

Speedlang Challenge 7

Miacomet (a.k.a. u/roipoiboy)

Started: October 11, 2020

Due: 11:59 GMT, October 25, 2020

This round is slightly different. I wanted to change things up, so I had a few ideas and then put it to the people to decide! After my informal polls of several servers I found that there was some interest in having a challenge that dealt with *a posteriori* conlangs or *a priori* conlangs with deep in-world diachronics. But the most voted-for category was to keep things the same. So here's what I'm going to do: there will be a few phonology constraints and a few grammar constraints. If you don't want to do diachronics, then you have to follow *all of the constraints*. If you decide to do the diachronic path, then there will be additional constraints, but you'll be allowed to choose two of the other constraints not to follow. The people have spoken. (Speaking of which...if you're eligible to vote in a country with an election this year, please check that you're registered and go out and vote!) Now on to the challenge.

Phonology

Your language's phonology must include:

- A pitch accent-type tonal system. Pitch accent is [a bit vaguely defined](#) so here's what I mean: a prosodic system where words have lexically specified tone, but individual syllables do not. This might look like word-level tone melodies or multiple contrastive pitch patterns for a stressed syllable. For this challenge, these systems should not be able to be easily analyzed as stress systems. In Italian, stressed syllables are always falling in pitch, but since these are predictable from stress, they wouldn't count for the purposes of this challenge. If you're looking for a place to start with tonal systems in your conlang, I'd recommend [this article by Aidan Aannestad \(u/sjiveru\)](#) to get started.
- A vowel system with some feature other than frontness, height, or roundedness that is *not* orthogonal to those other features. That means that your vowel system should make some other distinction, but that it has to be more complex than just "all vowels plus or minus X feature." For example, if your plain vowels are /aeiou/ and the feature you choose is nasalization, then your total vowels can't be /aæẽĩĩõũ/ since that's just your plain vowels with [±NASAL]. Tone doesn't count as a vowel feature. Bonus points if this leads to interesting morphophonological alternations.

Grammar

Your language's grammar must:

- Use [differential object marking](#), a phenomenon where direct objects are marked differently depending on some property, such as animacy, definiteness, or affectedness.
- Include at least two types of converb, non-finite verb forms that act as heads of adverbial clauses.
- Have some sort of commonly used [ablaut/apophony](#). It doesn't have to be productive as long as it's visible and common in the language.

Diachronics DLC

So! You've chosen to take the diachronics add-in. You can create an *a posteriori* language based on something we already have on Earth or you can create an *a priori* language with deep in-world diachronics. You're allowed to ditch two of the above requirements, your choice. In addition to the three remaining, you have to do the following things:

- Include an influx of loanwords somewhere in the middle of your language's history that get nativized, but don't undergo sound changes that happened before. If you're doing an *a priori* you're welcome to use other conlang words or make up nonce loan words. Document at least 10 in your lexicon, discuss how they got nativized and how they differ from native words that had undergone earlier changes.
- Create something akin to [Jespersen's cycle](#) where a feature initially expressed with one morpheme comes to be expressed using a morpheme plus an intensifier, then the original morpheme comes to be dropped and the intensifier ends up grammaticalized to mark the feature. Although Jespersen's Cycle refers to this happening with negation (which is fairly common), for this challenge you can use it for any feature as long as you justify it historically and explain its development.
- Include a section in your documentation about the history of the language including sound changes, notable grammatical changes and innovations, and any interesting etymologies.

Tasks

1. Document and showcase your language, explaining and demonstrating how it meets all of the elements of the challenge.
2. Translate and gloss five example sentences. You can either get "syntax test sentences" by asking Zephyrus "z!stest" (RIP Leonard), in which case note down which number sentences you get, or you can pick from recent 'Just Used 5 Minutes of your Day' challenges posted by u/mareck_ on r/conlangs, in which case note which number 5MOYDS you do.

3. Include an explanation of your conlang's number system and how counting and enumerating work in your conlang.