

A MEERKAT LANGUAGE PRIMER

EDITOR'S NOTE: Primo Paganini prepared this primer at Dara's request to enable her learn enough Meerkat to communicate with the animals on Beyond. Early on, when she rescued a mob of meerkats from the Mushroom Dens, she knew only three words of their language—"yes," "no," and "cat." This forced her to rely on sign language to make herself understood and made the rescue more difficult. In response, Paganini compiled the following detailed Meerkat grammar, based on his deep knowledge of the language gained over many years and many visits to Beyond. He also defined some grammatical terms for Dara, assuming she might not be familiar with them all. They may help other readers as well.

This is what he wrote:

INTRODUCTION:

Meerkat is the most widely spoken animal language on Beyond, where it serves as a *lingua franca* similar to Swahili in East Africa, or English in Europe and Latin America today. Most other animal languages, such as Otter or Parrot, are difficult for outsiders to learn. But aided by its relative simplicity and by the fact that meerkats live in many regions of Beyond, their language now serves as the most common means of communication across species. Most animals on Beyond are bilingual, speaking Meerkat in addition to their own native tongue. For anyone traveling to Beyond, this makes it the most useful language to learn and should be learned thoroughly.

Until recently, however, Meerkat was exclusively a spoken language. Writing was unknown to the birds and animals of that planet until the arrival of European colonists in the fifteenth century of our calendar, myself among them. Only parrots have since felt the need to develop a script of their own. Here I have used the Roman alphabet to approximate the sounds of Meerkat, although some, such as the bark meaning "no," can be explained but not easily reproduced phonetically.

HISTORY:

Linguists tell us that languages usually change over time. This they do by simplifying their grammar, enriching their vocabulary, and/or devolving into various regional dialects. Eventually then, people who once spoke the same language but who later become separated by distance, geography, or time, will also diverge in pronunciation to the point that they can no longer understand those outside their own group, and a new, separate language is born.

Despite this general tendency, Meerkat pronunciation over the past five hundred years has remained remarkably stable. Aside from a strange dialect confined to dwellers in the

easternmost reaches of the Red Desert, it is spoken much the same way throughout Beyond. The probable reason for this is that the meerkats are often on the move and travel great distances to visit their kin. Frequent travel and constant contact have reduced the regional variations in pronunciation and vocabulary, which in turn has facilitated its use as a language understandable to all on Beyond.

This is not to say that Meerkat has not changed at all. Being an oral language, there is of course no record of Meerkat's early development, but my own experience hints at some simplification of grammar, just as the linguists would have predicted. For example, when I first arrived on Beyond five centuries ago, there was still an "honorific" pronoun — *katara* — which has since fallen into disuse. A small "feminine" noun class has also disappeared. For you, this modest simplification is good news, since it will make learning the language that much simpler. At the same time, the Meerkat vocabulary has expanded through adopting loan words both from other animal languages and from the three human languages used by successive waves of settlers on Beyond. The origins of such loan words are indicated in the English-Meerkat vocabulary at the end of this primer.

LANGUAGE OVERVIEW:

Meerkat is what linguists would call a "polysynthetic" and "agglutinative" language. That means it relies on case endings and inflection for its meaning, as opposed to "analytic" languages such as English or Chinese, which depend instead on word order and use of auxiliary verbs. Meerkat nouns, adjectives, and pronouns all change their endings according to their use in a sentence (i.e. are declined), as explained below. The basic word order of Meerkat is subject-object-verb, but because the verbs are inflected and nouns declined, this order is often changed for emphasis.

Verbs present the greatest challenge in learning Meerkat, as they do in many languages, including modern Russian and classical Greek. Here's what I hope may be a helpful analogy: **Meerkat verbs behave like a LEGO set**, with different "bricks" — prepositions, pronouns, and tense and aspect markers — attached to the front and back of a verb stem as prefixes and suffixes. The result is that Meerkat verbs often grow long. For example, the verb meaning "if you [plural] were not to go," which takes six separate words in English, requires only a single word in Meerkat, but that word — *lotatafallibeni* — has seven syllables.

Meerkat nouns frequently combine two elements to create a new, compound word describing the thing named. For example, the word for "swamp" is *lashommin*, formed by combining *lasha*, "water," with *ommin*, "place." *Sabalash*, "river," comes from *saban*, "large" and *lasha*, "water." Once you become familiar with basic Meerkat, this feature of the language may make new compounds easier to understand.

As might be expected on a wilderness planet, Meerkat enjoys many words describing plants and animals. There are also a great many words describing weather conditions. Mist is a

constant presence in the vast forests that cover the planet, with the result that there are at least a dozen Meerkat words for different kinds of mist—heavy, light, rising, cold, etc.— just as Inuit speakers here on Earth have an estimated 43 different words for “snow.” Other animals and birds, for their part, are generally given Meerkat names that resemble the animals’ characteristic calls. Hence a double whistle is the most common word for “bird,” and a single grunt for “pig.” The Meerkats themselves call their own kind “*sabalidaren*,” or “great travelers.”

Although meerkats live in large family groups, their language has surprisingly few terms for degrees of relatedness. Meerkat does make a distinction between paternal and maternal grandparents, like our Scandinavian languages, but unlike Japanese (or Parrot), there is no special term for “older brother” or “younger sister.” This may be due to the fact that Meerkat families are so large, with several children in each, so the distinction between “older” and “younger” may not seem so important in the end.

As mentioned above, Meerkat has adopted loan words from the three waves of human colonists that reached the planet since ancient times—those speaking ancient Basque, Greek, and English respectively. This has enriched the already large Meerkat vocabulary with new terms as well as supplied alternatives to old ones. For example, although the original Meerkat word for tree is *derek*, thanks to Hieronomos—a Greek speaker with many animal friends—there is now a separate term for an exceptionally large tree, *megadendron*, borrowed directly from ancient Greek. Meerkat has also borrowed from other native animal languages on Beyond. Otter, for example, gave it *hepparak*, the word for “play.”

PRONUNCIATION:

The pronunciation of Meerkat presents few major difficulties save for eight sounds not found in English. The vowels it shares with English are “a” as in “father,” “e” as in “met,” double “ee” and “i” as in “see” (never as in “pin”), “o” as in “tote,” and “u” as in “moon.” Consonants are pronounced as in English except for “r,” which is trilled as in Spanish. “G” and “c” are always hard. The most common sounds peculiar to Meerkat (and not found in English) are the following:

1. A bark, like a small dog
2. A whistle, produced by air passing between the teeth
3. A cough, like someone with a sore throat
4. A purring sound, made like a French “r” but more prolonged
5. “Kh” pronounced like “ch” in the German “Bach” or Scottish “lough”
6. “KKhh” — a sound like clearing your throat. The word for “enemy.”
7. “hah” — an outflow of breath
8. A grunt, used mainly in the word for “pig.”

The following English sounds do not occur in Meerkat: ch, j, qu (kw), and z. “G” is uncommon and occurs mainly in words borrowed from other languages.

STRESS:

Like English and Russian, Meerkat distinguishes between stressed and unstressed syllables. Each Meerkat word carries a single, principal stress. In words of two syllables, that stress falls on the first syllable. In words of three or more syllables, the stress falls on the “antepenult” or third syllable from the end. Thus in the Meerkat sentence *Tatafalidanin fallekh omana minibeni*, meaning “If you were to go, it would be a long trip,” the stressed syllables are: *Ta-ta-fal-EE-da-nin FAL-lekh O-ma-na mi-NI-be-ni*. This pattern of accentuation gives Meerkat its signature singing quality.

ELISION AND EUPHONY:

If a Meerkat word ends with a vowel and that same vowel also begins the next word, the two are elided and pronounced as one. For example, the question “Are they friends?” is pronounced *sisiminiab’aramon?* rather than *sisiminiaba aramon?* As always, the stress falls on the third from last syllable, in this case the first “a” of *aramon*. Similarly, when a prefix ending in a consonant is added to a word that begins with another consonant, the second consonant drops away and the first is often doubled for the sake of euphony. Example: *hom-* (the imperative prefix) + *fallieh*, “to go,” becomes *hommallieh*, “go!”

SOME USEFUL MEERKAT PHRASES:

My name is Dara. *Dara tersakabbani*. (Lit: “I am called Dara”)

What is your name? *Taberen lokiba dimini?*

I speak only a little Meerkat: *Simi sari ranerreku sabanidari samit ranieh*.

Could you speak more slowly? *Taridanin tanon sarameni ranieh?*

Please say that again. *Daneka kebi pura homarani*.

I’m lost: *Simini lommina*.

It’s cold today: *Kari dimini deselliin*.

How far is it? *Kassipree niminiba?*

I want to help you. *Sami tana wanneteh*.

I would like to see what’s in the forest. *Sashirinumaba loki finderekalam nimini ameh*.

Either we decide to go on or we stay here. *Mellen sasapekali dashen falieh, ellen sani sasaberemen*.

Thank you so much. *Sabanalla palipali*.

GENERAL GRAMMAR

My aim here has been to outline for you the main aspects of Meerkat grammar. At the risk of drowning you in detail, I have chosen to include ALL relevant forms of the principal parts of speech, assuming that if you choose to spend more time on Beyond, you will wish to improve your knowledge of the language until you are fluent. For that you will need a comprehensive knowledge of the various grammatical forms, which this primer supplies.

I should warn you that you may at first find Meerkat somewhat complicated. But as you yourself have observed, these are smart and sophisticated animals, and their language reflects their intelligence and sophistication. Moreover, other Beyond languages, such as Parrot, make Meerkat look simple by comparison. The only animals who truly master Parrot are Parrots themselves, who learn the language from infancy. Mira tried to teach me a little bit as an adult, but even that little bit was so difficult to learn that I soon gave up. ☹

Finally, let me add that I have included a brief definition of basic grammatical terms in case you need a refresher. A complete chart of regular and irregular verbs plus the verb *mini*, “to be,” is included in Appendix I.

NOUNS:

As you might already know, nouns refer to “persons, places, and things”—living things (otter) and nonliving things (a rock), as well as feelings (jealousy) and concepts (relativity). That’s a lot! But while nouns in English remain unchanged, no matter what their use in a sentence, this is not true for Meerkat. There, the endings of nouns, adjectives, and pronouns can vary depending on their role. In general, there are four possible types of ending (also known as “cases”):

1. The **subject or nominative case**, which shows who or what is initiating an action.
2. The **possessive or genitive case**, which shows who owns something.
3. The **dative case**, used to indicate indirect objects (to or for something or someone).
4. The **object or accusative case**, which shows who or what is affected by an action.

Meerkat has no noun classes (i.e. “genders”), unlike European languages such as French, German, or Russian. A few nouns in Meerkat, such as the onomatopoetic names of animal languages like “pig,” do not decline at all and have no plural.

Plurals:

Plural nouns in Meerkat are formed using the suffix *-on* or (if the noun ends in a vowel or a guttural sound) *-ron*. Examples: *derek*, “tree,” *derekon* “trees,” *dola*, “foot,” *dolaron*, “feet,” *kkkkh*, “enemy,” *kkkkhron*, “enemies.” There are no irregular plurals, like “woman, women” in English.

Articles:

English nouns are usually preceded by “the” (the definite article) or “a/an” (the indefinite article). Meerkat, on the other hand, dispenses with articles altogether. Thus *killiban* can mean either “a bat” or “the bat.” This may seem confusing, but the meaning is usually made clear by the context. Several Earth languages—Chinese, Japanese, and Russian among them—also dispense with articles and do just fine.

Noun Cases:

Here are the four different grammatical uses that determine which ending a Meerkat noun will take:

1. Subject or Nominative Case:

The subject case is used for... wait for it... the subject of a sentence. It is also the form of the noun to which endings attach—the first “LEGO brick”—and the one that appears in my vocabulary list at the end of this primer. Example: *killiban*, “bat.”

2. Possessive or Genitive Case:

The possessive indicates ownership or close association. The possessive noun ending in Meerkat is *-i* or *-si* (following a vowel), attached to the subject form of the noun. The possessive form of “bat” is “*killibani*.” Possessives follow the thing possessed. Example: the word for “river” is *sanalash* and “river water” is *lasha sanalashi* or “water of the river.”

3. Dative Case:

The dative ending indicates personal involvement, as in when something is given to or taken from an animal. Its sign is *-a* or *-na* (following a vowel), attached to the subject form of the noun. Example: *Sakersanielen killibana peshamu*, “I gave the bat a fruit.” The dative is also used in so-called “impersonal constructions,” which show when the animal is affected by something like temperature or thirst. Example: *Sana dimini dellin*, “I am cold,” literally “it is cold to me” (similar to the the Russian construction *мне холодно*).

4. Objective or Accusative Case:

The objective ending is *-u* or *-nu* (following a vowel) attached to the subject form of the noun. Example: *Sari sameh killibanu*, “I can see the bat.” Note that you could rephrase the sentence and say, *Sari killibanu sameh* or *Killibanu sari sameh*, depending on whether you wish to emphasize that it’s YOU who see the bat or that it’s a BAT that you see. Meerkat case endings

make this flexibility in word order possible, whereas in English (save in poetry), the word order is fixed: subject-verb-object.

Diminutives and Augmentatives:

Meerkat nouns sometimes add a diminutive suffix, which is *-al* or *-sal* if the noun ends in a vowel. Example: *derek*, “tree,” and *derekal*, “little tree.” As in Spanish, the diminutive can also be used as a term of endearment, as in *aramal*, “dear friend.” The possessive, dative, and objective case endings are added after the diminutive suffix *-al* or *-sal*. Example: *Sami samaramalu*, “I see my dear friend.”

Nouns can also add an augmentative suffix, *-aran* or *-ran* (if the noun ends in a vowel), much like the Italian *-one*, which denotes a large size. Example: *nomabanaran*, “a large fish.”

ADJECTIVES:

Adjectives describe a noun in many possible ways, as in a “big white tree.” What sort of tree? Big and white—two adjectives that tell us what it looks like.

Meerkat adjectives must agree with the number (singular or plural) and ending (one of the four cases) of the noun they modify and generally follow the noun. Example: *Sari barenu sabanu maloku ameh*, “I can see a big red rock.” Adjectives derived from nouns often take the suffix *-ala* or *-lla* if preceded by a vowel). Example: *mafa*, “cloud,” *mafalla*, “cloudy.”

Comparative and Superlative Adjectives:

The comparative form of Meerkat adjectives is formed by adding the suffix *-en*. The superlative form adds an additional *-en*. So *saban*, *sabanen*, *sabanenen* = “big,” “bigger,” “biggest.” “Too,” as in “too much” is *-kom* or *-akom*, attached as a suffix. Example: *sabanakom*, “too big.”

Another way to form the comparative and superlative is by using the adverbs *tanen*, “more,” and *tanenen*, “most” or *samen*, “less,” and *samenen*, “least.” So *tanenen rashamin*, “most courageous” and *samenen rashamin*, “least courageous.”

ADVERBS:

Adverbs describe the action of a verb. “He runs fast.” How does he run? The adverb “fast” tells us. Like adjectives, adverbs in Meerkat generally follow the verb they modify.

As in classical Greek, Meerkat forms many adverbs by adding a long vowel to an adjective with a related meaning—in this case *-ee* or *-i*. (Hieronomos, a native Greek speaker, was struck by

this similarity.) Example: *famen*, “fast,” and *fameni*, “quickly.” *Safallien fameni finnereku dori*, “I hastened through the forest.”

The adverb *ki*, “very,” combines with the adjective it modifies as a prefix. Example: *kisaban*, “very big,” *kisha*, “very small.”

Adverbs can be intensified by doubling them, as in modern Italian. So “very quickly” can be expressed either as *famenifameni* or *kifameni*. “Much too quickly” = *kifamenikom*.

Adverbs that refer to time, such as *kari*, “today,” or *dashari*, “yesterday,” are usually placed at the beginning of a sentence, as in Japanese. Example: ***Kari*** *sasafallis in nomalieh sanalashalam*, “Today we’ll go for a swim in the river.”

Interrogative Adverbs:

Like Spanish, Meerkat makes a distinction between “regular” adverbs like *kassi*, “how,” and interrogative adverbs, which ask a question — *kassiba*, “how?” All interrogative adverbs in Meerkat are formed by adding the interrogative suffix *-ba* to the “regular” form, as shown in the chart below:

Regular Adverb		Interrogative Adverb	
how	<i>kassi</i>	how?	<i>kassiba?</i>
how much	<i>kassini</i>	how much?	<i>kassiniba</i>
when	<i>daki</i>	when?	<i>dakiba?</i>
where	<i>ani</i>	where?	<i>aniba?</i>
why	<i>fori</i>	why?	<i>foriba?</i>

WORD ORDER:

As noted above, because Meerkat nouns and adjectives are inflected, word order is more flexible than the English subject - verb - object convention. This means that no matter where a noun in the objective case may occur in a Meerkat sentence, we know it is having something done to it and is not itself the subject of the verb. Despite this flexibility, there are six general rules that will help you determine word order in Meerkat, as follows:

Six General Rules of Word Order:

1. Nouns in the subject or possessive case usually precede the verb.
2. Nouns in the possessive case follow the thing possessed. Example: *lasha sanalashi*, “river water” (literally “water of the river”).

3. Nouns or pronouns in the dative case usually precede nouns or pronouns in the objective case. Example: *Dakersani malla nomabanu*, “he gives the cat a fish.”
4. Adjectives usually follow the nouns they modify but can precede them for emphasis. Examples: *derek saban*, “a big tree,” but *saban derek*, “a BIG tree.”
5. Adverbs follow the verb they modify except for adverbs that refer to time. Those are placed at the beginning of the sentence. Example: *Kari sasafallisinn finnerekumo*, “Tomorrow we will go to the forest.”
6. With modal verbs such as *rieh*, “to be able,” *banieh*, “to be able,” *morieh*, “to want,” which are paired with an infinitive, the infinitive comes as the last element in the sentence. Example: *Sari nomabanu ameh*, “I can see a fish.”

VERBS:

Verbs describe an action or state of being, but also (a) place it in time, (b) specify who is acting (I, you, she), and (c) tell us something about whether this really happened or is just a possibility. That is to say, verbs do many different things. For that reason, they constitute the most complex part of many languages, including Meerkat. The following section on verbs will not be short, I’m afraid, but understanding Meerkat verbs in detail will go a long way toward helping you feel at home with the language.

For English speakers such as you, the most challenging feature of Meerkat verbs is how they incorporate pronoun and tense sign and negation (if any) into a single word. That can make these verbs seem to go on forever. One bit of good news is that there is only one main verb system (or “conjugation”), along with a dozen or so irregular verbs, most having to do with motion. Meerkat verbs have present, past, pluperfect, and future tenses, all formed by suffixes. Verbal prefixes show person (I, you, she/he/it) and number (singular or plural). Two other important prefixes are *lo-*, which negates the verb (like in Hebrew), and the imperative prefix *-hom* for commands. When negating a verb, the negative prefix precedes the personal prefix. Example: *losami*, “I don’t see.” Verbal suffixes show tense and mood. Example: *sami*, “I see,” *samilen*, “I saw.”

As I mentioned earlier, one useful way to think about Meerkat verbs is to imagine them as a set of LEGO bricks. The brick you start with is the stem, formed by removing the infinitive ending *-eh* from the verb. For example, the stem of the verb *fallieh*, “to go,” is *falli-*. If there is no final vowel before the *-eh* sign for the infinitive, the stem ends in “i.” Once you have the stem, you add more bricks onto the front or back or both—personal pronouns, tense markers, etc. “I go” is *safalli*; “I went” is *safallien*, “I didn’t go” is *losafallien*. The stem of irregular verbs such as *mini* (“to be”) or *wanu* (“to follow”) is the same as the infinitive, since they lack the normal *-eh* infinitive ending.

To show how this works in practice, let’s consider the verb *losafallidanin*, “I would not go,” which is composed of four separate parts—*lo* + *sa* + *falli* + *danin*. Here the negative *lo-* is followed by the first person singular pronoun *sa* for “I,” followed by *falli*, the root of the regular

verb *fallieh*, followed at the end by the conditional marker *-danin*. You can see this assembly process in the table below:

Negative prefix	Personal pronoun	Verb stem	Conditional suffix
<i>lo-</i>	<i>-sa-</i>	<i>-falli-</i>	<i>-danin</i>
“not”	“I”	“go”	“would”

Another example: *Lododorisinaba?* or “Won’t they want?” Here the verb is composed of the elements *lo + dodori + sin + aba*:

Negative prefix	Personal pronoun + verb	Future suffix	Interrogative marker
<i>lo-</i>	<i>-dodori-</i>	<i>-sin-</i>	<i>-aba</i>
“not”	“they want”	“will”	question mark

Finally, here is an example with the irregular verb *wanu*, “to follow.” The verb *tatawanulenen*, “you had followed,” is composed of the three elements *tata + wanu + lenen*.

Personal pronoun	Infinitive as verb stem	Pluperfect ending
<i>tata-</i>	<i>-wanu-</i>	<i>-lenen</i>
“you” plural	“ follow”	“had”

Now let’s take a closer look at how Meerkat verbs operate in detail.

Subject pronouns:

If verbs tell what is being done, then subject pronouns tell us who is doing it—“I,” “you,” “she,” etc. We commonly refer to “I” as the “first person,” “you” as the “second person,” “he, she, It, or they” as the “third person.” These persons can either be singular or plural. Thua the first person singulat is “I,” and the first person plural is “we.”

In Meerkat, the sign for the first-person singular is *sa-*, for the second person singular, *ta-* and for the 3d person singular, *da-*. Singular subject pronoun prefixes are duplicated to form the plurals. Example: *sami*, “I see,” *sasami*, “we see.” Here is the complete set:

Singular	Plural
<i>sa = I</i>	<i>sasa = we</i>
<i>ta = you</i>	<i>tata = you</i>
<i>da = he/she/it</i>	<i>dada = they</i>

Subject pronouns in Meerkat attach to the verb stem as prefixes and are used with verbs even if the verb has another, separate subject. Example: *Killiban **dapralli** dusanu*, “The bat catches the bug,” literally “The bat he catches the bug.” To catch = *prallieh*, he catches = *da + pralli*.

Most Meerkat verbs that involve an action affecting someone or something (i.e. “transitive” verbs) govern the objective case. A few, including *wanu*, govern the dative case. The verbs used with the dative are listed in Appendix II. A full conjugation of the verb *fallieh*, “to go,” can be found in Appendix I.

Infinitives:

In English, the sign of the infinitive is the preposition “to,” placed just before the verb, as in “to swim.” In Meerkat, as we have seen, the infinitive of regular verbs is formed by adding the suffix *-eh*. Example: *fallieh*, “to go.” Irregular verbs have an infinitive ending in a vowel and lack the normal ending *-eh*. Example: *killi*, “to fly.”

Negatives:

Negatives in Meerkat are formed with the prefix “*lo-*” (like Hebrew), pronounced with a long “o” like “bow.” Example: *losamori*, “I don’t want.”

Passive Voice:

The “passive” voice of a verb indicates the subject is on the receiving end of an action rather than doing something on its own. The passive voice in Meerkat is formed with the prefix *ter-*. Example: *tersami*, “I am seen,” from *sami*, “I see,” *lotersami*, “I am not seen.” Meerkat also has the special verb *simillieh*, similar to the Greek verb μάνθανω, meaning “I escape notice, I pass unseen.” (Naturally this similarity was of interest to that native Greek speaker, Hieronomos.)

Past and Future Tenses:

You have now seen how the present tense in Meerkat is formed by dropping the *-eh* ending of the infinitive and replacing it with the vowel *-i*. Meerkat has past, pluperfect, a future tenses—all indicated by adding suffixes to that stem. But unlike English, Meerkat has no perfect tense, as in “I have gone.”

The past tense in Meerkat is indicated by the suffix *-en* or *-len* (if the stem ends in a vowel). Example: *samilen*, “I saw.” The pluperfect suffix is *-lenen*. Example: *samilenen*, “I had seen.” The future suffix is *-sin*. Examples: *samisin*, “I will see,” *tersamisin*, “I will be seen,” *lotersamisin*, “I will not be seen,” *samorisin*, “I will want,” *losamorisin* “I won’t want.”

Asking Questions:

The interrogative suffix for Meerkat verbs is *-aba* or *-aban* (before a word beginning with a vowel). Example: *Tatoriaba?* “Do you want?”

Commands:

The imperative or command prefix is *hom-* (pronounced “home”) or *homa-* (if the verb begins with a vowel or “w”). Meerkat verbs retain their infinitive ending in the imperative. Example: *Hommareh!* “Look!”

The Subjunctive:

The subjunctive form of a verb expresses worry, doubt, or uncertainty. In other words, the speaker is making a guess about the actual course of things, as in, “It might rain tonight.” Of course, it also might *not* rain, so this uncertain situation calls for the subjunctive. The subjunctive suffix in Meerkat is *-beni*. Examples: *Kina safallibeni*, “Were I going,” and *shivani kebi diminibeni feran*, “I’m afraid he might be sick.” The subjunctive mood exists in Meerkat in the present tense only.

Conditional Statements:

As noted above, the subjunctive is used in certain “if...then” statements usually called “conditional” statements. These occur in situations when something hasn’t yet happened but *might* happen, given certain conditions. There are two kinds of the conditional statements in Meerkat, which I will call “certain” and “uncertain.” The subjunctive is used only in the second.

An example of the first, “certain conditional” would be “If I see you, I will wave.” There’s no doubt that I’ll wave if I see you, so in both English and Meerkat, the “if” clause verb is in the present indicative tense and the “result” or “then” clause verb is in the future indicative. Example: *Kina tanu sami, saporrisin*, “If I see you I’ll wave.” (*Porrieh*, “to wave”)

The second type of conditional sentence expresses doubt, uncertainty, or impossibility. These are statements of the type: “If I were you, I would go” (but I’m not you) or “if you were to leave, I would be sad” (though I don’t know if you’re leaving). Note that though we don’t usually think of English as having a subjunctive mood, it does—the past plural “were.”

Here the verb in the “if” clause changes from the indicative to the subjunctive, using the *-beni* suffix to indicate the doubt or impossibility. The following result or “then” clause takes the conditional ending *-danin*, meaning “would” in Meerkat. Example: *Safallibeni wasanin siminidanin*, “If I were to go, I would be careful” (though I might not be going). (*wasanin*, “careful”)

Indirect Discourse:

“Indirect discourse” means you are reporting what someone else said, as in “He told me that he might be late.” You are not making this statement yourself, but acting as a spokesperson for another. Earth languages handle indirect discourse in different ways. For instance, German uses a form of the subjunctive mood, while English uses the past tense. Meerkat solves the problem by reporting what the other person *actually* said in the present, as if the person or animal were there, speaking for themselves. Example: *Daranilen satalisin*, “He said he would come” (literally “He said, ‘I will come.’”)

Modal Verbs:

Modal verbs indicate possibility, intent, ability, or necessity and are usually paired with an infinitive that shows just what action is possible, intended, etc. Meerkat modal verbs include *rashanieh*, “to dare,” *nekanieh*, “to hope,” *banieh*, “to need,” and *morieh*, “to want.” All these verbs have regular conjugations and precede the infinitive they are paired with. Thus “I want” is *samori*, “you want” is *tamori*, “he/she/it wants” is *damori*, “we want” is *sasamori*, “you (plural) want” is *tatamori*, “they want” is *dadamori*. Example: **samori** *brikkeh*, “I want to sleep.”

However, there are three modal verbs in Meerkat—“might/may,” “should” and “must”—that occur not as separate words but as suffixes added to the verb stem. The suffix for “might/may” is *-kat*. Example: *safallikat*, “I might go.” The suffix for “should” is *-bat*. Example: *safallibat*, “I should go.” The suffix for “must” is *-niat*. Example: *safalliniat*, “I must go.” Note that the tense markers precede modal suffixes, so “I had to go” is *safallitenniat* and not *safalliniaten*.

Irregular Verbs:

As mentioned earlier, Meerkat has a very few irregular verbs that differ from “regular” verbs simply in that they lack the normal *-eh* infinitive ending. Instead, their stem is the same as the infinitive and remains unchanged when suffix markers are added.

The most common irregular verb in Meerkat is *mini*, “to be,” which also has a different set of pronoun prefixes, substituting “i” for “a.” It is declined as follows: *simini*, *timini*, *dimini*, *sisimini*, *titimini*, *didimini*. Example: **Sisimini** *aramon*, “We are friends.”

“There is” and “there are” in Meerkat are derived from *mini*: *minin*, “there is” and *miminin*, “there are.” *Minin* and *miminin* are the **only** Meerkat verbs that do not add subject prefixes. Example: *Sani miminin feenon sabanon derekon*. “Here there are many big trees.”

Most other irregular verbs in Meerkat (besides *mini*) concern motion. They include *wanu*, “to follow,” *keru*, “to uncover,” and *killi*, “to fly.” All take the normal pronoun prefixes.

The “Inceptive” Prefix:

Meerkat has an “inceptive” verbal prefix indicating that the verb’s subject is initiating or beginning an action, similar to the Russian inceptive prefix “за-.” The Meerkat prefix is *ana-* or

an- (if the verb begins with a vowel) and precedes the personal pronoun. Example: *ana + safalli* = *anasafalli*, “I’m starting to go.”

The “Continuing Action” Prefix:

Meerkat also has a prefix indicating continuing action, which is *bara-* or *bar-* (if the verb begins with a vowel). Like *ana-*, it precedes the personal pronoun. Example: *bara + sawanu* = *barasawanu*, “I keep on following.”

Present Participles:

A participle in English is formed by adding “-ing” to the first person singular of the verb as a suffix. It connotes the state of something happening as a process—walking, flying, sleeping. Participles in Meerkat work the same way. They are formed from the stem of the verb with the prefix *kera-* and with the ending *-an* and are declined like nouns or adjectives. Example: *kerafallian*, “going.” Participles are declined exactly like adjectives. Example: *Sami killibanu kerfallianu*, “I see a flying bat.” Like in English (and Japanese), it is possible to construct a “present progressive” tense in Meerkat by pairing the participle with the verb “to be.” Example: *Killiban kerakillian dimini*. “The bat is flying.”

Politeness Levels:

There are two politeness levels in Meerkat—informal and formal—indicated by whether you use the singular or plural second person form of the verb. In Meerkat, as in French and Russian, the plural form of “you” (i.e. the second person plural) is used for formal situations, while the second person singular (also “you” in English) is used for familiar or intimate ones. This differs from English usage, where only one form of “you” exists and is used both for one and several people. In addition to these two forms, Meerkat (like German) also has an intimate plural pronoun: *lala*. So the polite form of “you go” is *tatafalli*, whether one or several animals or birds are involved. But “you go” (familiar singular) is *tafalli*, and “you go” (familiar plural) is *lalafalli*.

PRONOUNS:

Pronouns provide a substitute for nouns. Usually (though not always), the noun to which they refer precedes them in the sentence. However, there are several different kinds of pronouns, including (1) those used to refer to people or things (“relative”); (2) those used to point to something (“demonstrative”); (3) those used to refer to oneself (“reflexive”); (4) those used to indicate possession (“possessive”); or (5) those used for emphasis (“disjunctive”). All Meerkat pronouns are declined like normal nouns and adjectives, and thus have four separate possible endings (eight if you count both singular and plural).

Relative Pronouns:

Relative pronouns refer to a noun that occurs earlier in the sentence, often called the “antecedent.” They agree with the antecedent in number (singular or plural), but not always in case, since they may play a different role in the sentence (as in the second example below).

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
	Who	Who	What	What
Nominative	<i>kem</i>	<i>kemen</i>	<i>tem</i>	<i>temen</i>
Genitive	<i>kemi</i>	<i>kemeni</i>	<i>temi</i>	<i>temeni</i>
Dative	<i>kema</i>	<i>kemena</i>	<i>tema</i>	<i>temena</i>
Accusative	<i>kemu</i>	<i>kemenu</i>	<i>temu</i>	<i>temenu</i>

Examples: (1) *Malla, **kem** sukkari datalisen, nomabanu dakari.* “The cat who came yesterday likes fish.” (2) *Malla, **kema** nomabanu sasakersanilen, dimini suwala.* “The cat we gave a fish to is happy.” (*Kersanieh*, “to give;” *nomaban*, “fish” — literally “swimming thing;” *suwala*— “happy”)

Demonstrative Pronouns:

The demonstrative pronouns “this” and “that” serve to point something out.

	This	These	That	Those
Nominative	<i>mar</i>	<i>maren</i>	<i>dar</i>	<i>daren</i>
Genitive	<i>mari</i>	<i>mareni</i>	<i>dari</i>	<i>dareni</i>
Dative	<i>mara</i>	<i>marena</i>	<i>dara</i>	<i>darena</i>
Accusative	<i>maru</i>	<i>marenu</i>	<i>daru</i>	<i>darenu</i>

Example: *Tamiaba **darenu** derekonu?* — “Do you see those trees?”

Personal Pronouns:

We have already met the personal pronouns used with verbs, all in the nominative case. But personal pronouns are also used in other ways and change their endings accordingly.

	Singular		Plural	
	I	You	We	You
Nominative	<i>sa</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>tasa</i>	<i>tata</i>
Genitive	<i>sani</i>	<i>tani</i>	<i>sasani</i>	<i>tatani</i>
Dative	<i>sana</i>	<i>tana</i>	<i>sasana</i>	<i>tatana</i>
Accusative	<i>sanu</i>	<i>tanu</i>	<i>sasanu</i>	<i>tatanu</i>

	Singular	Plural
	He / She / It	They
Nominative	<i>da</i>	<i>dada</i>
Genitive	<i>dani</i>	<i>dadani</i>
Dative	<i>dana</i>	<i>dadana</i>
Accusative	<i>danu</i>	<i>dadanu</i>

Example: *Sakersanilen **dana** nomabanu*, "I gave the fish to him."

Reflexive Personal Pronouns:

These are pronouns used when the subject of the sentence is the same as the object. Example: *sawanniesin **samanu***, "I will help myself."

	Singular		Plural	
	I	You	We	You
Nominative	<i>saman</i>	<i>taman</i>	<i>sasaman</i>	<i>tataman</i>
Genitive	<i>samani</i>	<i>tamani</i>	<i>sasamani</i>	<i>tatamani</i>
Dative	<i>samana</i>	<i>tamana</i>	<i>sasamana</i>	<i>tatamana</i>
Accusative	<i>samanu</i>	<i>tamanu</i>	<i>sasmaanu</i>	<i>tatamanu</i>

	Singular	Plural
	He / She / It	They
Nominative	<i>daman</i>	<i>dadaman</i>
Genitive	<i>damani</i>	<i>dadamani</i>
Dative	<i>damana</i>	<i>dadamana</i>
Accusative	<i>damanu</i>	<i>dadamanu</i>

Disjunctive (Emphatic) Personal Pronouns:

To draw attention to a pronoun, Meerkat has a disjunctive or emphatic form, made by adding a final *-mi* to the pronoun in question. The disjunctive form emphasizes agency or direct involvement, like the Greek *οὗτος*, "I myself." The emphasized pronoun precedes the verb, often as the first element of the sentence. In this case, the verb goes to the end. Example: ***Sami** sanalashu samilen*, "I saw the river myself."

	Singular			Plural		
	1 st person	2 nd person	3d person	1 st person	2 nd person	3d person
Regular	sa	ta	da	sasa	tata	dada
Emphatic	sami	tami	dami	sasami	tatami	dadami

Possessive Pronouns:

Possessive pronouns show to whom or to what something belongs. In Meerkat, these pronouns take the same form as personal subject pronouns and are inserted as prefixes to the noun they modify. As in Spanish, they remain unchanged no matter what the case of the noun they modify. Before nouns beginning with vowel, the pronoun adds an “n.” Examples: *saderek*, “my tree,” *samilen tashabanu*, “I saw your child.”

Indefinite Pronouns:

Indefinite pronouns refer to “someone” or “something” without being specific. Meerkat makes no grammatical distinction between animals and humans (humans are animals, after all) and this broad usage extends to insects and plants as well—in sum, all living things, conceived of as a single subject category. Thus, the indefinite pronoun *kem*, “some/any living thing,” can refer to either an otter, a parrot, a human, a butterfly, or a tree. *Dakkari samilen kemu lashomminalam*. “I saw something alive in the swamp yesterday.” (*Lashommin*, “swamp,” literally “water place.”)

	Some/any living thing		Some/any nonliving thing	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	<i>Kellem</i>	<i>Kelemen</i>	<i>telem</i>	<i>Telemen</i>
Genitive	<i>Kelemi</i>	<i>Kelemen</i>	<i>telemi</i>	<i>Telemen</i>
Dative	<i>Kelema</i>	<i>Kelemena</i>	<i>telema</i>	<i>Telemena</i>
Accusative	<i>Kelemu</i>	<i>Kelemenu</i>	<i>telemu</i>	<i>Telemenu</i>

Indefinite Relative Pronouns:

The indefinite relative pronoun, meaning “whoever” or “whatever” is, if anything, even more “indefinite” than the preceding indefinite pronoun. It is often used without an antecedent. Example: *Sakersanielen peshamu dokema sanu damorilen*. I gave a fruit to whoever wanted it.

	Whoever	Whatever
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	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	<i>Dakem</i>	<i>dakemen</i>	<i>Dakidem</i>	<i>Dakidemen</i>
Genitive	<i>Dakemi</i>	<i>dakemeni</i>	<i>Dakidemi</i>	<i>Dakidemeni</i>
Dative	<i>Dakema</i>	<i>dakemena</i>	<i>Dakidema</i>	<i>Dakidemena</i>
Accusative	<i>Dakemu</i>	<i>dakemenu</i>	<i>Dakidemu</i>	<i>Dakidemenu</i>

Interrogative Pronouns:

Who? *kemba?*

What? *lokiba?*

Negative Pronouns:

Instead of referring to “someone” or “anyone,” a negative pronoun refers to “no one.”

Negative pronouns in Meerkat are used only in reference to living things. The Meerkat negative for inanimate things, *loban* or “nothing,” is not declined. Examples: *Samilen loban finderrekalam*, “I saw nothing in the forest,” but *samilen lokemu finderrrekalam*, “I saw no one in the forest.”

	No one	
	Singular	Plural
Nominative	<i>Lokem</i>	<i>Lokemen</i>
Genitive	<i>Lokemi</i>	<i>Lokemeni</i>
Dative	<i>Lokema</i>	<i>Lokemena</i>
Accusative	<i>Lokemu</i>	<i>Lokemenu</i>

Example: *Lokemen sani nomabanu dadakari*, “No one here likes fish.”

Reciprocal Pronouns:

These pronouns refer to an exchange between two or more living or nonliving things.

	Each Other	One Another
Nominative	<i>Maballin</i>	<i>kaballin</i>
Genitive	<i>Maballini</i>	<i>kaballini</i>
Dative	<i>Maballina</i>	<i>kaballina</i>
Accusative	<i>Maballinu</i>	<i>kaballinu</i>

Example: *Mallaron maballina dadarani*, “The cats are talking to one another.”

CONJUNCTIONS:

Coordinating conjunctions, such as “and” or “but,” link different parts of a sentence together. Other conjunctions like “because,” termed “subordinating conjunctions,” provide logical links between one thought or action and another within the same sentence. Example: “He brought an umbrella to school because it was going to rain.” Though we seldom pay them great attention, both types of conjunctions turn out to be extremely useful.

Because so many animals and birds on Beyond are intelligent, it is especially important for you to learn the conjunctions associated with logical reasoning such as “because,” “but,” “nevertheless,” or “therefore.” If you are arguing with a meerkat or a parrot, they will expect you to make a good case, using logic rather than relying on mere assertion.

Conjunctions in Meerkat are placed in the sentence in much the same position as in English, linking one part to another. However, a few conjunctions, especially “because,” also function as prepositions. Think of the phrase “because of the rain” in the sentence “Because of the rain he stayed home.” In such cases, Meerkat requires the noun (“rain”) to be in the possessive case. The word for “because,” *pandak*, follows the noun. Example: ***Kamalashi pandak moranalam daberemenielen***, “She stayed home because of the rain.” This is similar to the Greek ἕνεκα, “for the sake of,” which also takes the genitive case.

Here are the most common Meerkat conjunctions.

And	<i>kha</i> (soft guttural sound, like Scottish <i>loch</i>)
As	<i>keli</i>
Because	<i>pandak</i>
But	<i>tor</i>
Either	<i>mellen</i>
For	<i>nari</i>
Just as	<i>rakeli</i>
Neither	<i>lomellen</i>
Nor	<i>loellen</i>
Not only	<i>losamit</i>
Only	<i>samit</i>
Or	<i>ellen</i>
So	<i>tari</i>
That	<i>kebi</i>
Therefore	<i>kannari</i>
What	<i>loki</i>
When	<i>daki</i>
Where	<i>ani</i>
Whether	<i>sari</i>
Yet	<i>sator</i>

PREPOSITIONS:

Prepositions localize an object or an action. "The book is on the table." Where is the book? The preposition "on" helps tell us. In Meerkat, most prepositions take the dative case. One-syllable prepositions are attached to the noun they modify, while those of two or more syllables follow the noun as independent words. Example: *finerek + a + lam* or *finerekalam*, "in the forest" but *finereka sabashen*, "around the forest." Prepositions that imply motion toward a destination, including *domor*, "into," take the objective case. Example: *findereku domor*, "into the forest." Prepositions implying motion away require the genitive case. Example: *findereki dobor*, "out of the forest."

Prepositions taking the genitive case:

Away	<i>dafor</i>
From	<i>safor</i>
Out (of)	<i>dobor</i>

Prepositions taking the dative case:

After	<i>umma</i>
Around	<i>sabashen</i>
At	<i>dan</i>
Back	<i>roshen</i>
Backwards	<i>rosheni</i>
Before, in front of	<i>dashen</i>
Behind	<i>kishen</i>
Beside	<i>doshen</i>
Beyond	<i>mashen</i>
In	<i>lam</i>
On	<i>dor</i>
Over	<i>donom</i>
Under	<i>sori</i>
With	<i>tum</i>

Prepositions taking the accusative case:

Down (from)	<i>fodor</i>
Into	<i>domor</i>
Through	<i>dori</i>
To	<i>do</i>
Toward	<i>dasheni</i>

THE MEERKAT NUMBER SYSTEM

The Meerkat number system is based on tens, like ours, perhaps because meerkats on Beyond have ten digits (including opposable thumbs), though those on Earth have only eight. This is another example of how evolution on both planets has taken slightly divergent paths.

Numbers in most languages, including Meerkat, are of two kinds: “cardinal” numbers like “one, two, three,” and “ordinal numbers,” which rank objects, like “first, second, third.” Meerkat numbers of both kinds are invariable and do not decline.

Meerkat does not use numbers beyond a thousand, since to most animals and birds even that seems an impossibly large number. Instead, they generally use *kimon*, meaning “very many.”

Cardinal numbers:

One	<i>kaban</i>
Two	<i>oni</i>
Three	<i>meni</i>
Four	<i>sami</i>
Five	<i>ken</i>
Six	<i>tagan</i>
Seven	<i>tassan</i>
Eight	<i>tillan</i>
Nine	<i>tisan</i>
Ten	<i>rok</i>
Eleven	<i>rokaban</i>
Twelve	<i>rokkoni</i>
Thirteen	<i>rokkeni</i>
Fourteen	<i>rokkami</i>
Fifteen	<i>rokken</i>
Sixteen	<i>rokagan</i>
Seventeen	<i>rokassan</i>
Eighteen	<i>rokillan</i>
Nineteen	<i>rokisan</i>
Twenty	<i>onirok</i>
Twenty-one	<i>onirokkaban</i>
Twenty-two	<i>onirokkoni</i>
One hundred	<i>kikaban</i>
Two hundred	<i>kikkoni</i>
Three hundred	<i>kimeni</i>
Four hundred	<i>kisami</i>

Five hundred *kikken*
 One thousand. *tikaban*

Ordinal numbers:

Ordinal numbers are formed by adding the prefix *da-* or *dan-* to the cardinal number. So:

First	<i>dakaban</i>
Second	<i>danoni</i>
Third	<i>dameni</i>
Fourth	<i>dasami</i>
Fifth	<i>daken</i>
Sixth	<i>dakagan</i>
Seventh	<i>datassan</i>
Eighth	<i>datillan</i>
Ninth	<i>datisan</i>
Tenth	<i>darok</i>

APPENDIX I: VERB CHARTS

1.Regular Meerkat Verb Tenses and Moods

I have used the verb *fallieh*, “to go,” as a model.

	Indicative	Conditional	Subjunctive	Infinitive	Participle (declined like adjectives)
Present	<i>safalli</i> <i>tafalli</i> <i>dafalli</i> <i>sasafalli</i> <i>tatafalli</i> <i>dadafalli</i>	<i>safallidanin</i> <i>tafallidanin</i> <i>dafallidanin</i> <i>sasafallidanin</i> <i>tatafallidanin</i> <i>dadafallidanin</i>	<i>safallibeni</i> <i>tafallibeni</i> <i>dafallibeni</i> <i>sasafallibeni</i> <i>tatafallibeni</i> <i>dadafallibeni</i>	<i>fallieh</i>	Singular
					<i>kerfallian</i> <i>kerfalliani</i> <i>kerfalliana</i> <i>kerfallianu</i>
Future	<i>Safallisin</i> <i>tafallisin</i> <i>dafallisin</i> <i>sasafallisin</i> <i>tatafallisin</i>	<i>safallisindanin</i> <i>tafallisindanin</i> <i>dafallisindanin</i> <i>sasafallisindanin</i> <i>tatafallisindanin</i>		Imperative	
				<i>homafallieh</i>	

Past	<i>sawanuen tawanuen dawanuen sasawanuen tatawanuen dadawanuen</i>	<i>sawanuendanin tawanuendanin dawanuendanin sasawanuendanin tatawanuendanin dadawanuendanin</i>			
Pluperfect	<i>sawanuenen tawanuenen dawanuenen sasawanuenen tatawanuenen dadawanuenen</i>				

3.Meerkat Verb *Mini*, “To be”

	Indicative	Conditional	Subjunctive	Infinitive	Participle (declined like adjectives)
Present	<i>simini</i> <i>timini</i> <i>dimini</i> <i>sisimini</i> <i>titimini</i> <i>didimini</i>	<i>siminidanin</i> <i>timinidanin</i> <i>diminidanin</i> <i>sisiminidanin</i> <i>titiminidanin</i> <i>didiminidanin</i>	<i>siminibeni</i> <i>timinibeni</i> <i>diminibeni</i> <i>sisiminibeni</i> <i>titiminibeni</i> <i>didiminibeni</i>	<i>mini</i>	Singular <i>kerminian</i> <i>kerminiani</i> <i>kerminiana</i> <i>kerminianu</i>
					Plural <i>kerminianon</i> <i>kerminianoni</i> <i>klerminianona</i> <i>kerminianonu</i>
Future	<i>siminisin</i> <i>timinisin</i> <i>diminisins</i> <i>sisiminisin</i> <i>titiminisin</i> <i>didiminisin</i>	<i>siminisindanin</i> <i>timinisindanin</i> <i>diminisindanin</i> <i>sisiminisindanin</i> <i>titiminisindanin</i> <i>didiminisindanin</i>		Imperative	
				<i>hommini</i>	
Past	<i>Siminilen</i> <i>timinilen</i> <i>diminilen</i> <i>sisiminilen</i>	<i>siminiendanin</i> <i>timiniendanin</i> <i>diminiendanin</i> <i>sisiminiendanin</i>			

	<i>titiminilen</i> <i>didiminilen</i>	<i>titiminiendanin</i> <i>didiminiendanin</i>			
Pluperfect	<i>siminilenen</i> <i>timinilenen</i> <i>diminilenen</i> <i>sisiminilenen</i> <i>titiminilenen</i> <i>didiminilenen</i>				

APPENDIX II: VERBS TAKING THE DATIVE CASE

The most important verbs used with the dative case are: *wanu*, “to follow,” *wahannieh*, “to help,” *kerrieh*, “to address, speak to,” *palieh*, “to thank,” *kersanieh*, “to give,” *kollanieh*, “to happen to.” Example: ***Dana*** *dakollanisen*, “It happened to him.”

APPENDIX III: MEERKAT ALARM CALLS

Meerkats on Beyond must be on guard against enemies and have developed a large repertoire of specific alarm calls, which alert their fellow meerkats to a particular danger—for instance, a snake or bird of prey. Other animals on Behond have alarm calls in their own languages, of course. But what if they want to warn a different animal from themselves of impending danger? Then they will use one of four of the meerkat alarm calls that are in general use:

Beware of a human!	<i>churrr!</i>
Beware of danger in the sky!	<i>kamani!</i>
Beware of something on the ground!	<i>feesali!</i>
Beward of something In the water!	<i>lashali!</i>

ENGLISH-MEERKAT DICTIONARY

This list of common Meerkat words is by no means complete, but it should still be enough to allow you to communicate well enough with the meerkats and other animals on Beyond. In case you wonder, the total number of words in Meerkat is about 150,000—roughly the same as

French. By comparison, English boasts between 600,000 and a million words, which means it has one of the largest vocabularies of any of Earth's major languages. So just be glad you learned it as a child. 😊

A

To be able	<i>rieh</i>
	I can = <i>sari</i>
After	<i>umma</i>
Alone	<i>prana</i>
And	<i>kha</i> (soft guttural sound, like Scottish <i>loch</i>)
Also	<i>alan</i>
And	<i>kha</i> (soft, guttural sound, like Scottish <i>loch</i>)
Animal	<i>galan</i>
Another	<i>kaballin</i>
Around	<i>sabashen</i>
As	<i>keli</i>
Away (from)	<i>dafor</i>

B

Back	<i>roshen</i>
Backwards	<i>rosheni</i>
Baby	<i>shasha</i>
Baby, boy	<i>shabaka</i>
Baby, girl	<i>shahaka</i>
Bad	<i>kremmit</i>
Bat (animal)	<i>killiban</i>
Bear	<i>ranak</i>
Beautiful	<i>sirinasa</i>
Beauty	<i>sirina</i>
Because	<i>pandak</i>
Bed, sleeping	
place	<i>brikoma</i>
Before	<i>dashen</i>
Behind	<i>kishen</i>
Beside	<i>roshen</i>
Big	<i>saban</i>
Bird (animal)	<i>sarani</i>
Bird (lang.)	<i>wheet, wheet</i> — a double whistle
Blue	<i>amal</i>
To be born	<i>kisurieh</i>

Both	<i>suma</i>
Boy	<i>bakasha</i>
Barrier	<i>dak</i>
Barrier Cliffs	<i>dakentalon</i>
Book	<i>biblin</i> (from Greek βιβλίον)
Branch	<i>dereki</i>
Brave	<i>rashat</i>
Bravery	<i>rashalan</i>
Bush	<i>deresha</i> ("small tree")
But	<i>tor</i>

C

Cage	<i>shoritok</i> (from Basque <i>txoritoki</i>)
To call	<i>kabanneh</i>
Call n.	<i>kaban</i>
Careful	<i>wasanin</i>
Carnivore	<i>kavarrog</i>
Cat (animal)	<i>malla</i>
Cat (language)	<i>a purring sound</i>
To catch	<i>prallieh</i>
Child	<i>shaban</i> ("small thing")
Cliff	<i>kental</i>
To climb	<i>baranieh</i>
Close	<i>salla</i>
Clothing	<i>shaski</i> (loan word from <i>jazki</i> in Basque)
Cloud	<i>mafa</i>
Cloudy	<i>mafalla</i>
Cold	<i>forin</i>
Color	<i>sumo</i>
To come	<i>talieh</i>
To continue	<i>perieh</i>
To cook	<i>apalleh</i> (loan word from Basque, <i>apailatu</i>)
Courage	<i>rashatalan</i>
Cowardice	<i>shivannalan</i>
Cowardly	<i>shivan</i>
To crawl	<i>rapolieh</i>

D

Danger	<i>kremmiten</i>
To dare	<i>rashanieh</i>
Dare n.	<i>rashan</i>
Dark	<i>mormora</i>
To decide	<i>pekalieh</i>
Decision	<i>pekalien</i>
To do,	<i>kashieh</i>
make	I make = <i>sakashi</i>
Desert	<i>samun</i>
To die	<i>malleh</i>
Difficult	<i>loturi</i>
To discover	<i>resanieh</i>
Discovery	<i>resanillan</i>
To divide	<i>kashanalakeh</i>
Division	<i>kashanalakh</i>
Down n.	<i>killakal</i>
Down (from)	<i>fomor</i>
Downy	<i>killakalla</i>
To drink	<i>lokharieh</i>
Drink n.	<i>lokharan</i>
Dry	<i>khari</i>
Drought	<i>kharillan</i>

E

Each	<i>mara</i>
Early	<i>ader</i>
Early morning	<i>simmersan</i> ("little morning")
Earth (soil)	<i>tassa</i>
Earth (planet)	<i>Gaia</i> (loan word direct from Greek Γαῖα)
Easy	<i>turi</i>
Easily	<i>turilla</i>
To eat	<i>kavalieh</i>
Eater	<i>kavalior</i>
Either	<i>mellen</i>
Either...or	<i>mellen...ellen</i>
Enemy	<i>Kkkhhhh</i> —guttural noise like clearing your throat
Enough	<i>posso</i> (follows adjective)
To escape	
physically	<i>sulinieh</i>
To escape	
notice, not be seen	<i>simillieh</i>
Evil adj.	<i>kipemmit</i>

Evil n.	<i>kipemmittakh</i>
Eye	<i>bamen</i>
Excuse me	<i>sunden</i>

F

To fall	<i>warakkeh</i>
Far	<i>pree</i>
Far away	<i>losalla</i>
Fast	<i>famen</i>
Father	<i>borasa</i> or familiarly, <i>boba</i>
Fear	<i>shivash</i>
To fear, be scared	<i>shivaneh</i>
To feel	<i>bavieh</i>
Female	<i>hakala</i>
Fifth	<i>daken</i>
To find	<i>resamieh</i>
To finish	<i>keleneh</i>
First	<i>dakaban</i>
Fish	<i>nomaban</i> ("swimming thing")
Five	<i>ken</i>
Flower	<i>sana</i>
Flower petal	<i>maneren</i> ("flower leaf")
To fly	<i>killi</i>
Fog	<i>kiria</i>
Food	<i>kavalikan</i>
Foot	<i>dola</i> (plural, <i>dolaron</i>)
For	<i>nari</i>
Forest	<i>finnerek</i> ("many trees")
Fortress	<i>bassiri</i> (from Basque, <i>babesiri</i>)
Forward	<i>dashen</i>
Four	<i>sami</i>
Fourth	<i>dasami</i>
Friend	<i>aram</i>
From	<i>safor</i>
Fruit	<i>pesha</i>
Fun (adj.)	<i>khabisi</i>
Fun (noun)	<i>khabi</i>
Fur	<i>ushaban</i>

G

Gift	<i>kersan</i>
To give	<i>kersanieh</i>
To give birth	<i>kerisurieh</i>
Girl	<i>hakasha</i>
To go	<i>fallieh</i>
Good adj.	<i>kimmidan</i>
Good n.	<i>kimmit</i>
Golden	<i>fasan</i>
Green	<i>sumal</i>
Ground	<i>feesa</i>

H

He, she, it	<i>da</i>
To have	<i>halieh</i>
To happen (to)	<i>kollanieh</i>
Head	<i>toran</i>
Headfirst	<i>torandakaban</i>
To hear	<i>itteh</i>
Hearing	<i>ittebian</i>
Heavy	<i>voron</i>
Height	<i>sheenalan</i>
Hello (at a distance)	<i>whee-oo</i> — a whistle
Hello (close)	<i>meshi</i>
Help!	<i>waha!</i>
Help n.	<i>wahannakh</i>
To help	<i>wahanneh</i>
Helper	<i>wahannor</i>
Herbivore	<i>kavalibin</i> (“plant eater”)
Here	<i>sani</i>
High	<i>sheena</i>
Hoggar	<i>kremmiban</i>
To hold	<i>braneh</i>
Home	<i>moran</i>
At home	<i>moranalam</i>
House	<i>esha</i> (compare modern Basque, <i>etxe</i>)
How (adv.)	<i>kassi</i> (included as prefix to word it modifies)
How?	<i>kassiba</i>

However	<i>logaleh</i>
Human	<i>nolen</i>
Humid, sultry	<i>wesha</i>
Hundred	<i>kikaban</i>
Hunger	<i>bavaka</i>
Hungry	<i>bavakala</i>
To hunt	<i>brekeleh</i>
	I hunt, <i>sabrekeli</i>
Hunter	<i>brekelor</i>
Hunting	<i>brekelakh</i>

I

I	<i>sa</i>
If	<i>kina</i>
Important	<i>sarasha</i>
In	<i>lam</i> (takes dative case and follows noun as a suffix)
Insect	<i>dusa</i>
Intelligent	<i>arassan</i>
Into	<i>domor</i>
It is	<i>nimini</i>

J

Journey n.	<i>fallakh</i>
To journey	<i>fallakheh</i>
Just as	<i>rakeli</i>

K

To kill	<i>roggeh</i>
King, male Leader	<i>rabaka</i>
Knife	<i>aisho</i> (compare Basque "aixto")

L

Language	<i>ranerrakh</i>
Leaf	<i>seren</i>
Leafy	<i>serenella</i>
Least	<i>samenen</i>
Life	<i>suribian</i>
Less	<i>samen</i>
Light	<i>dassan</i>
To like,	
Enjoy	<i>kariah</i>
Little	<i>sim</i>
To live	<i>suribieh</i>
Long	<i>omana</i>
Lightstone	<i>fanolissa</i> (loan word from Greek Φανολιφος)
To look	<i>marreh</i>
Look!	<i>hommareh!</i>
Lost	<i>lommina</i>
Love n.	<i>mirinuma</i>
Lovely	<i>mirinumala</i>
To love	<i>mirinumeh</i>

M

To make, do	<i>kashieh</i>
Male	<i>bakala</i>
Man	<i>baka</i>
Many	<i>mon</i>
Meat	<i>rog</i>
Meerkat	<i>sabalidar</i> ("great traveler")
Mist, light	<i>vessa</i>
Mist, heavy	<i>voronessa</i>
Misty	<i>vessala</i>
Moon	<i>sindassan</i>
More	<i>tanen</i>
Morning	<i>persa</i>
Most	<i>tanenen</i>
Mother	<i>harasa</i> or familiarly, <i>hara</i>
To move	<i>erreh</i>

N

Name	<i>beren</i>
Near	<i>tabor</i>
To need	<i>messeh</i>
	I need <i>samessi</i>
Neither...nor	<i>lomellen...loellen</i>
New	<i>kimidin</i>
No	a high-pitched barking sound
No longer	<i>lodarien</i>
Not only...	
but also	<i>Llsamit...toralan</i>
Next	<i>apin</i>

O

Old	<i>paman</i>
On	<i>dor</i>
One	<i>kaban</i>
One another	<i>kaballin</i>
Only	<i>samit</i>
Or	<i>ellen</i>
Other	<i>lomallin</i>
Out (of)	<i>dobor</i> (with possessive case)
Outside	<i>bawan</i>
Over	<i>donom</i>
Owl	<i>simbrekor</i> ("silent hunter")

P

Parrot	<i>kerfarani</i> ("wise bird")
Piece	<i>nalak</i>
Pig	grunting sound
Place	<i>ommin</i>
Plant	<i>bina</i>
Play	<i>hepparak</i> (loan word from Otter)
Playful	<i>hepparakala</i>
Pleased	<i>mutalla</i>
Pleasure	<i>muta</i>
To prefer	<i>shirinumeh</i>
Preference	<i>shirinuban</i>

Q

Queen,	
female leader	<i>rashaka</i>
Quiet n.	<i>shimia</i>
Quiet adj	<i>shimiala</i>

R

Rain	<i>kamalasha</i> (“sky water”)
Ready	<i>raka</i>
Red	<i>malok</i>
Red Desert	<i>sammalok</i> (“big red”)
To repeat	<i>papanieh</i>
To rescue	<i>forunkashieh</i> (“make safe”)
Rest n.	<i>fee</i> — falling tone, like air being let out of a tire.
To rest	<i>feeleh</i>
To return	<i>roshefilieh</i> (“travel back”)
Ripe	<i>mosha</i>
To rise	<i>menieh</i>
River	<i>sanalash</i> (“big water”)
Rock	<i>koren</i>
To run	<i>feronieh</i>

S

Sad	<i>sairan</i>
Safe	<i>forun</i>
Safety	<i>forunnalan</i>
Same	<i>masin</i>
Sand	<i>samun</i>
Scent	<i>ishalan</i>
Secret	<i>similla</i>
Second	<i>danani</i>
To See	<i>ameh</i>
	I see <i>sami</i>
Shadow	<i>sidona</i>
Shadow,	
predator	<i>khremmona</i>
Sharp	<i>fiska</i>

Short	<i>ben</i>
Sick	<i>feran</i>
Sight	<i>amennalan</i>
Silent	<i>simma</i>
Since	<i>kaleh</i>
Sky	<i>kaman</i>
Sleep n.	<i>brikkian</i>
To sleep	<i>brikkieh</i>
Slow	<i>saramen</i>
Slowly	<i>saramenee</i>
Small	<i>sha</i> (<i>shan</i> before a vowel)
Smart	<i>toraniska</i>
To smell	<i>lsheh</i>
Smoke	<i>khassili</i>
Snake	<i>rabon</i>
To sneeze	<i>rashemeh</i>
So	<i>tari</i>
Soft	<i>foma</i>
Soon	<i>piri</i>
To speak	<i>ranieh</i>
Speech	<i>raniakh</i>
Speed	<i>famennakh</i>
To squeak	<i>khikettieh</i>
Stair	<i>krik</i> (stairs: <i>Krikon</i>)
To startle	<i>firitembeh</i>
To stay,	
Remain	<i>beremenieh</i>
Steep	<i>kenta</i>
Strong,	
powerful	<i>ronomen</i>
Sun	<i>sadassan</i>
Sunrise	<i>dassamen</i>
To swim	<i>nomieh</i>

T

Tall	<i>shuna</i>
Tangle	<i>shinara</i>
Tangled	<i>shinarella</i>
Ten	<i>rok</i>
Tenth	<i>darok</i>
Thanks	<i>pali</i>
Thank you	<i>palipali</i>

That	<i>kebi</i>
There	<i>tani</i>
Therefore	<i>kannari</i>
They, them	<i>dada</i>
Thin	<i>shamala</i>
Thing (living)	<i>ban</i>
Thing (non- Living)	<i>kan</i>
Third	<i>dameni</i>
Three	<i>meni</i>
Through	<i>dori</i>
Time	<i>denbora</i>
Tiny	<i>kisim</i>
To, towards	<i>bri</i> (with objective case)
Today	<i>kari</i>
Tomorrow	<i>ukkari</i>
Too	<i>kom</i>
Tool	<i>kashikan</i>
Tooth	<i>kirga</i>
Toward	<i>dasheni</i>
To travel	<i>filieh</i>
Traveler	<i>filidar</i>
Trap	<i>lako</i> (compare Basque, “lakio”)
Tree	<i>derek</i>
Tree, large	<i>megalodendron</i> (from the Greek mega, “big,” and dendron, “tree”)
To tremble	<i>babasieh</i>
Twig	<i>bori</i>
Two	<i>oni</i>

U

Under	<i>sori</i>
Until	<i>aleh</i>
Upside down	<i>pressim</i>

V

Very	<i>ki</i> — combines with adjective as prefix, e.g. “kisaan,” “very big.”
Very many	<i>kimon</i>

W

To walk	<i>mallu</i>
Walk n.	<i>mallesi</i>
To want	<i>morieh</i>
	I want = <i>samori</i>
Warm	<i>uma</i>
Warmth	<i>umanalan</i>
Water	<i>lasha</i>
Watery	<i>lashala</i>
We, Us	<i>sasa</i>
Weak	<i>lomen</i>
Weapon	<i>roggeban</i> (“killing thing”)
What	<i>loki</i>
What?	<i>lokiba?</i>
When	<i>daki</i>
When?	<i>dakiba?</i>
Where	<i>ani</i>
Where?	<i>aniba?</i>
Whether	<i>sari</i>
While	<i>shura</i>
Why?	<i>fori?</i>
Wind	<i>vusha</i>
Windy	<i>vushala</i>
Wing	<i>killanor</i> (from <i>killi</i> , “to fly” and <i>wahannor</i> , “helper”)
Wise	<i>kerfan</i>
With	<i>tum</i> (rhymes with “room”)
Without	<i>lotum</i>
Woggar	<i>peggalan</i> (“bad animal”)
Woggar	(language) — snarl
Woman	<i>haka</i>
Worm	<i>rapi</i>

Y

Yellow	<i>sunì</i>
Yes	a cough
Yet	<i>sator</i>
Yesterday	<i>dashari</i>

You sing.	<i>ta</i>
You pl.	<i>tata</i>
Young	<i>nisa</i>
Young animal	<i>nisalan</i>