
Aramteskan

The Language of Scent in Real and Constructed Languages

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Language & Scent

1. Scent typology in real languages
2. Scent in constructed languages
3. Our approach to scent in the construction of the Aramteskan language in Shadowscent

Bridging the gap between typology and creative language construction





Project team

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Interests include: Language documentation and description, gesture, language construction



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Interests include: Holistically researched fantasy worlds



Scent in real languages

Some languages have a richer scent lexicon than English (Majid & Burenhult 2014)

Even see the encoding of scent in grammar: e.g. scent classifier in Cha'palaa (Floyd, San Roque & Majid, 2018)

But scent doesn't feature frequently: e.g. no scent based evidentials (Aikhenvald 2004)

English makes use of source-based references and hedonic valence (e.g. 'yuck') (Poulton 2020)

Scent in constructed languages

Similarly, scent in constructed languages rather neglected

Note: as with real languages there is a gap in the discoverability of descriptive literature



Scent in constructed languages

Some attempts to conceptualise how a language would function with scent as the modality

- David Weber's *Honor Harrington* series. Medusans use sound, gesture and scent ([ref.](#))
- Charles Sheffield *Summertide* insectoid pheromones ([ref.](#))
- *Doomship* by Frederik Pohl and Jack Williamson, the aliens (T'worlies) communicate through smells.
- Colin Kapp, *The Old King's Answers*, scent glands on the feet

see also: conlang LISTSERV discussions in [2012](#), [2011](#), [2001](#)



NASALO

Lexicon by Sissel Tolaas (mid-2000s) ~2500 words

MUQSUN = corn; lemon

MUQUN = raw fruits

MEETAN = old graveyards and old bones in the earth

PASSLO = ardent; burning; fervent; passionate

PLIISH = Polish shops

SQU'IJA = simple but appetizing



Language construction and world building

a creative approach to enriching worldbuilding
(Sanders and Schreyer 2020; Coon 2020).

Aramteskan is an a priori natlang aiming to emulate
typologically observed patterns of natural languages

But also creatively diverges, exhibiting ‘weak naturalism’
(Peterson 2020; 261)





Language construction and world building

Aramteskan constructed for the Shadowscent world:
The Darkest Bloom (2019) & Crown of Smoke (2020)
(Scholastic)



Constructing a language is a creative approach to enriching worldbuilding, creating depth even when the whole language is not used directly
(Sanders and Schreyer 2020; Coon 2020)



Aramteskan



Via [Instagram](#)

- Scent-focused grammatical features
 - Smell vocabulary
 - Scent-focused nominals
 - Scent-prominent evidential system
 - Scent-focused metaphors
- Other features not discussed today:
 - Time-depth of ~500 years (phonology and grammar)
 - Pronominal system evolved gender distinctions
 - Base-five counting system
 - Regional dialect differences

More about Aramteskan on [Superlinguo](#) and (hopefully soon!) Fiat Lingua

Smell vocabulary

gatmar (gat-mar) v.t. to smell something deeply without knowing what it will smell like; to inhale irresponsibly.

gukmar (guk-mar) v.t. to smell something bad, often unintentionally, and then feel disgust.

nelmar (nel-mar) v.t. to smell something faintly, often on a breeze.

nosnar (nos-nar) v.t. to smell something slowly for a long time because it has a pleasant smell, e.g. burying one's nose in a bouquet of flowers.

rashmar (rash-mar) v.t. to smell something by wafting the scent to your nose with your hand.

sugmar (sugmar) v.t. to smell cautiously, as though unsure of what the scent will be, to sniff.

toshmar (tosh-mar) v.t. to smell something that you remember but can't immediately place.

Adirun

Borenai

A - a

Adirun *Phon:* /a-di-run/ *n.* fourteenth month.

Category: months.

Akair *Phon:* /a-kair/ *pn.* Akair II, writer of Catechylans. *Category:* names, given names. *Arb:* Eairik's summary "fabrics of whom the younger gods first squabbled alongside kings".

Akred *Phon:* /a-kred/ *pn.* Akred, a Chronicler in the Library of the Lost. *Category:* names, given names.

akrol *Phon:* /a-krol/ *n.* small desert mesa. Extremely bitter. Diuretic and laxative effect if eaten. *Category:* plants.

Alak *Phon:* /a-lak/ *pn.* Zostar's surname. Trelian. *See:* Zostar. *Category:* names, surnames.

Alet *Phon:* /a-let/ *pn.* the Alet mountain ranges.

Category: places. *Arb:* Fall name in Old Arantesh /Asmanak Ala Topesh/ *It*, mountain sky base (the mountain that hits the sky)

alob *Phon:* /a-lob/ *n.* dumplings filled with cheese and herbs, steamed then fried. Best with a spicy sauce. *Category:* food.

Ami *Phon:* /a-mi/ *pn.* Ami, the youngest of the library curator. *Category:* names, given names.

Ana *Phon:* /a-na/ *pn.* Rake's family name. *See:* Rake's. *Hub.* *Category:* names, surnames.

Aphoral *Phon:* /a-fo-rail/ *pn.* the province of Aphoral. *Category:* places. *From:* SL.

Arantesh *Phon:* /a-ran-tesh/ *pn.* country. *Category:* places.

B - b

Baidok *Phon:* /bai-dok/ *pn.* family name of the Eraz of Aphoral. *See:* Malmud.

Category: names, surnames.

Bardeen *Phon:* /bar-deen/ *pn.* Rake's childhood friend. *See:* Elok. *Category:* names, given names.

Belgith *Phon:* /bel-gith/ *pn.* Belgith's Canyon, located south of Aphoral. *Category:* places.

Aramteskan *Phon:* /a-tan-tes-kan/ *pn.* the

language of Arantesh.

Ashradinoran *Phon:* /a-shrad-ino-ran/ *pn.*

1 - Shield to Prince Nisai.

2 - the name of a mythical warrior from the ancient sagas. *See:* Lasmud. *Category:* names, given names, historical names.

Asmudtag *Phon:* /a-smud-tag/ *pn.* primordial deity. *Category:* deities.

Atrolos *Phon:* /a-tro-los/ *pn.* Kreb-Atrolos, an

apothecary in Lapis Latus. *See:* Kreb. *Category:* names.

Awulshag *Phon:* /a-wul-shag/ *pn.* Awulshag II.

First Emperor in the post-Accord era that would come to subsequently be known as The Great Bloom. Founder of the imperial University at Ekanya.

Category: kings, names, historical names.

Azered *Phon:* /a-ze-red/ *pn.* goddess of death, souls and prayer. *Category:* deities.

Azutral *Phon:* /a-zu-trai/ *pn.* town in the far north of the Aphoran desert, near the

borderlands of the Empire. Site of one of the many recent skirmishes. *See:* Aphoral. *Category:* places.

Bodko *Phon:* /bod-ko/ *n.* ball game involving

swiftly-executed throws and kicks.

Category: games.

Borenai *Phon:* /bo-re-nai/ *n.* thirteenth month.

Category: months.

Scent-focused evidentials

Aramteskan verb structure:

[Subj] [Obj] Tense(Asp) (Neg)Root adverb **particle**

Particles include interrogative, optative and dubitative, as well as the following evidentials:

nal Evidential (smell)

kan Evidential (other sense)

bith Reported speech (from bitos, 'to say')



Scent-focused nominals

Nominals (non-animate) are primarily scent-focused, with a derivational suffix to make them object focused:

lirpa 'rose scent'

lirpaya 'rose'

asmeb 'smell of dark'

asmebto 'darkness' (historical morpheme, mostly fossilised)



Scent-based metaphors

<i>Rykirgaa</i>	<i>lednish</i>	<i>pegmyt</i>	<i>irahbalu</i>	<i>pur</i>	<i>traalnaalzen</i>	<i>byt</i>
Riker-go	ladnesh	pagmith	erahbailu	pur	trol-nolzin	bith
Riker's	heart	plight	eternal-acc	conc	pst.nose.towards	RS

'When Raikur's heart faced the eternal plight'

faced is lit. 'nosed'

spatial and temporal orientation focuses on the nose.



Typologically-driven language construction

Using typology to inform language construction can allow for exploration of linguistic possibilities beyond documented typological barriers.

Language construction provides an opportunity for a creative application of linguistic expertise.



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nulmur smer delas ral Scents keep you!

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