

# **A User's Guide to Ôrëños**

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**&**

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## 1. Preamble

### Chris:

Joseph W. Windsor and I co-designed the Ôrëños language. I handled the writing system and lexical development, and he took care of the grammar and translations. Joey wrote this guide to help readers understand the proper usage of Ôrëños, which is a constructed language (conlang) I invented for my novel series, *The Ring of Worlds*.

Although I created the words and spellings of the language, I was unable to do the work necessary to create the grammar and make it real. Working with Joey was fun, educational, and something I deeply appreciated. Ôrëños would never have come to exist as a conlang without his invaluable support and assistance, and I'm pleased to share it with my readers.

### Joseph:

In this guide, you will encounter linguistic jargon referring to lexical categories such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives; grammatical concepts such as tense, aspect, and agreement; and linguistic transcription practices such as phonetic transcription and interlinear glossing. As much as possible, each of these concepts is explained where they occur with examples provided using English and Ôrëños to help the user; however, a few extra explanations are given here.

Throughout this material, a number of different bracketing tools are used in various examples which require some explanation. Slant brackets around phonetic transcriptions (/.../) denote something called phonemic representation; this is the form of the sound that exists in a speaker's mental dictionary.

For example, pay close attention to where your tongue is placed in your mouth when making the /n/ or /m/ sounds in the following words: indecision, ingredient, and implosion. Although it might seem obvious that the /m/-sound in implosion is made with a neutral tongue position and closed lips (how we make an /m/-sound) and the first /n/-sound in indecision is made by raising your tongue to a position just behind your upper row of teeth (how we make an /n/-sound), do you notice there is something very different about how you physically produce the first /n/ in ingredient?

Most English speakers produce the first /n/ in ingredient farther back in the mouth at a place called the velum (where the hard palate transitions to a softer surface). The reason we do this is to easily change between the /n/-sound and the following /g/-sound. The sound /g/ is a velar sound (produced at the velum), and so pronouncing the /n/-sound in the same place makes the transition between the two sounds easier. Similarly, /m/ is a bilabial sound, as is /p/, so in the word implosion, having the nasal bilabial /m/ sound directly before the non-nasal bilabial /p/ sound facilitates easier pronunciation. The same is true of the /n/ and /d/ combination in indecision—both are produced at the alveolar ridge.

Regardless of whether we produce our /n/ as [n] (alveolar) or [ŋ] (velar) has no bearing on our understanding, so we undergo a sound change to facilitate simpler articulation. To denote this sound change, we switch from the slant brackets (/.../) to the square brackets ([...]). Linguistically, this transcription difference represents the sounds as we store them in our mental grammar (/.../) and the sounds as we actually produce them ([...]).

The third type of bracket in this grammar is the angled bracket (<...>). The angled brackets simply refer to spelling conventions. So, I could talk about the first <n> in ‘ingredient’ being an /n/ that is produced as an [ŋ].

Another linguistic convention used in more complex examples is something called interlinear glossing. This is a tool that allows linguists to break down all the complex parts of a word or phrase so that they may be seen in isolation. For example, take the English word indecision. We can break this



word down into three component parts: in- decide -ion. In an interlinear gloss, we do this on separate lines where the first line represents how the word/phrase is written, the second one breaks out each of these component parts (called morphemes), the third defines each of the morphemes, and the final provides a translation.

This becomes especially helpful when looking at a foreign language (e.g., Ôrëños) where you don't know how the language works yet. For an example, here is the Ôrëños word 'boats':

- riatsī
- riats-tī
- boat-INDEF.PL
- 'boats'

In this example (which is not a full sentence for simplicity), we find out that what is written in the first line is composed of two morphemes: the noun riats and an indefinite plural ending. Further, we learn that while the indefinite plural suffix is -tī, the <t> portion of that suffix is not written—this is because riats ends in a consonant, as is explained in §3.1. We can check this hypothesis by looking at a similar noun that instead ends in a vowel, where we do indeed see the <t> of the indefinite plural suffix appear in the written form:

- grostetī
- groste-tī
- bird- INDEF.PL
- 'birds'

In full sentences, this method of glossing allows the reader to understand what each part of the sentence is and to understand the various components under discussion, as well as their language-specific ordering (since the Ôrėńos word order is different from English):

- ĩste vereenńo serevotdemb řeperā cher tavendaĩblemb
- ĩste vereen-ńo se-revot-demb ře-perā cher tu-avenda-ĩb-lemb
- 3.PL river-3.DEF.SG 3-discover-FUTpossible-AUX COMP 1.SG-foretell-PERF-PST
- ‘I had foretold that they would discover the river.’

In this example, it is easy to see that the verb ‘want’ is expressed in the present future tense by the suffix *-demb*, and the verb ‘foretell’ is expressed in the past tense by the suffix *-lemb*. The third person plural (‘they’) is expressed by the pronoun *ĩste*, and again with a prefix on the verb *se-*. The first person singular (‘I’) is not expressed with a pronoun in this sentence but is expressed by the verbal prefix *tu-*.

Although there are several other components to this sentence, it is perhaps interesting to the reader that the order of the sentence is ‘they the river will discover’, but in English ‘will discover’ would come before the object of the sentence, ‘river’. Further, ‘that they would discover the river’ comes before ‘I had foretold’ in Ôrėńos though it would come after ‘I had foretold’ in English.

Examples of this type are used throughout the grammar to provide a plethora of information about translations—what the component parts of a sentence are, how they’re ordered, and any effects combining two or more component parts together might have.

### 1.1. Abbreviation Glossary

In this guide, a number of linguistic abbreviations are used to gloss examples. While some examples can be relatively easy to understand (e.g., 3.SG might make inherent sense if you know the person number system), others are more abstract (e.g., NMLZR might cue a reader to the term nominalizer, but that term is not a common term that non-linguists use). The following list compiles the different abbreviations used in this guide, the expanded term, and a link to the section of the guide where the information on this term is provided.

Abbrevia- tion (guide)	Definition	Abbrevia- tion (dic- tionary)	Definition
1.	First person (e.g., I/me)	<i>adj.</i>	Adjective
2.	Second person (e.g., you)	<i>adv.</i>	Adverb
3.	Third person (e.g., he/she/it)	<i>aux.</i>	Auxiliary (verb)
Adj	Adjective	<i>comp.</i>	Complementizer
ADJZR	Adjectivizer—turns a word into and adjective	<i>conj.</i>	Conjunction
Adv	Adverb	<i>dem.</i>	Demonstrative
Agr	Agreement	<i>exp.</i>	Expression
Asp	Aspect	<i>n.</i>	Noun
AUX	Auxiliary (vervb)	<i>neg.</i>	Negative
BEN	Benefactive	<i>num.</i>	Number
Card	Cardinal number	<i>ord.</i>	Ordinal Number

COMP	Complementizer	<i>pn.</i>	Propper Noun
DEF	Definite	<i>post.</i>	Postposition
Dem	Demonstrative	<i>prep.</i>	Preposition
DEM	Demonstrative	<i>pro.</i>	Pronoun
Det	Determiner	<i>q.</i>	Question
DIST	Distal (demonstrative)	<i>quant.</i>	Quantifier
DO	Direct Object (of sentence)	<i>v.</i>	Verb
F	Feminine		
FAM	Familiar (demonstrative)		
FUT	Future (tense)		
HAB	Habitual (aspect)		
IMP	Imperative		
IMPERF	Imperfective (aspect)		
INDEF	Indefinite		
IO	Indirect Object (of sentence)		
M	Masculine		
N	Neuter		
Neg	Negative		
NEG	Negative		
NMLZR	Nominalizer—turns a word into a noun		
PASS	Passive (voice)		
PERF	Perfective (aspect)		

PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive
Post	Postposition
Prep	Preposition
PRES	Present (tense)
PRO	Pronoun
PST	Past (tense)
PROX	Proximal (demonstrative)
Q/Q	Question/inquisitive
Quant	Quantifier
SG	Singular
Subj	Subject (of sentence)
UNFAM	Unfamiliar (demonstrative)
UNSPEC	Unspecified (subject agreement)
V	Verb

*Table 1: Abbreviations*

For more information on linguistic glossing, see the Leipzig Glossing Rules at <https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php> (last visited February 15, 2023).

## 2. The Sounds of Ôrëños

Each of the basic sounds of the Ôrëños language are listed below, using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcription system. To hear these sounds pronounced in a standardized format, you can find an interactive IPA chart here: <http://www.ipachart.com/> (last visited February 15, 2023). Aspirants are pronounced in a lower or softer tone of voice than unaspirated consonants and vowels.

### 2.1. *Consonants*

The Ôrëños consonant inventory consists of 26 sounds, represented in Table 1.

	Labial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop	p b		t d			k g	
Nasal	m		n n <sup>h</sup>				
Trill				r r <sup>h</sup>			
Affricate				tʃ dʒ			
Fricative	f v	θ ð	s s <sup>h</sup> z	ʃ			h
Approximant				ɹ ɹ̥	j		
Lateral Approximant			l				

Table 2: Consonants of Ôrëños

The following list provides tips on pronunciation for each of these sounds.

- /p/ The sound /p/ is similar to the <p> in the English word ‘applause’ or ‘ship’.
- /b/ The sound /b/ is similar to the <b> in the English word ‘base’ or ‘table’.
- /t/ The sound /t/ is similar to the <t> in the English word ‘bat’ or ‘step’.
- /d/ The sound /d/ is similar to the <d> in the English word ‘bad’ or ‘deep’.
- /k/ The sound /k/ is similar to the <k> in the English word ‘sketch’ or ‘bleak’.

- /g/ The sound /g/ is similar to the <g> in the English word ‘give’ or ‘tag’.
- /m/ The sound /m/ is similar to the <m> in the English word ‘make’ or ‘sum’.
- /n/ The sound /n/ is similar to the <n> in the English word ‘no’ or ‘sun’.
- /n<sup>h</sup>/ The sound /n<sup>h</sup>/ is not typically found in English; it is produced in the same manner as /n/ but with an extra burst of air following the consonant, similar to how you might produce a sequence like <nh>.
- /r/ The sound /r/ is a rolled-r as found in the Scottish dialect of English or in Spanish.
- /r<sup>h</sup>/ The sound /r<sup>h</sup>/ is not found in English, but is similar to the /r/ above except that it is followed by an extra burst of air. Some speakers realize this sound as an [ɹ], described below, with an additional burst of air—similar to a quiet or whispered <r> in words like ‘red’ or ‘round’.
- /tʃ/ This sound is similar to the <ch> in the English word ‘church’.
- /dʒ/ This sound is similar to the <j> and the <dge> in the English word ‘judge’.
- /f/ This sound is similar to the <f> in the English word ‘full’ or ‘wolf’.
- /v/ This sound is similar to the <v> in the English word ‘very’ or ‘glaive’.
- /θ/ This sound is similar to the <th> in the English word ‘think’ or ‘bath’.
- /ð/ This sound is similar to the <th> in the English word ‘this’ or ‘bathe’.
- /s/ This sound is similar to the <s> in the English word ‘sky’ or ‘bliss’.
- /s<sup>h</sup>/ This sound is not typically found in English; it is produced in the same manner as /s/ but is followed by an extra burst of air similar to the /n<sup>h</sup>/ and the /r<sup>h</sup>/ described above.
- /ʃ/ This sound is similar to the <sh> in the English word ‘ship’ or ‘dish’.
- /h/ This sound is similar to the <h> in the English word ‘hotel’ or ‘inhabbit’.
- /ɹ/ This is the typical <r> produced by English speakers in a word like ‘red’ or ‘rust’.



- /ɹ/ This sound is occasionally found in English when <r> functions like the head of a syllable, such as the <er> in ‘butter’ or ‘earth’. It is produced the same as /ɹ/, but is slightly louder and longer than /ɹ/.
- /j/ This sound is similar to the <y> in the English word ‘yellow’ or ‘yes’ and is sometimes combined with the /u/ vowel and written as a single letter (<ü>), which has the sound of the English word ‘you’ rather than <oo> as in ‘boot’.
- /l/ This sound is similar to the <l> in the English words ‘like’ or ‘lab’, or the <ll> English words ‘well’ or ‘hill’, which have slightly different articulations in English (the <ll> examples being produced further back in the mouth than the <l> examples), but that is not an important distinction in this language.

## 2.2. *Vowels*

The Ôrënos vowel inventory consists of 14 basic vowels with one additional pronunciation:

Front Vowels	Back Vowels
/i/ /i <sup>h</sup> /	/u/
/ɪ/ /ɪ <sup>h</sup> /	
/e/ /e <sup>h</sup> /	/ʌ/ [o]
/ɛ/ /ɛ <sup>h</sup> /	/ɔ/
/æ/	/aɪ/ [a <sup>h</sup> ] /ɑ/

Table 3: Vowels of Ôrëños.

The following list provides tips on pronunciation for each of these sounds.

- /i/ This sound is similar to the <ee> in the English word ‘sheet’ or ‘feet’.
- /i<sup>h</sup>/ This sound is not typically found in English; it is produced the same as the /i/ vowel, but the sound drops off halfway through as if the second half of the vowel is replaced by an /h/.
- /ɪ/ This sound is similar to the <i> in the English word ‘ship’ or ‘ninja’.
- /ɪ<sup>h</sup>/ This sound is not typically found in English; it is produced the same as the /ɪ/ vowel, but the sound drops off halfway through as if the second half of the vowel is replaced by an /h/.
- /e/ This sound is similar to the <ay> in the English word ‘say’ or ‘bay’.
- /e<sup>h</sup>/ This sound is not typically found in English; it is produced the same as the /e/ vowel, but the sound drops off halfway through as if the second half of the vowel is replaced by an /h/.
- /ɛ/ This sound is similar to the <e> in the English word ‘bed’ or ‘temp’.
- /ɛ<sup>h</sup>/ This sound is not typically found in English; it is produced the same as the /ɛ/ vowel, but the sound drops off halfway through as if the second half of the vowel is replaced by an /h/.
- /æ/ This sound is similar to the <a> in the English word ‘bat’ or ‘catch’.

- /ʌ/ This sound is similar to the <u> in the English word ‘but’ or ‘cut’.
- /u/ This sound is similar to the <oo> in the English word ‘boot’ or ‘loop’.
- /ɔ/ This sound is found in some dialects of English, such as those in New England; it is similar to the <o> in the English word ‘or’ or ‘bore’, or the <aw> in the English word ‘paw’ or ‘sawn’.
- [o] When /ɔ/ is the first or last sound in a word, or when it is immediately followed by /s/, it is instead pronounced as [o], which is similar to the <oe> in the English word ‘toe’ or the <o> in ‘so’.
- /ɑ/ This sound is similar to the <o> in the English word ‘sock’ or ‘bottle’.
- /aɪ/ This sound is similar to the <i> in the English word ‘abide’ or ‘ride’.
- [a<sup>h</sup>] When /ɑ/ is the last sound in a word, it is instead pronounced as [a<sup>h</sup>], which is similar to the <a> in father, but, like other aspirated vowels in the language, the sound drops off halfway through as if the second half of the vowel is replaced by an /h/.

### 2.3. *Stress*

Stress is the aspect of pronunciation that has to do with emphasizing one syllable over another in a systematic fashion (as opposed to contrastive stress that allows a speaker to emphasize any syllable to make a point). Consider the pair of English words ‘convict’ (the noun referring to a person convicted of a crime) and ‘convict’ (the verb referring to the action of convicting a person of a crime). In the pronunciation of the noun, we place emphasis on the first syllable ‘a CONvict’, whereas in the pronunciation of the verb, we place emphasis on the second syllable ‘they chose to conVICT’. To illustrate the difference, we can talk about ‘Will they conVICT the CONvict?’

In Ôrëños, many words bear lexical stress; that is, a particular syllable is specified as the stressed syllable rather than having stress assigned by a grammatical rule. When a syllable bears lexical stress,

this is denoted in The Ôrëños-English Dictionary as a primary stress mark (/') written before the syllable in the IPA pronunciation entry of the dictionary. When no syllable is lexically stressed, stress falls on the final (ultimate) syllable of the word by default and is not recorded in its IPA pronunciation.

The assigned lexical stress or ultimate stress are called primary stressed syllables. Another type of stress is called secondary stress and occurs in some words of three or more syllables. For example, take the English word 'military', which has four syllables, denoted in IPA by a period: [mɪ.l.ə.t<sup>h</sup>ɪ.r.i]. In English, we tend to assign primary stress to the first syllable of the word (i.e., MILitary), but compared to the second and final syllable, the third syllable is also prominent (i.e., MILiTARy). Comparing the first and third syllable, although both prominent in the word, the first syllable is the most prominent so we call the first (most prominent) syllable the primary stressed syllable and the third syllable the secondary stressed syllable.

In Ôrëños, secondary stress is applied to the syllable that is two syllables to the left of the primary stress. If there is only one syllable to the left of the primary stress, it only receives stress if it ends in a consonant. Syllables to the right of the primary stress never receive secondary stress. Secondary stress is not denoted in the IPA pronunciation entry of the Ôrëños-English Dictionary.

## **2.4. Sound Changes**

Sometimes, when adding affixes or creating compound words, two sounds will come together that trigger a sound change, which alters the word's pronunciation. These sound changes are listed below in their respective subsections.

### *2.4.1. Deletion*

When a root word and an affix (for example, a verb and a tense suffix [see §4.3. for details]) come together and the result would have two vowels or consonants of the same type together, one of the

segments (vowel or consonant) is deleted so that only one is pronounced. Take, for example, the verb *zessed* ‘break’, which ends in the consonant /d/; to put this verb in the future tense, the suffix *-demb* is added to the verbal root:

- tuzesedemb
- tu-zesed-demb
- 1.SG-break-FUT
- ‘I will break’

In this example, the final /d/ in the verb root occurs directly adjacent to the initial /d/ in the future tense suffix, which can be seen in the second line of the interlinear gloss; however, only one of the /d/ segments is produced when speaking—the same is true for the written form, only one of the <d> letters is written. If the verbal root and suffix that would trigger the deletion are separated by an additional suffix, or if a different suffix (e.g., the past tense) was used, no deletion takes place:

- |                             |                       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| • tuzesedi <b>bd</b> emb    | tuzesed <b>l</b> emb  |
| • tu-zesed-i <b>b</b> -demb | tu-zesed-l <b>emb</b> |
| • 1.SG-break-PERF-FUT       | 1.SG-break-PST        |
| • ‘I will have broke’       | ‘I broke’             |

#### 2.4.2. Syllabic Consonants

Syllabic consonants are consonants that serve as vowels in the nucleus of a syllable under special circumstances. In Ôrëños <r> is described as occasionally being syllabic. “This sound is occasionally found in English when <r> functions like the head of a syllable, such as the <er> in ‘butter’ or ‘earth’. It is produced the same as /ɹ/ but is slightly louder and longer than /ɹ/.”

Syllabic r occurs when <r> follows a consonant like <k> or <v>, which occurs in several words in Ôrëños. However, affixation sometimes causes other sonorous sounds like /m/, /n/, or /l/ to appear in a position where they follow a less-sonorous sound but are not followed by a vowel.

For example, one of the nominalization suffixes (a suffix that turns a verb into a noun creating a word ‘thing that does’ or ‘person who does’) is -ms. If we took the verb *kab* ‘excite’ and were to form a word like ‘exciter’ (perhaps to be used in Ôrëños particle physics), the word would be *kabms*. Here, the /m/ would become a syllabic consonant, causing the word to be pronounced as two syllables ([kæb.ms]) even without a second vowel, the /m/ being treated like the second vowel in the word.

#### 2.4.3. Sandhi Processes

Sandhi processes (*pānkr* in Ôrëños) are sound changes that occur between words; in Ôrëños, these changes occur when two sounds come together as a result of compounding or other morphological processes (e.g., adding suffixes). Sandhi processes do not typically encompass undoing a vowel change (see §2.5) where an <a> vowel, for example, is pronounced as [ʌ] when it is at the end of a word, but as [æ] if a suffix stops the vowel from being at the end of a word.

What sandhi processes effect are a number of sound sequences where the second member is <h> /h/ or <y> /j/. These sound sequences are created when the final sound of one word and the initial sound of a second word appear together, such as in a compound word. The processes are explained below and Table 3 provides a quick reference using both the IPA transcription convention as well as the orthographic writing tradition (described in §2.5).

The most common sandhi process in Ôrëños is aspiration: when a word ends in a non-aspirated vowel or consonant and a word beginning in /h/ is suffixed to it, the two sounds collapse into one aspirated sound, if such a sound exists in the language. For example, if word 1 ended with an /ε/ vowel and word 2 began with an /h/, both of these sounds would be replaced with /ε<sup>h</sup>/. The same is true with consonants that have aspirated versions (r<sup>h</sup>, s<sup>h</sup>, and n<sup>h</sup>); this does not apply to consonants that do not have an aspirated version in the Ôrëños inventory of sounds (e.g., v, z, b, k, m...).

The exception to this rule are the consonants /d/ and /t/; although these consonants do not have an aspirated counterpart, under sandhi conditions, when /d/ or /t/ are followed by /h/, they turn into continuant sounds, [ð] and [θ] respectively.

Note that if the final sound in the first component of the sandhi combination already ends with one of the aspirated sounds as described in Table 3, the /h/ (<h>) is simply deleted from the following word.

The other sandhi process in Ôrëños is palatalization, which affects fewer sounds than the aspiration change. Palatalization occurs in a subset of sounds when the second word in the sandhi combination begins with a /j/. This change affects some vowels, /s/, /s<sup>h</sup>/, /d/, and /t/. Palatalization causes front vowels other than /i/ and /ɪ/ to mutate: /ε/ becomes [e], /ε<sup>h</sup>/ becomes [e<sup>h</sup>], and /æ/ becomes [aɪ] (/e/ and /e<sup>h</sup>/ remain the same, but the subsequent /j/ is deleted). In the case of /s/ and /s<sup>h</sup>/, palatalization causes both of them to be pronounced as [ʃ]; /d/ and /t/ are pronounced as /dʒ/ and /tʃ/, respectively. Finally, palatalization affects the /u/ vowel through a process called metathesis, causing the /u/ + /j/ sequence to be reversed to [ju].

<b>Aspiration</b>			
<b>IPA</b>	<b>Romanization</b>	<b>IPA</b>	<b>Romanization</b>
/e/ + /h/ = [e <sup>h</sup> ]	<ā> + <h> = <ê>	/s/ + /h/ = [s <sup>h</sup> ]	<s> + <h> = <ş>
/ɛ/ + /h/ = [ɛ <sup>h</sup> ]	<e> + <h> = <ë>	/ʃ/ + /h/ = [ʃ <sup>h</sup> ]	<ś> + <h> = <ş>
/i/ + /h/ = [i <sup>h</sup> ]	<ē> + <h> = <î>	/ɹ/ + /h/ = [ɹ <sup>h</sup> ]	<r> + <h> = <ṛ>
/ɪ/ + /h/ = [ɪ <sup>h</sup> ]	<i> + <h> = <î>	/r/ + /h/ = [r <sup>h</sup> ]	<ṛ> + <h> = <ṛ>
/ʌ/ + /h/ = [ʌ <sup>h</sup> ]	<a> + <h> = <ä>	/n/ + /h/ = [n <sup>h</sup> ]	<n> + <h> = <ń>
/ɑ/ + /h/ = [ɑ <sup>h</sup> ]	<ä> + <h> = <ä> <sup>1</sup>	/t/ + /h/ = [θ]	<t> + <h> = <th>
		/d/ + /h/ = [ð]	<d> + <h> = <dh>
<b>Palatalization</b>			
<b>IPA</b>	<b>Romanization</b>	<b>IPA</b>	<b>Romanization</b>
/ɛ/ + /j/ = [e]	<e> + <y> = <ā>	/s/ + /j/ = [ʃ]	<s> + <y> = <ś>
/ɛ <sup>h</sup> / + /j/ = [ɛ <sup>h</sup> ]	<ë> + <y> = <ê>	/s <sup>h</sup> / + /j/ = [ʃ]	<ş> + <y> = <ś>
/æ/ + /j/ = [aɪ] <sup>2</sup>	<a> + <y> = <ī>	/t/ + /j/ = [tʃ]	<t> + <y> = <ch>
/ɑ/ + /j/ = [aɪ]	<ä> + <y> = <ī>	/d/ + /j/ = [dʒ]	<d> + <y> = <j>
/u/ + /j/ = [ju]	<ū> + <y> = <ü>		

Table 4: Sandhi processes

<sup>1</sup> See Note 1 in §2.5.

<sup>2</sup> See Note 3 in §2.5.



## 2.5. Writing in Ôrëños

The Ôrëños inventory of sounds (phonetic inventory) consists of 26 consonants and 14 vowels, with two additional written letters (<o> and <ü>) as described earlier in this chapter. The table below details how these sounds are written.

IPA	Romanization	IPA	Romanization	IPA	Romanization
/e/	Ā/ā	/ju/	Ü/ü	/b/	B/b
/a/; [a <sup>h</sup> ]	Ă/ă <sup>1</sup>	/j/	Y/y	/tʃ/	Ch/ch
/e <sup>h</sup> /	Ê/ê	/ɣ/	R/r	/dʒ/	J/j
/a/; [o]	O/o <sup>2</sup>	/ɹ/	R/r	/d/	D/d
/æ/	A/a <sup>3</sup>	/ɾ <sup>h</sup> /; [ɾ <sup>h</sup> ]	Ř/ř	/g/	G/g
/ʌ/	U/u; A/a <sup>3</sup>	/r/	Ŗ/ŗ	/h/	H/h
/i/	Ē/ē; E/e <sup>4</sup>	/s/	S/s	/k/	K/k
/ɛ/	E/e <sup>4</sup>	/s <sup>h</sup> /	Ş/ş	/l/	L/l
/ɛ <sup>h</sup> /	Ĕ/ĕ	/ʃ/	Ŝ/ŝ	/m/	M/m
/i <sup>h</sup> /	Ī/ī	/v/	V/v	/n <sup>h</sup> /	Ń/ń
/aɪ/	Ī/ī	/z/	Z/z	/n/	N/n
/ɪ/	I/i	/f/	F/f	/t/	T/t
/ɪ <sup>h</sup> /	Î/î	/θ/	Th/th	/p/	P/p
/ɔ/	Ô/ô	/ð/	Dh/dh		
/u/	Ū/ū				

Table 5: Ôrëños Writing System

Notes:

1. The written vowel <Ä/ä> has two pronunciations, depending on context: when <ä> occurs at the end of a word, it becomes aspirated, with many speakers producing it slightly further forward in the mouth ([a<sup>h</sup>]); in any other position, this vowel is pronounced as [a]. Note that a compound word ending <ä> will be pronounced with aspiration ([a<sup>h</sup>]) if the second member of the compound begins with <h>.
2. The written vowel <O/o> has two pronunciations, depending on context: When <o> occurs between two consonants, it is pronounced as [ɔ], unless the following consonant is an <s>, <ś>, or <ş>; when <s>, <ś>, or <ş> is an immediately following consonant or the <o> is at the beginning or end of a word, it is pronounced as [o].
3. The written vowel <A/a> has several pronunciations, depending on context: when the <a> occurs at the beginning or the end of a word, it is pronounced as [ʌ]. If it begins a word and is followed by <r> and another consonant, or if it occurs in a word, it is pronounced as [æ]. In palatalization sandhi contexts (see §2.4.3), this vowel is pronounced as [aɪ] instead of [ʌ.j].
4. The written vowel <E/e> has two pronunciations, depending on context: When the <e> is followed by another vowel, it is pronounced as [i]; in all other cases, it is pronounced as [ɛ].

### 3. Using Nouns

Nouns are words used to name persons, places, things, or ideas/concepts. Nouns indicate what is the subject (the thing doing the action described in the sentence), or the object (the thing having the action described in the sentence done to it). Nouns in Ôrëños can largely be used in the form listed in the Ôrëños-English Dictionary, but they can be modified by certain affixes or in compound forms (see §6.1).

Nouns are part of a template that contains things such as determiners, demonstratives, adjectives, and numerals. This template is referred to throughout this document as an argument—a general term that refers to the entire noun template that can be inserted into the sentence as a subject, object, or indirect object (all defined in chapter 5). The structure of the argument is provided in the following template with the individual elements explained in detail in their own sections below:

(Prep) > (Possessive) > Noun(-Det/Card) > (Quant) > (Adj) > (Dem) > (Post)

*Figure 1: Argument Template*

#### 3.1. Determiners and the Singular-Plural Distinction

(Prep) > (Possessive) > **Noun(-Det/Card)** > (Quant) > (Adj) > (Dem) > (Post)

In order to properly use a noun in Ôrëños, there are a few grammatical features that must be understood: definite versus indefinite, grammatical person, and grammatical number. These concepts

are used to compute suffixes for the noun, and for other aspects of grammar discussed later in Chapter 4. These grammatical concepts are explained in the following paragraphs.

**Definite/Indefinite:** nouns can be either definite or indefinite. A definite noun is one that refers to a specific entity or group. In English, definite nouns are typically nouns that are introduced with ‘the’. An indefinite noun is one that does not refer to a specific entity or group. In English, indefinite nouns are typically nouns that are introduced with ‘a’. Contrast the two English sentences: ‘the dog ran up to me as soon as I stepped out of the car’ [definite] with ‘a dog ran up to me as soon as I stepped out of the car’ [indefinite]. In Ôrëños, indefinite nouns usually appear without a definiteness suffix (unless they are plural), and definite nouns appear with a suffix, which is selected based on person and number.

**Grammatical Person:** three grammatical persons are used in Ôrëños: the first person, second person, and third person. The first person can be understood as any noun that could be replaced by pronouns (in English) like ‘I/me/mine/we/us/ours’; the second person can be understood as any noun that could be replaced by pronouns (in English) like ‘you/your’ (either singular or plural); the third person can be understood as any noun that is not first or second person, nouns that could be replaced by pronouns (in English) like ‘he/she/they/it/him/her/them/his/hers/theirs’.

**Grammatical Number:** there are two grammatical numbers that nouns in Ôrëños fall into: singular or plural. If a noun refers to a single entity or a group as a total (the entire group rather than multiple members of the group), then the noun is singular; whenever the noun refers to more than one entity, the noun is plural.

By understanding each of the above grammatical principles, the correct suffix for a noun can be selected from Table 5.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
--	----------	--------

DEFINITE	1 <sup>st</sup>	<-śo> /-fo/	<-śĩ> /-faɪ/
	2 <sup>nd</sup>		
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	<-ró> /-r <sup>h</sup> o/	<-rí> /-r <sup>h</sup> aɪ/
INDEFINITE	1 <sup>st</sup>	—	<-ĩ> (-tĩ) /-(t)aɪ/
	2 <sup>nd</sup>		
	3 <sup>rd</sup>		

Table 6: Definiteness suffixes for nouns

Using the table above, the correct suffix for the context of the noun is selected and then added to the end of the noun. For example, if the noun being used were for a ‘bird’ *groste*, we would determine the context: discussing ‘a’ bird (i.e., indefinite and singular), no suffix would be put on the noun, and ‘a bird’ would be translated as simply *groste*. However, if we were discussing ‘birds’ (i.e., indefinite and plural), we would add the  $-(t)ĩ$  suffix—in this case, because *groste* ends in a vowel, the form of the suffix with the <t> is used: *grostetĩ*. If the word we were using did not end in a vowel, such as ‘boat’ *riats*, the <t> of the indefinite plural would be omitted: *riatsĩ*.

If, however, the bird that we were discussing was specific (i.e., definite), we would have to determine both the grammatical person and number: for most nouns like ‘bird’, ‘boat’, etc., the person will normally be 3<sup>rd</sup>, unless that noun is a participant in the conversation (addresser: 1<sup>st</sup>; addressee: 2<sup>nd</sup>). So ‘the bird’ (i.e., third person definite singular) would be realized as *grosteśo* and ‘the birds’ (i.e., third person definite plural) would be realized as *grosteśĩ*.

The exception to using a suffix on a noun to mark it as plural is when a numeral is used (as discussed in §3.2). If a cardinal number is used to quantify the noun (e.g., ‘one’, ‘five’, ‘seven billion’...), then the noun does not take any of the determiner suffixes in Table 4; it is left unmarked. For example,

‘nine birds’ would be translated as *groste nikte* regardless of whether the ‘birds’ in the sentence are definite or indefinite.

From an English background, it may be difficult to conceive of a situation where a noun (not a pronoun, as discussed in §3.3) would appear in the first or second person. In Ôrëños, the suffixes used to denote definite 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> person nouns tend to be used for the vocative address (used when calling to or specifically addressing someone or something) or for reported speech. Thus, if you were to refer to someone using an invective or nickname, that noun could be expressed as 2<sup>nd</sup> person definite; for example, *śāb* is an invective slang term to refer to a person, roughly translated as ‘dickhead’. In order to address someone along the lines of ‘hey, dickhead!’, the definite 2<sup>nd</sup> person suffix would be attached: *śābśo!* (See also reflexive and emphatic pronouns in §3.3.)

Reported speech also causes a noun that would normally be analyzed as being 3<sup>rd</sup> person to be used in the 1<sup>st</sup> person. Thus, in a children’s book with anthropomorphic characters, it would be possible to say something like ‘the bird said...’, in this context ‘the bird’ would be expressed as a 1<sup>st</sup> person definite singular *grosteśo* as it is the speaker in the reported speech sentence.

### 3.2. Numerals and Quantification

(Prep) > (Possessive) > Noun(-Det/**Card**) > (**Quant**) > (Adj) > (Dem) > (Post)

Cardinal numbers and quantifiers can co-occur in Ôrëños as they have slightly different positions within the argument template. However, they both express similar grammatical functions: A cardinal number provides a specific number of the noun being modified and quantifiers give a general idea of the amount of the noun being modified. For example, you could say ‘nine birds’ *groste nikte*, ‘some birds’ *grostetī rīt*, or ‘some of the nine birds’ *groste nikte rīt*. Notice, in these examples, that when a

cardinal number is present, there is no definite suffix on the noun; if there is no numeral but a quantifier, the noun does get marked as plural with a definite suffix.

Regardless of whether a noun is singular or plural, definite or indefinite, if a cardinal number is used to modify the noun, the noun does not take a definiteness suffix from Table 4. The presence of a quantifier, though, does allow the noun to be definiteness marked as appropriate.

Cardinal numbers may also take a suffix to derive ordinal numbers: The suffix applied is the same as the third person singular definite suffix, <-ró> /-r<sup>h</sup>o/. Applying this suffix to a cardinal number gives an ordinal interpretation: e.g., *tat* ‘one’ > *tatró* ‘first’, *dok* ‘two’ > *dokró* ‘second’, *sovjen* ‘seventeen’ > *sovjenró* ‘seventeenth’, *tatbrenr doksovr tat* ‘one hundred twenty-one’ *tatbrenr doksovr tatró* ‘one hundred twenty-first’. Changing a cardinal number to an ordinal causes the word to become an adjective, which means that it can combine with a cardinal number in cases where you have ‘the first five racers to cross the line...’ or something similar.

### 3.3. *Proper Nouns and Pronouns*

(Prep) > (Possessive) > **Noun**(-Det/Card) > (Quant) > (Adj) > (Dem) > (Post)

Proper nouns are names of individuals, places, products, etc. These words typically do not take any definite endings (Table 5), though they can under certain conditions. For example, if two individuals from the same city were in a group (e.g., *Vindel*), they could be referred to as *vindelrí*, what might be translated to English as Vindelians. Similarly, a cardinal number could be added to the proper noun to achieve a similar interpretation: *vindel dok* ‘two Vindelians’. As with the normal rules for adding a cardinal number to a noun, the proper noun cannot take a definite suffix if a cardinal number is present.

Pronouns are words that can stand in for nouns, or even entire arguments; they are words like I/me, you, he/him, she/her, we/us, they/them, or even this/these and that/those in some contexts. Instead

of saying ‘Captain Jack Sparrow’, one could simply say ‘he’; similarly, instead of saying ‘the man I met last night outside the tavern’, one could also simply say ‘he’—as long as the listener can interpret who ‘he’ refers to in context.

Although Ôrëños typically lacks any grammatical gender, gender can be expressed using pronouns as it relates to the gender that an individual identifies as. However, the default 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun is genderless (i.e., neuter); it is not derogative to refer to an individual using the neuter 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun as there is no animacy distinction, it is merely a-gendered. Table 6 provides the nine pronouns of Ôrëños.



	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	<tok> /tak/	<isti> /i <sup>h</sup> s.taɪ/
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<iv> /arv/	<ivē> /aɪ.vi/
3 <sup>rd</sup> (masculine)	<ir̄a> /i <sup>h</sup> .r <sup>h</sup> Λ/	<iste> /i <sup>h</sup> s.tɛ/
3 <sup>rd</sup> (feminine)	<ir̄ā> /i <sup>h</sup> .r <sup>h</sup> e/	
3 <sup>rd</sup> (neuter)	<etsā> /ɛt.se/	
Topic	<zāg> /zeg/	

Table 7: Pronouns

Of specific note in Table 6 is the Topic pronoun: this pronoun is used to refer to a previous topic (e.g., ‘that’s what I mean’) or used when there is no grammatical subject of a sentence (e.g., ‘there arose a noise from the valley’ or ‘it happened on a stormy night’).

Similar to proper nouns, pronouns are typically uninflected with respect to definiteness. The exception to this rule is emphatic or reflexive pronouns. Reflexive pronouns are those that would be translated with ‘-self/-selves’ in English; emphatic pronouns are translated to English in the same way but can be used to add emphasis to the person referred to—this is not common to all English dialects, but in Irish-English, for example, one could say ‘give a drink to himself’ where ‘himself’ is emphatic rather than reflexive. To create either of these interpretations in Ôrëños, one of the 1<sup>st</sup> person definite suffixes from Table 5 is used as appropriate (i.e., singular or plural).

### 3.4. Demonstratives

(Prep) > (Possessive) > Noun(-Det/Card) > (Quant) > (Adj) > (**Dem**) > (Post)

In English, Demonstratives serve a similar function as articles to the point where an article and a demonstrative cannot co-occur: ‘\*this the bird’ is ungrammatical. In Ôrëños, when a demonstrative is used, it obligatorily co-occurs with a definite suffix (except where definite suffixes are ungrammatical, such as with numerals or in most circumstances with proper nouns or pronouns).

Demonstratives are used to locate a noun in relative space to the speaker of the sentence. Similar to English, demonstratives can locate an object as proximate (‘this’, ‘these’) or as distal (‘that’, ‘those’); unlike English, there is no distinction in Ôrëños demonstratives for singular or plural (this grammatical distinction is marked on the noun using a definiteness suffix or with a cardinal number). However, Ôrëños has a distinction in its demonstrative system that English does not have: Familiar/Unfamiliar. The Familiar/Unfamiliar distinction can be used in two manners: if an object is already part of the conversation, it can take a familiar demonstrative. For example, if the person I was speaking to were first being told of Warrior Mountain, I would introduce it into the conversation as *vïveksdülāro ñoz* where *ñoz* implies that it is unfamiliar and distal (i.e., far away). However, in the next sentence, although Warrior Mountain is far away, I would refer to it as *vïveksdülāro rïz* where *rïz* implies that it is still distal, but now familiar (I’ve already introduced it to the conversation).

The second way that the Familiar/Unfamiliar distinction is used is somewhat pejoratively: the Ôrëñā view themselves as superior to other species, so they will often use the familiar demonstratives to refer to things they associate with their own culture and the unfamiliar demonstratives to refer to things they associate with other cultures.

Table 7 provides the four demonstratives of Ôrëños divided by proximity to the speaker and familiarity.

	PROXIMATE	DISTAL
--	-----------	--------

FAMILIAR	<liv> /li <sup>h</sup> v/	<riz> /ɹi <sup>h</sup> z/
UNFAMILIAR	<ńov> /n <sup>h</sup> av/	<ńoz> /n <sup>h</sup> az/

Table 8: Demonstratives

### 3.5. Adjectives

(Prep) > (Possessive) > Noun(-Det/Card) > (Quant) > (**Adj**) > (Dem) > (Post)

Adjectives are words that provide descriptions of nouns, words like ‘big’, ‘small’, ‘long’, ‘short’, ‘old’, or ‘young’. Using adjectives in Ôrėnos is very straightforward; adjectives follow the noun in the argument and can be used directly from the dictionary with no additional affixes required. Thus, while ‘bird’ is *groste* ‘a great bird’ is *groste von*.

Putting this together with the previous sections on parts of the argument, we can begin to see an almost complete argument:

- groste          nikte   rīt                  von    ńoz
- groste          nikte   rīt                  von    ńoz
- bird            nine   some.of          great   DIST.UNFAM
- ‘some of those nine great birds’

### 3.6. Adpositions (*Prepositions and Postpositions*)

(**Prep**) > (Possessive) > Noun(-Det/Card) > (Quant) > (Adj) > (Dem) > (**Post**)

Adpositions, typically called prepositions in English due to the fact that they come before the noun, are words that provide additional information about the spatio-temporal relationship the noun has with other elements of the sentence—words like ‘with’, ‘of’, ‘to’, ‘from’, ‘beside’, ‘before’, ‘after’...

In Ôrěños, the default position of the adpositions is in the preposition slot of the template; however, there are a few adpositions that follow at the end of the argument in the postposition slot of the template. A native speaker of Ôrěños will instinctively know which adpositions are prepositions and which are postpositions, but the rule of thumb is that if it is a single syllable, put it in the preposition slot; if it is more than one syllable, put it in the postposition slot.

Mistakes among non-native speakers of Ôrěños tend to be that all adpositions are put into the preposition slot, and this is typically tolerated, but marks the speaker as non-native—and inferior.

For example, examine the following four arguments:

- dülāfī                      rīz                      ūit
- dülā-rī                      rīz                      ūit
- mountain-DEF.3.PL      DIST.FAM              beyond
- ‘beyond those mountains’ [grammatically correct]
  
- ūit                      dülāfī                      rīz
- ūit                      dülā-rī                      rīz
- beyond                      mountain-DEF.3.PL      DIST.FAM
- ‘beyond those mountains’ [not grammatically correct but tolerated]
  
- mov                      dülāfī                      rīz

- mov            dülä-rî            rîz
- over            mountain-DEF.3.PL    DIST.FAM
- ‘over those mountains’ [grammatically correct]
  
- \*dülä-rî            rîz            mov
- dülä-rî            rîz            mov
- mountain-DEF.3.PL    DIST.FAM    over
- Intended: ‘over those mountains’ [ungrammatical]

As can be seen by the above examples, putting a postposition (e.g., *ūit* ‘beyond’) in the preposition slot is not technically grammatical, but acceptable; the reverse, putting a preposition in the postposition slot (e.g., *mov* ‘over’), is ungrammatical and not accepted.

### 3.7. *Denoting possession*

(Prep) > (**Possessive**) > Noun(-Det/Card) > (Quant) > (Adj) > (Dem) > (Post)

To indicate ‘his dream’, ‘John’s dream’, ‘that dream of John’s’, ‘the tall man with the great hair from Vindel’s dream’... We need a way to indicate a possessor. To do so in Ôrëños a possessive argument is added to the possessive slot in the template. What is used in this slot can be as small as a pronoun or proper noun or can be as large as a full argument itself.

Unlike in English where possessors are marked with a genitive –‘s or using the preposition ‘of’, in Ôrëños, the grammatical role of the possessor is understood by position and so no suffixes or special prepositions are required:

- tok simnaño
- tok simna-fo
- 1.SG.POSS dream-DEF.3.SG
- ‘my dream’

- John simnaño
- John simna-fo
- John.POSS dream-DEF.3.SG
- ‘John’s dream’

- John simna
- John simna-Ø
- 1.SG.POSS dream-INDEF.SG
- ‘a dream of John’s’

- John simnaño ñoz
- John simna-fo ñoz
- John.POSS dream-DEF.3.SG DIST.UNFAM
- ‘that dream of John’s’

- rābad ôrë lôrvā vūv vindel gametño ñoz
- rābad-Ø ôrë lôrvā vūv vindel gametño ñoz

- hair-INDEF.SG great with from Vindel philosopher-DEF.3.SG DIST.UNFAM
- simnafo
- simna-fo
- dream-DEF.3.SG
- ‘that philosopher from Vindel with great hair’s dream’<sup>3</sup>

### 3.8. *Vocative Address*

See §3.1.

### 3.9. *Embedded Arguments*

Sometimes, we need to express a complex argument that requires several arguments embedded within the overall argument that will be the subject or object of a full sentence. The linear string of words that create embedded arguments in Ôrënos may seem odd to a native English speaker because it is largely backwards from English.

For example, to say ‘the philosopher from Vindel with great hair’ in Ôrënos where ‘philosopher’, ‘Vindel’, and ‘hair’ are all nouns, the order would be reversed such that we would literally translate the string as ‘[[with hair great] [from Vindel] philosopher-the]’. This rule of thumb, reversing the English order of embedded arguments, can generally be used to get the correct order.

- rabad ôrë lôrvā vūv vindel gametro noz

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<sup>3</sup> The order of these elements is explained in §3.9.

- rābad-Ø      ôrë    lôrvā   vūv    vindel gametró                      űnoz
- hair-INDEF.SG   great   with   from   Vindel philosopher-DEF.3.SG   DIST.UNFAM
- ‘that philosopher from Vindel with great hair’

A similar structure to embedded arguments can be thought of as a three-part predicate. Although syntactically distinct, the strategy to get the correct order of nouns is quite similar except that what was being embedded in the above example comes in between two other elements in a three-part predicate. Consider the argument ‘the city’s destruction by the greatship’; when translating this sentence into Ôrëños, the possessor (the city) and the head noun (destruction) go in their respective positions in the argument template, but the by-phrase (by the greatship) gets sandwiched in between them:

- plendaó                      gôz    riatsvonó                      miaríkr
- plenda-ó                      gôz    riatsvon-ó                      miarí-kr
- city-DEF.3.SG.POSS    by    greatship-DEF.3.SG    destroy-NMLZR
- ‘the city’s destruction by the greatship’

### 3.10. *Negating Nouns*

Sometimes, it will be important to negate a noun rather than a verb or entire clause (see §5.4.). For example, while a negation in a sentence will often take the form of ‘I didn’t run’ where the verb is negated, you may also encounter a sentence like ‘John and Mary, but not Chuck ran home’ where only ‘Chuck’ is negated.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The phrase ‘but not’ is rendered in Ôrëños as ‘and not’. See §5.7.



Negating individual nouns is achieved by adding the negation word *navr* before the noun. So, if we assumed that 'John', 'Mary', and 'Chuck' were Ôřěnos names, that series of nouns with 'Chuck' negated would be formulated as: John, Mary, *navr* Chuck... Literally: John, Mary, and not Chuck.

## 4. Using Verbs

Verbs describe the action denoted by the sentence. They indicate what the subject of the sentence is doing (or what the object of the sentence is having done to it). Verbs are denoted in the dictionary as *v*. The form of the verb provided in the dictionary is the citation form—the form of the verb lacking any affixes. In this chapter, changes that are specific to verbs are discussed. The subsections below detail how to alter the verb to indicate different grammatical functions such as subject agreement; past, present, or future tense; negation; and using verbs as nouns or adjectives.

Similar to Nouns in the previous chapter, verbs also have a template, but perhaps not as complex as the noun template:

(Subj.Agr) > V > (Asp) > (Tense) > (Voice)

*Figure 2: Verbal Template*

### 4.1. Subject Agreement

**(Subj.Agr)** > V > (Asp) > (Tense) > (Voice)

The term subject agreement refers to an affix that attaches to a verb to refer to the subject of the verb. For example, most dialects of English have subject agreement with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular: ‘I walk’, ‘you walk’, ‘he/she/... walks’. That -s suffix on the verb indicates that the subject of the verb is 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (i.e., he/she/...). In Ôrëños, the system for subject agreement is richer, and somewhat variable

(explained below). In order to apply the correct prefix to the Ôrëños verb, the grammatical person and number are needed, including if the subject is unknown or unspecified:

Person Number	SG	PL
∅ <sup>5</sup>	<g(u)-> /g(Λ)-/	
1 <sup>ST</sup>	<t(u)-> /t(Λ)-/	<tī-> /taɪ-/
2 <sup>ND</sup>	<v(u)-> /v(Λ)-/	<vī-> /vaɪ-/
3 <sup>RD</sup>	<se-> /sɛ-/	

Table 9: Subject Agreement

In table 8, round-bracketed vowels indicate sounds that are only present if the verb that the prefix is being added to begins with a consonant. For example, the following list is the conjugation of the verbs ‘to eat’ *enelī* and ‘to know’ *pepta* with each of the prefixes from Table 8:

- genelī ‘one eats’                      gupāpta ‘one knows’
- tenelī ‘I eat’                              tupāpta ‘I know’
- venelī ‘you eat’                          vupāpta ‘you know’
- senelī ‘he/she/they... eats’              sepāpta ‘he/she/they... knows’
- tienelī ‘we eat’                          tipāpta ‘we know’
- vīenelī ‘y’all eat’                        vīpāpta ‘y’all know’

---

<sup>5</sup> The ∅ symbol indicates that the subject of the sentence is unknown or unspecified, and there is no distinction between singular or plural for this category.

As stated above, the subject agreement prefix to the verb is somewhat variable. In highly formal speech, these prefixes are typically used; however, in less formal speech, either an overt subject (usually, when first mentioning a subject in the conversation) or a subject agreement prefix can be used, but both are not required. For example, to say ‘John knows’ I could use the format *John pepta*, without the subject agreement prefix; later in the conversation, when it’s already clear we are talking about John, I could simply say *sepepta* ‘he knows’ with the subject agreement prefix—both are acceptable.

A typical pattern as to when to omit either the subject or the prefix would be: if the subject would be named, use the subject; if the subject is a pronoun, use the subject agreement prefix. Examples of this optionality are provided in §5.1.

It should be noted that in examples of reported speech (see §3.1) where nouns take a 1<sup>st</sup> person definite suffix, subject agreement on the verb agrees with the 1<sup>st</sup> person marking of the noun (even if the noun is not overtly marked because it is a pronoun or a proper noun, for example). An example of this type of construction can be found in the first sentence of All Good Things: Q’s Soliloquy in §10.1.

#### 4.2. *Aspect*

(Subj.Agr) > V > (**Asp**) > (Tense) > (Voice)

The suffix that immediately follows the verb is typically the aspect. Aspect provides information on the completeness of a verb. For example, in English, if we say ‘I have eaten’, then we know that the action of eating has been completed; by contrast, if we say ‘I was eating’, then we know that the action was incomplete—this is distinct from tense (discussed in the next section) as we can say ‘I will have eaten’ denoting that the action will be completed in the future or ‘I will be eating’ indicating an ongoing action in the future.

The aspect that denotes an action as completed is called the perfect or the perfective while the aspect that denotes an action as ongoing or incomplete is called the imperfect or imperfective. A third aspect, called the habitual or neutral is also possible in Ôrëños, and this is the default aspect that is the interpretation when no suffix is used. The perfective aspect is created by adding the suffix <-îb> /-aib/ immediately after the verb, the imperfective aspect is created by adding the suffix <-o> /-a/ (pronounced [-o] if it appears before an /s/ or at the end of the word), and the habitual/neutral aspect is created by leaving this slot of the verbal template empty (denoted in the interlinear gloss using the Ø symbol). Examples of each are supplied below:

- tenelî                                tenelîb                                tenelîo
- tu-enelî-Ø                                tu-enelî-îb                                tu-enelî-o
- 1.SG-eat-HAB                                1.SG-eat-PERF                                1.SG-eat-IMPERF
- ‘I eat’                                ‘I have eaten’                                ‘I am eating’

As is shown in §4.3, any of the three aspects can be combined with tense information to change the interpretation. (Tense information is intentionally omitted from the above examples but is provided in the following section where tense is discussed.)

#### 4.2.1. *Infinitives & Imperatives*

(Subj.Agr) > V > (**Asp**) > (Tense) > (Voice)

Although not technically types of aspect, infinitives and imperatives are created by adding a suffix to the verbal complex in the Aspect slot of the template.

Infinitives are the form of the verb created in English by adding ‘to’ e.g., ‘to go’, ‘to work’, ‘to eat’, ‘to think’. To form an infinitive in Ôrëños, the suffix -s is added to the verb in the Asp slot. Typically, no subject agreement prefix is used with infinitives, nor are aspect suffixes.

Imperatives are commands e.g., ‘go!’, ‘work!’, ‘eat!’. In order to form an imperative in Ôrëños, the suffix -dī is added to the verb in the aspect slot. Typically, no subject agreement prefix is used with infinitives; if additional specification as to who is being commanded is needed, a proper noun or pronoun can be added to the imperative verb in the subject slot of the sentence template.

Rarely, the future tense suffix, -demb (described below) can be combined with the imperative suffix to provide the interpretation of ‘do X eventually’. Some uses of the imperative and the future tense can also provide an idiomatic interpretation of ‘when your turn comes’.

- enelīdī                              enelīdīdemb
- enelī-dī                             enelī-dī-demb
- eat-IMP                             eat-IMP-FUT
- ‘eat!’                                ‘eat at some point’
  
- bobnīdī                             bobnīdīdemb
- bobnī-dī                            bobnī-dī-demb
- speak-IMP                        speak-IMP-FUT
- ‘speak!’                             ‘speak when your turn comes’

### 4.3. *Tense*

(Subj.Agr) > V > (Asp) > (**Tense**) > (Voice)

Thus far, our examples of verbs have been in the present tense; this is because—similar to the habitual or neutral aspect—the present tense is the default tense, which is created by leaving the tense slot blank (denoted in the interlinear gloss by the  $\emptyset$  symbol). In addition to the present tense (describing events that take place at the same time as the sentence is uttered),  $\hat{\text{O}}\text{r}\ddot{\text{e}}\text{n}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{s}$  also denotes the past tense (events that take place prior to the sentence being uttered) and future tense (events that will take place after the sentence is uttered). Like aspect, tense uses a simple set of suffixes: The future tense is denoted with the suffix *-demb*; the past tense is denoted with the suffix *-lemb*; and the present tense is the default tense, denoted by the absence of either of the other suffixes:

- |   |                                     |                          |                         |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| • | tenelī                              | tenelīb                  | tenelīo                 |
| • | tu-enelī- $\emptyset$ - $\emptyset$ | tu-enelī-īb- $\emptyset$ | tu-enelī-o- $\emptyset$ |
| • | 1.SG-eat-HAB-PRES                   | 1.SG-eat-PERF-PRES       | 1.SG-eat-IMPERF-PRES    |
| • | ‘I eat’                             | ‘I have eaten’           | ‘I am eating’           |
| • | tenelīlemb                          | tenelīblemb              | tenelīolemb             |
| • | tu-enelī- $\emptyset$ -lemb         | tu-enelī-īb-lemb         | tu-enelī-o-lemb         |
| • | 1.SG-eat-HAB-PST                    | 1.SG-eat-PERF-PST        | 1.SG-eat-IMPERF-PST     |
| • | ‘I ate’                             | ‘I had eaten’            | ‘I was eating’          |
| • | tenelīdemb                          | tenelībdemb              | tenelīodemb             |
| • | tu-enelī- $\emptyset$ -demb         | tu-enelī-īb-demb         | tu-enelī-o-demb         |
| • | 1.SG-eat-HAB-FUT                    | 1.SG-eat-PERF-FUT        | 1.SG-eat-IMPERF-FUT     |

- ‘I will eat’                      ‘I will have eaten’                      ‘I will be eating’

#### 4.4. **Voice**

(Subj.Agr) > V > (Asp) > (Tense) > (**Voice**)

Auxiliary verbs, including the one we call voice, are verbs that support the main verb of a sentence. In English, examples of auxiliary verbs are: may, might, must, can, could, shall, should, will, would. There is no single word in English that translates as the voice auxiliary in *Ôrěños*, though. The voice auxiliary in *Ôrěños* provides what is commonly referred to as the passive voice. So, in English, we might say ‘it was eaten’, which is in the passive voice because the being that did the eating is not mentioned (passive constructions can mention who did the action using a by-phrase and still be passive e.g., ‘it was eaten by John’).

To achieve a passive voice in *Ôrěños*, the auxiliary verb *šo* is added. Note: the Voice slot in the template is separate from the rest of the verbal template because this is a separate word that follows the verb rather than a suffix that attaches to it.

- etsā    geneliblemb            šo
- etsā    gu-eneli-īb-lemb            šo
- 3.SG.N   UNSPEC-eat-PERF-PST    PASS
- ‘it was eaten’

Note that in the example above, ‘it’ appears in the subject position of the English translation, it is actually the grammatical object of the verb (the thing that has the action of the sentence done to it)



and no actual subject is provided (it is not stated who performed the action of eating); therefore the subject agreement prefix uses the unspecified subject agreement and the ‘it’ pronoun appears before the verb; though, without an explicit subject, it is not obvious that this is the object of the verb (explained further in Chapter 5).

There is a series of other auxiliary verbs used in Ôrëños, which more closely resembles the list of English auxiliaries provided at the beginning of this section; these are the conditional, interrogative, and optative auxiliaries. The terms conditional, interrogative, and optative do not particularly matter; suffice it to say that these auxiliaries are separate from the voice auxiliary—they occur in a slightly different position of the sentence template. Because these other auxiliaries occur in a different position of the sentence, they are detailed in Chapter 5 (see §5.4).

#### **4.5. *Verbal Nouns & Verbal Adjectives***

Suffixes that change the grammatical category of a verb to a noun or an adjective do not take a special slot within the verbal template, they are simply added to the end of the verb without any other grammatical information (e.g., subject agreement, aspect, tense) and then treated as a member of the new category for purposes of adding additional affixes.

One way that a verb may change grammatical category is to become a noun, which is typically done in one of two ways: by referring to the act that the verb describes (frequently called a verbal noun or a gerund) or by referring to a being that is described by its common action. Each of these verbal nouns has a suffix to indicate the change, glossed as NMLZR or nominalizer in the interlinear gloss.

So, you could say ‘the greatship is destroying the city’ where ‘destroy’ is a verb, but you could also refer to the event of destroying with a noun by saying ‘the city’s destruction by the greatship’ where ‘destruction’ is the verbal noun. To turn *mīarī* ‘destroy’ into ‘destruction’, the suffix -kr is added:

mīarīkr. Compare the two forms of ‘destroy/destruction’ below using the example from §3.9 (the order of the other sentential elements is explained in Chapter 5).

- riatsvonró                      plendaáo                      **mīarío**
- riatsvon-ró                      plenda-áo                      mīarī-o
- greatship-DEF.3.SG      city-DEF.3.SG.POSS      destroy-IMPERF
- ‘the greatship is destroying the city’
  
- plendaáo                      gôz      riatsvonró                      **mīarīkr**
- plenda-áo                      gôz      riatsvon-áo                      mīarī-kr
- city-DEF.3.SG.POSS      by      greatship-DEF.3.SG      destroy-NMLZR
- ‘the city’s destruction by the greatship’

The other primary nominalization of verbs is to refer to something by the action it typically performs (e.g., compute > computer, calculate > calculator, teach > teacher). The suffix for this type of nominalization is -ms. Thus, the verb ‘kill’ is *dustī* and someone who kills, a ‘killer’, would be *dustīms*.

In some situations, verbs need to become adjectives, grammatically. For example, when we say the English sentence ‘he was killed’, *killed* is functioning like a verbal adjective. In English, the verbal adjective is created by adding the past tense suffix -ed and putting the verb in the correct sentence position. In Ôrēnos, a different suffix is used to denote this grammatical distinction: -ül. Using a similar example sentence as with the nominalizer, -kr, we can see the -ül suffix used:

- plendaáo      mīariül      rib

- plenda-ró miarī-ül rī-īb-Ø
- city-DEF.3.SG destroy-ADJZR be-PERF-PRES
- ‘the city is destroyed’

Another type of adjectivizer is the prefix *nā-*, which expresses ability. Thus, to turn the verb ‘know’ into the adjective ‘knowable’, the prefix *nā-* is added to the verb ‘know’, producing *nāpāpta*. When *nā-* is added to a verb, the adjectivizer suffix *-ül* is not also used, except in a particular construction:

- juljī v. ‘receive’
- nājuljī *adj.* ‘receivable’
- juljiül *adj.* ‘received’ [cf. *juljiblemb* v. ‘received’ in the past perfect]
- nājuljiül *adj.* ‘receptive’ *i.e.*, exhibiting the quality of receivable.

A secondary use of the suffix *-ül* is to add it to a noun, which still produces an adjective. When *-ül* is added to a noun, it is similar to adding it to a verb in that it conveys the meaning of ‘having the property of X’. For example, if you take the noun *verbā* ‘consilient’ and add the suffix *-ül*, you get *verbāül* ‘having the property of consilience’ *i.e.*, ‘consiliency’.

## 5. Syntax

A sentence, in the most basic terms, consists of three elements: a subject, the thing doing the action; a verb, the action itself; and, possibly, an object, the thing having the action done to it. In English, the typical order of these elements is Subject > Verb > Object; if you hear the sentence ‘the dog bit the mailman’ you are unlikely to think that there is a vicious mailman out there going around biting dogs. In Ôrëños, the typical order of the sentence elements is Subject > Object > Verb, so the same sentence would be the equivalent of ‘the dog the mailman bit.’

Of course, there are other elements that are included in a sentence, some of which have already been touched on in previous chapters, others that are introduced in the following subsections. For the most part, just like nouns followed the argument template and verbs followed the verbal template, most elements of a sentence can be slotted into the sentence template, with each of the elements of that template explained in the sections below:

(Embedded Clause) > Subj > (IO) > (DO) > Verb > (Voice) > (Adv) > (Q/Aux/Neg)

*Figure 3: Sentence Template*

### 5.1. *Subjects and Subject Drop*

(Embedded Clause) > **Subj** > (IO) > (DO) > Verb > (Voice) > (Adv) > (Q/Aux/Neg)



- |   |                               |                         |               |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| • | tu-pāpta-Ø-Ø                  | tok                     | pāpta-Ø-Ø     |
| • | 1.SG-know-HAB-PRES            | 1.SG.PRO                | know-HAB-PRES |
| • | ‘I know’ [informal]           | ‘I know’ [informal]     |               |
| • | vupāpta                       | iv                      | pāpta         |
| • | vu-pāpta-Ø-Ø                  | iv                      | pāpta-Ø-Ø     |
| • | 2.SG-know-HAB-PRES            | 2.SG.PRO                | know-HAB-PRES |
| • | ‘you know’ [informal]         | ‘you know’ [informal]   |               |
| • | sepāpta                       | John                    | pāpta         |
| • | se-pāpta-Ø-Ø                  | John                    | pāpta-Ø-Ø     |
| • | 3.SG-know-HAB-PRES            | John                    | know-HAB-PRES |
| • | ‘he/she/... knows’ [informal] | ‘John knows’ [informal] |               |

The preference for whether to drop the overt subject or the subject agreement prefix depends on what the subject is: if the subject of the sentence is a pronoun or otherwise already the topic of conversation, then the overt subject is usually dropped; if the subject of the sentence is a proper noun or is otherwise not already the topic of the sentence, then the subject agreement prefix is usually dropped. An example of the distinction between pronoun and proper noun can be seen in the 3rd person example above where if ‘John’ is dropped, the translation is ‘he/she/... knows’, but if the subject agreement prefix is dropped, then it is possible to understand who ‘he/she/...’ is (i.e., John).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the subject of the sentence is an argument; thus, the Subj slot of the sentence template is not restricted to just a pronoun or proper noun—as large an argument as you can

make using the argument template in Chapter 3 can be inserted into the Subj slot of the sentence template and be grammatical:

- rābad            ôrë    lôrvā   vūv    vindel gametró            nóz
- rābad-Ø        ôrë    lôrvā   vūv    vindel gametró            nóz
- hair-INDEF.SG   great   with   from   Vindel philosopher-DEF.3.SG   DIST.UNFAM
- sepāpta
- se-pāpta-Ø-Ø
- 3.SG-know-HAB-PRES
- ‘that philosopher from Vindel with great hair knows’ [formal]

Of course, with the above example, the subject agreement prefix *se-* could be omitted since the subject is otherwise specified.

## 5.2. *Direct and Indirect Objects*

(Embedded Clause) > Subj > (IO) > (DO) > Verb > (Voice) > (Adv) > (Q/Aux/Neg)

Just like the Subject (Subj) is a basic noun phrase (argument), the same is true of the Direct Object (DO) and Indirect Object (IO). Each of these slots in the above template can be filled with a full argument, as described in Chapter 3.

Discerning the difference between a direct and an indirect object can be a little complicated, but there are a few general things to look for that will let you get it correct most of the time. If an argument

is directly affected by the action in some way (e.g., ‘I hit **him**’), it is the direct object; if an argument is introduced by an adposition (see §3.6), it is probably an indirect object (e.g., ‘I hit him **with a stick**’). There are lots of exceptions to these rules, but they will allow you to correctly slot the arguments most of the time—when in doubt, go with your gut, keeping in mind that the Ôrēños order of elements is different than the canonical English order: ‘I with a stick him hit’ rather than ‘I hit him with a stick’.

- (tok) lēv pāskēn ĭfā tukabiblemb
- (tok) lēv pāskēn-Ø ĭfā tu-kab-ĭb-lemb
- (1.SG) with book-INDEF.SG 3.SG.M 1.SG-excite-PERF-PST
- ‘I excited him/her/... with a book’

### 5.3. *Adverbs*

(Embedded Clause) > Subj > (IO) > (DO) > Verb > (Voice) > (**Adv**) > (Q/Aux/Neg)

Adverbs are descriptors that tell you how an action is being done, words like ‘quickly’, ‘slowly’, or ‘argumentatively’. Additionally, adverbs can be used to further describe when or where an action takes place with words like ‘yesterday’, ‘tomorrow’, ‘soon’, ‘here’, or ‘there’.

In Ôrēños, the default position for adverbs is between the voice slot and the other auxiliary slot (Q/Aux/Neg); however, adverbs can also appear between the verb and voice slots, or after the Q/Aux/Neg slot—adverbs never appear before the verb, though, unless the adverb is modifying an embedded clause (in which case, they follow the verb of the embedded clause as normal).

- ĭste lēv riats vereenfo serevotiblemb **lapev vā**



- ïste lēv riats-Ø vereen-ró se-revot-īb-lemb **lapev** vā
- 3.PL.PRO with boat-INDEF.SG river-3.SG.DEF 3.PL-discover-PERF-PST **again** Q
- ‘Did they discover the river with a boat again?’
  
- ïste lēv riats vereen-ró serevotīblemb vā **lapev**
- ïste lēv riats-Ø vereen-ró se-revot-īb-lemb vā **lapev**
- 3.PL.PRO with boat-INDEF.SG river-3.SG.DEF 3.PL-discover-PERF-PST Q **again**
- ‘Did they discover the river with a boat again?’
  
- vereen-ró gurevotīblemb şo vā **lapev**
- vereen-ró gu-revot-īb-lemb şo vā **lapev**
- river-3.SG.DEF UNSPEC-discover-PERF-PST PASS Q **again**
- ‘Was the river discovered again?’
  
- vereen-ró gurevotīblemb şo **lapev** vā
- vereen-ró gu-revot-īb-lemb şo **lapev** vā
- river-3.SG.DEF UNSPEC-discover-PERF-PST PASS **again** Q
- ‘Was the river discovered again?’
  
- vereen-ró gurevotīblemb **lapev** şo vā
- vereen-ró gu-revot-īb-lemb **lapev** şo vā
- river-3.SG.DEF UNSPEC-discover-PERF-PST **again** PASS Q
- ‘Was the river discovered again?’

As can be seen with the various formulations of the above sentence, there are multiple positions for the adverb to appear in, and all of the above examples are grammatically correct.

#### 5.4. *Auxiliaries*

(Embedded Clause) > Subj > (IO) > (DO) > Verb > (Voice) > (Adv) > **(Q/Aux/Neg)**

Auxiliaries were first introduced in §4.4. when the voice auxiliary was introduced. This section discusses three other types of auxiliaries in Ôrëños: Conditional and optative auxiliaries, negation auxiliaries, and interrogative auxiliaries. Normally, these grammatical functions are broken out into separate categories; however, in Ôrëños, they are grouped together as they all fill the same slot within the sentence template and often combine in certain ways, showing their inherent relationship.

##### 5.4.1. *Conditional and Optative Auxiliaries*

The conditional and optative auxiliaries allow the speaker to refer to things that have the possibility of occurring; in English, the conditional is expressed with words like could, should, would, may, might, etc., and the optative expresses wishes or blessings (e.g., ‘may the road rise to meet you’).

Expressing the conditional or optative in Ôrëños is achieved through subtle changes to the word *perā*, which has come to be the word for ‘verb’ but is the root of most auxiliary verbs in the language. These auxiliary verbs do not carry tense information or other verbal inflections, those grammatical features are applied to the main verb of the clause. The basic conditional auxiliaries are provided in the following table, which is fleshed out in the following two sub sections:

	Conditional	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
Ability 'can'	ńāperā			
Desire 'should'	üperā			
Permission 'may'	dhēperā			
Obligation 'must'	dhūperā			
Possibility 'might'	řeperā			
Optative 'may it be so'	lēperā			

Using the verb *enelī* 'eat', each of the auxiliary verbs can be demonstrated, though in keeping the present tense and first person subject, some of these translations are a little odd:

- tenelī
- tu-enelī
- 1.SG-eat
- 'I eat'
  
- tenelī      ńāperā
- tu-enelī      ńā-perā
- 1.SG-eat      able-AUX
- 'I can eat' (i.e., 'I am able to eat')
  
- tenelī      üperā

- tu-enelī      ü-perā
- 1.SG-eat      desire-AUX
- ‘I should eat’
  
- tenelī      dhëperā
- tu-enelī      dhë-perā
- 1.SG-eat      permission-AUX
- ‘I may eat’ (i.e., ‘I am allowed to eat’)
  
- tenelī      dhūperā
- tu-enelī      dhū-perā
- 1.SG-eat      obligation-AUX
- ‘I must eat’ (i.e., ‘I am required to eat’)
  
- tenelī      ɽeperā
- tu-enelī      ɽe-perā
- 1.SG-eat      possible-AUX
- ‘I might eat’
  
- tenelī      lëperā
- tu-enelī      lë-perā
- 1.SG-eat      opt-AUX
- ‘May I eat’ (i.e., ‘I wish eating for myself’, a blessing or a well-wishing)

#### 5.4.2. Negative Auxiliaries

There are two strategies for negation in Ôrënos, both of which use the Q/Aux/Neg slot of the template. To negate the main verb in the sentence (or the sentence as a whole), the negative auxiliary *navr* is inserted in the template:

- *tupāpta*                                      *tupāpta*      *navr*
- *tu-pāpta*                                      *tu-pāpta*      *navr*
- 1.SG-know                                      1.SG-know      NEG
- ‘I know’    ‘I don’t know’

The second way that negation can be used is to combine it with one of the auxiliary verbs using the suffix *-vr*:

	Conditional	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
Ability ‘can’	<i>ñāperā</i>	<i>ñāperāvr</i>		
Desire ‘should’	<i>üperā</i>	<i>üperāvr</i>		
Permission ‘may’	<i>dhēperā</i>	<i>dhēperāvr</i>		
Obligation ‘must’	<i>dhūperā</i>	<i>dhūperāvr</i>		
Possibility ‘might’	<i>ṛeperā</i>	<i>ṛeperāvr</i>		
Optative ‘may it be so’	<i>lēperā</i>	<i>lēperāvr</i>		
No conditional	—	<i>navr</i>		

This suffix can be seen with the same example sentences as the conditional auxiliaries:

- tenelī          navr
- tu-enelī        navr
- 1.SG-eat        NEG
- ‘I don’t eat’
  
- tenelī          nāperāvr
- tu-enelī        nā-perā-vr
- 1.SG-eat        able-AUX-NEG
- ‘I can’t eat’ (i.e., ‘I am unable to eat’)
  
- tenelī          üperāvr
- tu-enelī        ü-perā-vr
- 1.SG-eat        desire-AUX-NEG
- ‘I shouldn’t eat’
  
- tenelī          dhēperāvr
- tu-enelī        dhē-perā-vr
- 1.SG-eat        permission-AUX-NEG
- ‘I may not eat’ (i.e., ‘I am not allowed to eat’)

- tenelī dhūperāvr
- tu-enelī dhū-perā-vr
- 1.SG-eat obligation-AUX-NEG
- ‘I mustn’t eat’ (i.e., ‘I am required not to eat’)
  
- tenelī ɾeperāvr
- tu-enelī ɾe-perā-vr
- 1.SG-eat possible-AUX-NEG
- ‘I might not eat’
  
- tenelī lēperāvr
- tu-enelī lē-perā-vr
- 1.SG-eat opt-AUX-NEG
- ‘May I not eat’ (i.e., ‘I wish no eating for myself’, a curse)

#### 5.4.3. *Yes/No Questions*

When it comes to asking questions in Ôrēnos, there are two basic strategies that you can employ, depending on the type of question being asked: yes/no questions or content questions, each of which have to do with filling the Q/Aux/Neg slot of the sentence template with a question word.

The most basic questions are those that require only an affirmative/negative response, known as yes/no questions. To form a yes/no question in Ôrēnos, the question word *vā* or *vār* (for the negative

interrogative) is added to the sentence; this creates the equivalent of ‘did/do/will...?’ / ‘didn’t/don’t/won’t...?’.

Similar to the negative auxiliaries, the interrogative can also be added to the conditional auxiliaries, both in the affirmative (e.g., would you X) or the negative (e.g., wouldn’t you X):

	Conditional	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
Ability ‘can’	ńāperā	ńāperāvr	ńāperāvā	ńāperāvār
Desire ‘should’	üperā	üperāvr	üperāvā	üperāvār
Permission ‘may’	dhēperā	dhēperāvr	dhēperāvā	dhēperāvār
Obligation ‘must’	dhūperā	dhūperāvr	dhūperāvā	dhūperāvār
Possibility ‘might’	ṛeperā	ṛeperāvr	ṛeperāvā	ṛeperāvār
Optative ‘may it be so’	lēperā	lēperāvr	—	—
No conditional	—	navr	vā	vār

Table 10: Auxiliary verb derivations

- venelilemb navr
- vu-enelī-lemb navr
- 2.SG-eat-PST NEG
- ‘you didn’t eat’
- venelilemb vā
- vu-enelī-lemb vā



- 2.SG-eat-PST Q
- ‘did you eat?’
- venelilemb vār
- vu-enelī-lemb vār
- 2.SG-eat-PST Q.NEG
- ‘didn’t you eat?’

#### 5.4.4. Content Questions

Only slightly more complicated than yes/no questions are content questions, those that ask for specific information, sometimes called wh-questions by English speakers—those that ask who, what, where, when, why, and how.

In Ôrėńos, content questions are created the same as yes/no questions—by adding the question particle to the Q/Aux/Neg slot of the sentence template—and by adding an inflected noun to the appropriate Subject/DO/IO portion of the template.

The inflected noun is created by taking any noun that specifies the type of answer you are looking for and adds the interrogative suffix *-vā*. For example, to ask ‘what’, this could be specified with the noun ‘event’ *indvā* with the interrogative marker: *indvāvā?* Who could be asked using *dōlbo* ‘person’: *dōlbovā*. How much could be asked using *isrodel* ‘price’ (*isrodelvā*) or *kadēja* ‘total’ (*kadėjavā*).

- dōlbovā pemnat řo řiz genelilemb vā
- dōlbo-vā pemnat -řo řiz gu-enelī-lemb vā
- person-Q melon-3.DEF.SG FAM.DIST UNSPEC-eat-PST Q

- ‘Who ate that melon?’
- nepāavā          venelilemb          vā
- nepāa-vā          vu-enelī-lemb          vā
- thing-Q                          2.SG-eat-PST                          Q
- ‘What did you eat?’

The interrogative suffix can reasonably be applied to any noun depending on how specific the speaker wants the question to be, even to the point where ‘what member of the Indāškar race...’ could be asked by adding the *-vā* suffix to *indāškar*. If multiple people with the name ‘John’ were in a room and the speaker wanted to ask ‘who’ did something, they could ask this question using *dôlbovā* ‘person-Q’ or by applying the *-vā* suffix to the name: *Johnvā* for ‘which John’.

### 5.5. *Embedded Clauses*

**(Embedded Clause)** > Subj > (IO) > (DO) > Verb > (Voice) > (Adv) > (Q/Aux/Neg)

Embedded clauses are subordinate to matrix clauses, providing additional information. These clauses contain the second tensed verb of a multi-verb sentence: e.g., In the sentence [I know [that you love sweet-bread]], ‘that you love sweet-bread’ is embedded within the matrix clause ‘I know X’.

The relative position of an embedded clause to a matrix clause in Ôrëños is the opposite to what we find in English: while in English we would get the sentence [I know [that you love sweet-bread]], in Ôrëños the order of the two clauses would be [[that you love sweet-bread] I know].

In English, embedded clauses are typically introduced by a complementizer such as ‘that’ or ‘if’, though they can sometimes be optional: ‘I know that you like pizza’ and ‘I know you like pizza’ are functionally equivalent. In Ôrëños, however, embedded clauses nearly always include a complementizer, which follows the Q/Aux/Neg slot of the template:

- ïste vereenró serevotdemb řeperā cher tavendaiblemb
- ïste vereen-ró se-revot-demb ře-perā cher tu-avenda-ib-lemb
- 3.PL river-3.DEF.SG 3-discover-FUTpossible-AUX COMP 1.SG-foretell-PERF-PST
- ‘I had foretold that they would discover the river.’

The two primary complementizers in Ôrëños are *cher* ‘that’ and *jav* ‘if’. *Cher* is used to denote most embedded clauses; *jav* is used to denote that the matrix clause is dependent on the embedded clause, such as in an example like ‘they would have discovered the river **if** they had moved around’:

- ïste seribsiblemb jav ïste vereenró serevotiblemb
- ïste se-rïbsi-ib-lemb jav ïste vereen-ró se-revot-ib-lemb
- 3.PL 3-move.around-PERF-PST if 3.PL river-3.DEF.SG 3-discover-PERF-PST
- řeperā
- ře-perā
- possible-AUX
- ‘They would have discovered the river if they had moved around.’

Using the Ôrëños word order, the literal translation would be akin to: ‘they moved around had if, they the river discovered have would’. Although this ordering may seem odd to a native English speaker, this is the correct grammatical order of words in Ôrëños.

### 5.6. *Clause as Subject*

Sometimes, the matrix clause is the subject of the embedded clause. For example, ‘that is the adventure that awaits you.’ This example can be broken down into two clauses: [that is the adventure [that awaits you]], or, put into the Ôrëños clause order: [[that awaits you] that is the adventure].

In this example, the subject of the embedded clause verb (await) is the matrix clause (that is the adventure). In informal Ôrëños, no subject agreement is needed on the embedded verb and can be left off. In formal Ôrëños, though, subject agreement should be included: The subject agreement prefix of an embedded clause whose subject is the matrix clause is the same subject agreement as the matrix verb.

In our example of ‘that is the adventure’, the demonstrative pronoun ‘that’ prompts an unspecified ( $\emptyset$ ) singular prefix on the verb ‘be’ (i.e., ‘is’); even though ‘that’ refers to ‘the adventure’, which is third person singular; thus, the embedded verb ‘await/wait’ receives the unspecified singular prefix as well.

### 5.7. *Coordination*

Coordination is the ability to combine multiple nouns/arguments, multiple verbs/clauses, or multiple sentences. In English, the most common methods of coordination are using ‘and’, ‘or’, or ‘but’, and it is almost the same in Ôrëños with the conjunction (*conj.*) coming between the elements being coordinated. The difference between English and Ôrëños is that there is no word in Ôrëños that specifically translates as ‘but’; instead, ‘but’ is created in Ôrëños with the formulation ‘and not’:

- iv    înth   tok
- iv    înth   tok
- 2.SG   and   1.SG
- ‘you and me’
  
- iv    îndh   tok
- iv    îndh   tok
- 2.SG   or    1.SG
- ‘you or me’
  
- iv    înth   navr   tok
- iv    înth   navr   tok
- 2.SG   and   not   1.SG
- ‘you and not me’

## 6. Creating New Words by Extension

Many words in Ôrëños can be used to create new words through various morphological processes such as adding a suffix or combining multiple words together to create a compound. Several of the processes for creating new words by extending the meanings of existing words are detailed below.

### 6.1. *Compounding*

Compounding is the process of combining two or more existing words to create a new meaning. For example, in English, we can have a ‘green house’ (a house that is green) or a ‘greenhouse’ (a house that encourages the growth of plants, which are often green). A compound word can either be the sum of its parts (e.g., an airbag is a bag of air), or can take on a new meaning (e.g., the greenhouse example above).

The same process works in Ôrëños: the word for ‘mountain’ is *dülā* and the word for ‘warrior’ is *viveks*; together, *viveksdülā* is the name of ‘warrior mountain’. Conversely, the word for ‘serious’ is *kü* and the word for ‘servant’ is *ërdë*; together, *küërdë* is a ‘serious servant’, which is the word for ‘student’.

To create a compound word in Ôrëños, the component words need to be identified as a head and a modifier: the head of a compound in Ôrëños is the word that provides the type of word the compound will be; the modifier of the compound is the word that specifies some quality or function. For example, with *viveksdülā*, the compound word describes a mountain (the type of word the compound is), therefore

*dülā* ‘mountain’ is the head; the so-called quality specified by this compound is *vīveks* ‘warrior’, therefore *vīveks* is the modifier of the compound. In Ôrēños, the modifier word appears to the left of the head of the compound; this is true whether the head of the compound is a noun, a verb, or an adjective (etc.).

An apparent contradiction to the rule that says modifiers go to the left of the compound heads are several compound words that contain a proper noun (see §3.3). Examples of these compounds are words like *Pāskendiñoldor* ‘the Dawntime Grimoire’, where the first member of the compound is *pāskēn* ‘book’. We would expect *pāskēn* to be the second member since the compound ultimately refers to a book, making it the head of the compound modified by the group, the *Ñoldor* ‘Dawntimers’.

This apparent contradiction is most commonly found with proper nouns, but not exclusively. These reversed compounds come from a time before the *zīśāya* (unification) and the standardization of the language by the Ôrēñā. They have been accepted as exceptions to the rule, but all new compounds created follow the modifier>head rule.

## 6.2. *Verbal Nouns and Verbal Adjectives*

The strategies to turn verbs into nouns or adjectives are explained in §4.5.

## 6.3. *Adverbializer*

The suffix *-dē* creates an adverb from a word that typically belongs to a different part of speech. Typically, this suffix is applied to adjectives (e.g., quick > quickly), but can also be applied to nouns to produce a meaning similar to ‘behaving like X’. For example, one could take *ērdēñā* ‘human species’ and add the *-dē* suffix to create an adverb to mean ‘human-like’ or ‘humanly’: *ērdēñādē*.

## 6.4. *Opposite*

The negation word *navr* can follow a noun to negate the argument, appear in the auxiliary slot of the sentence template to negate a clause, or can appear as a suffix to indicate the opposite of the word's original meaning—similar to the non-, un-, or anti- prefixes of English:

- kībī 'cheer/joy' > kībīnavr 'cheerless/joyless'
- bobnī 'speak' > bobnīnavr 'speechless'
- pāpta 'know' > pāptanavr 'unknown'



## 7. Idioms

**Ekte:** In the dictionary, this word is provided as ‘clear; transparent’. However, idiomatically, this word can also be used as an adjective meaning ‘without deceit; without guile’.

**Lôrvādhēs:** As well as. This idiomatic expression can be used without additional grammar to agree.

**Numfūlodē:** An adverbialization of the noun *numfūlu*, which refers to an annoying insect. *Numfūlodē* is used to denote some pejoration on the part of the speaker towards the addressee, frequently translated as ‘just’, ‘simply’, or ‘obviously’.

## 8. Example Translations

### 8.1. *All Good Things: Q's Soliloquy*

“Neritôrelânso vanüpta numfûludē vār,” bedh ĩra tepteno kü tukiniblemb. “Īvē lardenarī ĩnth ĩvē kolfī enkathas ĩvē bāvenerāfo viesabdi ja kinomris tilernlemb gābet tat lāg elvad ĩvē zāg viesabdiblemb. Lok tat partem elvād ĩvē dhē usrantī usibīülnavr nājuljūl vīriblemb. Īvē gusongfī cher zāg ôrikûlumró gīb... Sūvilumrī gojītsademibo ĩnth sūvilumńenrī gukinomrīo navr, ĩnth navr zaptikakrkāfēmī nāpāpt-anavr ganüpta.”

“You just don’t get it, do you, captain?” Q asked, leaning in towards him. “We wanted to see if you had the ability to expand your mind and your horizons... And for one brief moment, you did. For that one fraction of a second, you were open to options you’d never considered. That’s the exploration that awaits you... Not mapping the stars and studying nebulae but charting the unknowable possibilities of existence.”

- “neritôrelânso      vanüpta                      numfûludē      vār,”
- neritôrelân-šo      vu-anüpta-Ø                      numfûludē      vār
- captain-2.SG.DEF      2.SG-comprehend-PRES                      simply      NEG.Q
  
- bedh              ĩra      tepteno                                      kü      tukiniblemb.

- bedh      iřa      tu-epten-o-∅      kü      tu-kin-ib-lem̄b
- towards      3.SG.M 1.SG-lean-IMPERF-PRES Q<sup>6</sup>      1.SG-ask-PERF-PST.
- iřē      lardenari      inth      iřē      kolfi      enkathas      iřē
- iřē      lardena-ři      inth      iřē      kol-ři      enkatha-s      iřē
- 2.PL.POSS      mind-3.PL.DEF and      2.PL.POSS      limit-3.PL.DEF expand-INFIN 2.PL
- bāvenerāro      viēsabdi      jav      kinomri      tilernlem̄b
- bāvenerā-ro      vi-esabdi-∅-∅      jav      kinomri-s      ti-lern-lem̄b
- ability-3.SG.DEF      2.PL-possess-HAB-PRES COMP      learn-INFIN      1.PL-want-PST
- gābet      tat      lāg      elvad      iřē      zāg
- gābet      tat      lāg      elvad      iřē      zāg
- moment      one      brief      for.the.duration.of      2.PL      DEM.PRO
- viēsabdi-lem̄b.
- vi-esabdi-ib-lem̄b
- 2.PL-possess.PERF.PST.
- lok      tat      partemelvād      iřē      dhē      usrantī      usibiūlnavr
- lok      tat      partemelvād      iřē      dhē      usran-tī      usibi-ül-navr

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<sup>6</sup> This name is transliterated from the English ‘Q’, which in ironic coincidence makes the Ôřenos equivalent translatable as ‘serious’.

- second one milli in.the.run.of 2.PL for.BEN option-INDEF.PL consider-ADJZR-NEG
- nājuljiül vīrīblemb.
- nā-julji-ül vī-rī-īb-lemb
- ADJZR-receive-ADJZR 2.PL-be-PERF-PST.
- īvē gusongfī cher zāg ôrikūlumfo
- īvē gu-songfī-Ø-Ø cher zāg ôrikūlum-fo
- 2.PL UNSPEC-wait-HAB-PRESCOMP DEM.PRO quest^intense-3.SG.DEF
- gīb... sūvilumfī gojitsademibo înth
- gu-īb-Ø-Ø sūvilum-rī gu-ojitsa-demib-o-Ø înth
- UNSPEC-be-HAB-PRES... star-3.PL.DEF UNSPEC-map-make-IMPERF-PRES and
- sūvilumñenfī gukinomrīo navr înth navr
- sūvilumñen-rī gu-kinomrī-o-Ø navr înth navr
- nebula-3.PL.DEF UNSPEC-study-IMPERF-PRES NEG and NEG
- zaptikakrkārēmī nāpāptanavr ganüptao
- zaptikakr-kārēm-rī nā-pāpta-navr gu-anüpta-o-Ø
- existence-possibility-3.PL.DEF ability-know-NEG UNSPEC-comprehend-IMPERF-PRES

## 8.2. Ôrēnos-English Dictionary

Each entry in the Ôreños-English dictionary is marked by an abbreviation to denote the word's part of speech or component roots for compounds. The most updated content is available on [www.theringofworlds.com/conlang](http://www.theringofworlds.com/conlang) in PDF format.

*adj*: adjective.

*adv*: adverb.

*aux*: auxiliary.

*cardnum*: cardinal number.

*comp*: complementizer.

*conn*: connective.

*dem*: demonstrative.

*exp*: expression.

*expl*: expletive.

*multipnum*: multiplicative numeral.

*n*: noun.

*nprop*: proper noun.

*ordnum*: ordinal numeral.

*post sfx*: postposition.

*prep*: preposition.

*pro*: pronoun.

*quant*: quantifier.

*rtwd*: root words.

*v*: verb.

## 9. Creating Ôrëños

### Joseph:

People who construct languages, known as conlangers, can be brought onto a project at any stage. It is not unusual for creators (e.g., authors, directors, game designers) to decide a professional conlanger is needed late in the writing process, after dozens of names, or even full phrases have already been created.

When this is the case, the conlanger begins with an analysis of the existent components of the language: sounds and sound combinations, words that are already defined and their order within any existent phrases, and any existent spelling conventions. After the initial analysis, the conlanger can make recommendations for expanding, developing, or (if possible) reworking the system.

Take for example the language Klingon created for the *Star Trek* franchise by Dr. Marc Okrand: before Okrand started to work on the language, James Doohan (Scotty) created a version of Klingon that had been heard in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. The sounds of the language heard in the 1979 movie and their translations (even though the exact one-to-one correspondence for word translations were not set in stone) needed to ultimately be part of the Klingon language that Okrand constructed.

In the case of Ôrëños, the author of *The Ring of Worlds* novel series, Christopher Harris, began creating the language by creating a large list of words, character and place names, and a Romanized writing system—along with a sketch of the phonological (i.e., sound) system of the language.

Chris and I videoconferenced so he could tell me about his method, progress, and vision for the language and the setting the language would be used in; from there, I proceeded to elicit opinions on

different types of linguistic structures: should the language follow the same basic pattern as English? Should the language put the verb first in the sentence? Was there a desire to have a morphologically complex language with lots of affixes to denote different grammatical roles?

Once I had an understanding of what Chris wanted, it was time to start an analysis of the existing phonology, which consisted of Romanized characters with basic descriptions of how each would be pronounced in Ôrëños and rules for pronunciation changes in certain contexts. One of my goals as a conlanger is to create naturalistic languages; in order to achieve that, I employ linguistic theory typically used to understand natural languages but reversed to create a plausible system.

On the phonological side, when designing a sound inventory for a conlang, I use the Contrastive Hierarchy. This theory successively divides a branching tree diagram by phonological features (features specify certain properties of sounds such as are they voiced, do they completely stop the air flow, are they made using the lips, etc.) until all the basic sounds of a language are adequately defined.

Going through this process, I found a few gaps in the inventory—sounds that Chris hadn't included in the original concept but would seem natural to include. After some discussion, we arrived at the complete inventory.

The next step in creating Ôrëños was to sketch out the basic form of the grammar. In our initial video chat, we decided that Ôrëños would be an SOV language: in other words, that the basic order of elements in a sentence would be Subject, Object, Verb (as contrasted with the Subject, Verb, Object order of English).

I sketched a few syntactic tree diagrams (again, binary branching structures that account for the order of sentence elements and their relationships with one another). By doing this exercise, I knew what the basic structure of the sentence would be and could refer back to those diagrams any time I wasn't sure how the language would handle a new type of construction to see where it logically fit into the existing structure.

Once I understood what the structure of the Ôrëños sentence would be, I could get to work on fleshing out additional grammatical words and affixes that would be necessary for the structure that I had designed. Fortunately, while I was working on the behind-the-scenes grammar of the language, Chris was proceeding at break-neck speed on lexical development—creating the dictionary with many words for the language.

Because of his lexical creation, there were a plethora of examples of what words in the language should look like so that I could complement the style when adding affixes, function words (e.g., determiners, adpositions, etc.), and other grammatical elements. At this stage, I also fleshed out systems such as the definite suffixes, subject-verb agreement prefixes, and completed the partial pronoun system.

As each of these component systems of the grammar were created, the words Chris created could be used as examples in the text, and I could check to ensure the system was working as intended. During this stage of the conlanging process, I attempted to anticipate the different patterns that would be needed for using the language in the future and to create a section in the grammar on everything I thought would be necessary, as well as providing frequent examples.

The real test for the conlang was in doing a translation challenge. I chose one of my favorite soliloquies from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, a challenging passage that contained multiple grammatical constructions, including reported speech and clauses as subjects. This exercise highlighted a few gaps in the existing grammar (e.g., the correct verbal agreement prefix to use when a clause is the subject of another clause), and these were created during the translation process.

While I write this synopsis, Chris is still hard at work creating additional vocabulary and working on learning organizational tools to take our existing dictionary based in Microsoft Excel and create custom sorting etc., for the order of the Ôrëños alphabet. While my work on the Ôrëños language was primarily in constructing the behind-the-scenes grammar of the language and writing this users' guide,



Chris continues to work on growing the language in terms of adding words to the dictionary and compiling additional translation.

## 10. About Joseph W. Windsor:

My interest in language goes back as far as I can remember—from a young child playing with secret codes for friends to a teen buying foreign language dictionaries purely for interest (though, not understanding the concept of grammar at the time) and writing a lot of poetry and prose. In university, I studied (with mixed success), Irish, German, Latin, and Blackfoot with brief forays into other languages when workshops were available (e.g., Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, Klingon).

I had always enjoyed conlanging (constructing artificial languages), though I didn't know the term at the time. I would try to overlay terms from my German dictionary onto English sentence structure to “translate into German” or work with a Latin dictionary to give wizards in Dungeons & Dragon games arcane sentences for casting spells (still completely ungrammatical).

By the time I started my PhD studies in Linguistics, I was becoming more and more familiar with conlangs with the release of TV/films like Lord of the Rings, Avatar, and Game of Thrones. Though, it wasn't till a friend asked, “Can you do a lecture on the linguistics of Klingon?” that I jumped into conlanging with both feet.

Since my initial prompt to learn the linguistics of Klingon, I have done local and international lectures on the linguistic structure of Klingon, published an article with Robyn Stewart on second language acquisition of Klingon stress patterns, hosted the 7th Language Creation Conference in 2017, and have created more than 20 conlangs.

Currently (as of writing this in 2022), I am the president of the Language Creation Society—an international not-for-profit dedicated to the promotion of the art, craft, and science of constructed languages—a volunteer position that I have held since 2018.

## Abbreviation Glossary