

Comparison of selected responses for those who can think fluently in their conlang vs. those who can't

16 people gave a yes or qualified yes answer to the question "Can you think in your conlang, without deliberately constructing sentences word by word?"; 36 said no or gave no response. Here I compare the responses of these two subsets of respondents to certain other questions, where there seems to be a significant difference in the two groups.

I also did a comparison of the 12 people answering yes to the question "Can you speak spontaneously in your conlang at conversational speed?" with the 40 people who said no or gave no response. I don't show most of those comparisons here, but I have taken this data into account in selecting what analyses from the other perspective to show; if a correlation doesn't appear in some form from both perspectives, I suspect it's more likely to be spurious than if it does.

The average age at which the more fluent conlangers started conlanging is slightly higher than the average for the less fluent set, but perhaps not significantly so.

Fluent set:

mean age when started conlanging:: 18.2 with 15 numeric values
 minimum value: 10
 maximum value: 46

Less fluent set:

mean age when started conlanging: 14.42 with 36 numeric values
 minimum value: 3
 maximum value: 40

14. Are you single, married, divorced, widowed, remarried...?

Fluent set:

single	6	37.50%
married	5	31.25%
(no response)	2	12.50%

Less fluent set:

single	19	52.78%
married	7	19.44%
long-term relationship	4	11.11%

long-term relationship	2	12.50%
separated	1	6.25%

(no response)	3	8.33%
divorced	3	8.33%

The greater proportion of married people in the more fluent set could be partly accounted for by their being slightly older on average than the less fluent set, but probably not entirely. This ran counter to my expectations; I would have guessed that single people would be more likely to become fluent in their conlangs through having more leisure time on average than married people.

15. a. What is your religion, if any?

Fluent set:

Christian	5	31.25%
(no response)	3	18.75%
eclectic	3	18.75%
Baha'i	1	6.25%
LDS	1	6.25%
none/atheist/agnostic	1	6.25%
Jehovah's Witnesses	1	6.25%
Buddhist	1	6.25%

Less fluent set:

none/atheist/agnostic	12	33.33%
eclectic	10	27.78%
Christian	7	19.44%
(no response)	4	11.11%
Muslim	1	2.78%
Hindu	1	2.78%
Jewish	1	2.78%

monotheist	9	56.25%
(no response or too ambiguous to classify)	3	18.75%
polytheist/pantheist	3	18.75%
atheist	1	6.25%

(no response or too ambiguous to classify)	15	41.67%
monotheist	9	25.00%
agnostic	5	13.89%
polytheist/pantheist	4	11.11%
atheist	3	8.33%

It may be relevant to mention here that of the more fluent set, 5 (31.2%) indicated that they use their conlang for prayer, or might do so at some point; of the less fluent set, 7 (19.4%) said they use their conlang for prayer or might do so when they become more fluent. Several of the more fluent conlangers also describe their relationship with their conlang in spiritual terms, for instance as a gift from God which it is an act of worship to use and develop further.

19. Is your conlang *a priori* (devised from scratch) or *a posteriori* (based on a specific natural language or language family), or a mix of *a priori* and *a posteriori* elements?

Fluent set:

mixed	6	37.50%
a priori	6	37.50%
a posteriori	4	25.00%

Less fluent set:

a priori	18	50.00%
a posteriori	13	36.11%
mixed	5	13.89%

One would tend to expect that (other things being equal) *a posteriori* languages would be easier to learn than mixed languages, and mixed languages would be easier than *a priori* languages — at least for people already familiar with the languages the *a posteriori* or mixed languages are based upon. So this result is partly counter-intuitive. However, adding the mixed and *a posteriori* languages together, there are 10 (62.5%) used

by the more fluent conlangers, and 18 (50%) used by the less fluent; not unexpected.

20. Describe the typology of your conlang - what is its primary word order (SVO, SOV, VSO...; pre- or postpositional; etc.)? Is it isolating, agglutinating, fusional, polysynthetic? Is its case or word order system primarily accusative, ergative, active, other...?

Fluent set:

SVO	11	68.75%
SOV	2	12.50%
(no response)	1	6.25%
VSO	1	6.25%
VOS	1	6.25%

Less fluent set:

SVO	15	41.67%
SOV	7	19.44%
VSO	6	16.67%
(no response)	4	11.11%
OVS	2	5.56%
VOS	1	2.78%
OSV	1	2.78%

This is as expected, seeing that all of the native languages of the respondents have SVO as their primary word order. Relative proportions of prepositional and postpositional languages among the two groups are also much as expected: 6.25% postpositional among the more fluent, and 11.11% among the less fluent.

fusional	5	31.25%
agglutinative	4	25.00%

agglutinative	13	36.11%
fusional	9	25.00%

(no response)	2	12.50%
isolating	2	12.50%
isolating/oligosynthetic	1	6.25%
polysynthetic	1	6.25%
isolating/agglutinative	1	6.25%

(no response)	7	19.44%
isolating	4	11.11%
synthetic	3	8.33%

This is somewhat surprising, as agglutinative languages seem to be easier to learn than fusional, other things equal. We would expect isolating languages to be easier still, and if we add all the more or less isolating languages together, then 25% of the conlangs of the more fluent set are isolating in some aspect of their grammar, vs. 11.11% of those of the less fluent.

accusative	10	62.50%
(no response)	4	25.00%
ergative	2	12.50%

accusative	20	55.56%
(no response)	9	25.00%
ergative	2	5.56%
active (fluid-S)	2	5.56%
trigger	1	2.78%
active	1	2.78%
tripartite	1	2.78%

Again, not surprising since the native languages of all respondents have accusative alignment. Personally I've found the active alignment of gjâ-zym-byñ to be a more difficult aspect of its grammar to learn fluently than its postpositionality or OVS word order.

21. a. How extensive or complete do you consider your conlang to be (in grammar and vocabulary)?

Fluent set:

mean vocabulary count: 6329 with 5 numeric values
 minimum value: 120
 maximum value: 13027

Less fluent set:

mean vocabulary count: 2343 with 19 numeric values
 minimum value: 200
 maximum value: 6200

It's not surprising the more fluent conlangers have languages with on average more than twice the vocabulary of the less fluent. The wider range of vocabulary sizes in the fluent set is primarily explained by the presence of Sonja Kisa's Toki Pona — other than that, the smallest vocabulary size mentioned by the more fluent users is larger than the average vocabulary size of the less fluent.

24. a. Do you intend to become fluent in your conlang, or did you when you started creating it?

Fluent set:

yes	8	50.00%
no	7	43.75%
maybe	1	6.25%

Less fluent set:

yes	21	58.33%
no	14	38.89%
(no response)	1	2.78%

24. b. If not, did you find yourself becoming fluent as an unexpected result of developing and using it?

Fluent set:

Less fluent set:

yes	8	50.00%
(no response)	6	37.50%
somewhat	2	12.50%

(no response)	22	61.11%
no	6	16.67%
yes	5	13.89%
somewhat	3	8.33%