

Relaysper: ?a?a-FaM

Sparksbet

(w/ help from Knut, co-creator of ?a?a-FaM)

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Torch Text

ha KILESAKISE aaKiNe? usnak!

JaS LanaW LiiWtu wan KaJ lu SKaL irLiiDuc MaNTa FaLKurutu was wan DanaQ BiBiyaT:

RajuTa TiTiyakuc ?AEKASE SaRia lu DaR PiiL. pas kun aSDRiNu JaLa iSDRuNa fit ha KILESAKISE wan SDRanaN-la kun RAT fidultu iDaAMtu-la, inbebir KRaN-la, JaLa QarSTi-la QurSTi baj ?AEKASE SaRia KriiNe? irtuuq. pars wa TaN fidul WiyaBe? hwiiuc udan SaRia Fiikuc-la kuns aAKRiNtu JaLaariuc irPiiL.

Lexicon

?AEKASE	<i>n.</i>	a place name	KRaN	<i>n.</i>	money, wealth, riches, value, worth
BiyaT	<i>v.intr.</i>	to be known, to be recognized, to be common knowledge	KRiiN	<i>v.tr.</i>	to pay <i>sme.</i>
baj	<i>postp.</i>	using, with, by means of	KILESAKISE	<i>n.</i>	a person's name
iDaAM	<i>v.intr.</i>	to gather together, to assemble, to come together	LiiD	<i>v.tr.</i>	to accept, to receive
DanaQ	<i>n.</i>	member of the community, neighbor, villager, citizen, in-group member	LanaW	<i>n.</i>	chief, ruler, supreme one
DaR	<i>n.</i>	punishment, retribution, revenge	LiiW	<i>v.tr.</i>	to be hierarchically above, to rank higher than, to rule over, to outrank
Fiik	<i>v.tr.</i>	to plunder, to pillage, to raze	-la	<i>postp.</i>	with, and, along with
FaLK	<i>n.</i>	choice, decision, selection, plan	lu	<i>postp.</i>	comprised of, consisting of
fidul	<i>postp.</i>	before, in front of	MaNTa	<i>adj.</i>	long, big, tall, large along the primary axis of measurement
fit	<i>postp.</i>	in, on, at	PiiL	<i>v.tr.</i>	to result in, to cause <i>smth.</i> to result
hwii	<i>v.</i>	it is not the case that	QarSTi	<i>n.</i>	beer, malt-based beverage
JaLa	<i>adj.</i>	many, much, a lot of, a large amount of	QurSTi	<i>n.</i>	barley grain
JaS	<i>n.</i>	spirit, ghost, god	RajuTa	<i>n.</i>	calendar, schedule, planner, timetable
KaJ	<i>n.</i>	text, writing	RaT	<i>n.</i>	circle, cycle, lap, revolution, year, round, game, conclusion
iKaaN	<i>v.intr.</i>	to identify oneself, to present oneself to the public, to be famous	SaRia	<i>n.</i>	country, large organized polity, land, kingdom
			SKaL	<i>n.</i>	knowledge, learning, study

aSDRiNu	<i>n.</i>	army, battalion, squad, organized military group	tuuq	<i>v.</i>	must, needs to, it has to be the case
iSDRuNa	<i>n.</i>	battlefield, battlegrounds, battle, conflict, encounter	udan	<i>postp.</i>	depending on, if
SDRanaN	<i>n.</i>	soldier, member of the military	usnak	<i>v.</i>	hortative, ‘let it be so’
Tiyak	<i>v.intr.</i>	to be useful, to serve a purpose, to be of use	wiyab	<i>v.intr.</i>	to arrive, to show up, to appear, to return, to come back
TaN	<i>n.</i>	time, hour	wan	<i>postp.</i>	genitive, ’s, belonging to

Morphology

ʔaʔa-FaM’s primary morphology is organized around a system of roots and patterns. Each *root* is comprised of two *radicals*, each of which consists of a consonant or consonant cluster. A radical cannot be empty. These roots represent a common shared meaning, and can be formed into various lexical items using different *patterns* that represent further specification of a roots meaning. There are many patterns in ʔaʔa-FaM, some of which are very widely used throughout the languages and others with a more limited use case. Neither a root nor a pattern can occur on its own—they can only be realized in tandem.

To allow for easier reading of ʔaʔa-FaM text, the radical consonants in a given word are typeset in small capitals. This solely indicates morphology and does not affect the phonological realization of a word (e.g., *kaj* and *kaJ* are pronounced the same).

Most of the root/pattern relationships seen in this text are fairly straightforward and have been defined for you. The only primary derivations that are not explicitly included in the lexicon given above are the causatives, which you are expected to derive from their non-causative counterparts (which are included in the lexicon).

In addition to this root/pattern system, ʔaʔa-FaM also contains more transparently concatenative morphology, both inflectional and derivational.

Inflectional Morphology

Pretty much the entirety of ʔaʔa-FaM’s concatenative inflectional morphology is attached to verbs. Verbal inflection can be divided into three categories—terminals, medials, and evidentials.

Terminals

Terminals are verb-final suffixes that indicate the function a verb is serving in a sentence.

The unmarked ‘declarative verb’ terminal is only used for head verb of an entire sentence when that sentence is declarative. Likewise, the interrogative terminal *-li* and the imperative terminal *-ak* are used only for the head verb of a sentence if the sentence is intended to have the desired mood. All other verbs in a given sentence should be marked with one of the other terminals.

The subordinate terminal *-uc* is used to mark the head verb of a content clause—a clause that is intended to function like a noun. Clauses headed by a verb with the subordinate terminal can often be approximated in translation by using ‘that’ in English.

The relative terminal *-tu* is similarly used to mark the head verb in a relative clause. Since relative clauses in ʔaʔa-FaM are internally-headed (see the syntax section for more info), the verb marked with the relative terminal is always the final element of the relativized NP to occur in a given sentence.

The connective terminal is more widely used than any of the others. This terminal is used to mark a verb that is headed by another verb but is not serving a nominal function. In some scenarios, this appears to correspond to ‘a verb scoped over by an auxiliary’, but the connective terminal is used more broadly than that and can also serve as a basic converb marker. Many constructions that use more complex structures in English and other languages use simple chaining of connective verbs in ʔaʔa-FaM.

Medials

Medials are morphemes which are suffixed to the verb but occur prior to the terminal. These morphemes provide information about a verb’s relationship to its arguments.

ʔaʔa-FaM is a direct-inverse language. A transitive verb’s two arguments are both unmarked, and the presence or absence of the inverse medial *-ibi-* on the verb is used to indicate which of the arguments is the subject and

	<i>Pattern</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Example</i>	
1.	ΘaΘ	Abstract noun	JaB	good fortune (cf. <i>JaBa</i> ‘good’)
2.	ΘiiΘ	Transitive verb	FiiS	to give birth to (cf. <i>Fanas</i> ‘person’)
3.	ΘiyaΘ	Unaccusative verb	KiyaL	to be poured out (cf. <i>KarLi</i> ‘water’)
4.	iΘaaΘ	Unergative verb	iNaAM	to eat (cf. <i>Niim</i> ‘to eat (smth.)’)
5.	Θ ₁ iΘ ₁ iyaΘ ₂	Causative of 3	SLiSLiyas	to lock (cf. <i>SLiyas</i> ‘to be locked’)
6.	aaΘiΘ	Causative of 2 or 4	aaNiM	to feed (cf. <i>iNaAM</i> ‘to eat’)
7.	ΘaΘa	Attributive	SaFRa	hot (cf. <i>SaFR</i> ‘heat’)
8.	uΘiΘi	Experiential	uNiMi	hungry (cf. <i>NaMa</i> ‘satisfying’)
9.	ΘanaΘ	Person of X	KanaJ	author (cf. <i>KiiY</i> ‘to write (smth.)’)
10.	ΘurΘi	Object	NurMi	food (cf. <i>iNaAM</i> ‘to eat’)
11.	ΘarΘi	Liquid noun	QarFi	coffee (cf. <i>iQaaF</i> ‘to drink coffee’)
12.	iΘuΘa	Place of X	iHuTa	night (cf. <i>HaTa</i> ‘dark’)
13.	mΘiΘ	Tool/instrument	mRiQ	weapon (cf. <i>RaQ</i> ‘pain’)
14.	inΘiΘ	Diminutive	inFiM	word (cf. <i>FaM</i> ‘language’)
15.	ΘuΘi	Color/Visual Impression	KuWi	green (cf., <i>KajuWa</i> ‘leaf’)
16.	ΘuliΘ	Body part	BuLiT	head (cf. <i>iBaaT</i> ‘to understand’)
17.	ΘuΘu	Animal	cuMPu	kangaroo (cf. <i>iCaAMP</i> ‘to jump’)
18.	ΘasiΘ	Long, slender object	NasiRK	icicle (cf. <i>NURKi</i> ‘snowball’)
19.	ΘajuΘa	Flat object or surface	DajuLa	mirror (cf. <i>Diil</i> ‘to stare at’)
20.	ΘidiΘ	Loose, granular mass	widiW	sugar (cf. <i>WaWa</i> ‘sweet’)
21.	aΘiΘu	Closed/natural container	aBiRDU	bird’s nest (cf. <i>BURDu</i> ‘bird’)
22.	ΘimiΘu	Open/unnatural container	QimiFu	coffee mug (cf. <i>aQiFu</i> ‘coffee pot’)
23.	Θ ₁ aΘ ₂ jalaΘ ₂	Upper-body clothing	SaJeJaLaJ	pajamas (cf. <i>iSaaJ</i> ‘to go to bed’)
24.	usΘaΘ	Lower-body clothing	usRaT	skirt (cf. <i>RaTa</i> ‘whole, round’)
25.	ΘuΘaw	Direction	MuNTaw	‘towards the mountains’ (cf. <i>iMuNTa</i>)
26.	ΘuuΘ	People group, land of X people	NuuRK	Nords, Norse, Norway (cf. <i>NaRka</i> ‘cold’)
27.	ΘaΘia	Nationstate	FRaNCia	France (cf. <i>FRuuNC</i> ‘Franks’)

Table 1: Primary derivation patterns

which is the object. ?a?a-FaM’s animacy hierarchy provides the first degree of distinction between different arguments—if the object is higher on the animacy hierarchy than the subject, the inverse medial is used.

- (1) a. *FanaS BURKu RiiQ -Ø*
 person dog attack-DIR
‘The person attacked a dog.’
- b. *FanaS BURKu RiiQ -ibi*
 person dog attack-INV
‘The person was attacked by a dog.’
- c. *BURKu FanaS RiiQ -Ø*
 dog person attack-DIR
‘The dog was attacked by a person.’
- d. *BURKu FanaS RiiQ -ibi*
 dog person attack-INV
‘The dog attacked a person.’

The ?a?a-FaM animacy hierarchy can be shown in Table 2. Subordinate clauses are treated like abstract concepts, while relative clauses are treated like whatever the rank of the relative clause’s head is.

Table 2: ?a?a-FaM Animacy Hierarchy

- 0 Forces of nature, the universe, God, anything that no person could reasonably affect in any way
- 1 Pronouns (1 > 2 > 3)
- 2 Speakers of ?a?a-FaM
- 3 Non-speakers of ?a?a-FaM
- 4 Higher animals (mammals, octopi, anything considered intelligent)
- 5 Tools, inanimate objects used to act upon things, body parts
- 6 Lower animals
- 7 Plants
- 8 Other inanimate objects
- 9 Abstract concepts

If both of a transitive verb’s arguments are at the same level of the animacy hierarchy, the choice of direct vs. inverse pivots around the topic instead—if the more topical (marked through word order) argument is the subject, the (null) direct medial is used, while if the less topical argument is the subject, the inverse medial is used.

- (2) a. *FanaS KanaP aaNiM-Ø*
 person spouse feed -DIR
‘The person fed their spouse.’
- b. *FanaS KanaP aaNiM-ibi*
 person spouse feed -INV
‘The person was fed by their spouse.’

Evidentials

Each verb can be prefixed with one of several evidential markers. These markers indicate the way in which the speaker has come to know the information expressed by the sentence.

The direct evidential is unmarked, and indicates that the speaker has themselves directly witnessed the eventuality described. However, this implication only holds when the unmarked verb is not scoped over by another verb. If another verb scopes over a verb that is left unmarked for evidentiality, the head verb's evidentiality also scopes over that verb.

The inferential evidential *hwa-* is used when the speaker hasn't directly observed the described eventuality but can infer it from other evidence. For instance, if the speaker has not seen a fire but sees smoke on the horizon, they can infer that there is a fire and mark that statement with the inferential evidential.

The hearsay evidential *ir-* is used when the speaker is reporting on something that they have no direct evidence for but have been told by someone else.

The internal evidential *qaa-* is used when the speaker has no concrete evidence that necessarily allows them to infer that an eventuality occurs, but they assume that it occurs due to gut instinct, tendencies, routines, or assumptions about the world. This evidential has some overlap with traditional epistemic modality.

Derivational Morphology

ʔaʔa-FAM has rich concatenative derivational morphology, almost entirely applied through suffixing, but most is not seen in this torch. The main relevant morphemes seen here are *-ari*, a causative/translative morpheme, and *-s*, a nominalizer.

-ari is suffixed to a noun or adjective and means 'to become X' or 'to cause to become X'. It is underlyingly a transitive causative and is indeed the dominant method of forming causatives for copular constructions, but when the subject argument is omitted is also serves a translative function.

-s(e) is simply attached to an adjective or determiner and serves to nominalize it. For instance, the adjective for 'sick', *MaLa*, becomes *MaLas(e)* 'the sick one.'

Numbers

ʔaʔa-FAM has an interesting number system that is base-10 but with underlying base-5 tendencies. Simple cardinal numbers are as follows:

sar one	kekaj sar eleven
pas two	kekaj pas twelve
bar three	kekaj bar thirteen
qad four	kekaj qad fourteen
kaj five	barkaj fifteen
sesar six	barkaj sesar sixteen
pepas seven	barkaj pepas seventeen
bebar eight	barkaj bebar eighteen
qeqad nine	barkaj qeqad nineteen
kekaj ten	qadkaj twenty

ʔaʔa-FAM lacks ordinal numbers (or, from another point of view, does not morphologically distinguish them from cardinal numbers), so in contexts where ordinals would be used in other languages, ʔaʔa-FAM either uses cardinal numbers or other types of adjectives/adverbs to describe the relationship.

Fractions are formed by treating the entire number as though it's a root in the $\Theta a \Theta$ pattern, with the final 'a' in the cardinal number treated as the 'a' in the pattern. This pseudo-root (which may well contain vowels in its pseudo-radicals) is then put into the diminutive $in \Theta i \Theta$ pattern. Some examples:

inpis one-half	inkij one-fifth
inbir one-third	insesir one-sixth
inqid one-quarter	inpepis one-seventh

Syntax

The basic structure of ʔaʔa-FaM syntax is verb-final, and there are nearly no exceptions to this fact. However, the order of constituents beneath the verb is actually very flexible outside of this. Arguments and adjuncts can be placed in virtually any order, with information structure tending to dictate the order that is actually realized for a given clause in a given context. Additionally, ʔaʔa-FaM tends to have a rough tendency to put heavier/more complex constituents further leftward (that is, to the beginning of a sentence). This is likely due to the fact that with the strict verb-final clause structure, putting complex subclauses to the leftmost edge makes it clear which simpler constituents belong to the subclause and which to the main clause. Nevertheless, this is only a tendency and not a hard-and-fast rule.

Attributive adjectives directly precede the nouns they modify, and postpositions, naturally, directly follow their object noun phrases. When a verb has two arguments and neither is a complex subclause, the more topical argument tends to be the one further fronted in the sentence.

A verb's subject can be omitted if permitted by context, but a transitive verb's object can never be omitted. The result of this is that if a transitive verb appears with only one overt argument, it is always the case that the overt argument is the object of the transitive verb, not its subject.

Relative clauses are internally headed. This means that the head noun of a relative clause is not always at one end of a relative clause but is rather realized within the clause itself. Much like in independent clauses, its position can be highly variable, though the most topical noun in a relative clause is usually the head. Like all clauses in ʔaʔa-FaM, relative clauses are verb-final. If it is difficult to tell from context which constituent in a relative clause is the head, the head can be optionally preceded by the relative determiner *kun*.

Pronouns & Determiners

ʔaʔa-FaM uses pure pronouns for reference to the first and second persons. Its first and second person pronoun set is as seen in Table 3. The 'nonplural inclusive' is actually a dual inclusive 'you and me.'

	<i>Nonplural</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>Speaker-only</i>	<i>nas</i>	<i>naswi</i>
<i>Addressee-only</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>miwi</i>
<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>nemi</i>	<i>nemiwi</i>

Table 3: Discourse participant pronouns

Third person pronouns, on the other hand, technically don't exist in ʔaʔa-FaM. There are three demonstrative determiners: *wa* (proximal), *par* (medial), and *bu* (distal). These are used in a variety of contexts, as demonstratives often are across languages. When an overt third-person pronoun is indeed necessary, it is expressed by nominalizing one of these determiners.

In addition to these, ʔaʔa-FaM also has two unique determiners, *ha* and *fu*, used only with people's names. When a person's proper name is used referentially in a text, it is preceded by one of these determiners to indicate that it is being used referentially. It is *not* preceded by one of these determiners when used descriptively (as in, 'Her name is X') or when used for direct address. Unlike virtually all other ʔaʔa-FaM grammar (and certainly other ʔaʔa-FaM determiners), these contain reference to the referant's gender identity (with *ha* being used for men and *fu* for women). It is theorized that these determiners actually originate as third-person pronouns from an older form of the language.

Phonology

By and large, ʔaʔa-FaM's phonology is not particularly relevant to the contents of this relay. However, here are a few basics regarding its phonological inventory and syllable structure which can allow you to transcribe any necessary borrowings from ʔaʔa-FaM in your text.

/i(:)/ and /u(:)/ are lowered to [e(:)] and [o(:)] when they precede /j/ and /w/ respectively.

The schwa included in the vowel inventory is only marginally phonemic. For the most part, schwas only appear epenthetically to break up disallowed clusters. However, there are a handful of function words that contain schwa outside of that context in some dialects. When it is inserted to break up disallowed consonant clusters, the epenthetic schwa occurs in the earliest non-initial position that allows for legal onsets and codae. Including it orthographically in these contexts is optional. It is never stressed.

Table 4: Phonemic Consonant Inventory

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Fortis	$p^h \sim p\phi$ ⟨p⟩	$t^h \sim ts$ ⟨t⟩	$c^h \sim c\zeta$ ⟨c⟩	$k^h \sim kx$ ⟨k⟩	$q \sim q^h \sim q\chi$ ⟨q⟩	ʔ ⟨ʔ⟩
Lenis	$p \sim b$ ⟨b⟩	$t \sim d$ ⟨d⟩				
Fricative	f ⟨f⟩	s ⟨s⟩		$\zeta \sim x \sim \chi \sim h \sim h$ ⟨h⟩		
Approximant		l ⟨l⟩	j ⟨j⟩ ⟨y⟩ ¹	w ⟨w⟩		
Nasal	m ⟨m⟩	n ⟨n⟩				
Rhotic		$r \sim r \sim r$ ⟨r⟩				

¹ /j/ is written as ⟨y⟩ when adjacent to ⟨i⟩ and ⟨j⟩ elsewhere.

	Front		Central	Back	
Close	i ⟨i⟩	i: ⟨ii⟩		u ⟨u⟩	u: ⟨uu⟩
Mid			(ə) ⟨e⟩		
Open			a ⟨a⟩	a: ⟨aa⟩	

Table 5: Phonemic Vowel Inventory

Stress, in the form of elevated pitch and volume, is placed on the first non-schwa vowel of the word, on the nucleus directly after the first root radical, or on certain morphemes which carry stress inherently. This is largely irrelevant to this relay.