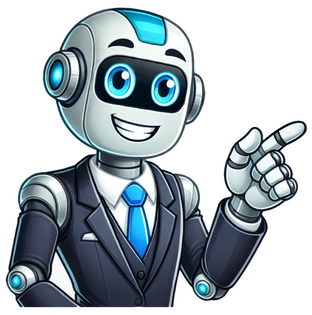
I'm not a bot



Another phonetic confusion I have is this... I have 3 dictionaries (Oxford, Collins, Larousse) that describe Brazilian pronunciation on their first pages. I also use some online resources (thefreedictionary.com, forvo.com) to look things up or just listen to the pronunciation. Where the pronunciation (Brazilian Portuguese) is indicated in writing, it generally goes something like this:-o (final) : livro []: leo as in shop [o]: colnia as in poleo (unstressed) [o]: locomotiva as in poleo (stressed) []: loja as in shop or [o]: globo as in poleSo, this implies that "o" (that has no graphic accent over it) has two different pronunciations (besides , of course):1. diphthongized [o]: locomotiva, globo as in pole2. monophthong []: loja as in shop Now, the confusion comes from the fact that I do not hear this diphthongized o in the aforementioned and many other words at forvo.com.To me all these o's sound more or less the same, as monophthongs. Are the dictionaries wrong or outdated? Or do they cover a different dialect of Brazilian Portuguese than that demonstrated at forvo? Or am I deaf? Please help as I can't get my head around this.Update: I think there's a plausible explanation of the phenomenon. The dictionary authors likely tried to approximate the Portuguese "o" (a monophthong) with American English "o" (a diphthong, [u]/[]) and weren't very elaborate, which made their pronunciation guide confusing. Last edited: Mar 28, 2010 Another phonetic confusion I have is this... I have 3 dictionaries (Oxford, Collins, Larousse) that describe Brazilian pronunciation on their first pages. I also use some online resources (thefreedictionary.com, forvo.com) to look things up or just listen to the pronunciation. Where the pronunciation (Brazilian Portuguese) is indicated in writing, it generally goes something like this:-o (final) : livro []: leo as in shop [o]: colnia as in poleo (unstressed) [o]: locomotiva as in poleo (stressed) []: loja as in shop or [o]: globo as in poleSo, this implies that "o" (that has no graphic accent over it) has two different pronunciations (besides , of course):1. diphthongized [o]: locomotiva, globo as in pole2. monophthong []: loja as in shop Now, the confusion comes from the fact that I do not hear this diphthongized o in the aforementioned and many other words at forvo.com.To me all these o's sound more or less the same, as monophthongs.Are the dictionaries wrong or outdated? Or do they cover a different dialect of Brazilian Portuguese than that demonstrated at forvo? Or am I deaf? Please help as I can't get my head around this. If your dictionaries say anything about diphthongs, they're just wrong. All those sounds are monothongs. It's true that you have 3 different ways to pronoune the letter o, but none of them is a diphthong, which is always represented in writing.(1) bola - similar to o in off(2) dedo - similar to oo in book(3) coco - slightly similar to o in goIn (3) I said "slightly similar" because, unlike English, in Portuguese you have a monothong, not a diphthong. So, while o in go has two vowels in its pronunciation -- [o] + [w] --, o in coco is simply [o]. Last edited: Mar 28, 2010 The only diphtongized "o" I know is the one from Rio, in the word doze (douze). Last edited: Mar 28, 2010 None of the above "o" sounds are diphthongs, as Ariel Knightly has explained, but they are not more or less the same either. In the final position, the "o" is always reduced to a "u" sound; when in the middle of the word, it can be either open, closed or nasal (you know the sound is nasal when "o" is followed by the letters "m" or "n" in the same syllable). Olho (eye): first "o" is closed, second "o" reduced to "u"Olhos (eyes): first "o" open, second reduced porto (port): first "o" closed, second reducedportos (ports): first "o" open, second reducedporta (door): first "o" open, second reduced ovo (egg): first "o" closed, second reducedovos (eggs): first "o" open, second reduced nibus (bus): nasal "o"computador (computer): first "o" nasal, second "o" closed Last edited: Mar 28, 2010 If your dictionaries say anything about diphthongs, they're just wrong. All those sounds are monothongs. It's true that you have 3 different ways to pronoune the letter o, but none of them is a diphthong, which is always represented in writing. Wow, unbelievable. The Oxford dictionary claims to be "most trusted" and "comprehensive reference work" (yet I've found typos and mistakes other than this in it), Larousse -- "ideal for all your language needs" and "providing fast and practical solutions to the various problems encountered when reading Portuguese" (yet its pronunciation guide lacks basic details, contained in the other too), Collins -- "fully revised", "authoritative" and "ideal for home/school/office". How come all three of them are so misleading? Is there any other Portuguese or any other Brazil the authors had in mind or did they never learn the language in the first place? Btw, do you know a better dictionary that is actually correct? And others to stay away from? None of the above "o" sounds are diphthongs, as Ariel Knightly has explained, but they are not more or less the same either. In the final position, the "o" is always reduced to a "u" sound; when in the middle of the word, it can be either open, closed or nasal (you know the sound is nasal when "o" is followed by the letters "m" or "n" in the same syllable). Olho (eye): first "o" is closed, second "o" reduced to "u"Olhos (eyes): first "o" open, second reduced porto (port): first "o" closed, second reducedportos (ports): first "o" open, second reducedporta (door): first "o" open, second reduced ovo (egg): first "o" closed, second reducedovos (eggs): first "o" open, second reduced nibus (bus): nasal "o"computador (computer): first "o" nasal, second "o" closed I already know about the "u" sound at the end and nasalization.I'm trying to understand the pronunciation basics from the various incomplete and misleading sources. I don't know why it's that way with Portuguese.It's not that obscure/rare of a language with few speakers... Regarding the open/closed, especially in your examples:- is that something that occurs naturally with speech due to the word length in terms of syllables/sounds?- is there a way to figure out which is which based on the overall spelling, word form and knowledge of stress location?- how often is it important to make this distinction? I know, for example, that av and av mean different things and are pronounced differently, but the spelling clearly marks this distinction in these words, while in the words from your examples, there's nothing obvious at first glance and I think there're no other words to confuse p*rt@(s) and *vo(s) with due to a different pronunciation of o. There are no way to recognize the pronunciation by the spelling.You see:posto (position, placed): first "o" closedposto (I post): first o openposte (pole): "o" opencorte (cut): "o" opencorte (court): "o" closedYou actualy have to know the pronunciation. Last edited: Mar 28, 2010 There are no way to recognize the pronunciation by the spelling.posto (position, placed): first "o" closedposte (pole): "o" opencorte (cut): "o" opencorte (court): "o" closedYou actualy have to know the pronunciation. Nice. Like English. Good example, thanks. Regarding the open/closed, especially in your examples:- is that something that occurs naturally with speech due to the word length in terms of syllables/sounds?- is there a way to figure out which is which based on the overall spelling, word form and knowledge of stress location?- how often is it important to make this distinction? I know, for example, that av and av mean different things and are pronounced differently, but the spelling clearly marks this distinction in these words, while in the words from your examples, there's nothing obvious at first glance and I think there're no other words to confuse p*rt@(s) and *vo(s) with due to a different pronunciation of o. In most cases, there's no telling if the o is open or closed from the spelling, you have to learn it on a case-by-case basis. And, yes, unfortunately it's very important to get the open/closed distinction correctly if you don't want to sound odd, even if it's usually not an obstacle to understanding. As a rule of thumb, words in which the o is closed tend to have open o's in their plural forms: olho (closed) - olhos (open)aeroporto (closed) - aeroportos (open) But the bad news is that there are exceptions: cachorro (closed) - cachorros (closed)repolho (closed) - repolhos (closed) Last edited: Mar 28, 2010 Wow, unbelievable. The Oxford dictionary claims to be "most trusted" and "comprehensive reference work" (yet I've found typos and mistakes other than this in it), Larousse -- "ideal for all your language needs" and "providing fast and practical solutions to the various problems encountered when reading Portuguese" (yet its pronunciation guide lacks basic details, contained in the other too), Collins -- "fully revised", "authoritative" and "ideal for home/school/office". How come all three of them are so misleading? Is there any other Portuguese or any other Brazil the authors had in mind or did they never learn the language in the first place?Btw, do you know a better dictionary that is actually correct? And others to stay away from? To me, your dictionaries are good enough. Vowels are a complex issue. There's no such thing as a perfect match when we talk about vowels; that's why dictionaries -- for pedagogical reasons -- usually adopt expressions like "similar to" in their phonetic explanations. For example, we could use the same IPA symbol for both apito and noisy; but it doesn't mean that those sounds are exactly identical. They're close enough to share the same IPA symbol, but the American English phone is normally a little bit higher than the Brazilian Portuguese one. Among all American English vowels, [o] is the closest sound to the Brazilian Portuguese [o].You can compare those vowels here. Last edited: Mar 28, 2010 I agree with Ariel, I think this is the closest sound for English speakers.For Russian speakers I think we can say:coco: tak kak "cok"loja: tak kak "okno" To me, your dictionaries are good enough. Vowels are a complex issue. There's no such thing as a perfect match when we talk about vowels; that's why dictionaries -- for pedagogical reasons -- usually adopt expressions like "similar to" in their phonetic explanations. For example, we could use the same IPA symbol for both apito and noisy; but it doesn't mean that those sounds are exactly identical. They're close enough to share the same IPA symbol, but the American English phone is normally a little bit higher than the Brazilian Portuguese one. Among all American English vowels, [o] is the closest sound to the Brazilian Portuguese [o].You can compare those vowels here. They didn't do a diligent job in writing "similar to"/"as in"/etc. They should've added something like "but there's no [] at the end of this [o]" or reiterated that this sound isn't diphthongized unlike misleadingly suggested by their examples of pole and local.Thanks. Nice article, btw (not that I didn't know those issues described in it since speakers of Russian also face the same problems when learning English. Regarding the open/closed, especially in your examples:- is that something that occurs naturally with speech due to the word length in terms of syllables/sounds?- is there a way to figure out which is which based on the overall spelling, word form and knowledge of stress location?- how often is it important to make this distinction? I know, for example, that av and av mean different things and are pronounced differently, but the spelling clearly marks this distinction in these words, while in the words from your examples, there's nothing obvious at first glance and I think there're no other words to confuse p*rt@(s) and *vo(s) with due to a different pronunciation of o. There are some patterns that tend to repeat (for example, vowels are generally close when they're nasal), but no universal rules. The reasons for the different pronunciations go back to Latin (sometimes with irregularities along the way). The good news:Most times, it won't make a difference if you pronounce a vowel close instead of open, or vice-versa. Also, when the difference does matter, the vowel in question is always stressed. There are a handful of word pairs you should make an effort to distinguish, like av/av. Unfortunately, not all of them are differentiated in writing. By the way, the same kind of thing happens with //e. These vowel changes were probably the hardest thing for me to learn, and even to this day I have some problems with it! I remember starting a similar thread which also may be of help. You can take a look at it here:Changes in vowel sounds Chris As a non-native speaker of Portuguese, I continue to have problems with all the ways to pronounce "o" in that language. I know the difference in meaning and pronunciation between av and av, but whenever I want to pronounce either word, I have to stop, think, and then continue. It has not become "naturalized" in my spoken Portuguese (although in written Portuguese, it's quite simple.)In the city I live in, Fortaleza, there is an even more complicated situation with a single spelling (but different accents) that results in three pronunciations and meanings, one of which is quite rude. The word, unaccented, is coco. Along side this is the vulgar coc, and here in Fortaleza we have a river and a park named Coc. I don't have a problem with the differentiating the unaccented coco, but believe me, I'm very careful when I pronounce the name of the park! I stop, think twice, confirm silently, and then carefully proceed. All to avoid those giggles and snickers from native Brazilian friends if I err. The only diphtongized "o" I know is the one from Rio, in the word doze (douze). Very good! Usually the same people that say cisneifor cisne. Hello, I am wondering how to write a fraction in an English text: 1/2 or ?1/2 cup of sugar or cup of sugar.Thank you It's normal to use the smaller font size but on many devices this may be impossible or more difficult, so 1/2 is acceptable. Both are correct. Some character entry systems/keyboard software systems offer to automatically convert 1/2 into . Some don't. Last edited: Sep 27, 2021 If you can do so, use . It is generally easier to read, and if you are combining whole numbers and fractions, this can be very difficult to do using forms like 1/2. For example, it is easy to read 2 minutes, but it can become confusing when you have written 2 1/2 minutes.The format is only available for a handful of fractions. While I can find a character for , for example, I cannot find one for 15/16. I am wondering how to write a fraction in an English text: 1/2 or ?1/2 cup of sugar or cup of sugar. When typing (on a typewriter or a computer) the issue is fonts. As people above say, many fonts do not offer a small version for fractions.When writing by hand, this isn't a problem. You simply make the numbers smaller. Ascii symbols for halves, quarters, fifths, and eighths, can be called up using Alt + (ascii code). It is usually faster to type out the numbers than to look up and execute the ascii code. But sometimes space and appearance dictate that the smaller type is required.ALT Codes for Math Symbols: Vulgar Fractions The terminology for these fractions ("vulgar fractions") seems very judgemental to me. Fraction: 0.250Vugar Fraction: or 1/4 Fraction: 0.750Vulgar Fraction: or 3/4 Note: This site allows me to use the ascii symbol for 3/4 but not the ascii symbol for 7/8. So sometimes it is the software and sometimes it is the available font. I have a chart on my desk for these vulgar fractions. When I am typing a quote, space limitations sometimes require that I use the ascii code and not just type it out. Typing it out uses three spaces. The acii code uses one space. Typing the ascii code requires five keystrokes and I have to look at the chart on my desk. Most people would have to do some research to find the appropriate code. But some numbers are always going to be typed out: 5/9, 23/27, 19/41 etc. Last edited: Sep 27, 2021 The terminology for these fractions ("vulgar fractions") seems very judgemental to me. One old-fashioned meaning of "vulgar" is "common; ordinary". I think that is the meaning in "vulgar fractions".This meaning is used in linguistics: "vulgar Latin" was the language spoken by ordinary people in Rome in 1 AD. That's British English for what we call "common fractions" in US elementary schools. "Common fractions" is what we called it in school. It seems that "vulgar" is the new term. And "decimal fractions" is what we used to call numbers with a decimal point: 0.250, 0.875, etc. For me, having grown up in the UK, something is either a fraction (X / Y) or a decimal X.Y or 0.XYZ.The term "decimal fraction" is a contradiction in terms Dear all, it seems that on Internet many people write something like "I will be working there for a couple of months". Now, I always thought that continuous tenses are not meant to express duration, but rather being "in the process" at a particular point in time. That is one may not say "I will be working tomorrow for 2 hours", but one may say "I will be working tomorrow at 2PM". Is this correct or am I mistaking? Thanks, Igor. Hi, according to your example you can say instead, in my opinion : I will have been working tomorrow for 2 hours at (a specific time) Hi, according to your example you can say instead, in my opinion : I will have been working tomorrow for 2 hours at (a specific time) I think you are complicating the matter by phrasing it thus. You are saying something completely different. I will work tomorrow at 2pm or I will be working tomorrow at 2pm are both ok. So are I will work tomorrow for 2 hours or will be working for 2 hours. I will be working there for a couple months = I am going to be working there for a couple months.I can see how English must seem complicated to non-speakers, as putting the same words in different combinations can mean very different things. Last edited: May 19, 2010 I think you are complicating the matter by phrasing it thus. You are saying something completely different.I will work tomorrow at 2pm or I will be working tomorrow at 2pm are both ok. So are I will work tomorrow for 2 hours or will be working for 2 hours. I hope this helps. But my example is also correct , isnt it ? Maybe this (the fact of working tomorrow at a specific time) has several interpretations depending on the speaker . Last edited: May 19, 2010 I edited my post a few minutes later. English is tricky when using the same words in different combinations. I think both are ok, 'I will be working' can be used to emphasize the specific time. The following example may be easier: When you visit the cafe, I will be working there (for couple of months). At a specific time i.e when you visit the cafe. Last edited: May 19, 2010 I will be working there for a couple months = I am going to be working there for a couple months. OK, now the things are getting clearer. I did not know that Future Continuous has the "I am going to" meaning. I think both are ok, 'I will be working' can be used to emphasize the specific time. The following example may be easier: When you visit the cafe, I will be working there (for couple of months). At a specific time i.e when you visit the cafe. Yes, this is a textbook example and I am perfectly fine with it. A specific time is clearly meant in this case. However, sometimes it seems that people say "I will be working" without actually meaning a specific time. hi, bolzano217 my guess : I think 'will be doing' is used to announce one's future plan, making the plan sounds more established than 'be going to do', which makes the plan sound less committed to. An established plan/decision doesn't necessarily mean a fixed time schedule(a specific time) for everyone. When would you use one or the other? The future continuous is a verb tense that indicates that something will occur in the future and continue for an expected length of time. Another way to think of it is that the continuous tense is the situation, whereas the regular future tense is what will happen. Stative verbs are almost always regular future tense, while action verbs can be either regular future tense or future continuous, depending on if you are emphasizing the action for a period of time, or the state of working. Without context, there really isn't much difference between "I will work" and "I' will be working", but for example: "What are you doing tomorrow?""I think I'll go into work for a couple hours." - it's a decision your making now about what you've decided to do tomorrow. "Mike's party starts at 5 o'clock tomorrow. Do you want to come?""I'll be working a couple hours, but I'll come afterwards." - emphasizing that you'll be doing this activity for this period of time, maybe in relation to the party. When you visit the cafe, I will be working there (for couple of months). If you say "for a couple of months", this sounds funny to me. It would have to be "When you visit the cafe, I will have been working there for a couple of months". Hello there! I'd like to ask native Lithuanian and Latvian speakers about how they see the other language. For non-Baltic readers: Lithuanian and Latvian are two closely related languages, the only two of the Baltic branch of Indo-European languages. They are quite similar and share a great deal of vocabulary and grammar features, but not close enough to make conversation possible. I'm familiar with both, but I'm an outsider. It would be great if you could share stories, anecdotes, impressions, misunderstandings that are related to your neighbours' language. For instance, I've talked to several Latvians who seemed to have the impression that there are more Slavic (i.e. Russian-sounding) words in Lithuanian than in Latvian. (Many Lithuanians and Latvians are fluent in Russian.)In some cases, this impression is justified (the different-looking Latvian word may not be of Baltic origin, but is a German loanword): Lith. stalas / Ru. stol / Lat. galds (table)Lith. slyva / Ru. sliva / Lat. plme (plum) Lith. vynia / Ru. vishn'a / Lat. irsis (cherry)Lith. knyga / Ru. kniga / Lat. grmata (book) The Latvians who pointed out the examoles above were surprised that there are just as many examples of the opposite situation: the Latvian and Russian words are similar, but the Lithuanian one is totaly different: Lith. savait / Ru. nedel'a / Lat. neda (week)Lith. metai / Ru. god / Lat. gads (year)Lith. dantis / Ru. zub / Lat. zobs (tooth)Lith. taika / Ru. mir / Lat. miers (peace)Lith. peilis / Ru. nozh / Lat. nazis (knife) Dear AndrasBP, First of all, for both Latvians and Lithuanians national identity is a sensitive issue, so it is not difficult to hurt the feelings of people by trying to compare which language is more closely related to Russian. You should take into consideration that Lithuania was more heavily influenced by Slavs. A variant of Old Church Slavonic language (which is probably more related to Bulgarian that Russian) was the official language of Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Later on, Polish language became the official language of the state and by the beginning of XX century it was so widespread, that all the educated Lithuanians were speaking Polish. It is also heavily reflected in Lithuanian surnames, i.e. surnames beginning with -auskas are actually polonized or have Polish origin (as Polish surname -ski).Latvians, on the other hand, were probably more influenced by Germans. Therefore, it would not be surprising if Latvian vocabulary contained more words of German origin. Personally I always had the impression that Latvian language have more Slavic loan words, but this is probably a sort of "optical illusion": one doesn't think so much about their own language and tends to analyse foreign language more. Both Latvian and Lithuanian languages have dialects. For example, I am from the northern part of Lithuania which historically had a closer contact with Latvian speaking population. As a result, my dialect exhibits some phonetic features which are common in Latvian language, and I would not be surprised if we shared some common vocabulary. There is a good chance that I would be able to understand southern Latvian people much better that I do understand general Latvian language.Most anectodical situations I have encountered in Latvian language relates to their words having (sometimes) a completely different meaning. For example Lithuanian word briedis (moose) in Latvian is alnis (which sounds similar to Lithuanian elnias (deer)). A cat in Latvian is kakis, which in Lithuanian sounds like a word for "pooh". And when Latvians say they are ready (gatavs) in Lithuanian it means that they are drunk. There is a comprehensive list of differences between Lithuanian and Latvian in the Lithuanian Wikipedia (. As to the vocabulary, since Baltic and Slavic languages are related, there are numerous cases when a certain word exists in both groups (e. g. "galva") or is present in some languages and modified or absent in others. Quite often the inherited word is too different for laypeople to perceive it as related (e. g. "zub" "zobs" has a Lithuanian cognate "ambas" Proto-Balto-Slavic/ombos,_*ambas). In the above examples, the Lithuanian "stalas" is inherited, and "slyva", "vynia" and "knyga" are borrowed; among Latvian words "neda" is borrowed and the rest are inherited or at least cannot be proved to be borrowings. There are even cases when an original Baltic word is partly influenced by its Slavic counterpart, e. g. Latvian "etri", "four" has replaced its etymological initial "c" (cp. "ceturtais", "fourth") with the Russian/Belarusian "" (from "etyre"), in the Lithuanian "alavas", "tin" the second "a" comes from the Russian/Belarusian "olovo", cp. the inherited Latvian "alva".Speaking of the overall habit, the Lithuanian is considerably more archaic, but what constitutes the perceived character of the language is new in both Lithuanian and Latvian. Thus, Latvian has developed an initial stress, a staccato rhythm, has reduced many final vowels and is going to reduce the remaining ones, has modified the combinations of vowels + n/m in closed syllables (roka from *rank), developed new sibilants (c, dz, and d, new , from s' and z'). The literary Lithuanian has lost the ancient tones in unstressed syllables and the glottal stop, has developed the ubiquitous palatalization in consonants and the new sibilants i and di, shifted the old long to o ("storas" from "*stras"), developed new long a ("stalas") and ("senas"), shortened and modified the final acute vowels ("stalu" from "*staluo", cp. "tuo"). Both languages have created diphthongs uo (from *) and ie (from some ei {dievas/dievs} and ai {sniegas/sniegs}). I think neither language would have sounded familiar to a Baltic speaker of, say, two millennia ago. A variant of Old Church Slavonic language (which is probably more related to Bulgarian that Russian) was the official language of Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Wasn't it actually Old Belorussian (, Ruthenian and other names are also used) actually? Old Church Slavonic infuenced Old Belorussian in too little extent to call it the variant of such. In some cases, this impression is justified (the different-looking Latvian word may not be of Baltic origin, but is a German loanword):...Lith. knyga / Ru. kniga / Lat. grmata (book) Lat. grmata and Lith. gromata (letter) are from Russian (- letter, document, from Greek). Last edited by a moderator: May 12, 2015 I can probably understand half of the Lithuanian words, but that's not enough to actually understand context of what is being said. And to me Lithuanian doesn't sound similar to Russian at all. It might be sounding more similar to Ukrainian than Russian.It's the East-Latvia dialects that have most Russian-esque accent. In the Northern part Latvian sounds similar to Estonian. In Riga (especially among intelligence) the accent might be influenced by German language. I have noticed that Lithuanian pronunciation greatly varies among individuals. In particular, women tend to palatalize consonants perceptibly less than men and usually have a more pronounced sing-song intonation, which indeed makes their speech similar to the Ukrainian language. Men working on the radio have a more neutral pronunciation with a moderate palatalization and intonations, but casual men calling to the radio (especially, as I have noticed, from Kaunas) sometimes sound totally Russian with their strongly palatalized consonants and a very flat intonation.Update. And, by the way, I find this latter variant of Lithuanian to be one the most pleasant languages I have heard: it possesses all the pleasant features of the Russian pronunciation while lacking its unpleasant moments, plus the words in Lithuanian often sound better. Alas, the Lithuanian literary norm is much less euphonic to my ears. Last edited: Apr 25, 2014 Thank you very much for your interesting replies! Labai ai! Liels paldies! !Two of my Hungarian friends, who don't know Russian and who have visited all three Baltic countries, said that Lithuanian sounded like Russian and Latvian like Estonian Indeed, the similar stress pattern of Latvian and Estonian (always on the first syllable) might make them sound similar even though they are unrelated. On the other hand, Lithuanian and Russian both have mobile stress. By the way, does anyone know if the fixed stress in Latvian is an influence from Estonian/Livonian or Baltic German, or both, or neither?Sure, I meant the only two living members of the family. Last edited by a moderator: May 12, 2015 Original for Baltic languages is the mobile stress as in Lithuanian, but with tonal oppositions on both stressed and unstressed long syllables and with the glottal stop, as in Latvian (and western Lithuanian dialects), so the literary Lithuanian has preserved one aspect of the original accentual system, and the literary Latvian another. The localization of the stress on the first syllable characterizes the entire Latvian area, so it is most probably older than the German colonization and thus has to be ascribed to the Finnic influence. Prussian, with its heavy German superstrate, probably had the mobile stress until the end (as can be hypothesized from the placement of diacritics in the Late Medieval manuscripts). Interestingly, northern Russian dialects, which also arose on the Finnic substrate, show no signs of the stress shift to the first syllable and overall of any accentological peculiarities. Last edited: Apr 27, 2014 By the way, does anyone know if the fixed stress in Latvian is an influence from Estonian/Livonian or Baltic German, or both, or neither? Definitely from Livonians. Latvians are basically Balts mixed with Livonians. The literary Lithuanian has lost the ancient tones in unstressed syllables and the glottal stop, has developed the ubiquitous palatalization in consonants and the new sibilants i and di, I recall reading that there are some Lithuanian (maybe also Latvian) dialects in which *tj and *dj never shifted to i and di -- do you know if that's accurate? I recall reading that there are some Lithuanian (maybe also Latvian) dialects in which *tj and *dj never shifted to i and di -- do you know if that's accurate? Yes, the entire Samogitian area: this is actually the main difference of that dialectal group. Don't know about the Latvian: the literary language at least has *tj>*> and *dj>*d>. Prussian, however, preserved tj/dj or t'/d' (median, maldian, medione). I recall reading that there are some Lithuanian (maybe also Latvian) dialects in which *tj and *dj never shifted to i and di -- do you know if that's accurate? Latgalians have all of those sounds. Latgalians have all of those sounds. The Latgalian t' and d' are new. The question was about the ancient combinations tj and dj, reflexes of which can be seen e. g. in the Genitive Plural of some declension types of nouns: Lithuanian continues these consonant combinations as palatalized and d (bit bii, briedis briedi), while Latvian as (hard) and (bite biu, briedis brieu), both from proto-Baltic *bitj *bitjn and *breidjas *breidjn. Latgalian shares its reflexes with Latvian: bite biu, brds bru (Leikuma L 2003 Latgalu volda. 1 pp. 12 & 15 for the alternation tables). Two of my Hungarian friends, who don't know Russian and who have visited all three Baltic countries, said that Lithuanian sounded like Russian and Latvian like Estonian Indeed, the similar stress pattern of Latvian and Estonian (always on the first syllable) might make them sound similar even though they are unrelated. On the other hand, Lithuanian and Russian both have mobile stress. I would name two more common features of Latvian and Estonian: a very strong pitch accent (original in Latvian but secondary in Estonian) and the overall staccato rhythm (original but reinforced by the apocope in Estonian and secondary in Latvian). Lithuanian in principle has pitch accent as well, but it is so imperceptible for a foreigner that despite my 25 year long attempts I still am not able to distinguish between acuted and circumflected simple vowels (and in the diphthongs I perceive not the pitch but only the distinct articulation of the first and second elements). Also, frequent palatalized consonants, no chopped rhythm and the overall East Slavic feeling, which is much less perceptible in Latvian (but not in Latgalian) and totally absent in Estonian. The latter language sometimes sounds almost extraterrestrial to me, especially when spoken by women. Last edited by a moderator: May 12, 2015 Bulgarian and Serbian, eg, are two different Slavic languages. However, a dialectal continuum between them existed in the near past (up to 19th century). Bulgarian and Serbian split during the recent ten centuries. What about Lithuanian and Latvian? Of course, Lithuanian and Latvian are two diferent Baltic languages.Q1. Was there a dialectal continuum between them?Q2. Could you assess the time they split? The dialects laid to the ground of the literary Lithuanian and Latvian were two poles of the East Baltic continuum: most other idioms (Samogitian, later Curonian etc.) can be regarded as intermediate between them in one or another aspect. In particular, Lithuanian is the only Baltic language that continues the IE palatovelars as and , whereas other Baltic dialects (including the extinct West Baltic) show s and z, the only exception being the extinct dialect (East Galindian) that left traces in the hydronymy around Moscow (e. g. *Maj>Mozhaya, cp. Lithuanian maoji "the small one") and the borrowings to Baltic-Finnic (e. g. Finnish hampaa-/hammas from ambas "tooth" this, however, may be the evidence of a common Baltic stage before the changes >s and >z). Since the literary records of Baltic languages are very late, there is no way to estimate the divergence times. Obviously, West (e. g. Prussian) and East (e. g. Lithuanian and Latvian) Baltic split earlier than the two surviving languages. West Baltic has some particular similarities with Slavic, which suggests that the split into West and East Baltic may have been pretty ancient.Despite all this, the dialects from both branches in the Middle Ages remained rather close to each other, so that the less successful tribes were unproblematically assimilated to either Lithuanians (e. g. part of Prussians and Yotvingians, part of Curonians) or Latvians (another part of Curonians). Hello Lithuanian and Latvian language is one out of oldest languages in Europe, may in the world too. They are similar to sanskrit. People, who like sanskrit, like to study Lithuanian or Latvian too . But Lithuanians don't understand Latvian language and Latvians don't understand Lithuanians, because many same words has different meanings, like estonian and suomi. So they talk to each other using English or Russian. Lithuanian history is related to Poland and Russia. Latvian history is related to Germany, Sweden and Russia. Bulgarian and Serbian, eg, are two different Slavic languages. However, a dialectal continuum between them existed in the near past (up to 19th century). Bulgarian and Serbian split during the recent ten centuries. What about Lithuanian and Latvian? Of course, Lithuanian and Latvian are two diferent Baltic languages.Q1. Was there a dialectal continuum between them?Q2. Could you assess the time they split? It's not the case of Latvian and Lithuanian. As far as I know, Bulgarian and Serbian are mutually inteligible, while Latvians and Lithuanians, in order to understand eachother, have to communicate in Russian or any other language they both speak. Personally I always had the impression that Latvian language have more Slavic loan words, but this is probably a sort of "optical illusion": one doesn't think so much about their own language and tends to analyse foreign language more. Well, I just think that Latvian has a bit more Russian loanwords, maybe also because in Latvia the % of the Russophone population is much higher, than in Lithuania.However, some might not like the fact that people make comparisons between Latvian and Russian. Well, I just think that Latvian has a bit more Russian loanwords, maybe also because in Latvia the % of the Russophone population is much higher, than in Lithuania.However, some might not like the fact that people make comparisons between Latvian and Russian. I don't think the high percentage of Russophones has anything to do with the number of Russian loanwords in Latvian. Most of these loanwords were borrowedwell before the Soviet era, which is when the percentage of Russian speakers increased significantly. And yes, because of the present political situation and 20th c. history, it is very hard to talk about Latvian-Russian relations objectively, from a purely linguistic point of view. But educated Latvians and Lithuanians don't (can't) deny the fact that their languages are related to Russian and all other Slavic languages (and German, and Spanish, and Hindi) Lithuanian in the past had a considerable amount of Slavic borrowings, but most of them were cleaned from the literary language in the second half of the ninetienth century. There were even attempts to remove inherited words, like prayti, which looked suspiciously similar to their Slavic counterparts. I have never heard, however, of a similar movement in Latvian, that's why it has all those etri, domt, gatavs, dabt, zvant pa telefonu, cena bez paketa, etc.Also, sometimes the Latvian words just sound similar to the Russian ones, making people suspect a borrowing even when the word is not, like e. g. roka, zobs, vesels, gads, skolnieks, skolniece etc. And yes, because of the present political situation and 20th c. history, it is very hard to talk about Latvian-Russian relations objectively, from a purely linguistic point of view. But educated Latvians and Lithuanians don't (can't) deny the fact that their languages are related to Russian and all other Slavic languages (and German, and Spanish, and Hindi) It's also wrong to think that Latvia is full of Russophobes, this seems a stereotype that some people in Russia love to spread - take for example only the Russian business in Latvia, the fact that many people have no problem in using Russian in everyday life, the fact that Latvia at Eurovision most of the times gave 12 points to Russia. Returning to the language part, I was trying to explain why for some people, Latvian seems to have more Russian words than Lithuanian. Maybe my explanation is wrong, since I'm not a linguist. Hello, labdien, laba diena! Some questions regarding the 'dialect continuum' between Latvia and Lithuania (if you can call it that way): Is the dialect (or language) of Latgale somewhere 'in between' Latvian and Lithuanian? Is it difficult for Latvians from Riga to understand someone from, say, Rezekne in Latgale? And are people from Rezekne, or Daugavpils, for that matter, able to understand Lithuanian due to the proximity of their languages? Wikipedia articles about Latgalian in Latvian, Lithuanian and to a lesser extent in English contain comparative tables. Basically, Latgalian has a number of forms that are closer to Lithuanian, but this can be found between any related contiguous languages. Latgalian is peculiar in that it has experienced a profound vowel shift (somewhat similar to that in the extinct Prussian, though most probably not related) and has developed an opposition of plain/palatalized consonants (like Lithuanian). The pitch accent acustically is closer to the Latvian model. The articulation varies among speakers: on the Latvian radio Latgalian programs some people speak pretty close to the Latvian pattern, while some others (including the male presenter and one of the female presenters, all with local names and surnames) sound as if they were Russians speaking Latvian (strong palatalization and Russian intonations). Thank you, paldies! Latgalian (if that's the correct English spelling) does seem to have experienced a vowel shift that seems to distinguish it quite a lot from both (Standard) Latvian and Lithuanian:- Latvian & Lithuanian "laba" - Latgalian: "loba"- Latvian & Lithuanian "diena" - Latgalian: "dna" And are people from Rezekne, or Daugavpils, for that matter, able to understand Lithuanian due to the proximity of their languages? Being fluent in Lithuanian and familiar with standard Latvian, I doubt that Latgalian is understandable to Lithuanians. I have never heard spoken Latgalian, but judging from Latgalian texts on Wikipedia, it is clear that while Latgalian may be closer to Lithuanian in some aspects, it's still pretty distant from Lithuanian and much closer to standard Latvian, although the vowel differences probably make it sound weird to the untrained Latvian ear. Hello, I am Latvian who has learned Lithuanian at quite high level.First I have to say that if Latvian or Lithuanian is completely new to the second Baltic language, than it would be almost impossible to have dialog between those two. They would be able to say hallo to each other, but after that it would be very hard. Written language is much easier in the beginning. After I started to study Lithuanian I was able to read some texts in Lithuanian quite fast. I think that biggest problem for Latvian is the Lithuanian pitch accents, which can make some Lithuanian spoken words unrecognizable even if Latvian could definitely understand that word in written form. Of course when you get used to Lithuanian accent it becomes much easier.In my opinion I would say that about 60 % of Latvian and Lithuanian words have some common roots. It is possible to get some basic understanding of Lithuanian in short period of time, but if you want to speak correctly, than it would take a lot of time.There are some words in Latgalian language who is more similar to Lithuanian for example:latviskilatgaliskilietuviskiapkrtapleikaplinklejupzamynemyniekvydviduj(e)vienmrvysodvisad(a)ikdienas-kasdnys-kasdienisvijisjisviajeijiuni irjauniete, meitenemrgamergina, mergaimenesaimeeimadzimtenetvainetvynprieknieksviersinksvirininkasaustrumireitirytairietumivokorivakaraiaukstssoltsaltapostsvuorgivargasrindaaiaeilkdaklaidaklaidalappusepuslopapuslapisgalotneviersyunevirnstabsstulpsstulpas I think its little bit easier for Latgalian to learn Lithuanian, but they still need to put a lot of effort.If we compare mutual intelligibility between Baltic languages (Latvian and Lithuanian) and mutual intelligibility between Slavic languages (for example Russian and Serbian) than I would say that Slavic languages are more similar than Baltic languages. Thank you, ahvalj, for the radio links, it's very interesting. Latgalian sounds like an over-palatalized Latvian with shifted vowels. If we compare mutual intelligibility between Baltic languages (Latvian and Lithuanian) and mutual intelligibility between Slavic languages (for example Russian and Serbian) than I would say that Slavic languages are more similar than Baltic languages. Thank you, hargh, your glossary is really interesting.By the way, is it very rare for Latvians to learn (or at least to be interested in) Lithuanian? What is the usual reaction of Lithuanians when you tell them you're Latvian? Last edited by a moderator: May 12, 2015 Yes its rare. I know very few Latvians who have learned Lithuanian. Usually Latvians use English or Russian in order to communicate with Lithuanians.Usually Lithuanians are very friendly to me and also quite surprised. Some of them say that it sounds like I am from Samogitia (The region where dialect of Lithuanian language is spoken) There are also some who had sad to me that I am sounding little bit angry when speaking Lithuanian. I think that's because I am stressing words in a wrong way. Hello, labdien, laba diena! Some questions regarding the 'dialect continuum' between Latvia and Lithuania (if you can call it that way): Is the dialect (or language) of Latgale somewhere 'in between' Latvian and Lithuanian? Is it difficult for Latvians from Riga to understand someone from, say, Rezekne in Latgale? And are people from Rezekne, or Daugavpils, for that matter, able to understand Lithuanian due to the proximity of their languages? I'm from Riga, and I can understand Latgalian very well. I would say the difference is not much bigger than for example difference between American English and the English spoken in Ireland. I'm from Riga, and I can understand Latgalian very well. I would say the difference is not much bigger than for example difference between American English and the English spoken in Ireland. Thank you, that is interesting. Listening to some of the Latgalian programs on Latvijas Radio my impression was that Latgalian sounded much more similar to Latvian than to Lithuanian but I wasn't quite sure... I do not see anything sensitive in it! We are not looking at each other as the representatives of other nations, we are same folk. Most of native Latvians know Lithuanian as a dialect and we understand it perfectly but all fun kick in when we mix our dialects. By the way our nations has many of old stuff dialects . For example - Semigolian, Curic,Curric - livv(funny one) Latgolian (it is a language different from central latvian like Lithuanian),Semogitian, Selonian (hard to find in these days but still in use), Central Latvian - it is only few those whom I and my familly been using! In different parts of nation one word has different names and it is a very common thing in our languages specifically in Latvia. If you understand only the central Latvian I can safely say that one of your parents is not of nativ origin! This comparative table of translations can be usef