

Middle Auma

Writing system

Middle Auma is written with an alphabetic system which has some historical depth in its marking of vowel quality and tone. The orthography does not capture everything so some correspondances between written and pronunciation have to be learned separately. There are, however, some basic principles which can help: The second syllable, by default, is accented, that is, carries the high tone and has a more front and close vowel, but this is complicated by prefixes not being counted and old long vowels stealing the accent. A set of non-initial glyphs, the letters for old geminates, grant the accent onto the syllable preceding them.

Low tone is marked with the same letter as *i* written after the vowel, mostly word-finally.

Phonology

m	n		ɲ <ń>	ŋ					
b	d		ɟ <ǧ>	g				i	i <y>
p	t	ʈ <č̣>		k	ʔ <q>			u	
v	z		ɟ <ž>					ie	ie <ye>
f	s	ʃ <š>	ɛ <ś>	x				ei	ai <ai>
w	l		j					æ <ä>	
	r							ɑ <a>	

Tone, as mentioned above, is a distinguishing element with its three heights.

Recent sound changes have lenited voiced plosives [b, d, g] into [w, r, h] between vowels. These are <w, r, h> in the romanization, but retain the old plosive letters in the native script. Note that, /r/ may also have become /l/ after /r/ which is <l> in the romanization. Additionally, both /g/ and /ŋ/ become /w/ before /u,o/. The specific grapheme for "e/u" is /u/ after (or sometimes before) labial sounds /p,m,b,w/ and /e/ otherwise.

The language underwent a large-scale palatalization process before close front vowels [i, ɪ, y, e, ø]. While the vowel qualities later changed, for example, opening to <e> /e/ and <ä> /æ/, the language came to exhibit paradigms with alterations between these correspondances:

p	b	v, r	t, k	d, g	s, -h	n, m, ŋ	l, w
f	v	ž	č	ǧ	ś	ń	j

The changes are common between verb infinitives and their conjugated forms as well as some singular and plural forms of nouns.

ǧāsä "to live" *ǧāsí* "I live"

Grammar

Verb

The verb is conjugated for two numbers (singular and plural) and three persons as well as two tenses (past and non-past). There are old reduplicated forms which can carry aspectual distinctions but oftentimes have acquired a differing meaning compared to the base verb.

Conjugations (with second-syllable / non-second-syllable variants given if the vowel is differing)

-a	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Present	-ý / -u	-ah*	-	-um	-ieíq / -uq	-aq
Past	-ien	-ieh	-j	-iem	-jäh	-ieh
* for some verbs, the ending can be <i>-úh</i> , and this is given in the dictionary						
-ä	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Present	-í / -y	-jäh / -äh	-	-ím / -ym	-ieíq / -äq	-jáč / -äq
Past	-ien	-ieh	-j	-iem	-jäh	-ieh
-n	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Present	-n	-m*	-	-n	-mýq / -muq	-q
Past	-ń	-ń*	-*	-ń	-ňäh	-h
*changes may appear in the final syllable, and these are given in the dictionary						
-äh	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Present	-än	-äh	-	-äm*	-äh	-äq
Past	-en	-eh	-	-iem*	-ieh	-ieh
* may end in -n, which is then given in dictionary						

The 1PL -m comes from earlier -b while the -q /ʀ/ of other plurals from -t which are still written as they used to be in the native script.

Stem-alteration of verbs ending in **-Cäh** between singular and plural (as well as PST.3SG):

Base C:	t	k	č	∅
Altered C:	z	š / -h	ž / š*	h**
Palatalized:	ž	š / -h	ž / š	h

* depending on the original alteration, 1PL given in the dictionary

** changes in the vowels between base and altered forms, 1PL given in the dictionary

Example: *ečán, ečáh, ečá, ešám, ešáh, ešáq*

Irregular verb **wappe** "to go"

wápä	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Present	gápú	pawú	opú	gápúm	pútäh	opúq
Past	ven	veh	bu	buvám	buváh	buvih

Object focus

The verb can appear in a specific object focus form which appears with initial palatalization and spreading of high tone as well as possible changes in vowel or consonant qualities. Some verbs retain an initial *i*-, especially when the initial consonant would not change under palatalization (see the palatalization table above). The tense suffix is *-ä* for the present and *-n(a)* for the past. The subject is marked with a final possessive suffix (shown below).

<i>talý sih</i>	see-1SG he.ACC	"I see him."
<i>sih čúlánè</i>	he.ACC OFOC\see-OFOC-1SG	"He, I see him."

Copular suffixes

Middle Auma uses a suffix for person-conjugated copula:

<i>nù xäšým</i>	then there-1SG	"I will be there."
<i>jéŋkumo</i>	fisher-1PL	"We are fishers."

The past sense can be signified with *fiwam* and future with *nù*.

	1	2	3
SG	-m	-n	-o
PL	-mo	-nte	-n

The endings take an epenthetic *-e-* to avoid consonant clusters. The third person ending can replace final vowels.

Noun

The noun is declined according to four cases:

nominative	(the base form, vowel elided in declination)
accusative	-(i)q
dative	-(i)e
genitive	-(i)` (low tone and possible change of vowel)

Common vowel changes are between *a<>u*, *a<>o*, *ä<>e*

Plural marking *-(v)u(wa)* is only used for emphasis, and the verb can instead reveal the plural subject.

Adjectives & adverbs

The adjective does not agree with its head and usually follows it. Most adjectives can also be used as adverbs.

Pronoun

The pronouns distinguish singular and plural number and decline according to the same cases as nouns: nominative, accusative, dative and genitive. They can be left out if nominative.

	1SG	2SG	3SG.F	3SG.M	3SG.N
NOM	we	fu	zu	sy	že
ACC	nah	fuh	zyh	sih	ží
DAT	nie	fie	zie	sie	žie
GEN	ńè	fè	žè	sì	žè
	1PL	2PL	3PL		3SG.D
NOM	wuq	vuq	syq		sa
ACC	wuh	vuh	syh		sah
DAT	vie	vučã	syčã		sie
GEN	vè	vù	šãčè		šè

The 3rd person pronouns also distinguish the gender and animacy: F is used for feminine nouns (often ending in ý/u), M is used for masculine (often ending in í/y), N for neuter (many ending in palatalized consonants) and D for divine (often ending in a). The gender of the noun is provided in the dictionary.

Possessive suffixes

Pronominal possession is marked with possessive suffixes on the head, after case and number endings.

	1	2	3
SG	-nè	-fò	-*
PL	-vè	-vù	-čè

* Pronouns in genitive case may be used, especially if the noun has attributes.

If the possessor is the prominent subject, the ownership can be marked with *-ì* for all persons:

talý kašì see-1SG house-OWN "I see my house."

Demonstratives

	NOM	ACC	DAT	GEN
this	čy	či	kie	čì
that	xi	xih	xie	xì

Reflexive

The reflexive pronoun *u* can become suffixed to a verb to mark that the target of the action was oneself. As a possessive clitic, it is *ì* and marks the prominent topic or subject as the possessor.

Derivational affixes

-mä augmentative

-su concept, abstract quality

bä- conditionality, if something is done

i- / j- possibility, something can/could be done (depends on the verb's consonant-/vowel-initiality)

Syntax

The language is rather head-initial with subject-verb-object and verb-subject-object primary orders and adjectives, genitives and relative clauses following their head. Sometimes the focused element can be placed in front of the verb. Auma's adpositions are almost entirely prepositions, with the only exception of terminative *cu* being a postposition. Prepositions also govern a case that is specified in the dictionary.

Possession and accompaniment

In addition to possessive suffixes, there are other ways of marking possession. For one, nominal possession is usually marked with dative:

mańákie kaś baker-DAT house "The baker's house" / "The baker has a house"

Clitic *-š* marks nominal possession or something being part of something else if the connection is not strong enough to posit the use of actual genitive. The marked element is usually the one that contains:

ašýš ĵiédy land-š mountain "The land of mountains"

pačí ĵiédaš zaná tower tall-š door "The door of the tall tower"

The clitic sometimes marks accompaniment and can have comitative uses:

nujáš ín soup-š bread "Soup and bread"

Dependent clause

The relative form is used for dependent clauses: *-(h)tä* for present tense and *-na* for past tense. It works as a backgrounding element or adds information to the topic:

talý sih luhätä íniq see-1SG he-ACC carry-REL bread-ACC "I saw him carrying bread."
/ who was carrying

Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ACC	accusative
D	divine
DAT	dative
F	feminine
GEN	genitive
M	masculine
N	neuter
NOM	nominative
PL	plural
PST	past
SG	singular

Lexicon

áka	steadfast, strong
an	to raise, build, erect
aší^D	country, empire, nation
ašý wazyéh	to make a plan, plot, scheme
býn^D	flow (of energy), magic, spell
býn čání	to cast a spell, do something using magic [lit. "to touch it flowing"]
bäkútu^F	community, family, garden, yard
cýn	there is
čun	annoy, irritate [PST.3SG či]
daman	to grow, spring
dyé^F	soldier
dänytäh	to discuss, speak to someone [PST.3SG dänytä]
eíwu^F	core, heart, key, magic, nucleus, spirit
fağä	safe, in safety, secured
fajän	to attract someone (romantically, sexually) [PST.3SG faji]
fiwam	before (that), back then
fu ... fi	either ... or
fáka	to give, hand, offer, pass, serve
fäwan	to live somewhere [PST.3SG fäwé]
gan	let's (do something), shall
gäččá	extent, measure
gäfápä	to go away, leave
ǵí^D	person, people [PL wú]
ǵása	to feel, live
jieh	to carry, have, own [1PL luhám]
jieh	to know (something), remember [1PL lähám]
kam uwa	when
kaś^N	house
koč	by, near, on the side of + NOM
ku	as, like + GEN
kúhtu^F	forest, wilderness
kúma	to do, work

kyétu^F	tree, wood
kä^D	sign, plate
käčiente	avoiding something, keeping away from
käku^F	bearer, owner, user
känán	to consider something to be something
kánúnan	to approach, meet
lákwe^D	leader, ruler, queen
latú^F	foot, leg
läčáku	nomad, walker
máhtä^D	animal, being, creature
no	and
nù	so, then
náčán	to take
nípa^D	name
nípukäh	to call something with a name
ńisu^F	son, grandson
ŋaču^F	belonging somewhere, companionship, home, roots
oku	(not) anymore
pajǎ	long; interesting, varied
pavún	to say, speak
pús^N	member of an organization, servant, subject
pyjá^D	average person, citizen
pása	to pay
pásá^D	money, payment
rahè	a lot, many, much
rala	all, each, every
ramáí	everyone
ranú^D	planet, waking reality, world
súrāna	known (by someone), recognized
swejiéh	to bring
šieýkäh	to exhibit, to put up for sale
šāru	using, with (an instrument)
še	no, not
šučí^M	fur
šāfi^M	beast

tase	but, however
tašyé^D	border, edge, rim
újä	bright, pure, white
uňána	to hide (something), keep a secret; to be selfish
wáčen	to go by foot, walk
wò	because, for
wošúkäh	to put under
wu	already
wučí^M	sword, dagger
xašai	honest, righteous
xäšy	there
zúra	how
záču	a, one of many
zi	any, at all
än	same
ära	to care about, to value [PST.3SG äre]
ära^D	deity, god (immortal)