# Grammar of Duvip

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# Introduction

This paper explores and describes the language of Duvip.

## Overview

In the Introduction, I will provide an overview of what can be found in this paper, the goals of this conlang, and the cultural background of the fictional people who speak it. In the Phonology section, I will discuss the phonemic inventory of Duvip, some suprasegmental features of Duvip, and how syllables and words are formed. In the Romanization section, I will provide the romanization system used in the paper. In the Morphology section, I will discuss the four main word classes of Duvip and how they are morphologically inflected and derived. In the Syntax section, I will provide a brief description of different basic syntactic patterns to form sentences and phrases.

## Context

This language is a speedlang created as a part of miacomet's Speedlang Challenge 8, which took place from 3-1-2021 to 3-14-2021. The restrictions of the prompt included:

- Make use of some sort of quantity distinction, such as long vs short vowels or geminate consonants.
- Glides/semivowels may not contrast by rounding or point of articulation
- Have some sort of suprasegmental feature that isn't tone or stress
- Include an open pronoun class
- Feature insubordination, a phenomenon where in certain contexts, morphology that usually marks subordinate clauses appears in independent clauses
- Have asymmetrical negation
- Mark indefinite noun phrases but not definite ones

    As part of the prompt, we were also expected to:

- Document and showcase your language, explaining and demonstrating how it meets all of the elements of the challenge
- Translate and gloss five example sentences
- Include an example showing at least fifteen possible pronouns

    This paper serves to document and showcase Duvip, accomplishing that task. Each restriction is met, as demonstrated throughout the paper. In the pronoun section, fifteen example pronouns are provided. Example sentences are provided throughout the Syntax section.

Outside of the Speedlang Challenge, this is also my first conlang developed to this level. While this conlang is by no means perfect, I am proud to have been able to do as much as I did at all. Going forward, I hope to further develop and improve this conlang.

## Cultural Background

Duvip is spoken by a group of people which are located on an isolated subarctic island. They experience chilly, dry climates throughout most of the year, although sometimes it is known to snow or rain heavily for days. They are primarily vegetarian, although they supplement their diet with fish.

# Phonology

In this section I will discuss the phonological system of Duvip. First, I will discuss the phonemic inventory of Duvip, and how each phoneme generally manifests. Next, I will discuss the suprasegmental features of Duvip, specifically its stress-system and its unique form of nasalization. Finally, I will discuss the phonotactics of Duvip.

## Inventory

Duvip has a relatively small, moderately vowel-heavy phonemic inventory. The specific consonant and vowel inventories are discussed in greater detail in their respective sections.

### Consonant Inventory

Duvip has a relatively small consonant inventory. The inventory consists of 13 phonemic consonants, differentiated at the labial, alveolar, postalveolar, palatal, and velar places of articulation. They are also differentiated at the plosive, fricative, and approximant manners of articulation. They come voiced and unvoiced. Table 1 describes the consonant inventory of the langage.

|  | Labial | Alveolar | Postalveolar | Palatal | Velar |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Plosive | p b | t d |  |  | k g |
| Fricative | f v | s z | ʃ ʒ |  |  |
| Approximant |  |  |  | j |  |

Table 1: The phonemic consonant inventory of Duvip, in IPA.

One interesting feature of the inventory is its small size, at just 13 phonemic consonants. Additionally, there is only one phonemic approximant. This approximant, /j/, can sometimes be articulated further back or forward (either closer to [ɰ] or [ɹ]) depending on its position relative to either phonemes, but is generally manifested in the palatal position, as [j]. Also of note is the small asymmetry, where there are no postalveolar plosives or velar fricatives.

### Gemination

Duvip also makes use of differentiation by geminated consonants. Geminated consonants are consonants which have been lengthened in some way. In Duvip, gemination manifests in plosives by way of lengthening the time the airway is obstructed. Other consonants are geminated simply by lengthening the time they occur. The palatal approximant cannot be lengthened in Duvip.

## Vowel Inventory

Duvip has an average vowel inventory, with 6 phonemic vowels. These vowels are either in the front, or back, and either closed, middle, or open. The front vowels tend to be less rounded, and the back vowels tend to be more rounded, with the exception of /ɑ/. Table 2 describes the consonant inventory of the langage.

|         | Front | Back |
|---------|-------|------|
| Close   | i     | u    |
| Middle  | e     | o    |
| Open    | a     | ɑ    |

Table 2: The phonemic vowel inventory of Duvip, in IPA.

While Duvip has what is considered a relatively average vowel inventory, it is actually somewhat large when compared to Duvip's consonant inventory. The consonant to vowel quality ratio is 13:6, or about 2.2, which is considered small. Most of these phonemic vowels occur consistently in the position they appear in as described in Table 2, however /ɑ/ will appear as [ə] when in an unstressed position.

# Suprasegmental Features

This subsection provides an overview of the basic suprasegmental features of Duvip. Specifically, Duvip makes use of non-phonemic stress and phonemic syllable-level nasalization.

## Stress

Stress is not a strong process in Duvip, and follows regular rules. Monosyllabic words are unstressed. In other cases, primary stress occurs on the first syllable of the word, demonstrated by a short lengthening of the vowel and a rise in pitch. In polysyllabic words, secondary stress occurs in the penultimate syllable of the word. However, since stress is so regular, stress is not contrastive between words in Duvip.

## Nasalization

One very unique feature of Duvip is its use of phonemic nasalization. In Duvip, nasalization is contrastive on a syllable level, but does not occur phonemically on a segment level.

In Duvip, nasalization can occur in syllables which start with a plosive consonant. If the syllable is nasalized, all most other phonemes will become nasalized as well, including the vowel, and any plosive consonants that might be in the coda of the syllable. When this occurs, the place of articulation of each phoneme remains the same. When this occurs, fricative or

approximant consonants remain the same. Below, Example 1 demonstrates a pair of two different words which are contrasted only by this syllable-level nasalization.

(1) [pos]          lean
    [mõs]          intelligent

As demonstrated in the above example, nasalization occuring on the syllable level is contrastive.

# Phonotactics

This subsection discusses Duvip's phonotactics system. Duvip has a relatively simple syllable and word structure, as elaborated in the following two subsections.

## Syllable Structure and Patterns

Syllables are constructed CV(C). This allows for simple consonant clusters to occur at syllable boundaries. When a syllable ends with the same consonant the next syllable begins with, this will become a geminated consonant. This geminated consonant is considered the start of the following syllable. The palatal approximant, /j/, must occur at the onset of a syllable, and cannot occur in a syllable's coda.

## Word Structure and Patterns

Words cannot end with a vowel. The palatal approximant, /j/, cannot occur word-finally. Syllables are otherwise able to be strung together in any way to form a word.

# Romanization

For the purposes of this grammar sketch, a romanization system is described. Duvip is relatively easy to romanize due to its relatively simple phonology. The following list gives the nominalization for each phoneme in inventory. Also to note, when a syllable is nasalized, the nasalized syllable is preceded by an <n>.

| /p/ | - | <p> |
|---|---|---|
| /b/ | - | <b> |
| /t/ | - | <t> |
| /d/ | - | <d> |
| /k/ | - | <k> |
| /g/ | - | <g> |
| /f/ | - | <f> |
| /v/ | - | <v> |
| /s/ | - | <s> |
| /z/ | - | <z> |
| /ʃ/ | - | <sh> |
| /ʒ/ | - | <zh> |
| /j/ | - | <j> |
| /i/ | - | <i> |
| /e/ | - | <e> |
| /a/ | - | <a> |
| /u/ | - | <u> |
| /o/ | - | <o> |
| /ɑ/ | - | <ao> |

This romanization system is used throughout the remainder of this paper.

# Morphology

This section describes the morphology of the four major classes of words: verbs, nouns, modifiers, and pronouns.

## Verbs

### Inflection

Verbs are inflected for tense, aspect, and mood. Verbs can be in past, present, or future tense. Verbs can be in perfective or imperfective aspects. Verbs can be in the gnomic, indicative, subjunctive, or optative moods.

### Moods

The gnomic mood generally refers to self-evident, eternal truths. It is used for aphorisms, some idiomatic expressions, in some poetic speech, or occasionally sarcastically. Verbs in the gnomic mood are not inflected for tense or aspect. Verb roots are in the gnomic mood, and thus the gnomic mood is not indicated with any morphological change.

Verbs in the indicative mood are used to indicate true statements. In contrast to the gnomic mood, this includes statements that are not necessarily eternal, that the speaker might not know with complete certainty, etc. The indicative mood is far more common in spoken language, being used in declarative sentences. The indicative mood is suffixed with **-ef**, although it is always followed by another suffix indicating tense and aspect.

The subjunctive mood is often used in subordinate clauses, but sometimes the independent clause that the subordinate clause relies on is dropped when it can be inferred from context. As such, the subjunctive mood finds itself used for a variety of purposes, such as conditionality, causality, to indicate surprise an event has transpired. It is somewhat analogous to 'that-clauses' in English, or content clauses. The subjunctive mood is indicated with the suffix **-pozh**, although it is always followed by another suffix indicating tense and aspect.

The optative mood is used to indicate that the speaker wishes an event would happen. This is also often used in imperative sentences. The optative mood is indicated with the suffix **-gug**, although it is always followed by another suffix indicating tense and aspect.

### Tense and Aspect

Verbs are suffixed for both tense and aspect after they are suffixed for mood. Verbs can be in past, present, or future tense. These refer to events in the past, present, or future relative to the time of speaking. Verbs can be in perfective or imperfective aspects. These refer to events without internal temporal structure and with internal temporal structure. Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5 list each suffix that is used to indicate tense and aspect in Duvip. These suffixes are different depending on whether the verb is in the indicative, subjunctive, or optative mood. If the verb is in the gnomic mood, it cannot take inflection for tense and aspect.

| Indicative | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Past | Present | Future |
| Perfective | -ef | -ik | -sash |
| Imperfective | -ivif | -paop | -ugag |

Table 3: Tense and aspect suffixes on indicative verbs.

| Subjunctive | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Past | Present | Future |
| Perfective | -tuf | -esh | -ed |
| Imperfective | -ejaos | -npos | -es |

Table 4: Tense and aspect suffixes on subjunctive verbs.

| Optative | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Past | Present | Future |
| Perfective | -bab | -ig | -eg |
| Imperfective | -nket | -zig | -sek |

Table 5: Tense and aspect suffixes on optative verbs.

The suffixes for tense and aspect, when used in combination with the suffixes for mood, make all up all possible grammatical inflections for verbs in Duvip.

### Derivation

Verbs can be nominalized from the gnomic form, forming the gerund. This is done using the suffix **-nkus**. After being nominalized, the verb can have case markings applied to it like any other noun. These case markings are further discussed in the Nouns subsection. These case markings can be used to derive other new words, or use verbs nominally in a variety of situations.

## Nouns

Nouns in Duvip are inflected for case, definiteness, and plurality. Duvip has seven grammatical cases. These are the ablative, locative, nominative, accusative, dative, genitive, and instrumental. Nouns can be plural or singular. Nouns can be definite or indefinite.

## Case and Plurality

Nouns are required to take suffixes that indicate their case and whether they are plural or singular. Singular nouns are for counting nouns of which there is one thing being referred to. Plural nouns are for counting nouns of which there is more than one thing being referred to, or mass nouns. The different cases and the suffixes for them are discussed in more detail in their respective subsection.

### Nominative

The nominative case is used to mark the subject of transitive and intransitive verbs. There are two suffixes for the nominative case. The suffix **-ek** is used to mark singular nouns in the nominative case, whereas **-ik** is used to mark plural nouns in the nominative case.

### Accusative

The accusative case is used to mark the direct object of transitive verbs. The suffix **-kizhek** is used to mark singular accusative nouns, whereas **-aok** marks plural accusative nouns.

### Dative

The dative case is used for indirect objects of transitive verbs. It is also used to indicate direction towards a location or object. The suffix **-jet** is used to mark singular dative nouns, whereas **-buk** is used for plural dative nouns.

### Ablative

The ablative case is used to indicate movement away from something. It can be used to indicate causation, or that a noun originates from the noun marked by the ablative case. The suffix **-od** is used for singular ablative nouns, and **-isup** is used for plural ablative nouns.

### Genitive

The genitive case is used to indicate composition, or inalienable possession. The noun marked is used as a modifier to modify the head in the noun phrase. The suffix **-ses** is used to mark singular genitive nouns. The suffix **-shut** is used to mark plural genitive nouns.

### Locative

The locative case is used to indicate that one is at something. The suffix **-bab** is used to mark singular locative nouns. The suffix **-npit** is used to mark plural locative nouns.

### Instrumental

The instrumental case is used to indicate that an action was performed using or with the help of something. The suffix **-jok** is used to mark singular instrumental nouns. The suffix **-jek** is used to mark plural instrumental nouns.

Nouns are marked as indefinite with a prefix **nke-**. Unmarked nouns are considered definite. An indefinite noun is one that refers to the noun that is not identifiable in a given context. Nouns are more likely to be definite than in English. Most nouns or noun phrases are considered identifiable, or definite, until proven otherwise.

# Modifiers

Modifiers modify other words, including nouns, verbs, and other modifiers. Modifiers are inflected to agree with nouns for plurality, case and definiteness; modifiers that modify verbs are not inflected to agree with the verb.

Indefiniteness is indicated with the suffix **-inkit**, and definiteness is left unmarked. Modifiers are first suffixed for plurality and case, and then suffixed for indefiniteness if necessary. Table 6 shows the suffix used for each plurality/case combination.

|  | Singular | Plural |
|---|---|---|
| Nominative | -dat | -vavif |
| Accusative | -ntat | -sez |
| Dative | -dod | -sekkit |
| Ablative | -ivvif | -essig |
| Genitive | -onpes | -pes |
| Locative | -bebis | -zaot |
| Instrumental | -zhaosh | -ezh |

Table 6: A list of each suffix to be attached on a modifier to indicate both grammatical case and plurality of the noun it modifies.

Modifiers can be used without the modified noun when the noun can be assumed from context, due to how they agree with the head noun. These nominalized modifiers may be reused and act as pronouns. Pronouns are discussed in greater depth in the Pronoun subsection.

# Pronouns

Pronouns are a surprisingly open class in Duvip. Prefixes can be additionally attached to indicate reflexivity and clusivity. Reflexive pronouns are indicated with the prefix **tni-** where inclusive pronouns are indicated with the prefix **npi-**. Nominalized modifiers can serve as pronouns - other

nouns, or nominalized verbs, are not able to serve as pronouns. Table 7 provides examples of different pronouns, their literal meaning, and how they are most often used.

| Duvip word (romanization) | Literal Translation | Most Common Usage |
|---|---|---|
| zhozh | humble | 1SG |
| pipjuk | venerable | 3SG |
| pipjaop | kempt | 2SG |
| npippud | beautiful | 2SG |
| gukish | plain | 1PL |
| setjek | quaint | 1PL |
| zhekkip | organized | 2PL |
| npos | intelligent | 2SG/2PL |
| jin | well-read | 3SG |
| gigket | diligent | 3PL |
| poppozh | helpful | 2SG/2PL |
| zhankut | attractive | 2SG |
| kujat | quiet | 1SG |
| tefjon | fat | 1SG |
| pos | lean | 3SG |

Table 7: A list of pronouns that are found in Duvip.

As demonstrated by the above list of pronouns, the class of pronouns in Duvip is rather open and extensive. It is also important to note that Duvip is somewhat pro-drop, so these pronouns are not used in every context they would be in English.

# Syntax

This section covers some basic syntax of Duvip. The section covers: the Basic Constituent Order of Duvip, which includes the word order of main clauses, noun phrases, and verb phrases in Duvip; dependent clauses, including insubordinate clauses; negation; imperative sentences; interrogative sentences; the passive voice; conditionals; causality.

## Basic Constituent Order

This subsection covers the basic word order of main clauses, noun phrases, and verb phrases. Each of these topics is covered in their own subsection within this subsection.

### Main Clauses

Duvip has a generally SVO word order. Example 2 demonstrates this SVO word order.

(2) jejip-ek                fivvit-ef-ik            shif-kizhek
DEF.child-NOM.SG   eat-IND-PRS.PFV     DEF.fish-ACC.SG
"The child eats the fish."

As demonstrated in the above example, Duvip has an SVO word order.

### Noun Phrases

Duvip is head initial when considering noun phrases. That is, modifiers, relative clauses, and postpositions follow the head. Example 3 demonstrates this word order for noun phrases.

(3) jejip-od               deszup-ivvif   doptas-ivvif
DEF.child-ABL.SG    loud-ABL.SG  round-ABL.SG
"Away from the loud round child."

As demonstrated by Example 3, noun phrases are head initial.

### Verb Phrases

Duvip is head initial when considered verb phrases. Modifiers of the verb follow the verb. Example 4 demonstrates this word order for verb phrases

(4) sejizh          bujet
shine.GNO    bright
"(It) shines bright."

As demonstrated by Example 4, verb phrases follow a head initial pattern.

# Dependent Clauses

Dependent clauses are indicated by the subjunctive mood on the verb. Example 5 demonstrates a sentence which contains a dependent clause.

(5) jejip-ek baokntot-ef-ik shif-kizhek,
DEF.child-NOM.SG have-IND-PRS.PFV DEF.fish-ACC.SG
"(If) the child has a fish,"

jejip-ek fivvit-pozh-npos shif-kizhek
DEF.child-NOM.SG eat-SUBJ-PRS.IPFV DEF.fish-ACC.SG
"... then the child would be eating the fish."

The above example demonstrates that dependent clauses can be placed in a complex sentence by using the subjunctive mood.

## Insubordinate Clauses

In Duvip, the main clause will sometimes be unspoken when it can be assumed from context, resulting in insubordinate clauses. This is used extensively for a variety of purposes. Example 6 demonstrates an example of this process, based on the sentence provided in Example 5.

(6) jejip-ek fivvit-pozh-npos shif-kizhek
DEF.child-NOM.SG eat-SUBJ-PRS.IPFV DEF.fish-ACC.SG
"(If the child had the fish, then) the child would be eating the fish."

As demonstrated by the above example, insubordination is used when the dependent clause the independent clause relies on can be deduced from context.

# Negation

Negation in Duvip is indicated using the negative copula and the gerund in the genitive form. Example 7 provides an example of a sentence, where Example 8 provides an example of the same sentence negated.

(7) jejip-ek fivvit-ef-ik shif-kizhek
DEF.child-NOM.SG eat-IND-PRS.PFV DEF.fish-ACC.SG
"The child eats the fish."

(8) jejip-ek                    tof-ef-ik
    DEF.child-NOM.SG   NEG.COP-IND-PRS.PFV
    "The child does not…"

    fivvit-nkus-onpes              shif-kizhek.
    DEF.eat-NMLZ-GEN.SG     DEF.fish-jet.
    "... eat the fish."

Example 8 might be literally translated as "The child is not composed of eating towards the fish." As demonstrated by the above two examples, negation is asymmetric.

# Imperatives

Soft imperatives are generally indicated by using the optative mood. Example 9 demonstrates a soft imperative.

(9) poppozh-dat              jak-gug-ig              jejik-jet
    helpful-NOM.SG       walk-OPT-PRS.PFV   child-DAT.SG
    "I want you to walk to the child."

As demonstrated by the above example, soft imperatives can be created in Duvip using the optative mood. On the other hand, strong imperatives would use the subjunctive mood. Example 10 demosntrates this process using insubordination.

(10)    poppozh-dat              jak-pozh-esh              jejik-jet
        helpful-NOM.SG       walk-OPT-PRS.PFV   child-DAT.SG
        "(It would help if) you would walk to the child."

As demonstrated by the above example, the subjunctive clause can be used for strong imperatives. However, culturally strong imperatives are considered rude. It is more common to use soft imperatives, such as demonstrated in Example 9.

# Interrogatives

Duvip has a variety of ways to form interrogatives, depending on the situation. These are differentiated from other sentences by a rising intonation. Often interrogatives are asked simply by putting the verb in the subjunctive mood. Example 11 demonstrates an interrogative formed in this way.

(11)    jejip-ek           npep-pozh-esh              jejod-bab
        DEF.child-NOM.SG      COP-SUBJ-PRS.PFV      where-LOC.SG
        "(Do you know) where the child is?"

As demonstrated by the above example, the subjunctive mood can be used to form the interrogative. Sometimes, if it is something the speaker is hoping has happened or is the case, it may be put into the optative mood. Example 12 demonstrates an interrogative formed using the optative mood.

(12)    jejip-ek           baokntot-gug-ig       fattud-kizhek
        child-NOM.SG    have-OPT-PRS.PFV   happiness-ACC
        "I hope that the child is happy?"

Example 12 demonstrates how the optative mood can be used to ask a question that the speaker hopes has a certain answer.

# Conditionals

Conditionals are indicated with a subordinate clause, using the subjunctive mood. This is demonstrated in Example 13 below, which is the same sentence as used in Example 5.

(13)    jejip-ek           baokntot-ef-ik        shif-kizhek,
        DEF.child-NOM.SG      have-IND-PRS.PFV   DEF.fish-ACC.SG
        "(If) the child has a fish,"

        jejip-ek           fivvit-pozh-npos      shif-kizhek
        DEF.child-NOM.SG      eat-SUBJ-PRS.IPFV   DEF.fish-ACC.SG
        "... then the child would be eating the fish."

As demonstrated by Example 13, conditionals can be indicated using dependent or insubordinate clauses and the subjunctive mood.

# Causatives

Duvip uses dependent clauses and the subjunctive mood to indicate that one event was caused by another event. Example 14 demonstrates this.

(14)    pos-dat           sujud-ef-ef         zhozh-ntat
        lean-NOM.SG     strike-IND-PST.PFV  humble-ACC.SG
        "He struck me …"

| paos | zhozh-dat | jak-pozh-npos | pos-essig |
|------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| and | humble-NOM.SG | walk-SUBJ-PRS.IPFV | lean-ABL.SG |

"... and (so) I am walking from him."

As demonstrated by the above example, causation can be indicated with the subjunctive mood.