

Ex Nihilo Ad...



Language Creation Society

with Jim Henry, Jeff Jones, David J. Peterson, Erin Peterson, and Sylvia Sotomayor

69th Annual World Science Fiction Convention

Reno, Nevada

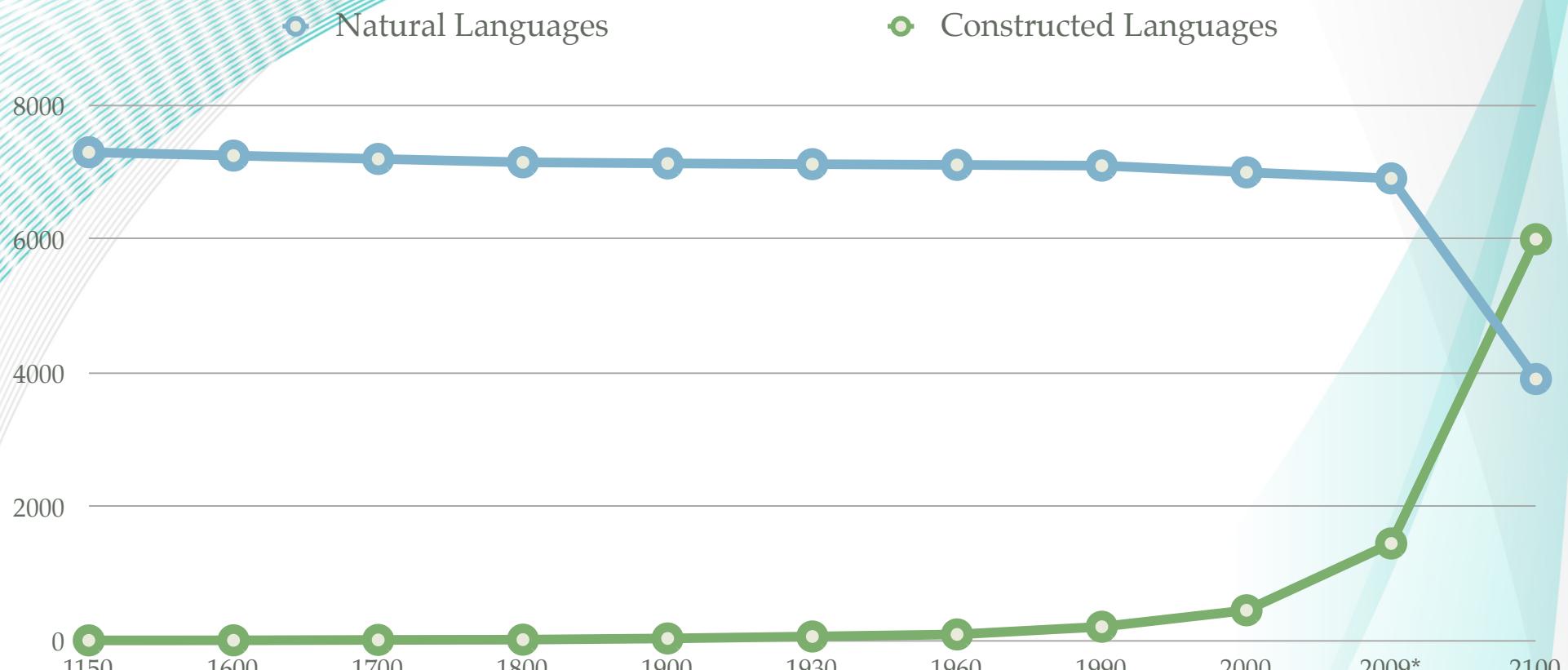
August 18, 2011

Conlangs

“At some point in the next century, the number of invented languages will probably overtake the number of surviving natural languages.”

-Cullen Murphy (October, 1995)

In the Beginning...



* Projected (mid 21st century)

Lingua Ignota

The first conlang.



Hildegarde von
Bingen
(1098-1179)

r b z 2 9 q t z
g 9 x b 7 r u k
l c x * q 3 x

Aigonz - God

Burizindiz - fire

Cliuanz - bone

Diriz - ring

Ermosiz - goldfinch

Flauriz - pelican

Gulsich - bucket

Harzima - field

Inimois - human

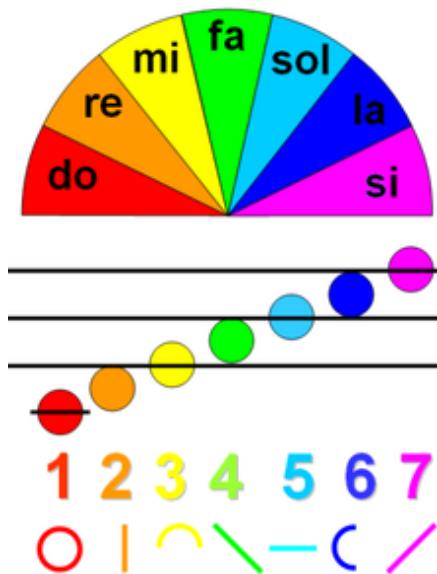


The Philosophical Languages

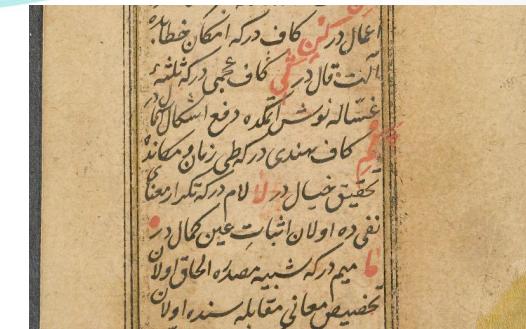
John Wilkins



Solresol
1827



1668



Bâlaibalan
14th Century

Ro Language

taq “year”
taqi “annually”
taqzaw “century”
taqzayo “millenium”

One Lang to Rule Them All

Esperanto vs. Volapük vs. Ido



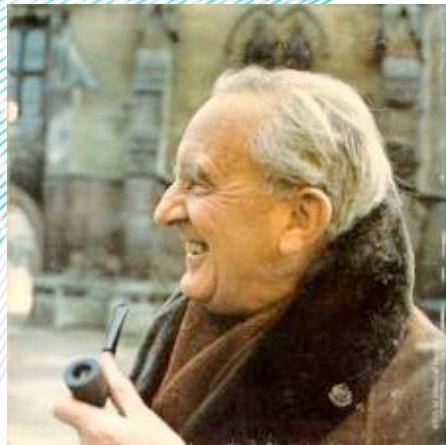
Johann Martin Schleyer, Erfinder des Volapük.

- ★ Culturally neutral.
- ★ Easy to learn.
- ★ Completely regular.
- ★ Western (vocabulary and structure).
- ★ Guiding socio-political ideals.

*Idiom Neutral
Spokil
Bolak
Mundolinco
Adjuvilo
Occidental
Novial
Sona
Intal
Mondial
Interglossa
Interlingua
Frater
Modern IE...*

For Art's Sake

J. R. R. Tolkien



1892-1973

♩ λαύνω πάτα, ή πόνω δγίι πό ητ
καρδιώπι πό γαρ ::



The Impact of the Internet



- ❖ July 25th, 1991: First Conlang listserv message (archived).
- ❖ 1995: Jeffrey Henning begins sending out the *Model Languages* newsletter.
- ❖ ~1996: *Model Languages* becomes Langmaker.com. Henning begins to catalog every known conlang on his site.
- ❖ 1997: The Auxlang list splits off from the Conlang list.
- ❖ 1999: The first conlang relay.
- ❖ 2004: The Conlang flag is created. The logo consists of a purple square containing a yellow sun-like shape with rays, resting above a black silhouette of a mountain range.
- ❖ 2006: The First Language Creation Conference.
- ❖ 2007: Language Creation Society founded.
- ❖ ~2009: No longer possible to keep track of the number of conlangs in any reliable way.



Why?

Pure enjoyment.

Best Practices

Mass Conlanger Collaboration

1991-2011

Today: What we've learned; how you can
benefit thereby.

First Step

Form four groups.

Goal: To create a model conlang (plausibly human) incrementally from the ground up.

Sound System

Oral Stops

Nasal Stops

Fricatives

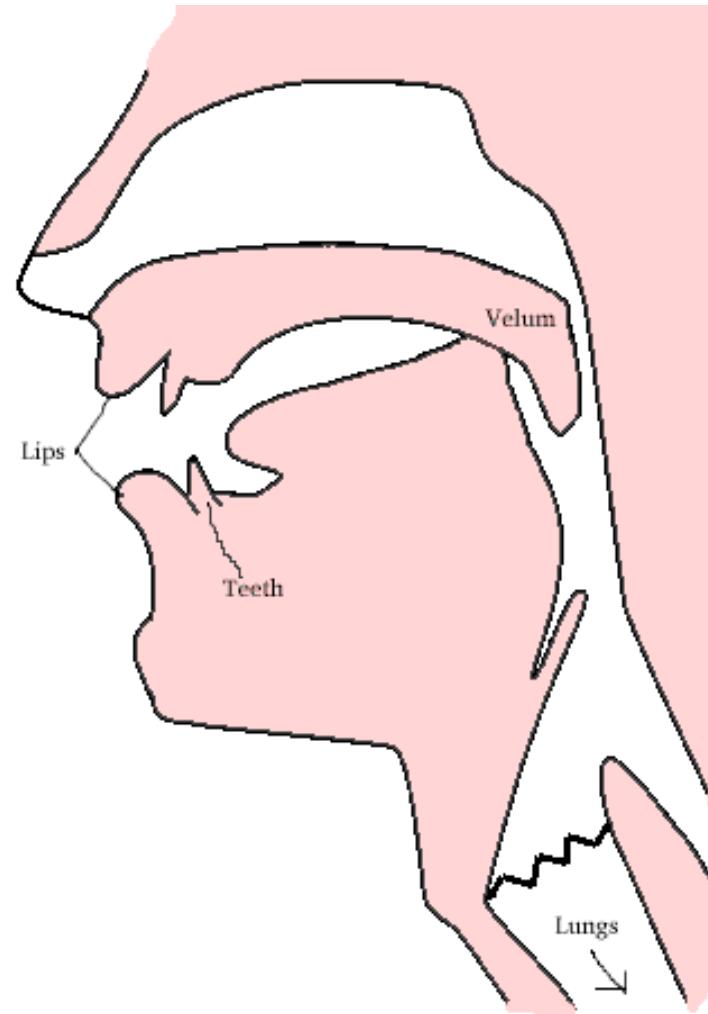
Affricates

Trills/Taps

Laterals

Glides

Vowels



Pronouns and Modification

<i>English</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Finnish</i>	<i>Hawaiian</i>
he	él	hän	ia
she	ella	hän	ia
it	él/ella	se	ia

oquichtli “man”
 noquich “my man”
 moquich “your man”
 toquich “our man”

his car
 the man's car

arabasinin
 adam araba

red car → his red car

carro rojo → su carro rojo

makinë e kuqe → makinë e tij të kuqe

blue hat(s) → chapeau(x) bleu(s)

blue car(s) → voiture(s) bleue(s)

çocuk araba “the boy's car”
 çocuğun kırmızı araba “the boy's red car”

Sound Change

je parle
tu parles
il parle
ils parlent

All languages change over time.

Sound change can be used to produce irregularities.

Ease of Articulation

leaf > leaves

hoof > hoooves

bath > bathe

house > house

Daisuke

Kinoshita

gakusei

sutoraiki

evde > “in the house”

tavanda > “on the ceiling”

örtüde > “on the roof”

topta > “on the ball”

yaktubu > yaktub “he writes” (*indicative*)

yaktuba > yaktub “that he writes” (*subjunctive*)

yaktubi > yaktub “let him write” (*jussive*)

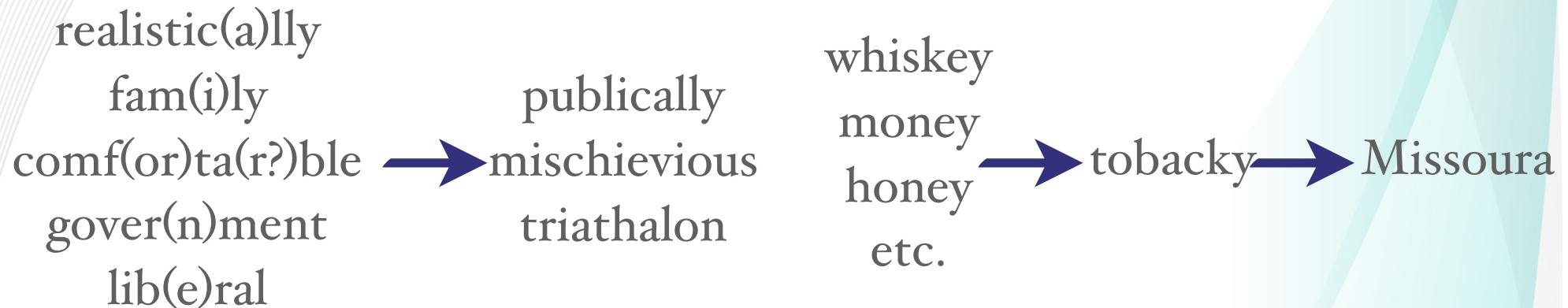
Misapprehension

noctem > notte

lactis > latte

octo > otto

pectus > petto



New Words

<i>Novel Root Creation</i>	cialis, gleak, xerox, viagra (<i>also pokedex, filk, etc.</i>)
<i>Compounding</i>	capped heron, whistling heron, boat-billed heron, white-crested tiger-heron
<i>Affixation</i>	computer > computery, kitten > kittenish, adjudicate > readjudicate, smarmy > smarminess
<i>Metaphorical Extension</i>	hand (body part > worker), run (physically > make work), green (color > inexperienced)
<i>Reduplication</i>	like > <i>like-like</i> , <i>kitap</i> “book” > <i>kitapmitap</i> “books and related material”, ‘au “swim” > ‘au’au “bathe”

Verbatives

<i>Tense vs. Aspect</i>	<i>sit, sat vs. (k)e noho, ua noho</i>
<i>Person Marking</i>	<i>sit~sits, brauche~brauchst~brauchen~braucht, canto~canta~cantas~cantan~cantamos~cantais</i>
<i>Exponence</i>	<i>sit-s~sat, graf-o~e-graf-a, ua noho~ke noho nei, have eaten~will have eaten~will have been eaten</i>
<i>Language-Specific</i>	<i>moods: optative, subjunctive, potential, jussive... voices: passive, middle... agreement, etc.</i>
<i>More Aspect</i>	<i>honorific: peer to peer, adult to child, child to adult evidentiality: first-hand knowledge, hearsay, none</i>

Borrowing

<i>Phonological Modification</i>	<i>lingerie</i> > “lawn juray”, <i>front</i> > <i>furonto</i> , <i>zaytuun</i> > <i>aceituna</i> , <i>kitaab</i> > <i>kitap</i>
<i>Phonological Incorporation</i>	<i>film</i> “film” > <i>aflam</i> “films” (Arabic) <i>kitabu</i> “book” > <i>vitabu</i> “books” (Swahili)
<i>Specificity and Generality</i>	<i>mouton</i> “sheep” > <i>mutton</i> , <i>sombrero</i> , <i>albondiga</i> , <i>salsa</i> <i>pantaloons</i> (< Italian theater character <i>Pantalone</i>)
<i>Drift</i>	<i>front</i> > <i>furonto</i> > “reception desk” <i>animation</i> > <i>anime</i> > <i>anime</i>
<i>Rejection and Translation</i>	conical hat, rice hat, etc. (< Chinese 斗笠 <i>dǒulì</i>) spring roll (< Chinese 春卷 <i>chūn jiǎn</i>)

Greetings, Farewells, Etc.

Goodbye > God be with ye

Aloha > love

Salvē > be healthy

Nǐ hǎo > you good

As-salaam ‘alaykum > peace upon you

Merci > *mercēs* “wages, fee, price”

Shukran > from root “to praise, to laud”

Thank > “good thoughts” > “thought”

To Have, to Need...

Verbs: I have..., I need...

Preposition/Phrase: *'andii...*, *Ana bi'haajatin ila...* (Arabic)

Mixed: *J'ai... J'ai besoin de...* (French)

Etymologies: *tener* “to hold”, *besoin* > “look after” (?), *bi'haajatin* “lack” (cf. English “want”), *'and* > “to resist, obstinate”, *brauchen* > “to use”

And...

That's just the tip of the iceberg.

Thank you for participating!