

# **BAMALI ORTHOGRAPHY STATEMENT**

By

**ACHOTIA BRIDGET IBIETIE**

With

SIL Mentor: HEDINGER ROBERT  
Contributors: MBEGHAM MATHIAS  
TALOH DONATUS

**The National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees (NACALCO)  
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# BAMALI ORTHOGRAPHY GUIDE

*By*

**ACHOTIA BRIDGET**  
DR HEDINGER ROBERT  
MR MBEGHAM MATHIAS  
MR TALOH DONATUS

## 1 Introduction

This paper proposes an orthography for Bamali (Chopechop), a Grassfields Bantu (Mbam-Nkam, Nun) language spoken by about 5,300 people (1982). Bamali is located in the South of the Ndop Plain in the Central Sub-Division of Ngoketunjia Division of the North West Province, Republic of Cameroon. Bamali does not have dialectal differences but is related to Bafanji, Bambalang, Bamukumbit, Bangolan and Bamenyam. No linguistic work has ever been done on this language. We used the General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages (Tadadjeu Maurice and Sadembouo Etienne (eds.) 1979) as a reference document for the graphemes.

## 2 Alphabet

The Bamali segmental alphabet is made up of [21] consonants and [10] vowels. They are represented below in upper and lower cases:

A a, B b, Ch ch, D d, E e, E ε, E ə, F f, G g, Gb gb, Gh gh, H h, I i, I i, J j, K k, ' ', L l, M m, N n, Ny ny, Ŋ ŋ, O o, Ø ø, O ɔ, P p, Sh sh, T t, U u, W w, Y y.

### 2.1 Consonants

The consonant phonemes, their allophones and graphemes are presented in Table I below. We also show their use in various positions in the word.

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial Position	Final position
/p/	[p]	P p	<b>p̂</b> <i>arm, hand</i>	<b>nəp̂</b> <i>egg</i>	<b>kup</b> <i>basket</i>
	[p <sup>h</sup> ] <sup>1</sup>		<b>p̂nə</b> <i>return</i>	<b>nəp̂n</b> <i>breast</i>	—
/t/	[t]	T t	<b>tê</b> <i>father</i>	<b>nət̂ŋ</b> <i>navel</i>	<b>kət</b> <i>leg, foot</i>
	[t <sup>h</sup> ]		<b>tí</b> <i>tree</i>	<b>mət̂in</b> <i>irons</i>	—
/k/	[k]	K k	<b>koo</b> <i>bed</i>	<b>nək̂iŋ</b> <i>pot</i>	—
	[k <sup>h</sup> ]		<b>k̂ip</b> <i>shell s.th.</i>	—	—

<sup>1</sup> Aspirated [p<sup>h</sup>,t<sup>h</sup>,k<sup>h</sup>] are always written as simple **p,t,k** respectively.

<sup>2</sup> s.th. something

/ʔ/	[ʔ]	ʔ ʔ	—	<b>fà'a</b> <i>work</i>	<b>yô'</b> <i>plantain</i>
/gb/	[gb]	Gb gb	<b>gbaaŋ</b> <i>hit, beat</i>	—	—
/tʃ /	[tʃ]	Ch ch	<b>chə</b> <i>chew</i>	<b>məchǒp</b> <i>news</i>	—
/f/	[f]	F f	<b>fī</b> <i>blind person</i>	<b>nəfâ</b> <i>twin</i>	—
/ʃ/	[ʃ]	Sh sh	<b>shàt</b> <i>cap, hat</i>	<b>nəshè</b> <i>grave</i>	—
/ɣ/	[ɣ]	Gh gh	<b>ghêt</b> <i>ring</i>	<b>nəghə'</b> <i>jaw</i>	—
/h/	[h]	H h	<b>hà'a</b> <i>give</i>	<b>shàhaŋ</b> <i>here</i>	<b>yăh</b> <i>sprinkle</i>
/m/	[m]	M m	<b>mələt</b> <i>groundnut</i>	<b>nyimnə</b> <i>claw, nail</i>	<b>shàm</b> <i>comb (n)</i>
/n/	[n]	N n	<b>nô</b> <i>snake</i>	<b>tanə</b> <i>jump</i>	<b>ghin</b> <i>mortar</i>
/ɲ/	[ɲ]	Ny ny	<b>nyɛ</b> <i>prepare food</i>	—	—
/ŋ/	[ŋ]	Ŋ ŋ	<b>ŋə</b> <i>person</i>	<b>nkòŋnə</b> <i>love</i>	<b>nəshəŋ</b> <i>fish trap</i>
/l/	[l]	L l	<b>lī</b> <i>name</i>	<b>kulôŋ</b> <i>lizard</i>	—
/w/	[w]	W w	<b>wě</b> <i>laugh, smile</i>	<b>məwě</b> <i>hail</i>	—
	[ɥ] <sup>3</sup>		<b>nwi</b> <i>god</i>	<b>chélwilwī</b> <i>gall bladder</i>	—
/j/	[j] ~ [ʒ] <sup>4</sup>	Y y	<b>yô</b> <i>thing</i>	<b>məyi'</b> <i>pretend</i>	<b>wăy</b> <i>catch</i>

### 2.1.1 Prenasalized Consonants

One kind of consonant cluster found in Bamali consists of clusters where the first consonant is a nasal consonant that is pronounced at the same place of articulation as the following consonant. Quite a few consonants may be preceded by such homorganic nasal consonants, as in the following chart:

Consonant Cluster	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/mb/	[mb]	Mb mb	<b>mbà</b> <i>meat, flesh</i>	<b>məmbī</b> <i>goat</i>	—
/nt/	[nt]	Nt nt	<b>ntât</b> <i>waist</i>	<b>nəntī</b> <i>claw, nail</i>	—
/nd/	[nd]	Nd nd	<b>nde</b> <i>throat</i>	<b>mèndôŋ</b> <i>cups</i>	—

<sup>3</sup> The sound [ɥ] before i is always written as w.

<sup>4</sup> The sounds [j] and [ʒ] are interchangeable and are always written with y.

/ŋk/	[ŋk]	Nk nk	<b>nkù'</b> <i>elephantiasis</i>	<b>nènkát</b> <i>raffia palm</i>	—
/ŋg/	[ŋg]	Ng ng	<b>ngát</b> <i>gun</i>	<b>məngú</b> <i>fowl</i>	—
/ntʃ/	[ntʃ]	Nch nch	<b>nchǒp</b> <i>leopard</i>	<b>mènychòt</b> <i>mouths</i>	—
/ndʒ/	[ndʒ]	Nj nj	<b>nǒp</b> <i>vegetable</i>	<b>mənjít</b> <i>sheep</i>	—

### 2.1.1 Palatalized Consonants

Another kind of consonant cluster is where the second consonant is the palatal glide [j], which is always written in Bamali as "y". A few consonants may be followed by this glide, as in the following chart:

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/kʲ/	[kʲ]	Ky ky	<b>kyè'</b> <i>torch</i>	<b>pàkyè'</b> <i>torches</i>	—
/tʃʲ/	[tʃʲ]	Chy chy	<b>chyè'ètə</b> <i>greet</i>	—	—
/ʎʲ/	[ʎʲ]	Ghy ghy	<b>ghyě</b> <i>invite</i>	—	—
/fʲ/	[fʲ]	Fy fy	<b>fyèhètə</b> <i>explain</i>	—	—
/ʃʲ/	[ʃʲ]	Shy shy	<b>shyè'ε</b> <i>a small hole</i>	<b>nèshyêŋ</b> <i>star</i>	—
/mbʲ/	[mbʲ]	Mby mby	<b>mbyênà</b> <i>males</i>	—	—
/mʲ/	[mʲ]	My my	<b>myè'ε</b> <i>throw away</i>	—	—
/ngʲ/	[ngʲ]	Ngy ngy	—	<b>məngyee</b> <i>small fishes</i>	—

### 2.1.2 Labialized Consonants

The last kind of consonant cluster is where the second consonant is the labiovelar glide [w], which is always written in Bamali as "w". Quite a few consonants may be followed by this glide, as in the following chart:

Consonant Cluster	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/pʷ/	[pʷ]	Pw pw	<b>pwǎ</b> <i>ankle ring</i>	<b>nèpwà'ə</b> <i>pumpkin</i>	—
/tʷ/	[tʷ]	Tw tw	<b>twè'</b> <i>support</i>	—	—
/kʷ/	[kʷ]	Kw kw	<b>kwet</b> <i>take</i>	<b>mèkwô</b> <i>semen</i>	—

/tʃʷ/	[tʃʷ]	Chw chw	<b>chwa</b> <i>snatch</i>	—	—
/fʷ/	[fʷ]	Fw fw	<b>fwǎ</b> <i>ferment</i>	—	—
/ʃʷ/	[ʃʷ]	Shw shw	<b>shwǎ</b> <i>frog</i>	<b>pəshwǎ</b> <i>frogs</i>	—
/mʷ/	[mʷ]	Mw mw	<b>mwâ</b> <i>child</i>	—	—
/nʷ/	[nʷ]	Nw nw	<b>nwǎ</b> <i>put, keep</i>	—	—
/ŋʷ/	[ŋʷ]	ŋw ŋw	<b>ŋwà'ànə</b> <i>book</i>	<b>pəŋwà'ànə</b> <i>books</i>	—
/mbʷ/	[mbʷ]	Mbw mbw	<b>mbwəhənə</b> <i>respect</i>	—	—
/ndʷ/	[ndʷ]	Ndw ndw	<b>ndwěn</b> <i>hammer</i>	<b>məndwěn</b> <i>hammers</i>	—
/ndʒʷ/	[ndʒʷ]	Njw njw	<b>njwê</b> <i>whistle</i>	<b>mənjwê</b> <i>whistles</i>	—
/ŋkʷ/	[ŋkʷ]	Nkw nkʷ	<b>nkʷə'</b> <i>bridge</i>	<b>mənkʷə'</b> <i>bridges</i>	—
/ŋgʷ/	[ŋgʷ]	Ngw ngw	<b>ngwâŋ</b> <i>salt</i>	—	—
/lʷ/	[lʷ]	Lw lw	<b>lwənə</b> <i>mourning</i>	—	—
/jʷ/	[jʷ]	Yw yw	<b>ywe'</b> <i>taste, learn</i>	—	—

### 2.1.2 “Velarised” Consonants

There is another consonant modification apparently only occurring after alveolar and alveo-palatal consonants and before ə.<sup>5</sup>

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/lɥ/	[lɥ]	Lÿ lÿ	<b>lÿǎ</b> <i>store up</i>	—	—
/tɥ/	[tɥ]	Tÿ tÿ	<b>tÿǎ</b> <i>calabash</i>	—	—
/ʃɥ/	[ʃɥ]	shÿ shÿ	<b>shÿə</b> <i>faint</i>	—	—
/tʃɥ/	[tʃɥ]	Tÿ tÿ	<b>chÿə</b> <i>arrive</i>	—	—
/ndʒɥ/	[ndʒɥ]	Njÿ njÿ	<b>njÿə</b> <i>dream</i>	—	—

<sup>5</sup> The limited distribution of this raises the suspicion that this may not be a full phoneme. Needs to be confirmed.

### 2.1.3 Consonant Orthography Rules

Various rules on which consonants can occur in which positions or which can occur before and after other consonants are important to learn. Here is a partial list of consonant orthography rules:

1. Never write "b" without an "m" in front of it.
2. Never write "d" without an "n" in front of it
3. Never write "g" without an "n" in front of it.
4. Never write "j" without an "n" in front of it
5. Never write " ' " word-initially.
6. The only consonants that can be word-final are "m", "n", "ŋ", "t", "p", "'", "h" and "y"
7. Never write "zh". If you hear "zh", write "y".
8. If you hear a nasal consonant before "k", "g" or "j" always write "n".

## 2.2 Vowels

### 2.2.1 Short vowels

The Bamali language has [10] vowel phonemes, presented with their allophones and proposed graphemes in Table II (a) below. The sounds are shown as they occur in different positions of the word.

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/i/	[i]	I I	—	<b>yip</b> <i>open</i>	<b>mî</b> <i>face</i>
/e/	[e]	E e	—	<b>kwe'</b> <i>spy (v)</i>	<b>che</b> <i>urinate</i>
/ɛ/	[ɛ]	Ɛ ɛ	—	<b>nêŋ</b> <i>body</i>	<b>pɛ</b> <i>pick up</i>
/i/	[i]	I i	—	<b>mə̀lìn</b> <i>beard, saliva</i>	<b>shî</b> <i>shame</i>
/ø/	[ø]	Ø ø	—	<b>ghòghè</b> <i>weaver bird</i>	<b>nə̀ntø</b> <i>palm tree</i>
/ə/	[ə]	Ə ə	<b>ə</b> <i>yes</i>	<b>kət</b> <i>dance</i>	<b>fə</b> <i>blow</i>
/a/	[a]	A a	<b>a</b> <i>he, she, it</i>	<b>pàt</b> <i>mad person</i>	<b>nka</b> <i>grass</i>
/u/	[u]	U u	—	<b>kup</b> <i>forest</i>	<b>shû</b> <i>fish</i>
/o/	[o]	O o	<b>ɔ</b> <i>you (sg.)</i>	<b>lonə</b> <i>healthy</i>	<b>ko</b> <i>touch</i>
/ɔ/	[ɔ]	Ɔ ɔ	—	<b>mbə̀n</b> <i>squirrel</i>	<b>tî</b> <i>head</i>

**Table II (a): Short Vowels**

### 2.2.2 Long vowels

There are also long vowels in the Bamali language. All short vowels have their long counterparts. The phonemes are presented with their allophones and proposed graphemes

in Table II (b) below. The sounds are shown as they occur in different positions of the word.

Phoneme	Allophone	Grapheme	Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/i/	[i:]	Ii ii	—	<b>nìnə</b> <i>movement</i>	<b>mbii</b> <i>mosquito</i>
/e/	[e:]	Ee ee	—	<b>kweetᵔ</b> <i>skull</i>	<b>kwee</b> <i>bone</i>
/ɛ/	[ɛ:]	Ɛɛ ɛɛ	—	<b>twɛɛŋ</b> <i>bury</i>	<b>yɛɛ</b> <i>abundant</i>
/i/	[i:]	Īī īī	—	<b>pìnnə</b> <i>return</i>	<b>nəmīī</b> <i>proverb</i>
/ø/	[ø:]	Øø øø	—	<b>kòøᵔ</b> <i>act, do, stir</i>	<b>ghòø</b> <i>lake</i>
/ə/	[ə:]	Əə əə	—	<b>ləəŋ</b> <i>horse</i>	—
/a/	[a:]	Aa aa	—	<b>kaaŋ</b> <i>fry</i>	<b>kaa</b> <i>rest, tired</i>
/u/	[u:]	Uu uu	—	<b>shùutàŋ</b> <i>tendon</i>	<b>fuu</b> <i>cockroach</i>
/ɔ/	[ɔ:]	Ɔɔ ɔɔ	—	<b>nəlɔŋ</b> <i>music</i>	<b>kɔɔ</b> <i>crab</i>
/o/	[o:]	Oo oo	—	<b>chòonə</b> <i>meet</i>	<b>koo</b> <i>bed</i>

**Table II (b): Long Vowels**

Most long vowels at medial positions are either followed by velar nasal -ŋ, a suffix -nə or they are found in compound words.

### 2.2.3 Vowel Orthography Rules

This will be decided only after considerable further research has been done in the language.

So far we have identified five phonetic pitches in Bamali: i.e. 3 level pitches high [á], mid [ā] and low [à]; and 2 contour pitches, rising [ǎ], and high-falling [â]. Phonologically these pitches come from two underlying level pitches: High and low.

## 2.3 Lexical Tone Contrasts Marked by Diacritics

As of this point in time, we have discovered numerous minimal tone pairs for words that contrast high tone, rising tone, falling tone and low tone. Because there are no minimal tone pairs between mid and high, mid and low, mid and rising and mid and falling tones, we propose an orthography where only low, together with rising and falling tones are marked by diacritics and the high and mid tones are not marked. (It is common orthographic practice to indicate one of the well-attested contrastive tones by specifically omitting to mark a diacritic over the vowel.) Since at the moment we have not found any long vowels with rising or falling tones, we propose that low tones be marked on the first vowel and no high or mid should be marked. Again, no tone whatsoever should be marked on the second vowel in a series of vowels. Tones should only be marked on the first vowel. See the chart below:

Tone	Phonetic	Grapheme (Diacritic)	Examples	Frequency
High	[á]	a	<b>tu</b> <i>shoot</i>	very many nouns and verbs
	[á:]	aa	<b>kɔɔ</b> <i>crab</i>	very many nouns and verbs
	[ā]	a	<b>həŋ</b> <i>where</i>	rare
Low	[à]	à	<b>fī</b> <i>blind person</i>	many nouns
	[à:]	àa	<b>nòɔ</b> <i>animal, month</i>	many nouns
Rising	[ǎ]	ǎ	<b>mǐ</b> <i>swallow</i>	many verbs, few nouns
High-falling	[â]	â	<b>fǒ</b> <i>boundary</i>	many nouns, few verbs

**Table III:** Bamali Lexical Tones

Our proposal is to write all Bamali words as they occur in isolation (i.e. as they occur when pronounced by themselves), and it is these forms that will be written in the lexicon. Bamali speakers should have no problem reading or pronouncing the actual phonetic pitch of all the words in a sentence once they recognize the meanings of the individual words that make up that sentence.

It is fairly easy to find Bamali words where the only difference between them is tone. For example, note the minimal tone pairs below between the four contrastive tones:

- |     |             |        |                        |            |       |                              |
|-----|-------------|--------|------------------------|------------|-------|------------------------------|
| (1) | <b>nga</b>  | [ŋgá]  | <i>no</i>              | <b>yô'</b> | [yôʔ] | <i>plantains</i>             |
|     | <b>ngâ</b>  | [ŋgâ]  | <i>guest, stranger</i> | <b>yɔ'</b> | [yóʔ] | <i>hear</i>                  |
| (2) | <b>kwìt</b> | [kwìt] | <i>heap, herd (n)</i>  | <b>fòt</b> | [fòt] | <i>he-goat</i>               |
|     | <b>kwǐt</b> | [kwǐt] | <i>throw away</i>      | <b>fót</b> | [fót] | <i>mouse</i>                 |
| (3) | <b>mî</b>   | [mî]   | <i>face</i>            | <b>nyɛ</b> | [ɲé]  | <i>prepare food</i>          |
|     | <b>mǐ</b>   | [mǐ]   | <i>swallow</i>         | <b>nyě</b> | [ɲě]  | <i>tendrils</i>              |
| (4) | <b>shî</b>  | [ʃî]   | <i>today, valley</i>   | <b>fǒ</b>  | [fǒ]  | <i>medicine</i>              |
|     | <b>shǐ</b>  | [ʃǐ]   | <i>deep, vein</i>      | <b>fǒ</b>  | [fǒ]  | <i>boundary</i>              |
|     | <b>shɪ</b>  | [ʃɪ]   | <i>black, dirty</i>    | <b>fɔ</b>  | [fó]  | <i>truth</i>                 |
| (5) | <b>tu</b>   | [tú]   | <i>shoot</i>           | <b>kâ</b>  | [kâ]  | <i>what?</i>                 |
|     | <b>tǔ</b>   | [tǔ]   | <i>spit, grunt</i>     | <b>kə</b>  | [kó]  | <i>small, thin</i>           |
| (6) | <b>hǐ</b>   | [hǐ]   | <i>sweet</i>           | <b>lòo</b> | [lò:] | <i>dry season</i>            |
|     | <b>hî</b>   | [hî]   | <i>tongue</i>          | <b>loo</b> | [lò:] | <i>bite(v), full</i>         |
| (7) | <b>nkaa</b> | [ŋká:] | <i>monkey</i>          | <b>păt</b> | [păt] | <i>carry (child) on back</i> |

	<b>nkàa</b> [ŋkà:]	<i>basket for groundnuts</i>	<b>pât</b> [pât]	<i>mad person</i>
(8)	<b>chu</b> [tʃú]	<i>say</i>	<b>lí</b> [lí]	<i>name</i>
	<b>chǔ</b> [tʃǔ]	<i>whisper(v)</i>	<b>lǐ</b> [lǐ]	<i>relative</i>
(9)	<b>shòt</b> [ʃót]	<i>enter</i>	<b>shô</b> [ʃô]	<i>pimple</i>
	<b>shôt</b> [ʃôt]	<i>hoe</i>	<b>shǒ</b> [ʃǒ]	<i>saw(n), wash(v)</i>
	<b>shǒt</b> [ʃǒt]	<i>undress</i>		
(10)	<b>pân</b> [pân]	<i>fufu corn</i>	<b>nên</b> [nên]	<i>body</i>
	<b>păn</b> [păn]	<i>hate(v)</i>	<b>năn</b> [năn]	<i>teach or show</i>

As mentioned above, there are no tone pairs that contrast mid and high, mid and low, mid and rising, and mid and falling tones.

### Some Tonal Processes

In some Bamali phrase constructions, there are some tonal changes that occur because another word with a different tone is around it. This word may be a preceding or following word. As we earlier said, when you are faced with such a situation, write the word as it is pronounced in isolation. Do this with nouns only. Feel free to pronounce the word with the changes but make sure you write word as when it is in isolation. The following examples are just a sample of such changes. You will come across many others.

<i><b>Pronounce this</b></i>		<i><b>write this</b></i>	
<b>shàt</b>	‘cap’		
<b>pàshàt</b>	‘caps’		
<b>pàshǎt m̀</b>	‘my caps’	<b>pàshàt m̀</b>	‘my caps’
<b>shô</b>	‘hoe’		
<b>pàshô</b>	‘hoes’		
<b>pàshǒt m̀</b>	‘my hoes’	<b>pàshô m̀</b>	‘my hoes’

## 2.4 Grammatical Meanings Marked by Diacritics

No analysis of tone in the grammatical system of Bamali has been done yet. Therefore no proposals as to how grammatical tone should be written can be made at this point.

## 3 Word Division

There are a number of compound words in Bamali. That is, words that consist of more than one or two words. Our proposal is that these roots should not be separated. See the examples below:

<b>fǒti</b>	‘leaf’
<b>chěndwi</b>	‘pocket’
<b>ghetnètônə</b>	‘earring’
<b>kǒndôp</b>	‘wall of house’
<b>kòttô</b>	‘head pad’

<b>kweeshú</b>	‘fish bone’
<b>ghòpnəpǒ</b>	‘egg shell’
<b>fungwàshaan</b>	‘corn husk’

But family relationship words will typically be separated with a hyphen to avoid lengthy, hard to read words. Note the following examples.

<b>ndì-ndômà-yì-məngwè</b>	‘sister-in-law’
<b>ndĩ-tyěmà-yì-mbyênə</b>	‘father’s brother (uncle)’
<b>ndĩ-mâmà-yì-məngwè</b>	‘mother’s sister (aunt)’

In some other cases, that is, in phrase construction, some words completely change their consonants, vowels and tones. See the following examples:

<i><b>Pronounce this</b></i>		<i><b>Write this</b></i>	
<b>shat</b>	‘cap’		
<b>shàl ɛ̃</b>	‘his cap’	<b>shàt yǐ</b>	‘his cap’
<b>shàl ɔ̃</b>	‘your (sg <sup>6</sup> ) cap’	<b>shàt ghò</b>	‘your (sg) cap’

Again, as we proposed that you write the word as in isolation, pronounce the [l] but write the /t/.

In another situation, some vowels follow other vowels directly and though they stand for a word, the pronunciation is linked. Never write these changing vowels. But you can pronounce them. See these examples below:

<i><b>Pronounce this</b></i>		<i><b>Write this</b></i>	
<b>məngû ɪ̃</b>	‘his fowl’	<b>məngû yǐ</b>	‘his fowl’
<b>məngû û</b>	‘your fowl’	<b>məngû ghò</b>	‘your fowl’
<b>fĩ ɪ̃</b>	‘his bracelet’	<b>fĩ yǐ</b>	‘his bracelet’
<b>fĩ û</b>	‘your bracelet’	<b>fĩ ghò</b>	‘your bracelet’
<b>lĩ ɪ̃</b>	‘his tongue’	<b>lĩ yǐ</b>	‘his tongue’
<b>lĩ û</b>	‘your tongue’	<b>lĩ ghò</b>	‘your tongue’
<b>nde ɛ̃</b>	‘his throat’	<b>nde yǐ</b>	‘his throat’
<b>nde ô</b>	‘your throat’	<b>nde ghò</b>	‘your throat’
<b>ghòø ɛ̃</b>	‘his lake’	<b>ghò yǐ</b>	‘his lake’
<b>ghòø ô</b>	‘your lake’	<b>ghò ghò</b>	‘your lake’
<b>koo ɛ̃</b>	‘his bed’	<b>koo yǐ</b>	‘his bed’
<b>koo ô</b>	‘your bed’	<b>koo ghò</b>	‘your bed’
<b>pa ǎy</b>	‘his baboon’	<b>pa yǐ</b>	‘his baboon’
<b>pa ò</b>	‘your baboon’	<b>pa ghò</b>	‘your baboon’
<b>kup bĩ</b>	‘his basket’	<b>kup yǐ</b>	‘his basket’
<b>kup bĩ</b>	‘your basket’	<b>kup yǐ</b>	‘your basket’

There are a lot of these cases. Remember that “his” or “her” is **yǐ** and “your sg.” is **ghò**. Do not mix up the various changing vowel sounds.

Also when a word ends in a velar nasal consonant **ŋ**, this nasality affects the following vowel. For example:

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<sup>6</sup> sg. Singular

### ***Pronounce this***

**nəshǒŋ** ‘tooth’  
**nəshǒŋ ǎŋ** ‘his tooth’  
**nəshǒŋ ǔŋ** ‘your tooth’

### ***Write this***

**nəshǒŋ yĩ** ‘his tooth’  
**nəshǒŋ ghò** ‘his tooth’

As usual, do not write the **ŋ** in **yĩ** or **ghò**.

### **Verbs**

Verbs will be studied later but for now, we are proposing a rule that, the PST marker **-nə** be attached to the verb than kept in isolation because it will contrast with **-nə** that stands for ‘and’ or ‘with’. Equally, we should not separate the infinitive **-nə** from the verb. It should be written together. See examples below:

### **The simple past tense “nə”**

#### **Write this**

**nənji** ‘ate’  
**nəcha’a** ‘borrowed’  
**nənde** ‘slept’  
**nəti** ‘choked’  
**nəkǎt** ‘danced’  
**nəni** ‘came’

#### **Do not write this**

**nə nji** ‘ate’  
**nə cha’a** ‘borrowed’  
**nə nde** ‘slept’  
**nə ti** ‘choke’  
**nəkǎt** ‘danced’  
**nə ni** ‘came’

### **The infinitive “to”**

<b>məyi nə</b> ‘to eat’	<b>mə yi nə</b> ‘to eat’
<b>məcha’anə</b> ‘to borrow’	<b>mə cha’a nə</b> ‘to borrow’
<b>mələ nə</b> ‘to sleep’	<b>mə le nə</b> ‘to sleep’
<b>mətinə</b> ‘to choke’	<b>mə ti nə</b> ‘to choke’
<b>məkǎtnə</b> ‘to dance’	<b>mə kǎt nə</b> ‘to dance’
<b>mənĩ nə</b> ‘to come’	<b>mə ni nə</b> ‘to come’

## **4 Elision**

The area of elision needs study before proposals can be made as to how words should be written when vowels and/or consonants drop out at word boundaries.

## **5 Punctuation and Capitalisation**

The punctuation marks and the rules that govern the Bamali language are the same as those for English. The punctuation marks used for Bamali are therefore as follows:

- 1) Full stop (.)
- 2) Question mark (?)
- 3) Exclamation mark (!)
- 4) Comma (,)
- 5) Colon (:)
- 6) Semicolon (;)
- 7) Quotation marks (“ ... ”) and (‘ ... ’)

## 5.1 Full Stop

The full stop (.) in Bamali marks the end of a declarative sentence.

**Yò'òmbí ngǒ mbwə'àngǒ.**

Yombi go farm

*Yombi is going to the farm.*

**Mambôt p̄inə mət̄aa.**

Mambot return market

*Mambot has returned from the market.*

## 5.2 Question Mark

The question mark (?) marks the end of an interrogative sentence.

**Ǫ lǒ hǎ?**

you from where

*Where are you from?*

**A nyě kô?**

she cook what

*What is she cooking?*

## 5.3 Exclamation Mark

The exclamation mark is written at the end of a command, or it is placed following exclamatory words or phrases. It functions to express interjections, surprises, excitement, and forceful comments as well as simple commands; as below.

**Tèh yǐ!**

allow him

*Allow him!*

**Ǫ yô!**

you see

*You see!*

**Kǎy li'ì chwênə nən!**

She not do so

*She should not do that!*

## 5.4 Comma

Commas are used to separate clauses or parallel words within a clause, as below:

**Tê ghǒ lǎng mət̄b', à ka ghǒ wǎy shú.**

father go tap wine he not go catch fish

*Father has gone to tap wine, he has not gone to catch fish.*

**Pǎ p̄i'i nyě p̄ân, mət̄kô, nə yô'.**

we PST<sup>7</sup> cooked fufucorn, rice and plantains

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<sup>7</sup> PST Past tense

*We prepared fufu corn, rice and plantain.*

## 5.5 Quotation Marks

Quotation marks (“ ... ”) occur at the beginning and end of direct speech, as below:

**Màma pihinə, “Ō pì'i chə həŋ?”**  
mother asked you PST were where  
*Mother asked, “Where were you?”*

Note: In English and Bamali, other punctuation marks always precede quotation marks when they occur next to each other.

## 5.6 Capitalisation

Capital letters are used at the beginning of sentences, for proper nouns, and after a colon.

First word in a sentence:

**Ngwǎ ngǒ ndâ Nwì shî.**  
I.will go house God today  
*I will go to church today.*

Proper nouns:

**Yě nənǰə, Tenkê', Pû nə Lǒngàŋ.**  
Yeh saw Tenkeh Puh and Longang  
*Yeh saw Tenkeh, Puh, and Longang.*

After a colon:

**Ta'à nǔ fɔ̃: À lən.**  
one thing true he intelligent  
*One thing is true: He is intelligent.*

## 6 Need for further testing of the orthography

Any new orthography needs people to use it for a time before potential problems reveal themselves. It is our hope that this proposal will be a significant first step in allowing people to start reading and writing the language.

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