Languages Are Too Intimate: My Failures In Conlanging

Lang Blog #1 | Aspen S. H. | 12 August 2025

In case you don't know, I am a conlanger. I occasionally sit myself down, ponder about phonemic inventories and grammatical syntax, ask myself how ideas can be expressed in unorþodox ways, and mutter phonemes to myself in a dark office. I find languages to be extremely fascinating, and so I of course want to try and make my own. I have use. I have reason. It's worþ bragging, and someone once said I could write a þesis in college on þis hypoþetical language of mine. Pretty cool pretty cool, I'll say.

I've spent þe last þree years trying to invent languages, writing systems, and accomplish þe lofty goal of having an entire language of my own creation. Over þose years, I've learned þat you mustn't just toss sounds into a blender and hope for þe best, nor stumble mindlessly over grammatical concepts. It helps to be aware of oþer languages, natural or constructed, and to avoid beginner mistakes. So what do I have to show for it? Noþing.

As of þe 12þ of August, 2025, I've successfully started zero languages. Not þat þere isn't anyþing, but more þat my languages never got to a point where I could just expand þeir lexicons and am no longer working on þings like phonology (yuck). Phrhëhdish, Plezhonian, Proto-Plezdrakonik, and Aspenni. Þese languages (one of which þis site is þe namesake of) each never got furþer þan phonology and þe most basic grammar. Most of þem actually never even made it þrough phonology before being dropped! What's þe problem? Þey never felt like languages.

I don't know if it's just me, or if oþer conlangers feel þis too, but whenever I coin a word, it doesn't feel legitimate. It doesn't feel like a real word. It's goofy, has weird sounds, and means someþing I have no need to have a word for yet (but will in þe future; like "dirt" for example). Take þe word *saf*, which is Aspenni for air, gas, or wind. I feel no connection to it. Why in þe fuck do I call þe wind, *saf*? Doesn't make sense, and I know why. It was a random syllable, I remember, and I arbitrarily connected it to its definition. Perhaps in time it'll be more natural, and þat's probably my problem in actuality. Let's've anoþer example; *kaduzhyet*, a neo-Aspenni word used like an adjective or noun to describe a very dear and beloved person. Because I actually've used þat word, said it to anoþer person, and I used it in a sentence, "Tobyo kaduzhyet, lye," it feels so much more real þan *saf*. If you're curious, þat phrase means "Tobyo, my love," *lye* being a possessive first-person pronoun, "my."

Upon writing þis wee blog, I've realized my problem isn't so much about languages being *too* intimate, but þat my conlanging isn't intimate *enough*. I had no reason to coin a word for þe wind, but I did for þe love of my life. I realize þere's a reason seasoned conlangers say, "translate texts to build vocabulary," because you only need þe words you

use, and not þe words you þink you might need. I remember once spending days coining dirt related words for an obscure, Minecraft-based conlang because I was, for whatever reason, extremely concerned about þe difference between stone and *a* stone, gravel and sand, and when a boulder becomes a stone, becomes a rock, becomes a pebble, becomes a grain of sand, and finally becomes a spec of dust. Minecraft only distinguishes between dirt, sand, gravel, and stone, *and* I had no intent on writing about dirt in þat conlang.

Frankly, my problem is þat I go, "I want a language! Let's make a language! Let's put random sounds togeþer! Ooh! Let's coin random words cuz' I actually have no clue what I'm doing! Lol!" Guah! Þat's not how you conlang! I get so hung up on þe actual activity of conlanging, I forget þe whole reason *to* conlang in þe first place. Writing þis has given me a sense of clarity þough. Þis blog is titled, "Languages Are Too Intimate: My Failures In Conlanging," but really should be titled, "Conlanging Is an Art, and Art Needs Soul."