

Consonants

stops: p, b, t, d, k, g

affricates: tʃ, dʒ

fricatives: f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, χ, γ, h

nasals: m, n

lateral and flap: l, r

semi-vowels: j, w

Labialized /k/ and /g/ occur: [k^o, g^o]; also a hamza-like interruption where elision of a velar fricative has taken place: *mo'a* ('very').

For mutations see below.

Vowels

i, e, a, o, u

/i/ and /ɪ/ are represented by y.

The letter *e* covers /eɪ, ɛ, ə/; *o* covers /oɪ, ɔ, ɔɪ/; *u* covers /uɪ, y, ʌ/.

There are several diphthongs.

Mutation

There are four types of juncture mutation in Cornish, with traces of a fifth:

- (a) Soft mutation (lenition): /b/ → /v/, /d/ → /ð/, /m/ → /v/, /k/ → /g/, /gV/ → /V/, etc. As in other Celtic languages, this mutation takes place after the definite article *an* in feminine singular nouns, in masculine plural nouns denoting persons, and elsewhere: e.g.

mam 'mother': *an vam* 'the mother'; dha vam 'thy mother'

dyw 'two', bre 'hill': *an dhyw vre* 'the two hills'

bugeleth 'shepherds': *an vugeleth* 'the shepherds'

- (b) Aspiration: /k/ → /h/, /p/ → /f/, /t/ → /θ/, etc.: e.g. *pen* 'head': *ow fen* 'my head'; *tyr* 'country': *ow thyr* 'my country'.
- (c) Nasalization: e.g. /d/ → /n/: *dor* 'earth': *an nor* 'the earth'.

A hard mutation: /b/ → /p/, /d/ → /t/, /g/ → /k/ (i.e. the converse of lenition) also occurs, and certain particles and adverbs generate a mixed mutation, e.g. /b/ → /f/, /d/ → /t/. This mutation is known as provection.