Relaysper Torch — Can·samsi

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Introduction

Dear recipient of this torch,

What you are faced with is a speedlanguage created over the course of just a few days. It has turned out rather unnaturalistic in some aspects, as is probably to be expected with the sort of gimmick I have chosen to experiment with. Nevertheless, I'm sure ANADEW will in time prove me wrong and someone will point out a far more extreme version of my language than I could ever have come up with.

Without further ado, the following is the text you are tasked to translate. I hope you enjoy!

> Gile·sagise timšem xiñ!
>
> Lue ƛaena λueǰeñ·pempam ƛae λueǰeñ·xiñxeñ ƛaena λueǰeñ·xeñxiñ timšem·xiñ ƛaena semsi mieba nati lue ƛae baeλeñ caǰa lū diǰū:
>
> Laga·kamamga lū bū ƛae Haekase ƛaena λučuñ ǰapuse senla. Haekase ƛae lue ƛaena ñalun čī ǰūme ƛae hamxeñ·nuebe ƛae hamxeñ mela cie ƛae lu pam·mage·maguǰu jim mela pūña xeñla, lū ƛae Gile·sagise ƛaena kāña·bempam mejie ƛae kākāña cie gekū ƛae kī suesu lekā. Gueguegi dasi ƛae laga deǰum ƛae λueǰeñ ma-dem·ƛunsem ƛae xiñxeñ bāge mela ƛae laga cunikū šie.

Lexicon

I strongly recommend reading the grammar section first. I've put the lexicon first to minimize the amount of scrolling. Words are listed in something resembling an alphabetical order. All syllables are written as if accented, type of compound and argument pattern are indicated.

Function words

na Empty pronoun, see syntax section. (Be)

lu Pronoun referring to dislocated referent, see syntax section. (Be)

lū 1. Pronoun referring to a distant object.

2. Pronoun referring to a referent that is not the current discourse topic. (Be)
lue 1. Pronoun referring to a nearby object. **2.** Pronoun referring to the discourse topic, which may persist over multiple sentences. (Be)
ƛae Indicates that previous argument is an external argument, see syntax section. (ƛ)
ƛaena Contraction of ƛae and na. (ƛ)

Lexical Words

baeƛiñ Decide (Say)
bāki Increase (Say)
bū Use (Say)
cačae Important (Be)
cie Large amount (Be)
čī $^{1}/_{12}$ (Be)
cuhiekū After (temporal), in front of (spatial) (Go)
dasie Deliver (Say)
gikū Inside, among, between (Go, Be)
Gila·sagisi Name of a person. Behaves as an endocentric compound. (Be)
guegie Product, item (Be)
Haekasa Name of a location (Be)
hamxiñ Grain, esp. wheat (Be)
jim Two (Be)
ǰapusi Punish (Be)
ǰū Half (Be)
ǰūmi One and a half. Copulative compound of ǰū and mi. (Be)
kamamkae Plan (Be, Say)
kāñae Fight, battle (Be, Say)
kāñae·pam Soldier. Endocentric compound of kāñae and pam. (Be)
kī Come (Go)
lakā Time, while, during (Go, Be)
lakā·kamamkae Schedule. Endocentric compound of lakā and kamamkae. (Be)
magu 12^{3} (Be)
matam Murder, violent death (Receive)
matam·ƛunsum Pillage. Copulative compound of matam and ƛunsum. (Say)
mi With, and (And)
mieba Teach (Say)
mujie Lead (Say)
nāti Receive (Receive)
nuepi Ferment, alcohol (Say, Be)
ñālun Gold (Be)
hamxiñ·nuepi Beer. Copulative compound of hamxiñ and nuepi. (Be)
pam Person (Be)
pam·magu ǰū Battalion (864 soldiers). Endocentric compound of pam, magu and ǰū. (Be)
pūhā Pay (Say)
samsi Say, Word (Say, Be)[1]
san Result (Be)
sue Year (Be)
šie Option, or (And. Be)
tieǰū Announce (Say)
timšim Praise, worship, honor (Say)
timšim·xiñ God. Copulative compound of timšim and xiñ. (Be)
tuǰum Before (temporal), behind (spatial) (Go)
xiñ Command, requirement, demand (Say)
ƛuečuñ Kingdom (Be)
ƛuečuñ·pam Citizen. Endocentric compound of ƛuečuñ and pam. (Be)
ƛuečuñ·xiñ King, ruler. Endocentric compound of ƛuečuñ and xiñ. (Be)
ƛunsum Steal (Say)

[1]Yes, I am aware of the irony of having my prototypical "say" word also be able to be a "be" word.

Grammar

The gimmick of Can·samsi is simple: There is only one part of speech. Linguists might argue that really, there are several more, and I might be inclined to agree with them, but regardless, with the exception of one functional word, **ƛae**, all words have the same morphological and syntactical capacities, even if some uses are not semantically meaningful.

Syntax

Any word on its own forms a complete clause. Further, any clause may be subordinated to a word to form a more complex sentence. There is a valence-increasing operation (see the morphophonology section), which allows a second argument. It is not possible for a word to have more than two arguments. Notationally, a transitive word will be indicated in glosses by a preceding +.

Syntactically, if **A** is a clause and **B** is a word, subordination is indicated by concatenation **A B**.

(1) *Ñālen nāde.*
Gold receive.
"Gold is received", "There is an event of gold-receiving"

This type of argument is termed the *internal* argument of a word. It is not always entirely obvious what the internal argument means semantically, this must be learned depending on the head. In the case of **nāti** (here rendered as **nāde** for reasons yet to be explained), the internal argument specifies what object or action is being received.

A second argument, termed *external*, may be added by combining the use of a morphological operation and the particle **ƛae** as follows: If **A** is the external argument, **B** the interal one and **C** the head, one says **A ƛae B C**.

(2) *Ʌueǰeñ·xiñ ƛae ñālen nati.*
King ƛ gold +receive.
"The King receives gold."

Naturally, all this can be nested indefinitely. The structure one gets in doing so remains unambiguous. In the above example, there is no "giver" indicated. Doing so requires such nesting. The following sentence might literally be translated as "The King receives the giving of gold by a soldier."

(3) *Ʌueǰeñ·xiñ ƛae kāñe·pam ƛae ñālen seǰie nati.*
King ƛ soldier ƛ gold +give +receive.
"The soldier gives gold to the King."

It may be very useful to get out a piece of paper and sketch tree diagrams when deciphering the relay.

Naturally, as the complexity of sentences grows, it becomes increasingly hard to parse them. In particularly bad cases, speakers may choose to dislocate a clause to the end of the sentence. In this case, a placeholder pronoun **lu** is put in its place. It should be noted that in theory, this pronoun could be further modified… but we won't go there.

Occasionally, a word may need to have its internal argument supressed while remaining transitive. For this purpose, the empty pronoun **nā** exists. Since **nā** generally[2] follows the particle **ƛae**, they are usually contracted into a single word **ƛaena**. The perhaps most common situation where this structure appears is in indicating possessives: On words of the type be X", such as **pam** "be a person, there exists a person", the internal argument gives further specification, while the external argument indicates possession. Thus the following example phrases:

(4) a. *Samse kāña·pam.*
Speak soldier.
"There is a soldier who is talking."

b. *Λueǰeñ·xiñ ƛae samse kāña·pemla.*
King ƛ speak +soldier.
"There is a soldier belonging to the king who is talking."

c. *Λueǰeñ·xiñ ƛae=na kāña·pemla.*
King ƛ =∅ +soldier.
"There is a soldier who belongs to the king."

Argument patters A few common argument patterns can be established for easy referencing. These are as follows:

- Say: The internal argument is a thing being said, made or otherwise used. The external argument is the person doing the action. Ext says Int, Ext teaches (about) Int.
- Be: The word itself asserts existence of an object. As an argument to another word it functions much akin to a traditional noun, or as a relative clause saying "which has this property". Its internal argument is used for further specification, its external argument indicates ownership. Ext's book, which is Int.
- Receive: The internal argument is the thing or action received by or done to the external argument. Ext is told Int.
- Go: The internal argument is a location relevant to the action, e.g. a destination. The external argument is the actor. Ext goes to Int, Ext comes from Int.
- And: This pattern is almost exclusively used transitively. The two arguments are linked in an often symmetrical way. Int and Ext, Int or Ext.

[2] I believe always but I'm too lazy to work it out.

Phonology and Morphology

Phonology and morphology are connected quite closely in Can·samsi, as just about every bit of morphology is non-concatenative. The two morphological processes relevant to this text[3] are the valence-increasing operation, which works through an accent shift, and plural marking, which works through reduplication. The accent interacts with segmental phonology (and naturally orthography), so there is no choice but to talk about phonology first.

		Lab.	Dent.	Alv.	Post-Alv.	Lat. Alv.	Vel.	Glot.
Nasal		m ⟨m⟩	n ⟨n⟩				ŋ ⟨ñ⟩	
Plosive	Ejective	p’ ⟨p⟩	t’ ⟨t⟩	ts’ ⟨c⟩	tʃ’ ⟨č⟩	tɬ’ ⟨ƛ⟩	k’ ⟨k⟩	ʔ ⟨h⟩
	Tenuis	p ⟨b⟩	t ⟨d⟩	ts ⟨j⟩	tʃ ⟨ǰ⟩	tɬ ⟨λ⟩	k ⟨g⟩	
Fricative			θ ⟨x⟩	s ⟨s⟩	ʃ ⟨š⟩	ɬ ⟨l⟩		

Table 1: We do not ask about capital ƛ.

Short	Long	Broken
a ⟨a⟩	aː ⟨ā⟩	a̯ə ⟨ae⟩
i ⟨i⟩	iː ⟨ī⟩	i̯ə ⟨ie⟩
u ⟨u⟩	uː ⟨ū⟩	u̯ə ⟨ue⟩

Table 2: Oh, and plain [ə] is ⟨e⟩.

The above two tables show all the phonemes and how they’re spelled. The orthography is somewhat phonetic however, and in unaccented syllables there are multiple sound shifts:

- Ejectives become tenuis plosives. Thus ⟨p t c č ƛ k⟩ will become ⟨b d j ǰ λ g⟩ in writing. /ʔ/, which lacks a tenuis counterpart, instead becomes a nasal: [n] before (underlyingly) front vowels and [ŋ] elsewhere.
- Vowels reduce: Long and broken vowels turn into their respective short forms, while short vowels become [ə].
- Coda nasals turn into nasalization of the preceding vowel. This is not indicated in writing[4].

Words may phonetically be broken down into feet of one to three syllables. These are separated by interpuncts in writing and generally align nicely with morpheme boundaries. The following accent patterns are possible, where bold indicates accented:

- Monosyllabic feet: **σ**
- Disyllabic feet: **σσ** and σ**σ**

[3] I.e. all two of the ones I made.

[4] So, yes, you can forget about it again.

- Trisyllabic feet: **σσ**σ and **σ**σ**σ**

Accent is not itself indicated in writing, but it can be seen easily by comparing with the dictionary form, in which all syllables are written as if unreduced.

Valence shift By default, words have the first accent of the ones listed above. To increase the valence, as discussed in the syntax section, the accent is moved to the second pattern. In the case of monosyllabic words, the syllable **la** is affixed to allow for this shift. This accent shift interacts with reduplication, a summary of the outcomes will be provided after these explanatory paragraphs. It should further be noted that generally only the last foot undergoes this valence shift — see the paragraph on compound words for details and exceptions.

Reduplication Plurality is marked with reduplication of the accented syllables of the last foot. The reduplicand either goes to the beginning of the last foot, or makes up a new foot, depending on number of syllables. The interaction with accent shift may be best thought of as follows: First add the right number of placeholder syllables in front. Then apply the appropriate stress pattern for the number of syllables. Only then copy the segments over to the placeholders.

Thus we get the following accent patterns on mono-, di-, and trisyllabic words:

	person.SG	person.PL	say.SG	say.PL	punish.SG	punish.PL
Accent 1	**pam**	**pam**bem	**sam**se	**samsam**se	**ǰapu**se	**ǰa**be·**ǰapu**se
Accent 2	bem**la**	bem**pam**	sem**si**	**si**sem**si**	**ǰa**be**si**	**ǰa**se·**ǰa**be**si**

It should be noted that on "verby" words, plurality indicates that an action is done multiple times, which may or may not mean that multiple people are doing it.

Compounds There are two kinds of compounds. The first type, endocentric compounds, specifies the head word more closely. An example from the text would be **kāñae·pam** "soldier", from **kāñae** "fight" and **pam** "person"; a soldier being a person who fights. The second type, copulative, identifies a meaning by connecting multiple words that all describe it partially or can be linked by "and" to form the full meaning. An example would be **matam·ƛunsum** "pillage", from "murder" and "steal".

These two types of compounds differ in how accent patterns are applied to earlier feet. In an endocentric compound, all but the last foot are fixed in first accent. In an copulative compound however, all feet undergo the same accent shifts. Reduplication however is still only applied to the final foot, and the reduplicand never undergoes accent shifts.