

RELAY TEXT – VOLAPÜK

Kultan ägolom su veg binü bakastons redik, ven vien koldik äbladon ini logod oma.
Ad gevön fuginane at lejonodi vien äsagon: „Vö! herem olik kiolunik binon!”
Kultan ägespikom: „Ö! vien ga no neodon heris.”
„Gudikumos-la, das oprimol ad fidön, o blod! e vütimo konolös obe bos. Bi vilob seivön kläni, keli klänädol.”
„Benö! ekö! klän, keli eklänädob: äglob su veg binü bakastons redik, ven vien koldik äbladon ini logod oba.”
Tü timül at vien ästopedon ad lilön.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A priest was walking on a red brick road, when a cold wind was blowing in his face.
To teach that stranger a lesson, the wind said: “Wow, such long hair you have!”
The priest answered: “Oh my! The wind doesn’t need hairs, now does it?”
“You better start eating, brother, and in the meantime tell me something. Because I want to know the secret you are keeping.”
“Alright, here comes the secret I’ve been keeping: I was walking on a red brick road, when a cold wind was blowing in my face.”
At that moment, the wind stopped listening.

INTRODUCTION

Volapük doesn’t need much of an introduction. It was created in 1879 by father Johann Martin Schleyer and became a really big thing during the 1880s, but by the end of the century the Volapük movement had collapsed completely. Volapük reached its final form in the early 1930s, when it was revised by Arie de Jong.

Although Volapük is usually classified as a “mixed a priori/a posteriori language”, I would rather qualify it as an a priori language that borrows most of its vocabulary from other languages, mostly English, German and Latin. That sounds contradictory, but what I mean is that those English word roots were not meant to help English speakers, but merely to be used as raw input material. Besides, in many cases they are barely recognisable.

Grammar, on the other hand, is entirely a priori. Volapük is a heavily schematic, agglutinating language, and even though it is entirely regular, it has lots of (sometimes pretty unusual) rules.

GRAMMAR

Volapük has no articles, no grammatical gender, singular/plural, and one single declension scheme with four cases: nominative, genitive, dative and accusative.

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>Nom.</i>	-Ø	-s
<i>Gen.</i>	-a	-as
<i>Dat.</i>	-e	-es
<i>Acc.</i>	-i	-is

These endings can be attached to nouns, but also to pronouns and modifiers. Adjectives and other modifiers usually follow the noun and are inflected only when they do not follow it directly.

Adjectives can be always be recognised easily by the ending **-ik**, followed by **-um** in the comparative and **-ün** in the superlative. Nouns and adjectives can be turned into a verb by simply adding a verbal ending.

Adverbs usually have the ending **-o**, prepositions the ending **-ü**, interjections the ending **-ö**.

Volapük is known for having an awful lot of verb forms, but the system is really simple: the root is obtained by removing the ending **-ön** from the infinitive, personal forms by adding a personal pronoun to the root:

binön "to be" → **bin-** (root) + **ob** (I) → **binob** "I am".

Tense is marked with a prefix: **ä-** for the imperfect tense, **e-** for perfect tense, **o-** for the future tense. Moods are formed by adding a suffix to the verb form. In this text, you will only encounter the optative marker **-ös**, which can also be used as a polite imperative.

GLOSSARY

ad (prep.)	to, in order to
at (pron.dem.)	this, that
bakaston (n.)	brick
benö (intj.)	well, okay, right
bi (because)	because
binön (v.)	to be
binü (prep.)	made from, consisting of
bladön (v.)	to blow
blod (n.)	brother
bos (pron.indef.)	something
das (conj.)	that
e (conj.)	and
ekö (intj.)	look, here is/are

fidön (v.)	to eat
foginan (n.)	foreigner, stranger
ga (adv.)	after all (modal particle indication emphasis or certainty)
gespikön (v.)	to answer
gevön (v.)	to give
golön (v.)	to walk
gudik (adj.)	good
her (n.)	hair
herem (n.)	hair, pelage
ini (prep.)	into
kel (pron.rel.)	which
kio- (prefix)	how! what!
klän (n.)	secret
klänädön (v.)	to conceal, to keep hidden, to keep secret
koldik (adj.)	cold
konön (v.)	tell
kultan (n.)	priest
-la	(subjunctive, expresses uncertainty)
lejonod (n.)	lesson, instruction
lilön (v.)	to listen
logod (n.)	face
lunik (adj.)	long
neodön (v.)	to need
no (adv.)	not
o	(vocative particle)
ob (pron.pers.)	I
ol (pron.pers.)	you (sg.)
olik (pron.poss.)	your
om (pron.pers.)	he
on (pron.pers.)	it
os (pron.pers.)	it (impersonal)
ö (intj.)	hm! well I never! fancy that!
primön (v.)	to begin, to start
redik (adj.)	red
sagön (v.)	to say
seivön (v.)	to get to know, to find out
stopedön (v.)	to stop
su (prep.)	on
timül (n.)	moment
tü (prep.)	on, in, at (time)
veg (n.)	road
ven (conj.)	when
vien (n.)	wind
vilön (v.)	to want
vö (intj.)	really, truly, wow
vütim (n.)	meantime