SEATTLE CONLANG CLUB

Zine

THE SCC'S

CONSTRUCTED PIDGINS

UDANO MOR SENDOK & MORE ON PAGE 19

FOREWORD

Thanks for checking out the second installment of the Seattle Conlang Club Zine! It has been six months since our first one, and we are excited to share what our members have been up to!

In this installment, you'll read about one of our club's favorite activities, the pidgin games, as well as our first ever conlang relay, the history of Esperanto, and the ethics of conlanging. We've also got a puzzle, a guide, a game, conlang writeups and more! All of the articles were submitted by club members.

Thank you to everyone who reads our zine, and thank you to all our zine contributors who make this possible!

ABOUT THE CLUB

If you'd like to join the Seattle Conlang Club, check out our website at conlang.club or join our Discord at conlang.club/discord.

Discord server QR code

We welcome members of all levels of linguistics knowledge, from absolute beginners to seasoned conlanging veterans. Most of our members are from Seattle or Washington State, but anyone is welcome.

We usually meet remotely over Discord, where we often discuss and create conlangs, as well as play our own immersive pidgin-making game, Pidgin Craft (conlang.club/pidgin). We hope to see you there!

SINCERELY, THE SCC ZINE CONTRIBUTORS: FREDERICK, DEJVID, LOGAN, AND FINN

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS? WANT CONLANG CRITIQUES?

Join our Discord at conlang.club/discord or
email Club President Frederick Chan at fredchan@conlang.club

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ESPERANTO IN 20TH CENTURY AMERICA
BY DEJVID

Esperanto was first proposed as an international second language in the book *Unua Libro* by Dr. Zamenhof published in 1887. Since then Esperanto has spread across the globe. In the previous edition of the Seattle Conlang Club Zine, Frederick introduced us to the spread of Esperanto in Japan in the nineteen hundreds. In this article, we'll look at the other side of the Pacific Ocean, at the USA.

The first appearance of Esperanto in the US press was actually in the very same year that *Unua Libro* was published, 1887. It was in a German language newspaper called *Der Deutsche Correspondent,* and it invited readers to get their first tastes of Volapuk's new "competitor" by reading a soon to be published brochure. The article uses Dr. Zamenhof's pseudonym, "Dr. Esperanto", and it has Dr. Esperanto's claim that studying the brochure is enough to become understood in the "new world language".

The first report of Esperanto in a major New York newspaper was *The New York Sun* in 1891, 4 years after the *Der Deutsche Correspondent* article. The article starts "Germany Has a New Universal Language in Lieu of Volapuk" and describes its explosive popularity in Germany and its relative ease versus Volapuk. *The New York Sun* wouldn't mention Esperanto again for another 10 years. *The New York Times* picked up the story for the first time in 1897. That article relays Zamenhof's call for international discussion about the need for a lingua franca, and his invitation for people to submit proposals about which language should be adopted.

One of the first Esperanto societies in the US was started in 1905, the aptly named Esperanto Society, in Boston. Within just another year a second club popped up in the same city, marking the start of a period of intense

enthusiasm and organization around Esperanto in the US. Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology both had their own Esperanto societies by 1906. In 1906 *The New York Sun* wrote "Bostonians are attending the [Esperanto] classes which have sprung up all over the city", and that Philadelphia also had "a marked interest in the new universal language". They also wrote that students considered Esperanto to be "much nearer the ideal than Volapuk or any of its predecessors".

The first World Esperanto Congress hosted in America was the 6th WEC meetup in 1910. Not only was this first one hosted in America, it was the first one hosted outside of Europe, serving as a milestone for the international spread of the new language. The highlight of the meetup for some was a performance of Shakespere's *As You Like It* (*Kiel plaĉas al vi*), translated into Eserpanto by prominent American Esperantist Ivy Kellerman Reed, and performed by a local theater troupe. The US also hosted the next meetup 4 years later, as well as the 57th meeting in 1972.

A famous American writer who mentioned Esperanto is Isaac Asimov in his short story *Homo Sol* (1940), which envisions a future Earth whose inhabitants receive a diplomatic invitation from extraterrestrial beings. The aliens "delivered the invitation before their parliament in their own language–a simple one they call Esperanto." Although a modest mention, it shows the perception that some had about the future of Esperanto.

Esperanto made an appearance at the white house in a 1951 article from the daily column by Eleanor Roosevelt titled *My Day*. In it she discusses contract bridge player Ely Culbertson's proposal to create a police force within the United Nations. The proposal also suggests that this police force should adopt "a universal language, such as Esperanto". Although Roosevelt didn't completely disregard the idea of a UN police force, she writes that she has "very little interest" in a constructed

"MY DAY"—By Eleanor Roosevelt
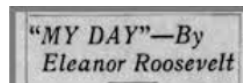
international auxlang, believing that English is already on its way to becoming the universal second language.

The largest Esperanto organization in the US was founded in 1952 as the Esperanto League for North America (ELNA). Prior to its founding, the largest American Esperanto organization at the time was suffering due to its leadership promulgating McCarthyist and anti-communist fears, which lead to the ostracization from the larger Universal Esperanto Association. In response, the ELNA was created, and it had essentially replaced the previous organization within 3 years.

A famous American actor who used Esperanto is William Shatner. Shortly before his work on Star Trek, Shatner starred in a feature length Esperanto horror film called *Incubus* (1966). Director Leslie Stevens said the reason for making the horror film in Esperanto was to give it an otherworldly quality, which could speak to the lack of familiarity that the American populace had with Esperanto at the time. On the other hand, the film makers claim on the *Special Features* section of the DVD that the reason was for the perceived greater international audience. Shatner, Stevens, and the rest of the crew spoke no Esperanto, so the dialogue was unimpressive and the pronunciation was laughable to Esperantists. The movie was ultimately a flop.
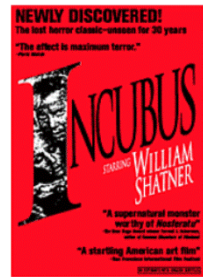
The final fate of Esperanto is untold, and today there are vibrant Esperanto communities across the nation. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny that the popularity of Esperanto and the public's level of awareness of international auxiliary languages has waxed and waned over the last century. These days, many avid Esperantists like myself are happy to learn and use the language without a genuine expectation of a Fina Venko, a time when Esperanto is globally adopted as a second language. But I can't help wondering what it would have been like to live at a time when Esperanto was taken seriously enough to have its adoption by the UN be discussed in US congress, or for filmmakers to consider it as a viable option for reaching larger audiences, even if erroneously.
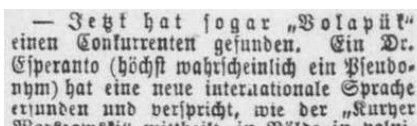
ESPERANTO EN 20-A JARCENTO AMERIKO

BY DEJVID

Esperanto estis unue proponita kiel internacia dua lingvo en la libro *Unua Libro* de D-ro Zamenhof, eldonita en 1887. Ekde tiam Esperanto disvastiĝis tra la tuta mondo. En la antaŭa eldono de la Revueto de la Seatla Klubo pri Artefaritaj Lingvoj, Frederick rakontis pri la disvastiĝon de Esperanto en Japanio en la 20-a jarcento. En ĉi tiu artikolo, ni rigardos la alian flankon de Pacifiko, ĉe Usono.

La unua apero de Esperanto en usona gazeto estis en la sama jaro, kiam *Unua Libro* estis eldonita, 1887. Ĝi estis en germanlingva revuo nomita *Der Deutsche Correspondent*, kaj ĝi invitis legantojn akiri siajn unuajn provojn de la nova "konkuranto" de Volapuko per legado de eldonota broŝuro. La artikolo uzas la alinomo de D-ro Zamenhof, "D-ro Esperanto", kaj laŭ D-ro Esperanto, studi la broŝuron sufiĉas por ke oni komprenu vin en la "nova mondlingvo".

La unua novaĵo pri Esperanto en grava novjorka gazeto estis The New York Sun en 1891, 4 jarojn post la artikolo Der Deutsche Correspondent. La artikolo komenciĝas "Germanio Havas Novan Universalan Lingvon por anstataŭigi Volapukon" kaj priskribas ĝian rapidan kreskon de populareco en Germanio kaj ĝian relativan facilecon kompare kun Volapuko. La gezeto *The New York Sun* ne plu menciis Esperanton dum pliaj 10 jaroj. La New York Times diskutis pri Esperanto unuafoje en 1897. Tiu artikolo rakontas, ke Zamenhof instigis homojn el diversaj landoj pripensi la bezonon de komuna lingvo kaj invitis ilin proponi, kiu lingvo estu elektita.

Unu el la unuaj Esperantaj kluboj en Usono fondiĝis en Bostono en 1905. Ene de nur alia jaro aperis dua klubo en la sama urbo, markante la komencon de periodo de intensa entuziasmo kaj organizo ĉirkaŭ Esperanto. Universitato Harvard kaj Masaĉuseca Instituto de Teknologio ambaŭ havis

siajn proprajn Esperanto-societojn antaŭ 1906. En 1906 The New York Sun skribis ke bostonanoj ĉeestas la Esperanto kursojn, kiuj aperis tra la tuta urbo, kaj ke Filadelfio ankaŭ montris klaran intereson pri la nova universala lingvo. Ili ankaŭ skribis, ke studentoj konsideras Esperanton "multe pli proksima al la idealo ol Volapuko aŭ iu ajn el ĝiaj antaŭuloj".

La unua Universala Kongreso de Esperanto gastigita en Ameriko estis la 6-a Universala Kongreso en 1910. Ne nur ĝi estis la unua en Ameriko, sed ankaŭ la unua ekster Eŭropo, servanta kiel grava paŝo por la internacia disvastigo de la nova lingvo. La kulminaĵo de la renkontiĝo por kelkaj kunsidanoj estis prezentado de *Kiel plaĉas al vi*, tradukita al Esperanto de elstara usona esperantisto Ivy Kellerman Reed, kaj prezentita de loka teatra trupo. Usono ankaŭ gastigis la venontan renkontiĝon 4 jarojn poste, kaj de la 57-a en 1972.

Fama usona verkisto, kiu menciis Esperanton, estas Isaac Asimov en sia novelo Homo Sol (1940), kiu antaŭvidas estontan Teron, kies loĝantoj ricevas diplomatian inviton de eksterteraj estaĵoj. La eksterteranoj "faris la inviton antaŭ sia parlamento en sia propra lingvo—simpla lingvo, kiun ili nomas Esperanto." Kvankam malgranda mencio, ĝi montras la vidpunkton, kiun iuj havis pri la estonteco de Esperanto.

Esperanto aperis ĉe la Blanka Domo en artikolo de 1951 el la ĉiutaga artikolode Eleanor Roosevelt titolita Mia tago. En ĝi ŝi diskutas la proponon de kontrakta briĝludanto Ely Culbertson krei komunan polictrupon ene de la Unuiĝintaj Nacioj. La propono ankaŭ sugestas, ke tiu ĉi polictrupo alprenu "universalan lingvon, kiel Esperanton". Kvankam Roosevelt ne tute ignoris la ideon de UN-polico, ŝi skribas ke ŝi havas "tre malmulte da intereso" pri planlingvo, kredante ke la angla estos la universala dua lingvo.
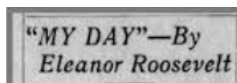
La plej granda Esperanto-organizo en Usono fondiĝis en 1952 kiel Esperanto-Ligo por Nordameriko (ELNA). Antaŭ sia fondiĝo, la tiama plej granda usona Esperanto-organizo suferis pro sia gvidado disvastiganta kontraŭkomunisman timon kontraŭ maldekstruloj, kiuj kondukis al la malligo de la pli granda Universala Esperanto-Asocio. Rezulte, la ELNA kreiĝis, kaj ĝi ĉefe anstataŭigis la antaŭan organizon post ne pli ol tri jaroj.

Fama usona aktoro kiu uzis Esperanton estas William Shatner. Baldaŭ antaŭ sia laboro pri Star Trek, Shatner ĉefrolis en plenlonga Esperanta horora filmo nomita *Incubus* (1966). Reĝisoro Leslie Stevens diris, ke la kialo por fari la hororan filmon en Esperanto estis doni al ĝi alimondan kvaliton, kiu povus esprimi la nekonatecon kiun la usona loĝantaro havis kun Esperanto tiutempe. Aliflanke, la produktoroj asertas sur a sekcio de specialaj aldonaĵoj sur la DVD ke la kialo estis ĉar ili kredis ke ĝi atingus pli grandan internacian spektantaron. Shatner, Stevens kaj la resto de la skipo ne sciis Esperanton, do la dialogo estis malimpona kaj la prononco estis ridinda por esperantistoj. La filmo estis finfine malsukceso.
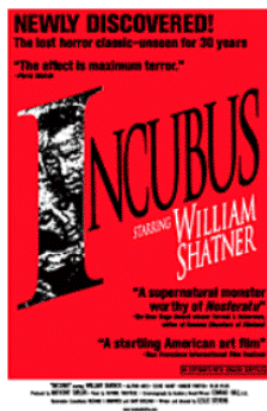
La fina sorto de Esperanto estas nekonata, kaj hodiaŭ ekzistas viglaj Esperanto-komunumoj tra la lando. Tamen, estas malfacile nei, ke la populareco de Esperanto kaj la nivelo de konscio de la publiko pri internaciaj helplingvoj kreskis kaj malkreskis dum la lasta jarcento. Nuntempe multaj fervoraj esperantistoj kiel mi ĝojas lerni kaj uzi la lingvon sen vera atendo de Fina Venko, tempo kiam Esperanto estas tutmonde adoptita kiel dua lingvo. Sed mi ne povas ne scivoli, kiel estus vivi en tempo, kiam Esperanto estis sufiĉe serioze prenita por ke ĝia akcepto fare de UN estu diskutata en la usona kongreso, aŭ ke filmistoj konsideru ĝin kiel ebla elekto por atingi pli vastan publikon, eĉ se erare.
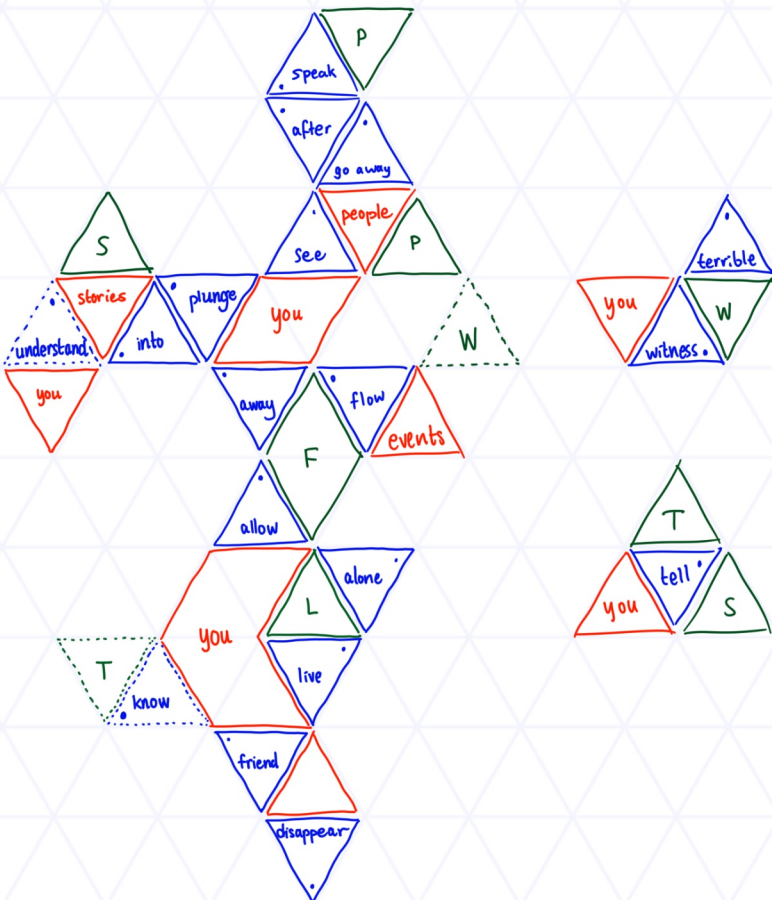
SCC CONLANG RELAY

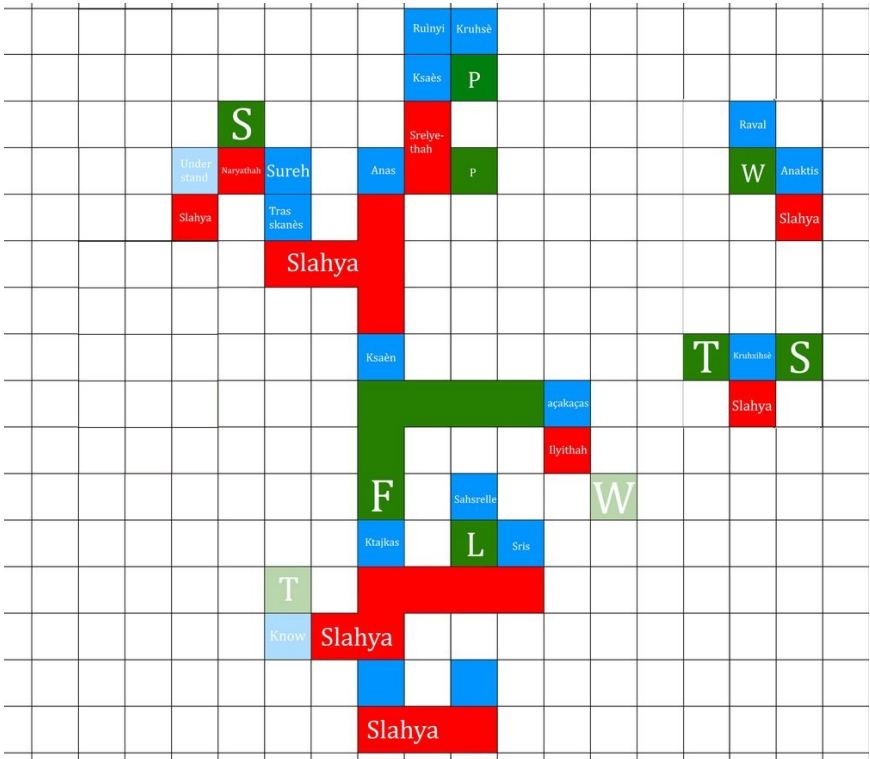## FREDERICK 〉FINN 〉DEJVID 〉LOGAN 〉LONDON

A Conlang Relay is a Telephone-like game where the first player translates a text passage into their conlang, and gives it to the next person to translate into their own conlang, and so on. Once the last person is reached, it is translated back to English to see if the meaning of the original text survived.

STARTING TEXT

When you live alone you no longer know what it is to tell a story: the plausible disappears at the same time as the friends. You let events flow by too: you suddenly see people appear who speak and then go away; you plunge into stories of which you can't make head or tail: you'd make a terrible witness.

— *from* Nausea *by Jean-Paul Sartre*

Ruinyi · Kruhsè · Ksaès · P · Srelye-thah · S · Understand · Naryathah · Sureh · Anas · P · Raval · W · Anaktis · Slahya · Trasskanès · Slahya · Slahya · Ksaèn · T · Kruhxihsé · S · açakaças · Slahya · Ilyithah · F · Sahsrelle · W · Ktajkas · L · Sris · T · Know · Slahya · Slahya

◀ STEP 1
### TRILANGLE (FREDERICK)

Originally created in Summer 2021 as an SCC project and afterwards continued by Frederick, Trilangle is a non-linear, first order logic-based engilang written using colorful tessellating triangles. Red triangles represent objects, Blues are verb-like events, and Greens are used for pronoun-like indexation. The Trilangle guide is available online at 🌐trilangle.conlang.club.

STEP 2 ▲
SEKTALE-SQUARELANG (FINN)

Finn transposed Trilangle into squares while replacing the words with vocabulary from his longtime conlang Sektale, an *a priori*, polysynthetic language that makes use of a large set of word roots that can be suffixed with particles to systematically create nouns, verbs, and adverbs.

DEJVID'S INTERPRETATION

You would be a terrible witness. You plunge into stories that you don't understand, and that you didn't know you could tell. Your friend disappears. You live alone and are lonely. You allow events to flow away from you. You see people speak and then they leave.
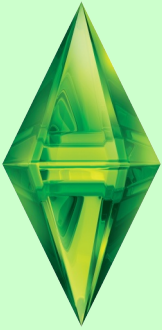
STEP 3: SÍHM LÌHSH (DEJVID)

Inspired by the gibberish spoken by the characters in *The Sims* game series, Dejvid created Simlish, a conlang with grammatical features inspired by its game mechanics— Verbs inflect for household membership and degree of free will, nouns are classified by interactability, and the vocabulary features words like **ihr** *'have an emotionally charged reaction to something.'*

Dejvid's Simlish in **bold**. *Glosses and English translations below by Logan.*

Mùv ahbi sef im blesbi krir, seb muvjál ahbi sef im sen havgab.
Crime you (distant future) (reactive) (see) if, bad witness you (distant future) (reactive) be then.
"If you ever see a crime, then you will be a witness."

ShÌz ahbi bub ihdlei so ahbi gwin gwig ihg ahbi bub dgut so ahbi gwig.
Story you don't understand/know that you (are able to) talk about you not know that you talk.
"Story you don't understand where you're able to talk about knowledge of you talking."

Dgóuhsh ahbi ten so sherb im ihdg.
Friend you met (relativizer) (past tense) (emotional reactive) disappear.
"A friend that you met disappeared."

Bèrei ahbi fif so sen ùm.
Family you belong.to that is (one-party)
"Your family is just you."

Ahbi seb ir.
You bad feel.
"You feel bad."

Sartre would probably have an emotionally charged reaction to being told he was a Sim ▶

Ahbi bihsh usfet faet im gwig.
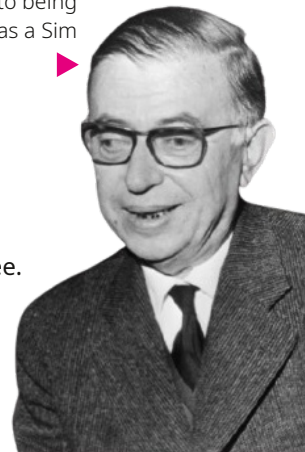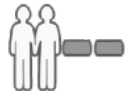You (casual) (go to work) and (reactive) interact socially.
"You casually go to work and chat."

Ih síhm kuhn arfol so gwig so ahbi bles.
(A few) Sim (immediate future) (leave) that (interact) you see.
"You see a few Sims leave."

STEP 4: ZETASANITA (LOGAN)

Zetasanita is Logan's first conlang, created during an SCC meeting using the rules of the r/conlangs Speedlang Challenge 22. It has a robust system of determiners encoding definiteness and quantity, as well as a direct-inverse morphosyntactic alignment that assigns NPs with higher animacy as the agent of verbs— superhumans like gods, aliens, and celestial bodies are considered the most animate. Check out Logan's article on page 13 for more info!

Logan's Zetasanita in **bold**. *English translations below by London. No gloss was created during the translation.*

Ve fi fo-mu Mo fy Xymo, vena qony zu-mu Mo Fono.
"If you saw a crime, then you would be a witness."

Qopi pu fota-mu Mo Kesitata za fi na tona-mafuvata-mu ky pe pu kufu-mu za fi na mafuvata-mu.
"You don't know what you are saying."

Fi xu fupy-mu fymu Nopiko Mo za fi tupakanati-ke fymu Nopiko.
"You met with your friend who disappeared."

Fi zu-ki Mo qamu Zynota, za xu fi zu-mu qamu tisa Zynota Mo.
"They were your family, but you're the only one left."

Fi pano nuny Mo.
"You feel bad."

Fi mifeqe-mu Mo sumu Mytako me fupyta-mu Mo.
"They got to your workplace and mingled among the group."

Fi fo-mu mizyno-ka Nota Mo.
"You saw them leave the group."

Speedlang challenges, like the one Zetasanita followed, can inspire you with features you might not normally consider when conlanging ▼

Grammatical constraints:

- Have word order be governed primarily by something other than `scramble(S,O,V)` (e.g., direct/inverse animacy/empathy hierarchy[4], topic/focus/whatever-prominence[5], &c.[6]).
- Detail how the language expresses phasal polarity[7].
- Have fewer than two (2) xor greater than three (3) tense/aspect[8] morphemes.
  - (*bonus*) Same restriction on mood/evidentiality morphemes.

STEP 5: LAJA (LONDON)

London has been working on Laja since mid-2024, with major changes in between. Although primarily a romance-based conlang with some Germanic inspiration, Laja has pronominal tense marking— unusual for a romlang.

London's Laja in **bold**. *Glosses and English translations below by Frederick.*

Sa	**ta**	**v-eś**	**porsoun-a**	**fas-or**	**vilon-a,**
if	you.PST	see-2SG	person-INDF.SG	do-INF	crime-INDF.SG,

tein		**testi-or**		**se.**
you.COND		witness-INF		be.2SG.

"If you see a person do a crime, then you would be a witness."

Tein	**ni**	**compr-es**	**di cocuo**		**tei**	**di-es.**
you-COND	not	understand-2SG	of INDF.REL		you-PRS	say-2SG.

"You would not understand what you are saying."

Ta	**coum**	**amic-e**		**to**	**ci**	**disparait-ae**	**lei**
you-PST	with	friend-DEF.SG		all	who	disappear-3SG	he-PST

recontr-es.
meet-2SG.

"You were with your whole friend, who disappeared, and who you met."

Ìl	**famill-e**		**to**	**e,**		**copassa**	**sel**
he-PRS	family-DEF.SG		all	therefore,		however	only

e		**tei**	**ci**	**ex-es**		**auc**.
therefore		you-PRS	who	be.there-2SG		still.

"Thus, he is the whole family, but only you are still there."

Tei	**te**	**sen-es**	**maladete.**
you-PRS	you-OBJ	feel-2SG	badly.

"You feel bad."

Lei	**eu**	**area**	**di**	**trava**	**to**	**arriv-ei**	**ei**
he-PST	to	area	of	work	all	arrive-3SG	and

lei	**dein**	**cole**		**di**	**popel**	**mes-ae.**
he-PST	inside	group-DEF.SG		of	people	mingle-3SG.

"He arrived at everyone's workplace and mingled with the group of people inside."

Ta	**lis**	**v-eś**	**di**	**col-e**		**kit-is.**
you-PST	they-OBJ	see-2SG	of	group-DEF.SG		leave-3PL.

"You see them leave the group."

CONLANG RELAY RESULTS

There you have it: the conclusion of the first ever SCC Conlang Relay! In just five steps, the SCC's version of Nausea has created a completely new OC: the unnamed friend who is your whole family, and who left you behind after mingling at everyone's workplace. Will we ever uncover what happened to our mysterious friend? Find out next time in the next SCC Conlang Relay!

ORIGINAL: NAUSEA BY JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

When you live alone you no longer know what it is to tell a story: the plausible disappears at the same time as the friends. You let events flow by too: you suddenly see people appear who speak and then go away; you plunge into stories of which you can't make head or tail: you'd make a terrible witness.

FINAL: NAUSEA BY THE SEATTLE CONLANG CLUB

If you see a person do a crime, then you would be a witness. You would not understand what you are saying. You were with your whole friend, who disappeared, and who you met. Thus, he is the whole family, but only you are still there. You feel bad. He arrived at everyone's workplace and mingled with the group of people inside. You see them leave the group.

WANT TO JOIN THE NEXT SCC CONLANG RELAY?

Visit ⊕conlang.club/discord to join our Discord server to be notified when the next relay starts! Players get two weeks to translate and hand off their passage to the next person. If the relay's already started, don't worry— we might be able to fit you in before it ends! 🐌

ZETASANITA: MY FIRST CONLANG
BY LOGAN LEMIEUX

Having not created a language since middle school, I set out to create one to be ready for the Conlang Relay after joining this club. This is an account of my experience creating Zetasanita.

"Zetasanita" (/zetaʃaɲita/) was the first word I added to the language Zetasanita. I wanted to invoke a Pacific Islander feel, and apply it to New Zealand. I created this name before I created phonology for the language, even; meaning that the name does not properly follow the rules for loanwords in its own language. I think this is representative of my general philosophy while creating it; the point is to let loose and have fun. It's okay if some things are janky!

After creating the name of the language, the club suggested working off of a random attribute generator for the language, using rolls of a D6 and a chart posted to the subreddit /r/conlangs for what apparently was their 21st speedlang challenge. The results shaped the language, and I will discuss them in order:

1. Consonants: Must use /χ/ and /ħ/.
2. Vowels: Cannot use /u/.

Starting strong, we have two criteria that I elected to skirt. I cannot for the life of me distinguish between /χ/ and /ħ/; therefore, I decided to leave one out. Zetalanita retains /χ/ (x). Maybe there exists a dialect where the two are distinct, but I certainly don't speak it. As for the vowel, I did remove /u/, but I replaced it with y (/ɨ/); it also has u (/ə/). (Schwa my beloved.)

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Aveolar	Post-Aveolar	Velar	Uvular
Plosive	p			t		k	
Nasal		m				/ŋ/ (s)	
Fricative		f	v	/θ/ (q)	z	/ʃ/ (s)		/χ/ (x)

Zetasanita consonants. /1/ (2) indicates IPA sound followed by the letter used.

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i	/ɨ/ y	

Close-mid	e	/ə/ u	o
Open-mid			
Open	a		

Zetasanita vowels. /1/ (2) indicates IPA sound followed by the letter used.

I altered this phonology a couple of times before settling on this final version. I wanted to keep a limited scope and wanted to keep it to things I could pronounce, while still completely (intentionally) butchering the pronunciation of loanwords.

    3.   Nouns: Collective.

This was the first part of the creation process that I really got into. Something about collective nouns scratched an itch that I didn't know I had. Effectively, imagine if the word "constellation" was simply a plural of "star". Groups of things imply a plural, rather than a number of things greater than one. Maybe traffic "*karota*" is a collective of car "*kavu.*" Etc.

    4.   Case: Unmarked.
    5.   Verbs: Mood, no tense.

Making a conlang requires a deep understanding of grammatical structure that I was never able to learn "traditionally" in a classroom. But, as soon as I was presented with these concepts in this new format, the ideas stuck. In English, case is the distinction in a proper noun between being a subject or object (I vs. me). Having none of it in this language saves me time at the expense of clarity. Verb tense is something I understood from Spanish, but the lack of it here, I think, made for an interesting challenge.

Verb mood was a mostly new concept; Spanish (and to a lesser extent English) do have a distinct subjunctive mood, but with no case and no tense, there should be more moods in the language to help clarify. I picked a few, based on vibes, from Wikipedia, and additionally added positive and negative polarity to these moods. The mood marker begins the sentence off, which ended up being an interesting stylistic choice, as it meant that the majority of clauses in the language start with "fi" or "pe."

Mood	+/-	English	Mark	Zetasanita	Notes
Indicative	+	John eats	fi	fi kafa John.	
	-	John does not eat	pe	pe kafa John	

Subjunctive	+	I think John eats	ki	fi piko Qy ky ki kafa John.	
	-	I don't think John eats	ve	pe piko Qy ky ve kafa John.	
Conditional	+	John would eat if he were hungry	qony	qony kafa John ve qony nisapo Ki	
	-	John wouldn't eat even if he were hungry	qopi	qopi kafa John ve qony na nisapo Ki	Non-optional polarity marker when it changes.
Imperative	+	Eat, John!	ku	(na) ku kafa John!	Optional polarity emphasis.
	-	Don't eat, John!	fe	(pu) fe kafa John!	
Interrogative	+	Does John eat?	xa	xa kafa John?	"xa" (*what*) or other question word.
	-	Does John not eat?	xapu	xapu kafa John?	

Zetasanita mood markers.

6. Argument Marking: Subject
7. Word Order: VSO (Verb Subject Object)

English uses a SVO (subject-verb-object) word order, and so it was not until I got quite far into writing out the grammar of the language that I realized how silly argument marking was. Because the subject comes after the verb, and the verb is marked with the subject, sentences in Zetasanita state the subject twice in a row, except in simple sentences. This was funny, so I did not change it.

(English): I throw the ball to him.

(Zetasanita): Fi vuvo-qu Qy Ki su tizy

(Gloss): (positive indicative) throw-(argument I) I He the ball.

8. Syntax: Direct-Inverse

This was definitely the most involved part of the grammar. Direct-Inverse alignment means that the subject and object can be reversed in sentences

where the subject and the object are both Speech Act Participants (i.e. they could be either the subject or the object in different contexts), depending on the positions of each on the saliency and animacy hierarchies. For example:

English	Zetasanita	Gloss
I see the dog	Fi fo-qu Qy su Vovo.	(mood) see-(me argument) I the dog.
The dog sees me	Xu fi fo-ke Qy su Vovo	(inversion marker) (mood) see-(me argument) I the dog.

The only difference between these two sentences is the inversion marker "*Xu*", implying that the dog is the one doing the action, not me. The dog lies below me on the hierarchy; therefore, by default, it would be the passive object.

Saliency: First person > second person > third person
Animacy: "Superhumans" (gods, boogeymen, countries) > humans > children/animals > plants > objects> abstract ideas/thoughts

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All in all, the process of making Zetasanita took a lot of time and energy, but it was a ton of fun. Each one of those 8 points took me through a Wikipedia rabbit hole learning about every aspect of grammar, which helped me not only to create this but also to understand English better. Making a conlang is fun and I would recommend it to all. Especially if you can make it silly. The following is a list of some of my favorite words in the language.

Network/Internet	nitenetu	
Digital Network	kumupytata	Plural of *kumupytata*, "computer."
Crime (systemic)	xymota	Plural of *xymo*, "crime (singular)."
"Wow!": "Cool!"	supa!	English loanword
Audience	fonota	Literally fo+nota (see group of people)

SEATTLE CONLANG CLUB CROSSWORD #2 BY FREDERICK CHAN

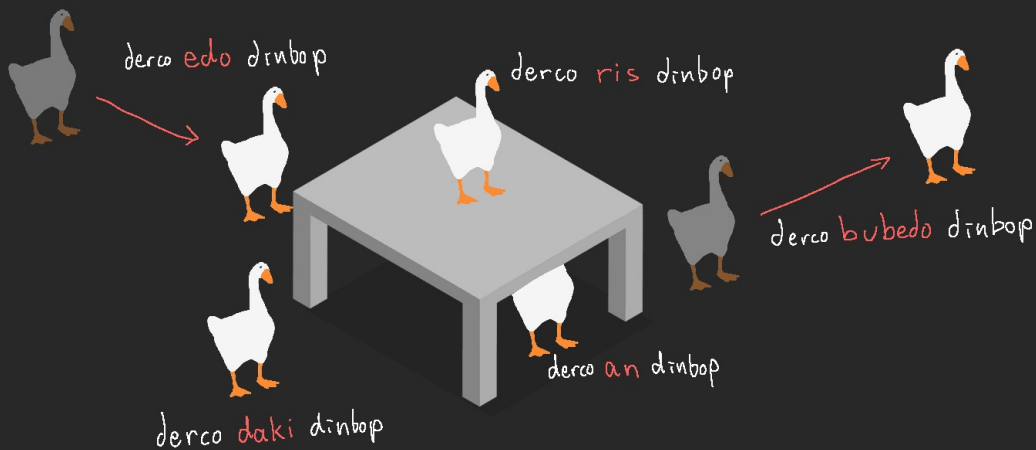*Electronic version, with answers:* 🌐 conlang.club/crossword/2

ACROSS

1. Form of English that Beowulf was written in
3. English verbs do this with nouns, but not adjectives
7. Adam's rib
8. Paleozoic, Mesozoic, or Cenozoic
9. Sleep just a bit
11. Each Blissymbols symbol is a kind of this
12. Neither win nor lose
14. Polite word for a drug junkie
15. Instrument for determining a vehicle's or Wiimote's motion, abbr.
16. Used for finding gold or cooking
17. Between countries
19. Spelt how it's said (but not this word)
24. A gesture with a specific meaning attached
28. Brain gland that makes you sleepy
29. Your mouth if you don't cover your sneezes
30. To go backwards in Minecraft (Java Edition)
31. Writing system with both consonant and vowel letters
32. A stop that's worth 10 points in Scrabble
38. The seventh Greek letter

39. Nuclear Regulatory Commission predecessor, abbr.
40. Tables and dogs have four
41. Glimpse at, perhaps clandestinely
44. Propelling a canoe
46. 6.283185...
47. It returns your tax, abbr.
48. Do it when you're hungry
49. A person who buys books ____
50. This happens when you checkmate someone

DOWN

1. The musical version of formants
2. Komo's star sign in this issue's horoscope
3. Jesus' likely primary language
4. All a scale's notes, or a monitor's colors
5. When there's no more
6. Lent when someone tells you about their troubles
7. 7 across is banned from this garden
8. Hunter who wrote the *Warriors* series
10. How pilots say P
11. Pakistan's primary intelligence agency, abbr.
13. Fish that Wall-E would eye up, maybe
18. Onomatopoeia for strength

19. Controversial COVID-era business loans, abbr.
20. Hairy all over
21. The number of buttons you're born with
22. It's for putting a canvas on
23. Protocol that encrypts your internet traffic, abbr.
24. Cryptaesthesia, abbr.
25. Most widely spoken dialect of Portuguese
26. The most scientific dog breed, maybe
27. Standard time in Colorado, abbr.
31. An object in the mirror is closer than it _____
33. Very large or wide
34. Fast, like in a river
35. Crystalline flat screen monitors, abbr.
36. Let your frustrations out verbally
37. Comes before the chicken
42. Target golf score
43. Branch of Chinese including Cantonese and Taishanese
45. Hawai'ian flower necklace

derco edo drnbop

derco ris dinbop

derco bubedo dinbop

derco an dinbop

derco daki dinbop

LOOKING BACK
A HISTORY OF THE SEATTLE PIDGIN GAMES BY FREDERICK CHAN

Right in the middle of COVID, my mother was forced to sell the home we lived in, and I ended up having to couch surf my grandparents' single-bedroom apartment.

After four short-lived conpidgin experiments, the SCC has achieved its 6-month anniversary with Udano Mor. Here's how it all started, with a tour of our Pidgin Games starting from 2021.

Separated from my friends in the middle of a dark point in my life, living with family I was never very close with, I searched desperately for an escape from the isolation and loneliness that had plagued the whole year.

PERRY GILMORE
KISISI
(OUR LANGUAGE)
The Story of Colin and Sadiki
WILEY Blackwell
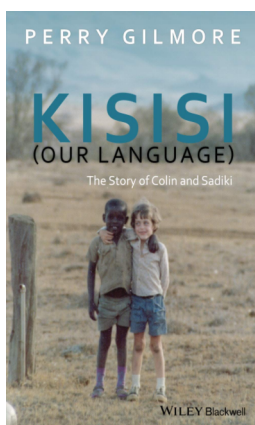
One day, a guest speaker at the UW lingustics department held a colloquium over Zoom, and offhandedly mentioned a very special book: *Kisisi (Our Language)*, about two five-year-old boys, Colin and Sadiki, who created their own pidgin language while Colin's mother was conducting field research in 1970s postcolonial Kenya. Though lacking a common language, simply by playing with toy cars, looking at comic books, and hanging out, a totally new language was forged from their deep personal connection.

OUR FIRST PIDGIN GAME

Enchanted by the idea of sharing something so personal with my friends, I came up with an idea for a Pidgin Game. Together with members of the Seattle Conlang Club who I knew, we would *simulate* the conditions for creating such a pidgin.

Although I hadn't known it at the time, the idea of a pidgin game was not unique: in 2014, the r/conlangs subreddit had already made the wildly popular Viossa. Our Pidgin Game, however, had some different rules:

- Generate a list of common words (e.g. **gleeb** *'corn'*) and keep it hidden.
- All words must be from this list or made up on the spot— no existing languages allowed.
- Think of a hidden "language goal" to steer the pidgin's grammar in a certain way (e.g. "introduce subject-verb agreement"), to keep the pidgin from becoming an English relex.

To keep the conversation flowing, we'd occasionally get a prompt in English for everyone to discuss. Pidgin Game v1 started on March 23, 2021, kicking off with *"What was the last interesting thing you remember doing?"*

The first pidgin word ever was **tkij** *'behind, back'* with a stock photo of a man pointing behind him found on Google Images. Without a physical body to mime and point with, posting stock images and mspaint drawings became the go-to strategy for introducing words.

A stock photo of **tkij**, one of many explanatory images used in the pidgin. ▲

Sentences with multiple new words were often preceded by several one-word messages with accompanying stock photos, and often followed up by confused people responding with, **bub bikmal** *'no understand'* and **odej <word>?** *'what's <word>?'*

One interesting strategy was employing logic and set theory symbols to explain words, like using the set membership symbol ∈ to explain ferr *'within, part of'*, or using the existential quantifier ∃ in this chat log ▶
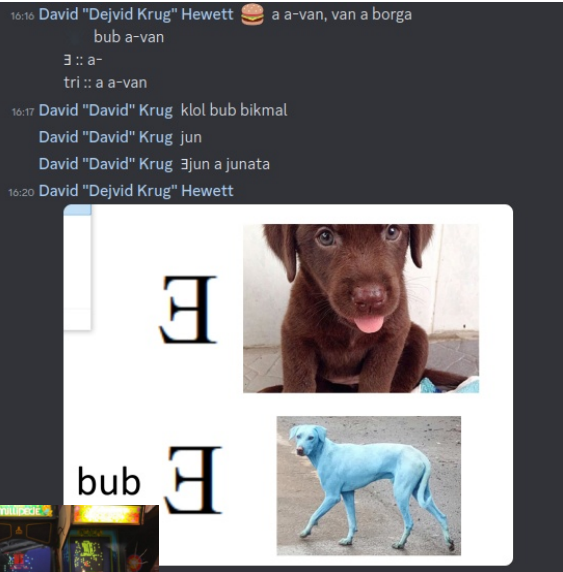
Collages of related stock images were often used to explain more abstract vocabulary, like ker *'fun'* ▼

Since the game was played primarily over text chat, and many players used a program to generate vocab, lots of words had consonant clusters that are rare or nonexistent in English, even though everyone was a native English speaker. For example, <dkss> and <dg> in **medkss** *'car, drive'*, **ngadkss** *'walk'*, and **kridg** *'bike'*.

This meant that when we used pidgin for the first time in a video chat, we found that everyone was pronouncing these words slightly differently. For example, **ngadkss** became /n.gæd.ks/, /ŋædks/, or even /ŋædz/, and the ever-ambiguous letter <j> (like in **odej** *'what'*) could be realized as /j/, /ʒ/, or /dʒ/ depending on the person.

Through a combination of emojis, stock photos, crude drawings, and saying **bub bikmal** over and over again, we muddled our way through talking about food, our pets, and other aspects of our daily lives. Eventually though, activity slowly began to fizzle out, and just two months after the start of the Pidgin Game, all activity has ceased.
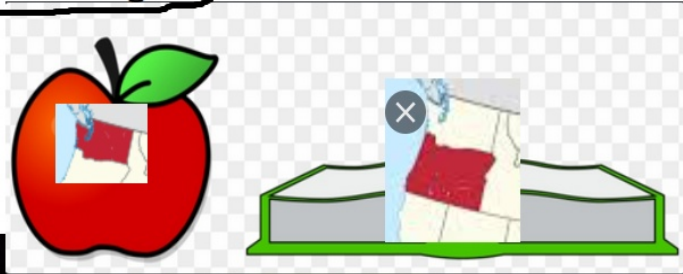
We tried making a Pidgin v1 textbook using the pidgin, but got stuck in debates about the meaning of some words, including prepositions like **ris** *'above, north of'*. Is **"Washington ris Oregon"** true in this picture?

PIDGIN GAME V2

Despite the short lifespan of the Pidgin Game, it was enjoyable enough that we were willing to try again completely fresh later in the year. This spawned the short-lived Pidgin Game v2, where everyone created a speedlang and had to write a long-form paragraph that responded to a prompt.

However, the long-form requirement resulted in walls of indecipherable text with no explanation. This discouraged people from playing, so v2 ended even sooner than v1. It wasn't until Fall 2021 when the club could meet in person again that we tried a new formula.

PIDGIN GAME: NOW IN MINECRAFT!

In Pidgin v3, we decided to split up into two Minecraft-based nations— Sampinko and Mili Wu— who would each come up with a basic conlang to mix together in-game.

Since both were making Minecraft-based conlangs, both lexicons had different words for common in-game items, like wood and stone. Both also had Minecraft-inspired grammatical gender: Sampinko had the *hostile*,

neutral, and *passive* genders patterned after mob behaviors, while Mili Wu had mostly Creative Mode Inventory-based genders like *food* and *natural items*, as well as *living things* and *locations*.

To make it easy to speak, Mili Wu was designed to have a very simple grammar, using a *core-oblique* case system where subjects and objects receive *core case* marking, and other arguments are *oblique case*.

In contrast, Sampinko's grammar was very fleshed-out: it had non-concatenative morphology for number marking, phrase structure rules for NPs and syntax for questions, even lore about the Sampinko culture!

NATIONALISM (IN MINECRAFT)

While in Minecraft, we quickly realized that we'd spent so much time making conlangs that we liked that we'd grown attached, and ended up resisting mixing them together. This was antithetical to the goal of the game.
For instance, a player from Sampinko might approach a Miliwuan, say the Sampinko for wood, receive the Miliwu for wood in response, and each person would keep using their national word for wood rather than compromising.

An excerpt from the Sampinko reference grammar, containing Sampinko lore and trees diagramming the syntax of the language ▼
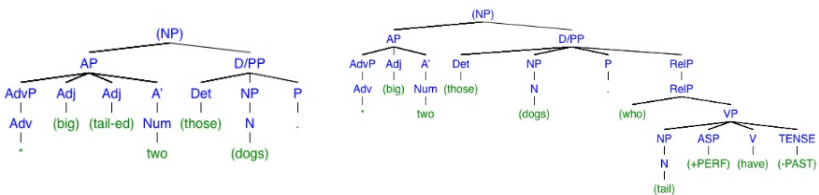
One of the last surviving photos of a Miliwuan, discovering a vein of diamonds in a deep cave ▼
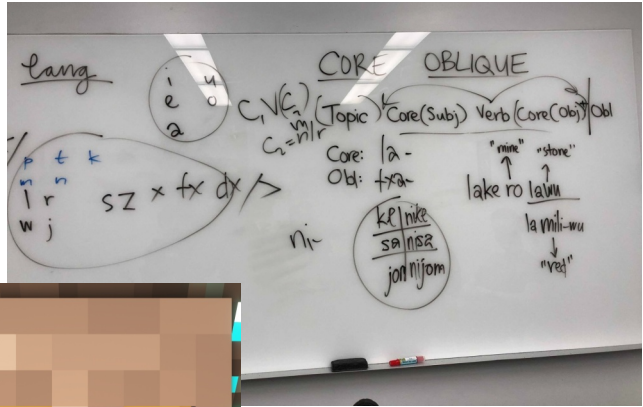
An early Mili Wu brainstorming ▲ board, showing its phonology and morphosyntax. Mili Wu was topic-prominent, marked subjects & objects with the *core case*, and other NPs with *oblique case*

This unique form of Minecraft nationalism was exacerbated by the fact that even in a server, the game can still be played as a single player game. Since cooperation is optional, the two nations self-segregated because players just found it easier to talk to their fellow nationals rather than the other group.

In the end, we'd only managed to loan some words into each others' conlangs, and failed to mix them into a pidgin as intended.

PIDGIN ISLAND QUEST: THE PIDGIN TABLETOP RPG

In 2024, three years later, perhaps out of nostalgia, we tried a fourth Pidgin Game called Pidgin Island Quest, a Dungeons and Dragons-like RPG centered around a band of primitive people stranded on an island.

Each week, we would rotate between Dungeon Masters who invent scenarios like *"You've been attacked by wild boars"* and *"Your food has been stolen from camp with tracks leading into the jungle"* that require player cooperation to resolve. Players could use terse English words to describe their characters' actions, such as *(points)* or *(runs away)*, or privately message the DM with more complex actions. Otherwise, players were required to convey everything through pidgin.

To prevent the attachment issues experienced in v3, everyone made a list of only ~15 words from starting languages none of the players spoke, such as Icelandic, Afar, and Sindarin.

The vocab of the resulting pidgin, Sendok, heavily reflects the primitive survival setting. The first scenario involved two wild boars attacking the players, birthing the words **aiwan** *'boar'* and **bizkotte** *'attack'*. The players quickly scrounged together crude tools, such as the **bakkeze** *'club, stick'*

Drawing by a Pidgin Islander of a fiskurbakkeze, a wooden tool for drying fish and other meats. ▲

and the **arwusta** *'bow'*, managing to drive one off and killing the other to cook on the **eld** *'fire'* and make **xag** *'food'*.

Unusually for a pidgin, Sendok developed morphology quite early, such as the verb ending **-ote**, derived from verbs like **nakotte** *'die'* and **bwanote** *'be good'* spoken by Finn, one of our players. This was retroactively applied to words like Icelandic **hef** to form the Sendok **hefote** meaning *'have'*. The copula **er** was exempt from this, so ***erote** is ungrammatical despite being a verb.

Self-portraits like this one were used for various purposes, including taking attendance when an islander went missing. Depicted from left to right: Krabba vinur, Nam'ma bakkeze vinur, Arwusta vinur, and a fourth, nondescript islander ▼
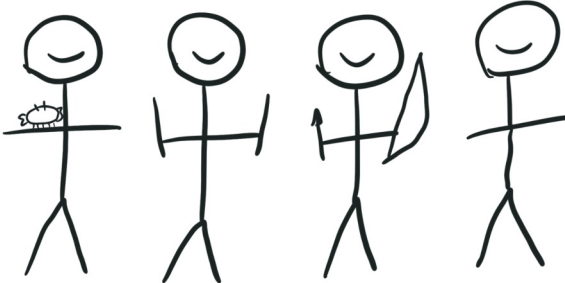
▲ This shaman's necklace was crafted with shells by Nam'ma bakkeze vinur, and summoned rain when shaken

PIQ GIVES WAY TO PIDGINCRAFT

Players participating in a **kenga** ritual at **Boga da Untz,** built by Lewis in the PidginCraft server ▲

Though PIQ eventually fizzled out, in large part because it was hard for new and returning players to learn the language in their absence, we started re-evaluating how we ran our pidgin games in preparation for our next one. Our current and most successful pidgin game, PidginCraft, has been running for 6 months as weekly synchronous sessions in a game we'd played before: Minecraft.

Unlike v3, we started with no linguistic material, to avoid nationalism and to make it easy to recruit non-conlangers. Thus, in the first session of the game, everyone started breaking blocks and building houses while making random noises at each other, trying to get other to understand them, forming the beginnings of the Udano Mor language.

With access to a virtual avatar, players could explain words with actions instead of stock photos.

> **Logan (L_1234)** 11/26/24, 20:37
> The horrifying thought just crossed my mind that Minecraft pidgin is the language I know third best.

During the invention of the words for 'yes' and 'no', one player gathered the others in a circle, nodding and shaking their head, saying **ani** and **lon**. After a few moments, the whole circle has a moment of clarity— one by one, everyone started to say **"aaaah, ani!"** and nodding their heads together.

This immediacy and immersiveness compared to the previous, mainly text-based pidgin games makes PidginCraft much more rewarding, since you can hear the moment when words click in people's heads.
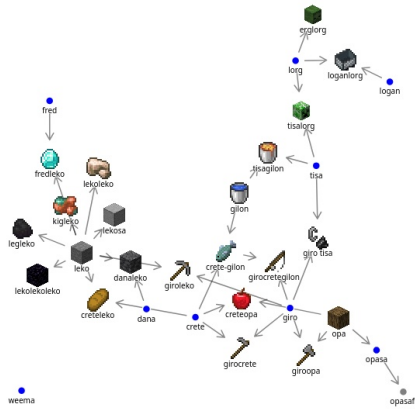
To force cooperation in PidginCraft, each player received a set of goals that other players needed to complete, such as *"bury a double chest in the ground with a piece of cobblestone."* To complete your own goal, you must ask another player what your goal was and ask them to confirm if your goal was complete.

We also made it easier for new and returning players to jump into the game by compiling a dictionary from the start. At the end of each session, everyone gathers around and votes if they understand new words they heard. If a majority understand, the word is recorded in English, otherwise, it is left undefined.

Even in session 2, Udano Mor had started creating many related compounds, as shown in the etymology graph at 🌐 conlang.club/pidgin/craft/etymology

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE LEXICON

One benefit to keeping a comprehensive dictionary is that we can look at the entire history of Udano Mor's words for interesting findings.

For instance, although personal pronouns were introduced on the first day of every previous pidgin game, they only appeared in Udano Mor starting in week 7.

Certain words, such as **opa** are semantically broadened, especially when part of compounds. In addition to directly related words like **opasa** , **opa** also appears in **bz** + **opa** = **bzopa** and **untz** + **opa** = **untzopa**

Onomatopoeia is an extremely productive source of new words, including **vroom** , **voop** , and **bokbok**

BASIC UDANO MOR

opa	**leko**	**aloza**	**giro**
crete	**mor**	**lorg**	**kota**
iu	**pe**	**lon**	**ani**
sil?	**brik**	**dore**	**waa**
mor **bi** *aloza*	**ature**	**udano**	**mmm**
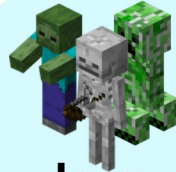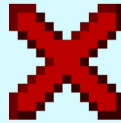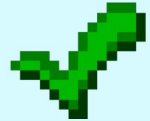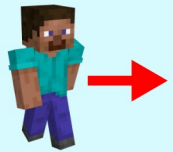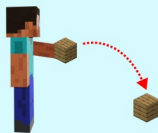
Players built this public square on the first day to illustrate the words they created for various blocks

Rare etymologies include retriplication (e.g. **leko** → **lekoleko** → **lekolekoleko**), words named after players (e.g. **loganlorg** , named after Logan), and a particularly comical lexicalization from a coordinated phrase: **creteopagimaigilongimagima**

EFFECTS ON THE GAME WORLD

Beyond the language itself, the desire to communicate has made significant impacts on the Minecraft environment. One of the first built spaces was a public square where players would contribute blocks with signs indicating what they wanted to call it.

Explanatory graffiti using signs and item frames are also commonly found on unrelated buildings, created to illustrate the meaning of words at some point in time and simply left there, occasionally reminding players of vocabulary as they pass by.

PIDGINCRAFT CONTINUES!

We are very blessed that PidginCraft has managed to remain vibrant and active after 6 months, three times longer than any of our previous pidgin games. We owe a debt of gratitude to both our core players who have been around since October, and to all the newcomers from r/conlangs and the University of Washington.

Want to join PidginCraft? Visit conlang.club/pidgin for rules, how to join, and the Udano Mor starter pack.

POETRY AND PROSE OF UDANO MOR
BY LOGAN LEMIEUX

Kota chetonan da Udano Mor weso za topa da iu da piragoye jieeoo. Za topa brona lonzesu; za topalere da brikdore da mortiin ida. Pe *tans* topa da aniani udano "da sil iu ruch da mim, da chetonan mmm?" Topalere aga za capo da inte udano mim aniani, oom ruch chetonan za brona. Iu topa za topalere kipoib da inte udano. Iu topa da silmor da mmm inte udano, mmm ruch chetonan.

I have included one translated song, one limerick, one haiku, and a couple other poems as a spread. Making these was a lot of fun and I recommend trying it out in any language you work on. The translation in particular was a big challenge; translations have to deal with either matching the syllabic structure of the original or the meaning. Both have downsides; I've used a combination of both as I saw fit. This was one of the first tasks we did in Spanish class in high school; a lot of kids got in trouble for their use of Google Translate. Unfortunately, Google does not yet support Udano Mor.

"Person of the Island"
Bi gaga tangu mor da latopa,
sil zik mmm lonabrik capo opa!
Udano "ani,"
mor brik ti clikclik,
i lon zik weso waa bogatopa!

"Cuh i Wuh"
Cuh i wuh za hlod iu mmm brona.
Lon za picapo da anisil hlod yusa.
(x16)

"The Piglands"
iu zik waagilon
bi krasgima lecheko
gasa lon tans vroom

"Lekoleko"
Sil za kipoib da lon dore leko?
Iu brik i iu dore i lon.
Aniani mor tans lekoleko,
i Bronmor da Bronboga? Konkon.

"Brongat Pe" – A Translation and Parody in Minecraft Pidgin of "Revenge" – A Minecraft Parody of Usher's DJ Got Us Fallin' In Love (Music Video) by Captainsparklez by Logan Lemieux

Tisalorg...
Lon mmm...

Io bi losa mim,
Giroleko brik fredleko
(Ega ren, ega bi ren)
Topalere lon zesu
Io zik festa brona
Piragoye, piragoye

Oh, lon
Chetonan, iia weso, cura
Vaton brona da pe mortiin
Oh, lon, pe za aga,
Iu lon is lontopa pe iiasloyo
I-iiasloyo

Piragoye!
Tisalorg zik eruta bila io
Piragoye!
Io is eruta giro i waa (giro i waa)
Waa, waa, is za lere
Is brongoye bi aga goye.
Piragoye!
Tisalorg zik eruta bila io

Bi tangu lon vaton,
Chetonan s-s-slorg bi
weso pe (Weso bi pe)
Brona mmm pe lonbrongat
Lon mmm kipoib pe bi tangu aga
Tangu aga

Tisa, vrimblin brongat i pe
zik ogigilon, oh
Waa bi boga, lon waa weso
Agagoye bi losa,
Pe tans eeoo vrimblin, oom lon
brongat (lon brongat)

Piragoye!

Tisalorg zik eruta bila io
Piragoye!
Io is eruta giro i waa (giro i waa)
Waa, waa, is za lere
Is brongoye bi aga goye.
Piragoye!
Tisalorg zik eruta bila io

(Tislorg, pe cura, haha)
Brik fredleko, kota leko,
i kota seda, mmm topa
Aloza: pe za brona hlodor
Girogat da fredleko
waa bi iu, mor, huh,
Brikdore bi boga bi goye
Kota mortiin capo cura zesu gat
Aniani brongoye, i goye
Tisalorg bi aga... ani
Iia iu, iia pe
Brongat pe, iu is brikdore
Iu za arrglorg, sil za mim?
Girogat is brongat pe.

Piragoye!
Tisalorg zik eruta bila io
(Etura latopa)
Piragoye! (Haha)
Etura girogat, i waa!
Brongat pe! Oh-oh
Gat, gat, bi kipoib brongoye da pe,
Pe mortiin goye

Piragoye!
Tisalorg zik eruta bila io
Piragoye!
Io is eruta giro i waa (giro i waa)
Waa, waa, is za lere
Is brongoye bi aga goye.
Piragoye! (Iia! Brongat ida!)
Tisalorg zik eruta bila io
(Iia! Brongat dana!)

SENDOK REFERENCE GRAMMAR FROM 2024 SEPTEMBER 8

Sendok is a conpidgin that is no longer spoken, created during Pidgin Island Quest (PIQ), the SCC's fourth conpidgin experiment. We originally intended to write reference grammars every so often to ease new and returning players to PIQ, but PIQ was soon replaced with PidginCraft. This is the only Sendok reference grammar produced.

BASIC SENTENCE STRUCTURES

'X IS Y' SENTENCES

The word **er** means *'is'*.

- **Atu er vinur** *'You are a friend'*

SUBJECT-PREDICATE 'X VERBS' SENTENCES

The basic word order is Subject-Object-Verb (SOV). The subject is sometimes omitted if it is obvious from the context.

INTRANSITIVE

- **Nin xagote** 'I eat'

TRANSITIVE

- **Nin naku xagote** *'I eat meat'*

YES/NO QUESTIONS

Sentences are unchanged, except for a question inflection (a question mark is added at the end).

- **Atu naku xagote?** *'Do you eat meat?'*

cf. no question mark: **Atu naku xagote** *'You eat meat'*

WH-QUESTIONS

The word **mana** means *'what'*. It occurs in the position in which it would occur in the corresponding declarative, without any change in word order.

- **Nin mana xagote** *'What are you eating?'*
- **Mana er "eld"** *'What is "eld"?'*

NEGATION

-ba is a suffix attached to verbs to negate them.

- **Nin vatn hef** *'I have water'*
- **Nin vatn hefba** *'I don't have water'*

nei is a standalone word that negates phrases.

- **Nei nin an galas** 'I don't go into the bushes'

nei is also used to simply mean *'no'*.
- **Atu xag hef?** 'Do you have food?'
- **Nei** 'No'

The usage of **-ba** and **nei** overlap. There is no rule for when to pick one over the other.
- **Nin nei mellon hef** *'I have no pets'*
- **Nin mellon hefba** *'I have no pets'*

LOCATIVE PREPOSITION?

an appears to be some kind of locative preposition or modifier, indicating a sentence's location or direction of motion. Its precise meaning or syntax is unclear.
- **nin an aliran ardehote** *'I go to the forest'(?)*
- **dyrialle an ardehote** *'Animal tracks go into the forest'(?)* or possibly, *'Animal tracks are in the forest'(?)*

PRONOUNS

There are three pronouns that have seen widespread use:
- **Nin** 'I, me'
- **Ninnin** *'we, us'*
- **Atu** *'you'*

NUMERALS

There are two numbers that have been used: **in'ki** *'one'* and **nam'ma** *'two'*.
- **Nin hef nam'ma bakkeze** *'I have two sticks/weapons'*

INFLECTIONS AND DERIVATIONS

VERB INFLECTION

-ote appears at the end of most verbs, with the notable exception of **er** *'is'*. Verbs can often be formed from nouns by adding **-ote**.
- cf. **xag** 'food' versus **xagote** 'eat'

As discussed in the negation section, the suffix **-ba** may be used to negate a verb.

REDUPLICATION

Nin *'me, I'* has been reduplicated into **ninnin** *'we, us.'*

It is unclear if reduplication is a productive process, or if it is restricted to some words.

MODIFIERS? ADJECTIVES? NOUN DERIVATIONS?

Sendok words can be combined into something akin to a compound word, e.g. **rachdyr** *'dangerous*

animal' from **rach** *'dangerous'* + **dyr** *'animal'*.

It is unclear if there are adjectives in Sendok distinct from compounding.

VOCABULARY USED BY AT LEAST THREE PEOPLE

After the decision was made to document the grammar, each week was accompanied by a review of words used by at least three people, and words known to everyone at the review session were recorded with an English translation. As such, this is not a full list of Sendok vocabulary.

FUNCTION WORDS

og - and
nei - no/not
atu – you
nin- I, me
ya – I, me *(archaic)*
ninnin - we, us
er - to be
erba - to not be
mana – what?
an - locative/motion indicator?

CONTENT WORDS

aa - onomatopoeia for shouting
aew - bird
aiwan - pig
aliran - forest/jungle
ardeh - flee, run (away)
arwusta - bow (the weapon)

bakkeze - stick, branch; tool, weapon
bisubakkeze - torch
bizkotte - attack
bukit - inland
bwana - good, understand
dyr - animal
dyrialle - animal tracks
eld - fire
erba - isn't
hef - have
hefba - not have, lack
hefote - have
krabba - crab
liantasse - long leafy/viney plant
makhan - shelter
mana - what?
mellon - pet, friend, companion
mequ - sleep, rest
naku - meat
nam'ma - two
pohon - wood, log, tree
ross - rain
runaote - put
soolis - get rid of, dispel, banish, yeet
suil - hello
vatn - water
vinur - friend, companion
xag - food
xagote – eat
xoo - wood, log, tree
xooiaf - tree fruit, coconut

Language Horoscope

By Frederick & Dejvid

Using the zeniths of the brightest stars in each constellation, we've determined the luckiest natural language for each star sign. Make a conlang inspired by the features of your star sign's lucky language!

Aries Jamaican Patois

Jamaican Patois is an English-based creole primarily influenced by Akan, as well as other West African languages. A *creole continuum* exists between varieties of Patois most similar to Standard Jamaican English, the prestigious *acrolect*, to the least prestigious *basilectal* varieties spoken in rural areas.

Gemini Canarian Spanish

Canarian Spanish is the variety of Spanish spoken by ~2.2M people in the Canary Islands. The island of La Gomero has a whistled register of Canarian Spanish that adapts its phonology to whistled sounds that carry up to 5 km, thanks to the island's ravines and valleys.

Leo Komo

Komo is a tonal language spoken by ~8,500 people in the Horn of Africa. Its *advanced tongue root* (ATR) vowel harmony is unusual in that it is bidirectional— a +ATR vowel can spread its ATR to vowels on its left, and a -ATR vowel can spread its lack of ATR on its right.

Taurus Warao

Warao is a language isolate spoken by ~32,000 people in northern Venezuela, Guyana, and Suriname. It is one of less than 1% of world languages with OSV as its default word order, though SOV can appear in *wh-* questions or when the subject is emphasized.

Cancer Ouargli

Ouargli is a North Saharan Berber language. In addition to inflecting for gender and number, nouns have a default *absolute* form and a special *annexed* form, which they takes if it follows a preposition, certain numerals, or relational nouns like **wə** *'son of'* or **sut** *'female members of'*.

Virgo Divehi

Dhivehi is spoken in the Maldives, an archipelago in the Indian Ocean. Each island's dialect is thought to represent a stage in Dhivehi's development— the south retains older morphology similar to Classical Sinhalese. As you move north, the morphemes are reduced or lost altogether.

Get featured!

Submit your horoscopelang to the SCC Discord (visit conlang.club/discord) or e-mail it to fredchan@conlang.club and your conlang could be featured in the next SCC Zine!

Citations & additional information: 🌐 conlang.club/horoscope

Libra Nhanda

Nhanda is a West Australian Aboriginal language with only partial speakers, meaning there are no fully fluent speakers of Nhanda. It has *split-ergative morphosyntax:* nouns have *ergative-absolutive* alignment, but the pronouns have *nominative-accusative* alignment.

Saggitarius Biri

Biri is an extinct northeastern Australian Aboriginal language. Biri pronouns inflect for case, person, & number (including dual). Some nominative, accusative, and dative pronouns also have bound clitic forms that attach to verbs and agree with its core arguments.

Aquarius Marquesan

Marquesan is spoken by ~8,700 people in French Polynesia. It has a preposition that marks *inalienable possession*, where the possessor has no control over the possessee because the relationship is inherent or socially given, like body parts, feelings, and social ties.

Scorpio Nyungar

Nyungar is an Australian Aboriginal language with ~240 speakers. It has a set of dual number personal pronouns that refer to people with close relationships— for example, the 1st person fraternal **ngali** *'us siblings'*, or the 2nd person paternal **nubal** *'you father-son'*, etc.

Capricorn Niuean

Niuean is a Polynesian language with about 8,000 speakers, of whom ~1,600 live in Niue. Its 1st person dual and plural pronouns have a *clusivity* distinction. For example, compare the exclusive **mautolu** *'us (excluding you)'* and the inclusive **tautolu** *'us (including you)'*.

Pisces Nahuatl

Nahuatl is an Uto-Aztecan language spoken by ~1.7M Nahuas in Mexico. Its nouns have three vocative forms: a generic *general vocative* **-w**, a *conversational vocative* **-h** for addressing others in the current conversation, and a *male vocative* **-éi** used by males to address those of lower-status.

BASICS OF CONLANG FONT MAKING WITH GLYPHR
BY FINN ANTON

For many years now I have been making conlang fonts both professionally and as a hobby using Glyphr, a free browser-based font creation app. I find Glyphr to be approachable for beginner font makers with its clean user interface while still retaining several key tools that make it ideal for creating conlang fonts with non-traditional layouts. In this article I'll walk through the functionalities of the app, as well as some tips and tricks for making well-formed vectors.

SETUP

The browser-based app can be accessed from 🌐glyphrstudio.com/app.

Once you name and load your new project, you will see the main menu here. To the right are your blank letterforms which you will be filling in later. When making a conlang font, I often map glyphs in one language to Latin alphabet glyphs roughly by phonetics. To the top left, in blue is the dropdown menu for more tools. Below it is metadata about your project. To begin making your font, click the blue menu and then click the icon that says "component menu."
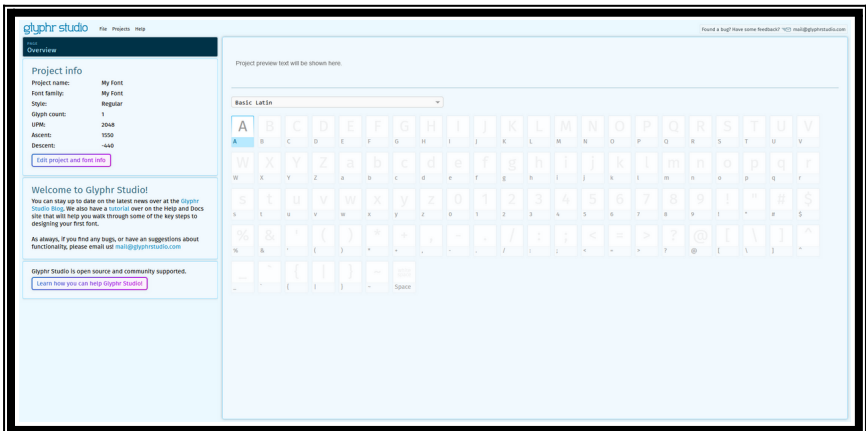
COMPONENT MENU AND BASIC VECTOR MAKING

Components are like building blocks of a larger glyph. After you create a component one time, each instance of it will appear at the same coordinates it is made in the component menu. This makes global edits very easy since you can alter a component in the component menu and all glyphs that use that shape will be altered the same way in turn. Having a robust inventory of basic shapes will drastically speed up the production of your font and will also ensure that your font has a consistent look between glyphs.

This is what the component menu looks like before you make anything. Let's make a new component (by clicking the purple button) and name it "corner."
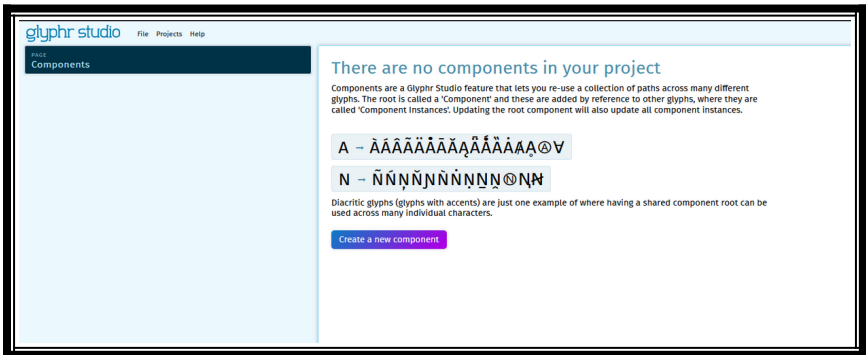

This will open the editing menu for vectors. It's where you will be spending most of your time when you're making a font, and the one for components is almost identical to the one for full glyphs.
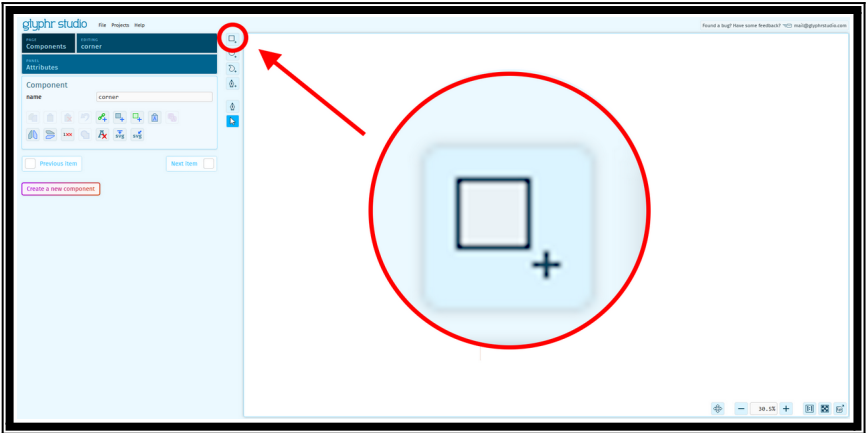
Now lets work on our first instance, a simple curved corner. Pieces like this are very versatile since you can easily fit them in to a glyph to change up its look. Start by clicking the rectangle draw tool at the top of the toolbar on the left. Then draw a box– it doesn't really matter how you do it since most of the time you will be finely adjusting its size with the dimension inputs on the far left. Of course your needs will vary from task to task, but for this demonstration I chose a 100x100 box since those are good round numbers.
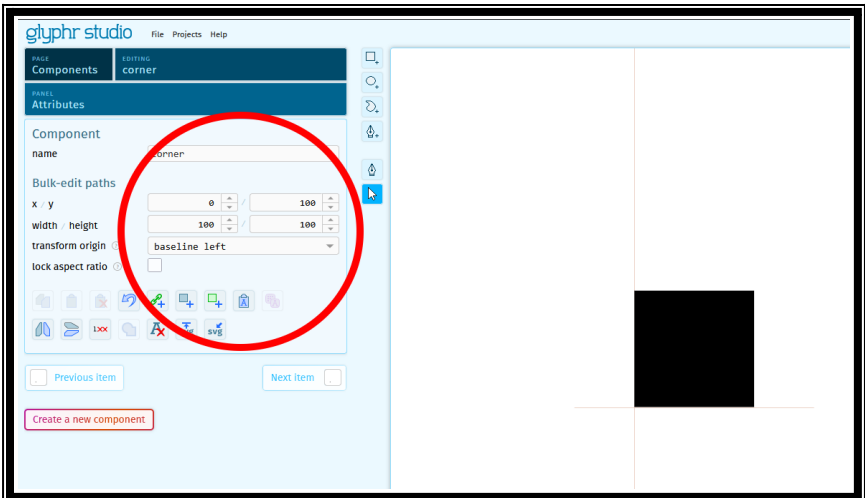
This box is too square, we need to delete a point so that we can put in our curve. Click the pen-looking tool on the toolbar, which lets you both see and place points on the selected shape. You'll now see blue points on each corner of the square. These are a special kind of vector node called a "corner point." There are three kinds of nodes in Glyphr, each with its own properties that are pretty easy to understand once you experiment with them. The corner point is used when one wants a sharp point end to a vector, like the top of a triangle. Let's click the point at the top right, and then delete it by clicking the button on the tool bar at the lower right.
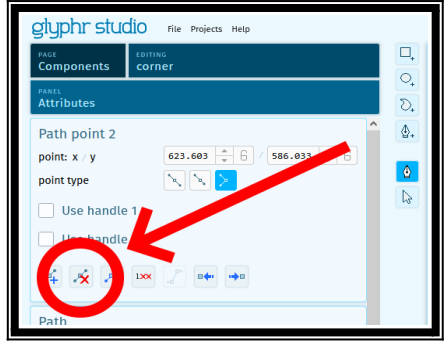

Once you do this, you'll get something that looks like a triangle.
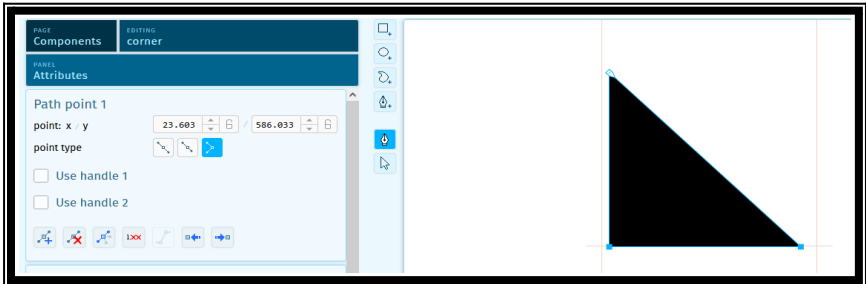
Once we have this triangle, we can start building our curve. The one we want is very simple, just an even curve that terminates in an area between the points at the top and right of our triangle. To do that, first click the top node of the triangle. Then click "use node 2" at the top left menu. Since vectors are interpreted as a series of directional nodes going either clockwise or anticlockwise, whether you use node 1 or 2 will differ according to what you are working on. Luckily, it is usually simple to tell which "handle" manipulates which side of the vector. Notice how activating one of the handles makes the curve bulge out a little bit. This is because in order to get a straight line to an angle a handle has to be deactivated. Click the bottom right node and activate handle 1 the same way.
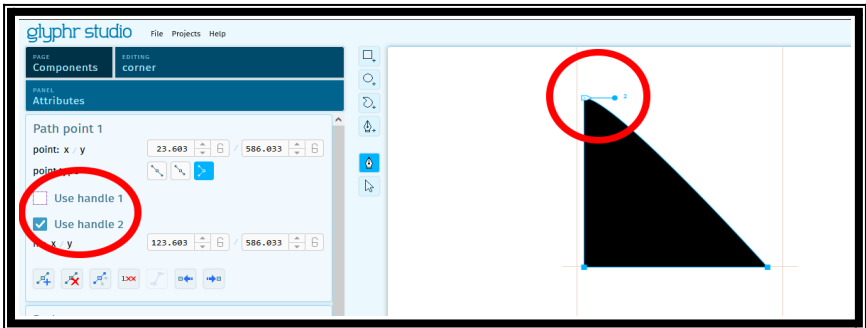
Now that you have both handles activated, let's move both handles to the middle of the square. That means we want our top node's handle to be at (50,100) and our bottom right handle to be at (100, 50). After you've done this you should get something like this. Its worth mentioning again that this is a tiny component, the whole glyph will often be something like 500x700 or more in dimension. Something like this is meant to be a simple aesthetic addition.
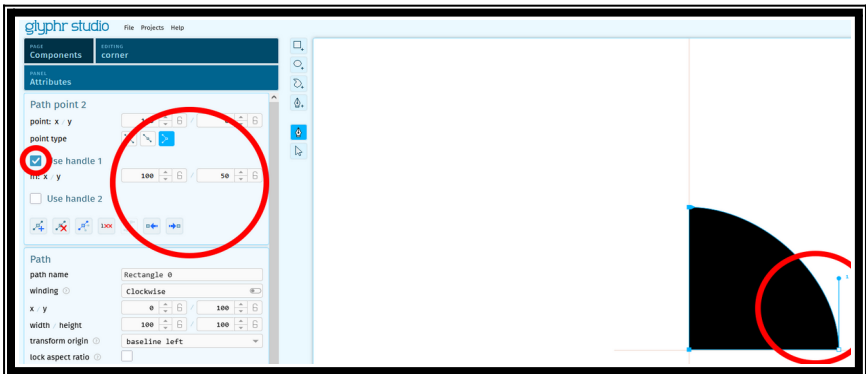
In order to finish off our corner piece, let's add a symmetrical node at the very apex of the curve using the add point tool on the vertical toolbar second from the bottom. It's generally a good idea to add a new node every time there's a new apex and whether you add a symmetrical or asymmetrical node is up to your own use case. It's good practice to always keep your points at round numbers, avoid using decimal points in your

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coordinates. There is a button on your toolbar which allows you to round your points to the nearest round number.
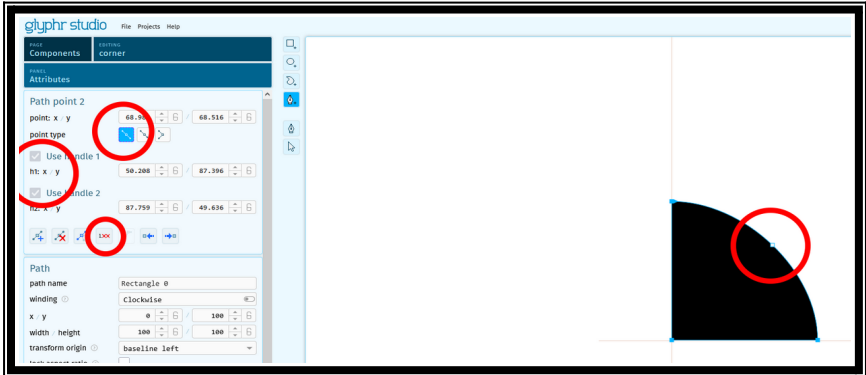

THE GLYPH AND LIGATURE MENUS

Once you have created your inventory of basic shapes you can enter the glyph menu. By clicking on a Latin alphabet character you can combine your components to make your letter shape. Also, you can use the ligature menu to combine keystrokes to generate context specific glyphs. I find the ligature menu to be very useful for generating conlang fonts since it makes it very simple to build an abugida or syllabary writing system instead of a simple alphabet.

EXPORTING YOUR FONT

In order to export your font, click on this button. The .otf format is the one you will be using most of the time. In order to install your font, click on the .otf file and go through installation wizard. Your font might look choppy (displaying strange patches of negative space) due to unmerged vectors, you can merge them in the "global actions" menu. I recommend the free app Paint.NET for testing out your fonts in progress since it has a robust font renderer, available from ⊕getpaint.net.
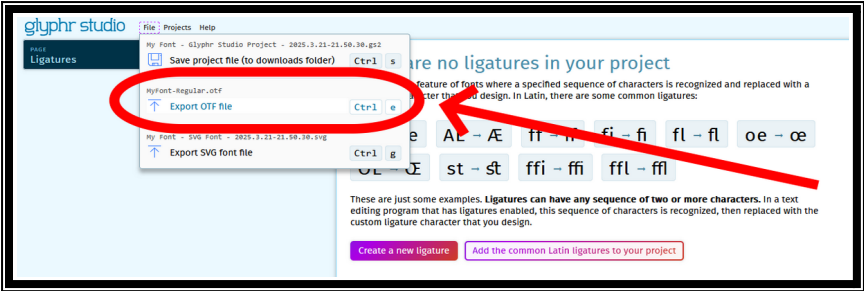
CONCLUSION AND EXAMPLES OF GLYPHR CONLANG FONTS

This is a very basic guide, only intended to give a very rough explanation of Glyphr. The app has very robust documentation which you can access once you're in the menu and it will answer the more technical questions unaddressed here. The link to the documentation is at 🌐glyphrstudio.com/help. To show what a finished project with this app looks like, I've included some Glyphr font samples from my constructed language Sektale. Once you have your set of components, Glyphr lets you go where your creativity takes you.
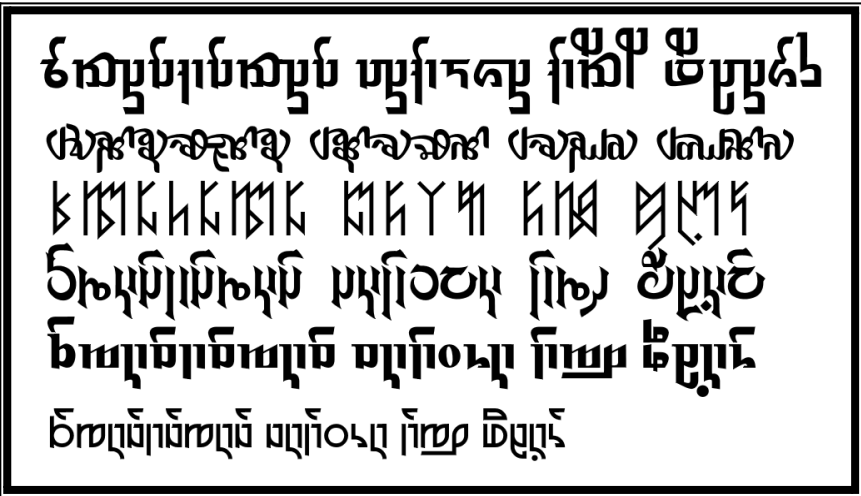
ETHICS OF CONSTRUCTED COMMUNICATION:
A CASE STUDY OF MAKATON & SIGNUNO BY FREDERICK CHAN

Sometimes, creators of communication systems cause unintended harms, especially those intending on a greater purpose than just making them for fun. In this article, we'll look at Makaton, a system intended for transitioning people with cognitive disabilities to spoken language, which despite its good intentions has caused unintended harms and considerable friction with the British Deaf community. Then, we'll look what Makaton can teach us about Signuno, an attempt at a signed, Esperanto-based international auxiliary language (IAL).

Bibliography available at ⊕conlang.club/makaton-ethics.
Numbers in brackets indicate citations of works in the bibliography.

BACKGROUND ON SIGN LANGUAGES AND DEAF POLITICS

Before we can start talking about the friction between the British Deaf community and Makaton, we first need to understand what sign languages are and some of the history behind Deaf politics.

Sign languages, including British Sign Language, are natural (not constructed!) languages that can evolve independently of spoken languages, and have grammar as complex as any other natural language. Although sign languages can borrow a few features from spoken languages they come into contact with, British Sign Language is as distinct from English as Japanese or Finnish. In fact, American Sign Language is unrelated to British Sign Language, despite both being from primarily English-speaking countries, and not mutually intelligible.

Misconceptions about sign languages have far-reaching consequences. Among the most devastating was followed the Second International Congress on the Education of the Deaf in 1880 (*aka* the Milan Conference), in which educators of deaf children around the world voted to ban sign languages in schools, believing them to be just gestures and thus inferior to spoken languages. Instead, they doubled down on *oralism*, attempting to

teach deaf children to speak a spoken language through lip reading and mimicking the mouth shapes and breathing patterns of speech[1].

While thankfully all the resolutions made during the Milan Conference were repudiated by the International Congress on the Education of the Deaf in 1980, and formally rejected in 2010, access to a sign language in schools, the workplace, and government services has remained an issue worldwide for over a century.

Edward Miner Gallaudet ▲ was the first president of Gallaudet University, the first Deaf university in the world, and was one of the few who fought for sign language rights at the 1880 Milan Conference

In fact, BSL was only recognized as a language of Britain (with equal status to English, Welsh, and Scots Gaelic) by the UK government as recently as 2022 with the BSL Act[2], after members of the British Deaf community fought tooth and nail for the status of their native language, including the British Deaf Association (BDA).

Sign language access is not simply a matter of choice— many Deaf people who are fully fluent in a sign language have trouble with reading their country's spoken language. If information about your legal rights is not available in your native language, lack of access can lead to a loss of those rights through no fault of your own.

On October 27, 2000, in Cincinnati, Ohio, a 19 year old Deaf American named Jason White was arrested on suspicion of a crime. A police detective, who had taken less than 10 weeks of a beginner American Sign Language class, failed to interpret the Miranda rights to ASL, leading to Jason signing a waiver of his constitutional rights to remain silent and to consult with an attorney before an interrogation that were written in legal terminology he had not seen before.

Not only this, the police incorrectly construed Jason's responses under interrogation as a confession to the crime, caused by the detective's botched translation of Jason's responses, despite Jason's insistence that he was innocent[3].

> *Many deaf people are unable to understand the process that led to their incarceration, nor are they able to participate fully in their own defense. For instance, one fourth do not have an interpreter during legal procedures. In some cases, they do not even understand the charges against them, to which they generally plead guilty.*
>
> — *"Obstacles Faced by Deaf People in the Criminal Justice System"*
> *Vernon & Miller (2005)*

Interactions with cops are not the only place where this matters. Everyday things like paying taxes, receiving benefits, and getting an education, are all situations where sign language should be accessible. When sign languages are recognized by the general public for what they are— fully-featured, natural languages— it becomes possible to receive adequate services from the government and other aspects of daily life in your native language.

SO WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH MAKATON?

Created in the 1970s, Makaton is a constructed communication system named after its creators, Margaret Walker, Katherine Johnston, and Tony Cornforth, intended for use by hearing people who have cognitive disabilities that make it difficult to communicate through speech. It uses signs taken from BSL, some original Makaton signs, as well as a set of symbols representing vocabulary words, designed to be used while transitioning its users to full usage of spoken English.

While the intentions of Makaton's creators are sincere, and the system can be genuinely useful for people who are unable to use language to communicate due to intellectual disabilities[4], the ethical problems lie in how the Makaton Charity's promotion, usage, and sale of Makaton have impacted the British Deaf community.

When referring to Makaton, we must take care not to call Makaton a language, but instead a constructed *communication system*. Unlike a language, Makaton has no grammar of its own, as it tries to transition users into English grammar.

The Makaton Charity has not been as careful when promoting Makaton, incorrectly equating Makaton and BSL as both being mere communication systems in its marketing materials. This has led to considerable confusion among hearing people, particularly parents with special needs children and their educators, who are misled to believe that BSL is not a fully expressive *'real'* language and/or that Makaton is a replacement for BSL.

In response, the British Deaf Association issued an official statement[5] in 2022 denouncing the marketing of Makaton and other projects incorporating signs, like Signalong and Baby Signs, emphasizing that harm that confusing constructed communication and natural language has on the British Deaf community who have been fighting for BSL access for over a century.

Deaf activists like Alison Bryan consider Makaton theft of cultural capital, given that Makaton makes millions of Pounds from copyrighted teaching materials while using BSL signs and causing harms to the BSL community. ▼

MAKATON AND LANGUAGE DEPRIVATION

In addition to its impact on language policy, the confusion leads many misinformed parents and educators to jump straight to using Makaton if

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Alison @Deaf · Mar 14, 2021 · · ·
These days Makaton is a registered trademark. There is a MBE for its work. Millions will have been made from this over the years, not just the charity but offshoots of this. Makaton apparently is broader but sign language is central to what it does. /7

💬 1   🔁 1   ♡ 13   ⅈⅼⅈ   ⬆

Alison @Deaf · Mar 14, 2021 · · ·
Just taking cultural capital with no renumeration (and what about permission) is cultural appropriation.

Meanwhile many Deaf people are financially not well off, unemployed and so forth. It reads like a form of theft. /8

💬 1   🔁 2   ♡ 19   ⅈⅼⅈ   ⬆

a young child has speech difficulties, without giving a proper language like BSL a try first. Rather than an inability to acquire language, the child may simply be hard of hearing or just have trouble with the spoken modality, and would do excellently with a sign language instead.

This is extra concerning considering that the early years of childhood are the most important for a child's language acquisition, known as the critical period by psychologists. Those who are not exposed to enough natural language input during this period are at risk of being unable to acquire full fluency in any language later in life. Makaton, and even cochlear implants without sign language access, are not enough[6].

However, from the perspective of a hearing parent with the false impression that Makaton can replace BSL, Makaton seems much more attractive, since it doesn't require the parent to learn a whole language, thus risking language deprivation.

In a 2003 scientific article, Mayberry and Lock[7] find that language deprivation is *"a common educational occurrence arising from the priority frequently given to speech over sign by rehabilitation professionals and hearing parents,"* and that adults who were victims of language deprivation perform

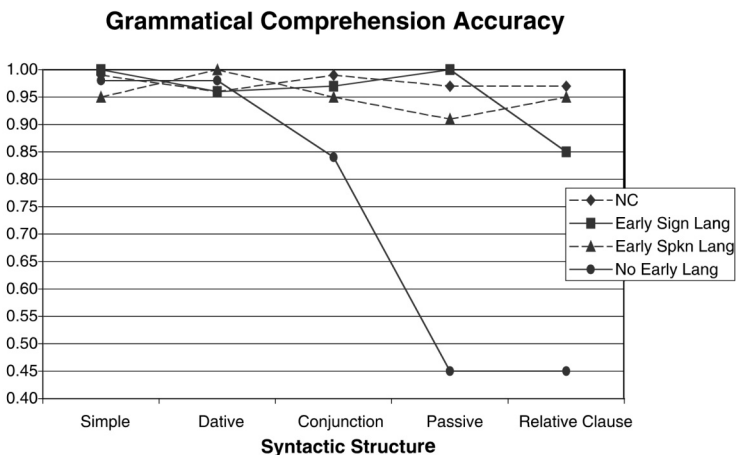

Grammatical Comprehension Accuracy

Figure 2 from Mayberry & Lock (2003) shows that adults who received inadequate language input until ages 3-6 suffer greatly in grammatical comprehension, compared with those who learned English natively (NC=Native Control) or who learned any non-English spoken or signed language in early childhood.

significantly worse at English grammar comprehension than even non-native English speakers.

With the consequences of Makaton being so dire, what should be done to make things better?

RESPONSIBILITY AND DOING BETTER

Let's be clear— the problem is not that the Makaton system exists, nor the fact that there are Makaton users. Again, Makaton is genuinely helpful for those with difficulty acquiring any language at all. Rather, the problem lies with the (likely unintentional) spread of misinformation by its creators and the subsequent harmful effects to children and the Deaf community. Hearing speech pathologists and educators who don't do their research and prematurely recommend Makaton only exacerbate the problem.

Ultimately, the question we should be asking is not who is to blame, but instead, how could the creators of Makaton have done better, and how can the situation be improved now?

For an organization with such an impact as the Makaton Charity that makes heavy use of BSL signs, Makaton would ideally have had some Deaf leadership from the start, or at least Deaf consultants, whose knowledge of Deaf issues could have prevented the harmful aspects of Makaton's promotion and spread. Makaton and BSL would likely not have been mixed up if this were the case.

In the present day, the Makaton Charity have recently started taking steps to correcting this mistake, as stated on their Makaton and British Sign Language webpage[8]:

> *"Makaton serves as a supportive communication system, aiding those with learning or communication challenges, while BSL is the full language of the UK's Deaf community. Acknowledging the significance of both, The Makaton Charity and the BDA have agreed to work collaboratively to highlight the specific features of Makaton and BSL and to support their respective communities effectively."*

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Unfortunately, the Makaton Charity cannot simply gather everyone around and fix everyone's misconceptions. But by changing what it does control— its marketing— it can mitigate these harms by making it clear what Makaton and BSL are respectively, and when Makaton should and should not be used.

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH CONLANGING?

Though Makaton is not a project that we would traditionally consider conlanging, the lessons we learn from Makaton can still apply. Consider Signuno, an attempt at creating an "Esperanto Sign Language" by turning each morpheme into a sign, which ignores the fact that sign languages are not signed relexes of spoken languages and perpetuates the harmful misconception that they are dependent on spoken counterparts.

The recent revival of Signuno, although obscure, has explicitly stated that it wishes to reach the Deaf community the most, with videos stating Signuno as "The Official Universal Sign Language" and "This Video is Made for Deaf People". The fact that this project has no Deaf

Despite having no connection to any Deaf community, the Signuno revival claims to be the "official" universal sign language.

members but is making a conlang for Deaf people is cause for alarm, since its members lack a crucial understanding of sign languages and Deaf culture. Even worse is that the project has been resistant to change despite criticism from members of the Deaf community.

> For an IAL like Signuno, the ethics of its design and promotion becomes important because its scope and intended audience are large.

The flaws in Signuno's design mean it will never meet its goals, but that in itself is not the ethical problem. After all, just because a conlang is badly made does not mean it will hurt people. Rather, we must consider its context: its scope and intended audience. For an IAL like Signuno, the ethics of its design and promotion becomes important because its scope and intended audience are large. Not only is it doomed for non-use among the Deaf community, but any hearing people

who learn or contribute to Signuno, believing it is useful, might come away with harmful misconceptions about sign languages, just as Makaton has done.

ETHICAL CONLANG CREATION

All this is not to say it's impossible to make an ethical signed conlang, even as a hearing person. The ethically simplest examples are artlangs, like those made for fictional conworlds, where the scope of the language is small. As long as it doesn't misrepresent itself as a real sign language and remains careful not to perpetuate harmful stereotypes about sign languages or its users, its ethical risks are usually minimal.

▲ *luka pona*, inspired by Toki Pona, is an example of a good signed conlang created with an understanding of real signed linguistics principles

Conlangs with wide scope and want users, like IALs, need to be extra careful, as they have the potential to cause a lot of harm if they become popular. Ethics should be a core design goal, and Deaf people should be consulted from day one, rather than waiting for it to become big and risking it getting out of control. After all, you wouldn't wait until your house burns down to buy a fire extinguisher.

In either case, researching the linguistics of sign languages and Deaf culture will help stop you from misrepresenting them, and gives you inspiration for language features that take full advantage of the signed modality. Conlangers can also benefit from joining the Signed Conlangs Discord Server, a community of both Deaf and hearing conlangers from around the world interested in making signed conlangs, with people who have the knowledge and cultural context to give advice on signed conlangs.

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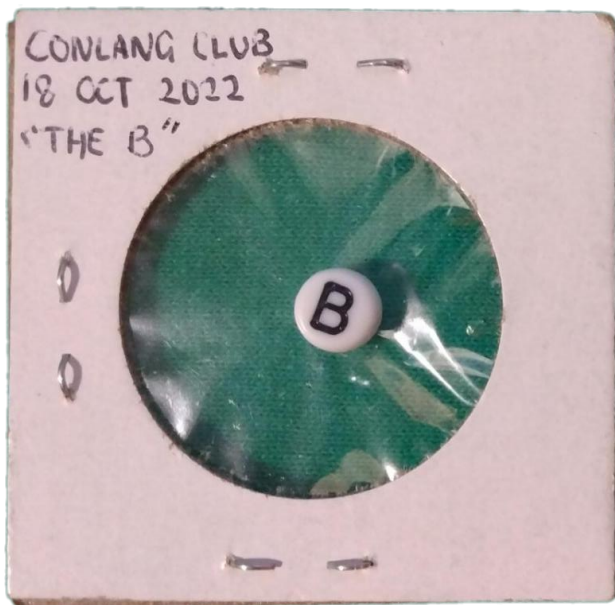
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