

# Liquoricelang

(lih•KOR•ih•shlang)

A language for how it sounds when talking with a mouth full of liquorice.

## Preface

It is my great hope that somebody finds this document with no context as to why or for whom it was created. That said: this document details the grammatical rules of Liquoricelang; Liquoricelang is a constructed language created as a silly gift for Edgar Grunewald and Bill McGrath, based extremely superficially on themes presented in The Artifexian Podcast; a constructed language (often abbreviated to conlang) is a language that has been made up for artistic reasons (such as Klingon, Na'vi, Dothraki, Quenya, or French) or for philosophical, social, or political reasons (such as Toki Pona or Esperanto); Liquoricelang falls much more heavily into the artlang camp than the practical-use-lang camp, though at its heart, it's really a jokelang above anything else.

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# Basics of Liquoricelang

## Syntax

Liquoricelang is an isolating SOV language, and features a pervasive use of articles and auxiliary verbs.

In the following example, the subject phrase is colored blue, the object phrase is colored green, and the verb phrase is colored red.

**gil Tem ish Liarish-Jokama gemii Shemii'e.**  
gil        tem    ish        leerish    jokama    gemii        shemii-e  
the.humanM person the.rope liquorice blue    withMouth taste-good  
**He tasted the blue liquorice.**

## Phonology

There are four categories of phonemes in Liquoricelang: Upper Vowels, Lower Vowels, Greater Consonants, and Lesser Consonants. These distinctions come into play for grammatical rules that will be addressed later on in this document, in the sections entitled *Tables about Nouns* and *Oddities and Discourse Particles*.

The following tables show all of Liquoricelang's phonemes, giving the romanization of each sound, two examples of each sound, and the IPA description of each sound.

Romanization	Example	IPA
<i>Upper Vowels:</i>		
e / E	Enter, tell	ɛ (Open-mid front unrounded)
i / I	Index, kill	ɪ (Near-close front unrounded)
ii / Ii / II	Emo, bean	i (Close front unrounded)
oo / Oo / OO	Uff da, room	y (Close back rounded)
<i>Lower Vowels:</i>		
uh / Uh / UH	Under, mud	ə (Schwa)
o / O	Orange, boat	o (Close-mid back rounded)
a / A	Adieu, call	a (Open front unrounded)
<i>Greater Consonants:</i>		
l / L	Lick, smell	l (Voiced alveolar lateral approximant)

k / K	<b>Candy, lock</b>	k (Unvoiced velar plosive)
r / R	<b>Red, near</b>	ɹ (Voiced alveolar approximant)
sh / Sh / SH	<b>Shell, bash</b>	ʃ (Unvoiced postalveolar fricative)

*Lesser Consonants:*

m / M	<b>Mother, swim</b>	m (Voiced bi-labial nasal)
t / T	<b>Ten, net</b>	t (Unvoiced alveolar plosive)
p / P	<b>Pit, lip</b>	p (Unvoiced bi-labial plosive)
j / J	<b>Jacques, azure</b>	ʒ (Voiced postalveolar fricative)
g / G	<b>Game, flag</b>	g (Voiced velar plosive)
f / F	<b>Friend, lift</b>	f (Unvoiced labio-dental fricative)
ch / Ch / CH	<b>Chair, beach</b>	tʃ (Voiceless postalveolar affricate)
x / X	<b>LiquoriceSmack.mp3</b>	(Dental click)

Most syllables in Liquoricelang can be expected to resemble (C)CV(V)(V)(C), with a strong tendency towards including diphthongs or triphthongs, and a strong aversion towards including a dental click as the coda. A syllable containing a quatrphthong with a dental click on each side of it, while not strictly out of the question, would almost certainly collapse into multiple syllables given a week or two.

## The Noun Phrase

The typical noun phrase is composed of two elements: an article and a noun.

### **chiigin Feoachen sheg Shtegen.**

*chiigin feoachen sheg shtegen*

the.animalF deer withFoot flee

**The doe ran away.**

Additionally, a noun phrase may contain some adjectives. These adjectives will typically occur after the noun, but may instead occur between the noun and the article if the speaker is less committed to them.

### **chiigin Feoachen-Tiliuh sheg Shtegen.**

*chiigin feoachen tiliuh sheg shtegen*

the.animalF deer small withFoot flee

**The little doe ran away.**

**chiigin tiliuh Feoachen sheg Shtegen.**

*chiigin tiliuh feoachen sheg shtegen*  
the.animalF small deer withFoot flee

**The small-ish doe ran away.**

**chiigin tiliuh Feoachen-Jooashej-Grafoo'om sheg Shtegen.**

*chiigin tiliuh feoachen jooashej grafoo'om sheg shtegen*  
the.animalF small deer green glowing withFoot flee

**That small-ish, green, glowing doe thing ran away.**

Even when a pronoun is used, it must still be accompanied by an article.

**gil Tem ish Ro xel kem Tamouhl.**

*gil tem ish ro xel kem tamouhl*  
the.humanM person the.rope edible withHand up reach

**He reached up for it.**

## The Verb Phrase

The typical verb phrase is composed of two elements: an instrumental and a verb. Though extremely common, an instrumental is not required in every circumstance.

Often times, a verb will take on different meanings depending on which instrumental is used (or not used) alongside it.

**xiir Tem rej Lepiiool gemii Trifiuhf.**

*xiir tem rej lepiiool gemii trifiuhf*  
the.humanF person the.box room withNose smell

**She smelled the room.**

**xiir Tem rej Lepiiool Trifiuhf.**

*xiir tem rej lepiiool trifiuhf*  
the.humanF person the.box room smell

**She attempted to get a feel for the room.**

Many strange bits of information may be tacked onto a verb phrase. The most straightforward of these are adverbs, which occur after the verb.

**tiish Tem sheg Luxam-Rejenen.**

*tiish tem sheg Luhxam rejenen*  
the.animate person withFoot dance fast

**They danced quickly.**

Direction may also be encoded before the verb.

**tiish Tem sheg roakmiien Luxam-Rejenen.**

*tiish tem sheg roakmiien Luhxam rejenen*  
the.animate person withFoot away dance fast  
**They danced away quickly.**

Items used to carry out an action may be specified after the instrumental.

**tiish Tem sheg il pochemuh-geolmiir roakmiien Luxam-Rejenen.**

*tiish tem sheg il pochemuh geolmiir*  
the.animate person withFoot the.stick shoe tall  
*roakmiien Luhxam rejenen*  
away dance fast  
**They danced away quickly in high-heels.**

**tiish Tem komal Mepoa sheg kejim pochemuh feoachen'ta xuhcha Tiiktauhe'e-Chejmo.**

*tiish tem komal mepoa sheg kejim pochemuh*  
the.animate person a.flat field withFoot the.bulky shoe  
*feoachen-ta xuhcha tiiktauhe-e chejmo*  
hiker-adj through walk-good calm  
**They walked calmly through a field in their hiking boots.**

Sometimes, multiple instrumentals may be used. This is most often found when using the Negation instrumental (which is not *strictly* an 'instrumental auxiliary verb', but is grammatically equivalent to one in LiquoriceLang).

**tiish Tem triig sheg Luxam-Rejenen.**

*tiish tem triig sheg Luhxam rejenen*  
the.animate person not withFoot dance fast  
**They did not dance quickly.**

## Tables about Nouns

LiquoriceLang makes use of many articles, which can encode information such as noun class, definiteness, subject/object role, and plurality.

Articles:

Noun Class	Singular Subject	Singular Definite Object	Singular Indefinite Object	Plural
Rope-like	ish	ish	ita	if
Stick-like	il	kil	pik	akil
Round/bulky	kejim	jesh	jash	jash
Flat	miimal	xomal	komal	kope
Box-like/container	rej	rej	rej	reja
Nebulous				taja
Male animal	chemit	kiimuh	kiikiimuh	kiimalem
Female animal	chiigin	mof	pan	mosh
Male human	gil	luhsha	til	ilim
Female human	xiir	shopuh	telii	jelii
Neuter animate	tiish	mech	kesham	xoren

Pronouns in LiquoriceLang encode additional information which articles may miss.

Pronouns:

Category	Pronoun
Edible thing	ro
Inedible thing	aoo
Person	tem
Animal	iil
Plant	fef
2nd person	jaoo
2nd person honorific	chaiish
1st person	fii

**xiir Tem luhsha Tem Raol.**

*xiir tem luhsha tem raol*  
 the.humanF person the.def.humanM person like

**She likes him.**

**gil Tem shopuh Tem Raol.**

*gil tem shopuh tem raol*  
 the.humanM person the.def.humanF person like

**He likes her.**

**xiir Tem shopuh Tem Raol.**

*xiir tem shopuh tem raol*  
 the.humanF person the.def.humanF person like

**She likes her.**

**xiir Tem ilim Tem Raol.**

*xiir tem ilim tem raol*  
the.humanF person the.pl.humanM person like  
**She likes those guys.**

**xoren Fii xoren Jaoo Raol.**

*xoren fii xoren jaoo raol*  
the.pl.animate 1st the.pl.animate 2nd like  
**We like them.**

A reflexive is formed by duplicating the subject's article and placing it by itself in the object's location.

**xiir Tem Xiir Raol.**

*xiir tem xiir raol*  
the.humanF person the.humanF like  
**She likes herself.**

A 'possessive pronoun' is formed by placing the word **a** (meaning, *at*) after the article. When a possessive pronoun is used, the article's noun class is chosen in reference to the possessor rather than in reference to the item that the article is actually attached to.

In roles outside of clear-cut subject and object, nouns typically take on the markings of a subject, even when they could be argued to be more object-like. The only partial exception to this is in the Human Female noun class, where the article **xiiar** is used in lieu of the typically 'xiir' article.

**xiir a Goodoo xel il mikle Teiiagtaii.**

*xiir a goodoo xel il mikle teiiagtaii*  
the.humanF at dog withHand the.stick tail wag  
**Her dog wagged his tail.**

**xiir a Goodoo xel chemit a mikle Teiiagtaii.**

*xiir a goodoo xel chemit a mikle teiiagtaii*  
the.humanF at dog withHand the.animalM at tail wag  
**Her dog wagged his tail.**

grammatically, one, two, or any decimal/fraction of something is considered singular. All integers besides 1 and 2 (including 0, -1, and -2) are considered grammatically plural.

When a noun is marked as plural, it receives a suffix based on the sound that that noun ends with. This suffix is placed on the noun when used in the Ropes, Sticks, Bulky, Flat,

Box, or Nebulous noun classes. When used in the other classes, the suffix—though still chosen based on the final sound on the noun—is actually appended to the last item in the noun phrase as a whole, meaning that it may end up on an adjective instead.

*Pluralization Suffixes:*

Final sound on noun	Pluralization suffix
Greater Consonant	'eliik
Lesser Consonant	'ashliior
Vowel	'shem

**gil Riiofel Gil Mooaiij.**

*gil riiofel gil mooaiij*

the.sg.humanM friend the.sg.humanM kiss

**The friends kissed each other.**

*(Literal: "The friend kissed himself.")*

There are two noun classes which hold irregularities towards plurality: in the Sticks noun class, two of something is considered grammatically plural; in the Nebulous noun class, *everything* is considered plural.

## Table about Verbs

Liquoricelang doesn't conjugate verbs ever which makes this section way heckin' simpler.



That said, there is one table to cover.

### *Instrumental Auxiliary Verbs:*

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Auxiliary Verb</b>
<b>Hand, non-ambulatory appendage</b>	xel
<b>Foot, leg</b>	sheg
<b>Upper body, head as a blunt instrument</b>	pora
<b>Mouth, nose</b>	gemii
<b>Eyes, ears, antennae</b>	jo
<b>Tool</b>	kish
<b>Unintentional</b>	mug
<b>Negation</b>	triig

## The Context Clause

There is almost certainly an actual word for this type of structure, but I'm blanking on the name of it and my usual tools for digging up this type of information aren't helping with this one. So.

A Context Clause™ is a short dependant clause which comes at the beginning of a sentence in order to allow for more arguments in the sentence; these additional arguments often provide context and clarity to what is being said in the main portion of the sentence. They may also serve as a proxy for encoding tense, aspect, and mood when such information is needed, though this is not done nearly as often as an English speaker might appreciate.

A context clause contains a bare verb (i.e., a verb with no instrumental) and a noun phrase (which contains both an article and a noun/pronoun). If the noun in the context clause is the same as the noun in the subject—as is commonly the case—the particle **xaom** (masc), **xiiam** (fem), or **xi** (n) replaces sentence's subject phrase.

### **tiiktauuh xiiar tem, Xiiam rej Chashefich sheg Looxeap.**

*tiiktauuh xiiar      tem      xiiam rej      chashefich sheg      Looxeap*  
walk      the.humanF person the.F the.box farm      withFoot arrive

**She was walking, and then she arrived at the farm.**

## Nuances of Liquoricelang

### Oddities and Discourse Particles

Liquoricelang speakers enjoy being frustrating towards linguists by appending ostensibly meaningless vowels onto the ends of verbs. Affixing an upper vowel holds generally positive connotations, while affixing a lower vowel holds generally negative connotations. This is done much more often in informal dialogues than in formal texts, to the point where many speakers will outright deny ever doing it, in spite of the fact that they very frequently do.

In addition to these tiny affixes, Liquoricelang has many ill-defined lexical items which may appear throughout a sentence for a variety of syntactically displeasing reasons.

**Shlaoa**, which can be placed anywhere but between nouns and their adjectives, is used to indicate that the speaker is changing topics. This is very analogous to the English *anyways*.

**Kijii'i**, which is typically placed at the start of a clause or before the verb, is used for the speaker to indicate frustration or doubt as to what they're saying.

**Liiauhn**, used as a standalone expression, seems to indicate a different thing to every person who uses it: to some it might be a mild vulgarity, to some it might be a celebratory expression, and to some it might be a call to grab others' attention. In many cases, it appears to merely be a way to fill silence.

**Tiirgafir** or **tiirgafiirga**, often found at the end of a poorly-received or clumsily-delivered bit of speech, is used as an attempt for the speaker to dismiss or downplay what they've just said. This is usually done in a lighthearted way, though may also be done morosely if the speaker is presenting bad news or has particularly low self-esteem.

**Xaom xaom xaom**, which may function as a noun, adjective, or a standalone expression, is used to mock overly-dense writing; this document may serve as a good example.

**ma**, **me**, or **m** can occur anywhere at all within a sentence—at times, it may even be found infixing into another word. This is used as a filler while the speaker is trying to think of something but does not wish to actually stop talking while they do so. A direct English analog would be the word *uh*.

Though these words only scratch the surface of Liquoricelangian discourse particles, they should help show the extent to which speakers of Liquoricelang are not afraid to step outside the bounds of intuitive communication practices.

## Using Words as Different Types of Words

To use a verb as a noun, place a verb phrase where a noun would go. The verb phrase will have all of the usual suspects in it—the verb, the instrumental, maybe some adverbs. The noun phrase (even though it contains a verb now) must still be marked with an article. Although the choice of article is a bit more abstract here than it would be ordinarily, speakers typically don't have trouble with choosing one out of thin air if need be.

To use a noun as an adjective, put a noun where an adjective would go and add the suffix **'ta** to the adjectiveized noun.

To use an adjective as a verb, put an adjective where a verb would go and add the prefix **mej'** to the verbified adjective.

To use an adjective as a noun, put an adjective where a noun would go and give it an article and stuff like you would to any other noun. Maybe don't put adjectives on your adjective though. It's not disallowed, it's just... concerning. Help yourself to a little adjective-on-adjective experimentation if you're an art student though.

## The Passive Voice

To form a sentence in the passive voice, the sentence's verb is skidaddle skidoodled into a noun as detailed in the section above, and then the sentence's object (subject? Most likely a patient, tiirgafiir.) follows. Information about the agent may be included after the verb's instrumental in the space where a traditional sentence might include the agent's tools.

## Questions and Frustrating Questions

Yes/No questions are asked quite declaratively in Liquoricelang: to ask a yes/no question, simply put *I ask* or *I wonder* into a context clause and then continue with the sentence as planned.

To ask a Who/What/When/Where/Why/How question, the context clause is also used to the effect of *Wonder who/Wonder what/Wonder where/etc.* The spaces in the sentence that the speaker doesn't know how to fill in are filled with best-guess pronouns. Typically, pronouns will default to the least animate possibility within the supposed range of options.

To ask a frustrating question in Liquorice, ask a Who/What/etc question, and then put a vague pronoun in both the subject and object space.

## Writing System

In the section on Syntax, I made the claim that this was an isolating language. Though I think that that's mostly true, it was also mostly just a claim I threw out there after the fact to justify how none of the words are visibly connected-to or derived-from any of the other words in the language. I think that at a surface level, you could take a line of Liquorice and make it appear anywhere from isolating to polysynthetic just by removing spacing and punctuation.

In the following examples, alternating highlighting is used to show morpheme boundaries.

*Actual sentence:*

**tiish** **Tem** **komal** **Mepoa** **sheg** **kejim** **pochemuh** **feoachen'ta** **xuhcha**  
**Tiiktauhe**-**Chejmo**.

*Hypothetical "polysynthetic" sentence:*

**Tiishtem** **komalmepoa**  
**shegkejimpochemuhfeoachentaxuhchatiiktauhechejmo**.

*Hypothetical "slightly more isolating" sentence:*

**tiish** **Tem** **komal** **Mepoa** **sheg** **kejim** **pochemuh** **feoachen** **ta** **xuhcha** **Tiiktauhe**  
**e** **Chejmo**.

Though any of these could have been chosen as the writing system, I think that the one I went with does the best job of showing how the language works in my head. You can argue that the language isn't isolating whatsoever if you want to. Honestly, I didn't even think about it until most of this document had been written and a fair amount of The Liquorice Farmer had been translated. ̄\\_(\ツ)\\_/̄

On the writing system though: if you've read the examples up to this point, then you've probably noticed a few of the romanization rules, such as:

- Capitalization is done to the first letter of main nouns and verbs

- Capitalization is done to the first letter of adjectives and adverbs which follow main nouns and verbs
- Capitalization is done to the first letter of names
- Nothing else is capitalized, not even the first letters of sentences nor nouns/verbs in a context clause
- Dashes are placed between nouns and any adjectives which follow them
- Apostrophes are placed between affixes and the words which they tie to
- Apostrophes are places at boundaries within words where the breakdown of phonemes is unclear, such as how “ooo” could be “oo’o” or “o’oo”
- Each context clause is followed by a comma

I think that if a native writing system existed, it would look like bits of liquorice knotted together in particular ways. Haven’t made that though. I’ll stick to the realm of things that I at least have a slim chance of reading aloud, tyvm.

## Inside Baseball

Counting generously, this is the fifth conlang I've made since I began conlanging near the start of 2018. My first conlang—Kasira—is for a science-fantasy novel that is currently being written. My second, third, and fourth conlangs—Avriciln, Giant's Tongue, and Birdsong—are for an interactive novel that is also currently being written. In none of these languages has the goal been to depict perfect naturalism. It is my strongly held opinion across many artforms that while realism is a perfectly respectable goal, it can also result in works that aren't as interesting as they could've been if they'd included a bit more a-realistic flair.

...but. Because I thought it'd be funny to go all-in on a language based on nothing but liquorice, I did turn the Naturalism dial up quite a bit when making Liquoricelang. Some of these naturalistic elements include: a clusterfuck of noun classes and articles, some of which differ in the particulars of how they get used; speech-oddities and discourse-particles that are very poorly defined; sentences in the language that I can't pronounce; a common word order (SOV) that gets muddled in practice (such as in context clauses and the passive voice).

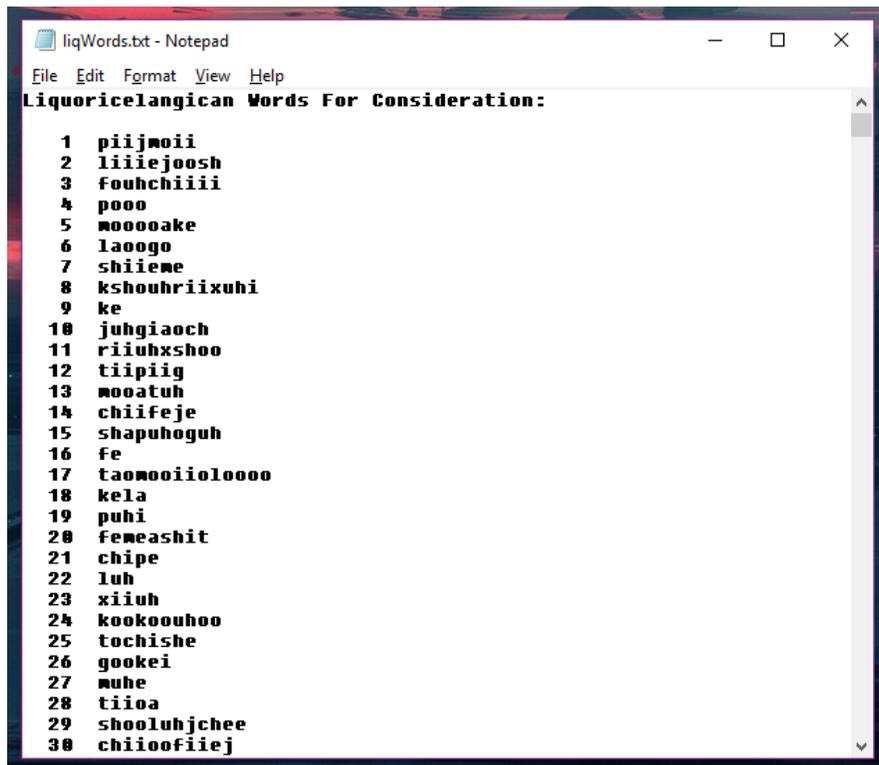
The way I make conlangs is typically very recursive, and involves coming up with a bunch of rules, trying them in example sentences and translations, re-tweaking the rules based on how those sentences went, trying more sentences, adding more rules as they become needed, and so on; The Liquorice Farmer and the Liquoricelang Grammar were written in parallel.

With Liquoricelang, I felt that the phonology was fairly important, since it was really the most liquorice-able part of the language. I chose a lot of phonemes that sounded chewy, as well as all of the phonemes found in the English word 'Liquorice'.

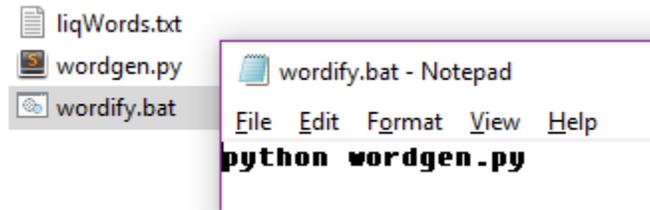
When it came to coming up with lexical items, I made up the first several words myself so that I would have a feel for how I wanted things to sound. At a certain point in the translating, however, it became clear that coining new vocabulary was becoming a boring bottleneck. So, I decided to make a script to write the words for me at that point.

```
1 import random
2
3 liqWords = open("liqWords.txt","w")
4 liqWords.write("Liquoricelangan Words For Consideration:\n\n")
5
6 consonants = ['l','k','r','sh','m','t','p','j','g','f','ch','x']
7 vowels = ['e','i','ii','oo','uh','o','a']
8
9
10 for x in range(1,1001):
11
12     syllables = random.randint(1,3)
13     word = ""
14
15     #(C)CV(V)(V)(C)
16     for s in range(syllables):
17         #(C)
18         if random.randint(1,20) == 1:
19             word += random.choice(consonants)
20         #C
21         word += random.choice(consonants)
22         #V
23         word += random.choice(vowels)
24         #(V)
25         if random.randint(1,3) == 1:
26             word += random.choice(vowels)
27         #(V)
28         if random.randint(1,5) == 1:
29             word += random.choice(vowels)
30         #(C)
31         if random.randint(1,9) == 1:
32             word += random.choice(consonants)
33
34     liqWords.write("%4i %s\n" % (x,word))
35
36
37 liqWords.close();
```

The script generates a thousand words each time it's run.

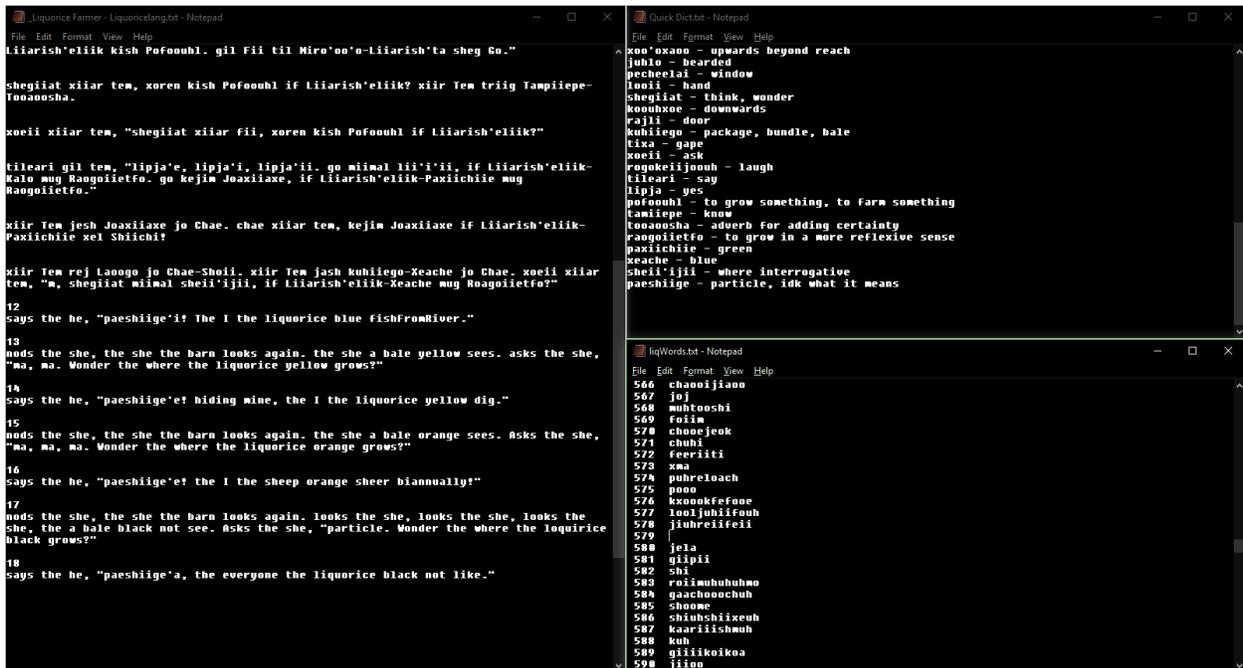


Also I made a batch file so that I could click on something to run the script instead of ever having to type anything.



Yay robots. A lot of the words it throws out aren't amazing, but, scrolling through and cherrypicking the appealing ones is definitely easier than coming up with every new word from whole cloth.

Typically when translating, I would have three items on my main screen: the story in translation, the dictionary in progress, and the list of words to choose from next.



On the second screen was either a cheatsheet for articles or the full grammar, depending on how hairy the part being translated was.

Anyways. I think that's all the noteworthy stuff. Fiat lingua. Edgar out.