

Fiat Lingua

Title: How an Unlikely Conlanger Created a Language

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I am, in my opinion, the most unlikely of conlangers.

I have a tendency to mix up symbols in my mind (calculus was fun), I struggle with memorization (still don't have my multiplication tables memorized), recalling names or specific words I want to use is hard for me (maybe I have a bit of dysnomia), and the way I learned most of my vocabulary has left me with poor pronunciation of most things... I was not a popular child and spent most of my time with fantasy books growing up. I always read at a very advanced level for my age, but this meant that I learned most of my words first from reading them (and never hearing them outloud). When I would talk to people, I wouldn't always know how some words were actually pronounced, so I would without fail say things wrong, be corrected, and feel quite awful. And then it was hard for me to recall alternative words for what I meant so I developed a fear of saying things out loud at all (my written vocabulary is still a lot larger than my spoken one due to this). Of all the people to choose to become a conlanger, I should have been the very last choice.

However, all of these things can certainly explain why I became a fantasy writer.

The act of creating worlds for my stories has given me an excuse to dive into many areas that I find fascinating. Climate modeling, tectonic plate movements, agriculture, development of society, speculative biology, and the list goes on. I love learning about these various scientific, historical, and anthropological areas, understanding and breaking them down enough to reapply them to a whole different world. I even started making guide videos on my YouTube channel to share the processes I was creating for myself. But for a long time, linguistics was something I never considered dabbling with. Linguistics was *terrifying*. Almost as terrifying as GPlates.

But as time went on and I created more and more worlds, and these worlds began to get deeper and less like places on Earth, I really started to hit a wall with language. I wanted the names of my characters to have a cohesive feel, for readers to be able to intuitively differentiate between people of different areas by name, and to be able to give things and places real names beyond capitalized nouns like the Capital. The first thing I tried, which I think is a logical next step for many fantasy authors, is to take a real-world place/language and use names from there. This works to an extent, but there are a lot of limitations, especially when it comes to naming more than just people. Amidst worries about cultural appropriation and using languages I didn't fully understand incorrectly, I knew I needed a different solution.

Despite the fear and anxiety that linguistics gave me, I was at least aware of conlanging in an abstract sort of way. So I started slowly researching. I watched David Peterson's [How to Create a Language video](#) on the WIRED channel, read his book *The Art of Language Invention*, read *The Language Construction Kit* by Mark Rosenfelder, and watched an assortment of language videos by Artifexian and Biblaridion. I could see the merits of making languages like this, but I was very overwhelmed and intimidated by it all. Surely *I* couldn't do this. The IPA was an unparseable code, I could barely articulate what an adverb was, and I struggled to learn real-world languages let alone a fictional one of my own creation. No, it wasn't for me.

And yet.

There's something profound about setting off on a journey that seems impossible and insurmountable. Something that you know you just aren't capable of, aren't made for, but there's that tiny *what if* to pull you through. What if you manage it anyway? What if you do the impossible? Is there anything more worthy to strive for than the impossible? I felt compelled to dip my toe into the water. *Dip* being the operative word.

Did I do this in any sort of brave and courageous fashion? Em, no. I just wanted the simplest of naming languages that even *I* might be capable of. It is important to note at this point that I was a software engineer for my day job, so I coded myself up a crutch to help me create what I saw as a bastardized version of a naming language. I gave this program all the "sounds" I thought were easily pronounceable by an English speaker, skipping IPA entirely and instead using the romanization. So 'sh' instead of 'ʃ' and so on. And I added a ton of filters for sound combinations and orderings that I thought would trip up readers. Then I coded a sequence of generators to build generators and words. For each defined naming language, you could choose which sounds were allowed, set their occurrence frequency, choose how many sounds could be in the onset vs the coda etc. and add filters for things that were required or disallowed in certain conditions, and various other rules. You could then generate words of different syllable lengths, or morphemes that followed prefix/affix/suffix rules, etc. It essentially allowed me to apply what I had learned without the stress of having to *remember* how to do it or bother with the parts I found the most terrifying. The code was certainly a bit rough and didn't have any grammar-capabilities at first.

```

public class SpellLangRules extends LanguageRules {

    private static final List<Consonant> sssTypes = List.of(SS);
    private static final List<Consonant> plosives = List.of(T, D, K);
    private static final List<Consonant> nasals = List.of(M, N);
    private static final List<Consonant> fricatives = List.of(F, V, S, TH, SH, J, CH);
    private static final List<Consonant> approximates = List.of(L, R, W, Y);

    private static final List<Vowel> allowedVowels = List.of(A, I, O, U);

    // No uo ia, ua, uo
    // a < o < i/u
    // Diphthongs must be closing (first vowel/more open lower than second)

    // Usually CV, sometimes CVC, rarely CCVC
    private static final Map<Integer, Double> onsetLengthWeights = Map.of( k1: 0, v1: 5.0, k2: 1, v2: 90.0, k3: 2, v3: 5.0);
    private static final Map<Integer, Double> nucleusLengthWeights = Map.of( k1: 1, v1: 90.0, k2: 2, v2: 10.0);
    private static final Map<Integer, Double> codaLengthWeights = Map.of( k1: 0, v1: 80.0, k2: 1, v2: 20.0);

    private static final Map<Integer, Double> nameSyllableLengthWeights = Map.of( k1: 1, v1: 20.0, k2: 2, v2: 50.0, k3: 3, v3: 30.0);

    // Allows ai, au, ao, oi, ou (maybe iu and ui??)
    private static final List<String> unallowedDiphthongs = List.of("uo", "ia", "ua", "uo");

    public SpellLangRules() {
        super(new LanguageDefinition(sssTypes, plosives, nasals, fricatives, approximates, allowedVowels,
            onsetLengthWeights, nucleusLengthWeights, codaLengthWeights, nameSyllableLengthWeights),
            SIDE_LANGUAGE_MORPHEMES, NOUNS);
    }

    private boolean validateDiphthongIsClosing(String diphthong) {
        if (diphthong.length() == 2) {
            // List of non closing diphthongs
            return !unallowedDiphthongs.contains(diphthong);
        }
        return true;
    }
}

@0venpide

```

Example of the rules class for the spell language. You can see the “sounds” in the language defined, the chances of different lengths in each part of a syllable (e.g. For the nucleus, there is a 90% chance of 1 vowel and a 20% chance of 2). You can also see an additional validation method that ensures that none of the unallowed diphthongs are present in anything the code generates.

```

public static List<String> buildAllValidMiddleOnsetClusters(LanguageRules languageRules) {

    List<List<Consonant>> validMiddleOnsetClusters = new ArrayList<>();

    if (languageRules.getSupportedOnsetLengths().contains(1)) {
        ALL_TYPES.forEach( ConsonantType consonantType -> validMiddleOnsetClusters.addAll(languageRules.getAllOfType(consonantType) Lis
            .stream() Stream<Consonant>
            .map(List::of) Stream<List<...>>
            .toList());
    }

    if (languageRules.getSupportedOnsetLengths().contains(2)) {
        ORDER_LENGTH_2.forEach( List<ConsonantType> pattern -> {
            var firstConsonants = languageRules.getAllOfType(pattern.get(0));
            var secondConsonants = languageRules.getAllOfType(pattern.get(1));

            firstConsonants.forEach( Consonant firstConsonant -> secondConsonants.forEach( Consonant secondConsonant -> {
                if (secondConsonant.canFollowTypeInOnset(firstConsonant.getType()) &&
                    secondConsonant.canFollowLetterInOnset(firstConsonant)) {
                    validMiddleOnsetClusters.add(List.of(firstConsonant, secondConsonant));
                }
            });
        });
    }

    if (languageRules.getSupportedOnsetLengths().contains(3)) {
        ORDER_LENGTH_3.forEach( List<ConsonantType> pattern -> {
            var firstConsonants = languageRules.getAllOfType(pattern.get(0));
            var secondConsonants = languageRules.getAllOfType(pattern.get(1));
            var thirdConsonants = languageRules.getAllOfType(pattern.get(2));

            firstConsonants.forEach( Consonant firstConsonant -> secondConsonants.forEach( Consonant secondConsonant -> {
                if (secondConsonant.canFollowTypeInOnset(firstConsonant.getType()) &&

```

Example of the method for building all valid middle onset clusters (so onset of a syllable that isn't at the beginning of a word). You can see it checks what lengths are supported, pulls all consonants that can go in each position, and then for each possible ordering checks that it is valid for the language.

I was hesitant to share what I was doing with these naming languages, more so than any of my other content, but sharing videos about my process was so ingrained into how I did things by this point that I did it anyway. I made a few videos about this builder, starting with my very first conlanging-related video on March 28, 2024, [Creating a Naming Language Builder for my Story Worlds](#) (which has now been moved to my worldbuilding channel). After a few of these, I decided to create a naming language during a livestream (which was something new to me at that point), so on May 1, 2024 we started the main naming language for my Craft Potion project.

I had been interacting with the worldbuilding community for a few years at that point and there's a decent amount of crossover between them and the conlanging community. Some of the worldbuilding patreon discords had various conlanging channels (which of course I avoided

beforehand like the plague). Still, I was surprised by how many people attended the livestream and how involved they were. They were so happy to offer advice and explain things to me. It made it feel like I wasn't really creating the naming language on my own; I had people to help.

I can tell you without a doubt in my mind that if it wasn't for the community of conlangers watching my streams that I never would have progressed past that point with my naming language dabbling. I would never have found the courage or grace I needed to make mistakes. Never would have been faced with so many people that seemed to never doubt I could keep going. So when I ran into an opportunity to take on something a bit more challenging, I considered it.

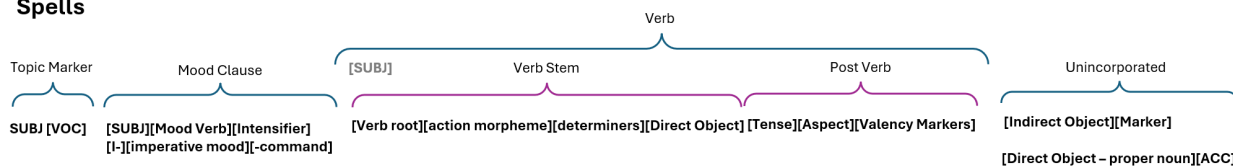
With this project, which I am currently calling my Craft Potion Project, I have a story revolving around breaking into an ancient, spell-locked temple. A decent part of the plot focuses on the translation of grimoires to understand how the temple was locked in the first place and determine how to unlock it. And of course with delightful hijinks as experimentation goes wrong. Since understanding the spells is part of the book, I wanted the reader to be able to read the spells with the dialogue and get a feel for them or even be able to try and figure them out along with the characters.

I thought surely this would only be another baby step after making the naming languages. Something simple with very limited grammar, something with a pretty basic formula where I could just drag and drop things. A non-naturalistic language created by the goddesses to command the winds. I only needed to be able to order people to do things. That's simple right? The obvious easy choice would have been to choose an existing language to use. Perhaps Latin or ancient Greek or celtic, as is commonly done. But why would my goddesses have taught the winds those? Their language would predate those of mortals, would be separate and unknown to them.

So on June 2nd, 2024 I decided to dip another toe into the water. I decided to create a spell language. I started toddling through on streams, trying to convey what I wanted while viewers made suggestions and helped guide me (thank you all!). And boy was it a hard task for them. I didn't know anything, and even things I had researched before or learned on earlier streams I would forget in the moment. I used the wrong words for things and viewers frequently had to guess what I was talking about, but we were making progress.

I wanted something that would allow for shorter spells, so I decided to go with a more polysynthetic language and make it mostly agglutinative (which seemed easier), but for the most part I just figured it out as I went along. What I thought would make sense for this kind of language and what wouldn't. At its inception, Ausmoulau (though it was not yet named at this point) was meant to be something very basic, more formulaic than containing real grammar. So we built the structure of that formula and I managed to translate the first few spells! Simple ones with a single verb, like *start a fire where I point*. You can see in the screenshot of the powerpoint we were working with how I was structuring this at the time.

Spells



Topic Marker	Mood Clause	Verb (Verb Stem + Post Verb)	Unincorporated
Oh!Imva,	I/we welcome you	bestow yourself this that I reference	
[Imva][VOC]	[I/we][IMP][1stD]	[bestow][REF][PROX]	
Imvash	amai	nakravadi	
Topic Marker	Mood Clause	Verb (Verb Stem + Post Verb)	Unincorporated
Oh!Imva,	I beseech you	start fire where I reference/point to	
[Imva][VOC]	[I][IMP][2stD]	[fire][CAUS][MEDI]	
Imvash	annaiwa	vIiduti	
Topic Marker	Mood Clause	Verb (Verb Stem + Post Verb)	Unincorporated
Oh!Imva,	I/we command you	Put out fire that is the spirit's fire	
[Imva][VOC]	[I/we][IMP][3stD]	[fire][TERM][SP.EX.AN][fire]	
Imvash	amaiwan	vIidauovli	

When people would suggest that I was a conlanger, or in any way capable of conlanging, I would very quickly point out their lapse from reality. I had no idea what I was doing, still couldn't read a drop of IPA, and couldn't follow any of the other conlanging livestreams I popped into (although I started attending them anyways).

But we were making spells! Such as a spell to compel a spirit/wind called Imva to create a water jet (see glossing abbreviations at the end of the article):

Imvash amaiwan thyduyumdith

[ɪm.vəʃ ʔa.maj.wan θaj.dʊ.jʊm.dɪθ]

Imva-VOC 1.IN-IMP-3rdD geyser-CAUS-ALL.N-PROX-LOC

Oh'Imva, I command you to create a geyser towards this location I point to.

And a spell to compel a spirit/wind called Imva to blow air around safe-to-eat mushrooms:

Imvash amaiwan rooldu furvaava'oth

[ɪm.vaʃ ʔa.maj.wan ɹo:l.du fu.ɹa:.va.ʔoθ]

Imva-VOC 1.IN-IMP-3rdD sky-CAUS ARO.N-trust-STAT-mushrooms-LOC

Oh'Imva, I command you to create air around trustworthy mushrooms.

But we quickly reached the point where I realized I needed *more* grammar. I was in denial for a while, kept trying to expand our little formula. But what forced me to see reason was a spell I was struggling to come up with to command the winds to make the conditions of a greenhouse meet the plants' needs. Did I need a copula? How was I doing conditional grammar? What were the limits of incorporation and how did I handle fully, unincorporated clauses? What was I even doing? My powerpoint structure was reaching the end of its usefulness and I needed more help. See some examples here (containing the birth and death of Ausmoulau's copula):

Topic Marker	Mood Clause	Conditional Mood Clause	Verb (Verb Stem + Post Verb)	Unincorporated
Oh'Imva, [Imva][VOC]	I beseech you [ɪ][IMP][2stD]	of them; (until/will) their happiness being happy [3 rd .PERS.AN][COND][copula][happy][REFL][FUT]	create warm rain unto the plants [warm-wet-sky][CREAT][PROX][plants]	within the greenhouse [LOC-WITHIN][TELIC][greenhouse][LOC]
Oh'Imva, [Imva][VOC]	I beseech you [ɪ][IMP][2stD]	of them; (while/would) they are dry [3 rd .PERS.AN][COND][copula][dry][REFL]	create warm rain unto the plants [warm-wet-sky][CREAT][PROX][plants]	within the greenhouse [LOC-WITHIN][TELIC][greenhouse][LOC]
Oh'Imva, [Imva][VOC]	I beseech you [ɪ][IMP][2stD]	of them; while it is being one of the night [3 rd .PERS.AN][COND][copula][night][REFL][SING]	create warm rain unto the plants [warm-wet-sky][CREAT][PROX][plants]	within the greenhouse [LOC-WITHIN][TELIC][greenhouse][LOC]

Thankfully I had recently met (thank you Edgar for the Artifexian Podcast's Christmas Quiz) a very wonderful conlanger who had offered to help me out... enter Jessie Peterson.

Through a few calls and sharing my documentation, Jessie stopped my floundering and gave me direction (and so much incredible information). She encouraged me to fill out a proper grammar document, helped me label and actually understand some of the things I was doing, and pointed out a lot of things that would typically come with a language like mine to help it feel balanced and cohesive. And she pointed out that no, I did not in fact *need* a copula. Like my streaming audience had been so necessary for getting me to that point, I think Jessie was critical for helping me turn the jumbled mess of my spell language into something real. Into something I could actually create more complex spells with and grow beyond the basic plug and

play formula structure I had been using. If you know anything about Jessie, you know how incredibly lucky I am to have her guidance.

She was adamant that I wasn't giving myself enough credit, that I had gotten a lot further than I thought I had, and that I knew more than I said. Her confidence in me was inspiring. And if *Jessie-freaking-Peterson* said I could do it, who was I to disagree? So when George of Conlangery asked me for the third time (I had insisted I was not qualified the first two times) if I wanted to join his relay... I said yes.

Now, I think this was more my ADHD side being REALLY stimulated by the thought of something so challenging but... that's beside the point. My spell language was certainly more *languagey* than before. I was able to make the more complex spells I needed at this point, like commanding a spirit to warn you if someone came near:

Imvash amaiwan chroudwaduwoi yumdinath mriiduna

[ɪm.vaʃ ʔa.maj.wan tʃɹow.dwa.dʊ.woj jum.dɪ.naθ mɹi:.du.na]

*Imva-VOC 1.IN-IMP-3rdD human-movement-CAUS-FUT ALL.N-PROX-1SG.IN-LOC
warning-CAUS-1SG.IN*

Oh'Imva, I command you that if people move towards me, warn me.

But as the date of my relay leg loomed closer, I was terrified. The imposter syndrome only grew worse as I did more research, and I couldn't stop the fear that everyone was about to see how little I knew/was capable of when the relay videos came out. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to translate the text before me because I barely understood the concepts I used for my own language, let alone concepts other people would use, and worried about all the holes in my language. It didn't have a name, a numbering system, any sort of adjectives or comparison features, a way to ask questions or differentiate between past/future (I essentially only had now and not-now), and the clausal grammar was mostly just... a hint of an idea. And had I even figured out what an adverb was?

Jessie gave me some amazing advice right before the relay though. The most important bits to mention right now are that she told me to stay true to the original purpose of my language and to really think about what I already had before adding a ton of new stuff just to make translation

easier. This turned out to be extremely helpful (it's almost like she's done this before or something).

Far too soon, it was time for my leg and Biblaridion sent me the torch. *IT WAS TIME TO PANIC.*

When I first started familiarizing myself with the grammar and text, I thought I was very much over my head. Now, Bib's grammar was fantastic. Very well organized and explained. HOWEVER, there were a lot of new things for me. Like vowel harmony and rhotacization and converbs and proclitics and between classes/genders, numbers, noun cases, and declension classes, there were about 224 different noun endings. There was also a whole matrix for possessive classifiers and for auxiliary verbs. For those of you that don't remember knowing as little as I did/do at this point, I had to google what *accusative* meant every time I came across it. Let that sink in. And yet, after about 5 hours, I had an introductory translation and a more thorough retranslation and it... made sense.

But there were a lot of things in the text that I had never done with my language before. Luckily I had Jessie's advice to fall back on. I thought about how these things would be said in my language, avoiding the temptation to add a bunch of grammatical things to do it the most straightforward way. I slightly expanded the determiners a noun could incorporate to include a way to build in adjectives and comparators, I added a way to express numbers without adding a number system, and I expanded the clausal grammar of the conditional spell I had made before to include the rules and patterns for other types of subordinate clauses. Was it the most straightforward or easy way to translate this kind of thing? No, but it fit with my language. But other than coining a bunch of new words, I didn't have to do anything else. I translated the *entire* torch... and it only took me about 6 hours.

And I finally named my language: Ausmoulau. The Language of the Spirits, or more literally: Words of the Caretakers of Life. That was a transcending moment for me.

After 8 more hours of tweaking and perfecting my grammar, I sent off the torch. I had done it. It had taken 22.5 active hours of work, but I had done it.

In the aftermath of the relay leg, I cleaned up some more things with the language, went through and crafted all the spells I thought I needed for my Craft Potion Project, and I even signed up for

a small relay for the [pre-Kopikon II stream](#) where I was able to quickly and easily add this to the story:

*They make words to the gathering: “Oh mice!
I command you to flowing-water-like-move within the fancy mice container,
I command you to birds’ wings-like-arms-move,
I command you to blooming-flower-like twirl,
I command you to leaf-blowing-like sway.”
The great mouse turned towards the adored mouse and offered their paw.*

**Noshadu chwumof: “sivlaolosh amaiwan amaiwan amaiwan amaiwan
[no.fɑ.du tʃwu.mof “sɪ.vlaw.loʃ ʔa.maj.wan ʔa.maj.wan ʔa.maj.wan ʔa.maj.wan]
1SG.EX.AN-words-CAUS gathering-DAT PL-mouse-VOC 1.IN-IMP-3rdD x 4**

**siniwsyoroolduvamyuisi vaoshvathlaiv
[sɪ.nɪw.sjo.ɹo:l.du.va.mjuj.si vawʃ.vaθ.lɛjv]
PL-leaf-wind-CAUS-STAT-sway-BASE blooming_flower-STAT-twirl-BASE**

**Sifrirofsosisyovasidyadawdu
[sɪ.fɹɪ.ɹof.so.sɪ.sjo.va.sɪ.djaw.dɔ.du]
PL-bird-DAT-SP.EX.AN.PL-PL-wing-STAT-PL-arm-movement-CAUS**

**yosvadawdu lalfyaisivlaolmujoth.”
[jo.sva.dɔ.du laɪ.fjɛj.sɪ.vlawl.mu.joθ]
flowing_water-STAT-movement-CAUS INEL.N-grand-mice-container-LOC**

**Vyaovlaolosh chavinosook thaliv yumjwishvavlaoloth.
[vjaw.vlaw.loʃ tʃa.vɪ.no.so:k θa.lɪv jʊm.dʒwɪ.ʃva.vlaw.loθ]
great-mouse-VOC offered-BASE-SP.EX.AN.SG-paw twirl/turn-BASE
ALL.N-adoration-STAT-mouse-LOC**

I had to admit to myself that what I had created was more than just a spell language. I had translated an entire relay text. I had... a language. Somehow. More than I had set out to create, which was already more than I ever thought possible. I still struggle to wrap my head around this, to not freak out when people call me a conlanger, to not caveat everything with how I know absolutely nothing. It's hard to stop the voices of doubt in my mind.

One of my excuses to degrade this thing I had created was to point out that I didn't use the IPA, that I couldn't communicate how to pronounce any of it (or even how to pronounce it myself).

This was the next line I drew in the sand that I thought would be impossible to cross. The thing that would hold me back.

Regardless, I *started* trying to understand the IPA. Some symbols came easily to me, but most were nebulous and slipped out of my grasp before I could get a proper hold on them. It became a thing though in my audience, that everyone knew how much I struggled with the IPA. There was definitely encouragement for me to learn even as people were entertained by my struggles (thankfully no one seemed frustrated with me). This led to what I thought would be a hilarious stream full of me making a fool of myself: Wil trying to teach me about the International Phonetic Alphabet in the first [IPA Classtime](#) stream. I even brought a bag of mini m&ms to reward myself if I managed to do something correctly.

Despite my expectations, IPA Classtime was... not a steaming pile of garbage. While I certainly didn't suddenly know all the symbols, the system made sense. At least for consonants. We even looked at my fake sound chart for Ausmoulau and added in the actual IPA characters, which was pretty snazzy. But the stream was so useful that we went back to look at vowels and then Jake Penny did one with me on tones. While it was all helpful, I still didn't feel like I could write things in the IPA. A couple consonants doesn't really get you a full transcription and vowels are scary! They change so much with accents, can be pronounced differently depending on the other sounds around them or where they are in a syllable, and the vowel chart for IPA looks more like someone was trying to set up a seance.

A few months went by as I warily regarded the IPA as something *slightly* less nebulous but still out of reach. I watched some more videos, my patrons occasionally gave me IPA transcriptions to try to parse on stream, and I tried to sound things out whenever I could. But, ya know, vowels are hard. And I don't want to horrify you... but the only vowel rules I had at this point was that diphthongs had to be closing and that there was no <e>. Yeah. *No <e>*.

I was afraid to say I wanted to be able to transcribe Ausmoulau in the IPA (I was in denial), but I did. Unfortunately I didn't know what I was missing, what bit of information would help me unlock more of the IPA. Until I started working on this article, actually, and Jake suggested I add IPA transcriptions. I explained my problem and they realized what I needed was to understand allophony (and have my hand held while doing it). So we took a break from our normal stream broadcasting for [an allophony stream](#). We took a bunch of example words from Ausmoulau and

analyzed how I was intuitively saying them, how I WANTED to say them, and reverse engineered the vowel/diphthong sounds and allophony rules. It was definitely what I had been missing. While I credit most of that work to Jake, I have to acknowledge how much the process taught me. How every time someone helps me or has to explain something, it doesn't mean I don't know something... it means I am learning something. And I don't know about all y'all who taught yourselves this stuff on your own, but learning how to conlang with *friends* is really fun.

I'm not sure if you noticed, but the examples in this article have IPA transcriptions. WE DID IT. It may not have stood out to you as notable, but they are miraculous in my eyes. So that spell language that somehow became a conlang that I named Ausmoulau? Well it's pronounced [ʔɔs.mow.law]. Just please don't ask me about the stress system... that's a problem for a future me.

The IPA was one of the scariest parts about conlanging to me, and yet in one small initial way, I have begun to tame it. In that allophony stream with Jake, 20 months after I first started to dip my toes into conlanging, I wrote full words in IPA for the first time. Not only that, I transcribed "sifrirofsosisyovasidyaodawdu". It may have been an unconventional and roundabout journey getting here, but that's okay. I keep finding myself pulling up the words we translated and looking at these strange symbols I have found terrifying for so long. It's empowering.

While I can't claim to be able to quickly read these IPA transcriptions (I definitely don't have them all memorized), I trust myself now to know that one day I will be able to. And that is freeing.

I shouldn't be here. I shouldn't have done this. *Me*, the most unlikely of conlangers. And yet...

I *did* do it.

And I'm not going to stop there. Who is to say where this journey will take me or the wonderful people I will meet along the way. For now, I am learning about sound changes and daughter languages while Jake and I work on the Languages of Pillar World. The next impossible step in this unlikely journey, that isn't as impossible or unlikely as I thought.

I think the message to be gained from all this is that we are capable of more than we know. If there is something you want to do or learn, but you think it is too hard or too impossible, try anyway. Everyone's journey looks different, but the only universal requirement is that at some point, everyone decides to try.

Glossing

1.IN - Speaker inclusive pronoun

1SG.EX.AN - Speaker exclusive singular animate pronoun

1SG.IN - Speaker inclusive singular pronoun

3rdD - Third degree intensifier

ARO.N - Locative around marker

BASE - Base verbalizing morpheme for things that are already verbs

CAUS - Creational/causational verbalizing morpheme

DAT - Dative noun case

FUT - Mark future tense and things that are currently not true

IMP - Imperative modal marker

LOC - Locative noun case

PL - Plural

PROX - Proximal spatial determiner

STAT - Reflexive/predicative/stative verbalizing morpheme

SP.EX.AN.P - Speaker exclusive animate plural possession

SP.EX.AN.SG - Speaker exclusive animate singular possession

SP.IN - Speaker-inclusive possession or pronoun

ALL.N - Lative to/towards prepositional marker (allative)

VOC - Vocative

INEL.N - Locative inside/within prepositional marker