

Let's Have A Relay – Kamya

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1 Text


Puvoç: Şel ta valath buşkiş bala sadhuşaş? Nahiş hath, huçasa na doraz bala n' odholaz!


Alci ta yeyiz hela, ta idiz hez?

 Ta keçiz keriz.

 Ta duşiz, mada şi kister bukişa akaçaz.


Ta pathiz na heşe huçasaz?

 Cen lipuk lasa komaz na canodaz.

 Cen toşi na cere vahamdaz.

Alci ta yeyiz utula, ta parayiz hez?

 Cen hadh n' uturudaz na wuçaşa.


 Na cere broça be moçaka çeş şava.


Alci ta huçat gara doraz, ani rawiz odholaz, ta valath sadhuşaş. Teş uşar gara lizimda, çazen ta biş berita.

Alci ta huçat gara odholaz, ani rawiz doraz, ta valath buşkiş. Ta path kavuk bišta. Ta şi ufezekişi, va beri forta!


['puvotʃ | 'ʃel ta 'valaθ 'buʃkiʃ 'bala 'saðuʃaʃ || 'nahiʃ 'haθ | 'hutʃasa na 'doraz 'bala 'noðolaz ||


'aldʒi ta 'jeʒiz 'hela | ta 'idiz 'hez ||

 ta 'ketʃiz 'keriz ||


 ta 'duʃiz 'mada ʃi 'kister 'bukiʃa 'akatʃaz ||


ta 'paθiz na 'heʃe 'hutʃasaz ||

 dʒen 'lipuk 'lasa 'komaz na 'dʒanodaz ||

 dʒen 'toʃi na dʒere 'vahamdaz ||

'aldʒi ta 'jeʒiz 'utula | ta 'parajiz 'hez ||

 dʒen 'hað nu'turudaz na 'wutʃaʃa ||

 na 'brotʃa be 'motʃaka dʒeʃ 'ʃava ||

'aldʒi ta 'hutʃat 'gara 'doraz ani 'rawiz 'oðolaz | ta 'valaθ 'saðuʃaʃ || 'teʃ 'uʃar 'gara 'lizimda | 'tʃazen ta 'biʃ 'berita ||

'aldʒi ta 'hutʃat 'gara 'oðolaz ani 'rawiz 'dora | ta 'valaθ 'buʃkiʃ || ta 'paθ 'kavuk 'biʃta || ta ʃi u'fezekiʃ va 'beri 'forta ||]

2 Vocabulary¹

akaç *n.* food.

alci *adv.* 1 • maybe, might or perhaps (used clause-initially with the conditional mood to indicate possibility and with the potential mood to express a lack of certainty). 2 • if (used clause-initially; requires the conditional mood). 3 • can (marks questions concerning ability or possibility; used clause-initially with the conditional mood). 4 • whether or if (requires a preceding complementiser; introduces both finite and non-finite interrogative complement clauses; requires the conditional mood with finite clauses).

ani *conj.* 1 • but, and or yet (introduces a new or different meaning). 2 • when (often preferred to *na vaka* in narratives, especially when the preceding verb is conveying an imperfective aspect).. Has the pre-vocalic allomorph *an'*.

bala *conj.* or or otherwise (when used with clauses, what follows is usually a negative or undesirable consequence; when used with phrases it is used as an exclusive or).

be *adv.* 1 • not (used pre-positively to negate verbs and occasionally adnominal and adverbial modifiers). 2 • no or yes (used to show disagreement with positive statements or agreement with negative statements).

beri *v.t.* 1 • to hunt. 2 • to prey on.

berita *n.* hunter.

biş *q.* no or none.

bişta *adv.* alone or on one's own (post-verbal).

broça *n.* 1 • shell (e.g. of molluscs). 2 • exoskeleton (e.g. of ants). 3 • pod or husk.

buk *v.t.* 1 • to hit, strike or beat. 2 • to clap or applaud (with *kaw* 'hand(s)' as a direct object in the accusative). 3 • to chime (with mediopassive; e.g. of clocks). 4 • to get or catch (e.g. bus or plane; colloquial). 5 • to play (of non-wind musical instruments). 6 • to thresh (i.e. to separate the grain from the chaff etc. by beating). 7 • to catch (e.g. of an animal hunting its prey).

buşuk *n.* spider.

cano *adj.* & *pn.* other (implies another, specific alternative is in mind though does not necessarily imply replacement of the first).

çazen *conj.* & *adv.* so, thus, therefore or such that.

cen, ce- *pn.* I/me (first person singular).

dor *n.* 1 • log (generic term for the cut trunk of a dead tree and certain other cylinder items). 2 • bole or trunk (of a tree). 3 • butt (e.g. of a rifle).

duşu, duş- *v.i.* 1 • to expect (takes complement clauses in the potential mood). 2 • to wait (takes dative adjuncts). 3 • to hope (takes complement clauses in the potential mood).

1 Entries with stems used in their inflections that differ in some way from their citation form are included after the headword by a following hyphen.

for *n.* poison or venom.

gara *q.* & *adv.* 1 • many, much or a lot of. 2 • very. 3 • a lot.

hadh *v.t.* 1 • to feel or touch. 2 • to taste (i.e. sense an odour with the tongue). 3 • to play (of non-percussion musical instruments but especially of wind instruments requiring the hands to manipulate valves etc.).

hath *v.i.* to answer or reply.

he *pn.* 1 • what.

hela *adj.* hungry.

heşe *pn.* 1 • which (requires the definite article when used adnominally).

huça *v.t.* 1 • to choose. 2 • to elect. 3 • to vote for. 4 • to appoint.

huçasa *n.* 1 • choice. 2 • option. 3 • vote.

id *v.t.* 1 • to do (i.e. to perform an action). 2 • to make (i.e. to produce something). 3 • to get, have or take (especially in relation to washing and grooming). 4 • to complete, finish, achieve or manage. 5 • to go (i.e. to say something or to make a sound).

kavuk *v.i.* 1 • to live, dwell or reside. 2 • to stay or lodge. 3 • to stay or remain (in a place).

keri *n.* fish.

keç *v.t.* to cook or bake.

kister *n.* 1 • trap. 2 • filter.

kom *n.* 1 • time (in general). 2 • tense (linguistics). 3 • age or era.

lasa *v.i.* 1 • to spend (e.g. money or time). 2 • to expend or use up (e.g. energy or resources). 3 • to wear out or use until no longer able serve an intended purpose (e.g. clothes or tools).

lipuk *v.i.* 1 • to enjoy or take interest in (takes instrumental adjuncts). 2 • to relax.

lizimda *n.* fear (takes genitive, ablative or dative adjuncts).

mada *adv.* & *conj.* 1 • while or as (often using the locative case marker as an aspectual augment). 2 • as long as. 3 • meanwhile, for now or for the time being (used pre-positively). 4 • before (in experiential contexts; used pre-positively).

moçaka *v.t.* to stop, end or finish.

na *art.* the (definite article, invariant with respect to number). Has the pre-vocalic allomorph *n'*.

nahiş *conj.* 1 • (in order) to/that or so/such that (introduces clauses typically with a verb in the supine with the same subject as the matrix clause; may take complement clauses in which case it is usually accompanied by the potential mood, and typically in the future when the preceding clause is in the present). 2 • why or what for (i.e. for what purpose or to what end).

odhol *n.* (cob)web.

para *v.t.* 1 • to take, have or use (e.g. food, drink, medicine, drugs). 2 • to experience or undergo.

path *v.t.* 1 • to like, enjoy or appreciate (catenative verb). 2 • to have a passing interest in or liking for (with the mediopassive and a pre-posed non-subject dative experiencer).

puvoç *n.* question or enquiry.

rawiz *q.* some, a little, a bit or few.

sadhuşa *n.* mammal.

şava *v.i.* to move.

şel *adv.* 1 • used clause-initially to form polar (or yes–no) questions from statements. 2 • used to form tag questions (often followed by *eç* after affirmative statements and *be* after negative statements).

şi *art.* a(n), some (indefinite article, invariant with respect to number. Has the pre-vocalic allomorph *ş'*).

ta *pn.* you (second person singular).

toşi, toş- *v.t.* 1 • to understand or comprehend. 2 • to realise or notice. 3 • to go without saying (with mediopassive). 4 • to sympathise with. 5 • to include or comprise. 6 • to master (e.g. a skill or apparatus). 7 • to have self-control (with mediopassive). 8 • to capture (e.g. some aspect in a piece of art).

ufezekiş *adj.* warrior.

usi, uş- *v.i.* to be or exist.

utula *adj.* weary, tired or fatigued.

uturuda *n.* weariness, tiredness or fatigue.

va *conj.* 1 • and (used to conjoin both noun phrases and verb clauses). 2 • both (when used together with itself in accompanying phrases or clauses). Has the pre-vocalic allomorph *van*.

vahamda *n.* feeling or sensation (especially physical but also mental).

valath *v.t.* 1 • to resemble or look like (takes dative objects). 2 • to appear or seem (takes complement clauses).

wuça *n.* 1 • (bone) marrow. 2 • crumb (i.e. the soft middle part of a loaf of bread, as opposed to the crust). 3 • gut or instinct (figurative, used especially in expressions).

ye *v.i.* 1 • to be (copula; null in the present indicative).

3 Grammar notes²

3.1 Some typological info

Kamya is primarily agglutinative and almost exclusively suffixing, though words only seldom occur with a large number of suffixes. The default constituent order is SOV. Adnominal modifiers precede the noun, save full relative clauses. There is no grammatical gender, including on all personal pronouns.

3.2 Phonemic inventory

	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal	m		n			
Plosive	p b		t d		k g <g>	
Affricate				tʃ <ç> dʒ <c>		
Fricative	f v	θ <th> ð <dh>	s z	ʃ <ş> ʒ <j>	y <gh>	h
Liquid			r l			
Glide	w			j <y>		

Table 1: Consonant phonemes

	Front	Back
High	i	u
Mid	e	o
Low	a	

Table 2: Vowel phonemes

3.3 Echo-vowel epenthesis

I think the only phonological process it's worth saying anything about for the purposes of this text is to note the presence of echo-vowel epenthesis. Word-final clusters are disallowed in surface forms and any underlying clusters that might surface in this position are repaired by an epenthetic echo vowel, e.g. /falk-az/ → *falkaz* ['falkaz] 'taste.ACC' but /falk/ → *falak* ['falak] 'taste.NOM'.

3.4 Case

Kamya is a (mostly) nominative–accusative language. There are eight main grammatical cases: nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, instrumental, locative, ab-

² The following abbreviations are used: ACC = accusative, FUT = future, IMP = imperative, NOM = nominative, POT = potential, PRES = present.

lative and allative.³ These are marked by suffixes on the head of a noun phrase. Adnominal modifiers are not marked for case unless they themselves serve as the head of a noun phrase. As seen in Table 3 below, each case-marking suffix exhibits allomorphy conditioned by the final segment of the word to which it is attached.

	After vowels	After sonorants	After obstruents ⁴
Nominative	-Ø	-Ø	-Ø
Accusative	-z	-az	-az
Genitive	-re	-ere, -e	-ere
Dative	-ş	-iş	-iş
Instrumental	-ta	-ta	-ata
Locative	-şa	-işa	-işa
Ablative	-zen	-azen	-azen
Allative	-zuri	-azuri	-azuri

Table 3: Case suffixes

For a discussion of case in the language, see the write-up at <https://keras-saryan.github.io/docs/kamya-case.pdf>.

3.5 Number

Nouns display a general–plural distinction, with explicit plural marking being largely optional, e.g. *vagi* ‘bird(s)’ or *goz* ‘cow(s)’. The plural is marked on nouns by the suffix *-da* after vowels, e.g. *vagida* ‘birds’, and by *-ada* after consonants, e.g. *gozada* ‘cows’. Overt marking is generally considered ungrammatical when a quantifier or cardinal numeral is present, e.g. *gara vagi(*da)* ‘a lot of birds’ or *iz goz(*ada)* ‘three cows’.

Verbs obligatorily agree for singular or plural number with their subjects irrespective of the presence or absence of marking on the subject itself. This is marked with the suffix *-ar* after consonants, *-yar* after /i/, *-war* after /w/ and *-r* after non-high vowels, e.g. *na vagi vura* ‘the bird is flying’ but *na vagi(da) vurar* ‘the birds are flying’.

Note also that unmarked nouns with a singular can also convey a generic meaning, e.g. *goz ak evez* ‘cows eat grass’ (rather than *goz(ada) akar evez*, which has the meaning ‘(some) cows are eating grass’).

³ Though there are additional case augments and other case-like suffixes not covered here.

⁴ This also includes stems that end in consonant clusters, i.e. case suffixes are attached before echo-vowel epenthesis applies.

For more on number in Kamyā, see my dLCC talk at <https://youtu.be/NEINfK5rm04> and/or slides at <https://keras-saryan.github.io/docs/kamyā-dlcc-2021.pdf>.

3.6 Articles

Nouns may be preceded by invariant definite and indefinite articles, namely *na* and *ši* respectively, both of which have apocopic pre-vocalic allomorphs: *n'* and *š'*. E.g. *na kudi* ‘the book(s)’, *na kezada* ‘the dogs’, *ši barak* ‘an owl’.

3.7 Tense

There are four verb tenses: the present, the near past, the far past and the future. With the exception of the unmarked present tense, these are marked morphologically by suffixes. As summarised below in Table 4, the forms these suffixes take depends on the final sound of the word to which they are attached.

	After vowels	After sonorants	After obstruents
Present	-Ø	-Ø	-Ø
Near past	-t	-dit	-it
Far past	-mca	-umca	-umca
Future	-cuz	-cuz	-ucuz

Table 4: Verbal tense suffixes

These tenses are occasionally supplemented by aspectual augments which are case suffixes attached to already conjugation verbs forms. For example, the locative may be used with a progressive meaning.

3.8 Mood

Including the unmarked indicative, there are five grammatical moods. These are marked on the verb by suffixes. The realisations of these mood-marking suffixes are summarised in Table 5 below.

	After vowels	After sonorants	After obstruents
Indicative	-Ø	-Ø	-Ø
Conditional	-yiz, -z	-iz, -z	-iz
Potential	-yel(e), -l(e)	-el(e)	-el(e)
Imperative	-sa	-a	-a
Hortative	-ja	-ija	-ija

Table 5: Verbal mood suffixes

The indicative is the default mood and is used in plain statements of fact or opinion. The conditional mood is used obligatorily in the conditional clause and frequently—albeit optionally—in the consequential clause of conditional sentences. That is, sentences which indicate that one event is dependent on another. The potential is used by speakers to express the opinion that a particular event is either possible or likely. The imperative mood is used in issuing commands. Lastly, the hortative is used to express a speaker's general wish or desire that something occur. In addition to these prototypical function, most moods also have additional uses. These are discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

3.9 The copular and existential verbs

In the present tense indicative, the copula is null (i.e. it has no overt phonological form). Elsewhere, however, the copula has an overt verbal form and is conjugated for tense and mood as a normal verb would be. As can be seen in Table 6, the conjugation of the copula is irregular.

In addition to the true copula, there is a separate existential verb, namely *usi*, which is also irregular. The conjugation of this is given in Table 7.

3.10 Irregular verbs

There are various irregular verbs in Kamya. Aside from the copula and existential verb, the only irregular verbs relevant for this text are the so-called “paragogic” verbs. These end in a vowel in their citation form that is not present elsewhere in the conjugation, e.g. *çema* ‘cover.IMP’, *çemumca* ‘cover.FUT’ and *çemele* ‘cover.POT’ but *çemi* ‘cover.PRES’.

3.11 Possession

Attributive possession is expressed using a preposed genitive form, either a noun or personal pronoun. In addition to this, an article is required. In the vast majority of cases, this is the definite article. E.g. *na vagire rehe* ‘the bird's wing’ or *na cere kudi* ‘my book’.

Supine Infinitive		ye yezen	
		Singular	Plural
Indicative	Imperative	ya	yara
	Hortative	yaja	yarija
	Present	Ø	Ø
	Near past	yet	yardit
	Far past	yumca	yarumca
Conditional	Future	yucuz	yarcuz
	Present	yeyiz	yeriz
	Near past	yezit	yerzit
	Far past	yezumca	yerzumca
Potential	Present	yele	yerel
	Near past	yelet	yerelet
	Far past	yelemca	yerelemca
	Future	yelecuz	yerelecuz

Table 6: Conjugation of the copular verb

Infinitive		uştun	
		Singular	Plural
Indicative	Imperative	usa	uşara
	Hortative	usija	uşarija
	Present	usi	uşar
	Near past	usit	uşardit
	Far past	usumca	uşarumca
Conditional	Future	usucuz	uşarcuz
	Present	usiz	uşariz
	Near past	uzit	uşarzit
	Far past	uzumca	uşarzumca
Potential	Present	usele	uşerele
	Near past	uselet	uşerelet
	Far past	uselemca	uşerelemca
	Future	uselecuz	uşerelecuz

Table 7: Conjugation of the existential verb

There is no dedicated verb of possession. Instead, predicative possession is conveyed by way of an existential construction in which the possessee occurs as the subject of the verb and the possessor is expressed as an adjunct in the dative case. However, the default word order of such possessive constructions is possessor–verb–possessum (= adjunct–verb–subject) rather than possessum–verb–possessor (= subject–verb–adjunct) as might be expected. E.g. *na vagış usi ři wece* ‘the bird has a grub’.

For more on possession, see the write-up at <https://keras-saryan.github.io/docs/kamyā-possession.pdf>.

3.12 Question formation

Polar questions are typically formed by way of the sentence-initial interrogative particle *řel*, e.g. *řel goz ak evez?* ‘do cows eat grass?’.

In content question, interrogative words generally remain *in situ* by default rather than being fronted, e.g. *goz ak hez?* ‘what do cows eat?’.