

VULCAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE SHI'OREN T'GEN-LIS VUHLKANSU

INTRODUCTION TO TRADITIONAL AND MODERN GOLIC VULCAN GRAMMAR

Ragtaya na'Zhit-lsan Ba-Gol- heh Iyi-Gol-Vuhlkansu

Traditional Golic Vulcan (TGV), also known incorrectly to offworlders as "Old Vulcan", "High Vulcan", "Ceremonial Vulcan", "Liturgical Vulcan", etc., dates from the time of Surak and his original followers, and is descended from "Ancient Golic Vulcan", the language spoken at least 25,000 years ago on the Plains of Gol and surrounding regions. Its directly-descended modern form is called Modern Golic Vulcan (MGV). (Another relative of Ancient Golic Vulcan is the extinct FthinraKathi, which is briefly discussed separately on our site.) Traditional Golic continues to be spoken in ceremonial usage, at schools of various disciplines (such as those at the religious centers of Gol and Mount Seleya), by poets and writers of certain styles of literature, by devout followers of Surak's teachings, and by members of many old clans affiliated with Surak. It is one of three "official" languages of the planet Vulcan (T'Khasi) and all educated Vulcans speak the language in addition to their own regional dialects and Modern Standard Vulcan (a separate language not covered on our site), somewhat like the status Latin had for something like 1,500 years on Earth. Modern Golic is the dialect spoken in day-to-day use by most people who live in the Gol region.

Philologists and linguists from outside T'Khasi often use the incorrect term "Old High Vulcan" in Federation Standard English (FSE) to describe the traditional form of the Golic Vulcan language, although this has led to much confusion. The linguistic experts from T'Khasi itself call this language >Ba-Golik< (Traditional Golic) or more formally, >Ba-Gol-Vuhlkansu< (Traditional Golic Vulcan). The modern form is often incorrectly called "High Vulcan" by offworlders but >Iyi-Golik< (Modern Golic) or >Iyi-Gol-Vuhlkansu< (Modern Golic Vulcan) by the Vulcans. This is roughly similar to the difference between the King's English and American English on Earth -- the first lead to the second and, although they have their differences, they are still, for the most part, the same language. "GV" is used if the information covers all of the Golic Vulcan languages. (The only other surviving Golic Vulcan language, Lowlands Golic, also descended from TGV is briefly discussed on another page.)

Grammar Fundamentals

TGV and MGV are "compounding" languages. Basic words and roots are put together to make new words, a lot like the Germanic languages of Earth. For example, the GV for "mouth" is "ru'lut" and for "water" or "fluid" is "masu". If you combine the two smaller words, you get "ru'lut-masu", which means "saliva" (literally "mouth-water"). Some ancient compound words, like "kun-ut" ("marriage" or "bonding") have lost their separate meanings. Also, some adopted ancient words are no longer obvious compounds. Most compound words have a " - " ("pakh", similar to a hyphen) separating their roots. *Saga'sek's Third Word Law* states, "No more than three root words can combine to form a compound word, although a full word triad can take prefixes and suffixes." For example, "fal-tor-pan" is possible (as is "na'fal-tor-pan" or "fal-tor-pan'es"), but never something like "ahn-wun-san-zhel" (which should be written "san-zhel t'ahn-wun"). Students should learn to split up compound words to analyze their roots.

Another important point with TGV/MGV can be made by using a rough comparison with Old Icelandic and Modern Icelandic from Earth. Modern Icelandic builds up new vocabulary by "recycling" an obsolete word or a word from the older language. TGV/MGV does this as well. One of many examples is the term for "computer" which is based on the old word "tum", meaning

"**tally**" and the common "**vel**", meaning "**thing**". "**Tum-vel**" literally means "**tally(ing) thing**", but is used for modern terminology. Remnants of this can be found in many other languages as well.

TGV and MGv are also affixing languages. Prefixes and suffixes are added to words (simple or compound) to modify them. In GV, nearly all words corresponding to prepositions are prefixes. These are usually separated from the word they modify by a Vulcan "**half-stop**" ("**ulef-pekhaya**") or " ' " (similar to an apostrophe). For example, "**etwel**" means "**us**" but "**k'etwel**" means "**with us**" and "**s'etwel**" means "**from us**". Suffixes are also important. They can be directly affixed, or separated by " ' " or " - ". For example, "**fonn**" (**loyal**) and "**fonn'es**" (**loyalty**) or "**kan**" (**child**) and "**kan-fam**" (**childless**). When new to the language, it is easy to confuse a compound word with a suffixed word. Also, certain ancient words handed down or adopted from now-extinct languages, like "**t'forti**" (**finally**), may look like they are prefixed but they are not. Memorizing the historical exceptions will help to prevent confusion later on.

Finally, TGV and MGv are "syntactic languages", meaning sentence construction and word order can determine shades of meaning. There are no declensions and practically no inflections to cause confusion.

Prefixes & Suffixes

In addition to information in the language lessons, see the three charts on the [Affixes Page](#) at the link below for examples of various grammatical and modifying affixes.

Affixes Page

Verb-Noun Word Pairs

Most TGV/MGV words come in what are called verb-noun word pairs. If you know the verb, you can often determine the related noun, or vice versa. Most TGV/MGV verb-noun pairs follow one of several standard patterns. This subject is fully addressed in the language lessons. The table below shows the most common forms with sample words:

Type	Noun ending	Noun	Verb	Comments
1	(none)	saul (shout)	saul-tor	most common; bare root plus -tor to make verb
2	(varied)	ha'kiv (life)	ha-tor	ancient compound with root extracted plus -tor
3	(varied)	talal (find)	tal-tor	noun variant to prevent similar word confusion
4	(varied)	esta (touch)	estuhl	ancient words, highly irregular with no pattern
5	an	psthan (search)	pstha	ancient words, n added to verb to make noun
6	an	tevan (fall)	tev-tor	pre-Surak words, an dropped and -tor added
7	aya	shaya (break)	shau	u dropped from verb, ya added to make noun
8	~n	shen (rise)	she-tor	pre-Surak words, n dropped and -tor added
9	shan	reshan (rage)	resha	pre-Surak words, n added to verb to make noun

TGV/MGV Word Etymology

Etymology Page

Sentence Order

As a syntactic language, sentence order is very important in TGV and MGv. The verb is almost always placed first in the sentence, although it may move for emphasis. Subjects are placed before objects in the sentence. The language tends to be "contextual" in that understood or previously mentioned things are seldom repeated, unless needed for emphasis. Non-Vulcans sometimes have a tough time understanding a conversation when pronouns, subjects and objects are dropped out. Vulcans usually find it wasteful to use more words than are truly necessary to get a point across. Normally full word usage is only done in teaching situations or formal literature.

Stress

The position of stress varies in GV words, although purists often put the stress on the second part of a compound. There is much variation due to the language reforms that were left incomplete after the death of Surak. Pronunciation guides using phonetic symbols appear in the GV-FSE Dictionaries. *Remember not to count prefixes and suffixes when determining stress.* The root word, whether compound or not, is often what stress is based on.

Written Vulcan

The Vulcans who speak GV use three main styles of writing the consonants and vowels of their language. Each of these styles has a specific place in Vulcan life and society. Although they are known by various names, the most widely accepted names are Ceremonial, Common and Media. It is very easy to tell the different styles apart from each other.

The "**Ceremonial Script**" (**Vanu-Zukitan**) is the most ornate style, preserving a certain amount of the ancient pictographic nature of Vulcan languages. This script is used for most inscriptions, official legal and family documents, and all major literary works. This is the style that Surak and his contemporaries used throughout their writings.

The "**Common Script**" (**Tsuk-Zukitan**) is that used in day-to-day life for writing notes, work, journals, correspondence, etc., and for any use that the "**Ceremonial**" is not appropriate. It is not as intricate as the "**Ceremonial**" and is much easier to write.

The "**Media Script**" (**Hitra-Zukitan**) is a simplified form used for mass-produced printings and computer displays, for example. After contact with Earth and the formation of the Federation, the Media Script was simplified further to allow it to be displayed on FSE-based systems. Greek and other symbols are used, allowing any computer in the Federation, without special software, to be able to type the simplest of Vulcan scripts. See link below for information.

Golic Media Script

The Ceremonial Script is nearly always written top to bottom. The Common Script is written either top to bottom or left to right, depending on the writer and style. The Media Script always appears left to right.

At the following link, you will find a page with a chart of the Golic Common Script's consonants, as a sample. More pages on scripts will eventually be added.

Golic Common Script - The Consonants

Alphabet(s)

The alphabetic system used in Traditional Golic Vulcan (and Lowlands Golic Vulcan) is made up of 30 symbols in all. The Traditional Golic Vulcan order of their letters is:

S T P K R L A D O E V U H G Ch I N Z M Y F W B Sh Th Kh Zh Ts Dzh Ks

The alphabetic system used in Modern Golic Vulcan is made up of 27 symbols in all. The Modern Golic Vulcan order of their letters is:

S T P K R L A Sh O U D V Kh E H G Ch I N Zh M Y F Z Th W B

Since this instruction is for speakers of Federation Standard English (FSE), we will not be using Vulcan symbols in our lessons.

In the early days of Earth-Vulcan contact, before the United Federation of Planets was formed and FSE was formalized, an inaccurate transliteration alphabet was devised for FSE speakers and many errors have continued to the present. You often see "y" written instead of the more accurate "ai", for example. This is because the "y" in English is a consonant or a vowel, whereas in Vulcan it is *only* a consonant. You can still see "**feyhan**" and "**kreyla**" instead of "**fei**han" and "**krei**la". Also, the TGV letter "dzh" is often incorrec~~t~~ed spelled "j" and "ks" as "x", although those characters do exist in other Golic and non-Golic languages. The Vulcan Language Transliteration Conference of Stardate 6550.0 updated and corrected mistakes of the past. *All our works use those official Federation transliteration/spelling rules.*

Pronunciation

See Language Lesson 1 for information on pronunciation of TGV and MG~~V~~.

Numbers

Numbers or numerals come in five forms in TGV, MG~~V~~ and LGV: Cardinal, Ordinal, Enumerating, Combining and Adjectival. See the two lessons on numbers in our language lessons for more information.

See also the accompanying chart at the link below for the various forms.

Numbers Page

Articles

There is no definite article in GV. For example, the word "**ek'zer**" can mean "**jewel**" or "**the jewel**". Although this is confusing to many non-Vulcans, the Vulcans have no trouble because context dictates the intent. The use of indefinite articles (a, an) is rare in Modern Golic (and Lowlands Golic) usage and normally used only for emphasis. In Traditional Golic, they are nearly always used unless understood or deemed superfluous.

Plurals

Plurals are often understood through context or by the use of pluralizing words, such as a number. In those cases, the word does not change its form. A pluralizing direct suffix (**~lar**) exists in TGV and MGv, similar to the "**~s**" of FSE.

When a construction like "a flock of birds" or "a pod of whales" is used in FSE, the type of animal is pluralized. In GV, equivalent constructions are *not* pluralized, since the collective word automatically indicates there is more than one animal. For example, "**treit t'kushel**" (literally, "flock of bird") or "**kuht t'sehlat**" (literally, "herd of sehlat").

Cases

There are no regular cases in TGV or MGv. Reforms around the time of Surak dropped many irregularities that appeared in some Vulcan languages and simplified the speech. Surak's death lead to a stagnation in language reforms, so all irregularities were not eliminated. Certain words, mostly pronouns, may have alternate forms for use in special situations. These pronouns seem to have dative or reflexive forms. For example, **>du< | >tu<** means "you" while **>vu<** means something like "you-yourself". Most of these alternative forms are based on handed-down tradition.

Interrogatives

Although many Federation languages have interrogative symbols, Golic Vulcan does not -- there is no question mark. "Yes or No" questions are formed by using the word **>ha<** at the very end of the sentence. Other questions are formed by using a questioning word like **>wilat<** (**where**) at the end of the sentence. To aid offworlders with the language, though, a question mark is often used in transliterated Vulcan (but never with true written Vulcan).

Invectives

Invectives, which are basically a way to "vulgarize" words, are extremely rare in contemporary usage because of the distaste Vulcans feel in its use and even existence. They encompass the grammatical formation in FSE of "darn", "damn", and worse words in an adjectival way. Use of them in speech now does not fit with the logical lifestyle and control of emotions that Vulcans embrace. In the pre-Surak world, their usage was common, but today they are only used by those who do not follow Surak's teachings, outlaws, those undergoing a difficult pon farr, by the criminally insane, etc. They are formed by prefixing nouns like true adjectives and come in two forms: *Mild Invektive* and *Severe Invektive*. Mild is comprised of **>khr~<** before a vowel sound and **>khra~<** before a consonant sound; Severe is comprised of **>khrikh~<** before a vowel sound and **>khrikha~<** before a consonant sound. *Never* use these in speech with cultured Vulcans or you may find yourself in a psychiatric facility for a mental health evaluation! Because of their distaste, Vulcans may refer to this type of speech as "Gutter Mode", if they speak of it at all. We did not plan to address this more on our site, but several requests have made us decide to put up a lesson for informational purposes.

Honorifics

In TGV and MGv, there are a number of examples of one word used for normal usage and a variant used when addressing or referring to something or someone "honored" or "greatly admired". This is to be expected in a culture such as that of Vulcan. In addition, there is a prefix >o~< -- which has no exact FSE translation but "honored" is considered closest in meaning -- that is directly affixed to the word it modifies. Examples: >Osu<, literally "honored person", but usually translated as "sir" or "madam", depending on the context; and >osavensu< (honored teacher), which is nearly always used in preference over >savensu< (teacher). The honorific prefix is especially common in Traditional Golic and lesser seen in Modern Golic. This is dealt with in more detail in Language Lesson 19.

Modes of Speech

In MGv there is only one mode of speech, whereas there are three modes of speech in Traditional Golic: Superior, Normal and Inferior. (The MGv mode is based almost entirely on the Normal Mode of TGV). One who is superior in standing to or much older than another person often uses the "Superior Mode" form of many words in speech. These words tend to be more ancient forms of words. In addition to using the older forms of words, superiors also tend to be more formal in their use of the language, not dropping out as much as the normal speaker does. An example of this is that in "Superior Mode" one tends to use indefinite articles and full word usage most of the time, where in "Normal Mode" they are more often dropped. Throughout our material, we will mostly concentrate on "Normal Mode", as that is the mode perhaps 90% of Vulcans use. "Inferior Mode" is mostly a leftover from the days before Surak. It is a very simplified form of the language that was previously used by slaves, common servants, those with low intelligence, and young children before entering school. Most Vulcans find this mode distasteful and it is now thought of mostly as an artifact. Since this is an introductory grammar and not a comprehensive guide, we will not go into this subject any further at this time.

Verbs

Verbs Page

Punctuation

In Traditional and Modern Golic Vulcan, there are five main marks used in punctuation:

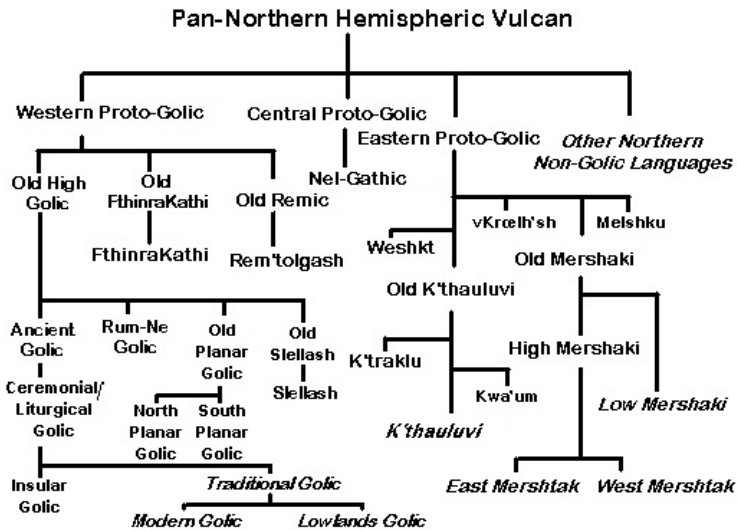
- " - " **pakh** (stroke) - used in affixing or compounding words, and as a comma or semi-colon is used in FSE
- " -- " **dah-pakh** (double-stroke) - used as a colon or long dash is used in FSE
- " ' " **ulef-pekhaya** (half-stop) - used to separate affixes from base words
- " . " **ek'pekhaya** (full-stop) - used as a period is used in FSE
- " .. " **dah-pekhaya** (double-stop) - used for emphasis, similar to an exclamation mark in FSE

Many Vulcans use what is called **ek'pakh** (full-stroke), a line about the length of three **pakh** marks, instead of **dah-pakh**. This is the older form and is preferred in literature or religious texts. The writings of Surak always use the **ek'pakh** instead of the **dah-pakh**. The **dah-pakh** was popularized by its use in the media script and we will use it here for typographic reasons.

As stated before, there is no question mark in Golic Vulcan. There are additional specialized symbols used in typography and science, but we will not discuss them in this particular material.

A future page may focus on typographic and scientific symbols. Language Lesson 6 expands on the subject of punctuation.

Golic Family Linguistic Map



Linguistic family tree of "Northern Hemisphere" languages on Vulcan, concentrating on Golic and its relatives. Although the Gol Region is in the Southern Hemisphere, the Golic languages descended from root languages that originated in and still dominate the North.

Languages in italics are the surviving languages still in use on Vulcan. Historical dates are not available for most of the languages, due to loss of records caused by warfare and natural disasters over the millennia. Other languages most surely existed but information no longer exists on them due to lack of any written records.

Distinguishing the Golic Languages from Each Other

Language	The Number "One"	Weak Verb "to drink"	Reg. Strong Verb "to like"	Reg. Strong Verb-Based Noun "like,liking"	Standalone Adjectival Ending(s)	Plural Ending(s)	The Word "Thing"
Ancient Golic (Mha'us-Gollhikh)	w'lùkhú	mhandórh	dhiṣá	dhiṣya	~hikh, ~hikhí	~l'har, ~ul'har	w'hèl
Traditional Golic (Ba-Golik)	wuh kuh	mon-tor	tishau	tishaya	~ik	~lar	vel
Modern Golic (Iyi-Golik)	wuh kuh	mon-tor	tishau	tishaya	~ik	~lar	vel
Lowlands Golic (Nuktru-Golik)	vuh kuh	mon-tor	tihshau	tihshayu	~ik	~ar, ~'ar	vell

Insular Golic (Viikuftra-Golik)	wuu kuh	moon-tor	tiishau	tiishaya	~iik	~laar	veel
Planar Golic (Ekkuu-Gollisk)	vhuu k	mohn-torr	tishkau	tishkauu	~isk	~arr, ~'arr	vhell
Rum-Ne Golic (Rum-Ne-Golishk)	hwu ku	mhonn-tor	tteishkou	tteishkoyu	~ishk	~lahr	hwell
Slellash	hvuh ku	mhonn'torr	thishao	thishau	~ash	~lharr	hvelh
FthinraKathi	mhoh khu	mhanndor	ldishu	ldishyu	~ush, ~ushu	~ir, ~'ir	b'haell
Rem'tolgash	mvún nù	voshn'torh	tlesshku	tlesshkuf	~ash, ~asha	~garh, ~agarh	bvaelh
Nel-Gathic (Nel-Gathelkh)	hwlō hòn	mnahnhdarr	dhehsku	dhehsku'u	~elkh, ~elkha, ~elkhi	~hlōrr, ~ahlōrr	wlōhell
vKrœlh'sh	wœkhuw	mœwœr	jushku	jushkuw	~'sh, ~'ush	~lœr	hweul
Weshkt (Weshktewj)	wųkhuŵ	mhuwų	dzyuwshkuŵ	dzyuwshkuų	~ewj, ~uwj	~lų	mhweł
K'traklu	whukhuj	mhaazn'shwurr	dsihshkaa	dsihshkazh	~ezh, ~uzh	~khaarr	rhyellk
K'thauuvi	whkhûj	mhanzhôrr	dzîshka	dzîshkaj	~evi, ~uvi	~hôrr	rhyelh
Low Mershaki (Hnuh-Mershahki)	hpuhhuhh	hmugnkhzarrh	ztesshtaa	ztesshtuu	~ahkhi	~hwaarr	shwaall
East Mershtak (Skveon-Mershtijki)	k'pvukuu	mreonzarr	stesshta	stesshtu	~ijki	~kvaar	skvaal
West Mershtak (Tsaebb-Mershtijkk)	k'pwuukku	mryonzarr	staeshta	staeshtu	~ijkk	~kwaarr	skwaall

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