

A phonetic tengwar mode for French

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1. Introduction

The tengwar, invented by J. R. R. Tolkien, are a script characterized on one side by elegant forms, on the other side by an exact correspondance between the articulations of the sounds and the articulations (subdivisions) of the signs.

The creation of a phonetic tengwar for French is difficult because all languages that J. R. R. Tolkien has represented with the tengwar have vowel systems that are much simpler than the French one.

Here, I present a phonetic tengwar mode for French, and particularly, I've paid attention to preserve the correspondance between the articulations of the vowels and the articulations of the signs that represent them.

2. Consonants

	I	II	III	IV
sign sound ex.	Ɔ /t/ 'amount' Ɔ̇ /ta/	Ɔ /p/ 'step' Ɔ̇ /pa/		Ɔ /k/ 'case' Ɔ̇ /ka/
sign sound ex.	Ɔ /d/ 'in' Ɔ̇ /dã/	Ɔ /b/ 'low' Ɔ̇ /ba/		Ɔ /g/ 'glove' Ɔ̇ /gã/
sign sound ex.	Ɔ /s/ 'this' Ɔ̇ /sa/	Ɔ /f/ 'fact' Ɔ̇ /fɛ/	Ɔ /ʃ/ 'field' Ɔ̇ /ʃã/	
sign sound ex.	Ɔ /z/ 'zeal' Ɔ̇ /zɛ/	Ɔ /v/ 'wind' Ɔ̇ /vã/	Ɔ /ʒ/ 'people' Ɔ̇ /ʒã/	
sign sound ex.	Ɔ /n/ 'nose' Ɔ̇ /ne/	Ɔ /m/ 'but' Ɔ̇ /mɛ/	Ɔ /ŋ/ 'lamb' Ɔ̇ /aŋɔ/	
sign sound ex.	Ɔ /r/ 'mouse' Ɔ̇ /ra/	Ɔ /w/ 'yes' Ɔ̇ /wi/	Ɔ /j/ ¹ 'yesterday' Ɔ̇ /jɛr/	Ɔ ∅ ² 'year' Ɔ̇ /ã/

Additional letters:

sign sound ex.	Ɔ /l/ 'tired' Ɔ̇ /la/	Ɔ /tʃ/ 'eight' Ɔ̇ /tʃi/
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¹ This letter is also used for words like /peje, mɔj/ 'pay, mesh' **Ɔ̇**, **Ɔ̇**

² This letter isn't but a carrier for nasal vowels that lack a preceding consonant. I propose not to use the "normal" carrier **Ɔ** in this case because it's too straight to bear the tilde. This is in analogy to the classical Quenya mode where the letter that corresponds to *vilya* **Ɔ** is used as a carrier in combination with the broad sign for following y.

3. Vowels

The vowels are placed above the preceding consonant. As they need to be placed above another letter that doesn't form a part of them, I've marked that other letters blue.

Oral vowels

An oral vowel that lacks a preceding consonant is placed on the "carrier" **ᶏ**, e.g. /ami/ 'friend' **ᶏᵐ**.

		anterior unrounded	anterior rounded	posterior
closed	sign sound ex.	ᶏ /i/ 'bed' ᶏ /li/	ᶏ /y/ 'you (sing.)' ᶏ /ty/	ᶏ /u/ 'crazy' ᶏ /fu/
mid-closed	sign sound ex.	ᶏ /e/ 'fairy' ᶏ /fe/	ᶏ /ø/ 'fasting' ᶏ /ʒœn/	ᶏ /o/ '(hand) palm' ᶏ /pom/
mid-opened	sign sound ex.	ᶏ /ɛ/ 'fact' ᶏ /fɛ/	ᶏ /œ/ 'young' ᶏ /ʒœn/	ᶏ /ɔ/ 'apple' ᶏ /pɔm/
opened	sign sound ex.	ᶏ /a/ 'paw' ᶏ /pat/	/	ᶏ /ɑ/ 'dough' ᶏ /pat/

Nasal vowels

A nasal vowel that lacks a preceding consonant is placed on *vilya* **ᶑ**, e.g. /ākr/ anchor **ᶑᶏᶑ**.

		anterior	posterior
unrounded	sign sound ex.	ᶑ /ɛ̃/ 'wind' ᶑ /vɛ̃/	ᶑ /ɑ̃/ 'slow' ᶑ /lɑ̃/
rounded	sign sound ex.	ᶑ /œ̃/ 'brown' ᶑ /brœ̃/	ᶑ /õ/ 'good' ᶑ /bõ/

Shva

The shva is represented by a dot below the preceding consonant:

/ʃəval/ 'horse':  ; /rəvə'nir/ 'come back': 

4. Sources

I've used Dan Smith's fonts TengwarSindarin.ttf and TengwarSindarinAlt.ttf (version 1.9e).

Principal source: The Lord of the Rings, app. E.

Among the tengwar texts written by J. R. R. Tolkien, the following have been important: DTS 20 - Namárië; DTS 39 - Doodled Headlines; DTS 41 - Envelope Doodles; DTS 49 - King's Letter, Third Version. Their bibliographical specifications can be found at the Mellonath Daeron Index of Tengwar Specimina:

<http://www.forodrim.org/daeron/mdtci.html>

Per Lindberg: *Att skriva svenska med tengwar*, after all the contribution of 'Findegil' Björn Fromén:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/elfscript/message/1533>

Florian 'Lothenon' Dombach + me: German mode.

<http://dombach.florian.bei.t-online.de/schrift/deutschloth.htm>

6. Author

This document has been written by "Mach Hezan" J. Wust on december 27th of 2003. Its intention isn't but to spread the knowledge of the tengwar. If you have remarks, you can contact me at:

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