

Developing a Non-Human Conlang: The Example of C'âár Yâm

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C'âár Yâm: The Speech of Daws



Design Principles

- ❖ Anatomical Accuracy
- ❖ Human Approximability
- ❖ Human-like grammatical structure
- ❖ How much are you willing to handwave?

Phonology



“Alveolar” ridge?
Hard palate
Choana



Consonants	Rostral	Palatal	Palatal Lateral	Choanal	Vowels		
Plosive		c [c]		q [q]	Close	i [ɨ]	
Nasal	m [m]			n [N]	Mid	e [ɛ ~ ɐ]	
Trill	r [r]				Open	a [a]	
Fricative		x y [ç ʝ]	l (ʎ)	h [ħ]	Closing	ae [aɛ̃]	
Affricate		cx [çç]			Opening	ia [ia]	
Click		c' [!]	t' ()	q' [‡]	Vowel qualities	IPA	Orthography
Nasal Click		nc' [ʎ!]	nt' [ʎ]	nq' [ŋ‡]	Plain	[a]	a
					Nasalized	[ã]	Ḃ
					Creaky	[ã Ḃ]	Ḃ

Tone	High	Low	Rising	Falling	Falling-rising	High falling-rising	Rising-falling	Twice falling
IPA	˥	˩	˨˨˥	˨˩˥	˨˩˨˥	˨˩˥˥	˨˩˥˩	˨˩˥˩˥˩
Orthography	á	à	ǎ	â	áǎ	âá	ǎà	ââ

Vocabulary



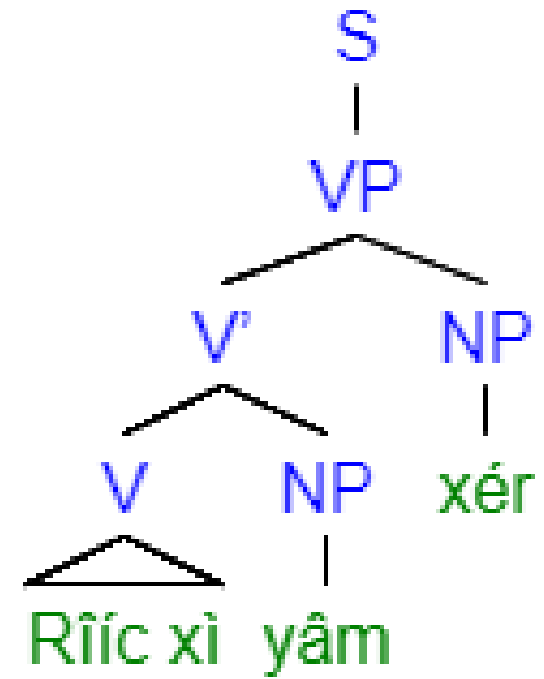
Vocabulary

❖ qéě - n. mommy, daddy
reflects corvid baby talk

❖ yàẹ - v. acc. swallow water, a liquid; look up, point upwards; yàẹ yàẹ: to drink
iterative reflects avian drinking style

❖ rê - adj. ultraviolet, the colour of some flowers including dandelions; some things we perceive as dark-coloured, including blueberries, obsidian; etc.
reflects avian colour vision

Grammar



Grammar

❖ Monosyllables

❖ Reduplication

❖ Whatever makes sense

Some sources I've used

- ❖ Ziswilder and Farner, 1972. Avian Biology. Volumes II and V.
- ❖ Hyman, 1942. Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy.
- ❖ Koenig et al., 2016. Avian Anatomy: Textbook and Colour Atlas. Second Edition.
- ❖ https://en.wikivet.net/Avian_Respiration_-_Anatomy_%26_Physiology
- ❖ <http://www.poultrymed.com/Atlas-of-Avian-Anatomy-and-Histopathology>
- ❖ <http://www.corvidresearch.blog>
- ❖ https://www.researchgate.net/post/What_natural_objects_and_organisms_are_strong_reflectors_of_ultraviolet_light
- ❖ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331895384_Contrasted_Speciation_of_Iron_In_Obsidian_and_Tektites_a_Spectroscopic_Study
- ❖ Art by Joseph Westgate and Aditi Sharma

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