

# Sinnish Primer

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## ***Introduction***

### **What is Sinnish?**

Sinnish is the English name of a constructed language. A constructed language (or a conlang) is, according to the ConLang Frequently Asked Questions page at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/9219/conlangfaq.html>, “ a language created consciously, usually by one person, rather than one evolving over long periods of time in a community of speakers.”

There are hundreds of conlangs out there. The most popular are the Elvish languages from Tolkein’s *Lord of the Rings* series, the Klingon of the *Star Trek* universe and the auxiliary language Esperanto. But you can see elements of constructed languages in all sorts of places, especially in a lot of science fiction and fantasy stories.

Most conlangs are what is called an artlang, or art language. The person designing the language usually makes them purely for the fun of it and often as a sort of obsession.

And that’s what Sinnish is, my little personal linguistic obsession. It’s intended to eventually be a working language at some point and I encourage people to use it.

### **Why is Sinnish?**

Originally, Sinnish was going to be a language used in a series of urban fantasy stories I was planning, being the language of the Raptured. The Raptured are a disparate group of people that are a cross between sex magicians and sex elementals. I have taken some of the themes from my Raptured background and used a watered-down form of them to develop a sort of personal mystic philosophy. Both of these form the cultural backdrop on which Sinnish is based. As I worked on Sinnish, it became more of the focus of my hobby than my stories did, thus it has taken on a life of it’s own to a certain extent.

Sinnish has a number of purposes, besides that the sheer delight I take in creating language. The first is to provide a unique way for me to express myself. As I have designed Sinnish from the ground up, the structure of the language itself is a reflection of my thought processes and how I express things. Also, the vocabulary tends to reflect my interests and includes terms for ideas I find difficult or awkward to express in English.

The second purpose is to be what some call a stealth language – it’s intended to provide a way for me to communicate with others that is secure and distinct.

The third is to provide a medium with which to express an array of subculture ideas in a manner that was designed for them, including occult and sexuality subcultures.

But overall, it’s just the sheer delight. ;)

## When is Sinnish?

No language is static; it changes over time as rules drift and words are added. Sinnish is more dynamic than that, as I haven't really finished it. I may never finish it completely as I indulge in Tolkein's vice of 'endlessly fiddling' with my language.

This primer will be a good place to start, but it will change over time as well. The revision date at the top will let you know what version of the language you are dealing with. Once I finish the primer, there will be an Appendix that lists what changes have been made from revision to revision.

## Where is Sinnish?

You can find what information I have available about Sinnish at <http://www.backtable.org/~blade/sinnish/>

What you see there isn't in the prettiest format, but you can find some basic information about Sinnish. You can also find some word lists, some sound bytes and some written examples there as well.

Maybe one of these days I'll register sinnish.org.

## How is Sinnish?

That's what this primer is all about, the hows of Sinnish.

The basic structure of the primer will be simple. Eventually each chapter will be divided into two parts: a section on grammar/structure and a conversation/culture section that focuses on phrases, style and other background details. The second section may have word lists as well.

In the text of the primer itself, we'll be using a number of conventions. Words, phrases and sentences in Sinnish will be written in *italics*. Translations into English will be in "quotation marks." For example: *medza* means "family".

Suffixes and prefixes will be listed with a hyphen, "-", before or after the letters themselves to indicate where it is attached to the main word. Infixes have a "-" on either side.

There will be a few special case situations, such as explaining the pronunciation of a word, which will be spelled out for easier understanding. For example: *medza* is pronounced MAYD-zah.

# Chapter 1

## **Structure: The Sounds of Sinnish**

We are going to start off with the sounds of Sinnish, how Sinnish words are spoken and how you write down those sounds.

One of the ways to write Sinnish is using the Roman alphabet and that's what we'll be using throughout this primer. It is generally a phonetic alphabet – each symbol or pair of symbols corresponds to a single sound, though there is some drift when certain sounds appear next to each other. There are no silent letters.

Each sound is listed by its Roman version, then the International Phonetic Association phonetic symbol for the sound and then an example.

## **Consonants**

The following is a list of consonants in Sinnish. They are divided up by types of sounds. These divisions may mean nothing to you, so you can ignore them if you like – they are just to break up the list a bit.

There are six stops. A stop is a sound created by the complete closure of the vocal tract.

<i>p</i>	p	p as in “put”
<i>t</i>	t	t as in “test”
<i>k</i>	k	k as in “kick”
<i>b</i>	b	b as in “boy”
<i>g</i>	g	g as in “go”
<i>d</i>	d	d as in “dog”

Sinnish has seven fricatives. A fricative is a sound created by air rushing through the vocal tract.

<i>s</i>	s	s as in “sun”
<i>z</i>	z	z as in “zoo”
<i>sh</i>	ʃ	sh as in “shoe”
<i>zh</i>	ʒ	s as in “vision”
<i>x</i>	x	ch as in the Scottish “loch”
<i>v</i>	v	v as in “valve”
<i>dh</i>	ð	th as in “then”

There are seven other consonants of various types.

<i>l</i>	l	l as in “leaf”
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<i>r</i>	ɾ	r in the Spanish “roja” (an alveolar flap)
<i>m</i>	m	m as in “meet”
<i>n</i>	n	n as in “nice”
<i>w</i>	w	w as in “wide”
<i>y</i>	j	y as in “year”
<i>ch</i>	tʃ	ch as in “church”

Notes on consonants:

- In English, we have a tendency to change our s’s to z’s when we say them, especially at the end of words (i.e. “dogs” comes out as “dawgz”). In Sinnish, this doesn’t happen – if it says *s*, it means *s*.
- The *x* sound tends to soften at the end of a syllable, sometimes so much it can be likened to an English “h”. That is really dependant on an individual’s accent, however.
- The *r* is a flap, which is a tap right behind the teeth with the tongue. It is not the English “r”, which is a sort of growling sound. It is often trilled as well.
- When you get the consonant cluster *dzh*, it has a tendency to come out as “dj” with the “j” as in “judge”.
- In consonant clusters, a voiced stop (*b, g, d*) cannot be followed by either *s* or *sh*. Similarly, an unvoiced stop (*p, k, t*) cannot be followed by *z* or *zh*.
- The consonants *v, n*, and *dh* only appear in prefixes and suffixes, never in a word itself.

## Vowels

There are six vowels in Sinnish. The first five will be familiar to students of Spanish as they are the Spanish vowels.

<i>a</i>	a	a as in “father”
<i>e</i>	e	ai as in “bait”
<i>i</i>	i	ee as in “meet”
<i>o</i>	o	oa as in “boat”
<i>u</i>	u	oo as in “boot”
<i>uh</i>	ə	u as in “mutt”

Notes on vowels:

- English has a tendency to change the *a* sound to an *uh* sound, especially in words ending with the *a* sound. In Sinnish, these are very different sounds. It’s important to make the *a* sound distinct from the *uh* sound, even in syllables that are unstressed. You can lengthen the *a* sound if that helps – this more common when it appears at the end of a word.
- Another English tendency is to change vowels when they appear before an “r”. In Sinnish, the vowels should remain as pure as possible when before an *r*.

- When an *a* appears before a *y* (as in *shaya*). Then the *a* can drift into the long “i” like in “bite”.
- When an *e* appears at the beginning of the word, it can be relaxed into a short “e” like in the word “bet”.

## Syllables

Syllables in Sinnish come in three different forms: a single vowel (V), a consonant then a vowel (CV), consonant vowel consonant (CVC) and vowel then consonant (VC).

CV is the most common and can appear in any position in the word.

V can occur at the beginning of a word or the end. However, it can occur at the end of the words only after a CV syllable.

VC only appears at the beginning of the word, after a CV syllable or another VC syllable.

The upshot of all of this is that Sinnish has some specific rules on how words are divided into syllables.

- If you have two consonants next to each other, they will always be in separate syllables. For example, *medza* will always be divided med-za, never me-dza or meds-a. *sazhda* would be sazh-da, not sazhd-a or sa-zhda. (Remember that the *h* is not a really letter in Sinnish – it is only used in conjunction other letters for the *sh*, *zh*, *ch*, and *uh* sounds.)
- If you have two vowels next to each other, they will be in separate syllables. For example, *gael* is always ga-el. The vowels are pronounced separately.
- If a word begins with a vowel, that vowel will always be in a syllable alone, except if it is followed by two consonants. In that case, the first two letters become the syllable. For example: *ushaya* is u-sha-ya. *elsima* is el-si-ma.
- A vowel will never be in a syllable alone in the middle of a word. It will always follow a consonant unless you have two vowels in a row, or if the syllable before it is a vowel then a consonant. For example, *gaelar* is ga-el-ar. But *kitarar* is ki-ta-rar.
- Adding suffixes or prefixes can cause syllable boundaries to shuffle. For example: *eke* is usually e-ke. But if you add the prefix *um-*, then it becomes u-me-ke.

## Conversation/Culture: Names and Salutations

### Proper Nouns and Sinnish Names

Let’s start off our conversational discussions with something on proper nouns. A proper noun is really just the name of something (i.e. its ‘proper’ designation). In English, capitalizing the first letter of each word in the name signals it as a proper noun.

In Sinnish, we don’t use capitalization this way (and other systems of writing Sinnish, there simply are no capital letters). Instead, proper nouns are indicated by placing an apostrophe (that is ‘ ’) before the proper noun. A lot of books and word

processors have several things that people think of as apostrophes, including what people call ‘curly quotes’ or ‘typographer’s quote’. In Sinnish, it doesn’t really matter which you use.

Now, this has no effect whatsoever on how the word is pronounced, just like capitalization has no effect on how an English word sounds.

For example, if someone’s name in Sinnish is *tezhme*, you would write it as ‘*tezhme*. The first represents the noun, meaning “the feeling like everything is right with the universe”, the second is the name of someone or something (like naming someone “Joy”). Both are pronounced the same, however: tayzh-may (or tɛʒme in IPA phonetic alphabet).

## Sinnish Names

In most modern Western Languages, names for people and places are usually derived from other cultures and languages and are sort of just signifiers. For instance, “David” is a common name, but in English, it doesn’t mean anything in itself. However, these names usually had meaning in the culture they came from (David seems to derive from the Hebrew for “beloved”).

Sinnish names tend towards the pattern in these originating languages, where names are actual words in Sinnish that have a literal meaning. This is similar to the stereotypical Native American style of name like “Running Bear” or “Dances with Wolves.” When translating names into Sinnish, a translation of the original meaning is considered the best style. For example, “Los Angeles” is “the angels”. In Sinnish, it is called *zhesal* (literally “angels”).

Names for people in Sinnish are slightly different. The *shiduzh* (“personal name”) is a person’s first name. It is usually just a noun or verb, chosen by the person when they learn Sinnish or when the speaker reaches adulthood. Sometimes, compound words are used for variation. Additionally, participle can be added to make it different from others with the same name.

For example, my Sinnish name is *lakem*, which means “poet”. If I wanted to be known as “shadow poet”, I could make my name a compound word of “shadow”+ “poet”: *lakemtuhr*. Or I could add a participle (essentially like an adjective) for something like “shadowy poet”: *lakem otuhr*. This would be like calling someone by name with a modifier, “Little John” or “Crazy Dave”.

There are a number of things that can be added as a surname to a Sinnish name. One of them is a *shidmedza* (“family name”) to indicate one’s lineage. Also, you could use a *shidaro* (“cabal name”) – a *daro* refers to an intentional association with tight bonds, a sort of ‘chosen family’. Some *daridho* adopt a name and that is used in a *shidaro*. We will pass on how to construct these, as it depends upon some of the more complex grammar you’ll see later. We’ll get back to them.

For now, you should probably choose your *shiduzh*.

## Salutations and Pleasantries

Below are a list of salutations you can use to say hello, introduce yourself, and say goodbye.

### Greetings

<i>ushe</i>	“Hello”
<i>ugule war</i>	“Welcome to you” (specifically one person)
<i>ugule wav</i>	“Welcome to you” (many people)
<i>zayoba</i>	“Good Morning”
<i>zarozha</i>	“Good Afternoon”
<i>zasure</i>	“Good Evening”
<i>zashusha</i>	“Good Night.”

### How are you?

<i>aribta</i>	“How are you?”
<i>ribtav alewa</i>	“How are you feeling?”
<i>alewa ribtav</i>	“How are you feeling?” (formal)
<i>rowasuv azus</i>	“What are you doing?”

### Responses

<i>ugel</i>	“I am fine.”
<i>umexe</i>	“I’m happy.”
<i>ubagel</i>	“I’m okay.” (literally “I’m reasonably good.”)

### Goodbyes

<i>shazhedha</i>	“Goodbye” (literally “Blessings”)
<i>alete yu</i>	“Be well” (literally “May you be healthy”)
<i>isim riv</i>	“Enjoy yourself”

### Other pleasantries

<i>sax</i>	“Please”
<i>udes</i>	“Thanks.”
<i>zhu mazhda</i>	“You’re welcome.” (literally “My pleasure.”)
<i>iguta sax</i>	“Excuse me.”

## Chapter 2

### **Structure: Words and Word Order**

We've talked about the sounds of Sinnish and a little about the shapes of the words. But in this chapter we are going to talk a little more about types of the words and how they are put into a sentence.

### **Types of Words**

#### **Element**

Many languages have the concept of 'gender'. In languages this is just a sort of linguistic category, often without a direct correlation to an actual gender. In Sinnish, there is a similar system, an elemental system. All words have an element associated with them. This element is sometimes often (directly or obliquely) connected to the meaning of the word. However, they are primarily a category of words. Generally, the element for a word does not change.

Each element has a corresponding vowel. When words of a particular element are being modified, this elemental vowel will often come into play.

There are six elements in Sinnish:

Element	Vowel
<i>rek</i> "sun"	<i>e</i>
<i>xos</i> "fire"	<i>o</i>
<i>wus</i> "air"	<i>u</i>
<i>shim</i> "water"	<i>i</i>
<i>karuhm</i> "earth"	<i>a</i>
<i>tuhr</i> "shadow"	<i>uh</i>

#### **Part of Speech**

There are two primary parts of speech in Sinnish: roots and particles.

Roots are words that can and usually are modified as they are used in the sentence. They have all of the real meaning in them. Affixes or phrases can be used to extend and refine what they are referring to.

You can divide them further into nouns and verbs. Nouns are things: persons, places, things, ideas, etc. Verbs are what these things can do – actions and states of being. Nouns do verbs.

The division between nouns and verbs is fairly mutable. Nouns can be used as verbs and vice versa. When a noun is used as a verb, it implies that the action the object is doing it to be, be like, or act like the noun. When a verb is used as a noun, it implies that the thing is the activity of doing the action described by the verb. This is, of course, dependant on context and poetic license.

Particles are smaller words that support other words in the sentence by adding meaning or providing grammatical information. Particles are rarely modified. Sometimes, there is some overlap, as some particles can be used as roots.

## **Word Order**

In English, who does what in a sentence is indicated by where they are in the sentence. “The cow ate the grass” is a very different sentence than “The grass ate the cow”. In Sinnish, we use a combination of endings and order to tell which word is in which role in the sentence.

In general usage, the subject (that which is doing the verb) is at the beginning of the sentence. Following it are the objects (that which is done to or about – we’ll talk more about them later). Finally, the verb appears at the end of the sentence instead of the middle as we are used to. So “The cow sings the song” would be *mudi lidov olidam* (“cow song sings” more literally). For poetic license, you can move the words around, as the endings make the role of noun clear.

Words or phrases that modify those words generally appear immediately after the words they modify.

## **Formal Word Order**

However, there is a second word order specifically for formal sentences. Formal sentences would be used when speaking to a superior, making a formal statement, in a legal document, etc. It’s used when what you are saying is ‘official’, ‘formal’ or ‘ritual’.

In the formal word order, the verb comes first in the sentence, followed by the subject then the objects. So the formal version of the sentence above would be *olidam mudi lidov* (literally “sings cow song”). In fact, the exact order of the nouns in the sentence are not important, as long as the verb comes first.

## Chapter 3

### **Structure: Verb - That's what's happenin'!**

Verbs are really the key point of the language, as verbs describe what is happening, as well as describing states and attributes of things. Verbs in English are not heavily inflected – that is you don't add things to them very often for different meanings. However, all verbs in Sinnish are inflected.

### **Person**

The person of a verb is who is doing the action. All Sinnish verbs are inflected for person by adding one or two letters to the beginning of the basic verb.

Person is roughly divided into three persons: first, second and third.

First person includes the speaker. 'I' and 'we' are both first person, as they include the person who is speaking. In Sinnish, you add a *u-* to the beginning of a verb when that verb is describing someone in the first person. Verbs that already begin with a vowel get a *um-* instead.

Example: *lidam* means "to sing". To say "I sing." You say *uzh ulidam*. The *u* on *ulidam* makes sure that the verb agrees with the subject (*uzh* means "I"). If you want to say "We sing." You would say *yal ulidam*. *yal* means "we", but notice that *ulidam* is the same in both cases. That's because they are both first person.

Second person is used for including the listener, who you are speaking to. "you" in English is second person. For verbs in the second person, you add *a-*, or *al-* for verbs that start with a vowel.

If you want to say "You sing.", the Sinnish for that is *wir alidam*. (Note: English has only one word for whether the speaker is talking to one of "you" or many of "you". Sinnish separates "you" singular and "you" plural into two different pronouns. *wir* is singular, meaning just "you". *wal* is plural and means "you all" or "y'all".)

Third person is everyone else, or groups that do not include the speaker or the listener. "He", "She", "Tom", "The cows" are all third person. In Sinnish, that is marked by adding an *o-* to the beginning of the verb, or *ot-* to a verb that begins with a vowel.

So, if I want to say "Lakem sings." I would say *'lakem olidam*.

Because the person is indicated by the prefix that you add, you can leave out the subject in certain cases. For instance, if I just say *ulidam*, I know it is first person (either "I sing" or "We sing."). At that point, it's an issue of context. If we were previously talking about "we", then *ulidam* would be "We sing." If we have no previous context, we assume it is singular (that is, it means "I sing."). This is particularly common for statement about yourself.

The important thing to remember is that verbs are always marked for person, meaning they will always have one of the above prefixes added to them.

## There is no Is

Something that is significantly different in Sinnish than in English is that there is no verb equivalent to “is”. “Is” is used for a lot of different things in English. One of these uses is as a copula - that is, a word that couples two things together. For example “The cow is black” or “I am a poet.”

Sinnish does not have that type of constructions. Instead, when you want to say that something “is” something else, you say that it does that quality. You wouldn’t say that the cow “is black”. You would say that it “blacks.” So to say “the cow is black” would be *mudi okol* (*mudi* is “cow”, *kol* is “black”).

Similarly, to say “I am a poet”, you’d say *uzh ulakem*. This is essentially “I poet.”

## Tense and Aspect

Most English speakers are familiar with the concepts of tense: past, present and future. Also, we have ways of saying if an action is happening right now, or if it was happening before and has stopped by now. This is called aspect.

Sinnish only has markers for aspect, which are separate little words that appear after the verb itself. However, some of them implicitly include a tense.

Without one of these words after the verb, the action is happens instantaneously right now or as sort of an abstract concept. If I say *ulidam*, I mean “I sing” in the generic sense. I sing in general (like “I’m a singer. I sing. It’s what I do”).

By following with the word *a*, you indicate that the action is currently happening. For instance, *ulidam a* would mean “I am singing,” it’s something you are currently doing. Without modifiers, this implies a present tense.

In order to indicate that an action has completed already, you use *ad*. To say “I sang.” You would say *ulidam ad*. This means that it happened previously and ended before now.

Now if you say *ulidam as*, that means “I was singing.” It happened previously, but happened over a period of time and may or may not be complete now. There isn’t a definite sense of the action ending in *ulidam as*.

Also, you could also say *ulidam il*. This translates into “I used to sing.” This aspect indicates that the action happened habitually in the past. It isn’t a single event, but more generally previous to now.

You can also use these aspect markers to show if an action is beginning or completing. If you say *ulidam or*, that means that the action is beginning right now. It would mean “I begin to sing.” Similarly, *ulidam od* means the action is stopping right now – “I stop singing.”

There are a few more aspects. One is an ‘all at once’ aspect. *ulidam ut* implies it happened suddenly or in one fell swoop – “I suddenly sing” or *yal ulidam ut*, “We all sing at once.”

Finally, there is an ‘iterative’ aspect, which describes an action that happens again and again. Unlike the other aspects, this one doesn’t have a little word that follows the verb. Instead, you repeat the last syllable of the word and add it on the end. *ulidam* becomes *ulidamd*, which means “I sing repeatedly.”

Now, none of these explicitly state tense, though several of them include it. If an action is complete by now, then you can assume it happened in the past. However, you can move the 'now' point by using special adverbs for 'past', 'present' and 'future': *lursa*, *eyu* and *yule*. You place them between the verb and the aspect marker, if any.

For example, *ulidam yule ad* would mean "I will have sung". *ulidamdad lursa* would be "I sang repeatedly". *ulidam lursa as* means roughly "I used to sing by then".

## **Actions and States**

Verbs can be divided into two categories, based off of what type of activity that they describe: actions and states. These categories describe how the activity works, and how it relates to the nouns in the sentence.

Actions are things that the subject of the sentence does - it's responsible for the action. Verbs like "speak", "kick", and "think" all talk about something that the subject is actively doing. It may or may not describe what is being done to, but it always describes who is doing it.

States are verbs that describe the state that the subject is in (or a change in that state). They describe not what the subject is doing, but what they are experiencing, the state they are in. Examples of state verbs are "sleep", "being happy" and "know". These verbs can also describe a change in state. For example, "learn" is a state verb, as it describes a change in state.

## Chapter 4

### **Structure: Nouns – Subjects and Objects**

Nouns are objects – they are person, places, things or ideas. If the verb is what happens in the sentence, the nouns are what are doing the action, what it is being done to, etc. Nouns in Sinnish basically have three attributes that you need to keep track of: element (as mentioned earlier), number and case. These three interrelate on how the noun is modified.

#### **Number**

The number of the noun indicates how many of that noun are there. In Sinnish, we only have two number categories – singular and plural. Singular is if there is just one of the object (“cow”) and plural is for more than one (“cows”). In many nouns, adding an “s” or “es” in English marks the noun as a plural.

Number is signified by different affixes attached to the noun. However, the affixes change according to the role of the noun in the sentence. We’ll address that below.

#### **Case**

The role of the noun in the sentence is called the case of the noun. In English, a nouns case can be indicated by position in the sentence, or by a suffix, or by use of prepositions.

In Sinnish, affixes are used to indicate both the number and the case of the noun in the sentence. There are three cases for nouns in Sinnish: the subject, the object and the focus.

The subject is the main noun in the sentence. For action verbs, the subject is the one performing the verb. For states, the subject is the thing in that state. In either situation, a singular noun as a subject is just the noun. For example, “cow” is *mudi* and “poet” is *lakem*.

As an object, we add an ending to a singular noun. If the noun ends in a vowel, we just add the *-v* suffix to the noun. *mudi* becomes *mudiv*. If the noun ends in a consonant, we add a vowel then the *-v* suffix to the noun. The vowel we add is dependant on the element of the noun. For example, *lakem* is a *shim* (“water”) word, so you add the water vowel *i*. Thus *lakem* becomes *lakemiv*.

If the noun is the focus of an action, it takes a different ending, the *-n* ending instead of the *-v*. Otherwise it works the same: *mudi* would become *mudin* and *lakem* would be *lakemin*.

Plural nouns use a different system of modifications. Instead of adding suffixes, we add infixes, that is, we insert letters into the word.

For a plural noun that is a subject, we will be inserting the element vowel of the word and the *dh* sound into the word. For nouns that end in a vowel, the vowel then *dh* is inserted after the last consonant in the word. For example, “cows” would be *mudadhi* – the *a* (the earth vowel) then *dh* were inserted after the *d*, the last consonant in *mudi*. For nouns ending in a consonant, the *dh* and vowel are reversed and inserted after the last vowel of the original word. “poets” becomes *lakedhim* – the *dh* then the *i* (the water vowel) are inserted after the *e* in *lakem*.

Now, plural nouns as an object in a sentence use the same scheme, but use a *v* instead of a *dh*. *mudi* becomes *mudavi* and *lakem* becomes *lakevim*.

For plural nouns that are the focus of an action, the letter inserted with the vowel is *n*. *mudi* becomes *mudani* and *lakem* becomes *lakenim*.

### **Cases and Actions, Cases and States**

This discusses a little about how case relates to different types of verbs in Sinnish. It’s a bit of a thick discussion, however. We’ll stick with English in this section for examples to make it easier.

Actions are actual activities, when some activity is done by something, usually to something else. Actions have a subject, the thing that is doing the actions. They can also have an object, something that directly experiences the action. Additionally, they can have a focus, a frame of reference to the action, but is not the direct target of it.

To illustrate, let’s look at the sentence “John threw the ball.” Here, we have an action (“throw”). The subject is “John” – John is who is responsible for the action, he is the one who threw. The object is the ball – it is what was thrown, the thing that directly experienced the action. Often in English, this is called the direct object.

The above sentence has no focus, however. But if we say “John threw Ted the ball” we now have a focus. John still threw the ball (and thus is the subject) and the ball is still the thing thrown (and thus the object). But Ted is still in there somewhere. He is who the ball was thrown to – he is the frame of reference, the focus of the action. While the ball did go to him, he isn’t the direct object of the action, which is being thrown. In English, we often call this an indirect object.

However, the focus has a wider scope in Sinnish. Each verb has a default type of focus. For “to throw” the focus is whom you throw to. For the verb “to escape”, the focus is where you are escaping from.

Actions always have a subject, even if that subject is implied or indefinite (i.e. “someone”). Objects and focuses are optional, depending on the verb. “John threw the ball” lacks a focus. You can say “John threw to Ted”, which lacks a definite object. But it is still there – it is implied because “throw” requires an object (thus is a transitive action). Transitive actions can still take an additional focus.

Some verbs (like “to escape”) don’t take a direct object by default. However it does take a focus (where you are escaping from). This is called a focused action. You can create a little variation by using a direct object with “escape” – you can “escape someone from somewhere”. This would mostly just saying the same as “breaking someone out from somewhere” or “releasing someone from somewhere.”

States are verbs that describe a state of being or a change in a state of being. As opposed to actions, which describe what the subject did, states describe what is going on with the subject, what state of being the subject is experiencing. A state has a subject, the thing that is experiencing that state. States can also have objects, too. For state verbs, it is what the state is about – it is a frame of reference, not something that is experiencing the state. State verbs cannot take an object in the same way that actions do.

For example, “to know” is a state verb. “John knows” is about a state, John is in the state of knowing. If “John knows chemistry”, John is still in a state of knowing – John is experiencing the state, not “chemistry”. But “chemistry” is a frame of reference, further describing the state (i.e. what is known).

Some states require a focus (even if implied). These are called focused states. Some, like “to sleep”, don’t take a focus at all. These are called intransitive states.

## ***Conversation/Culture: Status, Honorifics and Formality***

### **Honorifics and Status**

While Finnish isn’t as status conscious as languages like Japanese, it does have a relatively elaborate system of optional honorifics that can be added to nouns and names (similar to “san” in Japanese). These honorifics have two dimensions to them: relative status and disposition.

#### **Relative Status**

The relative status indicates the status of the subject compared to the speaker. There are four statuses: owned, lower, higher, exalted.

Owned status is for things that are owned by the speaker, such as pets. It can also be used in a BDSM context for a dom’s own slaves. Using this status when referring to someone is a very strong statement to make. An employer using the owned status to refer to his employees would be equating them to pack animals, for example. It could easily be seen as presumption or arrogance.

Lower status is for those lower on the totem pole than the speaker. As opposed to the above example, it could be within the realm of propriety for an employer to use the lower status for his employees. It is also an appropriate status to use with one’s children. Some even use it for pets that are ‘part of the family’.

Higher status is one you use for your ‘betters’ – parents, leaders, esteemed personages, employers, etc.

Exalted status is a status far above you. It’s saved for royalty, or great leaders or important people who are incredibly far above you. Like its converse, using the exalted status is a powerful statement. In a BDSM context, it can be used for one’s Master.

#### **Disposition**

There are three dispositions, which describe the speaker’s attitude toward the subject of the subject. These are: pejorative, neutral, beloved.

Pejorative is a negative attitude. The pejorative with owned status would be like calling someone a beast or a lowly thing. With lower, it’s still vaguely demeaning, like

referring to the lower class as “proles”. With higher status, it can indicate a hatred or fear and even more so with exalted, giving it a sort of ‘Dread Lord’ sort of feel.

Neutral infers no sort of bias toward the subject – the status is more of a matter of fact.

Beloved conveys a sense of love and affection. You would use it with owned for a beloved pet or a beloved slave. Beloved lower is appropriate for a child, like a son or daughter. Beloved higher is good for a parent or respected elder. Beloved exalted is for a beloved monarch or for a beloved Master.

### **Status Prefixes**

Each combination of the above has a different prefix. There are two for each listed, the first for words that begin with a vowel, the second one for words that begin with a consonant.

	Owned	Lower	higher	exalted
neutral	<i>as-, asa-</i>	<i>is-, isa-</i>	<i>es-, esa-</i>	<i>os-, oso-</i>
pejorative	<i>ach-, acha-</i>	<i>ich-, icha-</i>	<i>ek-, ekto-</i>	<i>ok-, okto-</i>
beloved	<i>azh-, azha-</i>	<i>izh-, izha-</i>	<i>ezh-, ezho-</i>	<i>ozh-, ozho-</i>

### **Status Prefixes as Titles**

The second of the above in each category can be used as a title in place of the name. For instance, you could say *esa* instead of someone’s name as an equivalent for “sir”. *ozho* could be “your Highness” or “Master”. *izha* might mean “dear” when talking to one’s child.

## Chapter 4

### **Structure: Modifying Nouns**

Nouns are good, but you can say a lot about nouns by modifying them with other words. The primary way to modify nouns is by adding words that describe the noun, called adjectives. Sinnish handles adjectives differently than many languages. There are no adjectives in Sinnish. Instead, it uses participles, which are modified verbs.

### **Participles**

A participle is a verb that is modified into be a description word. English creates participles by creating gerunds - that is adding “-ing” to the word. For instance, “singing” is a participle, describing something as in the action of “sing”. Since there is no “to be” verb in Sinnish, all descriptive words are actually verbs (as stated in the verb section). We make a participle out of the verb to modify a noun.

To construct a participle, we simply construct it as we would a normal verb. We add the prefix for the person of the noun to the beginning of the verb. Most of the time, this means adding the *o-*, *ot-* prefix to the noun, as most nouns are third person.

Participles in Sinnish need to ‘agree’ with the nouns they modify, meaning that they have to use a marker that signifies it as the case of the noun. If the noun is an object (accusative case), then the participle needs to be marked as an object too. This is an additional prefix added in front of the person marker. For objects, the prefix is *v-*. For a focus of an action verb, it is *n-*.

To modify the noun, the participle appears immediately after the noun.

So, to say “singing cow”, it would be *mudi olidam* for a subject, *mudiv volidam* for an object, *mudin nolidam* for a focus.

To say “I own the singing cow”, the sentence would be *uzh mudiv volidam uta*. *uzh* is the subject, meaning “I”. “The cow” is the object so has the *-v* ending. “singing” modifies the “cow” so it has the *v-* at the beginning followed by the person marker *o-* and it appears immediately after the noun it modifies. *uta* is the verb *ta* (meaning “to own”) with the person marker of *u-*, since “I” am doing the owning.

(You’ll note that the Sinnish phrase *mudi olidam* could be interpreted two ways – either as a sentence “The cow sings” or as a noun phrase “The singing cow”. Which it is depends on context.)

This works for words we normally think of as adjectives. *kol* means to be black, so if you wanted to say “the black cow”, you would say *mudi okol* (assuming the cow was the subject of the sentence). This is more literally “the blacking cow”.

Remember, these participles are descriptive words for modifying nouns. In English, you can use the participle to describe the act of a verb – that is, using “singing” as a noun to mean “the act of singing”. In Sinnish, you don’t use the participle for the “act of” a verb. Instead, you use the unmodified verb, in this case *lidam*. (There are some exceptions to this, but that will be covered later.)

## Determiners

Determiners are small words that give information about the noun. They are different than adjectives as they don't describe the noun directly, but where and how many there are. Determiners appear before the noun they modify, unlike participles.

### Demonstratives

These determiners show a relative location for the noun. There are two: *saya* (this) and *etu* (that). They can also be used as pronouns.

### Quantifiers

Quantifiers indicate the quantity of the noun and sometimes their relation to the whole of their group.

<i>uhpa</i>	all
<i>ike</i>	some
<i>rol</i>	most
<i>iya</i>	many
<i>pal</i>	few
<i>ewe</i>	any
<i>chike</i>	none

Note that all of the above require the noun to be in the plural number. You can't say "all cow", but you can say "all cows" *uhpa mudavi*.

Numerals are also quantifiers and appear before the noun like other determiners. However, they will be described in a different chapter.

## Participle Phrases

Additionally to providing the functionality of an adjective, you can use the participle to make a participle phrase that modifies the noun. In English, you see phrases like "the house that Jack built". This is a noun followed by a relative phrase, one that describes something about the noun.

To construct one of these in Sinnish, you start off with the verb in the phrase and make it a participle by adding the appropriate marker for the verb. The participle then takes a subject and/or object and focus. It is followed by the particle that agrees with the case. *dhuh* for subjects, *vuh* for objects, *nuh* for foci.

### Word Order in Participle Phrases

Participle phrases have a special word order, no matter what the overall word order of the sentence is. The participle is first, followed by the subject and then the object or focus.

The entire phrase appears after the noun it modifies.

### Optional Subjects and Objects in the Participle Phrase

The subject of the participle phrase is considered to be the noun it modifies, unless specified otherwise. For example, *mudi olidam lidov dhuh*, translates into "the cow that sings the song". *mudi* is the noun. *olidam* is the participle, in this case marked for 3<sup>rd</sup>

person and subject. *lidov* is marked with the object case, thus is the object of the participle (i.e. that which is being sung).

If there is a subject listed, but no object, the noun it modifies is the object of the participle. For example, “the cow that I own” would be *mudi ute uzh dhuh*, with *uzh* being in the case for subjects. Note that you could also just say *mudi ute*, as the *u-* in *ute* means implies a first person subject even if it is not there.

If the noun is the focus of the participle, you have to use a special reflexive pronoun for that. To say “the cow I sang to” or “the cow for whom I sang”, you would say *mudi ulidam zin dhuh*. *zin* is a reflexive indirect object that says that the indirect object of the participle is the noun we are modifying.

### **Using Aspect Markers in Participle Phrases**

You can use an aspect marker in a participle phrase. For instance if you want to say “the cow that was singing”, you have to use an aspect marker to indicate that the singing was in the past and that it was continuous in the past. So you would add the aspect marker to the participle just as you would to a verb: *mudi olidam as dhuh*.

## Chapter 5

### **Structure: Pronouns, Possession**

Nouns are sometimes long things to say. So all language use some sort of placeholder for referring to yourself or others. Sinnish is no exception, though the pronoun system is a little more complicated than we are used to in English

### **Pronouns**

#### **Subject and Object Pronouns**

In English, “I” can have something. But when “I” am the recipient of something, you give it to “me.” In English, you use different pronouns whether someone is the subject of the sentence, or the object of the sentence. Sinnish has a lot more pronouns than English, and each has a form for each case (subject, object and focus).

#### **I**

The first person singular pronoun (that is “I”) is simple – it is *uzh*. The object form, “me,” would be *ruzh*. The focal form is *nuzh*.

#### **We**

“We” is the first person plural pronoun, meaning “I and others”. However, in Sinnish there are two types of “we,” dependant on who you are speaking to. If you are talking about “we” and you include the person you are speaking to in that “we”, you use the inclusive form, *yal*. *yal* means “you and I (and possibly others)”. The object form is *yav* and the focal form is *yan*.

However, if you are talking about “we” that does not include who you are speaking to, you use the exclusive form, *xim*. This means “I and others, but not you”. The object form is *xiv* and the focal form is *xin*.

#### **You**

“You” is a word that does double duty in English. It can be singular (just “you”) or plural (sometimes informally said as “you all”). Sinnish makes a distinction between the two meanings and has different words for each.

*wir* is the singular second person pronoun, meaning just “you”. It’s just the person being spoken to, just one person. It has an object form, *war*. The focal form is *win*.

The plural version is the word *wal*. This means “you all.” It has an object form of *wav*, and a focal form of *wen*.

#### **He, She, It**

These are the English third person singular pronouns. Like many languages, there are different pronouns based off of gender in Sinnish. Sinnish recognizes four genders (see later in this chapter for gender in Sinnish). The pronouns reflect only three, however.

But there is a separate set of pronouns for animate and inanimate ‘neuter’ or ‘indefinite’ genders.

male	<i>esho</i>	<i>resh</i>	<i>nes</i>
female	<i>shad</i>	<i>shar</i>	<i>shan</i>
neuter inanimate	<i>tax</i>	<i>tar</i>	<i>tan</i>
neuter animate	<i>kaz</i>	<i>kar</i>	<i>kan</i>

## They

“They” is third person plural. The word for “they” is *ilal*. There is an object form of this, *ilav*. The focal form is *ilan*.

Any form of *ilal* can take gender prefixes to indicate the gender of the members of the group. For instance, if all of “they” are women, then you could say *zhoilal* to specify that it is all women. If there is no gender prefix, then it is assumed that there is a mix of genders, or the genders are unknown or unimportant.

## One, Indefinite pronoun

In English, there are a number of ways to specify a pronoun for someone who is unknown. In more formal English, you might use “one”, as in “One might be able to jump off the cliff.” In more informal speech (such as this sentence), you could use “you” instead.

Sinnish has special pronouns for this. If the indefinite pronoun refers to a person, it is *bazham*. If the indefinite pronoun is inanimate, it is *bazh*. These are singular pronouns, but if you add a plural ending, they can be used as plural ones.

## Time and Place Pronouns

There are a few words which can act as markers for time and place.

In terms of place, *lim* is “here” and *deda* is “there”.

In terms of time, “now” is *eyu*. “Then” is *lersa* if “then” is in the past, *yole* if “then” is in the future.

## Reflexive Pronouns

English uses words like “himself” and “herself” for pronouns that refer back to the original subject of the sentence. Instead of adding something like “-self” to a pronoun, there is a special set of pronouns. If the pronoun is an object, we use *riv*. If it is an indirect object, use *rin*. For example, *uzh riv ulidam* means “I sing to myself”.

## Possession

In English, you indicate possession with a possessive form of a noun, usually by adding a “’s” to the noun. In Sinnish, you use a few special participles to indicate possession, like saying “the cow of Lakem” instead of “Lakem’s cow”.

Sinnish uses the verb *ta*, “to own” for the participle for permanent possession/ownership. For example: *mudi ota ‘lakem dhuh* “the cow of Lakem” (literally “the cow that Lakem owns”).

Temporary ownership uses the verb *mu*, “to hold”.

## Possessive Pronouns

There are special possessive pronouns in Sinnish, just like English (“my”, “your”, etc.) There is one for each of the regular pronouns above. These all appear directly before the noun like a determiner.

These can also be used as nouns (“mine”, “yours”, etc.). They are marked normally for case.

my	<i>zhu</i>
ours(inc)	<i>ya</i>
ours(exc)	<i>xa</i>
your	<i>wi</i>
your-pl	<i>we</i>
his	<i>esh</i>
her	<i>sha</i>
its (animate)	<i>ke</i>
its(inanimate)	<i>to</i>
their	<i>ile</i>
one’s (person)	<i>bazhe</i>
one’s (thing)	<i>bazhe</i>

## Conversation/Culture: Gender

Many languages have a concept of gender built into the language. Sinnish does recognize gender, but not on any syntactic level. That means that there really aren’t categories of ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ words, nor is there any change in grammar based off of the gender of the objects in the sentence.

However, Sinnish semantics have a concept of gender in the sense that certain words imply a specific gender or gender essence. Sinnish recognizes four gender categories: male, female, neuter and mixed. Each of these genders has an associated prefix which can be added onto word to give a shading of that gender.

Male and female are the standard reference to the biological genders and to the essences that those represent. (Sinnish culture is an essentialist culture – it assumes a difference in essence between the masculine and feminine, if not strict or immutable definitions of what those essences are.) Some words have an inherent gender to them: man, woman, mother, etc. *ez-* is the prefix for male gender and *zho-* is the prefix for female.

Neuter is a neutral gender. It refers to things without specific gender properties or essence. It can also refer to things/people of indeterminate gender. The large majority of words in Sinnish are considered to be inherently neuter gender. *gal-* is the prefix for neuter gender.

Mixed gender is for those things or people who have properties of both genders. There are very few words with this inherent gender. This is mostly used for describing people or groups of people. *dab-* is the prefix for mixed gender.

These can be used for explicit gendering of objects. For instance, there is no single Sinnish word for “daughter”. However, there is a word for “offspring”, *xota*. So

you can add *zho-* to it for *zhoxota*, meaning “daughter” or more literally, “female offspring”.

Also, these can be used for semantic shading. By adding *ez-* to *zhoa* (“woman”), you could indicate a very butch woman or someone who is a woman in body, but a man in spirit. By adding *gal-* to *zhoa* would indicate a very androgynous woman.

Those who don’t fit into the male/female dichotomy have a number of options. A mixed gender person is a *daba*. An androgyne is a *gala*. A *dabezo* could refer to a male who has a very mixed gender identity.

If you want to explicitly describe those transitioning from one gender to another, you can use the *wo-* (“one who is/does”) and the *yi-* prefix (“to become”). *woyiezo* would mean “one who is becoming a man”.

## Chapter 6

### **Structure: Modifying Verbs**

We've seen how you can make nouns more specific and more descriptive. You can do that with verbs as well, describing how an action is performed, when, with what intent, and so on. There are four ways of modifying a verb in a sentence: focal objects, mood markers, adverbs and adverbial phrases.

Some of these topics are a bit complex and are a significant departure from English in several places, so read this chapter carefully.

### **Focal Objects**

Verbs can have a focus. A focus is a noun that is the point of reference for the verb without being directly affected by the action of the verb. For instance, in the sentence "I know chemistry", chemistry is the focus. It explains what the knowledge is about (i.e. chemistry). However, chemistry is not actually directly affected by the fact that we know it – it's not changed.

Very often in English we would call this an indirect object. For instance, in "John threw Ted the ball", Ted is the indirect object. Ted is not what is thrown, but who the ball is thrown to. We think of Ted as the beneficiary of the action.

In Finnish, focal objects are marked as explained in the Nouns chapter. However, the exact meaning of what that focus is depends on the verb. The definition of each verb includes what the relationship between the verb and the focus is.

For example, *roir* means "to leave". The focal object for *roir* describes where you are leaving from – its focus is location. However, for *somo* ("to know"), the focus is what the subject knows about – it is about association.

Focal objects tend to be generic unless the nature of the verb implies otherwise. For example, *gura* ("to be in a place") has a focus of location, but it is about where you are "at". However, a verb like *yad* ("to go") is about location as well. But as it implies motion, the focus describes where you are going 'to'.

Common foci for verbs include: location, where things are going to or are at; temporal, when things are at; relational, what something is about; means/method; how something was done or what it was done with; secondary patient or beneficiary, who is also affected or who the action is done for or to.

Note that foci for action verbs use the focal case markers (as described previously). State verbs, however, use the object case for a focus.

### **Mood Markers**

Mood markers indicate the judgment or opinion of the speaker about the sentence that they are uttering. While all of these can be described in more verbose ways (which we'll go over later on), these add a quick statement of sentiment to the sentence. Mood markers appear after the verb, after the aspect marker if any.

Each mood marker can be modified with a list of degree infixes to indicate the strength of that sentiment.

For example, *vu* indicates that the speaker thinks that the action is evident, that is it seems to have happened or happens. Thus *esho olidam vu* means "It is evident that he sings" or "It seems like he sings". But if I insert the *-uhdh-* degree infix ("barely") so that the sentence is *esho olidam vuhdhu*, then it means "It is barely evident that he sings" or, loosely, "You can almost tell that he sings".

Negative degree markers indicate the opposite of the positive degree markers. In this case, they indicate how unclear the perception of the event is for the speaker.

With all of the degree markers, you can get a variety of meanings

<i>esho olidam vu</i>	It is evident that he sings. He seems to sing.
<i>esho olidam vevu</i>	It is extremely evident (obvious) that he sings.
<i>esho olidam venu</i>	It is very evident (clear) that he sings.
<i>esho olidam vakyu</i>	It is reasonably evident (apparent) that he sings.
<i>esho olidam vuhdhu</i>	It is barely evident that he sings.
<i>esho olidam vikyu</i>	It is barely not evident (a little uncertain) that he sings.
<i>esho olidam vagyv</i>	It is reasonably not evident (unclear) that he sings.
<i>esho olidam vuhnu</i>	It is very not evident (very unclear) that he sings.
<i>esho olidam vuhvu</i>	It is extremely not evident (impossible to tell) that he sings.

There are several mood markers:

*ehh* This indicates that the action is probable or improbable. Note that in a marker that has no consonants, the infix is just added to the beginning of the marker. Thus *ehh* would be *uhdhehh*.

*eo* *eo* denotes the inevitability of an action. This means that an action must or might happen, depending on the intensity. Note that this does not include a sense of obligation like in the English "You must eat your vegetables." This simply indicates that the action is predictable, not that it is required. The negative degrees indicate how unpredictable the event is.

*wa* This indicates the sense that the speaker feels that there is a sense of obligation on the subjects part in the action. We could say "It is required that" to translate this word. This is equivalent to one meaning of the English phrase "have to" or the other meaning of "must". As the smaller degrees, this indicates that the action is "allowed", like one meaning of "may".

*ni* This marker says whether the action is acceptable or not. At the high degree, it implies that the speaker supports the action, while at the low degrees it implies it is a bad thing.

*ea* Conversely, this marker indicates the acceptability of the result of the action. A high degree states that the result of the action is good, while a negative one would indicate that the result is undesirable.

*baa* We used this marker to show that the speaker feels that the issue is significant or important (or unimportant with the negative degrees).

*wo* *wo* indicated a sense of necessity. Necessity is different than obligation, as marked with the previous word. However, English tends to use the same phrases for both. While obligation implies a moral directive to the subject, necessity is more focused on cause and effect. We could translate this as the phrase “It is essential that” or “It is logically required that”.

*yu* *yu* has two meanings in Sinnish. The first is to indicate that the speaker is hopeful that the action will occur. Negative degrees mean that they hope it won't. The other meaning is more of a formal appeal to the universe that the action occur, like “May you be happy”.

*za* This marker indicates that the action makes the speaker happy. Negative degrees indicate that the speaker is upset or feels hurt by the action.

*cha* This can be a strong marker. Using this marker indicates revulsion – the speaker is revolted by the action. The negative degrees describe an opposite reaction. The speaker finds the action compelling and attractive. At stronger degrees, you could translate it as “turning you on”.

*nao* *nao* indicates that the speaker is depressed about the action. At the higher degrees it moves into despair. Negative degrees indicate that the speaker finds the action affirming and invigorating.

*kai* The speaker shows anger about the action with this marker. Negative degrees tend to indicate apathy.

*vea* This mood is a special mood called a hedge. When we say something like “Strictly speaking” or “Technically”, this is called a hedge. This mood indicates a hedge, that the speaker feels that the statement is technically true (or seems to be true), but misleading, incomplete or incorrect. The degree indicates how misleading or incomplete the statement is. Negative degrees tend to indicate the opposite – that the statement is technically untrue, but implies a greater kernel of truth or the overall concept is true.

## Adverbs

Adverbs are words that modify verbs. In English, the definition is a little broader. They are usually words that end with “-ly”, like “slowly”, “happily”, etc. Adverbs appear after the verb.

In Sinnish, there are two types of adverbs. There is a small set of words which can just be used as an adverb with no modification, such as *lersa*, *eyu*, and *yole* for past, present and future. Question words also fall under this category as well.

The other type of adverb is a constructed adverb. These adverbs are just nouns or verbs with the *-wu* or (for words that end with a consonant) *-ewu* added on the end. This is the same as adding “-ly” to the end of words in English, or saying “in the manner of”.

For example, to say “quickly”, you would take *kaba*, which means “to be quick” and add *-wu* to get *kabawu*. This appears after the verb, so if I want to say “I sang quickly”, I would say *uzh ulidam ad kabawu*.

If I wanted to say “He sings like a cow”, I can use a single adverb for that. I make the adverb *mudiwu*, to mean, roughly “cowlike”. Thus the sentence would be *esho olidam mudiwu*.

## **Adverbial Phrases**

Adverbial phrases are extra phrases added into a sentence to help describe the action of the sentence. In the English sentence, “He was singing while he was dancing”, the phrase “while he was dancing” is the adverbial phrase. It is a phrase that modifies the action of the sentence as a whole.

Adverbial phrases use special adverbial prepositions with various meanings to attach it to the sentence. This happens at the end of the sentence. The adverbial phrase comes after the preposition. If the phrase included its own verb, it is constructed just as any other sentence. Otherwise, the noun is placed after the preposition in the nominative (subject) case.

The example above is: *esho olidam as kazu oboze as*. Another example with a noun instead of a sentence as the adverbial phrase would be *esho uboze as gura rolor*. This means “He was dancing in the field.”

## Chapter 7

### ***Structure: Commands, Questions and Answers***

#### **Commands**

Commands are ways of telling people to do something, whether you are being polite about it or not. English usually leaves off the subject for commands – “Sing!” Sinnish has a few different ways of expressing commands (also known as the imperative mood).

The most common is simply a different prefix for the verb. Instead of adding an *a-* or *al-*, you add the *i-* or *id-* (for verbs beginning with a vowel) to the beginning of the verb. For example, *ilidam* would be “Sing.” and *idexe* would be “Be Happy.” By itself, it doesn’t indicate a number of people. If you need to be specific as to the number of people, you can add *wir* or *wal* as the subject. *wal ilidam* would mean “All of you sing.”

If you want to add serious emphasis to your command, you can add the *xut* marker after it. *ilidam xut* is “Sing!!!”

If you want to make a request, you can use the *sax* mood marker from to make it a polite request. When using *sax*, you can use either the command prefix or the appropriate verb prefix. For example, “Please sing” could be either *ilidam sax* or *alidam sax*.