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Introduction

‘Intlis is a contact language on the model of an Earth creole; it is the outcome of a situation in which a population of Klingon native speakers learned English, but without either the exposure or the motivation to achieve native-like competence. Instead, they produced a language in which most of the *words* were English but the *grammar* was something else, with a heavy dose of Klingon. Thus, ‘Intlis has English as its lexifying language (or superstrate) and Klingon as its substrate.

We’ve never pinned down the in-universe explanation for this (an illegal Federation POW camp? A shipwreck?) but the idea is that there is now a stable, if small, population of speakers of this language, who are nearly all ethnically Klingon but have been out of contact with other Klingons for a few generations.

It seems clear (from the name of the language, among other things) that 'Intlis speakers didn't initially think of themselves as speaking a separate language, nor did they place a lot of pride or value in the way they talked. This is, sadly, historical reality for speakers of many creole languages. This grammar tries to present 'Intlis as its own linguistic system, rather than strictly as a development of English or Klingon, but comparative material is given in many places.

We apologize to serious Trekkies, creolists or anyone else who finds errors in this document. We did our best!

Phonology

The 'Intlis phonemic inventory contains 19 consonants (shown below, with Latin transcription):

/p ^h /	p	/t ^h /	tl	/m/	m
/t ^h /	t	/tʃ/	ch	/n/	n
/q ^h /	q	/dʒ/	j	/ŋ/	ng
/ʔ/	‘	/s/	s	/r/	r
/b/	b	/x/	h	/w/	w
/d/	d	/v/	v	/l/	l
				/j/	j

There are 5 vowels.

/ɪ/	i	/u/	u
/ɛ/	e	/o/	o
	/a/	a	

⟨a⟩ – /a/ – open back unrounded vowel (in English spa)

⟨e⟩ – /ɛ/ – open-mid front unrounded vowel (in English bed)

⟨i⟩ – /ɪ/ – near-close near-front unrounded vowel (in English bit)

⟨o⟩ – /o/ – close-mid back rounded vowel (in French eau and English snow)

⟨u⟩ – /u/ – close back rounded vowel (in Spanish tu and English you)

Along with diphthongs *iy*, *ey*, *ay*, *aw*, and *oy*.

Phonotactics

'Intlis has CVC syllables (no clusters are allowed). Sadly, we have not yet defined a stress system (watch this space).

All consonants appear as both onsets and codas except /l/, which becomes /w/ in coda position. The glottal stop ʔ is contrastive in both onset and coda position, but ʔIntlis words descended from English vowel-initial words almost all have initial ʔ, so this contrast is evident only for words of Klingon origin or native coinages.

Conversion rules

Most ʔIntlis words are direct and rather transparent borrowings from English; a smaller but still significant number come from Klingon. This makes it important to understand the phonology in a comparative setting, as a set of rules for loan-word adaptation.

The tables below draw on Wikipedia’s articles on English phonology.

Conversions for vowels

Vowel conversions are specified based on Wells’s lexical sets.

Lexical set	Gen. American : ʔIntlis outcome
TRAP	<u>æ</u> : a
BATH	<u>æ</u> : a
PALM	<u>ɑ</u> : a
LOT	
CLOTH	<u>ɔ</u> , <u>ɑ</u> : a
THOUGHT	
KIT	<u>ɪ</u> : i

DRESS	<u>ɛ</u> : e
STRUT	<u>ʌ</u> : a
FOOT	<u>ʊ</u> : u

LS	GA
FACE	eɪ : ey
GOA T	oʊ : o
FLEE CE	<u>i</u> : iy
GOO SE	<u>u</u> : u

LS	GA
PRIC E	aɪ : ay
CHOI CE	ɔɪ : oy
MOU TH	aʊ : aw

LS	GA
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NURSE	ɜr : er
START	ɑr : ar
NORTH	ɔr : ar
FORCE	ɔr, ɔʊr : ar
NEAR	ɪr : ir
SQUARE	ɛr : er
CURE	ʊr : ur

LS	GA
COMMA	ə : a
LETTER	ər : ar
HAPPY	i : iy

Rules for consonants:

A chart comparing the English, Klingon and 'Intlis consonant inventories is below. The highlighted colors indicate whether the consonant belongs to:

	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
plosive (unvoiced)	p /p ^h /		t /t ^h /			k /k ^h /	q /q ^h /	ʔ /ʔ/
plosive (voiced)	b /b/		d /d/	D /d̥/		g /g/		
affricate (unvoiced)			tlh /tʰ/	ch /tʃ/			Q /q̠x/	
affricate (voiced)				j /dʒ/				
fricative (unvoiced)	f /f/	th /θ/	s /s/	S /ʃ/		H /x/		h /h/
				sh /ʃ/				
fricative (voiced)	v /v/	th /ð/	z /z/	zh /ʒ/		gh /ɣ/		
nasal	m /m/		n /n/			ng /ŋ/		
trill			r /r/					
approximant	w /w/		l /l/		y /j/			
			r /ɹ/					

Klingon

English

Klingon and 'Intlis

Klingon, English, and 'Intlis

'Intlis lacks two Klingon consonants, Q (merges with q) and gh (merges with h).

Conversion table for English consonants:

The table below shows single English segments and their usual outcomes. These are presented orthographically; where the IPA value is unclear, it is shown within /slashes/.

		Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal		<u>m</u> : m		<u>n</u> : n			<u>ŋ</u> : ng	
Plosive/ affricate	fortis	<u>p</u> : p		<u>t</u> : t	<u>tʃ</u> : ch		<u>k</u> : q	ʔ : ‘
	lenis	<u>b</u> : b		<u>d</u> : d / <u>d</u> /	<u>dʒ</u> : j		<u>g</u> : q	
Fricative	fortis	<u>f</u> : v	<u>θ</u> : t	<u>s</u> : s / <u>s</u> /	<u>ʃ</u> : s		<u>x</u> : h /x/	<u>h</u> : h /x/
	lenis	<u>v</u> : v	<u>ð</u> : d	<u>z</u> : s	<u>ʒ</u> : j			
Approximant				<u>l</u> : l	<u>r</u> : r /r/	<u>j</u> : y	<u>w</u> : w	

Note: the flap (as reflex of medial t) merges with d.

Rules for conversion of consonant clusters:

Onset Clusters:

All single consonant phonemes except /ŋ/	per chart (see above)
Stop plus approximant other than /j/: /pl/, /bl/, /kl/, /gl/, /pr/, /br/, /tr/, ^[a] /dr/, ^[a] /kr/, /gr/, /tw/, /dw/, /gw/, /kw/, /pw/	play, blood, prize, bring: epenthesize a (paray, etc) clean, glove, tree, dream, crowd, green: tl / <u>t</u> / (tlin)

	twin, dwarf, Guam, quick, puissance: keep the first consonant (tin etc)
<p>Voiceless fricative or /v/ plus approximant other than /j/:^[b]</p> <p>/fl/, /sl/, /θl/,^[c] /ʃl/, /vl/, /fr/, /θr/, /ʃr/, /hw/,^[d] /sw/, /θw/, /vw/</p>	<p>floor, sleep: epenthesize a</p> <p>others: keep first consonant only</p>
<p>Consonant plus /j/ (before /u:/ or its modified/reduced forms):^[e]</p> <p>/pj/, /bj/, /tj/,^[e] /dj/,^[e] /kj/, /gj/, /mj/, /nj/,^[e] /fj/, /vj/, /θj/,^[e] /sj/,^[e] /zj/,^[e] /hj/, /lj/^[e]</p>	<p>pure, beautiful, tube,^[e] during,^[e] cute, argue, music, new,^[e] few, view, thew,^[e] suit,^[e] Zeus,^[e] huge, lurid^[e] : keep first consonant only</p>
<p>/s/ plus voiceless stop:^[f]</p> <p>/sp/, /st/, /sk/</p>	<p>speak, stop, skill : delete the s</p>
<p>/s/ plus nasal other than /ŋ/:^[f]</p> <p>/sm/, /sn/</p>	<p>smile, snow : delete s</p>
<p>/s/ plus voiceless non-sibilant fricative:^[c]</p> <p>/sf/, /sθ/</p>	<p>sphere, sthenic : delete s</p>
<p>/s/ plus voiceless stop plus approximant:^[f]</p> <p>/spl/, /skl/,^[c] /spr/, /str/, /skr/, /skw/, /smj/, /spj/, /stj/,^[e] /skj/</p>	<p>split, sclera, spring, street, scream, square, smew, spew, student,^[e] skewer : delete s, apply simplification above</p>

/s/ plus voiceless non-sibilant fricative plus approximant: ^[c] /sfr/	sphragistics : not a real word
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Coda clusters:

The single consonant phonemes except /h/, /w/, /j/, /l/	keep
Single /l/	Vocalize to w if diphthong is legal, otherwise keep
Lateral approximant plus stop or affricate: /lp/, /lb/, /lt/, /ld/, /ltʃ/, /ldʒ/, /lk/	help, bulb, belt, hold, belch, indulge, milk : drop approximant
In rhotic varieties, /r/ plus stop or affricate: /rp/, /rb/, /rt/, /rd/, /rtʃ/, /rdʒ/, /rk/, /rg/	harp, orb, fort, beard, arch, large, mark, morgue : drop approximant
Lateral approximant + fricative: /lf/, /lv/, /lθ/, /ls/, /lz/, /lj/, (/lð/)	golf, solve, wealth, else, bells, Welsh, (stealth (v.)) : vocalize l to w if the cluster follows a; otherwise, drop approximant
In rhotic varieties, /r/ + fricative: /rf/, /rv/, /rθ/, /rð/, /rs/, /rz/, /rʃ/	dwarf, carve, north, birth (v.), force, Mars, marsh : drop approximant
Lateral approximant + nasal: /lm/, /ln/	film, kiln : vocalize l -> w if possible
In rhotic varieties, /r/ + nasal or lateral: /rm/, /rn/, /rl/	arm, born, snarl : drop approximant
Nasal + homorganic stop or affricate: /mp/, /nt/, /nd/, /ntʃ/, /ndʒ/, /ŋk/	jump, tent, end, lunch, lounge, pink : drop nasal

Nasal + fricative: /mf/, /ms/, /mθ/, (/nf/), /nθ/, /ns/, /nz/, /ŋθ/ in some varieties	triumph, temse, warmth, (saunf), month, prince, bronze, length : drop nasal
Voiceless fricative plus voiceless stop: /ft/, /sp/, /st/, /sk/	left, crisp, lost, ask : drop fricative
Two voiceless fricatives: /fθ/	fifth : case by case
Two voiceless stops: /pt/, /kt/	opt, act : drop t
Stop plus fricative: /pθ/, /ps/, /tθ/, /ts/, /dθ/, /dz/, /ks/	depth, lapse, eighth, klutz, width, adze, box : drop fricative
Lateral approximant + two consonants: /lpt/, /lps/, /lfθ/, /lts/, /lst/, /lkt/, /lks/	sculpt, alps, twelfth, waltz, whilst, mulct, calx : convert l -> w if valid diphthong would result
In rhotic varieties, /r/ + two consonants: /rmθ/, /rpt/, /rps/, /rts/, /rst/, /rkt/	warmth, excerpt, corpse, quartz, horst, infarct : drop r, apply rule above
Nasal + homorganic stop + stop or fricative: /mpt/, /mps/, /ndθ/, /ŋkt/, /ŋks/, /ŋkθ/ in some varieties	prompt, glimpse, thousandth, distinct, jinx, length : drop nasal, apply rule above
Three obstruents: /ksθ/, /kst/	sixth, next : case by case

Syntax:

Pronouns:

	SG	PL
1	miy	wiy
2	yu	yaw
3.ANIM	'iy	dey
3.INAN	'i'	dos

The noun phrase:

Noun phrase markers are mostly prefixes. The noun phrase template includes slots for:

- Augmentation: whole-word reduplication
- Accuracy:
 - So-called: no qayd (<kind)
 - Apparent: luq (<look)
 - Accurate: qayd
- Plural (pluralization is optional):
 - Animate: 'aw (<all)
 - Inanimate: dem (<them)
- Possession:
 - pronoun or noun of possessor follows possessed
- Determiners/demonstratives:
 - ta "this"
 - ta' "that"

The full order is:

DET PLUR ACCUR NOUN POSS

A fully specified noun phrase would be:

<i>ta'</i>	<i>dem</i>	<i>qayd</i>	<i>layt-layt</i>	<i>yu</i>
DEM.DIST	PL.INAN	ACCUR	light~AUG	2sg

"Those big proper lights of yours"

When reduplicating a multi-morphemic noun, reduplicate the last element only:

mam qid-qid *miy*

FEM child~AUG 1sg

“My elder (big) daughter”

The inanimate plural can be used of animates in a “scattered all around” sense, as in Klingon:

‘aw *ser wayv* *‘iy*

PL.ANIM husband 3sg

“His or her husbands”

dem *ser wayv* *‘iy*

PL.INANIM husband 3sg

“His or her husbands all over the place”

Demonstratives are optional; *ta’* can function rather like English “the” as well as “that”, but unlike “the”, it is never required.

The verbal complex:

The verb complex contains many particles and auxiliaries, most of which calque elements of the Klingon agglutinative morphology of the verb. Like their Klingon equivalents, they sort into a number of ordered groups; in general, only one member of each group can appear. All the auxiliaries are optional; the bare verb is the simple imperfect form, used to indicate non-past events and generalizations.

qaptan *valay*

captain fly

“The captain flies”

This can have a habitual or punctual reading: “[every Tuesday], the captain flies”, a simple future reading: “[tomorrow], the captain flies [somewhere]”, or a simple imperfective reading: “the captain flies [because he has to]”; in the latter case, the continuous aspect is likely but not required.

Group 0 auxiliary: conditional:

The conditional marker, *iv*, occurs at the start of the verbal complex. There is no word for “then” to mark the consequent clause.

<i>qaptan</i>	<i>iv</i>	<i>valay</i>
captain	COND	fly

“If the captain flies...”

Group 1 auxiliary: imperative/optative:

The auxiliary *qo* (<go) expresses the optative mood. This indicates a wish, desire or order. It can be used without a subject, in which case it is interpreted as a second-person, commanding the listener. With a subject, it can be translated as “may” or “let”.

qo valay “fly!”
qaptan qo valay “let the captain fly”
wiy qo hapiy “may we be happy”

This can express a counterfactual optative with the addition of the conditional marker *iv*:

iv qaptan qo valay “if only the captain were to fly”
iv wiy qo hapiy “if only we were happy”

Group 2 auxiliary: causative:

The auxiliary *meq* (<make) indicates that the subject causes the object to perform an action or enter a state.

<i>miy</i>	<i>meq</i>	<i>valay</i>	<i>yu</i>
1sg	CAUS	fly	2sg

“I make you fly” (can indicate that I compel you to do it by order, or that I physically propel you into the air)

If the verb was already transitive, the result is a double-object construction with the original object last:

<i>miy</i>	<i>meq</i>	<i>valay</i>	<i>yu</i>	<i>sip</i>
1sg	CAUS	fly	2sg	ship

"I make you fly the ship"

Group 3 auxiliaries: necessity:

The auxiliary *hav ta* (<have to, hafta) expresses necessity. (This is a single word, written with a space as an orthographic convention--- probably because speakers recognize that it contains the element *hav*):

hav ta valay "must fly"

The auxiliary *wiw* (<will) expresses readiness to perform an action. It merges the Klingon distinction between animate -qang and inanimate -beH.

sip wiw valay "the ship is ready to fly" indicates that the ship is fueled and loaded

qaptan wiw valay "the captain is ready to fly" indicates a mental state

The auxiliary *won* (<won't) expresses fear of performing the action. (The subject is both the actor and the one feeling fear. To express a meaning like "I am afraid you will come", use *qed* "scared".)

qaptan won valay "the captain is afraid to fly"

Group 4 auxiliary: inchoative:

The auxiliary *qam* (<come) indicates that the subject is beginning to perform an action or enter a state.

qam valay "starting to fly"

qam hapiy "becoming happy"

The cluster of auxiliaries *wiw qam* ("ready to begin to...") can be used to indicate purpose:

'iy wana qo ta' palanet 'ad wiw qam siy wuwerin

"I want to go to that planet to see a wolverine."

Group 5 auxiliary: capability:

The auxiliary *qan* (<can) indicates that the subject is capable of performing an action or entering a state.

qan valay “able to fly”

qan hapiy “able to be happy”

Group 6 auxiliaries: evidentials:

There are several evidential markers which are mutually exclusive, but only one appears at this position in the auxiliary sequence--- the dubitative marker *luq*.

luq valay “seems to fly”

To indicate that the action is certainly occurring, reduplicate the verb. (This merges the function of two Klingon evidentials, *-bej* “completely certain” and *-ba*’ “obvious”. Reduplication does not specify whether the speaker is certain because of information available to everyone, or just themselves.)

sip valay-valay “The ship clearly flies”

To indicate that the verb is done in the best possible manner, add *hachu*’ (<Kl. ghaH-ta’-chu’ “s/he did it in the best possible manner”) after the verb:

qaptan valay hachu’ “The captain flies perfectly”

Group 7 auxiliaries: aspect:

The auxiliary *hav* (<have) expresses the perfect non-volitional, indicating that an action is complete:

hav qiq “kicked (by accident)”

The auxiliary *qot* (<got) expresses the perfect volitional, indicating that an action is complete and was done on purpose:

qot qiq “kicked (on purpose)”

The auxiliary *dan* (<done) is an alternative, which indicates that the action is complete and cannot be reversed, calquing the Klingon verb *rIntaH*.

yu dan mas 'i' "you smashed it (and it can't be fixed)"

Compare:

yu qot mas 'i' "you smashed it (on purpose)"

yu hav mas 'i' "you smashed it (by mistake)"

The continuous aspect marker *'in* is mutually exclusive with these, but appears after the verb.

qaptan valay 'in "the captain is flying"

The continuous is often used with locative expressions, but rarely with other statives (except with the reading "remained in [state]").

layt balaq 'in "the light stayed black // was still black"

Group 7 auxiliaries are optional in narrative once the frame of reference is established; the second clause could grammatically read *'ad miy hav mad*, but there is no need for the redundant marker and speakers would generally not use it.

yu qot mas 'i', 'ad miy mad "you smashed it (on purpose) and I got mad"

Group 8 auxiliary: reversal:

The reversal auxiliary *'an* (<un) indicates that an action is undone or done badly. (It is ambiguous between the two meanings in general, but for actions which can be reversed, prefer the "undo" reading.)

<i>miy</i>	<i>'an</i>	<i>'op</i>	<i>'i'</i>
1sg	REV	open	it

"I close it (again)"

<i>qaptan</i>	<i>'an</i>	<i>valay</i>	<i>sip</i>
captain	REV	fly	ship

“The captain flies the ship badly”

The full order is thus:

COND - IMP - CAUS - NECESS - INCH - CAPABIL - EVID - ASP (perf) - REV - VERB - ASP
(cont)

What happens with the examples in the Klingon dictionary? We have rather more lexical verbs and fewer causatives than Klingon. (However, do not forget the causative when translating; it is often used to lexicalize meanings that take single verbs in English.)

“we can create it” (Kl. can-caus-take.form)

wiy qan meq ‘i’

“I needed to take him/her”

miy hav ta hav teq ‘iy

“it made him/her willing to die”

‘i’ meq wiw hav day ‘iy

Roving auxiliaries and adverbs:

Two elements of the verbal complex are placed before the element they modify instead of occupying a fixed position.

no (<no), the negation marker:

no valay “doesn’t fly”

qan no valay “able to not fly” (can refuse to fly)

no qan valay “not able to fly”

Unlike in Klingon, the same negator is used for negative imperatives:

no qo valay “don’t fly”

Multiple negation within the same verb phrase is not allowed.

so (<so), the emphatic, can emphasize both auxiliaries and the main verb:

<i>wiy</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>won</i>	<i>qiw</i>	<i>yaw</i>
1pl	NEG	afraid	kill	2pl

“We are not afraid to kill you (pl)”

wiy so no won qiw yaw “we are NOT afraid to kill you”

wiy no so won qiw yaw “we are not AFRAID to kill you”

wiy no won so qiw yaw “we are not afraid to KILL you”

Syntax of basic clauses:

Simple declarative clauses are SVO.

<i>qaptan</i>	<i>qot</i>	<i>valay</i>	<i>sip</i>
captain	PRF.VOL	fly	ship

“The captain has flown the ship”

Pronouns are obligatory as both subject and object:

<i>yaw</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>wiw</i>	<i>valay</i>	<i>i'</i>
2pl	NEG	ready	fly	it

“You (pl) are not ready to fly it”

Prepositional phrases:

Syntactic roles other than subject and object are expressed by prepositions. The class of prepositions is closed and very small. The preposition *in* indicates a locative:

'in sip “in the ship, inside the ship, on the ship, into the ship, to the ship”

The other two are:

vam sip “from the ship, away from the ship, out of the ship”

var sip “because of the ship, to benefit the ship, to (recipient) the ship”

Prepositional phrases can appear fairly freely throughout the sentence (though they cannot intervene between auxiliaries and the verb):

<i>‘iy</i>	<i>qot</i>	<i>qiq</i>	<i>qaptan</i>
3sg	PRF.VOL	kick	captain

“He kicked the captain”

‘in sip ‘iy qot qiq qaptan

‘iy ‘in sip qot qiq qaptan

‘iy qot qiq ‘in sip qaptan

“He kicked the captain in the ship”

The postverbal position (*‘iy qot qiq qaptan ‘in sip*) can cause an ambiguity between the preposition and the continuous aspect marker, if the verb is optionally transitive. This position is dispreferred, but still acceptable when the speaker intends to emphasize the location.

Meanings which would be expressed with prepositions in English are frequently specified with a combination of preposition and location-denoting noun. For instance *sayd* “interior”, *wey* “path of a moving object” and *tiyn* “area between two objects; interior space defined by walls or barriers” all frequently occur with *‘in*, as does *qas* “effect” with *var*, but these nouns can also appear on their own.

‘in sayd sip “inside the ship”

sayd han ‘iy “the palm of his/her hand”

var qas chiqin “because of the chicken”

qas layt “the effect of the light”

Verb frames:

Most verbs take the same arguments that an English speaker would expect. (For instance, *valay* has both an intransitive reading, “fly through the air,” and a transitive one, “fly a ship”.) However, there are a few exceptions:

Verbs of motion often allow noun phrase destinations, even if English requires a prepositional phrase:

qam ta palanet “come to this planet”

The prepositional phrase is also allowed, especially if the speaker wishes to prefix the destination:

‘in ta palanet qam “come to this planet”

A smallish class of verbs has patient-like subjects and agent-like objects; this makes them similar to prototypical Klingon verbs or to English verbs in the passive voice. In fact, many of them appear to be lexicalized English passives (with initial *qe/qet* or *was*), while others are derived from verbs that participate in alternations like “the glass broke” ~ “you broke the glass” in which a patient-like argument frequently appears as the subject. Since the older term “lexical passive” takes an uncomfortably English-centric perspective, these are marked in the lexicon as “series II”.

sip hav qemas “the ship broke”

sip hav qemas ta’ no qayd mista ‘enjin “that so-called engineering officer broke the ship”

wadar qam boy “the water is starting to boil”

wadar qam boy wayv yu “your spouse is starting to boil water”

Adverbs:

Adverbs are generally sentence-initial, although this can be variable (adverbs can also appear pre-verbally, or rarely post-verbally).

fat yu waq ‘in

fast	2sg	walk	CONT
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“You’re walking fast”

Questions (polar)

The question marker is *‘is* (<is), which appears sentence-initially.

<i>‘is</i>	<i>‘iy</i>	<i>qiq</i>	<i>‘in</i>	<i>qaptan</i>
Q	3sg	kick	CONT	captain

“Is s/he kicking the captain?”

Questions (content)

Content questions also begin with the question marker *‘is*. (This probably reflects a reanalysis of English questions like “What is she doing?”, which can suggest that English content questions have the interrogative marker. Klingon content questions do not.) Interrogatives (wh-terms) appear in situ.

<i>‘is</i>	<i>‘iy</i>	<i>qiq</i>	<i>‘in</i>	<i>wat</i>
Q	3sg	kick	CONT	what

“What is s/he kicking?”

<i>‘is</i>	<i>huw</i>	<i>qiq</i>	<i>‘in</i>	<i>qaptan</i>
Q	who	kick	CONT	captain

“Who is kicking the captain?”

Adjunct WH-questions are allowed. The adjunct PP is almost always sentence-initial.

<i>‘is</i>	<i>var</i>	<i>wat</i>	<i>‘iy</i>	<i>qiq</i>	<i>‘in</i>	<i>qaptan</i>
Q	for	what	3sg	kick	CONT	captain

“Why is s/he kicking the captain?”

A few interrogatives, such as *weyr* “where”, act as lexical PPs.

<i>'is</i>	<i>weyr</i>	<i>'iy</i>	<i>qiq</i>	<i>'in</i>	<i>qaptan</i>
Q	where	3sg	kick	CONT	captain

“Where is s/he kicking the captain?”

“Adjectives”

Klingon has no adjectives, just stative verbs. Thus, English adjectives tend to be reanalyzed as verbs (and can take the same verbal auxiliaries to indicate aspect etc.). When they serve as predicates, no copula is required.

<i>'iy</i>	<i>hapiy</i>
3sg	happy

“s/he is happy”

<i>'iy</i>	<i>qam</i>	<i>luq</i>	<i>hapiy</i>
3sg	INCH	APPARENT	happy

“s/he starts to seem happy”

However, these words can also be used as pronominal modifiers:

<i>dem</i>	<i>red~red</i>	<i>layt</i>	<i>yu</i>
PL	red~SATURATED	light	2sg

“your deep red lights”

Equative constructions

As in Klingon, there is no copula “to be”. This function is served by the pronouns, which follow the full noun phrase.

<i>'u man</i>	<i>miy</i>
human	1sg

“I am human”

Verbal auxiliaries may be used with the pronoun in this context, and prepose or postpose as they would with a verb:

<i>mister</i>	<i>qan</i>	<i>miy</i>
officer	CAPABLE	1sg

"I can be an officer"

The same construction is used to indicate that someone is in a location. The locative phrase comes first. The continuous marker *'in* often follows the pronoun to indicate the state of being in a location (rather than moving, entering, etc.).

<i>'in</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>'iy</i>	<i>'i</i>	<i>'in</i>
LOC	hand	3sg.ANIM	3sg.INANIM	CONT

"It's in his/her hand"

<i>'in</i>	<i>ta'</i>	<i>palanet</i>	<i>hav</i>	<i>wiy</i>
LOC	that	planet	PRF.NONVOL	1pl

"We were on that planet (but aren't anymore)"

In copular constructions with a nominal subject, the noun follows the pronoun and its complement of verbal auxiliaries:

<i>'u man</i>	<i>'iy</i>	<i>qaptan</i>
human	3sg.ANIM	captain

"The captain is a human"

<i>mister</i>	<i>qan</i>	<i>'iy</i>	<i>'u man</i>
officer	CAPABLE	3sg.ANIM	human

"The human can be an officer"

<i>'in</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>'iy</i>	<i>'i</i>	<i>'in</i>	<i>chiqin</i>
LOC	hand	3sg.ANIM	3sg.INANIM	CONT	chicken

"The chicken is in his/her hand"

Conjunctions:

Unlike in Klingon, nouns and sentences use the same set of conjunctions. These are *'ad* “and”, *'ar* “or”, *'iydar* “exclusive or”, and *bat* “but not”. They appear between the items they conjoin.

qapten 'ad mister 'enjin “the captain and engineering officer”

chiqin 'ar qapibara “a chicken or a capybara, or both”

qah 'iydar qa “either gagh or a soul, but not both”

leq bat 'am “a leg, but not an arm”

Similarly:

chiqin qam 'ar qapibara qo “a chicken comes, or a capybara goes, or both”

Relative clauses:

Subject relative clauses are formed with the relative pronoun *'e* “who/which”. These clauses precede the noun they describe. A noun phrase qualified in this way can appear as part of a larger construction.

Subject relatives can be formed with intransitive verbs:

[	<i>'e</i>	<i>hapiy</i>	<i>mister</i>	]	<i>sing</i>
	REL	happy	officer		sing

“[The officer who is happy] sings.”

Or with transitives:

[	<i>'e</i>	<i>qam</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>palanet</i>	<i>ta'</i>	<i>sip</i>	]	<i>no</i>	<i>valay</i>	<i>hachu'</i>
	REL	come	DEM.PROX	planet	DEM.DIST	ship		NEG	fly	PROPER

“[That ship that comes to this planet] doesn't fly properly.”

The modified noun can also serve as an object:

miy siy ['e hapiy mister]

"I see [the officer who is happy.]"

A noun phrase modified in this way can also stand alone, as a topicalized sentence. This emphatic construction seems to calque the structure of English sentences like "It comes to this planet, that ship," in a way that yields a Klingon-like word order with the subject last.

'e hapiy mister

"It's that officer who is happy."

'e qam ta palanet ta' sip

"It's THAT SHIP that comes to this planet."

In other relatives, 'e appears within the clause, where the relativized noun would be expected. However, these noun phrases cannot stand on their own as sentences:

[	<i>'u man</i>	<i>siy</i>	<i>'e</i>	<i>chiqin</i>	]	<i>qot</i>	<i>qam</i>
	human	see	REL	chicken		PF.VOL	come

"[The chicken that the human sees] has come."

[	<i>var</i>	<i>qas</i>	<i>'e</i>	<i>wiy</i>	<i>qam</i>	<i>'op</i>	<i>dos</i>	<i>wadar</i>	]	<i>wiw</i>	<i>boy</i>
	because	cause	REL	1pl	INCH	open	3pl.INAN	water		ready	boil

"[The water because of which we started to open them] is ready to boil."

Again, the modified noun phrase can serve as an object:

miy 'iyt ['u man siy 'e chiqin]

"I eat [the chicken that the human sees.]"

Subordinate clauses:

Subordinate clauses which serve as verbal objects generally have a complementizer, *ta'* "that", although this is optional, and especially likely to be omitted with the verbs *sey* "say" and *wana*

“want”. A main verb which takes a clausal object is not normally marked for aspect (except for verbs of saying); in general, the aspect can be deduced from that of the subclause.

Subclauses may take the regular SVO syntax of main clauses, yielding sentences like these:

<i>miy</i>	<i>luq</i>	<i>ta'</i>	<i>'iy</i>	<i>qot</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>'aw</i>	<i>mister</i>
1sg	observe	COMP	3sg	PRF.VOL	hit	PL	officer

“I saw him hit the officers.” (cf. Okrand p66)

<i>miy</i>	<i>wana</i>	<i>yu</i>	<i>siy</i>	<i>'iy</i>
1sg	want	2sg	see	3sg

“I want you to see him/her.” (cf. Okrand p67)

However, subclauses can also use the same emphatic, cleft-like syntax as relative clauses, with post-posed subjects. This is most likely to appear when the subclause subject is already a topic of conversation. The sentence below is most natural in a story about its 3sg referent:

<i>miy</i>	<i>luq</i>	<i>ta'</i>	<i>qot</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>'aw</i>	<i>mister</i>	<i>'iy</i>
1sg	observe	COMP	PRF.VOL	hit	PL	officer	3sg

“I saw him hit the officers.” (cf. Okrand p66)

The sentence below is grammatical, but not idiomatic under most circumstances, partly because it is rare to tell stories about one’s addressee, and partly because of the garden path set up by *miy wana* “I want”, which is quite likely to be followed by a clause with 1sg subject.

<i>miy</i>	<i>wana</i>	<i>siy</i>	<i>'iy</i>	<i>yu</i>
1sg	want	see	3sg	2sg

“I want you to see him/her.” (cf Okrand p67)

The main clause may appear after the subclause, with a parenthetical meaning:

<i>ta'</i>	<i>'u man</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>wana</i>	<i>qah</i>	<i>'iy</i>	<i>qot</i>	<i>sey</i>
DEM.DIST	human	NEG	want	gagh	3sg	PRF.VOL	say

“That human doesn’t want any gagh, he/she said.”

When the main clause and the subclause share a subject, only one must be stated explicitly. Either may be dropped. A subclause with this kind of dropped subject generally uses the complementizer. Thus, the following are all rough equivalents. Subjects tend to be dropped more often when context make them predictable. There is also generally a preference for the first subject to be explicit and the second dropped, although this is by no means a categorical rule:

miy sey miy weyr qat
miy weyr qat, miy sey

Both subjects stated

miy sey ta' weyr qat
miy weyr qat, sey

First subject stated

sey ta' miy weyr qat
ta' weyr qat, miy sey

Second subject stated

"I say I wear a skort."

Some ambiguities arise with optionally transitive verbs, since it is not always clear whether a missing argument is due to subject deletion or to intransitivity. For instance, the sentence below has two possible readings:

miy wana siy yu
 1sg want see 2sg

(1) "I want to see you"

(2) "I want you to see"

Where an ambiguity like this arises in real speech, it can be disambiguated prosodically. If meaning (2) is intended, the utterance is likely to have a pronounced prosodic boundary after *siy*.

Alternately, an explicit complementizer can be used, in which case reading (1) is preferred: *miy wana 'ta siy yu*.

In any case, English speakers should note that there is no lexical class of “raising” verbs as in English; subject deletion can apply to any subclause, regardless of the main verb. Thus, the subject below (in parentheses) is optional:

<i>dem</i>	<i>nutliya</i>	<i>sar</i>	<i>ta'</i>	<i>(dos)</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>qan</i>	<i>valay</i>
PL	nutria	know	COMP	(3pl.INANIM)	NEG	POSS	fly

“Nutrias know they can’t fly.”

Numerical System

Numbers from 0-9 have unique names:

0- siyro

1- wan

2- tu

3- tliy

4- var

5- vayv

6- sik

7- sev

8- ‘eyt

9- nayn

For anything higher than nine, there are digit multipliers:

tens- tiyn

hundreds- hanet

The digit comes first:

wantiyn- 10

tutiyn- 20

tliytiyn- 30

etc.

you have the largest digit first, in order.

115: wanhanet wantiyn vayv

12: wantiyn tu

Greetings

yuwanat- from 'is yu wana wat?

Example text 1:

taym 'e miy qot qam Tar Valiyt Aqademi, miy hav baras var qas miy 'an piyq seym haw 'atar 'aw 'ensin. hav tiq mister no qan miy var qas miy piyq 'Intlis. 'e tiych var miy qamandar 'Uhura ta' piyq leyngwich yu sef so no rang.

“When I first arrived at Starfleet Academy, I felt ashamed because I didn’t talk like the other ensigns. I thought I could never be an officer because I spoke ‘Intlis. It was Commander Uhura who taught me that there is nothing wrong with speaking your own language.”

<i>taym</i>	<i>'e</i>	<i>miy</i>	<i>qot</i>	<i>qam</i>	<i>Tar Valiyt</i>	<i>Aqademi</i>
time	REL	1sg	PRF.VOL	come	Star Fleet	Academy

“When I first arrived at Starfleet Academy,”

<i>miy</i>	<i>hav</i>	<i>baras</i>	<i>var</i>	<i>qas</i>	<i>miy</i>	<i>'an</i>	<i>piyq</i>
1sg	PRF.NONVOL	ashamed	for	reason	1sg	REV	speak
<i>seym</i>	<i>haw</i>	<i>'atar</i>	<i>'aw</i>	<i>'ensin</i>			
like	manner	other	PL	ensign			

“I felt ashamed because I didn’t talk like the other ensigns.”

<i>hav</i>	<i>tiq</i>	<i>mister</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>qan</i>	<i>miy</i>
PRF.NONVOL	think	officer	NEG	POSS	1sg
<i>var</i>	<i>qas</i>	<i>miy</i>	<i>piyq</i>	<i>'Intlis</i>	
because	reason	1sg	speak	'Intlis	

"I thought I could never be an officer because I spoke *'Intlis*."

'e tiych var miy qamandar 'Uhura

REL teach for 1sg commander Uhura

ta' piyq leyngwich yu sef so no rang

COMP speak language 2sg own INTENS NEG wrong

"It was Commander Uhura who taught me that there is nothing wrong with speaking your own language."