Elvish as a Foreign Language: Tolkien's influence on Modern Day Linguistics

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- March 2014 -

Introduction

Throughout the course of constructed language creation, the same objective of resolving language barriers is observed with the majority of instances. Lodwick's Universal Language for example, was introduced in the late seventeenth century as a result of the Scientific Revolution, and the subsequent aspiration to establish a means of international communication. His attempts strived to reduce linguistic complexities by establishing relationships between words and their associated definition. Schleyer later created Volapük as a service to God, in permitting his parish members and followers to make international contact, thus spreading his "work of peace" (Adams, 2011:26). Zamenhof's Esperanto then took its place with an aim of resolving international conflict with the introduction of a universal dialect that would promote an atmosphere of international understanding and respect (Okrent, 2009:25), but despite its success, has concluded to becoming something of a global freemasonry. However, today we find the likes of Elvish, Klingonese (or Klingon) and Na'vi[1] reflecting the ongoing interest in created language; none of which strive to supersede existing languages, or fulfil any other such impractical objectives. It would appear that the impetus for the creator has since been outmoded with an increasing interest for writing languages for the purposes of entertainment, or what has since become known as an artistic language, or *artlang* (Okrent, 2009:282).

> [T]o create a language that captures an artistic vision, is the motivation for a new generation of language inventors, [whose] languages are designed for creativities sake, not to shape thought or change the world.

Such languages are distinguished from the likes of Lodwick and Schleyer given that their purpose is, as Stockwell states, "existing for their own sake" (Stockwell, 2006:6), and appear only in their own supporting secondary worlds. Although it could be argued in some cases that their primary objective

[1] Klingon being the language requested by Herve Bennett to be created for the *Star Trek* films, and Na'vi created by Paul Frommer for James Cameron's fictional characters in *Avatar*.

was to increase value to their associated franchise, there are those languages which were created for no purpose other than the personal enjoyment of the creator.

In the early 1920's, JRR Tolkien began writing the artlangs which we today associate with stories such as *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, and then having graduated from Oxford University following a study of English language and literature, began work for the Oxford English Dictionary. Although the languages later complimented the aforementioned stories, he hadn't considered publishing his works until his peers convinced him to do so. However by the 1970's, groups of both hobbyist and professional linguists had collated for the purposes of analysing and appreciating his linguistic works, and today Elvish is not only a continued interest of literary scholars, but a phenomenon that has spread throughout the world as a result of its use in the films of Peter Jackson.

However, this is not to say that artlangs have superseded the interest of all constructed languages. Auxiliary languages, or *auxlangs*, such as the aforementioned Esperanto, still constitute an active part of the field. Interlingua, for example, has been in use by many private international companies since its completion in the 1950's (Okrent, 2009:210). Despite its best-known purpose of standardising scientific terminology, and the project closing shortly after its first use in the Second World War Cardiological Congress in 1954, the language has continued to gain popularity for both professional and personal use. James Cooke Brown followed in the 1960's with a proposition of aligning language with logic; hence the projects name, Loglan. The idea was presented as an instrument with which to test the hypothesis of standardising global scientific vocabulary, rather than another campaign for world peace which, given its subsequent trajectory for litigation[1], could so easily have endured an ironic demise. SaypYu is another example of

[1] James Cooke Brown and Bob LeChevalier, one of Loglan's earliest supporters split following a long partnership of development of the language due to a difference of opinion over the intended use of Logloan. LeChevalier re-created the language and called it Lojban which Brown subsequently found to be against the initial contract. Substantial litigation then arose as a result which concluded with both languages being permitted under their respective names. Brown remained in denial of the outcome until his death soon following the judgement.

efforts made to alleviate the impracticalities of international communication, which proposes a universal phonemic orthography. Whilst the system is based on commonly used graphemes represented by a single letters, which gives the impression of a mere revision of the English orthography, it is also a "kəlabərətiv krawd-soorst projekt dhat iz biing divelәpt beyst on yuzərz' kontribyushnz" (collaborative crowd-sourced project that is being developed based on users' contributions).

So whilst linguistics are still being made use of to promote global harmony and international communication, suffice to say that similar efforts are becoming concentrated further towards use within the media. So to what extent does Tolkien's work, and those which followed, deviate from the earlier constructed languages? How do other artlangs compare to Elvish? And to what extent have artlangs affected people having become commonplace in modern-day media? These are questions which will be addressed in this paper, with the intention of illustrating not only how Tolkien influenced the current artlang era, but the extent of the impact that artlangs had, and continue to effect our current view of linguistics.

From Auxiliary to Aesthetic

While Zamenhof, among others, made attempts to overcome the flaws of linguistics, the success of any reciprocal solution would be determined by contrast to that which it proposes to supersede. However, such flaws may not be shared, if at all obvious, by targeted users. For example, before the introduction of the -ed suffix to the English language, a vowel change process was used to distinguish the past tense from the present, or infinitive. The verb "h**e**lp" which became "help**ed**", was originally "h**o**lp", in the same way "m**e**lt" was initially "m**o**lt", although some verbs survived this alteration[1]. Verb irregularity, among other syntactical anomalies, are often as a result of a reinforced habit and subsequently become overlooked. As a result, a

[1] such as s**a**ng or s**o**ld (as opposed to sing**ed** or sell**ed**).

sustainable a priori benefit of learning a new language becomes a prerequisite of any auxiliary language.

As a result of their moral and political detachment, artlangs dispense with such issues associated with auxiliary languages. Given that an artlang will often be created for a solitary purpose, subsequent criticism founded on ambiguity or inconsistency would apply only if taken out of its intended context. Therefore, those who choose to learn or study an artlang do so purely as a compulsion of aesthetic appreciation. To this end, languages such as Klingon and Elvish have enjoyed a success which were never envisaged; more so in the latter case, as Tolkien never intended to publish his work. But where did the ideology for the artlang begin? What was Tolkien's motivation to create such a vast collection of vocabulary?

In the early 1900's when Tolkien began experimenting with languages, auxlangs such as Volapük, Esperanto and Ido would have all been in the process of promoting their respective ideals. All had the same focus at the forefront of their development, which strived to reduce idiomatic use that "plagued the learner of national languages" (Carnaghan, 2014). Phonemic patterns and Indo-European cognates would often be used in such languages, however despite this consistency, it remains obvious that Tolkien did not prioritise the same for his own languages. The table below (figure 1) illustrates the similarities and differences between personal pronouns of the aforementioned auxlangs alongside Tolkien's Sindarin.

Despite the phonemic variation shown in figure 1, consistency does occur in Sindarin, although it may not be obvious to those unfamiliar with Tolkien's linguistic aesthetic. The result of such consistency in the case of Sindarin, and one of the most noticeable characteristics of the language, is the way in which the syllables and words flow between each other. The resultant beauty that Tolkien would observe from creating such a language was the only incentive required to continually develop artlangs for the entirety of his career, and his

subsequent retirement; the process of which Tolkien referred to as moving to a higher dimension (Tolkien, 2006:16).

> [M]oving to the higher dimension, the words in which there is pleasure in the contemplation of the association of form and sense are abundant.

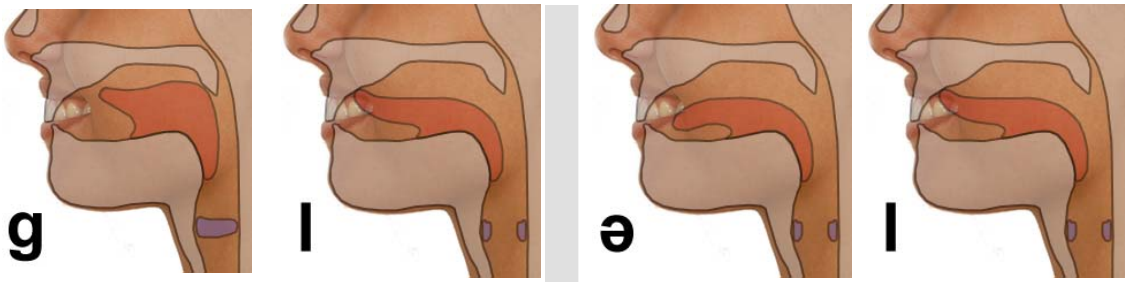
	English	Volapük	Esperanto	Ido	Sindarin
1st person	I	Ob	Si	Me	Im
	Me	Ob	Mi	Me	Nin
	Myself	Oy	Min	Mea	Anim
	We	Obs	Ni	Ni	Men
2nd person	You	Ol	Vi	Tu	Ech
	You (rev.)	Or	Vi	Vu	Lín
3rd person	He	Om	Li	Lu	E
	It	Os	Ĝi	Ol	Den
	Them	Oms	Ili	Li	Haín

Figure 1 *- Personal Pronouns used in Auxlangs and Artlangs*

An Analysis of the Aesthetic

In his *English and Welsh* lecture in 1955, Tolkien stated that the phrase "cellar door" held phonaesthetic beauty (when considered separate from its semantic context), and it is from this statement that we can further isolate the aforementioned consistency. When pronouncing the phrase "cellar door", it is noticed how the two words appear seamless - that they could collectively be misconstrued as a single word. As the "-ar" at the end of "cellar" is

pronounced using a mid-central vowel or *schwa* (sɛl**ə**), the tongue returns to a central point in the mouth, the glottis remains open and the lips unrounded, thus all articulators become redundant in the process. From this neutral point, the articulators can then move freely to pronounce neighbouring phonemes. The diagram below illustrates the movements required between a plosive and the aforementioned schwa to an example semi-vowel (or liquid).



Tongue moves from soft palette to alveolar ridge, while the glottal opens from a previously closed position

Tongue moves from neutral position to the alveolar ridge

***Figure 2** - Articulator movements between plosives and vowels*

The first example is most noticeable when the phonemes are tautosyllabic (both occurring in the same syllable), such as "**gl**ad" or "poly**gl**ot", and it is this excessive movement of the articulators, and the subsequent lack of phonetic fluidity that Tolkien disliked. By comparison, words such as "trav**el**" (travəl) and "**al**one" (ələʊn), the movement of which illustrated by the second example, promote the aforementioned fluidity between phonemes, and it was this that he subsequently found aesthetically pleasing.

Realising the sonorous qualities that vowels provide as a result of their lack of intervening articulation bodies, an analysis of the corpus[1] shows that Tolkien interspersed syllables with vowels to act as a neutral point, thus facilitating a desirable phonemic continuity. This process can be further exemplified when vowels are evenly distributed within syllables; such examples are often

[1] Data taken from Rausch's Sindarin Dictionary Statistics (2013)

referred to as CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words. To illustrate the difference that vowels have on articulation, and subsequent pronunciation, the table below shows examples of such words alongside those whose non-trigraphic, or *consonant clusters*, demonstrate the opposite, again inferring Tolkien's antipathy of the English language.

CVC words	Non-CVC words
N**e**v**e**r (*nɛvə*)	Ny**mph**
G**e**n**e**r**a**l (*dʒɛnərəl*)	Cry**pts**
C**i**n**e**m**a** (*sɪnɪmə*)	An**gst**
B**a**n**a**n**a** (*bənanə*)	Dwa**rfs**
C**a**m**e**r**a** (*kamərə*)	He**lpf**ul

Figure 3 *- Comparison of CVC and Non-CVC English words*

This same phonaesthetic paradigm has been further evidenced by independent research, where results show the most "beautiful" English words to pertain to a similar arrangement of vowels and consonants. Omitting those whose semantic context can influence such a decision (love, passion, beauty), words such as eternity, serendipity and lullaby were noted as popular responses, with the sounds making a "positive contribution" to the decision (Tench/Morris, 2012:4).

Another observed consistency of Tolkien's Elvish languages is that of vowel phonemes, unlike the English orthography that invites ambiguity by associating multiple phonemes with each vowel. For example, the words "f**a**ther" (faðə) and "**a**pple" (apəl) which make use of the open back and open front vowel respectively, or "banana", which associates the same letter with both the open front vowel and the aforementioned schwa. By comparison, Sindarin associates only one phoneme with the /a/ character (the open back vowel), as it does for subsequent vowels (including /y/ as a close central

vowel), thus avoiding such ambiguity. This subset also conforms to the use of Finnish vowel harmony; a process which Tolkien found aesthetically beneficial, and thus adopted for his own use. Again, Finnish vowel harmony promotes a sonorous flow of phonemes by preventing the co-occurrence of vowels (from pre-defined groups) within words.

Considering the above, we can say with some certainty that Tolkien utilised vocalic theory to emphasise his personal aesthetic within Sindarin, and whilst he may have used vowels to enhance such qualities, research shows that this is as a result of the *placement* of the vowels moreover the *quantity*. Depending on the dictionary used[1], Sindarin shows a vowel density between 0.41~0.45 which, based on a scale of vowel density (consisting of five measured levels), is comparable to that evidenced in the English language (Dryer/Haspelmath, 2013). Putting this data alongside the same for the aforementioned auxlangs, we can see that they also use a similar consonant-to-vowel (CTV) ratio[2].

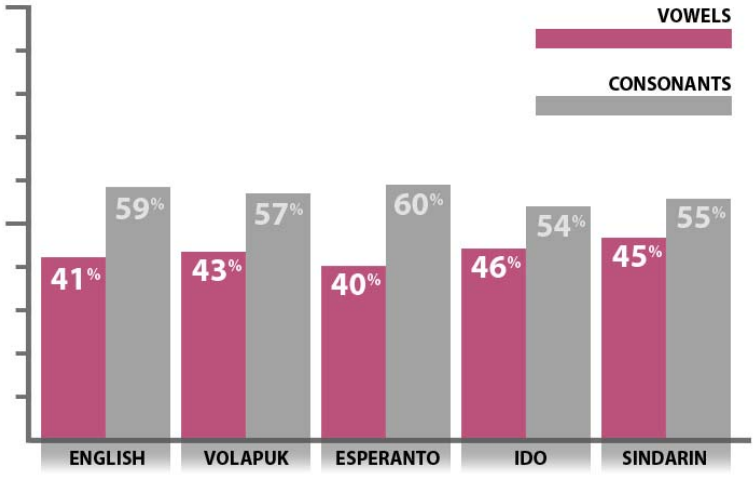


Figure 4 *- English and constructed language consonant-to-vowel statistics*

[1] Data for this study was drawn from three separate dictionaries (listed in references) to provide a mean coverage of the available vocabulary.

[2] This data was compiled by comparing translations of The Lord's Prayer in each language. Only pure vowels were considered in figure 4, and thus diphthongs were omitted

However, putting this in context with syllabic vowel distribution, as evidenced by the respective lexicon, we see that constructed languages show a clear consistency of CVC syllables by comparison to English.

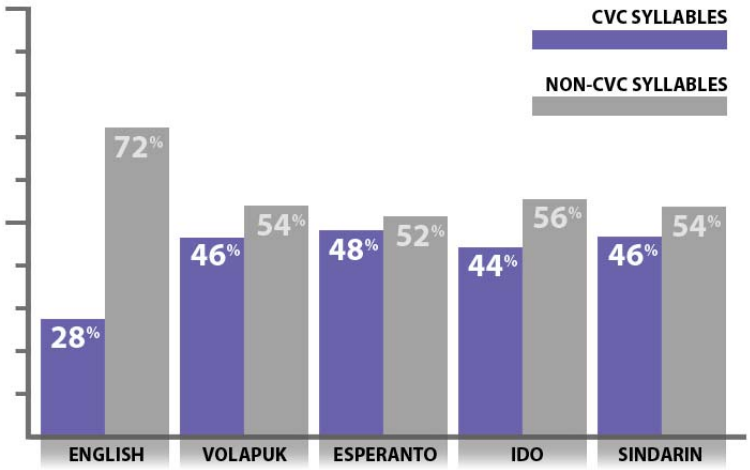


Figure 5 *- Comparison of CVC and Non-CVC English words*

Given that English uses a comparable CTV ratio to the those shown, yet less CVC syllables, it must therefore contain a higher concentration of consonant clusters, which again invites further ambiguity. For example, the /ght/ sequences used in English demonstrate the assimilation that occurs in such clusters, as found in words such as "ni**ght**", or "ei**ght**". Furthermore, digraphs can also masquerade as consonant pairs when split between syllables. The /ph/ digraph for example, when placed initially will be pronounced as a single phoneme or digraph (**ph**one), but between syllables will be pronounced as two independent phonemes (u**p**-**h**eld). This phenomenon has since led the latter example to be referred to as a *pseudo-digraph*. So whilst Tolkien felt the need to instil a sense of archaism in his languages, the years of habit that have reinforced non-phonetic orthographies did not play into his personal aesthetic.

Although consonant clusters occur in Sindarin, a further analysis of the aforementioned dictionaries show very few words which permit non-

trigraphic or digraphic consonants within a single syllable. The word *Iarwain*[1] for example, whilst containing the /rw/ sequence is pronounced in two syllables (Iar•wain), thus adhering to the above CVC theory. The majority of words not conforming to this theory were found to be monosyllabic, such as *salph* (*tr*. broth) or *morn* (*tr*. darkness, night).

A majority of the diagraphs and trigraphs used in the Sindarin lexicon are derived from Welsh phonology, used in no small part for its lenition properties. Of the nine examples, seven digraphs use an /h/ to lenite the neighbouring consonant, which serve to reduce the voiced characteristics of such consonants[2]; something which Tolkien clearly saw as a means to achieving the required aspects of his linguistic aesthetic.

Furthermore, whilst a majority of mid-word syllables are occupied by vowels, a frequent use of nasals are also noticed in the Sindarin lexicon in similar positions. These are often placed before a plosive which results in the devoicing of the following consonant; a phonological feature referred to as *prenasalisation*. Whilst this is also evident in English, under certain syllabic conditions, mispronunciation occurs through the assimilation of consonants. This will usually occur when a mid-word syllable ends with a prenasalised plosive, for example "sandwich" (san'wich) and "handbag" (han'bag). The use of prenasalisation was evident from the earliest, or primitive Elvish (Jonsson, 2009), and although it is commonly recognised as a feature of the African or Chinese languages, it is more probable that Tolkien noticed the effects as a result of his work in Greek philology in college. In order to avoid the aforementioned ambiguity associated with English, the alphabet used to write the Elvish languages (the *Tengwar*) makes use of a diacritic marking to indicate the use of prenasalisation (see figure 6 below). In addition, as a result of his affection for Finnish phonology, the voiceless plosives in Sindarin (/p/ and /t/) are not initially aspirated (Salo, 2004:21), and thus the effect of prenasalisation would not alter the pronunciation. However, the voiced counterparts (/d/ and /b/), also subject to this feature, subsequently become

[1] *Iarwain* (jar'wʌɪn) is the Sindarin word meaning elder, or eldest.
[2] Consider words pairs such as "ten" and "t**h**en", "ring" and "r**h**ythm" to demonstrate the lenition properties of the following /h/.

devoiced when pronounced; the table below demonstrates the result through use of suitable English words;

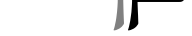
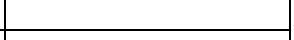
devoiced (prenasalised) plosives		voiced plosives	
co**mb**		ar**m·b**and	
da**mp**		co**m·p**ass	
almo**nd**		e**n·d**ow	

Figure 6 *- Prenasalisation features of English and Elvish*

Whilst we cannot conclude that the effects of prenasalisation were a prerequisite for Tolkien's aesthetic, continued analysis of the corpus continues to evidence this theory. Along with the aforementioned mid-word examples, nasal consonants also appear frequently in the word-final position. This is illustrated in the personal pronouns in figure 1, and when placed before a word containing an initial plosive, we find the same prenasalised devoicing effect results. Examples of this are shown below;

"I**m b**editha" "Me**n g**evennin"

im bɛdiθa - I will be going *gɛvɛnnin* - We all met

Figure 7 *- Examples of prenasalisation between words in Sindarin*

Word-final nasals also exemplify the aforementioned theory of Tolkien's phonetic fluidity when placed before an initial vowel, and much like the aforementioned "cellar door" example, such syllabic sequences can appear as a single word when pronounced.

"Me**n e**drannem"	"I**m A**rwen"
mɛn ɛdrannɛm - We opened	*im arwɛn* - I am Arwen

***Figure 8** - Examples of word-final nasals preceding initial vowels*

The sonorous effects are also evident when the word-final nasal is neighbouring another nasal. Whilst assimilation would occur should the same consonant be used in both positions, minimal movement is required between articulating bodies when pronouncing adjacent nasal phonemes (/n/ and /m/).

"I**m n**aran"	"De**n m**editha ech"
im naran - I told myself	*dɛn mɛdiθa ɛx* - It will eat you

***Figure 9** - Examples of word-final nasals preceding initial nasals*

Despite the existence of words in the Sindarin lexicon that end with phonemes other than nasals or vowels, those which Tolkien chose to include in his published works (which have since become accepted as being the catalyst for unveiling his languages) certainly appear to adhere to the above outlined theories. Excerpts from the aforementioned works[1] are shown in the following

[1] Sentence 1 translation "*The doors of Durin, Lord of Moria. Speak, friend, and enter*" (Tolkien, 1991:235), sentence 2 translation "*Elvish gate open now for us!*" (Tolkien,

diagram, alongside the observed data which further evidences the combined aforementioned theories.

"Ennyn Durin Aran Moria: pedo mellon a minno"

"Annon edhellen, edro hi ammen!"

"Ónen i-Estel Edain, ú-chebin estel anim"

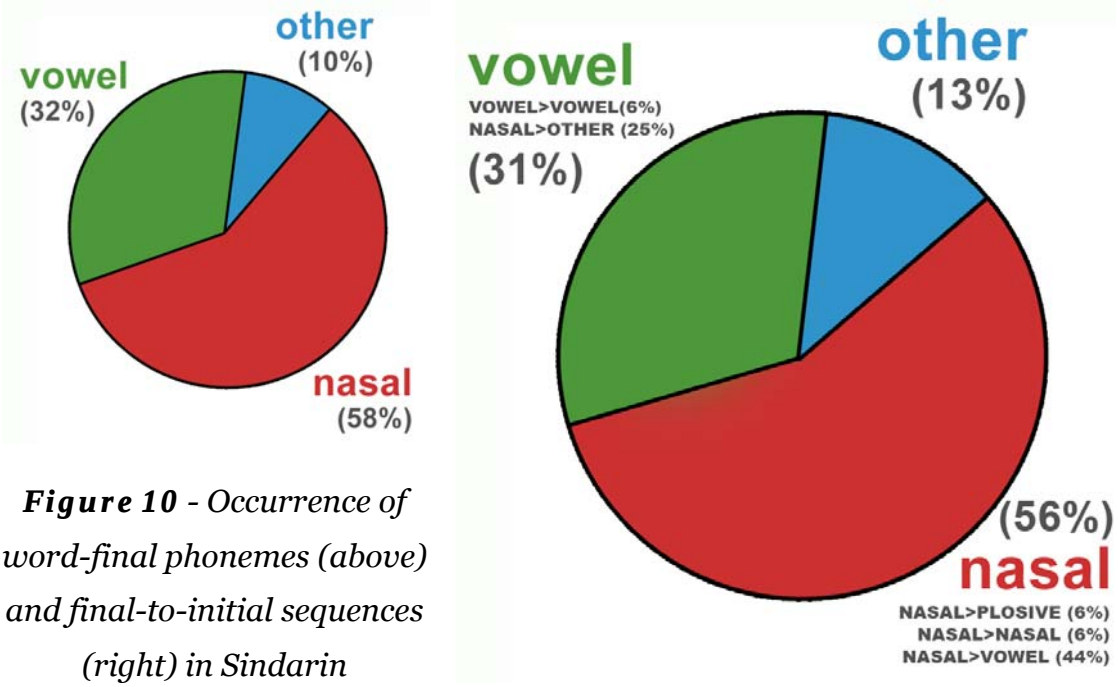


Figure 10 *- Occurrence of word-final phonemes (above) and final-to-initial sequences (right) in Sindarin*

Suffice to say that the balance or bias of vowels and consonants would serve as a means to promote the learning of most auxlangs, and whilst Tolkien clearly gave preference to the aesthetic qualities of his languages moreover such practicalities, he nonetheless avoided ambiguity between phonology and orthography.

1991:236), sentence 3 translation "*I gave hope to the Dúnedain; I have kept no hope for myself*" (Tolkien 1991:228)

From Aesthetic to Artistic

During the time that Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* was first in circulation, other authors had already begun writing auxlangs into their respective narratives; Burgess' *Nadsat* from *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), and *Newspeak* from Orwell's *1984* (1949) being the more memorable examples. Newspeak existed solely to meet the needs of a fictional totalitarian state within the framework of Orwell's narrative (thus pertaining to the accepted definition of an auxlang), yet it was closely modelled on *Basic English*, an auxlang written to aid the process of learning English as a second language. Therefore, Newspeak became a simplified subset of the existing English language (or *Oldspeak* as it is referred to by Orwell) by reducing the available lexical semantics, such that "warm" was replaced with "uncold" and "darkness" with "unlight". So whilst the plotlines were creatively woven into the syntax, the aesthetics of the resulting language were not a concern for Orwell - the same being observed of Burgess. Nadsat was created as an urbanised tongue spoken by the teen subculture of his story, and has since been described by critics as a "bastardisation of the Russian language" (thebookexperience, 2010). In most cases, words were taken from the Russian language and rewritten using English phonology. Some retained their original definition, such as "goober", originally губа (gubä) meaning "lip", whilst others were given alternate meanings based on their anglicised pronunciation, for example хорошо, or khorosho (xərɐ'ʂo) became "horror show". Again, the focus was clearly not one of aesthetic quality, but of experimental transliteration.

Whilst it was the intention of both Orwell and Burgess to create languages that would give credibility to their stories, the means by which they arrived at the algorithms for their respective artlangs still reflect a modest level of linguistic creativity by comparison to those created by Tolkien. However, we cannot assume that Tolkien created his Elvish languages from an entirely unique ideology.

In a brief period prior to the Russian Revolution, often referred to as the Futurism Movement[1], a group of three cubo-futurists created a language known as *Zaum* (loosely translating from Russian as "beyond the mind"). Unlike the auxlangs of the time, Zaum was created for the purpose of writing and performing experimental poetry using words which had no definable meaning. Underpinning their experiment is the concept of phonaesthetics (a subset of sound symbolism), or more specifically the idea that vocal sounds can carry definition in themselves. Whilst Tolkien's Elvish inevitably reflects elements of real-world cognates, the creators of Zaum required that their language allowed for a fuller expression; something which the "common everyday language binds" (Janecek, 1996:78). As such, Zaum was created organically to resemble sounds from clusters of lettering to suit the aesthetics of the poet. However, further consideration of this experimental field can invite digression towards musical aspects (Smith, 2014), which in turn dilute the lexical aspects of the language. In so doing, words (or lyrics) become appreciated by the auditor for aesthetic principles such as tonality and vocal musicianship. However, whilst Tolkien's Elvish followed a more literal doctrine to that of Zaum, this was not always the case for subsequent artlangs.

In 1979 Klingon language appeared in the first of what became a series of feature films for the Star Trek franchise. Although the language was later expanded by American linguist Marc Okrand, the first words were written by producer John Povill and James Doohan, who was cast in the original series in 1966 as "Scotty". The language was written for a richly articulated race of alien warriors, or a "Viking-Spartan-samurai motorcycle gang" (Okrent, 2009:264), and as such was required to portray suitably atypical human vocal attributes (Lenard, 1996:11);

> [The producers] didn't want the language to sound anything Earthly... there are sounds in there that sound a bit like German, a bit like Japanese, and a bit like God knows what...

[1] The Russian Futurism movement is thought to have begun between 1910-12 and ending at the onset of the Russian Revolution in 1917; the cubo-futurists Velimir Khlebnikov and Aleksei Kruchenykh being at the forefront of the defined period.

Whilst Klingon supposedly portrays the language of an extraterrestrial race, the phonemic structure is inevitably hindered by our own "human" vocal tract, thus all phonemes associated with the language can be found in the International Phonetic Alphabet. However, in the interest of creating what was to be interpreted as an other-worldly tongue, Okrand uses phonemes collectively known to very few; the unvoiced uvular ejective (qʼ) for example, used in only five known languages, and consequently spoken natively by approximately 40,000 people worldwide (0.006% of the current population). Suffice to say that potential audiences would not readily identify such phonemes, and to this end, formed the fundamental algorithm for Okrand's extraterrestrial language.

Since its use in within the aforementioned Star Trek franchise, both Okrand and the members of the Klingon Language Institute (KLI) have collaborated in the continued expansion of the Klingon lexicon, for no reason other than to pursue the language for its linguistic properties. The results of their work have since been published and include guides to Klingon pronunciation and a complete translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet; an extract of which is shown below.

bijatlh 'e' mev! peqIm! DaH cholqa' bIH!

bɪdʒatɬ 'ɛ' mɛv! pɛqɪm! ɖax ʧoqa' bɪx!

Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

taH pagh taHbe'. DaH mu'tlheghvam vIqeInIS.

tax paɣ taxbɛ'. ɖax mu'tɬɛɣvam vɪqɛnɪʂ

To be or not to be; that is the question.

Figure 11 *- An extract from The Klingon Hamlet published by the Klingon Language Institute*

Put in context with the data collated for figures 4 and 5, it is noticed that the distance between the CTV (consonant and vowel) variables increases, and with the data biased towards the consonants[1], the subsequent CVC count reduces to show a substantial deviation from both auxlang and real-world examples. Coupled with ejective, retroflex and glottal phonemes, Okrand's resultant dialogue achieves what can only be considered as the closest approximation to the required extraterrestrial linguistic model.

In the years that followed the first of the Star Trek series, the film and TV industry began to give more attention to the potential interest that artlangs could generate for their respective productions. Some of these languages, such as Na'vi, were developed to include a lexicon larger than required by the dialogue; the creation of which being subcontracted to a professional linguist. Others, the likes of which were given less attention, would be written as needed and often by the author[1] or script writer, or in the case of Huttese, a member of the sound recording team. However, in all respects, artlangs have since generated repeated response, either to study for personal or social interest, or for subsidiary employment in the media or games industry[1]. The diagram below (figure 12) shows just a few examples of artlangs that have been created for the film industry in the previous twenty-five years.

Although the languages created during this period are not as cultivated as Tolkien's Elvish, Paul Frommer spent a number of years creating what he describes as a "complete language with a consistent sound system, morphology and syntax" (Milani, 2009) for James Cameron's fictional land of Pandora. Cameron's request of Frommer was simply that the resultant Na'vi be "pleasant and appealing to the audience", and thus consideration was given to something akin to Tolkien's aforementioned linguistic aesthetic. To Frommer's benefit, this concluded with fans expressing curiosity about how and where to learn the language, even before the film's release.

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[1] Extracts totalling a 300 word count taken from the Klingon Hamlet, demonstrate a split of 70% consonants and 30% vowels.

[1] JK Rowling's Parseltongue, created for the series of *Harry Potter* stories, is a good example of a language created as needed. The language was subsequently extended as a result of the film and game industry's impact on the franchise.

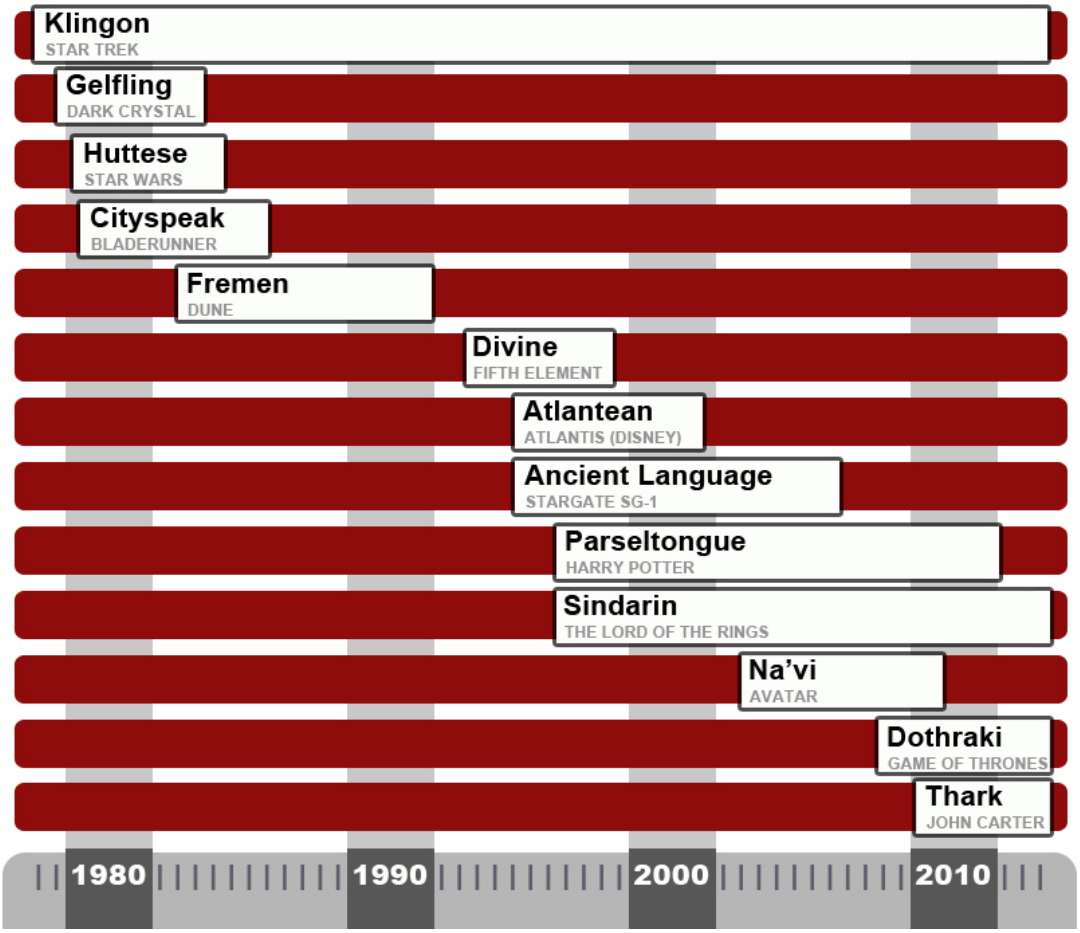

Figure 12 *- Artlangs created for the film industry in the last 25 years*

A brief analysis of Na'vi shows an absence of voiced plosives, whilst the voiceless examples remain initially unaspirated. In certain syllabic conditions, the same plosives are subject to lenition, causing them to mutate to the voiceless fricative of the same point of articulation[1]. Furthermore, a plosive>semi-vowel sequence (the obstruction of which illustrated in figure 2), is not permitted initially, and can only be split between syllable boundaries[2]. Frommer also gave attention to the CVC paradigm as shown in figure 5, indicating that a single vowel or diphthong must be centred in each syllable. The vowel being preceded by no more than two consonants, and followed by

[1] p becomes f (labial), t becomes s (dental) and k becomes h (palatal)

[2] for example "**gl**ad" is not permitted as the sequence is in an initial position, "poly**gl**ot" is also not permitted as the same sequence in contained within a single syllable, but "meanin**gl**ess" is permitted as the sequence is divided by the syllable boundary.

just one, thus giving each syllable the structure of either CVC or CCVC. Below is a typical example of Na'vi taken from the production for which it was written, and translated reads "*I see you brother, and thank you. Your spirit goes with Eywa, your body stays behind to become part of the People*".

Oel ngati kameie, ma Tsmukan, ulte ngaru seiyi ireiyo. Ngari hu Eywa saleu tirea, tokx 'ì'awn slu Na'viyä hapxì.

Figure 13 *- An example of the Na'vi language created for James Cameron's Avatar*

Considering the similarity between Na'vi and the previous analysis of Elvish, it would appear that Tolkien has, in this case, set the phonaesthetic standard for what is deemed "pleasant". Whilst it can be argued that aesthetics within any given context becomes open to subjectivity, and thus cannot be readily standardised, Tolkien and Frommer have drawn the same parallel in this case. However, in so doing, assumptions are made as to how the prospective audience will interpret the language, and given that auditors will be ignorant of the semantic content, impressions will be drawn purely from the sound of the language alone. So what can we know of such audiences, and in what context can artlangs be used outside of their initial purpose?

The modern-day artlang collective

Taking its place alongside modern counterparts such as Na'vi, Huttese, and Parseltongue, Elvish often attracts those seeking to better their social interactivity by committing phrases to memory, in place of undertaking scholarly exploits. Online forums and social media sites along with conventions such as Comic Con target such groups by instilling a sense of

kinship and community through the recreating of secondary worlds in these artlangs are used. However, the aforementioned examples written by script writers or authors who, unlike Tolkien, are not directly associated with the field of linguistics, create languages which are at best a collection of few words. Subsequently, these languages require minimal impetus to learn in their entirety.

For the languages whose vocabulary go beyond a handful of phrases, we find societies such as the Elvish Linguistic Fellowship (ELF) publishing periodic journals; the editors of which inviting contributions from fellow enthusiasts and scholars. Due to its longstanding recognition in the field, the panel responsible for the *Vinyar Tengwar*, or VT (one of two journals published by the ELF), are fortunate to have the assistance of Tolkien's third and youngest son, Christopher Tolkien. Having become the literary executor for the Tolkien Estate, fragments of prose and poetry are, on occasion, passed to the aforementioned panel in the continued interest of his late fathers work. It is common knowledge of the panel that many archived documents still exist in the aforementioned Estate, although it is the hope of the VT subscribers that access to such work will continue to be intravenously granted.

The Klingon Language Institute (KLI), much like the aforementioned ELF, are today internationally recognised as the organisation at the forefront of their respective languages. Collectively, they encourage their members to participate in the scholarly study of the languages, and indulge in such activities as postal courses, online discussion groups and the annual Qep'a conference, of which Marc Okrand has been known to sporadically attend. The *HolQeD*, dubbed the "main vehicle" of the KLI, is the quarterly newsletter available to members, whose content surrounding the "Warpspeed Warrior Tongue" is interspersed with DVD reviews, Klingon mathematics and discussions of Klingon lifestyle (Kli.org, 2014).

However, aside from Elvish being acknowledged some thirty years before Klingon, Tolkien's work has, by comparison, always presented itself to linguists with a greater sense of passion and linguistic fervour; the reason

perhaps being that Klingon *was created for Star Trek*. Conversely, The Lord of the Rings *was created for Elvish* - the contrary is a frequent misconception by those in ignorance of Tolkien's stories being a smokescreen, behind which he could unveil his linguistic creativity, or legitimise his madness (Okrent, 2009:283).

To those who study his work, the creation of Tolkien's artlangs are seen as a compulsion to satisfy an affinity for language, whereas Klingon was created to give credibility to an extraterrestrial race. Okrand was employed by the producers of Star Trek for this purpose following a meeting in 1982 working for the National Captioning Institute, which remained his continued career path until his retirement in 2013, whereas it is likely that Tolkien's Elvish would have existed to the extent we know it to be today, regardless of whether his works were published.

Conclusion

It was a recollection of a former Oxford graduate that Tolkien would begin each academic year, along with the influx of new students, guessing their home locations within an accuracy of a fifteen mile radius, purely form the sound of their respective dialects (German, 2013). His passion for language and the aesthetic beauty which he so fervently claimed it bestowed cannot be exaggerated. Therefore, having dedicated his academic life studying languages, and his personal life creating them, it is of little surprise that his work has become a keen focus for academic and amateur alike. Whether as a profession or a hobby, Elvish continues to be of avid interest to many.

The paradoxical effect that sees an incomprehensible language give so much credibility to literary work can never be underestimated, and also as noted by Ross Smith is his aesthetic review of Sindarin, this is the effect that is achieved wherever Tolkien "sprinkles Elvish expressions or verses through his prose" (Smith, 2005:16). Given the impact that his stories continue to have, and the observable influence that his linguistic work has since had on constructed

languages, suffice to say that Tolkien will remain at the forefront of the artlang era for the foreseeable future.

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