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{Greeting}

{Music}

George: Welcome to Conlangery, the podcast about constructed languages and the people who create them. I'm George Corley. In plague-ridden California we've got David J. Peterson.

David: {Clears throat several times} We have who?

George: What?

David: I mean, you weren't even going to say the "illustrious," the "respectable," uh, the "fragrant"?

George: It's probably not actually a good joke to be using because that's everywhere. Oh, down in Texas, someone who is going to start doing classes online if it doesn't crash on her is Jessie Sams.

Jessie: Hello.

George: Sorry. We had some discussion of things that are happening in terms of mitigation of a disease beforehand. Thankfully, that's not the thing that we're gonna be talking about.

Jessie: Yes, no. Please no diseases.

David: No, sir. We're just talking about tanking Heroics. That's it.

Jessie: That means nothing to me.

George: It means something to me but it's not actually what we're talking about.
David, please, this is my show.

David: By all means.

George: We are here to talk about ya'll's show. The two of you have started a streaming conlanging show called "LangTime Studio." That is gonna be our topic for today. Before we get to that, first of all, Conlangery is entirely supported by our patrons over at Patreon. You just go to patreon.com/conlangery and pledge your monthly amount. I love that we are getting enough that I can do a few things. One of the things that I've been able to do because of the Patreon is that I have transcripts of every episode now. If you want the back episodes transcribed faster, I need more pledges. That's just a thing. I could also get some better equipment and do more shows – all kinds of things. [Patreon.com/conlangery](https://patreon.com/conlangery) if you wanna support the show.

Now, moving on. We're here to talk about ya'll's show. Who wants to give me the rundown of what's the basic concept for LangTime Studio for our listeners?

Jessie: Go for it, David.

David: Okay. Way back when – well, last year I started hiring other conlangers to work with me on various shows. Jessie happened to be the very first one that I hired. I hired her to work on a show called "Motherland: Fort Salem," a show which is actually debuting on the Freeform network in four days on March 18th. I don't know when this is gonna come out. It might be after the premier. It might be before. If it's before, go watch it

since I know you're not doing anything else. Nobody's doing anything else right now.

Jessie: If it's after, it'll be on Hulu. Just saying.

David: Ooo! Really? Is that serious?

Jessie: That's what all the advertisements say, "Freeform" and then "Hulu" on the other side. I'm just saying. I'm counting on that.

David: That means I can watch it!

Jessie: Yes.

George: You can watch the show that you worked on, huh?

David: I don't have a cable subscription. I've got a digital antenna, but it doesn't go that high.

Jessie: It doesn't go as far.

David: I guess I can go to my parent's house. That's the only place that we're visiting while we're self-quarantining because, I mean, somebody needs to watch our child and it's not gonna be us. Anyway, what were we talking about? Oh, right. Okay. Anyway, Jessie was the first person I worked with. I also worked with Christian Tallman {sp} on "Shadow and Bone" and Carl Buck on a project that is yet to be revealed.

{00:06:10} That's gonna be a good one too. Anyway, going way back, I have a YouTube channel. I know I often forget about it, but I do. One of the things that I started doing was I started recording myself doing work on

languages, recording the various things I do, which was a lot of fun, but I can't stream it live because it's all covered by an NDA.

As an experiment, I did a joint one of these with Jessie when we were working on "Motherland." I did one, and the recording failed. It recorded video but it didn't record any audio. It was very embarrassing.

Jessie: Which must be fun to re-watch.

David: Oh, gosh. Well, no. That video's gone. I mean, is it?

Jessie: I'm sure it is.

David: I think I just deleted it. That one – gosh – that one was a load of fun. It really is too bad that the audio didn't record on that one. I figured out the problem, so we did it again and it recorded audio in the second one. That was a lot of fun. That one will go up on my YouTube channel eventually when that episode of "Motherland" airs.

Anyway, I had such a great time both working with Jessie to create a language and recording stuff with Jessie that I thought it would be a really cool thing if we just did it more. All we needed to do was come up with a way to create a language that wasn't covered by an NDA. I have a personal project that I'm working on where I want to create a bunch of languages. I asked Jessie if she wanted to help me out with it. That was how LangTime Studio was born.

Jessie: Indeed. I will tell you, when he asked me, I was like, "Heck yeah! Let's do this!" It was very exciting.

- David: Yay! Which was gratifying because she could've said no, and my little heart would've been broken into a million pieces.
- Jessie: I can't do that to the rabbits.
- David: Oh, that's right. The language we're creating, by the way, is a language for rabbits, kind of anthropomorphized rabbits – conveniently anthropomorphized rabbits. I'm not dealing with how would rabbit physiology work with phonemes and stuff like that. That's not for this project.
- George: That was right up front too on the – I have tuned into all of your streams. The last one I only tuned into part of it because – you know.
- David: Well, sure. It's two hours.
- George: Yeah. Right up front I remembered you were like, "We're just assuming that they magically have the same vocal apparatus as humans just because I don't want to deal with it." That's always a perfectly valid choice if you're making fantasy languages for fantasy creatures you just get to determine that. Having tried to account for non-human physiology before, it's just painful and you don't really wanna do it if you don't have to.
- Jessie: I feel like there's more story there, George.
- George: Well, I mean, it's fun. It's fun but, at the same time, it's like, "How far do you wanna go?" Some of my first few languages were for aliens. I was trying to think about it and I think most of the time I was thinking just in terms of what sounds they wouldn't have. I had, of course, a species that had beaks instead of mouths, so they wouldn't have any labials. I had a species where the nasal apparatus was actually creating echolocation

clicks, so I assumed that that would be dedicated to that and they wouldn't have nasal sounds available.

The creatures that have the beaks are the Xala. I also did give them something that humans can't pronounce in that they have a syrinx, which allows them to produce two pitches at once. I had a little bit of a tonal system. Those are old language that, I dunno, if I were to return to them today, I would probably scrap them and totally rewrite them because those are some of my first attempts.

Anyway, back to what ya'll are doing. You have this rabbit language, and you've done like three sessions, and I think you're still sorting through sound changes, right?

{00:11:12}

Jessie: Yes. But I feel like at the end of the third episode, we are now in a place where we'll potentially move off sound changes within the next episode or three. Is that accurate?

David: Yeah. Honestly though, if you think about it, creating a whole language – I mean, we've put six hours into this language and we're gonna be done with the phonology after six hours? I mean, it's pretty quick.

Jessie: That is insane. It does help to have the crowdsourced commenting because you make decisions faster when other people are voting.

David: I suppose there is a lot of time in conlanging that is lost to pondering, wondering, tinkering, and then also procrastinating – “procrastilanging,” if you were. In other words, you know that a decision is coming, you know it's gonna be important to make that decision, and you don't wanna

actually sit down and have to do it. Plus, there might be some work involved or some research and so you just kinda put it off. I know that there's a lot of conlanging time lost there. You can't really do that on air because it leads to dead air.

Jessie: That'd be real exciting to watch as we both strike a thinker pose –
“Hmm.”

David: There was something that really got me stuck this last session. It was trying to make the Pete Bleackley sound changes work. I really wanted them to work.

Jessie: But wait, now, we did reserve – or “preserve” I think I should say – part of it because we did change some of the [ə]s and [æ]s {00:12:00}. We got part of it. It was just all of it was difficult.

George: So, the Pete Bleackley sound changes? What are you meaning, exactly, there?

David: Right. I was having trouble with deciding how to resolve hiatus in this language. We put it to a vote amongst our patrons on Patreon, but even with those options that were available, I didn't know what to do with the sequences of schwa followed by [a] and vice versa. I left it kind of blank and I said, “We'll figure out what to do with that later.” Then, on Twitter, Pete Bleackley had a look at it and he gave me a really brilliant sound change where, whether it was schwa or /a/ – whatever it was – when they come next to each other, it turns into a long /a/. Then, a later sound change turns short /a/ into ash and long /a/ into regular /a/.

I was so brilliant and took care of things so well that I didn't consider the further ramifications beforehand. Instead, I tried to implement it and then

I saw that, with all the other things that were going on, it just wasn't going to work or wasn't gonna work out exactly the way I want it to or changing that would – if you wanted to keep the spirit of it – would force you to change some other things. Ultimately, we had to abandon it. I still feel that rather acutely.

Jessie: I feel like, though, it could be implemented into future languages. We do have more languages on the way, eventually.

David: This is true. Tons.

George: Here's a question. How much of this language are you going to create before you move onto others? Are you going to be getting into building the lexicon up and everything before you move onto other ones or what is the situation there?

David: I mean, I don't think we know. We didn't really plan this.

Jessie: It's unscripted, so we're not sure.

David: Here's the thing. I've had this happen a couple of times in my life where it was like I'd come up with an idea for something, and I think it's gonna be really cool, and I ask for advice, and people say, "Oh, you should do this, this, this, and this. Once you do all those things, you should be up and running in 7 to 8 months." And I'm like, "Ugh." And I was like, "Should I go through all this rigamarole and launch something that's really good eight months from now, risking the fact that I might just lose steam and drop it?" which happens a lot.

{00:15:01} "Or do I just go now with what I know already works and just see if it works?" I went with Option B there. Luckily, Jessie was onboard. I mean,

if Jessie were a different type of person, she might've said something like, "Oh, yeah. That sounds great. Let's create a roadmap and let's create an outline for how we're going to approach this and come up with a week-by-week schedule. Then, in a year and a half, we'll be ready to go." But luckily for me –

Jessie: If you hear my snort laughing over here, it's because I think from first mention to first episode there was a month. I was just like, "Let's do this!" I wasn't even thinking technology or any of the additional concerns that go into doing livestreaming. David was actually the planner in this partnership because he's like, "We need to practice and actually make sure we can record each other." Thank goodness we did because our test livestream we found out there was no audio for 10 minutes.

David: That was embarrassing.

Jessie: It was great.

George: I mean, that's the beauty of the new era of online content creation because you can just jump on and do that. When I started Conlangery, which is now years ago – I've been doing this for a very long time.

David: Very. In fact, hold onto your thought. It amazes me how many of these episodes you've done. I mean, 100 would be a ridiculous amount. Aren't you over 200 now? Approaching 200? Where are you at?

George: I believe that this one is gonna be 146. I'd have to take a look here.

Jessie: That's amazing.

George: Let me look at my website.

Jessie: It's one a month, right? So, we're talking – is it one a month?

George: Well, at the very beginning it was weekly. Then, it moved to every two weeks. And then now it's – but, yeah. This one – the last one was 145, so this one is gonna be 146.

David: Unbelievable.

George: This is also, yeah, one more time, we are transcribing those back episodes, and there are a lot of them. Right now you're getting one back episode a month with a current episode. So, patreon.com/conlangery. I could pay my transcriptionist more to do more stuff.

Anyway, this is not about me. I was just saying that, when I started Conlangery, I went on the ZBB back when I was on the ZBB and people were there. I don't know. Is that still going? I'm not sure. I went onto the ZBB and I'm like, "I wanna start a conlang podcast. Who's gonna be a host?" I got two people who showed up for the first episode. One of them was not on any more episodes. We were off to the races. Audio quality was horrible for the first seven episodes, but we were off to the races.

Now, that was in 2011, I think. Now, nine years later, we're still going. Hopefully, you guys will get to that long. I actually am very encouraged to see not just LangTime Studio but there's a bunch of conlanger channels popping up on YouTube now because that is the thing that I wanted to happen when I started Conlangery. It didn't really happen early on. There was one podcast that came after us early on and then just stopped abruptly after one episode, I think.

But now, finally, we've got LangTime Studio. We've got some – there's a world building channel, Artifexian, that does some conlanging stuff. Then, there's a few, like Conlang Critic and Biblaridion, I haven't really looked at these too much. I've watched one episode of one of them because I have no time. But it's encouraging that I see people trying this stuff. Hopefully, LangTime Studio will inspire more people to do stuff.

{00:21:08}

David: I hope so.

Jessie: Definitely.

David: By the way, since we're talking about Conlangery, there was this thing where when podcasts came out, they were huge, and then they all but died. Then, they came back. I believe that Conlangery came out at the very end of the first boom. You survived the general podcast crash. I don't know if you remember this, but nobody was listening to podcasts for a while after a time where everybody was listening to podcasts. Then, they came roaring back. So, that might've had something to do with it. But, my goodness, you just plowed right through that.

George: My secret, David, is I never expected to earn any money. I don't really care about getting sponsors or anything. Now, I have a Patreon and I would like to get more money, but it was never a goal. I was always going to do this anyway. I made it – and I went to monthly; I've gone on hiatus a couple times – but I've always made an effort to just do it just for the joy of it. That's how I survived.

Jessie: That's beautiful.

David: I think that was the idea that at least I had with this whole LangTime Studio was I didn't really care necessarily about people watching because I needed more followers or anything or for us to make money, I just thought it would be really cool to work with Jessie again, and I was desperately looking for some kind of excuse to do so. That was this.

Jessie: That is so sweet.

David: I mean, it's true though.

George: To be clear though, you guys do also have a Patreon and patrons can vote on certain things, right?

Jessie: Yes.

David: Yeah. It's there. What is it? What's the Patreon?

Jessie: Patreon/langtimestudio, right?

David: Oh, right. Of course. Yeah.

Jessie: Pareon.com.

David: We have a small but loyal following, and they've been voting, so that's been good. We take those votes seriously. Their stuff makes it into the language whether I like it or not.

Jessie: And then you kill it.

George: Let's talk a little bit about that. This is collaborative between the two of you, but you also have other people – I think what I've seen you do is

you'll do some things are patron votes and some things are audience votes, which is sort of a common thing. Then, where was I going through?

So, you're collaborating between the two of you and then you're collaborating with the audience, and the audience is throwing out suggestions. I think I threw out a few things once in a while. How is that like? Because I know that right now you have some things that you would like to keep in the language, but you're not totally sure if one of these votes is gonna kill – there was a word. I don't know. Is this what you're hoping to be the name, where it's the word [əŋalə]?

Jessie: That was actually – and I don't think David cared about the word because he's trying to kill all the central vowels including schwa. It was in our first session and it was one of our very first sound change rules. It was just thrown out there as one of the – “Hey, look! This could be a word.” Some of the commenters had latched onto it and said, “Hey, maybe this could be the name of the language.” I don't know why, it just has a great ring, and I was like, “This is great! [əŋalə] {00:24:08}.” I was really desperately holding onto that word, and David killed it in the last episode. The central vowels are gone.

David: Well, at the same time though, you really liked ash, remember?

Jessie: I do. Yes. I do have a weird affinity for the ash vowel sound.

David: I mean, you had to be thinking of “anala” in the back of your head at all times. I remembered it. I was like, “Oh, I know what's gonna happen to this.”

Jessie: And I believe now it is ['eŋalə] {00:24:46} – [e'ŋælə].

David: Yeah. I did that because otherwise it was going to wind up being [ɪŋælə] {00:24:55}, which that's terrible. Even I admit that's terrible.

{00:26:11}

Jessie: It just didn't work for me.

David: I found a way to at least get [eŋælə] {00:25:07} in there. It's all right.

Jessie: So, it'll be preserved. We haven't really set whether that's going to actually mean anything in the language or even be the name of the language. It was just this great sound. I don't know if it's because it's so similar to – I think the only way that this language could say my sister's name that I was like, "This is wonderful," because her full name is "Angela." I don't know if that's what made it so important to me. Something about it, I was like, "We have to keep this word."

David: I thought maybe you were thinking it was [eŋæləgɪs] {00:25:47} to another word.

Jessie: [eŋæləgɪs]? {Laughs}

George: Yeah. You can't do "Angela," can you? You'd have to have –

Jessie: We don't have that affricate.

George: [antselə] {00:26:06} or something like that.

David: Well, here's the thing. One of the last things that we need to do once we resolve our vote, which honestly I really felt sad for one of our

commenters who lost the last vote because they really liked voiceless sounds in between vowels and we just weren't gonna have it. So, I just relied on the old geminate trick to get them back. Now, we're figuring out how that's gonna work. I think it's gonna move forward. At least one version of it is, anyway.

Once we do that, one of the last things we have to do is – I mean, Jessie, you said you wanted a palatal series. We haven't addressed that yet. That's gonna have to happen next episode. We're gonna need to discuss if we're gonna do that and then how we're gonna do that. We've got a whole series of vowels that have palatal glides before them, so we've got options.

Jessie: I just feel like the rabbits are very palatal. I don't know why.

David: We'll see. We'll throw some test words out there, and if they feel rabbit-y or not –

Jessie: This is the beauty of creating languages, right, where it's like things just feel right and you have no idea why. We keep saying, "Oh, rabbits wouldn't do that." What rabbit would do any of these sounds? None.

David: Our rabbits.

Jessie: Our rabbits will, yes.

David: I really feel like somehow, miraculously, everybody who's chimed in and said something like that, I found myself agreeing with all of them. I think we've really homed in on the sense for what these rabbits are supposed to be and that brings joy to my heart. It makes my job easier because eventually I'm gonna have to fill out the stories for these rabbits. I mean,

I've got some, but I need to fill them out. But that's far after the language is done.

George: Let's ask about that because for the phonology, especially since you're just assuming that they're magically humanoid vocal tract, then you don't really have to think so much about culture and backstory and stuff like that. As you move into, a little bit in grammar but mostly when you get into lexicon stuff, you're gonna have to be considering that – how much world building have you done for this? I understand it's for a job.

David: It's this board game idea I have that I think can work very well. Honestly, not having languages has been an impediment because I don't even wanna give them placeholder names. I want them to at least fit the phonological pattern and there isn't one. Well, now there is one. Well, we're getting there. Anyway, it's been kind of a roadblock, so I really wanted to get these languages off the ground.

Essentially, these forest-dwelling rabbits are – they're in the forest and they believe that nature is tops. They're really big fans of it. Anybody that would harm nature is the enemy. The idea behind this world is – probably it is post-apocalyptic. What we know for sure is that there're no human beings anymore. They're simply not in the picture. But there are a number of animals that perhaps were hopping around here on earth, be they rabbits. What happened is there is some sort of substance which caused those animals that came into contact with it to develop human-like characteristics completely by magic. I don't care about the science of this at all.

{00:31:13} The rabbits are one group, right, and they are one group amongst several other groups including cats, dogs, mice, and probably possums though it

might be somebody else. I dunno. I have to decide when I get there.
Anyway –

George: I'm sorry. You have to have possums. You can't just drop possums and say, "Oh, it might be somebody else." It's gotta be possums, man.

David: Wow. Okay. Shoot. Now, I've got that to contend with.

Jessie: What about raccoons, armadillos?

David: Raccoons were coming later.

George: I'm from Appalachia, man. I need to have possums in there.

David: The only thing that gave me "pause-m" about the possums –

Jessie: "Pause" – hm.

David: That was terrible. I really apologize for that. But it was I thought that this group, it might be good to have diggers in there, you know, guys that dig holes.

Jessie: Are you thinking moles or prairie dog kind of diggers?

David: Yeah. Are they separate types of diggers? Do moles and prairie dogs dig differently?

Jesse: Oh, yes. They're different.

David: They do?

Jessie: They're totally different animals.

George: Well, I mean, rabbits burrow too.

Jessie: That's true.

David: They do to an extent, but specifically I wanted these to be – I thought it would make things easier if they were folks that dug in the ground quite a bit. On the other hand, possums are nocturnal, so that could also help. I do like possums. I think they're darling.

My wife was just telling me today – Erin was talking about how she saw the biggest possum she ever saw at her work. She thought at first it was a cat and then came closer and realized it was a possum. I think she was expecting me to react in horror like, “Ugh! Oh, my goodness! A possum that big?” And I was like, “Oh, that sounds delightful. What a good day.”

Jessie: Okay. You've never seen a possum hiss at you. They can be terrifying.

David: Well, maybe you shouldn't have mouthed off at that possum like that.

Jessie: Because – okay. George, you mentioned Appalachia. You're from the Appalachia area originally?

David: He's from West Virginia.

Jessie: West Virginia?

David: Yeah.

George: I'm from West Virginia.

Jessie: Okay. I'm from the Ozark region of Missouri, and I gotta say I never found possums cute because they're mean.

David: Well, see, that's what Erin has said about raccoons.

Jessie: That's true. But at least raccoons look like cute little bandits. I don't know why I find raccoons cuter. But they are very mean.

David: They're adorable. Possums are adorable.

George: I mean, none of these animals are mean unless you corner them. We've had a possum come up on my mom's porch and it runs away when you go to it. How did you encounter the possum? Were you going into the garage or something? Because that's probably when it would be aggressive.

Jessie: It was on our front porch.

George: Anyway.

David: It just showed up. It was probably looking for donations for its possum family and you just slammed the door in its face.

Jessie: It was eating our dog's food.

David: It didn't know anything about your dogs. What it knew was that somebody had set food out for it, and you're trying to shoo it. My goodness! Poor guy.

George: I mean, we can talk – I dunno. Possums are great. Raccoons would be great too.

David: I'll try to – sorry.

George: We used to live in a place in University housing that had animals everywhere. Flocks of turkeys would go by and there's raccoons and squirrels everywhere. It's like once, at night, I was going out to the mailbox, and there was a raccoon in my way. I'm like, "Okay. Hey, Bud. Just get out of my way," and he left. He rose up to his full height on hind legs, which is surprisingly tall for a raccoon there, but he did get out of my way after just a little gentle prodding.

Jessie: Gentle prodding? We have to have so many more languages, David. Not just five. We gotta add. We gotta have the possum and raccoons and squirrels. I mean, there are so many.

David: Oh, yeah. The initial set was gonna be five. But the idea is there would be expansions, of course.

Jessie: Expansion pack – love it!

George: Right. Now, we're planning your expansion packs, David. You pick your initial five but, at some point, you gotta add possums.

{00:36:10}

David: Anyways, the idea was that – yeah, this was kind of the back story for the rabbits. The idea with these initial group of five is that the whole reason that there is conflict is that this substance, which engendered in them the ability for speech and also to build stuff and hold stuff in their little paws, that substance has come back. Now, each of the five groups has a very different idea about what should be done about that.

The rabbits, of course, think that nobody should touch it. Nobody has any right to it at all because it's a part of mother nature and also trying to extract it could hurt it. It also so happens that the substance is arising on their lands in the forest, so they have something to defend. That's the basic set up.

Jessie: I like, though, how you threw in the "of course." The rabbits, "of course," feel that no one should touch it. We really have a strong kinship. What cracks me up is I was not introduced to the rabbits until the very first episode. David told me very brief sketches of "Hey, there's gonna be talking animals, but they're gonna have all the human phonology abilities." That was pretty much all I knew was that there was a game and there were animals who talk. I wasn't even introduced to the rabbits until our very first episode as we were livestreaming and, already, there is just such an affinity for them. I love it. It's so good.

George: I mean, there's such an interesting thought there. Once we get that little bit of world building, like, first of all, the name of that substance, I feel like, has to be a rabbit word, right?

David: Well, here's the thing. Everybody's gonna have their own word for it, of course, right? Then, the question is what's the social hierarchy of the animals. In other words, who is the prestige class? I'm gonna tell you this, the cats think they are the prestige class.

Jessie: Obviously.

David: Incidentally, my original idea for this was to take five of my old languages and re-tool them to make them better. I had a language picked out for each one. But I decided against this for a couple of reasons. 1.) I

felt like Njaama, which was the language I was gonna re-do for the mice, I just felt like it didn't fit them. 2.) Kamakawi was gonna be the language for the rabbits, and I realized to two things. 1.) I didn't want to update Kamakawi even though I don't feel like it's up to my standards anymore. It really holds a special place in my life and so I don't wanna touch it. It'd rather just not work on it anymore than try to re-tool it. 2.) It was a language for a people that lived on an island – a very small island somewhere in the South Pacific. Tons of vocabulary for ocean stuff and fishes and everything like that. Rabbits are nowhere near the ocean. If they ever saw it, they probably wouldn't like it. So, that just seemed like a poor idea.

Jessie: They would have very different words for it. You bring up something very interesting that I think – I feel like all conlangers will understand that feeling of you could repurpose an older language but, even though you recognize there're things that could be improved, it's very special. Languages are very special to you when you create them.

David: It's different with some of them. My plan was – and I'm still planning to do this – my plan was to refurbish Zhyler for the cats. I'm still happy to do that, and I'm actually pretty excited about doing that because, for some reason, the connection I have to that language is different. Whereas, with Kamakawi, I almost recoiled in horror at the idea. I just assumed it would work and I realized it wouldn't. I just couldn't do it.

George: Isn't Zhyler the one with the absolutely absurd vowel harmony?

David: Yeah. That was when I was taking theories that I would learn in linguistics very seriously before I realized that, often, those theories are garbage. The thing is, they're descriptive theories. They're descriptive theories.

{00:41:10} They're good enough if they explain whatever they seen before them. It doesn't matter if they over-generate because it doesn't matter. It over-generates but the data isn't there so who cares. As long as it generates the stuff that's there, it's fine. Of course, that doesn't work for a conlanger because otherwise you end up producing a language like Zhyler 1.

George: I do wanna say, linguists do actually care if theories over-generate, but I guess it's not necessarily as – it's not the same kind of concern. It's more a concern about the validity of the theory is rather than this is going to cause a problem with what you are doing, right? That's a thing that you always have to be careful of.

I remember going to a conference. And Optimality Theory is really known for over-generating a lot. Somebody tried to do a universal OT set up for stress systems and just run through all the possible orderings. They just came up with – the computer spit out just really absurd stuff like the stress pattern is different depending on whether you have even or odd number of syllables. Things like that. These are things that conlangers have to be careful of.

David: Yeah. {Inaudible} {00:41:40}

Jessie: I feel like – oh, go on.

David: No. Yours sounded better. Go.

Jessie: Oh, it just made me think of the conlang bot that just spews out really random ideas and some of them are really horrible for what you could incorporate into a conlang. I feel like everything that was being generated needs to go into that Twitter feed.

David: Regarding Zhyler 2, I will say that one of the things that makes it fun is that Zhyler 1 is really bad just from the very start at every single level. I mean, it's interesting and it was a fun idea but, since it's so bad at every single level, there's really nothing that can be rescued. So, when I approached Zhyler 2, the question was, "How can I do this right while retaining the spirit?" – still something that's strongly head-final, still something that has maybe a larger number of cases than one would expect from the average language but not everything is cases, and something that has interesting vowel harmony system but is not an absolutely fundamentally broken vowel harmony system. That makes it fun.

George: I look forward to seeing you wrangle it into some kind of shape that does not have a vowel harmony system that no one could ever acquire. That's gonna be an interesting challenge.

Jessie: Have you ever called it "Zhyler Squared" by any chance?

David: I have not.

Jessie: Because then we could have "cubed," you know? We could just build.

David: Okay. I hear that, but I also hear what you really said. What you really just said was is it possible to build a language out of dance because, of course –

Jessie: That is totally what I mean.

David: Because, I mean, "Zhyler Squared," square dancing, dance. I think that, yeah, if you could have a group dance that the entire purpose was to convey a message through the dance, I think it could be done.

Jessie: And now I'm wondering what "do-si-do" really means.

George: This is gonna be your language for bees.

Jessie: Yes! Oh, my gosh. We have to have bees now. They'll be squared. We can leave Zhyler 2 alone, but we need to have a "squared" language.

David: Oh, "bee squared" – be there, bee squared.

Jessie: Oh, my god. That's so perfect.

David: LangTime Studio Season 14 – be there, bee squared. Look out for it.

Jessie: We finally get to the bees.

David: That'll be in 2068.

Jessie: It'll be great.

George: I mean, it's an interesting thing to see people doing this live. I really like the idea that this is you guys just doing conlanging in the same way that people are now doing DnD streams, although those are slightly more popular.

{00:46:21} But people who do videos on all kinds of different hobbies, it's just you – I was talking to William and he was like, "I don't need anyone to teach me how to do conlanging," and I understand that perspective. But, at the same time, it's really interesting to me to see how someone else does it. I would do some things the same way that you do, and I would do some things differently, but it's interesting to see what your process is. I think

all conlangers who want to spend the time watching you guys would be interested – can get something from looking at this is how David and Jessie work on a language together. I think it's interesting.

David: If I could throw out my own pitch –

Jessie: Please do.

David: Okay. Here it is. It's interesting to see it done in video form. It's also interesting to have a conlanger reflect on their own process for a language that they've created whether it was their 1st or their 50th. If you or any other conlanger listening thinks that that's something they might enjoy doing, that is what Fiat Lingua is there for. We would love – absolutely love – essays from conlangers reflecting on their own process, reflecting on the creation of their own languages.

I think that is something that will be incredibly valuable to future conlangers whether they're beginning conlangers or not. It's just interesting to see somebody doing the same thing, having the same love for it, and approaching it in a slightly different way. Please, please, write this stuff up and send it to me. I beg you. That was my pitch.

Jessie: I love it. I also – kind of building on that – I also think there's always a point in every conlang I make where I feel like, not that I'm stuck, but I'm like, "Oh, my gosh. Where do I go from here?" Having that inspiration to just see what other people have done – especially, like David had said, hearing them talk about it or reading something that they've written about that back process – it is so inspiring. I think everybody can benefit from that.

George: I makes me want to jump into creating a new language or something like that, which I might end up doing soon in the future. I've halfway written a novel and I'm like, "I need this language and this language, definitely, for this." And I'm gonna need to go back and do a ton of world-building and figuring out these languages and at least get naming languages up because I've got placeholder names.

I know David – so that's one difference is I was writing a story with placeholder names just to get what I would need in the first place. Then, you're like, "No. I have to have a language first so I can have names for these things."

David: I mean, for me it works, like when I was writing writing, because then I would literally just drop in XXX, YYY, ZZZ, and so on because then you can search for them easily. But this is different. All the stuff that I'm writing, it's on a bunch of different documents and I have a Google Drive folder. I'm literally, it's just like, "Kingdom A, Kingdom B, Kingdom C, Kingdom D, Kingdom E." It's just like – ugh.

It's like, as I'm writing this stuff it's constantly referring to the other stuff and it's not in a single document. It's impossible to search. It's just like – ugh! Forget it. I need the languages, gosh darn it. I need something there. I needed something, you know? So, we're getting stuff. It's good.

Jessie: Slowly but surely.

David: [eŋælə] {00:49:33}, which is soon, via sound-changes, going to become –

Jessie: No, no, because that is so beautiful. We need [eŋælə] to stay.

George: I have to ask a question because you don't say anything explicitly about this. You are doing this historically, as is proper when you're doing naturalistic conlanging.

{00:51:09} Do you have a timeframe in mind between the proto-rabbit language and the modern rabbit language? Or are you just gonna give as many sound changes as you want to and then see what pops out?

David: Well, you know, of course, different languages will have a different number of sound changes occur over a different period of time. I never worry too much about that. In this case though, what I'm imagining is that there's certainly nobody alive that was the original – from the original crop – but it's not as far in the future as human beings. I mean, I don't think we can even conceive of how close this would be to the dawn of human beings in terms of analogy.

Let's say that this generation is maybe somewhere around generation 10, and that's it. It's really close to the beginning. For that reason, this stuff can be evolved less, but it could also be evolved more if we just happen to want it that way.

Jessie: I guess I never even – how long is a generation for our rabbits? I had never asked that.

David: Of course, I was thinking in human generations so, immediately, I screwed that up. Son of a gun. Okay. Hold on.

Jessie: You're welcome.

David: How long do rabbits live? I think they probably live about 20 years.

Jessie: They repopulate quickly.

David: Yeah. They do.

George: I have a feeling that all of your animals, after they are uplifted by this strange substance, will be living longer than their source species anyway, right?

Jessie: Yeah. That's a good point.

David: If for only that they can communicate now and could better protect themselves against random things. I'm sorry. I just googled this. I don't know if you heard my little gasp, but it was a gasp of sadness. Rabbits live one to two years in the wild.

Jessie: Oh. So, our generations will be much longer. 10 generations – 20 years later.

David: Pet rabbits are like 8 to 12 years but, I mean, you have to think the reason they're not living that long in the wild is because of predators and just accidental, you know, like cars and stuff. Oh, gosh. It's so sad.

Jessie: Oh, the horrors.

David: Yeah. These are gonna be longer-lived rabbits – longer-[larvd], longer-[lrvd], longer-[larvd] {00:53:09}? I dunno. They're gonna live longer, yes. Thank you, George. They're going to live longer because you are an expert and you said that they will, so.

George: Well, I mean – you know.

Jessie: That's George's Law.

David: "George's Law." Thanks to George's Law.

George: I mean, listen. You gotta have some kind of longer life-expectancy than one year in order for them to build a civilization and everything. I guess you're welcome. I'm glad that I could contribute while I'm having you on just to promote your show. {Laughter}

David: Ah, "George's Law," {inaudible} {00:54:00}

Jessie: I like it.

George: Where can people go to watch LangTime Studio? I know that you've not necessarily had a stable time, but what's usually gonna be the time when they can tune into the stream?

Jessie: Usually it's gonna be Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. Pacific. That would be 5:00 p.m. east coast. That will be our normal time. We only had to change that for one week so far. From here on out I think we're pretty good for a while at that timeframe. Usually, it's a two-hour livestream process when we do it.

David: To get to our YouTube channel, because it has some weird URL, just go to langtimestudio.com and it will redirect you automatically. We're also on Twitter at @LangTimeStudio, on Instagram at @LangTimeStudio. We're on Tumblr, which is – are we langtime.tumblr.com or langtimestudio.tumblr.com?

{00:56:16}

Jessie: I believe it's "langtimestudio."

David: Yeah. That makes a lot more sense. Then, Patreon – patreon.com/langtimestudio. Anyway, we did all the social media networks and we'll see which ones stick. It's kinda sad. I had more than 40,000 followers on Tumblr, but I started this one on Tumblr and it's not getting as much traction. But – you know. You can see old episodes, of course, on our channel at YouTube. I also post all of the old episodes on our Tumblr as well. I'll keep doing that just because, eh, it's not that much effort for our 30 Tumblr followers.

Jessie: Hey. I think that's more than I would otherwise have. I did verify. It is "langtimestudio" for the Tumblr.

David: Perfect. I'm sorry. 13 followers. 13.

Jessie: Okay. So, not as many as 30 but maybe, after this, we'll get 30. Go follow us.

George: Just go hit up the YouTube channel and go see LangTime Studio! It's fun, especially if you can get in the chat and get into the conversation because that's where everybody's just throwing out ideas and talking about linguistics and that's great. This episode, if I get it out right, we're recording this on the 14th, this will come out on April 6th. So, you guys said you were close to wrapping up phonology. Hopefully, by that time you'll be onto to morphosyntax, huh?

Jessie: Maybe. We'll see.

David: I'd say so. Our next one is gonna be the 19th, correct?

Jessie: Yeah.

David: Then, the 26th and then April 2nd – so if this airs April 6th, our next one will be April 9th. Yeah. We might be almost to the beginning of the very start of morphosyntax.

Jessie: Depends on how long that palatals take – the palatals.

David: Oh, my. Palatals – Episode 1 through 19.

George: Palatalization is fun. There's so many things you can do with it. You guys need to have – here's something that you guys need to have happen. I don't know if it will ever naturally happen, but you need to have some weird merger where two phonemes end up having the same allophone in a weird way that can't be analyzed. That's one of my favorite things to see.

David: Like both X and N going to F?

George: I mean.

David: In some environment?

Jessie: I would like to see that happen.

George: Is that a real thing that ever happened?

David: No. I'll tell you one thing that has happened. Velars have gone to post-alveolars. Wait. No, no, no, no. Velars have gone to interdental. That was it. So, [ɣə] {00:58:42} becoming [θə]. If it can do that, then it can go to labiodentals. So, [xə] can go to [θə] can to [fə] – that's fine. Then, for N, I mean that's more of a challenge, isn't it?

Jessie: I mean, I would say so.

David: Goodness gracious. It's gonna have to be N –

Jessie: Changing place and manner.

David: Coming next to some sort of – oh, I mean, this is how you'd have to do it, right? N coming before B, there's an assimilation that happens, so it's MB. Then, there's some sort of –

Jessie: I feel like it has to be a P because then it's at least voiceless.

David: No, no. no. Check this out. Okay? So, then MB per mutation just becomes M. That happens a whole lot. Then, what happens is that this thing becomes voiceless in word-final position because we dropped final vowels – so [amf], [am], [an] {00:59:46}. Then, that thing just gets interpreted as F. There you go.

George: I think I was thinking – I think I did not convey exactly what I meant and was thinking of something much, much tamer and more reasonable than what you just came up with. {Laughter}

{01:01:14}

Jessie: Nonetheless, that will show up in a language I'm sure.

David: Good lord. Now, I'm just thinking about how they could possibly work. How can she pull that off? Nobody can pull that off. Oh, my god. Anyway, what were you thinking?

George: Oh, I was literally just thinking – it came to mind because you were talking about palatalization where like in – I think too much about Mandarin, but anyway. In Mandarin, both velars and the dentals got palatalized to these, what do you call them, blade palatals or something? They're totally tame changes, it's not anything weird, but no one actually knows how to work out what's the phoneme or anything because, historically, these two things merged in this one environment for palatalization but that means that the information about what they originally were is lost. I like those kinds of things – much tamer than what you were suggesting of N and [x] merging to F. Although, I think it's possible.

Jessie: Anything is possible.

David: Honestly, everything just becomes H eventually anyway. Everything becomes H. Then, it disappears when everybody dies.

Jessie: Wow.

George: You did have an introduction to H in your geminate thing that you were working on, right? I think you were –

David: Yeah, I did.

George: It was an S coda going to – I remember because I saw it and I immediately thought, “Oh, Caribbean Spanish.” Anyway, I think Puerto Rican Spanish has similar things going on. Anyway, LangTime Studio – go check it out! If you're into livestreaming and you wanna watch these two work out a language for rabbits and hopefully, in the future, a language for cats and a language for possums – gotta do possums at some point. I don't care. At some point, you gotta do possums.

Anyway. Guys, just go and watch it and participate in the chat and everything. It's a fun time just kinda hanging out and seeing how other people do the conlanging thing. Thank you, David, for coming on and Jessie, too. Uh, oh.

Jessie: Yes. Oh, I just heard a noise.

George: David is offline suddenly.

Jessie: Oh, no! But you're welcome. I'm glad to have been here. I sure as heck hope this all is recorded well.

George: Okay. All right. In any case, thank everybody for listening and happy conlanging!

{Music}

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Kasara.

{Music}

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