

Text (for comparison)

Muvukup ákok buna dza Susídzep gunga ubuku yíboz vébe zvubekuz.

Someone called Water lived on Susídze's sacred geyser plateau.

Sa tazú dza nyepa ve Psyaz vopep vébe vunakuz.

A white bird found the flower with Psyaz.

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Sa tazú dza ubuku yíboz kanu vébe bzbvúkuz.

The white bird perched on a geyser plateau brazier.

Sámbet hudza tsung tsung yah ve nedzu vébe ikukuz.

The farmers lit the biggest fire in the liquor.

Púmov dza sa tazú vépos yah yum vébe edzokuz.

A child put some white birds near the fire.

The oldest child hits the worst white bird while they go to some trees.

Huna huna púmov dza mokya mokya sa tazú ve zaha fébe in vébe bingukuz.

The oldest child hit the lamest white bird while going to the trees.

Huna huna púmov dza tazup yéve ve hándzonye, zyega dza yah ve kúdzuk kyi vébe pínye gi dza zbakuz.

The oldest child made a bird cry with a shout and then, without having touched the fire, his neck bleeds, and the sky thundered.

Buna dza sa tazup yéve huvébe gi vopep vébe sutsíyenyé guna gémek zaha fébe ingkuz.

The person, as the white birds cried, departed heaven and then went to the trees burnt black.

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Sámbet hudza handzokuz, dzupekuz. Hudza híme nu huve hukakuz.

The farmer, shouting, followed. They only saw remains.

Buna hugvudza mu've mugúnye, sa tazu dza áme ve usim vopukuz.

These people drank water, and then the white bird could ask for release.

Gi dza tsung zaha venge fébe zbakuz.

The sky thundered by the top of the big trees.

Sa muv dza zaha vokyepi fébe vopukuz. Guna kahu hudza muv vofuka vébe undzakuz.

There was white water underneath. Black cosmos grew on the bottom.

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Sa tazu dza bunap áme ve nyepap muzvu vosi dzábeng usikuz.

The white bird asked for people's forgiveness with the flower story.

Hubuv nyáko sámbet pa psmi huvébe nyepa huve sa tazu vébe suvemábov, Susídze pángube ksána vébe zvubemábov.

If in the farmers' deaths you give flowers to the white bird, you will live in peace in Susídze.

Bokuz Only

Muvukup ákok buna dza Susídzep gunga ubuku yíboz vébe zvubekuz. Sa tazú dza nyepa ve Psyaz vopep vébe vunakuz.

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English Only

Someone called Water lived on Susídze's sacred geyser plateau. A white bird found the flower with Psyaz.

The white bird perched on a geyser plateau brazier. The farmers lit the biggest fire in the liquor. A child put some white birds near the fire. The oldest child hit the lamest white bird while going to the trees. The oldest child made a bird cry with a shout and then, without having touched the fire, his neck bleeds, and the sky thundered. The person, as the white birds cried, departed heaven and then went to the trees burnt black.

The farmers, shouting, followed. They only saw remains. These people drank water, and then the white bird could ask for release. The sky thundered by the top of the big trees. There was white water underneath. Black cosmos grew on the bottom.

The white bird asked for people's forgiveness with the flower story. If in the farmers' deaths you give flowers to the white bird, you will live in peace in Susídze.

Word List

A note on citation forms:

All words are provided in citation form. This means that nouns are presented as bare, and verbs are given in the 1st person non-past indicative, which ends for the most part in *-tse*.

Obligatorially possessed nouns are given in the order 1.ACC, 1.NOM

Word Classes: noun (n.), verb (v.), pronoun-determiner (p-d.), postposition (post.), conjunction (conj.)

ákotse ['a.ko] (v.) to call; to name

áme ['a.me] (n.) release; forgiveness

bíngutse ['biŋu] (v.) to hit

buna [bu.'na] (n.) person; human

bzbvútse ['bzbvu] (v.) to perch

dza [dza] (p-d.) 3rd person nominative singular "article" (see relevant section in grammar)

dzúpetse ['dzu.pe] (v.) to follow

dzenge, tse [e.'ŋe] *iŋe (n.) crown (of head); top (post.) top

ése [e] (v.) to place (3.NPAST **édzoz**)

kahu [ka.'hu] (n.) cosmos herb/flower

kyepi, tsekyepi [kje'pi] (n.) sole (of foot) (postp.) bottom

zga, zga ['(z)ga] (n.) neck

gémetse ['ge.me] (v.) to burn

gi [gi] (n.) sky; heavens

guna [gu.'na] (n.) black one, dark one

gunga [gu.'ŋa] (n.) 1. stratosphere; highest part of the atmosphere
2. sacred (one); unworldly; unearthly; nonprofane

gve, tsegve ['gve] (n.) foot, feet (postp.) from (ablative; marks the origin)

gvudza [gvu'dza] (p-d.) 3rd person nominative singular proximal pronoun-determiner

hánse ['han] (v.) to shout (3rd person **hándzoz**)

híme ['hi.me] (num.) one (n.) alone one, only one

hukátse [hu.'ka] (v.) to see

huna [hu.'na] (n.) old (one); elder

íkutse ['i.ku] (v.) to spark; to light (a fire); to ignite

íntse, in [in] (v.) to go (**in** is the present participle/verbal noun, something like 'going')

kanu [ka.'nu] (Bza) *qəl^u < qɪ^u 'burn' (n.) brazier; burner (usually ceramic)

ksána ['ksa.na] (n.) peace; calm; tranquility

kúdzutse ['ku.dzu] (v.) to touch; to meet

kyepi, tsekyepi [kje'pi] (n.) sole (of foot) (postp.) bottom (external: see *puka, tsefuka*); underneath

kyítse, kyí ['kji] *kaí (v.) to lack; negative existential copula (e.g. ku'za kyiz 'there is no sea') (n.) lack

mokya [mo.'kja] (n.) cripple; lame (one); gammy (one)

mugútse [mu.'gu] (v.) to drink

muv [muv] (n.) (fresh) water

muvuku [muvu'ku] (n.) 1. (water) spring 2. drinking water (also used as a personal name)

muzvu [mu.'zvu] (n.) story; tale; legend

nedzu [ne.'dzu] (n.) lightly distilled liquor produced by freezing cider; refined liquor more generally

nu [nu] (n.) remnant; relic; remains

nyáko ['nja.ko] (conj.) if, when (e.g. *nyáko ányek dza yupumához...* 'if it were to rain')

nyepa [nje'pa] (n.) bloom; blossom; flower (especially generic rather than a flower as part of a whole plant)

pep, tsepep ['pep] (post.) with (comitative)

pítse [pi] (v.) to bleed

psmi [psmi] (n.) death

Psyaz [psjaz] (p. n.) Demonic spirit/deity figure. Psyaz takes the form of a ground-dwelling quail-like bird and poisons those who overindulge on bird-meat.

púmov ['pu.mov] (n.) child

puka, tsefuka [pu'ka] (n.) riverbed (postp.) bottom (internal)

sa [sa] (n.) white one, pale one, light one; paleness, whiteness, lightness (of tone)

sámbet ['sambet] (n.) farmer; tiller

Susídze [su'si.dze] (n.) Proper noun (could be pronounced by someone as [su.'sji.dzje] [su.'ɕi.je] or [su.'ɕi.jje] depending on how fancy, foreign and/or well-read they want to sound)

sutsíyetse, sutse [su'tsi.je] (v.) to leave; to depart

súvetse ['suve] (v.) to give; to lend

tazu [ta'zu] (n.) bird (general)

tsung [tsun] (n.) big one; bigness

ubuku [u.bu'ku] (n.) geyser; hot spring

undzátse, undza [un'dza] (v.) to grow

usítse [u'si] (v.) to ask; to inquire; to request

dzusi, tsusi [u.'si] (n.) hand (postp.) instrumental (like some senses of with)

vopútse, vopu [vu.'pu] (v.) to be; classificational and existential copula (n.) (state of) being

vunátse [vu.'na] (v.) to find

yah [jah] (n.) fire

yévetse, yéve ['je.ve] (v.) to cry; to howl; to caw (n.) cry; howl; caw

yíboz ['ji.boz] (n.) plateau

yum [jum] (n.) nearness; proximity

zaha [za.'ha] (n.) tree; timber

zbátse [zba] (v.) to thunder

zvubétse [zvu'be] (v.) to live

Phonology and Romanisation

There is little worth dedicating much time to in the phonology due to the lack of semantically relevant phonological alternations. There are some forms of phonological reduction which are covered in the section on simple pronoun-determiners ("articles").

The romanisation is quite clear - I assume all choices would be David approved. The romanisation does not show the variation between how loan words and native words are written - where this is relevant I have noted this in the word list above.

Grammar

Bokuz is a strongly head-final language:

- modifiers precede head nouns

Koyákov: Nouns

Nouns in Bokuz are an open class, almost always found in noun phrases with a final article (see the following section). Within the category of nouns there is a closed class of obligatorily possessed nouns which take initial person marking (see below); outside of this, nouns do not change phonological form. Instead, all case and number flagging is done on the article.

Inalienably Possessed Nouns

Some nouns in Bokuz require a specified possessor. Typically these are nouns relating to parts of the body and kinship terms.

Bokuz distinguishes inalienable possession and alienable possession. The former uses a pronominal prefix on the possessed noun to agree in person with the possessor. Nouns that are inalienably possessed are in a closed class of obligatorily possessed nouns including body parts and kinship terms.

Consider first this paradigm for **-mba** 'family

In the nominative:

tsemba, 'my/our family'

bvumba 'your family'

dzomba 'his/her/their family'

In the accusative:

gomba, 'my/our/your family'

vomba 'his/her/their family'

The word has a complete Bokuz paradigm which can be summarised as below:

	NOM	ACC
1	tse-	go-
2	bvu-	
3	dzo-	vo-

There are however patterns of defective nouns which lack this full paradigm, like **-nuz** 'leg':

In the nominative:

tsenuz, 'my leg'

bvunuz 'your leg'

znuz 'his/her/their leg'

In the accusative:

nuz, 'my leg'

vonuz 'his/her/their leg'

	NOM	ACC
1	tse-	
2	bvu-	

3	z-	vo-
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(For those looking to explain this paradigm, it occurs principally when a word is stressed immediately preceding these markers)

The paradigm is even more irregular with forms which originally began with vowels:

	*a		*e		*i	*o	*u
	*abíu 'maternal grandfather'	*aŋeo 'father'	*ewíi 'daughter's son'	*éji 'paternal grandfather'	*iwóu 'maternal aunt'	*óbaa 'paternal uncle'	*ujéi 'daugher'
1	zbív	sni	zvíye	tsédze	tsevuv	tsúbe	<i>tsudzéye</i>
2	bobív	boni	bovíye	bvédze	bvevuv	bvúbe	<i>bvudzéye</i>
3	zyebív	zyeni	zyevíye	zyédze	zyevuv	zvúbe	<i>zvudzéye</i>
1+2	zbív	zni	zvíye	dzédze	dzevuv	dzúbe	<i>dzudzéye</i>
3	vobív	voni	vovíye	védze	vevuv	vúbe	<i>vudzéye</i>

Some things to point out: The nasal "initial" bases (we know diachronically this was not the case of course) preserve the voicing distinction where otherwise it is lost. Also, the pattern varies between stressed and unstressed vowels.

Alienable possession is conveyed using a set of genitive articles that precede the nouns they modify.

Modifying Nouns

All nouns can act as modifiers to a following head noun, and many nouns in Bokuz which would be adjectives in English can also refer to a being of the relevant quality.

Mepu puk dza yúpuz.
red(ness) leaf 3.NOM.SG fall-3

'The red leaf falls'

Dzum dza génum yúpuz.
yellow(ness) 3.NOM.SG also fall-3

'The yellow one falls too'

Superlatives

The superlative is formed with a full reduplication of the modifier noun (there is no distinct class of adjective in Bokuz)

(it) is the big big one i.e. the biggest
tsung tsung dza muz.
big big it is.

the darkest night
gvuki gvuki ngákov dza
dark dark night it

Postpositions

Bokuz uses inalienably possessed body parts to make postpositional phrases, conveying some extra specificity beyond the broader locative case. They follow the head noun but precede the pronoun-determiner.

Compare these two sentences

Bza dza ngum **vébe** muz.
onion it basket **in.it** it.is.
The onion is **in** the basket.

Bza dza ngum **vokyepi** vébe muz.
onion it basket **its-underneath** in.it it.is.
The onion is **underneath** the basket.

Gyákov: Pronoun-Determiners

This word class covers what would often be split up into a few distinct classes: pronouns, determiners and what while we were developing the language we called articles. In Bokuz these make more sense to consider as a single class of declinable words which carry case and number marking. A word of this class is required to form a licit noun phrase in all cases other than some fringe cases with nominalised verbs.

Simple Pronoun-Determiners and "Articles"

Having been derived from pronouns, the former 'articles' class and the 'pronouns' class mirror each other directly. The "articles" can thus be also analysed as an obligatory 3rd person pronoun or determiner following a noun.

The pronoun-determiner class is the only place in the language in which number is flagged. Beyond the singular-plural distinction, Bokuz marks a paucal to indicate a small number of things (usually 2-5). Number in the 1st and 2nd persons is regularly derived, while the 3rd person forms are more distinct.

The language's documentation generally uses the terminology of case and morpho-syntactic alignment in describing these cases. The nominative marks the subjects of intransitive verbs and the agent-like subjects of transitive verbs, while the accusative marks the object. An alternative analysis would be that the system is closer to the Japanese or Korean 'focus' based use of case particles, especially, as will be clearer in following sections of the document, when used in conjunction with the genitive and locative cases.

A final note: the accusative forms of 1st and 2nd person pronouns are

		NOM	ACC
1st	singular	tsi	ge
	paucal	tsímov	gémov
	plural	hutsi	huge
2nd	singular	buv	ge
	paucal	búvumov	gémov
	plural	hubuv	huge
3rd	singular	dza	ve
	paucal	dzaz	vépos
	plural	hudza	fuve

Locative

The locative marks the temporal and spatial setting of the verb, and follows core arguments (the nominative and accusative) when not topicalised using the nominative (focussed) form.

The coda nasal is used before words beginning with vowels only.

		NOM	ACC
1st	singular ~paucal	tsíbe(ng)	gébe(ng)
	plural	hutsíbe(ng)	hugébe(ng)
2nd	singular ~paucal	búbe(ng)	gébe(ng)
	plural	hubúbe(ng)	hugébe(ng)
3rd	singular ~paucal	dzábe(ng)	vébe(ng)
	plural	hudzábe(ng)	fébe(ng)

Genitive

The genitive pronouns mark possessors and participants in subordinate clauses.

The 3rd person has two forms: when following a word ending with a vowel it cliticises as **=p**, while otherwise it retains an independent form **pa**.

		NOM	ACC
1st	singular ~paucal	tsíne	géne
	plural	hutsíne	hugéne
2nd	singular ~paucal	búne	géne
	plural	hubúne	hugéne
3rd		V=p, C pa	

Allophonic Variation

The 3rd person "articles", being very frequent, display a stronger tendency towards reduction.

Where a noun ends in an alveolar obstruent, affricates /ts/ and /dz/ reduce to [s] and [z] respectively.

When a noun ends in a labial fricative, it is lost before an article starting with /v/.

The locative -ng ending is only used before vowel initial words; elsewhere this nasal has been lost.

The reduced forms are written with an apostrophe to indicate they are reduced forms:

/ˈbvaz za ˈkuv ve seˈŋi ˈve.beŋ ˈa.dze/
[ˈbva _za ˈku ve seˈŋi ˈve.beŋ ˈa.dze]

<Bva'za ku've sengi vébeng ádzez.>
'The freshwater crab eats the apple at the beach'

Deictic Pronoun-Determiners

In addition to the simple pronoun-determiners, there is a subclass further differentiated by distance and relative position.

Húbve dza meva hukugve ádzez.

mouse 3 seed PL-PROX.ACC eat-3

The mouse eats these seeds.

Húbve dza meva fuve bongep gvúbe ádzez.

mouse 3 seed PL-3.ACC island PROX.LOC eat-3

The mouse eats seeds on this island.

They decline as follows:

Case	Number	Proximal	Distal	Internal	External
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NOM	SING	gvudza	bza	ngudza	zvudza
	PAUC	gvudzaz	bzaz	ngudzaz	zvudzaz
	PL	hugvudza	hubza	hungudza	hudzvudza
ACC	SING	kugve	bzve	nguve	zvuve
	PAUC	kugvépos	bzvépos	nguvépos	zvuvépos
	PL	hukugve	hubzve	hunguve	huzvuve
GEN	N/A	gvup	bíyep	ngup	zvup
LOC	SING	gvúbe(ng)	bíyebe(ng)	pángube(ng)	dzúvuve(ng)
	PL	hugvúbe(ng)	hubíyebe(ng)	hupángube(ng)	hudzúvuve(ng)

Sundzákov: Verbs

Verbs in Bokuz are not especially scary. They obligatorily inflect for person (agreeing with the subject, and a 1st or 2nd person object), tense and mood. In most cases this simply involves attaching a fusional suffix to the verb stem.

The non-past indicative is used for most actions in the present, while the future tense is often implied based on use of the subjunctive unless it is certain that an event will happen.

Yudza dza bumához. 'The woman will come.'
 Zmínoh dza buz. 'Spring will come' (we are certain)

The subjunctive expresses events which are uncertain or conditional.

The past indicative is used to recount past events. The past subjunctive in turn is used for events occurring in the past which would also take the subjunctive.

Subátse 'to say' is an example of a regular verb. In the table below all its simple regular conjugations are presented with the relevant suffixes in bold.

	Indicative		Subjunctive	
Non Past	subát se	I/We say	sub mátse	I/We may say

	subá bo v	You say	sub má bov	You may say
	subaz	He/She/They say	subamá ho z	He/She/They may say
Past	subakú tse	I/We said	subabukú tse	I/We might say
	subakú bo v	You said	subabukú bo v	You might say
	subakuz	He/She/They said	subabukuz	He/She/They might say

Bokuz Copulaic Verbs

In Bokuz, there are two copulae that are contrasted: an equative copula and a classificational copula.

The equative copula *mútse* is used when both arguments are the same, e.g. your uncle's brother is your father.

The equative copula uses double nominative marking.

The crab is the bug. (Equitative)

Bvaz **dza** pyeke **dza** muz.
crab it bug it it.is

Mútse is also used as the existential copula, with the location of existence being marked in the locative.

'There is a crab on the beach' (Existential)

Bvaz **dza** sengi vébe muz.
crab it it.is beach on it.is.

The classification copula is used when one argument is a subsection of another, e.g. someone's brother is a man (but not all men, just a kind of man).

Unlike the equative copula, the classificational copula requires the noun forming part of the predicate to be in the locative.

Crabs are bugs. (Classificational)

Bvaz hud**dza** pyeke hud**zá**be vopuz.

A crab is a bug. (Classificational)

Bvaz (híme) **dza** pyeke (híme) **dzábe** vopuz.

Negative Copula

There is also a negative copula **kyítse**, which is effectively a negative of both copulae. The choice of case marking comes down to the specific nuance of definiteness being denied.

Bears are not bugs. (Classificational)

Dzáne hud**dza** pyeke hud**dzábe** kyiz.

A bear is not a bug. (Classificational)

Dzáne (híme) **dza** pyeke (híme) **dzábe** kyiz.

AND

The bear is not the bug. (Equitative)

Dzáne **dza** pyeke **dza** muz.

'There is **not** a crab on the beach' (Existential)

Bvaz **dza** sengi vébe kyiz.

crab it it.is beach on it.is.not.

Participle and Deverbal Forms

Participles in Bokuz are an open class of nonfinite verbs formed by adding specific suffixes to verbs. However, the marking of these participles has converged with nominal derivational morphology, making the distinction muddier than it originally began. They cannot act as predicates and do not index for person, but many convey some tense distinctions (the relationship between these and the above tense forms should be clear).

They take a combining form with verbs, sometimes reviving a lost vowel or consonant, similar to the irregular 3rd person forms.

Bokuz's particles act like nouns in that they can be used as modifiers, but also like verbs in that they can head their own phrase structures.

Tsi **búne** **pámok** gupas ve vebvútse.
 I(NOM) **you(GEN)** **bought** skirt it like-I
 I like the skirt **that you bought**. ~I like the skirt of your (past) buying.

See more in the section on relative clauses.

They are also used in constructions with the copulae to add aspectual or modal nuance.

Past Participle -k

The past participle produces forms which mean something like the past act of performing the modified verb. Below they are compared with the deverbal form of the verb:

ngeh 'running' > ngéhok '(that) ran'

yédze 'eating' > yédzek '(that) ate'

Potential Participle -m

The potential participle produces a form which indicate the ability to be able to do something, or that such a thing might happen

ngeh 'running' > ngéhom 'will/might run'

yédze 'eating' > yédzem 'will/might eat; edibility'

The potential participle can be used in conjunction with the classification copulaic verb *vopútse* to produce a predicate meaning 'to be able to do something':

Meva huve yédzem vopútse.
 seed PL-3.ACC eat-POT COP.CLASS-1.
 seed they can.eat am.I

I can eat seeds.

Deverbal Forms/Present Participles/Verbal Nouns

While verbs and most particles in Bokuz take regular suffixes, what began as verbal forms at the proto-stage were zero-derived into nominal forms which are entirely irregular. In this relay they appear fully lexicalised for the most part. For example, *nyepa* 'flower; blossom' is the deverbal form of *nyepátse* 'to bloom'.

Sequential converb: -nye

The sequential converb indicates that the events of the main verb happened after this clause. As a converb, this form indexes neither tense nor person, this being inferrable from the main clause.