Varta Avina
The *Kavina*n language

uruwi

Retami-varta hee
A complete grammar

September 8, 2017

Contents

0.1 | Introduction

1 | Phonology

1.1 | Consonants and vowels

The Kavina language uses the following phonemes:

Table 1.1: The consonants of Kavinan.

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal	m	nh /ŋ̊/ n			
Plosive	p	t		k	
Fricative	v /β/	s			h
Approximant			j		
Trill		r			

Table 1.2: The vowels of Kavina.

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

1.2 | Phonotactics

A syllable comprises of:

- an optional consonant,

- a vowel,

- and one of /r s n/,

as long as the first two items are not */ti/.

1.3 | Allophony

/h/ becomes [x] after a consonant.
/n/ becomes [ŋ] before /h k/.

2 | Syntax

In this chapter, we look at the structure of the whole sentence.

2.1 | Basic word order

Kavina uses SVO order. Since it does not have any cases, this word order is strict. None of the items may be omitted.

2.2 | Modifiers

Modifiers follow what they modify.

2.3 | Interjections and vocatives

They appear at the beginning of the sentence.

3 | Nouns

Nouns are inflected only for number. There are three main noun classes.

3.1 | 1st declension

First-declension nouns end with ⟨-a⟩.

Table 3.1: Declension of ⟨varta⟩ *language*

Singular	-a	varta
Plural	-o	varto

Nouns ending in ⟨-aa⟩ are treated specially:

Table 3.2: Declension of ⟨sapaa⟩ *frog*

Singular	-aa	sapaa
Plural	-oa	sapoa

3.2 | 2nd declension

Second-declension nouns end with ⟨-u⟩.

Table 3.3: Declension of ⟨rinu⟩ *door*

Singular	-u	rinu
Plural	-e	rine

3.3 | 3rd declension

Third-declension nouns can end with any consonant or vowel. Those that end with ⟨-u⟩ form a special case.

Table 3.4: Declension of ⟨kasta⟩ *coin*

Singular	-a	kasta
Plural	-ai	kastai

Table 3.5: Declension of ⟨toate⟩ *internal organ*

Singular	-e	toate
Plural	-ei	toatei

Table 3.6: Declension of ⟨seki⟩ *pebble*

Singular	-i	seki
Plural	-ii	sekii

Table 3.7: Declension of ⟨hano⟩ *circle*

Singular	-o	hano
Plural	-oi	hanoi

Table 3.8: Declension of ⟨tanevu⟩ *maple*

Singular	-u	tanevu
Plural	-i	tanevi

Table 3.9: Declension of ⟨panan⟩ *table*

Singular	-n	panan
Plural	-ni	panani

3.4 | Nasal mutation

The nasal mutation on nouns changes its role:

- it converts a noun to an associated adjective (e. g. *wood* → *wooden*)

- as an object of preposition, it changes the meaning of the preposition in question

- it converts a pronoun or a proper noun into a genitive

The initial consonant is changed to the following:

Start	End
Ø t s r j n	n
p v m	m
k	Ø
h nh	nh

3.5 | Pronouns

Personal pronouns are not divided into first, second and third persons as in most languages. Instead, they fall into four categories which exhibit different behaviour depending on whether they occur as the subject or not:

Table 3.10: Pronoun persons and their functions.

Person	Role in subject (or bind)	Role in other
Near	The speaker.	The subject of the sentence.
Far	The listener.	If the subject is the speaker, then the listener. Otherwise, the speaker.
Other	A third entity.	An entity that is neither the speaker, the listener or the subject.
Generic	A generic entity (akin to "one").	

Table 3.11: Personal pronouns.

	Singular	Plural
Near	sema	semai
Far	tarka	tarko
Other	kana	kanar
Generic	iuve	iuvei

3.5.1 | Bind pronouns

When a bind pronoun is placed at the beginning of a sentence (after any interjections or vocatives), the subject is understood to be possessed by the bind pronoun. The bind pronoun also assumes the subject reference from other pronouns in the same sentence.

Table 3.12: Bind pronouns.

	Singular	Plural
Near	semaa	semaja
Far	tarkaa	tarkoa
Other	kanaa	kanara
Generic	iuvee	iuveja

In the following example, notice that ⟨sema⟩ refers to ⟨tarkaa⟩, not ⟨sapaa⟩.

Tarkaa sapaa minan an sema.
PR.FAR.BIND frog jump-SG.PAST toward PR.NEAR
Your frog jumped toward you.

3.6 | Adjectives

Adjectives decline in a similar manner to nouns, although almost all adjectives are of the third declension. They can be inflected in the past tense by prefixing ⟨ta-⟩.

4 | Verbs

Verbs are conjugated for the number of the subject, tense and antipassivity. There are three conjugation schemes:

4.1 | 1st conjugation

First-conjugation verbs end in ⟨-i⟩ and are always transitive.

Table 4.1: Conjugation of ⟨kahii⟩ *open*

	Nonpast	Past
Singular	kahii	kahir
Plural	kahia	kahina
Antipassive		
Singular	kahin	kahirin
Plural	kahian	kahinen

The antipassive forms are used when the direct object is absent in a transitive verb.

4.2 | 2nd conjugation

Second-conjugation verbs end in ⟨-mi⟩ and may be either transitive or intransitive.

Table 4.2: Conjugation of ⟨temi⟩ *hunt*

	Nonpast	Past
Singular	temi	ten
Plural	tenu	tenu
Antipassive		
Singular	temin	tenen
Plural	tenun	tenunen

4.3 | 3rd conjugation

Third-conjugation verbs end in ⟨-ki⟩ and are always intransitive.

Table 4.3: Conjugation of ⟨haki⟩ *fly*

	Nonpast	Past
Singular	haki	har
Plural	harja	harna

4.4 | Rii

⟨rii⟩ *be* is conjugated irregularly and has no separate antipassive form.

Table 4.4: Conjugation of ⟨rii⟩ *be*

	Nonpast	Past
Singular	rii	iri
Plural	raa	rina

4.5 | Other forms of the verb

Form	Recipe	Description
Imperative	tur + *nonpast*	A command.
Infinitive	to + *nonpast singular*	The noun form of a verb. Can take direct objects or objects of prepositions. Can act as an adjective by mutating the particle to ⟨no⟩. If modifying ⟨saha⟩ *thing*, the phrase means "an act of doing X" – e. g. ⟨saha no nakoi⟩ = a killing.
Passive	ker + *verb*	The verb adopts the same tense and number as the base action.
Causative	*causer* + ankai + *sentence*	
Applicative	*verb* + *preposition*	Promotes an object of a preposition to a direct object. If the former OP is mutated, then the verb is mutated instead. If there is already a direct object, it becomes the OP of ⟨vus⟩.
Negative	pe + *verb* + pe	
Prohibitive	per + *verb* + pe	

5 | Prepositions

Prepositional phrases, like other modifiers, follow what they modify.

Many prepositions change meanings when their objects are nasal-mutated. Typically, the basic form will indicate position, and the nasal-mutated form will indicate direction. Some prepositions experience an irregular mutation.

Table 5.1: List of prepositions.

	⟨an hano⟩ toward the circle
⟨sivi hano⟩ inside the circle	⟨sivi nhano⟩ into the circle
⟨sivi voru⟩ at night	
⟨toa surna⟩ belonging to the person	⟨tona surna⟩ (e. g. give) to the person
⟨ke hano⟩ outside the circle, not belonging to the circle	⟨ke nhano⟩ toward the outside of the circle; (e. g. take) from the circle
⟨hunu hano⟩ on the edge of a circle	⟨hunu nhano⟩ along the edge of a circle
⟨peku hano⟩ near the circle	⟨peku nhano⟩ approaching the circle
⟨ina hano⟩ far away from the circle	⟨ina nhano⟩ away from the circle
⟨kar hanoi⟩ between the circles	⟨karu nhanoi⟩ into the space between the circles
⟨sivike hano⟩ off the edge of the circle	⟨sivike nhano⟩ through the circle
⟨vus rinu⟩ on the wall (vertical surface)	⟨vusu ninu⟩ onto the wall
⟨haka panan⟩ on the table (horizontal surface)	⟨haka manan⟩ onto the table
⟨varu hano⟩ above the circle	⟨varu nhano⟩ to above the circle
⟨meru nhano⟩ below the circle	⟨meru nhano⟩ to below the circle
	⟨varusivike nhano⟩ over the circle
	⟨merusivike nhano⟩ under the circle
⟨jula ransu⟩ with a vine attached	⟨jula nansu⟩ with a vine attaching
⟨hanu hano⟩ around the circle (static)	⟨hanu nhano⟩ around the circle (dynamic)
⟨ma voru⟩ during the night	⟨ma moru⟩ until the night
	⟨masivike moru⟩ through the night, all night

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⟨ne hano⟩ by the circle (used in passive constructions) ⟨irai hano⟩ like the circle ⟨tennu hano⟩ on behalf of the circle ⟨ras hano⟩ because of the circle ⟨paka panan⟩ under the table	
⟨paka panan⟩ under the table	⟨paka manan⟩ to under the table, not concerning the table
⟨nuo hano⟩ about (topic) the circle	

6 | Conjunctions and dependent clauses

They are different depending on whether non-predicates or predicates are tied.

Table 6.1: Conjunctions.

	Non-predicates	Predicates
X and Y	X o Y	X varan Y
X or Y	X vi Y	X veuro Y
X xor Y	X vae Y	X rihan Y
X but not Y	X he nY	X ipe Y

Clauses use a different set of conjunctions:

Table 6.2: Clausal ties.

Tie	Definition
nerta ... nen ...	... and ...
tuusi ... tuusi ...	... or ...
nerta ... kan ...	... but ...
nerta ... haasa ...	... but not ...
siivan ... sivir ...	when ..., ...
irva ... hevi ...	because ..., ...
vin ... vin ...	in order to ..., ...
suu ... suu ...	if ..., then ...

6.1 | Dependent clauses

Dependent clauses are done using the infinitive form. That is, relative clauses are made by modifying the antecedent with a nasal-mutated infinitive:

surna no nakor terne
person ADJ\INF cut-PAST leaf-PL
the person who cut leaves

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Note that only the subject can be relativised. Hence it is necessary to use the passive or applicative form of a verb:

ana no ker nai ne surno
water ADJ\INF PASS drink by person-PL
the water that the people drink

vansa no ker nevei sivi ne kana
cave ADJ\tscinf PASS pray inside by PR.OTHER
the cave in which he prays

Content clauses, thus, are infinitives, possibly in the passive or applicative form, or with objects.

7 | Numbers

Kavinan uses a base-14 system with special words for base 7. The following are the words for the first 14 natural numbers:

Table 7.1: First 14 natural numbers.

# (10)	# (14)	
1	1	kare
2	2	tarpa
3	3	hapan
4	4	pumo
5	5	jata
6	6	suro
7	7	ekin
8	8	akis
9	9	sisne
10	A	kursu
11	B	tortu
12	C	juron
13	D	mantu
14	10	sanpa

The following are the multiples of 7 up to $182 = 13 \cdot 14$:

Table 7.2: Multiples of 7.

# (10)	# (14)	
7	7	ekin
14	10	sanpa
21	17	saporna
28	20	tarpasan
35	27	hapekin
42	30	hapasan
49	37	pumekin

# (10)	# (14)	
56	40	pumosan
63	47	jatekin
70	50	jatasan
77	57	surekin
84	60	surosan
91	67	surpona
98	70	juhorna
105	77	juhorpo
112	80	akisan
119	87	tasanekin
126	90	juhotasan
133	97	havanekin
140	A0	juhohavan
147	A7	puvanekin
154	B0	juhopuvan
161	B7	jasanekin
168	C0	juhojasan
175	C7	jasanorpo
182	D0	junahesan

Thus, numerals of the form $a \cdot 14 + b$, with $1 \leq a \leq 12$ and $0 \leq b < 14$, are formed as such:

Table 7.3: Rules for $a \cdot 14 + b$.

b	
0	$(a \cdot 14)$
1	$(a \cdot 14)$ o kare
2	$(a \cdot 14)$ o tarpa
3	$(a \cdot 14)$ o hapan
4	$(a \cdot 14)$ o pumo
5	$(a \cdot 14)$ o jata
6	$(a \cdot 14 + 7)$ he are
7	$(a \cdot 14 + 7)$
8	$(a \cdot 14 + 7)$ o kare
9	$(a \cdot 14 + 7)$ o tarpa
10	$(a \cdot 14 + 7)$ o hapan
11	$(a \cdot 14 + 14)$ he nhapan
12	$(a \cdot 14 + 14)$ he narpa
13	$(a \cdot 14 + 14)$ he are

The words for $183 \leq n \leq 196$ are formed irregularly:

Table 7.4: Terms for $183 \leq n \leq 196$.

# (10)	# (14)	
183	D1	junaha he mantu
184	D2	junahesan o tarpa
185	D3	junaha he nortu
186	D4	junaha he ursu
187	D5	junaha he nisne
188	D6	junaha he nakis
189	D7	junaha he nekin
190	D8	junaha he nuro
191	D9	junaha he nata
192	DA	junaha he mumo
193	DB	junahesan o tortu
194	DC	junaha he narpa
195	DD	junaha he are
196	100	junaha

The multiples of 196, up to 14^3, are as follows:

Table 7.5: Multiples of 196.

# (10)	# (14)	
196	100	junaha
392	200	tarjuu
588	300	hapaju
784	400	pumoju
980	500	jasiju
1176	600	surjuu
1372	700	ekinuu
1568	800	akisiju
1764	900	sisneju
1960	A00	kursuju
2156	B00	tortaju
2352	C00	juronuu
2548	D00	mantaju
2744	1000	mahervu

Thus, a number $a \times 196 + b$ is expressed as $\langle a \times 196 \ o \ b \rangle$, with the following exceptions:

Table 7.6: Terms for $14^3 - 14 \leq n \leq 14^3 - 1$.

# (10)	# (14)	
2730	DD0	mahervu he nanpa
2731	DD1	mahervu he mantu

# (10)	# (14)	
2732	DD2	mahervu he nanpa o juron
2733	DD3	mahervu he nortu
2734	DD4	mahervu he ursu
2735	DD5	mahervu he nisne
2736	DD6	mahervu he nakis
2737	DD7	mahervu he nekin
2738	DD8	mahervu he nuro
2739	DD9	mahervu he nata
2740	DDA	mahervu he mumo
2741	DDB	mahervu he nanpa o tortu
2742	DDC	mahervu he narpa
2743	DDD	mahervu he are

8 | Names

Kavinan distinguishes *nominal* and *non-nominal* names. Nominal names include the following:

- native surnames

- some native place names

- names of native holidays

Non-nominal names include the following:

- given names

- all foreign names

The particle ⟨voo⟩ (or ⟨moo⟩ with nasal mutation) is often used before names.

Table 8.1: Usage in situations where names are employed.

Role of name	Native	Non-native
Vocative		As-is
Object of ⟨rii⟩	As-is	As-is and drop verb
Object of preposition	As-is	Use ⟨voo⟩
All other cases		Use ⟨voo⟩