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Section II:

Phonetics and Phonology

2.1. Overview

Davis once scrawled in the margin of his notes that the draconic language was “a whole bunch of hissing and every other unpleasant sound you can imagine thrown in there just to torment those who speak it...and *listen* to it!” This is a slightly biased description—one which he later changed—although it is accurate in that the draconic language is replete with an inventory of sounds which make it sound hissing, sibilant and breathy, as can be expected by the nature of the language’s speakers. This section goes over the phonetic inventory of the draconic languages; the sounds which make it up; the way in which they are pronounced, or the nearest possible way for those who are not dragons to pronounce them; as well as the way these sounds are altered when coming into contact with one another. At first brush, Srínawésin sounds extremely alien and often unpleasant to hear. Although Davis notes that if you ever have the opportunity to hear a dragon speak in its native language for any amount of time, this language can be quite beautiful, the alien and foreign quality never quite goes away. The phonetic aspects which most separate Srínawésin from the younger races’ languages are:

Continuant Sounds

The phonetic inventory of all languages of which I am familiar with have stop consonants¹ both voiced (*b, d, g*) and unvoiced (*p, t, k*) to varying degrees, but they all possess a few stop consonants as a matter of course. The Dragon Tongue for one reason or another has not a single true stop consonant in its inventory, by far preferring continuant sounds such as *s, x, w, y, h, l, r* as well as a unique sound *š* (as depicted in this orthography). Davis once posited that this was due to the construction of their vocal passageway although most of the Kindred which he met and conversed with spoke several Qxnéréx languages quite well despite the plethora of stop sounds found therein. After discussing the matter at length with his sources, Howard discovered that while dragons *could* reproduce the various sounds in our languages, they had difficulty doing so, managing it only by various tricks, much as a ventriloquist learns to speak without the use of their lips.

Thus, I am quite sure that the physical construction of the Kindred’s vocal passageway limits their ability to fully stop the air leaving their throats without closing off the air passage entirely and thus interrupting the ability to speak. This would explain the lack of true stop consonants in Srínawésin and this feature lends a hissing, lispy quality to the Dragon Tongue.

Affricate Sounds

Affricate sounds are those sounds produced when the air passage is stopped then released with a slightly restricted quality, producing a half-stop/half-continuant sound such as in the English *chair* (which is a combination of the ‘*t*’ and ‘*sh*’ sounds). Although the Dragon Tongue does not possess any true stops, it does possess a group of sounds which are close to full stops or affricates, written in this paper as *qs, qx,* and *ts*. My only explanation for the lack of *stops* but the inclusion of *affricates* in the draconic language is that the easiest method used to stop the passage of air *necessitates* a fricative sound following it (much as the *s* in *dogs* is pronounced as a /z/ due to various pronunciation factors in rapid human speech) unless concentrated effort is put into it. Several of the affricates found in Srínawésin are, to my knowledge, unique or at least rare as separate phonemes within a language and these sounds are often the most difficult for humans to reproduce. These sounds lend both a hissing as well as tongue-tying difficulty to the dragons’ language, and along with unvoiced vowels (see below) are responsible for the “foreign accent” which all Qxnéréx speaking the Dragon Tongue apparently have.

¹ Stop consonants are those given above, *p, b, t, d, k, g* as well as glottal stops where the passage of air through the mouth is *stopped* for a moment then released, thus producing the desired sound.

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Voiced/Unvoiced Distinctions: The distinction between voiced and unvoiced sounds (the vibration of the vocal chords vs. not vibrating them as in *p* and *b*) is common throughout all the languages of humans, such as the first sounds in English’s *to* and *do*, for instance, or the final sounds in Old Irish *macc* and *mag*. Srínawésin possesses this distinction but in a very unique way. All consonants in the Dragon Tongue are voiceless, spoken with a whispering or breathy quality. Although consonants are all voiceless, *vowels* are divided up into *voiced* and *unvoiced* vowels (*á, é, í,* and *ú* in the former case and *a, e, i,* and *u* in the latter)! This strange feature seems to be due to particularities of the dragons’ speech apparatus, they do not possess vocal chords as we do, but in order to make a *voiced* sound they instead vibrate a membrane deeper in their chest. This membrane is easily vibrated when their throat is open (as in pronouncing vowels) but not so easily when constricted (as in making consonant sounds). Davis believed that the Shúna’s extremely good hearing easily made up for this “deficiency” (as a human would call it) as they were capable of hearing even entirely voiceless words as well as voiced ones, even over long distances. Although dragons can learn to reproduce voiced and unvoiced consonants to replicate the speech of the younger races, they do *not* make use of this membrane to make the *b, d, th, g* and other voiced consonants, instead using membranes in their nasal passages to slightly hum the sound with a faint nasal quality that gives them a slight accent if they are not adept at it.

These distinctions are part of the Northern Latitudinal dialect spoken by Bloody Face. Other dialects of draconic apparently include long/short vowel distinctions (primarily in the older and Oceanic forms), fricatives such as *ç* (which Howard describes as a “rolled *s*”) in the most ancient form of the language, affricates such as *qš, qw, qł* and *qç* as well as a *mw* sound in most Oceanic languages, such as the word for humans, *qs’mwêhuñ* or “the boat people.”

2.2. A Note on the Orthography of this Paper

“Orthography” is a technical term which simply means “How something is written.” Davis’ methodology was precise and professional but his orthographic system seemed to change several times throughout the years and thus was not very systematic at all. I began working with Srínawésin primarily because I discovered his re-re-revised orthographic system, which he began to use relatively late during his work. In order to simplify the writing of this paper, and to keep anyone from wasting their time, I have systemized his orthography, removing some of the more archaic symbols he used (some of which he was really fond of) and replacing them with more “common” symbols. The removed or revised symbols include:

<u>Original</u>	<u>This Paper</u>	<u>Original</u>	<u>This Paper</u>
<i>æ</i>	<i>ae</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>š</i>
<i>ɑ</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ć</i>	<i>ch</i>
<i>ε</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ś</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>ì</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ĵ</i>	<i>ý</i>
<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ĵ</i>	<i>y</i>
<i>þ</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>χ</i>	<i>h</i>
<i>lh</i>	<i>ł</i>	<i>ş</i>	<i>sh</i>

Interestingly, Davis preferred to mark *unvoiced* vowels while leaving the voiced varieties unmarked. I have reversed this notation, indicating the voiced vowels as *á, é, í,* and *ú* while leaving the unvoiced forms unmarked. I believe this is a better representation of the way these vowels are thought of by their speakers as being ‘naturally unvoiced,’ in keeping with the general unvoiced tendency of the language as a whole.

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In this paper, certain things are expressed in the *orthography* which are not really differentiated in the spoken language. This is similar to the English difference between *their*, *they're* and *there*, all of which are spoken identically but which are written differently because they function differently within a sentence. There are certain contractions which take place in Srínawésin which I choose to represent in the written form (although Davis did not) to help the learner as well as to keep grammatical conditions clear. For instance the English translation of the phrase 'I sleep' would be written and pronounced as below:

Davis' Original Orthography	[<i>tsítsejɑ-n</i>]
Orthographic Presentation	[<i>tsítseya'n</i>]
Pronounced Form	/ <i>tsítseyan</i> /

These variations mostly occur in the contractions of evidential sentence enclitics such as in the example above and those in **2.8. Deletion of Repeated Final and Non-Final Syllables**.

2.3. Vowels

As noted above, vowels are divided up into two groups, *unvoiced* and *voiced* and distinctions between the two do form minimal pairs, differentiating the root *hawá-* "female goat" from *hawá-* "meat." Davis, half-jokingly says that this difference is vital not only to speaking correctly, but to not insulting the listener and thus having your face ripped off.

<i>a</i>	This vowel is pronounced basically like the English vowel in "f <u>a</u> ther" although it is <i>unvoiced</i> with a sort of whispered, breathy quality to it, pronouncing the sound without vibrating the vocal chords. In the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) it would be represented as / <i>a</i> /.
<i>á</i>	This vowel is pronounced exactly like "f <u>a</u> ther," including voicing, and to a dragon it is as distinct from the <i>a</i> as <i>p</i> and <i>b</i> are to English speakers. In IPA it is / <i>a</i> /.
<i>i</i>	Pronounced as in English "mach <u>i</u> ne" or "s <u>ee</u> " but with a breathy, unvoiced quality, sometimes with a slight palatalization forming a <i>y</i> sound. In IPA it is / <i>i</i> /.
<i>í</i>	Voiced version of <i>i</i> , pronounced exactly as in "mach <u>i</u> ne" or "s <u>ee</u> ". In IPA it is / <i>i</i> /.
<i>e</i>	Pronounced as in English "b <u>e</u> t" but with breathy, unvoiced quality. In IPA it is / <i>e</i> /.
<i>é</i>	Voiced version of <i>e</i> , pronounced as in English "b <u>e</u> t". In IPA it is / <i>e</i> /.
<i>u</i>	Pronounced as in English "b <u>oo</u> t" but with breathy, unvoiced quality. In IPA it is / <i>u</i> /.
<i>ú</i>	Voiced version of <i>e</i> , pronounced as in English "b <u>oo</u> t". In IPA it is / <i>u</i> /.

Noticeably the phoneme /*o*/ is absent from this dialect. I know of no physical or biological reason for this phoneme to be left out as other dialects include it, but Davis notes that the Northern Latitudinal dialect apparently changed all the *o*/*ó* sounds to *a*/*á* at least fifty draconic generations ago.

2.4. Semi-Vowels

There are several sounds that while originally being vowels are altered in a particular way to form a sort of semi-vowel, usually through vowel assimilation as detailed in **2.6.2. Vowel Assimilation** below. They maintain an unvoiced/voiced distinction as with all vowels but tend to alter the *pronunciation of the preceding sound* rather than form a wholly distinct sound of their own.

<i>y</i>	This orthographic symbol is close to an <i>i</i> or <i>y</i> sound but represents a palatalization of the preceding sound (much like giving it a <i>y</i> quality). In IPA it would be represented by / <i>y</i> / and for instance the word <i>Tsyenrísá'n</i> would be represented as / <i>t^{sy}ɛnrísɑn</i> /. Another common usage are sounds such as <i>y</i> / <i>s^y</i> / and <i>xy</i> / <i>j^y</i> /.
<i>ý</i>	A voiced version of the above <i>y</i> sound pronounced the same but voiced. In IPA it is / <i>y</i> /.

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- w* This sound is similar to the *y* sound but gives a rounded-lip quality to the preceding sound. It is important that this is the way *a human would articulate it*, but the Shúna do not actually round their lips to achieve this quality. In IPA it is /^w/, therefore [sw] would be pronounced as /s^w/ and [xw] would be pronounced as /ʃ^w/.
- w* This sound is the voiced equivalent of the simple *w* semi-vowel although voicing distinctions are not shown in the orthography. In IPA it is /^w/.

2.5. Consonants

The consonantal inventory of the Dragon Tongue is somewhat easier than the vowels, as all are unvoiced. Several sounds are extremely difficult to produce and in fact it might be physically impossible for humans to reproduce them, however the method for pronouncing the nearest possible approximate sounds are given below.

Sibilants

- h* Pronounced as in the name “Harry” but with a slightly more breathy expulsion of air. Sometimes, in excited or angry speech it is pronounced more as a *ch* sound as in Welsh *chwarae* ‘game’ or German’s *Bach*. In IPA it is /h/ and sometimes as /χ/.
- ł* A “lisped *l*” sound somewhat like the Welsh pronunciation of certain *l*-sounds (orthographically represented in Welsh as ‘*ll*’). But, unlike the Welsh pronunciation, the sides of the mouth are tensed much tighter, the lips are opened more and more air is allowed to spill out with a greater hissing quality. This sound can be pronounced by humans by placing the tip of the tongue in the same place as one would if they were producing the normal ‘*l*’ sound but allowing the air to spill out from either side of the tongue with a pronounced hissing sound. This sound is classed as part of the sibilant sounds, *s*, *š*, *x* and so on. In IPA it would be written as /l^s/ as opposed to the usual Welsh sound /l/.
- s* This sound is pronounced as the English sound in “soon,” although it tends to be held *slightly* longer than in standard English pronunciation. Long enough to be noticeable although not as long as the *š*. In IPA it is /s/.
- š* The long version of ‘*s*’ it is pronounced as above but approximately twice as long, making a drawn out, hissing sound as when someone is hissing the word “yessss” unpleasantly. It is better to hold it overlong than to make it too short and confuse it with the short *s*. This is a minimal pair with *s* and is not a geminate sound; it is truly a long, hissed ‘*s*’. In IPA it is /s:/.
- x* Pronounced as in the English “shade” although sometimes with a *slightly* longer quality to it. The long and short versions do *not* form a minimal pair. I have borrowed the convention of writing *x* to represent the ‘*sh*’ sound from the classical Spanish orthographies of Mesoamerican languages and some Chinese Romanized alphabets. In IPA this sound is /ʃ/.
- sh* This sound is *not* the same as the ‘*sh*’ in English (see the *x* sound above) but is pronounced as it is written as an ‘*s*’ sound with an ‘*h*’ following. This sound is similar to an affricate in that there is one sound with a release of another sound pronounced in almost the same moment, but as both of these sounds are sibilants it is better to think of this sound as an emphatic, breathy ‘*s*.’ Thus, a word such as *shiwasu* ‘algae’ is pronounced as ‘*s*-hee—wah—soo’ with all the vowels and consonants *unvoiced*. In IPA it would be written as /s^h/.
- th* This strange sound is written with the common English digraph ‘*th*’ although it is pronounced with a slightly lisped and harsh quality rather than the standard English pronunciation. Although this sound can be replicated by simply articulating it as ‘*th*’ it sounds foreign and strange to the Shúna, and the most authentic way of pronouncing this sound is to articulate it as if you suffered from a lisp, even exaggerating it if need be. It is interesting to note that the standard English pronunciation sounds as if the speaker has a lisp to one of the Shúna while the correct pronunciation sounds like a lisp to English speakers! In IPA (the International Phonetic Alphabet) it would be best represented as /θ^s/.

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Affricates

- ch* This sound does not occur naturally in Srínawésin as a separate phoneme but is rather a contraction of two sounds, usually *x* and *ts*, discussed below in 2.6.1. **Consonant Assimilation**. Although it is not a separate phoneme, it is basically pronounced as in the English word “**such**” although sometimes is drawn out slightly longer than the standard pronunciation. In IPA it is /tʃ/.
- qs* Very similar to the English sound as in “fox” but this sound is a true affricate in Srínawésin and can come at the beginning of words such as *qsánir* ‘moon’. The *q* part of the affricate tends to be pronounced farther back in the throat (when humans replicate it), similar to the uvular *q* in Iñuit or Arabic languages. In IPA it is /qʃ/ sometimes with a slightly lengthened sound as in /qʃː/ represented as *qš* in the orthography although *qs* and *qš* do not form a minimal pair and represent an assimilation of two sounds.
- qx* This sound is difficult for many humans. Similar to the sound in the word “**action**” this sound is essentially a ‘*ksh*’ sound but is a true affricate and can come at the beginning, middle or end of word such as the root *qxeqxí-* ‘fern’ pronounced as “*ksheh-kshee*.” The *q* is pronounced similarly to the sound noted in *qs* above. In IPA it is /qʃ/. This sound appears to be similar to the initial sound of the Sanskrit name “*Kśemendra*.”
- ts* This affricate is pronounced as in the Japanese “**Tsunami**” or in the English “**its**” but is a true affricate and can come at the beginning of a sound such as *tsúhú-* ‘darkness’. In IPA it is /tʃ/.

Nasals, Liquids and Semi-Vowels

- n* An unvoiced version of *n* as in the English pronunciation of “**no**” but with a breathy, voiceless quality. In IPA it is /n̥/. Very rarely this sound is pronounced as *ng* although there seems to be no pattern to the *n* vs. *ng* pronunciation that Davis could discern, thus he believed that these are simply allophones of one another. The only draconic speaker Davis repeatedly notes used a *ng*-pronunciation was the female Moonchild so it is possible this is a female speech pattern only, or might be simply an accent of this individual or even a speech impediment but I have almost no evidence for any supposition.
- r* This sound roughly corresponds to a rolled or trilled ‘*r*’ as in the Spanish pronunciation of “**pero**” or some Scottish/English pronunciations of the ‘*r*’. Sometimes with a slight growling quality as in the French pronunciation of “**Paris**,” however in all cases it is *unvoiced*. This sound is usually pronounced by dragons with a slight purring sound which cannot be exactly duplicated by humans perfectly and therefore can only be approximated as above. In IPA it is /r̥/.
- w* A simple, unvoiced version of the English sound “**when**” or “**what**” when pronounced as older people tend to do. This is the only “bilabial” sound in the Dragon Tongue although dragons do not possess lips in the way humans do, thus do not make use of these anatomical features in pronunciation. In IPA it is /w̥/.
- y* An unvoiced version of the English word “**yet**” with a breathy, whispered quality. In IPA it is /y̥/.

2.6. Phonology

Phonology is the discipline of understanding not just the individual sounds that comprise a language, but the way in which they are put together and how they influence one another. An example is how the ‘*s*’ in both *bugs* and *dogs* are pronounced in normal English speech as /z/ and not as [s] as they are written. Despite the difference in pronunciation, English speakers understand that these sounds are the same as the ‘*s*’ in *cats*, if they even realize they pronounced them differently at all. The complexities of pronunciation are—thankfully—somewhat eased by the fact that sounds in the Dragon Tongue have only a general influence on one another during normal speech, but it is important to note that assimilation only occurs *within a word* when the various affixes are applied to the roots to make meaningful words, *not between* two different words.

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2.6.I. Consonant Assimilation

The main rule of consonant assimilation is:

$$(1) \quad (\text{Consonant A}) + (\text{Consonant A}^2) = (\text{Consonant A})$$

Essentially this means that if a sound such as *qx* is placed next to another of the same (*qx* in this case) within a word the two sounds combine to produce a single sound, i.e. a single *qx*. An example is found in the first word of the sentence:

Sawqxítsúts anneqsánisyáhur laxáxéhášér aQsánir sa Qxéyész'n.
Moonchild spoke to the bright moon in the unreachable heavens above.

The first word *Sawqxítsúts* is comprised of the root *qxítsú-* 'to speak to' along with several affixes including the infix *-uqx-* denoting the object of the verb. Instead of **Sawqxqxítsúts*² the two 'qx' sounds are combined, thus forming the proper form: *sawqxítsúts*.

Another rule is similar:

$$(2) \quad (\text{Consonants } s, \check{s}, x) + (\text{Consonants } s, \check{s}, x) = \check{s}$$

In other words, if any of the sibilants *s*, *š*, or *x* come in contact with the sibilants *s*, *š* or *x* then they assimilate, turning into the long *š* sound. This holds true even if the initial 's' is part of an affricate such as *ts* or *qs* becoming *tš* and *qš* respectively, although neither of these two sounds form minimal pairs with their shorter sisters but instead represent assimilation. The exception to this is when *x* and *x* come in contact, detailed below. Additional rules follow the same model:

$$(3) \quad (\text{Consonants } qs, qx) + (\text{Consonants } x, s, \check{s}) = q\check{s} \quad \text{Pronounced with the long 's' but is not a minimal pair with the shorter 'qs'}$$

$$(4) \quad (\text{Consonant } ts) + (\text{Consonants } s, \check{s}) = t\check{s} \quad \text{Pronounced with the long 's' but is not a minimal pair with the shorter 'ts'}$$

There are three exceptions to these overarching rules:

$$(5) \quad (\text{Consonant } x) + (\text{Consonant } x) = x \quad \text{Rule 1) seems to take precedence here rather than Rule 2)}$$

$$(6) \quad (\text{Consonant } qx) + (\text{Consonant } x) = qx \quad \text{And not } q\check{s} \text{ with the same reasons as above}$$

$$(7) \quad (\text{Consonant } ts) + (\text{Consonant } x) = ch$$

This contraction only occurs then the *ts* occurs first and the *x* afterwards, not the reverse and usually only applies *within a single word*. However, when the evidential question words *xi/xa/xu* follows the Class I Subject ending *-ets* it often contracts to *-ech* as an exception of this rule. This is

² Or a geminate consonant replicating the sound pronounced as /sawq'q'it'ut^s/ or "sawqsh-qshee-tsoots"

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further discussed in section 7.3. **Evidential Sentence Enclitics** below. One final “rule” is how the syllable *wu* is treated by Srínawésin’s speakers. I say “rule” because unlike most of the other consonant assimilations presented above there is no universal method of treating this sound and the way speakers treat this sound varies somewhat from individual to individual. Essentially, however, there appears to be a tendency among the Northern Latitudinal Dialect speakers’ towards a definite dislike of the sound *wu*, not only in verb roots themselves but also on the rare occasions when the combination of *w+u* appears due to morphological conditions such as the addition of affixes to a verb root, the inflection of a prefix according to tense or other factors.

In fact, the syllable *wu* only appears once in a verb root in all of Davis’ notes in the word *qsláwu-* or ‘a forest with a great variety of mixed trees.’ I have no evidence for this belief and Davis himself never remarks on this disparity (at least in the notes I have access to) but I would hypothesize that since most forests have a large variety of trees in one way or another that the root *qsláwu-* is a rather common word to be used in describing forests and might therefore represent a form of archaism or holdout from a period of time before the Northern Latitudinal Dialect developed a dislike of the sound *wu* and began to alter its pronunciation. This is similar to how in English irregular and archaic word patterns such as *am, are, were, be* and so forth tend to be maintained because they are used so much (the dropping of the form *thou art* is relatively recent in English’ history). There is some evidence for this hypothesis as on the rare occasions where this syllable appears in Davis’ notes it is almost always when he was recording “archaic” speech patterns either spoken by very old dragons or by a younger dragon attempting to replicate what an older dragon might sound like for Always Scratching at Something’s benefit or in other varieties of Srínawésin such as the Arctic Latitudinal, which appears to retain the use of the *wu* syllable.

Despite these variations, one thing is very clear from Davis’ notes. Many, if not most of the Northern Latitudinal Dialect’s speakers dislike the sound *wu* and when it appears will alter the sounds therein to a more “pleasing” sound (Star Gazer’s term, not mine). I would guess the reason for the dislike of this syllable is that the two sounds which comprise it /w/ and /u/ are not just similar to a dragon’s speech apparatus but they are pronounced virtually identically. The combination of a *w* and *u* would therefore fall under both the consonant assimilation rule (1) above and the vowel assimilation rule (4) below, both of which simply state that when two identical sounds appear next to one another they assimilate into one sound. Normally this would be a simple task, but often the phoneme *w* contains vital grammatical information as it is invariably part of a grammatical prefix or suffix and the phoneme *u* almost always an indicator of the Cyclical Tense when combined in these forms and thus carries grammatical and semantic burden as well, so simply combining them would reduce the information required in the sentence.

So if simply combining the sounds cannot be done, what then do the language’s speakers do with this undesirable sound? This problem is not one which has found a universal solution by draconic speakers in Davis’ notes but there are two general strategies employed by the language’s speakers. 1) if the *wu* syllable is *absolutely essential for understanding*—usually in a short, clipped sentence of only a word or two when the rest of the affixes of the sentence are not available to provide the necessary information—the syllable *wu* is unchanged and left on. 2) if the rest of the sentence has the various affixes which provide the necessary tense information which would usually be carried by the /u/ phoneme, the *u* sound is simply deleted entirely and ignored even though it would usually be required. However, when this occurs the /w/ phoneme is invariably voiced to compensate and indicate the deletion of the /u/ sound although in this font it is not usually indicated. For instance, the exchange:

Saqسانیwéha asa ixixéwára sa síthrarésu irúnarahawéha nisa narúsa saxésits qxáxétusaha nasa’x,
xiXihúréš?
Xax? Wúx, xiRihu sa Sayaxhú!

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Have those large mountains over by the wide open ocean changed much since you last flew to them, Dribbler?

What did you say? **They are probably always** (changing) **in cycles**, Little Friend!

The term *wúx* in this exchange is part of a short, clipped phrase which has no other affixes in order to indicate the tense which the speaker intends to convey so in this instance the *wú* syllable is left unchanged as noted above. However, in the sentence below:

Wtsithí sa xinhaxlárésin urúrín sa nunashusurésin hula

I hear that the cold, icy winds **are always eroding (the mountains) over the ages**

In this instance, the verb *wtsithí sa xinhaxlárésin* “(the innumerable winds) are always eroding (the innumerable mountains) in geologic time” would appear as *Wutsithí sa xinhaxlárésin* but since the Cyclical Tense is indicated by various other inflections of affixes throughout the sentence the “unpleasant” *wu* syllable beginning the verb is modified by simply deleting the /u/ phoneme leaving the /w/ phoneme alone. This is primarily a orthographic convention on my part to aid in understanding, it would probably be more accurate to write *útsithí sa xinhaxlárésin* as the [wts] beginning the verb is pronounced identically to /uts/ but for the purposes of a beginner—and something of an expert in my case!—it is easier to write the [w] to indicate the “geologic timescale” prefix which is attached to the verbal root. The way verbs are put together and arraigned will be treated in further sections but for now it is enough to note that these constructions exist although on several occasions Davis noted that a speaker would go through some fairly complex linguistic acrobatics in order to avoid the “unpleasant sounding” *wu* sound when a more straightforward approach which entailed *wu* would be much simpler.

2.6.2. Vowel Assimilation

Vowel assimilations are similar to the consonantal forms, but are more complicated and unfortunately more common. When two vowels are placed together in the Dragon Tongue one of them always “wins” over the other, replacing it completely, (although there is an important exception, see 2.6.4. **Tense Marker Assimilation** below). There are four rules followed when applying this form of assimilation.

Rule (1) Voiced → Voiceless

This rule means that although one of the vowels will replace the other completely, it will assimilate with the *voiced/unvoiced* quality of the vowel it replaced. If two *unvoiced* vowels assimilate then the resulting vowel is also *unvoiced* but if an *unvoiced* vowel assimilates with a *voiced* vowel result will *always be voiced* regardless if the voiced vowel is replaced or is the replaced vowel. Thus an ‘a’ added to a ‘á’ will always result in ‘á.’

Rule (2) Front → non-Fronted

This means that the *front* vowel ‘i’ will win out over any other vowel which is *not fronted* (so called because for humans the ‘i’ is pronounced in the front of the mouth, once again in terms of *human* but not necessarily *draconic* pronunciation). I cannot give the physiological reason for this in regards to the dragons’ speech apparatus, but I imagine that a similar process is at work. It is important to note that Rule (1) still applies, thus although an ‘i’ will replace an ‘ú,’ the result will always be voiced: ‘i.’

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Rule (3) High \rightarrow Low

In this case a vowel which is pronounced *high* in the mouth (*i, í, u* and *ú*) will replace one which is pronounced *low* in the mouth (*a, á, e*, and *é*). 'E' will replace 'a' as it is pronounced higher in the mouth than the 'a' although it is not technically a true high vowel. Rules (1) and (2) still apply, thus 'i' will win out over 'ú' (both are high vowels but 'i' is a *front vowel* while 'ú' is a *back vowel*) but the result will still be 'i' (*voiced* due to the voicing of the original 'ú'). These rules can be written out as below, the various rules determining the results given in superscript:

$$(e, \acute{e}, i, \acute{i}, u, \acute{u}) + a = (e, \acute{e}, i, \acute{i}, u, \acute{u})^3$$

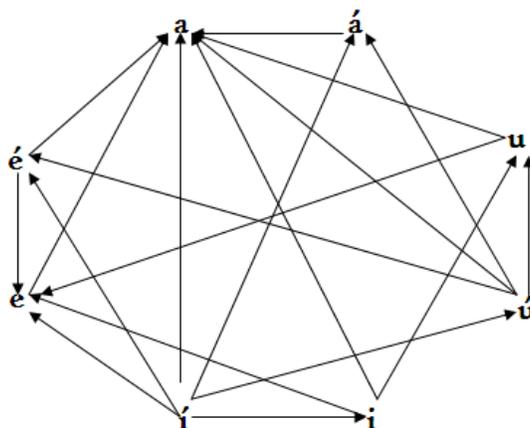
$$(e, \acute{e}, i, \acute{i}, u, \acute{u}) + \acute{a} = (\acute{e}, \acute{i}, \acute{u})^{1,2}$$

$$(i, \acute{i}) + e, \acute{e} = (i, \acute{i})^{1,2,3}$$

$$(u, \acute{u}) + i, \acute{i} = (i, \acute{i})^{1,2}$$

$$(u, \acute{u}) + e, \acute{e} = (u, \acute{u})^{1,3}$$

These vowel changes can be represented with the following diagram:



Thus, 'i' is the strongest vowel in that nothing will replace it; while 'a' is the weakest as even 'á' will replace its unvoiced sister. Interestingly, Davis notes that the vowel *o/ó* is still used in certain dialects of Srínawésin (primarily in the Arctic varieties) and the rule for vowel assimilation in these dialects is:

$$(o, \acute{o}) + \text{any other vowel} = (a, \acute{a})$$

He believed that this paradigm led to the reduction and final demise of the *o/ó* as a separate phoneme in the Northern Latitudinal Dialect of Srínawésin.

Finally:

$$\text{Rule (4)} \quad (\text{Vowel A}) + (\text{Vowel A}^2) = (\text{Vowel A})$$

This rule states that if two vowels of *the same kind* (including voicing distinctions) come into contact within the same word they combine and form one vowel of the same type: $a + a = a$ and $\acute{a} + \acute{a} = \acute{a}$. They do not produce a long vowel in the Northern Latitudinal dialect of the Dragon Tongue, instead simply combining into a single sound, although some other dialects *do* have long vowels which form in this case.

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2.6.3. Semi-Vowel Assimilation

There are a few cases when two vowels may come into contact with one another yet *not* assimilate, the primary one being dealt with below in **2.6.4. Tense Marker Assimilation**. It should be noted that when this occurs there is a *very slight* pronunciation alteration to the following unassimilated vowel. Essentially the following vowel is changed from a full syllabic vowel into a non-syllabic semi-vowel which alters the quality of the proceeding vowel rather than being pronounced in full on its own. This distinction deals primarily with the vowels *u, ú, i, í, a/á* and *e/é* are left largely untouched by this. Semi-Vowel Assimilation is shown below:

<i>a/á+u/ú</i>	<i>e/é+u/ú</i>	<i>a/á+i/í</i>	<i>e/é+i/í</i>
<i>a + u = aw</i>	<i>e + u = ew</i>	<i>a + i = ay</i>	<i>e + i = ey</i>
<i>a + ú = áw*</i>	<i>e + ú = éw*</i>	<i>a + í = áy</i>	<i>e + í = éy</i>
<i>á + u = áw*</i>	<i>é + u = éw*</i>	<i>á + i = áy</i>	<i>é + i = éy</i>
<i>á + ú = áw*</i>	<i>é + ú = éw*</i>	<i>á + í = áy</i>	<i>é + í = éy</i>

* *The w* in all of these cases is voiced but due to the limitations in this font they are not represented.

2.6.4. Tense Marker Assimilation

There is one exception to the rules of vowel assimilation. *If a vowel that is to be submerged by the other is part of an affix which is inflected for tense, the only rule which applies is Rule (1), i.e. the assimilation of unvoiced/voiced vowels.* The inflection of affixes for tense is detailed below in **3.5. Inflection of Affixes**, but it is important to note at the moment that the vowel in the verbal prefix *ha-* will not combine with an infix which follows it such as *-en-*, the infix marker for Class I verbs as in the case below:

Haenshawéts aSláya sa Snaréš xárrúnáha na

Bloody Face sometimes saw her/him (another of the Kindred) (as she flew) across the mountains

Thus, in the word *haenshawéts*, which is comprised of the morphemes *ha+en+šáwá+ets* the root *šáwá-* combines with *-ets* to produce *-šáwéts* but *ha-* and *-en* do not combine to form **hen-* as *ha-* is inflected for the past tense, therefore immune.

However, in the case of:

Háyńšawéts aSláya sa Snaréš xárrúnáha na

Bloody Face saw it (the small prey animal) (as she flew) across the mountains

The word *háyńšawéts* is composed of the morphemes *ha+ín+šáwá+ets* and in this case the prefix *ha-* becomes *há-* due to the voicing of the infix *-ín-* despite the fact that it is inflected for the past tense while the infix *-ín-* becomes the palatalized *-ýn-* due to the influence of the proceeding vowel. However, if both the tense-inflected vowel and the original vowel of the root are the same, they will assimilate with one another under the rules of 1) and 4) from **2.6.2.** above:

Hixíleya'n

(*hi+ixí+LEYA+Ø*) (+'n)

(Periodic Aspect+Class III Plural+HUNT-BY-SCENT+Ist Person Null Subject) (Certainly)

Sometimes-I-large animals-hunt-by-scent-alone certainly (lit.)

Sometimes I hunt large animals by scent alone

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2.7. Consonant Clusters

Consonant clusters are uncommon within verbal roots, the main derivational form of all draconic words (see 3.3. **Derivational Structure** below) although consonant clusters do occur during the normal course of word formation when the various affixes are attached to verbal roots. When affixes are attached to these verbal roots and this function produces a consonant cluster, it is subjected to the normal forms of consonant assimilation as noted above in 2.6.i. **Consonant Assimilation**. Thus the Dragon Tongue does not disallow consonant clusters entirely although consonant clusters *are* restricted if they are found at *the beginning or end of a single syllable*. Clusters forming across the boundary of two different syllables are subjected to Consonant Assimilation and are otherwise ignored.

A consonant cluster may begin or end a syllable when:

- 1) Consonant 1 is a fricative or is an affricate, i.e. ‘*qs, qx, s, x, š, ts*’
- 2) Consonant 2 is either a nasal or liquid sounds or ‘*n, l, r*’
- 3) Consonant 2 is a semi-vowel sound such as ‘*y, ý*’ and ‘*w*’

Thus the only allowable consonant clusters at the beginning or end of a syllable are: ‘*qsn, qxn, sn, xn, šn, tsn, qsl, qxl, sl, xl, šl, tsl, qsr, qxr, sr, xr, šr, tsr, qsy, qxy, xy, sy, šy, tsy, šw, xw*’ and so forth although not all of these sounds are found with any regularity. The most common consonant clusters at the beginning of a syllable are overwhelmingly ‘*sn, xn, tsn, sl, xl, šl, sy, xy, sw*’ and ‘*šy*’ while the most common cluster found at the end of a syllable is any of the above sounds with *-n* appended. This *-n* attachment, written in this orthography as *-’n*, is commonly found when the positive evidentials *ni, na* and *nu* are contracted and attached to the end of a words, see 7.3. **Evidential Sentence Enclitics** below.

2.8. Deletion of Repeated Final and Non-Final Syllables

In most words in the Dragon Tongue, suffixes are appended to nouns and verbs and in certain cases this suffix duplicates the final syllable of the root word to which it is attached. For instance:

-hunha+ha a deep, wide lake which has dried up

In these cases, whether it is a true-verb or a noun-verb, speakers will usually drop the repeated syllable completely (the proper suffix is simply understood to be there). When this is done the remaining syllable is *voiced*. If the syllable is already voiced no further change occurs:

-hunha+ha → *-hunhá* (**not** **hunjaha*)

This occurs in almost all cases, but there are two exceptions. If the word immediately following the noun or verb in question is one of the evidentials (treated in 7.3. **Evidential Sentence Enclitics**) or the particle *sa*, the repeated syllable is *not deleted* and remains in its full form:

Nahunhaha’x? At the deep, wide lake that dried up?

The phoneme *š* is considered to be different then the simple *s* so there is not final deletion in cases such as *Hiwašinsin* ‘It periodically smokes.’ Another deletion which takes place in Srínawésin occurs when the contracted form of an evidential enclitic falls behind a word *with the same sound*. When this occurs, the evidential is usually dropped, being understood as being there due to the previous sound. This form is represented in the orthography as [*’*], showing that the evidential is still “there” simply not expressed as a separate sound:

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<i>Aqxnéhix'?</i>	(contracted form of <i>Aqxnéhix xi'?</i>)	A human (interrogative subject)?
<i>Tsiqsusésin'</i>	(contracted form of <i>Tsiqsusésin ni</i>)	It is raining
<i>Náqšaráqs'</i>	(contracted form of <i>Náqšaráqs qsa</i>)	It (aquatic) didn't come up from underneath and grab it (another aquatic thing)

These deletions also occur to *non-final syllables*, although with much greater rarity. The general rule for non-final syllable deletion appears to be similar to final syllable deletion, i.e. the repeated syllables are contracted into one syllable which is then lengthened. For example:

Tsatsaqsáthich? → *Tsáqsáthich?* Were you/him/her eating it (Class XII Component)

These deletions are extremely rare, and only take place in certain circumstances, usually the addition of prefixes which repeat the sound of syllable after them. There are three exceptions to this, however, 1) voiced/unvoiced distinctions do not appear to apply in these cases (if the syllable *tsa* was attached to the syllable *tsá* they will *not* contract as they are considered to be sufficiently different from one another). 2) Roots are immune to contraction, i.e. if the attached syllable is the same as the *root's* initial syllable they are *not* contracted:

Rúrúnáwéha'n → **Rúnáwéha'n* Through the mountains

3) Roots with repeated syllables are also immune to any form of contraction (*qsáqsá-* 'crow' never appears as **qsá-*). Finally, in "formal," polite, poetic speech or in life-threatening situations (which when dealing with a dragon would definitely necessitate being polite!) the repeated syllables are often left on and *not* deleted. This is similar to the way English speakers will tend to use "do not" rather than "don't" in formal occasions.

§2.9. Stress

The stress pattern in the Dragon Tongue is extremely regular although due to the fact that the language differentiates between voiced/unvoiced vowels, it can be difficult to recognize which sound is stressed and which is not. The stress always falls on the first syllable of the verb root whether it is being used as a verb, noun-verb or adjective. In those instances when two roots are found within a single word (such as transitive verbs with infixed objects) the stress falls on the *main verbal root* not on the infixed object.

§2.10. The Draconic "Accent"

Although this chapter is primarily about how the Kindred articulate their own languages, how the Shúna attempt to speak human languages is just as interesting and is just as conditioned by their physiological characteristics. This section attempts to describe the draconic "accent" while they are attempting to speak in the human tongue, particularly in English, as the languages Howard heard his informants speak was overwhelmingly English and Srínawésin.

According to Davis' notes, the accent a particular Sihá displays ranges from Bloody Face's nearly perfect English to Charred Oak and Blue Tongue's almost unintelligible accent. This range depends upon several factors: a Sihá's exposure to the languages of the Younger Races, the amicability of the Sihá-Qxnéréx interactions and above all the particular dragon's desire to learn. Dragons such as Frost Song or Obsidian Claw thought of people as strange barely edible prey-creatures and so never really bothered to learn the "chattering" of the Younger Races. Bloody Face and Moonchild often dealt with their non-draconic neighbors (in a mostly but not always semi-friendly way) so they spoke fluently in a variety of languages with almost no accent whatsoever. On the other hand, some Shúna such as White Eye, Twisted

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Smoke and Angry Face regarded the Qxnéréx as an abundant and easy food source and not only learned human languages but could speak them just as well as Bloody Face and Moonchild, albeit with the goal of deceiving and luring tasty tid-bits closer.

Davis also noted that dragons (if they speak a human language at all) have not all been exposed to—or cared to learn—English because it simply isn't relevant to them. White Eye didn't speak any English whatsoever but spoke Norwegian, Swedish and Saami quite well, but then again that only made sense given he was from the Trondheim district of Norway. Dragons living in the Gobi desert will most likely speak Chinese if they know any human language at all, just as those in Africa would speak Bantu, Xhosa, Swahili or any of hundreds of other African languages. In addition it appears that certain human languages are more difficult for dragons to pronounce and articulate because some human languages have more sounds which do not come easily to the Kindred and some are easier because they contain sounds the Shúna can more readily pronounce. Lastly, the Shúna live so long the time in which they originally learned a Qxnéréx language is extremely relevant as well. Although Bloody Face often (read as once or twice in a century) dealt with his non-draconic neighbors, his last exposure to English had been in the 1600's so before he adapted to modern English he constantly said things like:

“Forsooth, Master Howard! Thou cookest thy meat before partaking? My troth! Dost thou not miss the taste of warm blood in thy seared strip of flesh?”

Needless to say, Howard found a huge crimson dragon speaking in an archaic English accent and saying things like “Fie upon that fish! It hath escaped me!” rather disturbing. Luckily, it took Bloody Face only a moon or two of exposure to Howard before he was using a little more up-to-date English.

But no matter how skilled a particular Sihá is with a human language there are certain physiological characteristics that will always give a dragon a particular accent, just as a human speaking Srínawésin will never be able to speak the language without a similar accent as neither race can physically form the same set of sounds as the other. A dragon speaking a human language is forced to employ particular articulation tricks in order to approximate certain human sounds which they simply *cannot* reproduce exactly. This is similar to a ventriloquist reproducing sounds such as ‘p, f, b, m’ and other sounds which require the use of the lips—without actually moving the lips. A particularly skilled Sihá can reproduce these sounds so well their accent is virtually impossible to hear although a majority of the Shúna usually retain a fairly strong accent. Howard also noted that while a Sihá is speaking in English there is a strange disconnect between the words they are speaking and the motions of their mouth. Most people are at least peripherally aware (although not usually consciously) of the way a mouth is “supposed” to move when someone is speaking—particularly with sounds that require the lips—but even when reproducing these sounds the Shúna do not move their mouth “quite right” because they are *approximating* human sounds, not forming them as we would. I would guess it is similar to watching a foreign movie which has dubbed over English dialogue, no matter how good the dubbing is there will always be instances when the mouth and the sounds it is supposed to be producing will not quite match up. The difference with watching one of the Kindred speak is that they are in fact producing the sounds but not doing it in a way which “matches up” with what a human mouth will look like while making the same sounds. I would also assume that seeing those long, razor-sharp teeth behind unmoving lips while a dragon is making (or attempting to make) a ‘p’ sound would be rather disconcerting as well. Davis noted that he *never* corrected a dragon when they made a mistake in English and I would venture to say anyone who would never like the pleasure of seeing their intestines all over the ground would probably do well to do the same.

Shúna have three main areas of difficulty while reproducing the languages of the Younger Races:

Labial Sounds: These sounds are produced with the lips and include phonemes such as /p, b, f, v, w, m/ and so forth. Dragons do not possess the same degree of articulation control over their lips as humans do, so they—for the purposes of language—do not have lips to make these

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sounds. The one exception is the ‘w’ sound, which is found in their own language and which they apparently make by slightly curling back their tongue while producing a /u/ sound to create the quality of the /w/ which humans make by rounding our lips. Dragons can replicate human labial sounds in a similar manner—by manipulating the back of the tongue to approximate sounds such as /w, m/ and /v/. Davis also theorized that they placed the back of their tongue against the top of their throat and releasing it to create labial stop sounds such as /p/ and /b/ although with a great deal of difficulty. Howard noted that the way the /f/ sound was created was much more transparent, this sound was created by releasing the air in their mouths over their tongues while slightly sticking their tongues out from their mouths, essentially making it look like the dragon was half-way between sticking its tongue out at him or making a raspberry. I would suggest no one laughs if they see a dragon make a /f/ sound. Even a skilled speaker has difficulty achieving these sounds because a Sihá must force the air in their lungs through their nasal passages rather than through their mouths for all the labial sounds except for /f/, giving all labial sounds a slightly thick or nasalized quality to them.

Voiced Consonants: As noted in **2.1 Overview** above, “voiced” sounds are articulated by the Shúna through the vibration of a membrane deep within their chest as opposed to the vibration of vocal chords as humans do. This membrane is easily used with an open air passage but less so when the passage is restricted such as when making consonantal sounds. This means that voiced-unvoiced differentiation is much easier to apply to vowels rather than consonants, even the voiced versions of phonemes the Kindred commonly use (such as /z/, the voiced variant of /s/). Therefore, the Shúna have great difficulty producing any sort of voiced consonantal sounds such as /b, d, g, v, ð, j/ and so on. When a skilled speaker attempts to reproduce these sounds, Davis noted that the easiest way to do this is by forcing the air partially through the nasal cavity, allowing the nasal vibration to take the place of a vocal vibration. This gives “voiced” consonants a highly nasal quality similar to they way ‘labial’ draconic sounds are produced although the strength of the nasal quality depends on the skill of the speaker.

Stop Consonants: The Shúna dislike “stop” sounds, apparently believing them to sound “chirpy, abrupt” and “choppy”—according to Tear of the Sun—and have a great deal of difficulty recreating stop sounds such as /t, d, k, g, p, b/ and so on. While attempting to speak a human language (which always have a variety of stop consonants which is partially the reason we are referred to as *qxnéhiréx* “chatterers”) a Sihá typically pronounces these sounds similarly to the ‘ts, qx’ and ‘qs’ sounds, releasing the consonants with a slight sibilant sound following it, making it a semi-affricate. With a particularly thick accent this will sound like “I d^so not^s see while it^s is so hard^s for you t^so eat^s raw flesh!” The strength of the sibilant release ranges from strong to almost imperceptible but Davis noted it was always present even if it was very difficult to hear.

These difficulties are cumulative, so a *voiced bilabial stop* such as /b/ is terribly difficult for a Sihá to pronounce correctly and requires a variety of articulation tricks to produce. This is similar to a human trying to make a /b/ sound without using their lips and attempting to make an /r/ sound at the same time. Davis noted that the ability to create stop sounds come easiest to the Shúna and the ability to repress the sibilant release comes fairly soon after that if they have enough exposure to humans and if they care at all to try that hard. If someone can’t understand what they are trying to say simply eating them is a perfectly viable alternative. But the nasalized voiced consonants and the difficulty replicating labial sounds are much more difficult to overcome. He noted (with some well-concealed humor in the presence of his

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informants) that unskilled draconic speakers of English tended to voice *everything* (a relatively common tendency given the draconic belief that our languages sound “buzzing”) or *devoiced* everything, relying on Davis to simply fill in the gaps if they were not pronouncing what they were saying correctly. This led to some horribly accented sentences such as:

“I do nod zee wad thy divviguldy iz! Hov vaz I do no thy glothes vere vflammable?”
(Spoken by Blue Tongue who not only voiced everything but spoke in archaic English!)

“Ha! Ash Tonkue sait you akset too many questions, XiXútsithí sa Qséxúnáx’hú! I’m surpriset he titn’t kill you when you came to speak with him!” (Spoken by Dribbler, who *devoiced* everything. The sounds such as ‘m, n, w, r’ and so on were also unvoiced.)

Finally, many dragons have a tendency to pronounce human sounds as if they were Srínawésin sounds. Even Moonchild and Bloody Face had a tendency to do this when they were excited or on edge but it was particularly strong with dragons such as Charred Oak, Rotten Teeth and Dawnglow. The typical pronunciation of human sounds as draconic sounds is given below:

<u>Human Phoneme</u>	<u>Draconic Pronunciation</u>
s	/s:/
h	/χ/ Sometimes but not always
z	/s/ or /s:/
m	/n/ Sometimes but not always
l	/l/
th	/θ ^s / Like a human with a lisp
r	/r/ “Rolled” like the Scottish English dialect

There are exceptions to all of these tendencies and all dragons are first and foremost individuals and must be treated as such. I would suggest that if you ever have any interactions with a Sihá that you not assume that it cannot speak any language you can speak and even if they cannot they are exceptionally skilled at reading body language and along with their ability to hear heartbeats and a sense of smell that rivals the greatest bloodhounds they are fully capable of knowing when someone is lying *even if they cannot understand the language that person is speaking at the time*. I would also like to thank Howard Davis once again for the information in this section. Taking a close look inside the mouths of possibly less-than-patient dragons cannot have been very much fun.

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Section III:

Morphology

3.1. Overview

Morphology is the way in which words are formed by various smaller units of meaning—called morphemes—to make a meaningful word. For instance, the English word *cat* is singular and an English speaker will understand this and know that to make it plural an *-s* must be attached to *cat* thus forming *cats*. This is a fairly simple case as opposed to the plural form of *man* isn't **mans* but *men*. Complex morphological forms in English include the use of the morpheme *un-* on certain verbs such as *un+clog* to form the complex verb 'unclog' and the famous linguistic example of 'antidisestablishmentarianism' which is found in almost every linguistics textbook dealing with morphology and is composed of a total of five morphemes attached to a single root (anti+dis+ESTABLISH+ment+ary+an+ism). All human languages range from the morphologically complex to relatively simple. On the complex side, Iñupiaq Eskimo and the Peruvian Quechua languages:

*Iñuqaqsaaginiaqtugut*³

We intend to have people over in the future

*Aparichimpullawaychehña!*⁴

Please bring it to me right away (to more than one person)!

These two languages are *agglunative* or morphologically complex in nature, whereby roots have various affixes attached to them in a predictable manner to form complex words, many of which can stand for entire sentences in English. English, on the other hand, is relatively simple, each word in the above example comprised of simple parts mostly without suffixes or prefixes (which do occur but with much, much more rarely). Sometimes English is classified as an *isolating* language although a better example of *isolating* languages would be Japanese, which relies on *particles* (separate words from the word they modify such as English prepositions *to*, *in*, *at* etc.) to define the grammatical place of the word along with a few suffixes attached to primarily verbs to denote past/present tense and so on:

Anata ga inu o shibafu ni mimasu ka?

Do you see the dog on the lawn?

Inflecting languages such as Old Irish or Latin are somewhat more complex than English, having a few prefixes attached to some words but denoting grammatical meanings by a pattern of inflections of specific word classes such as:

*Téit ass íarum 7 a sciath slissen laiss 7 a bunsach 7 a lorg ánae 7 a líathróit*⁵

Then he goes away, and his shield of boards with him, and his toy javelin and his driving stick and his ball

Galba cum Lesbiâ in casâ parvâ habitat

Lesbia lives with Galba in a little cottage

³ From *North Slope Iñupiaq Grammar: First Year, Third Edition Revised*, Edna Ahgeak MacLean

⁴ From *Introduction to Quechua: Language of the Andes, 2nd Edition*, Judith Noble, Jaime Lacasa

⁵ This sentence is from the famous Irish story the *Táin bó Cúailnge* where the hero Cú Chulainn leaves his home to join the boytroop of Emain Macha. The symbol '7' is an Old Irish convention which stands for the word *ocus* 'and' and works similarly to today's '&.'

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In the Old Irish case, *téit* 'to go' is an inflected verb meaning 'he goes' combining the 3rd Person 'he' with the present sense of the verb vs. 'went.' The various nouns in the sentence (*sciath slissen laiss* 'board made of shields,' *bunsach* 'toy javelin,' *lord ánae* 'driving stick' and *líathróit* 'ball') are all inflected to show their case (or the way in which they participate as actors in the sentence) as are the various nouns in the Latin sentence, for instance the proper noun *Galba* is in the *nominative case* and so forth. These morphological distinctions are important because, as you might have noticed from some of the examples in Section II that Srínawésin is a highly agglunative language, adding multiple prefixes, infixes and suffixes onto word roots to form various grammatical relationships and meaningful words. This leads to an utterance which would in English be a full sentence while in the Dragon Tongue is a single word such as:

Náírátháhéts nan!

He/she (another dragon) overwhelmed my enemy suddenly!

Generally speaking an *affix* (a prefix, infix or suffix) morpheme is added to the *root* morpheme which serves as the core of the new complex word such as:

qsáni- (to change) + *-ar* (Class VII reflexive ending) = *qsánir* "the moon" (literally "it-changes-itself")

Or phrases such as:

sihá- (to be alike) + *-éš* (Class I reflexive ending) = *sihéš* "a dragon" (lit. "it-is-kindred-to itself")

More complex forms are possible as in the case of plural forms:

qxénra- + *-wé-* (plural) + *-in* (Class V refl.) = *qxénrawín* "narwhal whales" (lit. they-are-narwhals-to themselves)

And these new complex multi-morphemic words can then serve as the root of even more complex constructions as further affixes can be added to elaborate and specify grammatical meaning:

laxa- (past tense locative) + *sihéš* = *laxasihéš* "the dragon (flying) overhead"

Or the addition of other verbal roots which serve as adjectival modifiers and noun prefixes to denote a vocative quality:

xi- (vocative) + *-laxa* + *xé* + *wášá-* + *-qsáni-* + *-ré-* + *-ar* = *Xilaxáxéwášáqsánirér!* "O, innumerable changing stars that were flying so far overhead!"

Thus, draconic words are built up by the addition of the various prefixes, infixes and suffixes onto root forms, which then in turn can form the root of complex words by the addition of further affixes to the complex root. Although this appears somewhat complicated, the ways in which these utterances are constructed are extremely regular and once the pattern is understood it does not look quite as daunting as at first blush it does. It is vital to remember that almost all draconic words (with almost no exceptions) are formed of *at least two separate morphemes*. Thus a root is almost never heard spoken alone such as **sihá*

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“dragon” but except for a very few instances it will always be comprised of a root with at least one affix appended: *sihéš* ‘a dragon.’⁶

These additions of the various affixes to the root word are governed by the phonological vowel assimilation system detailed above in 2.6.1. through 2.6.4. above, thus when the root *sihá-* is appended with the Class I reflexive ending *-éš*, the final ‘a’ is assimilated into the more robust ‘é’ vowel and the result is *sihéš* ‘dragon.’ In the case of the root *tsáhu-* ‘(my) mother’ appended with the suffix *-éš* the more robust of the two vowels is the final ‘u’ of the root and thus the vowel in *-éš* is assimilated into it *but* the resulting ‘u’ is voiced due to the influence of the voiced vowel in the suffix: *tsáhúš* ‘she is my mother.’

3.2. Root Forms

Srínawésin, like all languages, has rules on the various phonemes which can appear in relation to one another, the order in which they may appear and what syllabic structure can comprise a verb-root. For instance, in English the greatest number of consonants which can typically begin a word is three and they are usually *spl* or *spr* such as *splash* or *spring*. Russian and many Slavic languages have different rules which allow such names as *Dmitri* where in English the consonant cluster *dm* is not allowed to *begin* a syllable but may come in contact between syllables such as in *madmen*. By far the most common root forms in the Dragon Tongue are CVCV-, or consonant—vowel—consonant—vowel. These roots are always composed of two syllables: CV-CV-. Examples include:

<i>Sihá-</i> (<i>si-há</i>)	“to be alike”
<i>Súná-</i> (<i>sú-ná</i>)	“to interfere, to bother”
<i>Háqsa-</i> (<i>há-qsá</i>)	“to smell like a female deer”
<i>Xítsa-</i> (<i>xí-tsa</i>)	“to change with the seasons”

It is important to note in the latter two cases that as *qs* and *ts* are affricates and thus regarded as a single consonant these roots still maintain the CV-CV- form and are pronounced as indicated, *há-qsá* and *xí-tsa*. These type of forms are never pronounced as CVC-V, or **sún-a* or **háqs-a*. There are exceptions to the root structure, primarily falling into two categories: consonant clusters beginning a syllable (CCV-CV) and two consonants inclosing a single vowel in either of the two syllables of a root (CVC-CV or CV-CVC). Examples of the first type include words such as:

<i>Sneyé-</i> (<i>sne-yé</i>)	“to mark out a boundary, to separate”	(CCV-CV)
<i>Qslášu-</i> (<i>qslá-šu</i>)	“to be (your) neighbor”	(CCV-CV)

Once again, the sound represented by *qs* is regarded as a single sound and not two thus it obeys the form given above. Examples of the second type occur in such words as:

<i>Šerná-</i> (<i>šer-ná</i>)	“to be strong, to make strong”	(CVC-CV)
<i>Husún-</i> (<i>hu-sún</i>)	“to scheme against, to plot”	(CVC-CV)

A slightly rarer form is when the standard use of the word tends to leave off the final syllable of the root such as:

<i>Qxné(hi-)</i> (<i>qxné-</i>)	“to insult by talking like a child to...”
<i>Xna(qsé-)</i> (<i>xna-</i>)	“to crawl, to creep”

⁶ In this paper the use of ‘Shúna’ and ‘Sihá’ conform to standard English usage, appearing without the usual suffixes; ordinarily they would appear as *-shúnéš* and *-sihéš*.

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There is at least one word in Davis' dictionaries which has a root form of (CCVC-CV):

Snarhé- (*snar-hé*) “a saltwater iceberg” (CCVC-CV)

This form is only attested once so I am not sure how often this form appears but it seems to be quite rare. A slightly less rare form of roots is the *vowel-initial* root forms (V-CVC) such as:

Ítsin- (*í-tsin-*) “a ravine with steep sides”
Úrun- (*ú-run-*) “blue, blue sky”
Úsun- (*ú-sun-*) “some, something, general thing”

The vowel-initial roots are extremely rare and Davis notes that sometimes they are spoken by older dragons with an initial *y-* and with the first vowel *unvoiced* (so the examples above would be *yitsin-*, *yurun-* and *yusun-*). He postulates that for various reasons the initial *y-* has been dropped and the now-initial vowel becomes voiced to compensate, rendering the forms above. In all the vowel-initial roots he discovered the first vowel was *always* voiced, most likely due to this process. He specifies that this is only a hypothesis however, as he could never speak with very many truly ancient dragons. All of the above verb-root-forms appear to hold true for all the Latitudinal dialects of the Dragon Tongue although Davis could not give very good information on any of the other draconic languages he had little or no contact with.

3.3. Derivational Structure

As noted in 1.3.1. **Particularities of the Dragon Tongue**, *all roots are inherently verbal* and thus can take verbal endings. Thus, the root *sihá-* means “to be alike” and forms the base of the “noun” *Sihéš* “a dragon” or “one who is alike (to me).” Aspects of the verbality of all roots are given below in 4.1. **Verb Overview** but for now it suffices to say that all roots are essentially verbs even if they used as what we would call “nouns.” Exceptions to this are particles such as the productive particle *sa* as well as disjunctive sentence modifiers which translate into English as *and*, *but*, *so*, *if* and so on.

How can a language have only verbs? Aren't nouns *required*? Root forms are certainly *used* in a way we would understand as a noun, such as subjects, objects, locations and so forth, but these same words can also stand alone as an entire phrase having a quasi-noun/verb meaning such as:

Bloody Face: *Háqseqsáthits náqxíxináqx'?*
What did you usually eat here in this part of your territory?
Moonchild: *Annehawawéx'n.*
(I usually ate) female goats.

Verb roots serve as the basis of the many words derived from the root, all with related meanings (These are related to their draconic speakers although sometimes they seem to be strange associations to us). For instance, the verb root *tsitsí-* ‘to warm’ is a particularly productive root. When used as an *intransitive verb* it means ‘is warm,’ while when used as a *transitive verb* it means ‘to make warm,’ or in a reflexive sense ‘to make oneself warm.’ Additionally it can be used in an *adjectival* sense (which is very similar to the intransitive usage) ‘is warm,’ and it may be used *adverbially* with the meaning ‘hotly, warmly, angrily.’ When used as a noun-verb the meaning of the root *tsitsí-* depends on what *class* it is used with. If placed under Class VII, or ‘celestial object’ it becomes *tsitsír* ‘the sun,’ while if used in Class VIII or ‘aerial phenomena’ it becomes *tsitsísín* or ‘a year’ as in the yearly cycle of cold to warm and then back again. It can also be used in Class XII or ‘parts of a larger whole’ to become *tsitsíqx* ‘a day’ as in a unit of the larger cycle of the year. Derivations of *tsitsí-* include:

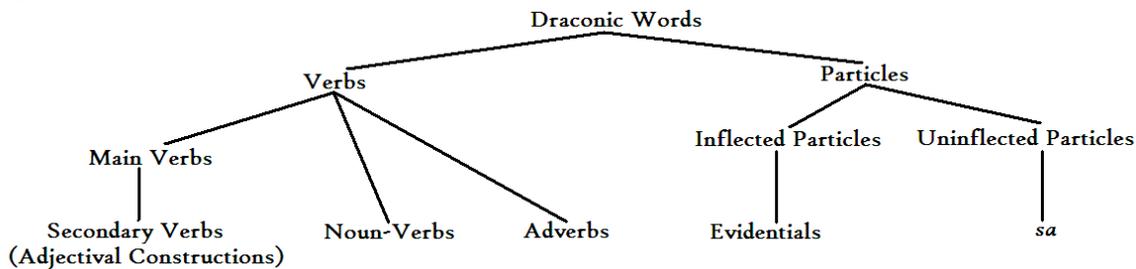
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Intransitive Verb:	<i>Tsitsitsíha išawaha'n</i>	the stone is warm
Transitive Verb:	<i>Saentsitsíts iQsánir sa Qxéyész'n</i>	Moonchild makes him/her/you angry/warm
Reflexive Verb:	<i>Tsitsitsí'n</i>	I am warm (to myself)
Adj.	<i>Xitsitsí sa qxéhasu'hú</i>	O, warm fire!
Adv.	<i>Satsitsí sa enqxítsúts ahaséš'lá</i>	I heard she/he spoke angrily to you/her/him
Noun		
Class VII	<i>-tsitsír</i>	the sun
Class VIII	<i>-tsitsísín</i>	a year
Class IX	<i>-tsitsísu</i>	warmth (from a fire), hot air, heat
Class XII	<i>-tsitsíqx</i>	(one) day

Thus, the root serves as the basis of all these derivations and although all these words share the same *general* meaning as the root itself, the *specific* meaning of the derived form is based on the various affixes which accompany it to show how the speaker intends the word to be understood both in terms of semantics as well as grammatical class. The ways in which quasi-nouns, adjectives, adverbs, transitive and intransitive verbs will be covered specifically in the sections below, however it is important to know that while these roots can become any of these derived forms, they will all share the same *general* meaning as the original root.

3.4. Particles

The other major component of the Dragon Tongue are *particles* which are different then verb roots in that they *do not take affixes* and thus do not form derivations of the original particle. Although there are far fewer particles then verb roots, these items are also inherently verbal (although it does not always seem so) they are used primarily as connecting words between other verbs, either which are a verbal phrase all their own or between larger verbal structures such as sentences and the like. Unlike the verb roots, particles derive from the original particle depending on whether or not they are inflected or not. Inflected particles include the evidentials (shown in **8.3. Evidential Sentence Enclitics**) while the single non-inflected particle is the very productive *sa* particle. The derivational structure of all draconic words is shown in the below diagram:



3.5. Inflection of Affixes

One of the biggest differences in the overall structure of the Dragon Tongue and the languages of humans is its approach to tense. Take the following examples from human languages, all translations of the same sentence (the present tense verbs are indicated by the bold sections):

English:	<i>The dragon sees the person</i>
German:	<i>Der Drache sieht den Mann</i>
Japanese:	<i>Ryû ga hito o mimasu</i>
Welsh:	<i>Mae'r ddraig yn gweld y dynol</i>
Old Irish:	<i>Fégaid in fer in ndracc</i>

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Now look at these same sentences again placed in the past tense (the past tense verbs are again indicated by the bold sections):

English:	The dragon saw the person
German:	Der Drache sah den Mann
Japanese:	Ryû ga hito o mimashita
Welsh:	Oedd yr ddraig yn gweld y dynol
Old Irish:	Fégais in fer in ndrac

In all of the above cases the past tense is indicated by a modification of the verb, either by inflection, the addition of affixes, the change of an auxiliary verb, and change of position of the main verb or other modifiers. This is true of every human language I am aware of: tense is indicated *by some modification of the verb* as the verb is the “holder of the tense,” so to speak. Now, the question is if every word in Srínawésin is inherently verbal *where is the tense expressed?* The present and past versions of the same sentence would appear as below when spoken by a dragon (tense markers are indicated by bold):

Srínawésin (Present):	Sínšáwéts inneqxnéx isihéš ni
Srínawésin (Past):	Sáyńšáwéts anneqxnéx asihéš na

As you can see, tense markers are not expressed by the main verb alone in either the present or past tenses (Sínšáwéts and Sáyńšáwéts respectively) but are woven *throughout* the sentence, *appearing in all four separate words*. This answers the question of where tense falls in a language that is comprised wholly by verbs: *Everywhere!* This is because since every word in Srínawésin is verbal and verbs are inherently linked to the expression of past and present, *tense is expressed throughout the sentence by inflecting most of the affixes in terms of tense*. As Srínawésin has three tenses, past, present/future and a cyclical time meaning, each affix will therefore come in three separate forms, i.e. in *Past*, *Non-Past* and *Cyclical* inflections. As far as I am aware, this system of tense being expressed throughout an utterance is one which is found in the Dragon Tongue alone and is a product of the inherent verbality of all draconic words. The concept of inflecting the various affixes for tense is one of vital importance and is *always* used and is an integral part of forming an understandable utterance, so *always* be aware of the inflection of affixes.

One important facet of inflecting affixes is that they all must agree with one another within a clause, i.e. being *Past*, *Non-Past* or *Cyclical* tense throughout the clause or utterance. Therefore, the sentence below is incorrect:

***Sáyńšáwéts inneqxnéx asihéš ni**

This is because the various expressions of tense clash, expressing the past in Sáyńšáwéts and asihéš while the present in inneqxnéx and ni! While tense must agree within the context of all the affixes *within* a clause, tense may switch *between* the clauses in order to form such sentences as:

Saqxnéhišáwéts aStáya sa Snaréš nán tsišathíx ni!
Bloody Face saw the human and now he's running away!

Although the marking of tense on these affixes is both a sentential and clausal aspect of the language it is also morphological as the root morphemes are expressed in different ways depending on the tense of the clause, sentence or utterance they are a part of. Luckily the Dragon Tongue is extremely regular in *how* it effects these inflections on its affixes, the vowel *a* (and *á*) are considered to be *Past Tense* vowels within the inflectional paradigm while *i* (and *í*) are considered to be *Non-Past Tense* vowels. The third “Cyclical” tense uses *u* (and *ú*) to indicate tense but for specifics see **4.3. Draconic Tenses**. Thus, variations between

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two sentences which are identical except for their tense the only variations will be between the vowels of the affixes, as in:

Tsaháqsalášír ayúšíl wáx

The bear was probably killing the deer

Tsiháqsalášír iyúšíl wíx

The bear is probably killing the deer

It is important to note that the inflection of affixes usually only occurs on *prefixes* and not on *suffixes*.