48 | Tyerl |
| 11 | Te-kheh | | 49 | Tyerlalr |
| 12 | Te-hryeh | | 50 | Tyerlai |
| 13 | Te-khu | | 56 | Fairl |
| 14 | Te-hryo | | 60 | Fairhyeh |
| 15 | Te-koih | | 64 | Khaulea |
| 16 | Iyrl | | 70 | Khaulea hryo |
| 17 | Iyr-alr | | 128 | Hlalea |
| 18 | Iyr-hlai | | 196 | Huakhea |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| First | Hta | | Fifth | Khuao |
| Second | Iha | | Sixth | Hryao |
| Third | Hiha | | Seventh | Koihao |
| Fourth | Hryeao | | Eighth | Teao |

Higher ordinals are created by adding -ao to the end of the numeral.  For example 'ninth' is Tealrao.

**Numeral Classifiers**

Counting requires the use of numeral classifiers, which specify the class of items being counted; the numeral cannot appear without an accompanying classifier. Class is usually assigned according to whether the object is animate or inanimate or according to an object's general shape. Thus when counting "flat" objects, a different form of numeral classifier is used than when counting round things, oblong items or people. Trokh has both numeral classifiers and noun classifiers; the noun classifiers can also be used as pronouns.

The meaning denoted by a noun may be altered significantly by changing the accompanying classifier. For example, when the classifier -yeyo is used with names of plants it is understood that the objects being enumerated are whole trees. If in this expression a different classifier, -siy (for counting long, slender objects) is substituted for -yeyo, this conveys the meaning that only sticks or branches of the tree are being counted.

**Time**

| Unit | Span | Name |
|---|---|---|
| Aslan Year | ~320 days | Ftahea |
| Aslan Day | ~36 hours | Eakhau |
| Aslan Hour | ~137 min | Tekhaao |
| Period | 1024 sec / ~17 min | Khtauaao |
| Sprint | 16 sec | Areiaao |
| Breath | 2 sec | Uealaao |

**Conjunctions**

| And | 'eya |
|---|---|
| But | 'ftiai |
| Or | 'ua |

**Interjections**

| Yes | Htuiiya |
|---|---|
| No | Aieaeyo |
| $#!% | Tua |
| !@#$ | Hfeh |
| &%$# | Wea'ea |

**Sentence Examples**

In the following examples, the verb stem is artificially hyphenated. This technique is sometimes helpful to non-Aslan trying to understand Trokh.  All of these examples use the female-template grammar with male prounous (appropriate and common use for language-learners).

Tloaei-yei-kto'yu-tlaiye
What is your name?

Ai-kto'tu-tlaiye _____.
My name is ____.

*Ke'airaouai'wihteakaolariht.*
I'm sorry.  (Lit., I am a very unsightly, perpetual, incurable barbarian.)

I'a'siyhei-ktyaea-ktaliaeitoyeekaosiy.
He did not say that [someone or something] had yet caused him to be prepared to jump over there.

Ke'rektyeituiaui-ktirle-eetlaiye ktarla'hao.
The ship behind you, the traitor, is attacking you.

Htiyei'iyetiysa-fiyai-kaolatoeyee!
Pilot, prepare to execute an immediate hard z-axis roll!

E'kheihiha-teisi-seha 'eya e'kheihta-hihte-seha.
The third shall be first, and the first shall be third. [Aslan proverb]

Tliyatyew'haoheisa'iuakhaohkei-ktir-aeiee?
Where and when has the corsair tended to attack traders before?

Ke'kheii'atyerhkeifeiaorihtseha khih akhhyah.
All people are born free with honorable rights ("honorable rights" is a gloss for "equal in dignity and rights").

Ke'waitaitlaiye! Greetings!
Yayeilao. Pardon me.

Tiya'e... Where is...
...khtirtyu? the/a pub?
...Lifakhtyu? the Hiring Hall?
...Sa'ityu? the Trader's Guild?
...Hketoyetyu? the TAS Hostel?

Yei'iu'e. It's here.
Yei'ekaosiy. It's over there.

Aikhar / Aokhar. I [m] understand you [m/f].
Yeikhar / Yaokhar. I [f] understand you [m/f].

Aii'khar / Aoi'khar. I [m] don't understand you [m/f].
Yeii'khar / Yaoi'khar. I [f] don't understand you [m/f].

Aiyeawl lyryeh roue'hao. I [m] have twenty credits.

In the following examples, I show how one center particle changes the sense of the question.
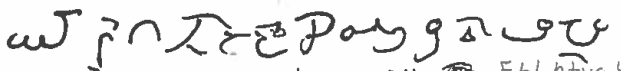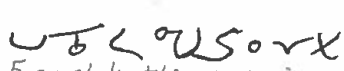
Tloaeiayeiwyoea. What's the price quote?
Tloaeiayei<span style="color:red">kha</span>wyoea. What's this ridiculous price you're trying to foist on me/us?
Tloaeiayei<span style="color:red">htarai</span>wyoea. What price are we getting nowhere on deciding on then?
Tloaeiayei<span style="color:red">htowaa</span>wyoea. What's the price you say it should be?
Tloaeiayei<span style="color:red">hliae</span>wyoea. What's the price (that we're working out)?
Tloaeiayei<span style="color:red">wao</span>wyoea. What's the final price then?
Tloaeiayei<span style="color:red">fya</span>wyoea. Hey, what's the price (I'm joining in on the haggling)?
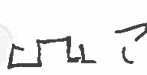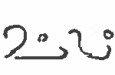
# THE ASLAN WRITING SYSTEM
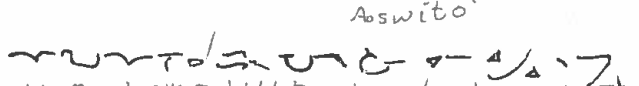
This writing system was reverse-engineered from Traveller materials from the 1980s, which typically had strange, semi-cursive writing shown on the sides of Aslan starships, vehicles, and ceremonial clothing. Taking these as an alphabet used to write Trokh, I did a best-guess mapping to the Trokh sound system, then tested it out with satisfactory results.
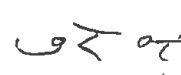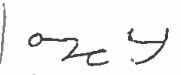
The subsequent pages summarize my guesstimates. First is my Trokh alphabet, then a few samples copied from illustrations and then translated into Roman letters, and a few Trokh starship names written using Aslan letters.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | | | F | | |
| AE | | | FT | | |
| AO | | | H | | |
| E | | | K | | |
| EA | | | KH | | |
| I | | | KHT | | |
| O | | | L | | |
| U | | | R | | |
| YA | | | S | | |
| YE | | | ST | | |
| IY | | | T | | |
| YO | | | TL/RL | | |
| YU | | | TR/LR | | |
| | | | W | | |
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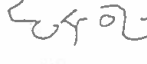
⟨conscript characters⟩ / ⟨conscript characters⟩
ftuearlu'khturhunorul ⟨symbol⟩ EtLhtyau    E aorl h tleast r wiy

⟨conscript characters⟩ / ⟨conscript characters⟩ / ⟨symbol⟩
Htokuye  Ueayehwaohk-    Iyr  O'isrlor   Ruao
          qoo
          Aoswito'

⟨conscript characters⟩ / ⟨conscript characters⟩
w o w ayer khihtu hwa 'a 'L' iuao!    Khtihwahwrl R'lakht

⟨conscript⟩ / ⟨conscript⟩ / ⟨conscript⟩ / ⟨conscript⟩ / ⟨conscript⟩ / ⟨conscript⟩ / ⟨conscript⟩
fus'     kyas     Khta   Hwirlaelt    Etlaoitl'ye  Rsaokrtwrl Ialkheo

⟨conscript⟩      ⟨conscript⟩      ⟨conscript⟩      ⟨conscript⟩      ⟨conscript⟩ ⟨conscript⟩
Ausitaoh    Ktieroa   Khtukhao   Taori    Trokh

⟨conscript⟩      ⟨conscript⟩      ⟨conscript⟩      ⟨conscript⟩
              ⟨conscript⟩