Kamalian Phonology

By Cameron White

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

1.1. Introduction

The sound system, or phonology, of Kamalian is somewhat similar to that of the Inuit branch of the Eskimo-Aleut languages of the arctic, subarctic, and Siberia. It is based on a three-vowel system and consonants appear in the labial, alveolar, velar, uvular, and glottal positions. Many dialects of the language also exist, some with obscure variations and mutations of these consonants.

1.2. Phonological typology

- A three-vowel system of /a/, /i/, and /u/
- No ejectives
- No voiced plosives
- Consonants at the labial, alveolar, velar, uvular, and glottal positions

SOUNDS

2.1.   Vowels

	IPA	Latin	Notes
Open front unrounded	/a/	a	
Closed Front unrounded	/i/	i	Realized as /e/ before /q/ or /ʁ/
Closed back unrounded	/u/	u	Realized as /o/ before /q/ or /ʁ/

Kamalian employs a three-vowel system, composed of /a/, /i/, and /u/. Before a uvular consonant (/q/ or /ʁ/), /i/ is realized as /e/, and /u/ as /o/. Neither in the orthography or the Latin transliteration, are these shown and are simply implied.

2.2.   Consonants

Kamalian has 12 consonants, three of which are nasals, five are stops, three are fricatives, and one lateral approximant.

	Labial	Alveolar	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Nasal	/m/ m	/n/ n	/ŋ/ ŋ		
Plosive	/p/ p	/t/ t	/k/ k	/q/ q	/ʔ/ '
Fricative		/s/ s		/ʁ/ g /χ/ x̂	/h/ h
Approximant		/l/ l			

INTONATION

3.1. Mechanics

Kamalian uses tone to convey prosody and pragmatics, but does not use it to express lexical distinction. Tone is especially useful when expressing quantity:

Singular:

Ŋupnuŋat "One fish"

"one.fish.ABS"

/ˈŋup˥.nuŋ˩ˌat˩/

Only (affirmative):

Ŋupnuŋat "Only one fish"

"one.fish.ABS"

/ˈŋup˥.nuŋ˥ˌat˧/

Only (interrogative):

Ŋupnuŋat? "Only one fish?"

"one.fish.ABS"

/ˈŋup˨.nuŋ˦ˌat˥/

Paucal (affirmative/interrogative)

Nuŋax/Nuŋax? "A few fish/A few fish?"

"fish.ABSp"

/ˈnuŋ˩.ax˩/

PHONOTACTICS

4.1. Consonant Gradation and "x̂"

A Kamalian noun may only start with either a vowel or consonant and end with consonant or two consonants, which only occurs when nouns take the Ergative plural case. However, it a phoneme beginning with a consonant directly follows a noun in the previous case, an exhibit of consonant gradation occurs. Take for example the sentence "The men in the house eat meat" translated into Kamalian:

Ilux̂talumit akalui'itit.

This could be broken down as:

Ilukt+talumit akal+ui+itit

But the "kt" is shortened to "x̂" when it is followed by another consonant. This is the ONLY time the "x̂" is ever used. In the kamalsagaq syllabary, this letter does not have a separate character, it is simply transcribed as "–kt" would normally be.

4.2. Phonological Constraints

Kamalian nouns and verbs are very restricted to what sounds may occur in them. All native nouns and verbs must…

- End in –k, –t, or –q
- Be disyllabic
- Not contain "x̂"
- Have (C)VCVC description

Adjectives follow the same requirements with the exception that they may end in any consonant except "x̂".