Trigedasleng (language)

- **Octavia**: Ai laik Okteivia kom Skaikru en ai gaf gouthru klor.
  - Translation: "I am Octavia of the Sky People and I seek safe passage".
- **Grounders**: Jus drein jus daun!
  - Translation: "Blood must have blood!"
- **Grounders**: Yu gonplei ste odon.
  - Translation: "Your fight is over."
- **Octavia**: Ge smak daun, gyon op nodotaim.
  - Translation: "Get knocked down, get back up."

Trigedasleng is a language spoken by the group known as Grounders. The Woods Clan and Sand Nomads are most commonly seen using this language. Luna’s Clan may also speak this language as Lincoln was teaching Octavia Trigedasleng on their way to their territory. However, the language is known by all Grounders. Some of the Sky People have started to learn Trigedasleng, most notably Marcus Kane and Octavia Blake. Trigedasleng is a heavily-accented dialect of American English that has evolved rapidly over three generations. It was originally intended as a means for the Woods Clan and their allies to keep the Mountain Men, who still speak Modern English, from easily understanding them. By the time of the Ark’s descent, most Grounders speak only Trigedasleng; warriors (and possibly certain others, like Nyko the healer) speak both Trigedasleng and Modern English, a fact which they are careful to hide from their enemies. Trigedasleng is not a creole, but a descendant of Modern English alone, and while it may share similarities with AAVE (African American Vernacular English), those similarities are not intentional.

The language

"If you take a look, you should be able to figure some things out. In effect, the Grounder language (called Trigedasleng) is an evolved form of English. All the words in the language come from English; the grammar and pronunciation’s just changed a little bit (and the meanings of words)." -- David J. Peterson, language creator.

"...it is basically a heavily-accented dialect of American English. I’m actually surprised when people working on the show don’t pick up on it (I think it’s the use of a standard romanization as opposed to using conventional English spellings). I think a couple people have picked up on it (Ryan Causey, script coordinator for The 100, has got it), but for the most part, the actors have been approaching it like a totally foreign language—which I think is cool (gives it more of an other-worldly sound), but unnecessary. I think it takes very little work for a native English speaker to understand all of it." -- David J. Peterson
Trigedasleng developed partially due to natural linguistic drift, but also because there was a pressure for them to develop code-terms and euphemisms that their enemies, particularly the Mountain Men of Mount Weather, could not readily understand. For example, instead of calling their leaders “leader” or “chief” or “commander”, a leader became known as a “header”, which then slurred to heda. Warriors still learn Modern English, however, so that they can understand and eavesdrop on their enemies.

When David J. Peterson developed Trigedasleng, he devised a phonetic writing system to use in the show’s scripts and to better reflect the changes from Modern English to Trigedasleng. For example, the first person personal pronoun “I” retains the same pronunciation in Trigedasleng, but is spelled ai in the scripts. This writing system, however, is not used in-world; the Grounders are no longer literate and have no writing system.

Trigedasleng underwent extreme phonological simplification during its descent from English, resulting in numerous homonyms. For example, sis has several meanings depending on its context:

- sis...au means “to help” and comes from “assist”
- sis...op means “to grab”; the particle op differentiates it from the first meaning
- as a noun, sis can mean “sister” but can also mean “six”

Pronunciation

Technically, Trigedasleng has no standard writing system. Below is David J. Peterson’s Romanization system for spelling and pronouncing written Trigedasleng words.

- A, a = the “a” sound in “apple”—UNLESS it’s the last letter of a word, in which case it’s the “a” sound in “sofa”.
- Ai, ai = the “i” sound in “bite”.
- Au, au = the “ow” sound in “cow”.
- B, b = the “b” sound in “bad”.
- Ch, ch = the “ch” sound in “chop”.
- D, d = the “d” sound in “dock”.
- E, e = the “e” sound in “get”.
- Ei, ei = the “ei” sound in “eight”.
- F, f = the “f” sound in “fate”.
- G, g = the “g” sound in “goat”.
- H, h = the “h” sound in “hate”.
- I, i = the “i” sound in “kid” OR the “i” sound in “machine” (no difference).
- J, j = the “j” sound in “jump”.
- K, k = the “k” sound in “keep”.
- L, l = the “l” sound in “look”.

• \( M, m \) = the “m” sound in “made”.
• \( N, n \) = the “n” sound in “near”.
• \( O, o \) = the “aw” sound in “law” OR the “o” sound in “son”
• \( Ou, ou \) = the “o” sound in “wrote”.
• \( P, p \) = the “p” sound in “pelt”.
• \( R, r \) = the “r” sound in “red”.
• \( S, s \) = the “s” sound in “slice”.
• \( Sh, sh \) = the “sh” sound in “shark”.
• \( T, t \) = the “t” sound in “talk”.
• \( Th, th \) = the “th” sound in “think”.
• \( U, u \) = the “u” sound in “rude”.
• \( V, v \) = the “v” sound in “vice”.
• \( W, w \) = the “w” sound in “wild”.
• \( Y, y \) = the “y” sound in “you”.
• \( Z, z \) = the “z” sound in “zoo”.

Names
In Trigedasleng, names are not translated, only transcribed. They are pronounced the same as they are in English, but when written as part of a Trigedasleng phrase or sentence, they are typically written out using the phonetic Romanization system.[10] Below are a few example names from the show.

Sky People
• Abby - Abi
• Clarke - Klark
• Bellamy - Belomi
• Octavia - Okteivia
• Jasper - Jaspa
• Monty - Monti
• Murphy - Mofi

Grounders
• Lexa - Leka
• Gustus - Gostos[13]
• Anya - Onya
• Lincoln - Linkon
• Nyko - Naikou
• Tomac - Tomak[14]

Mountain Men
• Tsing – Sing
• Cage – Keij
• Maya – Maiya
• Dante – Donteii
• Emerson – Emsoon
• Wallace -- Wolais

Pronouns[19]
• \( ai \) = "I/me" from English "I"
• \( yu \) = "you" from English "you"
• \( em \) = "he/she/it" from English "him" or "them"
• \( osir \) = "we/us" (excludes the listener) from English "us-here"
• \( oso \) = "we/us" (includes the listener) from English "us-all"
• \( yumi \) = "you-and-me/you-and-I" from English "you-me"
• \( yo \) = "you (plural)/you all/y'all" from English "you-all"
- emo = "they/them" from English "them-all" (note that this sounds like "em-oh", not the pseudo-Goth clothing style Emo, which would be spelled imo)

Trigedasleng lacks the distinction between the third person singular forms (he, she and it). Trigedasleng pronouns also do not distinguish between subjects and objects. Trigedasleng does make a distinction, however, which is not present in English: oso vs. osir. Oso is an inclusive pronoun, meaning it includes the person the speaker is addressing. Osir is an exclusive pronoun, meaning it excludes the person the speaker is addressing.[16] A third "we" pronoun, yumi, is used to exclude everyone except the person the speaker is addressing, and literally means "you and I" or "you and me".

To illustrate, let us say that Gustus and Nyko and Lincoln are on a patrol and are ambushed by some enemies. Gustus is knocked unconscious in the fight, and when he comes to, he asks what happened. Lincoln might say "Oso don ge jump op" ("We were attacked")—meaning that all three of them, including Gustus, were attacked. When they return to camp, Nyko is called upon for his healing expertise; Gustus might then say to Lincoln "Yumi souda gyon au gon heda." ("You and I must go to the commander.") They make their report, and say of the ambush, "Osir don ge jump op"—meaning that Gustus, Lincoln, and Nyko were attacked, but Lexa was not, as she was not with them.

Possessives

In Trigedasleng, possession is formed by apposition; in other words, the pronoun or noun to whom another noun belongs just sits next to the thing being owned:

- yu gonplei = "your fight"
- ai stegeda = "my village"
- Leksa swis = "Lexa’s knife"
- gona java = "warrior’s spear"
- emo honon = "their prisoners"

And so on. There are a few possessive pronouns, which are formed by adding -on (or -n) to the existing pronoun:

- ain = "mine"
- yun = "yours"

and so on

Nouns

Trigedasleng does not distinguish case (subject/object) or number (plurality) with its nouns. It also lacks articles (a, an, the). Plurality can be emphasized using emo or by specifying a number of a thing, but usually plurality is determined by context.

- Passage: gouthru
- from "go-through"

- **Healer:** *fisa*
  - from *fis op* "to heal" + -a "-er"
  - *fis op* "to heal" comes from "fix (up)"

- **Murderer:** *ripa*
  - from "rip"/"reap" + -a "-er"; used as a proper noun to refer to Reapers.

- **Fight:** *gonplei*
  - from "gunplay"

- **Group:** *kru*
  - from "crew"

- **Sky:** *skai*
  - from "sky"
  - This is one example of a word that has been preserved from Modern English; it has undergone no phonological change and is only spelled according to the romanization system devised by David J. Peterson.

- **Sky People:** *Skaikru*
  - from *skai + kru*
  - This is the name the Grounders give the people from the Ark.

- **Warrior:** *gona*
  - from "gun" + "-er"

- **Army/unit of warriors:** *gonakru*
  - from *gona + kru*

- **Language:** *sleng*
  - from "slang"

- **English (language):** *Gonasleng*
  - from *gona + sleng*

- **Commander:** *heda*
  - from "head" + "-er"; *heda* is gender-neutral

- **Tree People:** *Trigedakru*
  - from *tri "tree" + geda "gathering" + kru "people"
  - The Woods Clan is known as *Trigeda*; the Tree People (people of the Woods Clan) may also be called *Trikru*.

- **Shadow:** *trikova*
  - from *tri "tree" + kova "cover"

- **Forest:** *trimani*
  - from "tree" + "many"

- **Over/done/finished:** *odon*
- from "all done"

- **Never**: *nowe*
  - from "no way"

- **Blood**: *jus*
  - from "juice"

- **Tunnel**: *sobwe*
  - from "subway"
  - Many or most of the tunnels that the Reapers hide in are abandoned subway tunnels.

- **Lunch**: *sanch*
  - The etymology of this word is unknown. It may come from "sandwich".

- **Life**: *sonraun*
  - from "sun" + "around", referring to the movement of the earth around the sun
  - This metaphor is present in Modern English, when we talk about "going around the sun" to mean getting older or living one's life.

- **Soul**: *keryon*
  - from "carry on"

- **Joined/entwined**: *teina*
  - The etymology of this word is unknown.

- **Again**: *nodotaim*
  - from "another time"

- **Prisoner**: *honon*
  - from "hunt" + -on "one"

- **Number**: *noma*
  - from "number"

- **Mother**: *nomon*
  - from "number one"

- **Father**: *nontu*
  - from "number two"
  - After the nuclear fallout, surviving Grounders didn't want to tip off scouts from enemy tribes (or Mountain Men) about the identities of their leaders, which in clans tended to be mothers and fathers, so they called their leaders "number one" and "number two", which eventually came to mean "mother" and "father" respectively. Over time, these codenames were slurred to *nomon* and *nontu*.

- **Worthless/foolish**: *branwoda* or *branwada* (has been spelled both ways)
  - from "brown-water"
In the years after the nuclear war, the basic needs of finding drinking water clean enough for human consumption were often hard to meet. "Brown water" was a generic term for water which was not suitable for drinking. Over time, the meaning was extended to include anything worthless. It is now used as an insult as well, and can be used as a noun to mean "fool".

- Knife: *swis*
  - The etymology of this word is unknown. It may be derived from "Swiss army knife"

- Child: *goufa* or *yongon*
  - The etymology of *goufa* is unknown. *Yongon* is from "young one".
  - Typically, *goufa* refers to any child. *Yongon* is used to refer to one's own child, or the child of a particular person. While the two are technically interchangeable, it is more common for someone to use *yongon* to refer to their own offspring.

- Strong: *yuj*
  - from "huge"

- Weakness: *kwelnes*

- City of Light: *Soncha Kapa; Sonchageda/Sonchgeda*

- Mount Weather: *Maun-de*

- Mountain Men: *Maunon*

**Adjectives**

Adjectives in Trigedaslang precede the nouns they modify, as in English. The phrase *gouthru klier* (safe passage) is an exception, but may simply be a result of the parallel with *gouthru klin*, which sounds similar but means "to commit suicide".

- Safe: *kli*
  - from English "clear"

- Lying: *spichen*
  - *Ai don fis disha spichen gona op = "I cured this lying warrior."
  - The etymology of *spichen* is unknown.

- Hidden: *stelt*
  - from English "stealth"

**Demonstratives**

Trigedaslang enjoys a three-way distinction between demonstratives and spatial adverbs: here, there-near, and there-far.

- *disha, dison, hir = "this"/"this-one"/"here"
  - These three refer to things that are "here" or very near to the speaker/listener.
  - *disha gona = "this warrior"
  - *dison laik ain = "this one is mine"
- **kamp raun hir** = "stay here"
- **dei, daun, der** = "that"/'that one"/'there"
  - These three refer to things that are "there"; that is, they are distant from the speaker/listener but still within visual range or not extremely far away.
  - **dei gona** = "that warrior"
  - **daun laik yun** = "that one is yours"
  - **set raun der** = "stand there"
- **dei...de, daunde/daun-de, ouder** = "that"/"that one"/"over there"
  - These three refer to things that are "yonder"; that is, they are very far away from the speaker/listener.
  - **dei tri-de** = "that tree way over there"
  - **daunde ste kwelen** = "that one over there is weak"
  - **gyon au ouder** = "go way over there"

**Conjunctions**

- And: **en**
- But: **ba**
- Before: **fou**

Relative clauses can also be embedded in sentences using **bilaik**, which has no English counterpart.

David J. Peterson explains **bilaik** as a "general subordinator", meaning that its English translations are many and varied. It can mean "who" or "which" or "that" depending on context.

- **Gona bilaiik ai don fis op ste klir.** = "The warrior [that] I cured is safe."

**bilaik** can also be used to introduce a hypothetical or conditional clause:

- **Oso souda lok em veida tro op fou bilaiik emo hon emo sobwe op.** = "We must find the enemy patrol before they reach the tunnels."
  - **bilaik** is used here because the event in question ("they reach the tunnels") has not yet happened and can be prevented.

**Prepositions**

- From/to/with: **kom**
  - from "come"
  - **ai laik Okteivia kom Skaikru** = "I am Octavia of the Sky People"

**Numbers**

Number words underwent the same phonological "slurring" as other words.

- One - **won**
- Two - **tu**
- Three - **thri**
- Four - fou
- Five - fai
- Six - sis
- Seven - sen
- Eight - eit
- Nine - nain
- Ten - ten
- Twelve - tua
- Thousand - thauz

Grammar structure

Verbs in Trigedasleng have the biggest differences from English of any part of speech. Trigedasleng verbs have two parts: the verb root, and one of eight satellites. Some verbs, like auxiliary and modal verbs, don’t have or require satellites. Many verbs have different meanings depending on the satellite.

Satellites

Most verbs have a satellite that directly follows the direct object, if one is present; if a direct object is not present, the satellite follows the verb. Satellites precede indirect objects and other phrases that follow the verb. There are eight satellites present in Trigedasleng (op, in, au, we, of, raun, daun, klin), though a ninth (thru) has been listed in this post about grammar, but hasn't been seen in the wild.

Some useful guidelines for satellites follows:

- raun is used for base-transitive verbs when used intransitively, and replaces op or in
- op seems to be attached mostly to concrete verbs (verbs for doing and acting on the physical world), whereas in is more likely to appear with abstract verbs (verbs for things like thinking and saying and hearing, which don't really act on the physical world as much)
- klin connotes/denotes finality and has very special uses
  - Octavia misspeaks when Lincoln is teaching her in "The 48", saying gouthru klin which translates as "commit suicide" but derives from something like "final passage".
  - au, we, and daun all seem to be used in places where their English origins would be used

Verbs without Satellites

Not all verbs have a satellite. According to David J. Peterson, verbs having to do with agent-initiated motion or causation, performative verbs, and auxiliary/modal/function verbs don’t have satellites. They can co-occur with satellites, but that typically changes their meaning.

Auxiliaries & Modals
Auxiliary and modal verbs are used in a variety of ways. Mostly, they form tenses (as listed below), but there are other ways to use them. The future tense, for example, is also used for "in order to" phrases (ai don fis em op na sis oso au "I healed him to help us"). Trigedasleng also fails to distinguish the perfect tense, and instead uses the past tense: ai don fis em op "I have healed him."

- **Present**: no auxiliary
  - ai fis em op = "I heal him"
- **Progressive**: ste
  - ai ste fis em op = "I am healing him"
- **Past**: don
  - ai don fis em op = "I healed him"
- **Future**: na
  - ai na fis em op = "I will heal him" or "I can heal him"
  - The future tense marker na can also mean "can" or "could".
- **Passive**: ge
  - ai ge fis op = "I get healed" or "I am healed"
- **Modal**: beda and souda
  - yu beda fis em op = "you ought to heal him" or "you should heal him"
  - yu souda fis em op = "you must heal him"

For the most part, Trigedasleng doesn't distinguish between indicative and subjunctive moods. Hypothetical or conditional clauses are formed using *bilaik* (see above).

**Verbs**

- **Be**: laik or ste
  - *laik* is from "like" and is used with nouns and prepositional phrases.
    - ai laik Okteivia = "I am Octavia"
    - yu laik kom Trigeda = "You are from the Woods Clan"
  - *ste* is from "stay" and is used with adjectives (as a stative copula) and verb phrases (as a progressive marker).
    - yu ste kwelen = "you are weak"
    - emo ste hon em op = "they are finding him"
- **Tell**: tel...op
  - from "tell" + "up"
    - *bilaik* yu don tel ai op otaim = "like you have always told me"
- **Help**: sis...au
  - from "assist" + "out"
    - sis em au = "help him"
- **Want/need**: gaf...in
  - The etymology of this word is unknown. It may come from "go for".
- ai gaf sen em in = "I need to hear it"
  - The satellite is optional in most cases, particularly when followed by another verb.
- Fall behind: drag...raun
  - from "drag" + "around"
- Quiet/Be quiet: shof...op
  - from "shut up"
  - shof op has gone through "amelioration" and has lost the offensiveness of its Modern English ancestor
- Love: hod...in
  - from "hold" + "in"
  - ai hod yu in = "I love you"
- Wait/stop: hod...op
  - from "hold" + "up"
  - hod op! = "Wait!"
- Strike/attack en masse: zog...raun
  - from the "Zerg rush", a maneuver which gets its name from the StarCraft enemy "Zerg swarm" that attacks in overwhelming numbers + "around"
  - den oso na zog raun kom trikova = "then, we strike from the shadows"
- Find: hon...op
  - from "hunt" + "up"
  - ai don hon em op = "I found him"
- Locate: lok...op
  - from "look" + "up"
- Fall: slip...daun
  - from "slip" + "down"
  - em slip daun kom skai = "he fell from the sky" (note: the past tense auxiliary don has been left out, most likely by mistake)
- Hear: sen...in
  - The etymology of this word is unknown.
  - ai don sen in chit bilaik ai gaf sen in = "I've heard what I needed to hear."
- Take: jak...op
  - from "jack" + "up"
  - Skaikru don jak eting op kom ai = "Sky People took everything from me"
- Go to/stay near/be near: kamp...raun
  - from "camp" + "around"
  - osir na kamp raun ona tri = "we will stay in the trees"
Pull away/draw away: pul...we
  from "pull" + "away"
  pul em we gon emo honon = "draw them away from their prisoners"

Free: breik...au
  from "break" + "out"
  breik em au = "free him"

Die: wan...op
  from "wind" + "up"
  nau yu na wan op = "now you will die"

Kill: frag...op
  The etymology of this word is unknown. Likely from "f*ck them up".
  teik ai frag em op = "let me kill her"

Cut: kot...op
  from "cut" + "up"
  kot em op = "cut him"

Speak (for): shish...op
  The etymology of this word is unknown.
  teik ai shish op kom emo = "let me speak for them"

Leave: gon...we or bants
  gon...we is from "gone" + "away"
  The etymology of bants is unknown. It may be descended from "bounce".
  osir na gon we or osir na bants = "we will leave"

Eat: choj...op
  The etymology of this word is uncertain. It may be descended from "charge up".
  ai don choj ai sanch op = "I ate my lunch"

Adverbs

Enough: pleni
  from "plenty"
  daun ste pleni = "that is enough"
  em pleni! = "enough!" (as a command)

Then: "den"
  from "then"
  den, oso na zog raun kom trikova = "then, we will strike from the shadows"

Common Words and Phrases

Yes: sha
- No: no
- Thank you: mochof or chof
- You're Welcome: pro
- Please: beja
- Hello: heya or hei
- Goodbye: leidon or leida
- Your fight is over: Yu gonplei ste odon.
- Love is weakness: Hodnes laik kwelnes.
- Our fight isn't over: Osir gonplei nou ste odon.
- The dead are gone; the living are hungry: Stedauon don gon we; kikon ste enti.

Examples from the Series

Indra and her people use Trigedasleng to discuss strategy for the assault on some Reapers to get and their people back.

- 'Taim yu drag raun, taim yu ge ban au. Oso souda lok em veida tro op fou bilaik emo hon emo sobwe op. Pas daun, em bilaik—'
  - Translation: “If you fall behind, you get left behind. We must find the raiding party before they reach the tunnels. After that, it is—”.

Also in Reapercussions, Indra gives instructions:

  - Translation: “Stop. Then, we (will) strike from the shadows. You two: take the trees. Artigas, you and I will remain hidden until the Reapers are drawn away from their prisoners. Then, we free our people.”