Speedlang Challenge 9

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Started: October 15, 2021
Due: 11:59 EST, October 31, 2021

You hear a creaking in your attic. You tell yourself it's the wind. You don't see the tree branches swaying. You figure it's just something old houses do. You know your house was renovated in the nineties. You wonder if it's the cat. You don't have a cat.

You know what happens to curious people in horror movies. The audience watches them disappear, never to be seen again, their lives serving only to advance the plot. But this isn't a horror movie, you tell yourself. It's probably nothing. You pull down the stairs to the attic.

There's a figure stirring up dust in the attic, about the same height as you. It coughs and starts talking. It seems friendlier than you expected, if scared.

Astute linguist that you are, you befriend the creature and document its language, which turns out to meet the criteria below. But there's something not quite human about it...

Phonology

Your language's phonology must:

- Have an **asymmetrical set of plosives**, where not all feature combinations are represented at all places of articulation.[1]

- Include a phonological process making use of **featural metathesis**, where two features swap places within a word without entire segments swapping places. One example is quantitative metathesis, where two segments swap lengths without changing quality.

- Have a **phonological constraint on minimum word size/shape**. Include some words whose underlying forms don't meet the minimum and discuss what processes the words undergo in order to get surface forms that do.

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[1]Mareck is not allowed to meet this requirement by having a lower-than-expected number of labial stops.

Grammar

Your language's grammar must:

- Have a **symmetrical voice** system of some sort, in which there are (at least) two transitive voices with different argument structures. Check out [u/mythoswyrm's recent guide](#), which inspired me in part to include it in this challenge.

- **Mark a morphological category through the absence of something**. Examples of this could include things like disfixation, where a category is marked by removing segments, or antiagreement, where certain features prevent agreement that would otherwise occur.

- Use a grammaticalized **causative construction**. It can be directly marked or periphrastic. Think about how the causative interacts with other voices in your conlang!

Non-Human Language DLC

Speedlang 9 is due on Halloween, so let's make it spooky. I've decided to make another 'DLC' like last fall. If you make a language spoken by non-humans and include the following two requirements, then you can skip one of the main requirements.

- Include a sound not pronounceable by humans or a contrast that's not producible/perceivable by humans in your phonology.

- Include at least ten words in your lexicon that describe things that are relevant or important to the non-human species that speaks your language, but not to humans.

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.