

# The Thiguka Language

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By Lemuria

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## About

Thiguka is a constructed language that Lemuria has continued to develop since April 2024. This contains a full description of Thiguka's grammar, ready for your reading pleasure.

This is a SPECIAL EDITION prepared for Conlang Ambassadors 3. I hope you will have as much fun translating your texts into Thiguka as I have had back when I translated all of Lena Raine in April.

## Glossing abbreviations

AGR ADJ is used for adjective agreement.

- (1) tu~gu-elo                tubi  
    AGR~ADJ-yellow water  
    'urine'

PROX is used for the proximal determiner.

MED is used for the medial determiner.

DIS is used for the distal determiner.

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# 1 Phonology

Perhaps one of the rarest characteristics of Thiguka phonology is its complete lack of phonemic nasals. Thiguka has 11 consonants, 6 vowels, and 6 diphthongs.

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Velar
Plosive	p, b			t, d	k, g
Fricative		f	θ	s	
Rhotic				r	
Lateral				l	

Table 1: Consonant Phonemes

	Front	Back
Close	i	u
Close-Mid	e	o
Open	a	ɑ

Table 2: Vowel Phonemes

Diphthongs	ai	ei	ui	au	ɑi	ia
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Table 3: Diphthongs

[ia] is very rare in a priori Thiguka words, being exclusively used for loanwords such as Enya (Elija).

## 1.1 Nasals

Thiguka completely lacks nasals. [n] is an allophone of [l], while [m] is an allophone of [b], and [ŋ] is approximated as any one of [g, lg, k, l]. The chosen consonant differs depending on the context the velar nasal is in; for example, a speaker would not want to use [g] in for ‘fang’ [faŋ], because then they would be uttering a racial slur.

Table 4: Examples of nasal consonant approximations in Thiguka

English	English IPA	Thiguka	Thiguka IPA
Lemuria	[li.ˈmɜr.iə]	Liburija	[ˈli.bur.ia]
Enya	[ˈɛn.ja]	Elija	[ˈɛlia]
Lena Raine	[ˈlɛnə ˈreɪn]	Lela Reyl	[ˈlela ˈreɪl]

## 1.2 Stress

Thiguka places stress on the first syllable of the root word. However, stress is not a phonemic feature in Thiguka, and English speakers speaking Thiguka with English stress rules will be readily understood.

## 1.3 Phonotactics

Thiguka syllable structure is (C)(C)V(C).

Words may not end in [k, r, l]. If due to loanwords, or conjugations the word ends up ending in these three forbidden consonants, either add a dummy -a suffix, or remove the offending consonant.

Words may not end in consonant clusters.

Two diphthongs separated by a single consonant are not allowed — \*aybay.

Vowels next to each other, that are not diphthongs, are pronounced with a glottal stop inserted between them.

## 2 Grammar

Thiguka has an agglutinative grammar, a nominative-accusative case marking system, subject-verb-object word order, a tense-aspect system, a single copula with 37 irregular forms that inflect for time, person, and number, and a 38th irregular form that acts as a general-purpose copula.

### 2.1 Plurality

Plurality marking is optional. If the speaker does not know the quantity of a noun, they may simply omit it.

Table 5: Plurality

Plurality	Suffix
None (zero)	-pa
Singular	-sa
Dual	-gula
Plural	-elah

### 2.2 Case

Table 6: Cases

Case	Suffix
Nominative	-pah
Accusative	-tay
Dative	-lay
Genitive	-pafay
Locative	-kala
Instrumental	-kithi

### 2.3 Adjectives

Adjectives in Thiguka are placed before words. To attach an adjective to a word, the first syllable of the modified word, followed by *-gu-* should be attached to the adjective.

- (2) ri~gu-gulid rifari  
AGR~ADJ-good music  
'good music'

Adjectives can be used as nouns too:

- (3) Pothu-pafay gu-gulid-pah kufa pelu-tay-elah falusaya-sa pothu-tay  
3SG-GEN ADJ-good-NOM allow person-ACC-PL admire-PRS 3SG-ACC  
'Their greatness made them likeable.' (Their goodness made people like them.)

### 2.4 Determiners

Thiguka has proximal, medial, and distal determiners. Determiners are placed before root words.

- (4) ka~gu-parthas kasa kaela  
AGR~ADJ-pink.purple PROX.DET tree  
'this sakura tree'
- (5) ka~gu-parthas saka kaela  
AGR~ADJ-pink.purple MED.DET tree  
'that sakura tree near you'

- (6) ka~gu-parthas      *asila*      kaela  
 AGR~ADJ-pink.purple DIS.DET tree  
 ‘that sakura tree’

## 2.5 Tense-aspect

Thiguka has a tense-aspect system.

Tense and aspect are optional. If tense and aspect are omitted, the verb becomes infinitive; or the time it took place becomes ambiguous, granting it time-independence.

- (7) katarila  
 outer.space.travel  
 ‘to travel through outer space’
- (8) ras-katarila-ta  
 outer.space.travel  
 ‘to have accidentally traveled through outer space’
- (9) ge-katarila-sa  
 PROG-outer.space.travel-PRS  
 ‘to be currently traveling through outer space’

Table 7: Tense

Tense	Suffix
Past	-ta
Recent past	-tu
Present	-sa
Future	-tha

Table 8: Aspect

Aspect	Prefix
Perfective	pa-
Perfect	fe-
Progressive	ge-
Imperfective	sa-
Contemplative	kas-
Accidental	ras-
Intentional	ka-

## 2.6 Pronouns

Thiguka completely lacks gender distinction in pronouns, and has a clusivity distinction in first person pronouns.

Table 9: Pronouns

person/number	First	Second	Third
singular	thaka	kake	pothu
plural		katake	rafu
inclusive plural	situ		
exclusive plural	pata		

Thiguka has no T-V distinction in pronouns. Politeness may be achieved by attaching positive adjectives to second-person pronouns, but this is discouraged and goes against Lemuria’s intentions.

## 2.7 Template

Thiguka positions morphemes in a specific order, based on whether it is a noun or verb.

### 2.7.1 Noun

For nouns, the order is as follows: Derivational prefixes, Negation or intensifiers, Stem, Case, Adverb suffixes, Plurality.

### 2.7.2 Verb

For verbs, the order is as follows: Derivational prefixes, Negation or intensifiers, Aspect, Stem, Tense, Adverb suffixes

## 2.8 Derivation

Thiguka has multiple methods of taking in new words into its lexicon; such as compounding and the addition of derivational prefixes.

A few select examples of Thiguka derivational prefixes are:

1. fah-, agent prefix akin to English -er
  2. ri-, intensifier
  3. li-, negation
  4. filay-, “in the presence of a cat”
- (10) fah-katarila  
AGT-space.travel  
‘space traveler’
- (11) fah-filay-katarila  
AGT-with.cat-space.travel  
‘one who travels through space with a pet cat’
- (12) fah-filay-li-katarila  
AGT-with.cat-NEG-space.travel  
‘one who does not travel through space with a pet cat’

## 2.9 Copula

Thiguka has a single copula with 38 irregular forms.

Table 10: Copula forms

Person	Past	Recent Past	Present	Future
1SG	lasata	lasatu	lasa	lasatha
1DU	lagulata	lagulatu	lagulasa	lagulatha
1PL	lelahtaw	lelahtaw	lelahsa	lelahtha
2SG	kaketa	katu	kasa	katha
2DU	kagulata	kagulatu	kagulasa	kagulatha
2PL	kelahta	kelahtu	kelahsa	kelahtha
3SG	gulata	gulatu	gulaya	gulatha
3DU	poguta	pogutu	pogusa	pogutha
3PL	lotares	lotures	lores	lotheres

### 3 Orthography

Thiguka's orthography is phonetic, and is as follows.

Table 11: Thiguka orthography

IPA	Letter
p	p
t	t
k	k
b	b
d	d
g	g
f	f
s	s
r	r
l	l
θ	th
a	a
e	e
i	i
o	o
u	u
ɑ	ah
ai	ay
ei	ey
ui	uy
au	aw
ɑi	auy
ia	ija

Thiguka follows English punctuation conventions.

Loanwords are respelled to fit this orthography. The native spelling can be provided after the loanword in a parenthesis, for example:

Lela Reyl (Ilgis: Lena Raine) gulaya tagu-Arika tarifari.

#### 3.0.1 Proper nouns and hyphens

Proper nouns are capitalized, but if they are being attached to a word — treated as an adjective, the prefix that comes before the adjective is usually separated from the adjective by a hyphen: *tagu-Ayris*, not *\*Taguayris* or *\*taguAyris*.

Writers also have the option of placing hyphens between proper nouns and affixes. *Reyl-pah* and *Reylpah* are both correct. However, this should usually not be done for proper nouns: *\*kaela-taygula* outside of glosses.



## 4 Lexicon

Thiguka, as of May 2024, has about 350 defined words, with slight bias towards Internet and music-related terminology.

Thiguka's full lexicon for the purposes of the Ambagame3 contest is available at <https://github.com/thiguka/lexicon/tree/a4fc879f8299949b4f6c7be7293349ec96e470aa> in both tab-separated values format (works with a spreadsheet program like Excel or LibreOffice, hopefully) and an Anki deck.

The URL provided links to the state of the repository at a certain point in time. Do NOT use <https://github.com/thiguka/lexicon>, as this is the living version and will likely be updated during the contest.

You should have received this PDF file and a TSV alongside some instructions from a CDN admin like Zethar - follow their instructions for how to proceed.

A select few words from Thiguka's lexicon are as follows:

### 4.1 Swadesh-Yakhontov list

Because of the author's laziness and some holes in the lexicon, he is only able to provide a 35-word Swadesh-Yakhontov list below:

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. I — thaka             | 19. tooth — tutho       |
| 2. you (singular) — kake | 20. tongue — kageta     |
| 3. this — kasa           | 21. hand — aysi         |
| 4. who — kalisu pelu     | 22. know — kala         |
| 5. what — kalisu         | 23. die — dasay         |
| 6. one — isa             | 24. give — salath       |
| 7. two — dalata          | 25. sun — asalisa       |
| 8. fish — gothi          | 26. moon — luti         |
| 9. dog — aso             | 27. water — tubi        |
| 10. louse — lafauy       | 28. salt — salu         |
| 11. blood — rahsa        | 29. stone — sute        |
| 12. bone — bole          | 30. wind — lufah        |
| 13. egg — logi           | 31. fire — apay         |
| 14. horn — kipi          | 32. year — fasate       |
| 15. tail — taysa         | 33. current year — saro |
| 16. ear — eyla           | 34. full — hakath       |
| 17. eye — fathas         | 35. new — bage          |
| 18. nose — fothes        | 36. name — leyle        |

## 4.2 Unusual roots

Thiguka has some specific roots that many natlangs would need an entire sentence or even paragraph to describe. These roots are an extension of Lemuria's personality, condensing the things and concepts of significance to his life into one word.

- |                                                                              |                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. ketala — fear of being banned by a moderator on the Internet while asleep | someone (Catarina) in the Conlangs Discord Network too many questions about 3SG.GEN far-future world.                                  |
| 2. filay- — from English feline; prefix to indicate “with cat present”       |                                                                                                                                        |
| 3. katarila — space travel; because Lemuria asked                            | 4. orielija — to sail away. Combination of Orinoco + Enya (whose name gets loaned as Elija due to Thiguka being a Lo Lasals Language.) |

## 5 Syntax

### 5.1 Word order

Thiguka always uses a subject-verb-object word order. While hypothetically it may be possible to use alternate word orders due to Thiguka case marking, SVO is the intended order and alternative orders will cause possible confusion.

### 5.2 Questions

Two primary strategies for asking questions in Thiguka are to create declarative statements about the listener and allow the listener to fill in the blanks.

The intonation of these questions is rising; similar to English.

- (13) Kake-pafay leyle las  
2SG-GEN name COP  
'Your name is?'

Thiguka has one single determiner, 'kalisu' (what?).

A noun can be placed after 'kalisu' to further form the other English wh-words.

Table 12: Translations of English wh-words

Thiguka	English wh-word
kalisu	what
kalisu pelu	who
kathisa	why
kalisu pasla	where
kalisu tayle	when

'kathisa' is a shortened form of 'kalisu thilpahelah kufa kaketay'.

- (14) Kalisu thil-pah-elah kufa kake-tay?  
What thing-NOM-PL coerce 2SG-ACC?  
'What made you do it?'

An example of 'kalisu' is as follows:

- (15) Kalisu las kakepafay leyle?  
what COP 2SG-GEN name  
'What is your name?'

#### 5.2.1 Polar

Polar questions are marked by the particle *kalu* added to the bottom of a word.

- (16) Kake las pe gu-gulid pelu kalu?  
2SG-NOM COP AGR~ADJ person POLAR  
'Are you a good person?'

### 5.3 Possession

Possession is conveyed using the genitive case suffix *-pafay*.

- (17) Thaka-pafay kaela-gula  
1SG-GEN tree-DU  
'My two trees'

## 5.4 Negation

Negation is conveyed with the morpheme *li*, which can either be a prefix or a particle.

Negation cannot negate negation. Adding more negation only strengthens the negation instead of canceling it out.

- (18) Li! Thaka-pah li kisu-tha pothu-tay  
No! 1SG-NOM NEG kill-FUT 3SG-ACC  
'No! I will not kill them!'
- (19) Li-thaka-pah kisu-ta pothu-tay,  
NEG-1SG-NOM kill-PST 3SG-ACC  
'No, I didn't kill them.'  
lit. 'Not-me killed them.'
- (20) Li-li-li-li-thaka-pah kisu-ta pothu-tay,  
NEG-NEG-NEG-NEG-1SG-NOM kill-PST 3SG-ACC  
'I definitely did not kill them.'

## 5.5 Relative clauses

Thiguka does not yet have a relative clause system. Translations created before the creation of the system attached information conveyed by the relative clause as adjectives, or simply created additional declarative sentences.

- (21) Rey gu-teraseleter Reyl gulaya ta gu-ri-gulid tarifari.  
AGR ADJ-transgender Raine COP.3SG.PRS AGR ADJ-INT-good musician  
'Raine, who is transgender, is a great musician.'  
lit. 'transgender-Raine is a great musician.'

## 6 Examples

A variety of texts have been translated into Thiguka. The first major complete translation, from mid-April 2024, is Wikipedia's article on Lena Raine, an American music composer from Seattle who has made music for Minecraft.

The translation on Lena Raine is subject to errors, being an early text and not having been updated to reflect the latest changes to the Thiguka language as of May 2024.

### 6.1 Lena Raine

Lela Reyl (Ilgis: Lena Raine; berethata 1984-02-29), leylesathasi Lela Sapel (Ilgis: Lena Chappelle) aluthasi Kureyl (Ilgis: Kuraine) gulaya Taguarika alu Tagukalada tagulikageta tarifari alu lisapahsa lahkelasa kolugeyletayelah. Pelupahelah kalasa Reyltay pur pothupafay leygurutu leyboro ifil Selesete alu Maylakraf alu kigugiled kisufetelah dalata. Pothupah lahkelasathasi rifaritay ifil kolugeyletayelah sufadhas Deletarule alu Sikori: Sigukothor Sifothisa.

#### 6.1.1 Siguaga sifata

Reylpah berethata 1984-02-29 ifil Siatel ifil Asiltol. Pothupafay tali tarifari alu pothupafay laysa pelifei. Fipothupafay tagukuyri tarifagetata alu pothupah fathusita pothutay ifil tarifari. Pothupafay tali-thasi fahfayolil. Solik Edeog sigupeke pegusifothe peli giledsa fathusita pothutay ifil pagulidi patefarielah. Reylpah pagulidi patefariethielah taguisasafi lahkeluta rifaritayelah pothu kalata aludhete lahkelata pothupafay tagubage tarifari. Kuthifafay, pothupah kalata ifil Kornis ogukala ose Arafatelah. Kuthifafay, Kornispah salathta Reyltay lahgurifari lahkelasa oselufasa.

#### 6.1.2 Sifutila

Pelupahelah kalasa Reyltay pur pothupafay leygurutu leyboro ifil Selesete alu Kigugiled Kisufetelah Dalata. Pothupah leyborota ifil Kigugiled Kisufetelah Dalata ArilaLetkala pur fagugati fasatelah gafalu fahpatere-lahkesa alu fahlahkelapahsa ritutay.

Pothupah alu Laklel Diler, gafalu oguifil ose fahlahkelapahgula ritutay ifil geylepafay lisufasa ifil 2015, Kigugiled Kisufetelah Dalata: Arfaspafaysa Thigusapagad Thilelah. Pothupah falgathata ArilaLetay ifil 2016, bulu pogufilaras pothupah lahkelata rifaritayelah ifil ArilaLetpafay kolugeylelah.

Ifil 2018, Reylpah fathusita afegurayfathil koguafeltur kolugeyle esektay ifil itisayokala. Reylpah lahkelata rifaritay alu lahkelata kolugeyletay esektay alu Deytaireyspah (Ilgis: Dataerase) lahkelata arafatayelah. Ifil 2019, pothupah fathusita riguisasafi rifari, Isakalasa.

Pothupah lahkelata apay rigubage rifaritayelah ifil Maylakrapafay 1.16 "Lether Patifekalasa" (Ilgis: Nether Update) ifil 2020. Faguisa fasatefay, pothupah alu tagukolugeyle tarifarisa Kuli Taliokapah lahkelata gati rigubage rifaritayelah ifil 1.18 "Kelefitelah alu Sahlagelah: Pagudalatafasi Parafsa" patifekalasa, Faguisa fasatefay, pothupah lahkelata talo rigubage rifaritayelah ifil 1.19 "Pagufaylata Parafsa".

Reylpah lahkelata rifaritay ifil araguafeltur koguarapigi kolugeylekala Sikori: Sigukothor Sifothisa alu turlorta pelutayelah lahkelata rifaritayelah ifil sagudalatafasi sagdathasa ifil Deletarunekala. Kolugeylepahgula fathusita ifil 2021.

#### 6.1.3 Sigupelu sifata

Reyguteraseleter Reylpahthasi rayfata aglادتaysa, Siti of Taygers aluthasi rayfasa siguelegibiti sigupeke sifothe ifil pothupafay taygurifeyla tayle.

#### 6.1.4 Thiguolota thilelah

Asagata Reyltay pur ologubafata thiguolota thilsa aluthasi pothupafay rifari ifil Selesete risifta Giguarika Giledpafay Tarifarielah, pelupahelah rayfasa aglادتayelah alu pelupahelah fathusisa thiltayelah rigulid

rigukolugeyle rifari ifil fasate thiguolota thilsa ifil 2019. Pothupafay rifari ifil Selesetepahthasi risifta rigurigulid asagurifari asagasa ifil thigukolugeyle thiguolota thilelah ifil 2018.

## 6.2 Thiguka's endonym

- (22) **thi gu-kageta**      thil  
AGR~ADJ-mouth thing  
'mouth thing'

## 6.3 Miscellaneous sentences

- (23) Lahkelakesi-pah      fusala laki!  
make.building-NOM must grow  
'The factory must grow!'
- (24) Kalisu pelu      pa-gasari-ta?  
what person PFV-action.V-PST  
'Who did it?'
- (25) Kake-pah      fusala lahkela lahfisipaka-tay-sa.  
2SG-NOM must make conlang-ACC-SG  
'You must make a conlang.'