



Introduction

When I first started writing the novella, I knew I wanted to push hard on the strangeness of Zil -- the environment and the species -- because some of the dramatic oomph, as it is, relies on our hero, James, stubbornly and innocently overlooking this, and/or superimposing his own meanings onto what he sees and (thinks he) understands. So, I created Zilll, standing on (heavily, clumsily) the shoulders of linguists and creators of constructed languages.

My hope is that the meanings of Zill words and phrases, as well as the pidgin "Zinglish" James and Aveliin speak to one another, is clear in context, as you read. But, for the curious and the frustrated, I've assembled this brief glossary and language guide.

Zil, Zill, Zilll

The planet **Zil** is home to the indigenous **Zill**, who speak **Zilll**.

These were the first words created, setting up the language's backbone -- what linguists term a derivational morphology. For these and other basic vocabulary, there are morphemes, the building blocks of words, and then I've added prefixes or suffixes to the end to derive, or create, a new, related word.

We do this in English all the time, create related words by adding prefixes: for a dead simple example, think "teach" (which is a verb, meaning to instruct) -- when we add -er to that verb ("teacher"), we get a related word, but one that is a noun. In Zilll, the word "sii" means moon. So, "asill" (added prefix a-) means night time (where there is lots of moon).

Gestures

To add a bit more clarity (and complexity, richness of meaning), I also layered in some gestural grammar. Words that are related (or, in many cases, the same derivational morphology), meaning is added by one of three physical actions: pointing up, doing nothing, or slapping/stomping the ground.

Their tails figure prominently in Zill culture, and I think it would be natural that, then, they would be used in communication (I'm a cat person and find how those magical jerks use their tails utterly fascinating).

In the glossary, you'll find the gestural grammar depicted with these symbols:

Pointing up while saying word	↑
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No gesture while saying word	↔
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Slapping tail/stamp foot while saying word	↓

For example, "Zill" means an inhabitant of Zil (a person). There's no gesture, if the person is the speaker or an equal in age or status. But we can add gestures to refer to other people (Zill), but suggest a relationship:

Zill ↑ : parent, elder

Zill ↓ : child, infant, younger person

If we point up when we say "Zill," we mean someone older or more venerated. If we slap our tails (or, as humans, stomp foot), we mean a child or someone less experienced.

Glossary

Afca ↔ : clean, wash

Asill ↔ : night time (all moon)

Ayilla ↔ : Summer, to sleep

Azea ↔ : you, everybody

Azilyilla ↔ : "out of step," weird, coincidence, happening at wrong time

Ca ↔ : yes, hooray!

Caf ↔ : stranger, weirdo, fool

Caf ↑ : eccentric or strange, but beloved, weirdo

Caf ↓ : asshole

Cayi ↔ : size, "same size as I am"

Cayi ↑ : bigger than me

Cayi ↓ : smaller than me

Ehpi ↔ : cat-like creature

Eeya ↔ : Agreed

Ele ↔ : builders, to build or construct (mual)

Ele ↑ : house, inside

Ele ↓ : outside

Fal ↔ : solar flare, auroras

Fle ↔ : fire

Fsi ↔ : air

Fsi ↑ : wind

Fsi ↓ : still

Fca ↔ : water

Hayii ↔ : priest, shaman (mual)

Iled ↔ : long grasses with tall, toothy flowers, like sunflowers. Gives a honey-like nectar/pollen used in many foods, and feeds babies, specifically. A comfort food.

Iledi ↔ : sweet and delicious, life-sustaining

Iledilla ↔ : springtime, when the flowers bloom

Illel ↔ : head spikes

Kiliil ↔ : Mating ritual

Kist ↔ : Screw you

Ledi ↔ : sharp, fibrous grass. Used like flax (it is eaten by the soledi, then digested and softened). Can refer to the grass or to the fabric made from it.

Lsi ↔ : Pardon me

Lsi ↑ : Forgiven

Lsi ↔ : No problem, no big deal

Lsi ↓ : Apologies, I'm sorry

Mual ↔ : fated vocation

Muh ↔ : I understand, I'm listening, go on, yes

Muh ↓ : I don't understand, stop, no

Teal ↔ : some

Teal ↑ : many

Teal ↓ : few

Tesill ↔ : day time (some moon)

Teyilla ↔ : Winter, to learn

Soledi ↔ : armored bugs, something like roaches. They are a major food source (often pounded and dried into a flour-like substance. They eat ledi grass, and the softened, digested strands are used in weaving.

Soled ↔ : a Zilli dish of soledi

Sikli ↔ : water

Sikli ↓ : the great rains

Sii ↔ : moon

Simu ↔ : explorer

Szi ↔ : love

Szi ↑ : family, tribe, friend, platonic love

Szilla ↔ : Fall, to work

Szimuh ↔ : a cart, to carry

Yialmu ↔ : to teach

Yialmu ↑ : to think

Yialmu ↓ : to remember

Yil ↔ : the large, yellow sun

Yill ↔ : the smaller, red sun

Yilla ↔ : refers to both the suns, light

Ze ↔ : me (though this concept is still fairly inclusive as "us," all of me are us)

Zea ↔ : we/us

Zcal ↔ : gift

Zcal ↓ : obligatory gift

Zil ↔ : planet, world

Zill ↔ : person

Zill ↑ : elder

Zill ↔ : partner, friend

Zill ↓ : child, infant, younger person

Zillkiliil ↔ : parent

Zilll ↔ : language, tail