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A GRAMMAR OF MODERN

BALAK

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

1P	first person plural	INDF	indefinite
1S	first person singular	INF	infinitive
2P	second person plural	IPFV	imperfective
2S	second person singular	LOC	locative case
3I	third person inanimate	NEG	negative
3P	third person plural	NOM	nominative
3PA	third person animate plural	NPST	non-past
3S	third person singular	NWIT	non-witnessed evidential
3SA	third person animate singular	OBL	oblique case
3	third person	PASS	passive
ACC	accusative case	PERF	perfect
ADV	adverbial	PFV	perfective
DEF	definite	PL	plural
DEM	demonstrative	POSS	possessive
DIRE	direct evidentiality	POST	postpositional case
DIST	distal	PPFV	past perfective
DR	direct case	PRES	present
E	epenthetic	PROH	prohibitive
GER	gerund	PST	past
HSY	hearsay evidential	QMT	qumta vowel
IDRE	indirect evidentiality	REFL	reflexive
IMP	imperative	SG	singular
IMPER	impersonal	∅	null morpheme

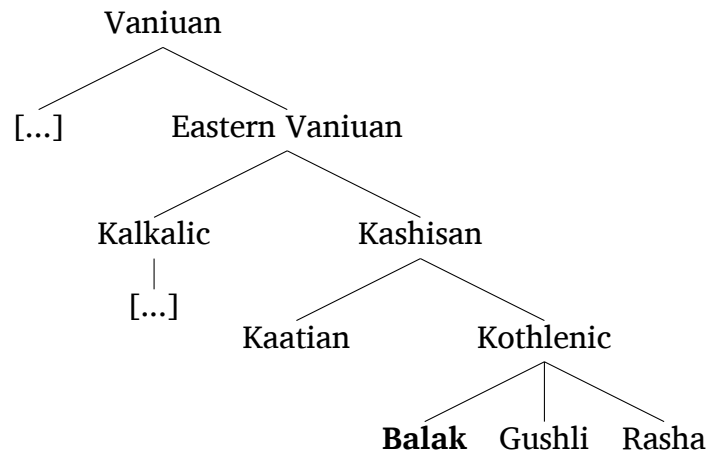
Part I

INTRODUCTION TO THE BALAK LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The linguistic relationship of Balak

Balak is a Vaniuan language spoken by around 90 million people, primarily in eastern Vaniua, but also in pockets in western Parshita and Puzimm. It is the primary official language in Balakia and Kunjut, and a prominent minority language in Sonka (although not officially recognised). Balak is a part of the Eastern branch of the Vaniuan languages, more specifically the Kashisan subbranch; it is most closely related to the Gushli, Rasha, and Kaatian languages, more distantly related to the Koman language, and even more so to other Vaniuan languages such as Shohuanese. The language derives its name from that of the Balak people, whose ethnonym ultimately descends from the name of the historical figure *Balâhak*, founder of the Kothlen Empire in the 9th Century AD.



1.2 Characteristic features of Balak

Balak retains numerous characteristics typical of the Vaniuan language family, such as a generally head-final word order, and a standard Eastern Vaniuan distinction between animate and inanimate nouns. In addition to these, however, the language has a number of characteristic features that distinguish it even from other Vaniuan languages. A lack of true adjectives, the role of which is instead played by stative verbs (see section 10.1.3), is unique to the Kashisan subbranch, while other features such as its Amaian-esque case system, and the presence of phonemic whistled sibilants and affricates are unique to Balak within the Vaniuan language family¹. A number of other features, both innovated and retained, can be noted when comparing Balak to other related languages, as in the sample sentences below, all meaning “I hear the horses crossed a river.”:

¹Although whistled sibilants and affricates do occur in some Kaatian dialects, they are not present in the standard language.

(1) **Balak (Eastern Vaniuan, Kashisan):**

Viremiş çik cvânoşcak.
 virem-Yiş çik-Ø cvân-oş-cak
 horse-DR.PL river-DR cross.over-PFV.IDRE-3PA

(2) **Kaatian (Eastern Vaniuan, Kashisan):**

«SAMPLE TO BE ADDED»

(3) **Zinshan (Southern Vaniuan):**

Basā civāşmen, erēmāş ūyin baçer
 basā civāş-men erēm-āş ūyi-ēn baçer
 DEM.DIST say-3S.PRES horse-NOM.PL river-OBL HSY
 yāndārnan.
 yān-dār-nān
 across-go-3.PPFV

(4) **Shohuanese (Western Vaniuan):**

Ūvarîv jazgubon jem mond, îwaq.
 ûvar-îv jaz-gubon jem mon-n îwaq
 horse-NOM.PL cross-3.PST.PERF one river-ACC.SG, HSY

(5) **Kovat (Northern Vaniuan):**

Cius nis felossins mom y, asués.
 ciu-s nis fel-ossins mom y asu-és
 horse-PL DEF.NOM.PL cross-PERF.3P river.SG INDF hear-PERF.1S

(6) **Amaian (Amaian, Amaian-Zwazwan²):**

Bämenäk vä gok toty.
 2bämenä-k = vA 1gok-Ø 2toty-Y-Ø
 horse-DR.PL = NOM.DEF.PL river-DR.SG cross-PFV.NWIT-3P

As can be seen above, the Balak sample displays a retained SOV word order found across much of the Vaniuan family (Shohuanese and Kovat in fact deviate from this typical SOV order). One distinction comes with the exhibition of a more pervasive evidentiality distinction within the verbal system; Balak uses a series of distinct verb forms to mark indirect evidentiality as opposed to adverbs or particles, as is the case with Shohuanese. The use of the direct case to mark indirect objects as opposed to the accusative case, reserved in Balak for direct (inanimate) objects, is another distinguishing feature that can be noted in the sample (see section 4.3 for more information).

²The Amaian language family has no relation to the Vaniuan languages, but an Amaian sample has been given to illustrate similarities between Amaian grammar and Balak grammar that have arisen through extensive language contact.

1.3 History of the Balak language

The Balak language has a recorded history stretching back over 1,000 years. The known history of the language can be divided into three distinct periods: *Old Kothlenic*, *Middle Jazaghan*, and *Modern Balak*, with the latter often being subdivided into *Imperial Balak* and *(New) Modern Balak*.

Proto-Kashisan

According to linguists, the Proto-Kashisan language was spoken at roughly 0 AD, along the Kashis Valley on what's now the northwestern border between Balakia and Kaatkukia. During this time, speakers of the Proto-Kashisan and Proto-Amaian languages are theorised to have had somewhat close contact, evident from grammatical and lexical similarities in modern languages. From there, groups of Proto-Kashisan speakers diverged, with groups who would become the ancestors of the Kothlenic tribes migrating south into what is now the Balak heartland and beyond.

Old Kothlenic

Old Kothlenic is the earliest recorded stage of the Balak language, with inscriptions and other writings from this stage of the language being dated to as early as the 5th Century AD and as late as the 12th Century AD. Kothlenic inscriptions use the extinct *Letathe* script, a descendant of the Letsatian script brought to modern-day Gushlia by Terminian merchants in the 3rd Century AD. An early form of this script was used in the *Sâğaşek Inscription*, the earliest dateable example of the language, thought to have been created in the 5th Century AD. The Old Kothlenic language became widespread in eastern Vaniua as a result of the Kothlen Horde's conquests in the 9th Century AD.

Middle Jazaghan

The beginning of the Middle Jazaghan period is marked by the Great Horde's conquest of the region that would later become Balakia and Gushlia, which would come to be known as *Jamaşdan*, under the Asharid dynasty. This form of the language maintained significance as a language of commerce and of military and trade dignitaries, as well as the language used in courts throughout *Jamaşdan*. Shortly after Asharid rule began, the *Letathe* script fell out of usage in favour of the Vaniuan script, under the influence of the Asharid elite and dominant Koman culture. Throughout the Middle Jazaghan period, the language adopted a variety of Koman loanwords, primarily religious and scientific vocabulary. In addition to these, there was also a growing presence of Amaian loanwords. A number of these words related to finance and banking, while others formed a part of general everyday vocabulary. In addition to loanwords, some additional grammatical features began to enter Middle Jazaghan as a result of contact with the Amaian language, such as the use of the locative case to explicitly mark the topic of a sentence.

Modern Balak

Imperial Balak

By the time the formation of the Balak Empire was declared in 1866, the Balak language had begun to take on a form close to its modern standard. The Institute of Balak Language and Linguistics at the University of Yercêsven (IBLL) was established as a regulatory body for the Balak language in 1881, remaining as such until the present day. The Institute based the standard spoken language on that of the Yercêsven elite, but maintained the archaic Middle Jazaghan spelling conventions. This form of Balak spread to Balakia's contemporary colonies, chief among them Sonka and Kunjut.

New Modern Balak

Standard Balak in its current form arose as a result of language reforms commissioned by the Kúúlist regime of the Union of Shomosvan in 1962 and fully implemented by both the government and the IBLL by the end of 1964. The reforms were primarily implemented to target the language's "unnecessarily complicated" Middle Jazaghan spelling conventions, thereby facilitating the teaching and learning of Balak, both as a native language and as a foreign language. The spoken language faced little alteration, save for some adjustments in standard pronunciation to account for minor sound changes, particular in vowels, along with the removal of certain constructions deemed to be "archaic." The written language, on the other hand, was given a complete overhaul, replacing the old spelling system with a newly created phonetic system. Initially, these reforms were only implemented in Balakia, but they have since become more widespread throughout the Kothlenosphere³, with the exception of Kunjut.

Today, Balak is mainly spoken in Balakia, Kunjut, Sonka, and parts of Komania and Ebo Nganagam, holding official status in the first two countries. In addition to this, a smaller diaspora of Balak speakers exists in the former Kúúlist bloc states, such as Cerman and Qonklaks, as well as a small group in the city of Leopaurkar in Thargun.

³A collection of nations that share common cultural and historical ties to Balakia or Gushlia, typically with a Kothlenic language being spoken by a majority of people.

Part II

GRAMMAR

PHONOLOGY

2.1 Vowels

Balak has a system of 10 phonemic vowels, typically analysed as featuring a distinction between 5 short vowels and 5 long vowels.

Table 2.1: Balak's vowel inventory

(a) Short/lax			(b) Long/tense		
	Front	Back		Front	Back
Close	ɪ <i>	ʊ <u>	Close	i: <î>	u: <û>
Mid	ɛ <e>	ɔ <o>	Mid	e: <ê>	o: <ô>
Open		ɑ <a>	Open	a: <â>	

Notes:

- Long vowels may be pronounced as short or half-long vowels when unstressed, but typically retain their quality.
- A growing number of speakers realise /a:/ as [æ:], with the precise length determined by the rule given above. This realisation has recently become accepted even in formal speech.
- /ɛ/ may be realised as [ə] by some speakers, likely due to the influence of Shohuanese. This is non-standard, however, and widely looked down upon as improper.

2.2 Consonants

Balak has 24 consonant phonemes. Its consonant system's characteristic features include a series of labialised sibilants, typically realised as whistled sibilants.

Table 2.2: Balak's consonant inventory

	Labial	Alveolar		Palatal	Dorsal	Glottal
		Plain	Labialised			
Nasal	m <m>	n <n>				
Plosive	p b <p> 	t d <t> <d>			k g <k> <g>	
Fricative	f v <f> <v>	s z <s> <z>	s ^w z ^w <sv> <zv>	ʃ <ʃ>	ɣ <ɣ>	h <h, q> ¹
Affricate		ts <c>	ts ^w <cv>	tʃ dʒ <ç> <j>		
Approximant		l <l>		j <y>		
Rhotic		r <r>				

Notes:

- /f/ only occurs in loanwords, though some speakers may substitute /f/ with /v/.
- /m, n/ undergo total nasal assimilation depending on any following consonant, being realised as [m] before labial consonants, [n] before alveolar consonants, [ŋ] before velar consonants and [N] before uvular consonants. Some speakers may instead substitute this final realisation of [N] with nasalisation and lengthening of the previous vowel.
- /r/ is realised as [r] syllable-initially and intervocalically, and as [r̥] before consonants and word-finally.
- /ɣ/ is realised as an approximant [ɣ̥] in syllable codas, which also serves as the sole realisation of the phoneme in certain dialects.
- /s^w, z^w, ts^w/ have a number of possible realisations and, in certain dialects, mergers:
 - Whistled sibilants [s^ϕ, z^β, ts^ϕ] — Common in central and eastern Balakia, as well as other conservative varieties and the standard language. It is by far the most common realisation.
 - Consonant clusters [sf, zv, tsf] — Occurs in transitional dialects spoken in Gushlia and close to the Balak-Gushli border.

¹<q> is not used in native words, save for some special cases like *qak* “king”, but rather for the etymological spelling of older Koman loanwords, as well as in more recent borrowings from Terminian and Shohuanese, among other languages.

- Merger with plain sibilants [s, z, \widehat{ts}] — Present in varieties spoken in southern Balakia and along parts of the east coast. Also occurs in some areas of western Balakia and eastern Gushlia.
- Merger with post-alveolar sibilants [ʃ, ʒ, $\widehat{tʃ}$] — Reported to occur in the idiolects of some younger speakers, particularly in urban regions such as Sâcar and Yercêsven.
- Merger with labiodental fricatives [f, v, $\widehat{pf}\sim f$] — Present in northwestern varieties, including Torosh Balak.

2.3 Phonotactics

The basic formula for a Balak syllable is (C)(v)V(F); *C* denotes any consonant, *V* denotes any vowel, and *F* denotes any consonant except for /s^w, z^w, \widehat{ts}^w /. /v/ can occur as a medial consonant between the rest of the syllable onset and the syllable nucleus, but only after the consonants /t, d, k, g/.

2.4 Phonological processes

Voicing

Balak features progressive voicing assimilation of obstruents (that is, obstruents assimilate in voicing to an obstruent preceding them); liquids do not affect the voicing of obstruents. This assimilation also occurs across word boundaries when there is no pause between words, as in *Amaçik zê duş şâşar* “Amaia is an old country”, pronounced [ama^htʃik^hse: 'du^h'ʃa:ʃar]. In addition to allophones already given as phonemic pairs in table 2.2, /ʃ/ has the voiceless allophone [χ] after voiceless obstruents, while /ʃ h \widehat{ts} \widehat{ts}^w / have voiced allophones [ʒ h \widehat{dz} \widehat{dz}^w] after voiced obstruents.

Cluster simplification

There are several phonetic processes in Balak which serve to simplify consonant clusters, including degemination and syncope.

After taking voicing assimilation into account, any geminated consonants are simplified into single consonants. As with voicing assimilation, this degemination can occur across word boundaries when there is no pause between words, such as in the previous example *Amaçik zê duş şâşar* [ama^htʃig^hze: 'du^h'ʃa:ʃar]. Such degemination also affects homorganic stop + affricate clusters, which are rather more common in Balak. In such clusters, the first consonant (i.e. the stop) is elided. For example the

clusters /tts̄/, /dts̄/ and /tt̄j̄/² are realised simply as [ts̄], [d̄z̄] and [t̄j̄] respectively.

Clusters of sibilants, as well as certain affricates, undergo their own processes of assimilation, which can also occur across word boundaries. When the alveolar sibilants /s, z/ occur next to the palato-alveolar sibilant /ʃ/, regardless of whether they come before or after, they are elided after voicing assimilation takes place, such as in *koşsar* “it is low,” pronounced as [kɔʃar] (sometimes informally spelt as *koşar*). In a similar vein, the cluster /ts̄j̄/ assimilates into [t̄j̄]. All sibilants are dropped after the affricates /t̄j̄, d̄z̄/, following voicing assimilation of the latter if applicable.

2.5 Stress

Stress is moderately variable in Balak, and follows the following set of rules:

- If a word contains at least one syllable which either:
 - contains a long vowel
 - ends with *v* or *y* as a coda
 - begins with *sv*, *zv*, or *cv*
 - features a medial *v*

then the last occurrence of such a syllable receives primary stress.

- If no such syllables are present in the word, then the final syllable of the word receives primary stress.

Secondary stress is placed on every second syllable away from the syllable with primary stress in either direction.

The application of these stress rules may cause different forms of the same word (for example verbal inflections) to exhibit highly variable stress, as shown below:

çevan “animal” /t̄ʃeˈvan/
çevanok “animal (LOC)” /t̄ʃevaˈnɔk/
çevanokrâ “animal (LOC.PL)” /t̄ʃeˌvanɔkˈraː/

Balâk “Balak” /baˈla:k/
Balâğok “Balak (LOC)” /baˈlaːɰɔk/
Balâğokrâ “Balak (LOC.PL)” /baˌlaːɰɔkˈraː/

²Although /t̄j̄/ is not a purely alveolar consonant, it is considered as such for the purposes of explaining degemination, so that is considered homorganic with other alveolar consonants such as /t/ or /d/.

Exceptions

Certain foreign words may exhibit stress patterns that contradict the above rules. For instance, in the proper noun *Açiyitqana* “Achiyitqana”, primary stress is placed on the penultimate syllable (i.e. /a₁tʃijit'hana/). This reflects the original Achiyitqan pronunciation [a.tʃi.jit'qá.na], which features a high tone in the same syllable.

Words with such irregular stress patterns typically exhibit fixed stress, i.e. the syllable holding primary stress maintains it in all forms of the word, in contrast to the variable stress of other words. This may also carry over into other derived terms. Once again using *Açiyitqana* as an example:

Açiyitqana “Achiyitqana” /a₁tʃijit'hana/ (expected /atʃijitha'na/)

Açiyitqanayâ “Achiyitqana (POST)” /a₁tʃijit'hana₁ja:/ (expected /a₁tʃijit₁hana₁ja:/)

GRAMMATICAL CONCEPTS

3.1 Word stems

Base stem

A word's *base stem* is the basic stem of a noun or verb, and also serves as the word's citation form. The majority of nouns and verbs in Balak only have a base stem. Base stems can further be subdivided into *consonant stems* and *vowel stems* based on whether the stem ends in a consonant or a vowel respectively. Vowel-stem words are almost universally of foreign origin.

Qumta stem

A sizeable number of nouns and verbs have an additional stem known as a *qumta stem* (from Rasha *qumta* “little ghost”). A qumta stem can be considered a kind of oblique stem that features an additional final *qumta vowel* not present in a word's base stem, which surfaces in certain forms of the word. The exact vowel present in a qumta stem is lexically determined. Balak dictionaries will typically give both the base stem and qumta stem of a word if applicable.

Unlike in the case of vowel-stem words, which maintain their final vowel in all forms, a qumta vowel will not surface in all forms; any form where the unmodified qumta vowel would occur word-finally does not feature the qumta vowel, in essence meaning that most forms of any given noun or verb with a qumta stem will feature it. This is a regular pattern; certain conjugations will universally feature or lack the qumta vowel. Compare the following forms of the verbs *çud* “to settle” (a regular consonant stem verb), *yana* “to be cute (slang)” (a vowel stem verb) and *yal* “to be new” (with a qumta stem of *yalu-*):

- *çud*:
 - *çunar* “[s]he settles” (consonant stem ending *-ar*)
 - *çunê* “settling (relative participle)” (consonant stem ending *-ê*)
 - *çudnamar* “[s]he settled” (ending *-namar*)
- *yana*:
 - *yanar* “[s]he is cute” (vowel stem ending *-r*)
 - *yanâ* “being cute (relative participle)” (vowel stem lengthening)
 - *yananamar* “[s]he was cute” (ending *-namar*)
- *yal*:
 - *yalur* “[s]he is new” (vowel stem ending *-r*)
 - *yalû* “[being] new (relative participle)” (vowel stem lengthening)
 - *yalunamar* “[s]he was new” (ending *-namar*)

3.2 Morphophonology

Softening

The final consonant of a noun or verb's base stem in Balak may undergo a form of mutation depending on the morphological context. This process, known as *softening*, occurs whenever certain suffixes beginning with a vowel are added to a word. These suffixes typically include inflectional endings for both nouns and verbs. Stem-final consonants are altered through softening as follows:

- *-b, -d, -g* become *-m, -n, -n*
- *-p, -t, -k* become *-b, -d, -ğ*

Palatalisation

Depending on the suffixes added to a word, the final consonant of a word may be (further) altered through a process of palatalisation. This is another form of consonant mutation which is common in Balak. Stem-final consonants are altered through palatalisation as follows:

- *-t, -c, -k* become *-ç*
- *-d, -g* become *-j*
- *-s, -z* become *-ş*
- *-n, -ğ* become *-y*
- *-l* becomes *-r*

Throughout this grammar, any suffixes which cause palatalisation of the preceding consonant will be marked with a capital *Y* as the first letter of the suffix (e.g. the prohibitive suffix for front conjugation verbs, *-Yim*), and will also be glossed as such.

şesen “syrup” + *-Yin* (accusative suffix) → *şeseyin* “syrup (ACC)”

In the case of inflected forms of nouns and verbs, palatalisation takes place *after* softening has been applied. See the example below:

Balâçik “Balakia” + *-Yek* (locative suffix) → *Balâçiyek* “Balakia (LOC)”
(from the softened/voiced stem *Balâçiğ-*), not *Balâçiçek*

NOUNS

...

In Balak there are four grammatical categories which are relevant for nouns:

- Declension: the set of patterns according to which the noun is declined (section 4.1 gives more information on declension patterns)
- Animacy: whether the noun is animate or inanimate (section 4.2 gives detailed information about noun animacy)
- Number: whether the noun is singular or plural (section ?? elaborates on grammatical number)
- Case: how the noun shows its role in the sentence (section 4.3 explains the different case endings)

4.1 Noun declensions

...

Balak nouns fall into one of two declension patterns - the *back-vowel declension* and the *front-vowel declension*, henceforth simply referred to as *back declension* and the *front declension*. Nouns whose final syllable contains the vowels *a*, *o*, *u* or their long counterparts *â*, *ô*, *û* belong to the back declension pattern, whereas nouns whose final syllable contains the vowels *e*, *i* or their long counterparts *ê*, *î* belong to the front declension pattern.

4.2 Noun animacy

Every Balak noun belongs to one of the two animacy classes: animate (living) or inanimate (non-living). Animacy in Balak is a form of grammatical gender, a system for classifying nouns. However, as opposed to appearing somewhat arbitrary, the animacy of a noun can easily be determined based on its meaning:

- Animate: *pâş* “father”
- Inanimate: *hâtap* “mountain”

As well as a semantic distinction, Balak makes a morphological and syntactic distinction between nouns of different animacy classes; nouns in each animacy class are inflected for differing amounts of cases or grammatical numbers. However, they are not otherwise marked differently based on which class they belong to.

Animate

Animate nouns inflect for both singular and plural numbers (with the exception of proper nouns), but do not inflect for the accusative case (see section 4.3 for more information). The animate class includes:

- human beings (including agentive nouns, as well as certain proper nouns - particularly names)
- non-human sentient species
- deities and spirits
- animals
- plants

Inanimate

Inanimate nouns inflect for the accusative case unlike animate nouns (see section 4.3 for more information), but most lack distinct plural forms; inanimate nouns are inherently treated as mass nouns. The inanimate class includes any noun not included in the animate class, as well as any inanimate proper nouns.

A small subset of inanimate nouns differ themselves from the rest by maintaining a distinction between singular and plural forms, although these are different in form to animate plural nouns. This group of nouns is known as *zva-plural* nouns, and their plural forms are descended from ancient dual forms of these nouns. The group mostly includes certain body parts.

4.3 Noun case

Grammatical case shows the function of a noun or pronoun within the sentence as a whole. Balak distinguishes between five cases—direct, accusative, oblique, postpositional, and locative—by means of inflection, i.e. by changing the form of the words. The nouns themselves are declined through the use of various fusional suffixes which encode both case and number. These suffixes vary based on whether the noun is a back declension noun or a front declension noun.

4.3.1 The direct case

Formation

The singular direct form is the citation form (i.e. the dictionary form) of a noun, meaning it requires no further modification through the use of suffixes. The plural

direct form is formed using the suffix *-aş* for back declension nouns and *-Yiş* for front declension nouns.

The direct plural suffix is added to the noun's qumta stem if applicable. If the noun the direct plural suffix is being attached to ends in a vowel (qumta vowels included), the initial vowel in the suffix is omitted.

Table 4.1: Direct case endings

	<i>Back declension</i>		<i>Front declension</i>	
	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Direct	---	<i>-aş</i>	---	<i>-Yiş</i>

It is important to be aware of potential confusion arising from ambiguity between the back declension direct plural suffix and the 2nd person singular objective suffix (see section 5.1.1 for more information).

doğasaş “dogs”
doğasaş “your dog”

dânaş “souls”
dânaş “your soul”

fadamaş “guardians”
fadamaş “your guardian”

However, this ambiguity by no means extends to every noun, or even most nouns, due to other factors such as qumta vowels or the noun belonging to the front declension pattern. It is nevertheless something to be wary of.

sakraş “vendors”
sakrayaş “your vendor”

bâşeş “mothers”
bâşaş “your mother”

jimâşimiş “bullies”
jimâşimaş “your bully”

Balâğaş “Balaks”
Balâkaş “your Balak”¹

¹This example does not necessarily make sense, but is nonetheless useful in illustrating the point conveyed here.

As the subject of a verb

This is the most important and characteristic function of the direct case. The finite verb of the clause takes an ending which agrees with the subject (see section 10.2).

- (7) Doğas zayen şeyimir.
 doğas-Ø zayen şe-yim-ir.
 dog-DR.SG 1S.OBL hear-PFV.DIRE-3SA
 ‘A dog heard me.’
 «EXAMPLES TBD»

As the indefinite direct object of a transitive verb

A secondary function of the direct case is to mark an indefinite (i.e. not specifically identifiable, c.f. English *a/an, some*) direct object, which is the recipient of or person affected by the action described by a transitive verb (a verb that can take a direct object).

- (8) Doğas şeyimet.
 doğas-Ø şe-yim-et.
 dog-DR.SG hear-PFV.DIRE-1S
 ‘I heard a dog.’
- (9) Doğasaş şeyimet.
 doğas-aş şe-yim-et.
 dog-DR.PL hear-PFV.DIRE-1S
 ‘I heard [some] dogs.’
- (10) Çik cvâşâmas.
 çik-Ø cvân-şam-mas.
 river-DR CROSS-IPFV.DIRE-1P
 ‘We used to cross a river.’

4.3.2 The accusative case**Formation**

The accusative case is marked with the suffix *-an* for back declension nouns and *-Yin* for front declension nouns. There is no separate plural accusative suffix due to inanimate nouns not possessing a distinct plural form, with the exception of *zva-plural* nouns (see section X).

All accusative case suffixes are added to the noun’s qumta stem if applicable. If the noun any accusative suffix is being attached to ends in a vowel (qumta vowels included), the initial vowel in the suffix is omitted.

Table 4.2: Accusative case endings

	<i>Back declension</i>	<i>Front declension</i>
Accusative	-an	-Yin

As the definite direct object of a transitive verb

The primary function of the accusative case is to mark a inanimate definite (i.e. specifically identifiable, c.f. English *the, that, those*) direct object, including proper nouns when these are inanimate.

- (11) Çiyin cvâşâmas.
 çik-Yin cvân-şam-mas.
 river-ACC CROSS-IPFV.DIRE-1P
 ‘We used to cross the river.’

«EXAMPLES TBD»

Other uses of the accusative case

...

...

4.3.3 The oblique case

The oblique case has the widest range of all the Balak cases, with many grammatical and idiomatic uses. However one theme common to all of these uses is that it typically marks a person or thing who is in some way concerned or affected by the action taking place.

Formation

The oblique case is marked with the suffix *-em* for singular nouns in both declension classes, *-mâ* for plural back declension nouns, and *-mî* for plural front declension nouns.

All singular oblique case suffixes are added to the noun’s qumta stem if applicable; this does not apply to plural oblique suffixes. If the noun the singular oblique suffix is being attached to ends in a vowel (qumta vowels included), the initial vowel in the suffix is omitted.

- (15) Doğasmâ şeyimet.
 doğas-mâ şe-yim-et.
 dog-OBL.PL hear-PFV.DIRE-1S
 ‘I heard the dogs.’

4.3.4 The postpositional case

Formation

The postpositional case is marked with the suffix *-yâ* for singular back declension nouns, *-yî* for singular front declension nouns, *-an* for plural back declension nouns, and *-Yin* for plural front declension nouns.

The noun’s qumta stem, if applicable, is used to form both singular and plural postpositional forms.

Table 4.4: Postpositional case endings

	<i>Back declension</i>		<i>Front declension</i>	
	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Postpositional	<i>-yâ</i>	<i>-yan</i>	<i>-yî</i>	<i>-yin</i>

As the object of a postposition of movement

Most postpositions govern the postpositional case (see section 7). If a postposition can be used as either a postposition of movement or a postposition of location, it governs the postpositional case if used as a postposition of movement.

«EXAMPLES TBD»

- (16) Cvenâyâ şe kabkabşâmas.
 cvenâ-yâ şe kabkab-şam-mas.
 city-POST in wander-IPFV.DIRE-1P
 ‘We used to wander into the city.’
- (17) Guluyâ hed caltoroşnamar.
 gul-u-yâ hed cal-tor-oşnam-ar.
 slave-QMT-POST like restrain-PASS-PFV.IDRE-3SA
 ‘[Allegedly] he was held like a slave.’
 «CHECK EXAMPLE»

Replacement with oblique case

In colloquial speech the postpositional case has largely fallen out of use, with speakers substituting it with the oblique case. ...

4.3.5 The locative case

Formation

The locative case is marked with the suffix *-ok* for singular back declension nouns, *-Yek* for singular front declension nouns, *-okrâ* for plural back declension nouns, and *-Yekrî* for plural front declension nouns.

All locative case suffixes are added to the noun's qumta stem if applicable. If the noun any locative suffix is being attached to ends in a vowel (qumta vowels included), the initial vowel in the suffix is omitted.

Table 4.5: Locative case endings

	<i>Back declension</i>		<i>Front declension</i>	
	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Locative	<i>-ok</i>	<i>-okrâ</i>	<i>-Yek</i>	<i>-Yekrî</i>

As the location of an action taking place

The primary function of the locative case is to give information about where an action took place. X.

«EXAMPLES TBD»

(18) «EXAMPLE GOES HERE»

As a modifier describing a noun's location

...

...

«EXAMPLES TBD»

(19) «EXAMPLE GOES HERE»

As the object of postpositions of location

Some postpositions trigger the locative case as opposed to the postpositional case (see section 7). If a postposition can be used as either a postposition of movement or a postposition of location, it governs the postpositional case if used as a postposition of location.

«EXAMPLES TBD»

- (20) Cvenâk şe kabkabșâmas.
 cvenâ-ok şe kabkab-șam-mas.
 city-LOC in wander-IPFV.DIRE-1P
 ‘We used to wander within the city.’

As the topic of a sentence

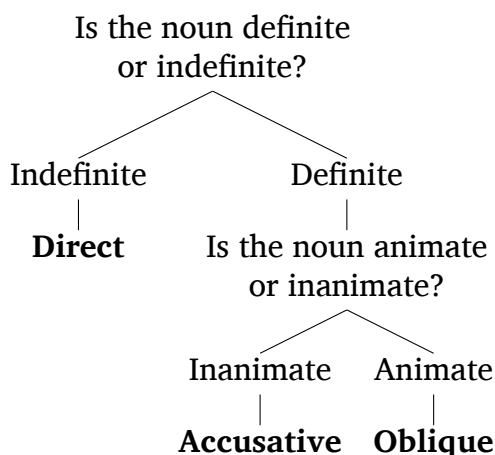
X. In this sense the locative case can be used to explicitly mark the topic of a sentence, thereby showing contrast or emphasising the subject. The noun marked as the topic is placed at the start of the sentence.

«EXAMPLES TBD»

- (21) Doğasokrâ şe dacânamet.
 doğas-okrâ şe-Ø dacam-nam-et.
 dog-LOC.PL hear-INF NEG-PFV.DIRE-1S
 ‘As for the dogs, I didn’t hear them.’

4.3.6 Which case do I use for a direct object?

As has been established, direct objects can be inflected for one of three cases—direct, accusative, and oblique—based on the definiteness and animacy of the noun. If a direct object is indefinite, it will assume the direct case regardless of animacy. If it is definite (pronouns are considered to always be definite), then it will assume the accusative case if it is inanimate, or the oblique case if it is animate. The following chart illustrates this:



4.4 Irregular nouns

...

4.4.1 Ğ-stem irregulars

...

4.5 Declension charts

Table 4.6: Case endings for animate nouns

	<i>Back declension</i>		<i>Front declension</i>	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Direct	----	-aş	----	-Yiş
Oblique	-em	-mâ	-em	-mî
Postpositional	-yâ	-yan	-yî	-yin
Locative	-ok	-okrâ	-Yek	-Yekrî

Table 4.7: Case endings for inanimate nouns

	<i>Back declension</i>		<i>Front declension</i>	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Direct	----	----	----	----
Accusative	-an	----	-Yin	----
Oblique	-em	----	-em	----
Postpositional	-yâ	----	-yî	----
Locative	-ok	----	-Yek	----

Table 4.8: Case endings for inanimate nouns (zva-plural)

	<i>Back declension</i>		<i>Front declension</i>	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Direct	----	-zva	----	-zvi
Accusative	-an	-zvan	-Yin	-zvin
Oblique	-em	-zvam	-em	-zvim
Postpositional	-yâ	-zvayâ	-yî	-zviyî
Locative	-ok	-zvak	-Yek	-zvik

PRONOUNS

5.1 Personal pronouns

Like nouns, pronouns can be inflected to indicate their role in a clause, as well as the person, animacy, and number of their referent. Balak is a pro-drop language, and as such pronouns do not frequently appear in the direct case except when used for emphasis.

Table 5.1: Personal pronouns

	Direct	Accusative	Oblique	Postpositional
1S	<i>zov</i>	----	<i>zayen</i>	<i>zanâ</i>
2S	<i>şê</i>	----	<i>şen</i>	<i>aşnâ</i>
3I	<i>şil</i>	<i>şic</i> ¹	<i>şim</i>	<i>şî</i>
3SA	<i>le</i>	----	<i>arem</i>	<i>arnâ</i>
1P	<i>ber</i>	----	<i>beren</i>	<i>ben</i>
2P	<i>êç</i>	----	<i>êçen</i>	<i>men</i>
3PA	<i>cok</i>	----	<i>cemâ</i>	<i>ceren</i>

In contrast to nouns, pronouns lack a distinct locative case. Thus, all postpositions trigger the postpositional case regardless of whether they are being used as postpositions of movement or postpositions of location. This can create some ambiguity in the meaning of some postpositional constructions, but the precise meaning can typically be inferred from context. Substituting the use of the locative case as a topic marker is a construction formed by using the postposition *şâ* “on, at.”

- (22) Pâşekze, hamân cvânar.
 pâş-e-Yek-ze, hamâ-an cvân-Ø-ar.
 father-QMT-LOC-1S.POSS, border-ACC cross-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 ‘As for my father, he’s crossing the border.’

- (23) Arnâ şâ, hamân cvânar.
 arnâ şâ, hamâ-an cvân-Ø-ar.
 3SA.POST on, border-ACC cross-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 ‘As for him, he’s crossing the border.’

5.1.1 Objective suffixes

Balak makes use of a series of objective suffixes to mark the object of a verb or the possessor of a noun, indicating person and number. These suffixes do not trigger softening of a previous consonant, even those beginning with a vowel, nor is the *qumta* stem of a noun used.

¹Although such practice is non-standard, the 3rd person inanimate pronoun’s accusative form *şic* is falling out of usage, with the oblique form *şim* being preferred, bringing it in line with other pronouns,

Table 5.2: Objective suffixes

	<i>Suffix</i>
1S	-ze
2S	-aş
3I	-şik
3SA	-â
1P	-bele
2P	-em
3PA	-cakâ

For objective suffixes beginning with a vowel (i.e. 2nd person singular, 3rd person animate singular, and 2nd person plural), an epenthetic consonant -y- is inserted before it if the noun it is being attached to (including cases where the noun is declined for case) ends in a vowel.

...

Marking the direct object

...

«EXAMPLES TBD»

...

Usage with postpositions

...

«EXAMPLES TBD»

...

Marking possession

Objective suffixes can be used as the equivalent to possessive adjectives (“my”, “yours”, etc.).

Examples for *şem* “ear” include:

- my ear: *şemze*
- your (sg.) ear: *şemaş*
- its ear: *şemşik*

syntactically speaking.

- his/her ear: *şemâ*
- our ear: *şembele*
- your (pl.) ear: *şemem*
- their (anim.) ear: *şemcakâ*

They are compatible with nouns inflected for any case, and are attached to the possessed noun after any case endings that may be attached to it, as in the following example:

- (24) Şeminze tağam!
 şem-Yin-ze tak-am!
 ear-ACC-1S.POSS flick-PROH
 ‘Stop flicking my ear!’

It is possible to use the suffixes in conjunction with standalone pronouns inflected in the direct case for emphasis, like so:

- (25) Sakatze zov şâşar!
 sakat-Ø-ze zov şâ-Ø-şar!
 wine-DR-1S.POSS 1S.DR be-NPST-3I
 ‘That’s *my* wine!’

Balak also does not have a distinct set of possessive pronouns; this function is instead performed by suffixing the objective suffixes onto *nây* “thing, stuff”.

- (26) Bez çen nâyze şâşar.
 bez çen-Ø nây-ze şâ-Ø-şar.
 that water-DR thing-1S.POSS be-NPST-3I
 ‘That water is mine.’

For nominal possessors, the appropriate third person possessive suffix is used based on the possessor’s animacy, and the possessor is placed after the noun, marked with the direct case.

- (27) Pâşze Şozasanok şe dânar.
 pâş-Ø-ze Şozasan-ok şe dân-Ø-ar.
 father-DR.SG-1S.POSS Shozasan-LOC in live-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 ‘My father lives in Shozasan.’
- (28) Pâşbele Şozasanok şe dânar.
 pâş-Ø-bele Şozasan-ok şe dân-Ø-ar.
 father-DR.SG-1P.POSS Shozasan-LOC in live-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 ‘Our father lives in Shozasan.’

more common due to the nature of this pronoun's usage.

- (32) Âm pot âm jes.
 âm pot-Ø âm jes-Ø.
 REFL.OBL hit-IMPER REFL.OBL stop-IMP
 'Stop hitting yourself'
- (33) Âm yepşesen raçşimir.
 âm yepşesen-Ø raç-şim-ir.
 REFL.OBL grape.sauce-DR obtain-IPFV.DIRE-3SA
 'He was getting himself some grape sauce.'

The reflexive pronoun's direct form *â* is used primarily to express possession. It can be used for emphasis in conjunction with any possessive ending regardless of grammatical person with the meaning of "one's own," being placed after the possessed noun, as well as the possessor if the possessor is a noun (see section ?? for more information about possession).

- (34) Bunheşekze â doğas rişod
 bunhez-Yek-ze â doğas-Ø rişod-Ø
 possession-LOC-1S.POSS REFL.DR dog-DR.SG end-ADV
 şâr!
 şâ-Ø-ar!
 be-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 'Finally I have my own dog!'
- (35) Sakadanaş â raç!
 sakat-an-aş â raç-Ø!
 wine-ACC-2S.POSS REFL.DR obtain-IMP
 'Get your own wine!'

OTHER DETERMINERS AND PRONOUNS

Determiners are a set of small words used with nouns to give more context to the noun. In Balak, determiners precede the nouns they modify, as well as any other modifiers a noun may have, such as numerals. They do not agree with the noun based on animacy or number.

Table 6.1: Determiners

<i>et</i>	“some/any”
<i>zek</i>	“some/a few”
<i>şeyâ</i>	“all/every”
<i>yâs</i>	“each”
<i>hed</i>	“same”
<i>zuğ</i>	“other”
<i>bon</i>	“no”

6.1 Demonstratives

Balak makes a two-way distinction between demonstratives in terms of distance, distinguishing between proximal and medial/distal demonstratives. The usage of these demonstratives depends on the distance (be it physical or metaphorical) between the speaker and the object being described.

Table 6.2: Demonstratives

<i>bev</i>	this
<i>bez</i>	that

The demonstrative *bev* usually refers to something near the speaker, *bez* usually refers to something either closer to the listener than to the speaker or to something away from both the speaker and the listener. In some dialects and informal speech, *bez* can also serve as a definite article, although this usage is non-standard.

6.2 Usage as pronouns

In addition to being used as modifiers for nouns, Balak determiners (demonstratives included) can also be used as standalone pronouns, declining based on the animacy of the object they are referring to; they are inflected in the same manner as animate nouns when the noun they stand in for is animate, and likewise in the same manner as inanimate nouns when the noun is inanimate. Thus, unlike true pronouns (see section 5.1 for more information), determiners that are used as pronouns possess a separate

locative case. When such a determiner is the direct object in a clause, it is assumed to be a definite direct object by default, and is therefore marked with the accusative case.

«EXAMPLES TBD»

POSTPOSITIONS

Postpositions are a small class of words which X. Unlike prepositions, they are placed after the nouns they modify. Most postpositions can trigger either the postpositional case or the locative case depending on the precise meaning they are used to convey. When used as postpositions of movement, they trigger the postpositional case, while as postpositions of location they trigger the locative case.

- (36) Pâşze Şozasanok şe dânar.
 pâş-Ø-ze Şozasan-ok şe dân-Ø-ar.
 father-DR.SG-1S.POSS Shozasan-LOC in live-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 ‘My father lives in Shozasan.’
- (37) Pâşze Şozasanyâ şe kamar.
 pâş-Ø-ze Şozasan-yâ şe kab-Ø-ar.
 father-DR.SG-1S.POSS Shozasan-POST into walk-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 ‘My father is walking into Shozasan.’

«EXAMPLES TBD»

Table 7.1: Postpositions

Postposition	Postpositional case meaning	Locative case meaning
<i>ganat</i>	through	within
<i>ğanet</i>	into the vicinity of	around, in the vicinity of
<i>ğec</i>	with (comitative)	---
<i>hed</i>	as, like	---
<i>jen</i>	with (instrumental)	---
<i>pirek</i>	(moving) over	above, over
<i>ric</i>	to, towards	(facing) towards
<i>şe</i>	into	in, within
<i>şim</i>	from, out of	(facing) away from
<i>yê</i>	(moving) next to	besides, next to
<i>zonok</i>	(moving) under	below, under

«LIST TO BE EXPANDED»

ADVERBS

Adverbs are a class of words whose primary function is to modify a verb or another adverb. ...

8.1 Position of adverbs

Adverbs are usually placed immediately before what they modify. ...

8.2 Locative adverbs

Locative adverbs are those formed from locative forms of nouns. Many time expressions, such as *beyyek* “today”, fall into this category. ...

8.3 Verbal adverbs

It is possible to use a verb, particularly a stative verb, as an adverb in Balak. The adverbial form of a verb is identical to the verb’s citation form and therefore identical to the infinitive form (see section 10.11) as well. ...

bêzar “efficiently” (verbal meaning “to be skilled, to be efficient”)
«EXAMPLES TBD»

While the vast majority of verbal adverbs are formed from stative verbs, there are a few adverbs formed from other verbs as well, for example:

rişod “finally, just” (verbal meaning “to end”)
«MORE EXAMPLES TBD»

8.4 Determinative adverbs

...

Table 8.1: Determinative adverbs

Type	<i>kar-</i> “what”	<i>be-</i> “this”	<i>bes-</i> “that”	<i>hed-</i> “same”
Time	<i>karnad</i> “when”	<i>bevnad</i> “now”	<i>besnad</i> “then”	<i>hednad</i> “at the same time”
Place	<i>kargey</i> “where”	<i>bevey</i> “here”	<i>besgey</i> “there”	<i>hedgey</i> “at the same place”
Way/manner	<i>karzar</i> “how”	<i>bezar</i> “like this”	<i>bezar</i> “like that”	<i>hedzar</i> “in the same way”
Amount	<i>karnon</i> “how many”	<i>bevnon</i> “this many”	<i>besnon</i> “that many”	-
Reason	<i>karmom</i> “why”	<i>bevmom</i> “for this reason”	<i>besmom</i> “for that reason”	<i>hedmom</i> “for the same reason”
Type	<i>zuġit-</i> “other”	<i>et-</i> “some”	<i>yâ-</i> “all/every”	<i>bô-</i> “no”
Time	<i>zuġinad</i> “at another time”	<i>etnad</i> “at some point”	<i>yânad</i> “always”	<i>bônad</i> “never”
Place	<i>zuġugey</i> “somewhere else”	<i>egey</i> “somewhere”	<i>yâgey</i> “everywhere”	<i>bôgey</i> “nowhere”
Way/manner	<i>zuġizar</i> “another way”	<i>etzar</i> “somehow”	<i>yâzar</i> “in every way”	<i>bôzar</i> “in no way”
Amount	-	<i>etnon</i> “some amount”	-	-
Reason	<i>zuġumom</i> “for another reason”	<i>etmom</i> “for some reason”	-	<i>bômom</i> “for no reason”

8.4.1 Prepositional adverbs

The same determinative prefixes given in the table prior can be attached to postpositions to form adverbs. These adverbs can refer to objects as well as locations. For example, using the postposition *ric* “to”:

- *karric* “to where/what”
- *bevríc* “to here/this”
- *besric* “to there/that”
- *hedric* “to the same place/thing”
- *zuĝuric* “to somewhere/something else”
- *etric* “to somewhere/something”
- *yâric* “to everywhere/everything”
- *bôric* “to nowhere/nothing”

...

NUMBERS

9.1 Cardinal Numbers

Cardinal numbers are numerals used to count objects X. X. X.

Table 9.1: The forms of the cardinal numbers

0 <i>ma</i>	10 <i>hom</i>	20 <i>zvîm</i>	30 <i>bezâm</i>
1 <i>se</i>	11 <i>homerse</i>	21 <i>zvîmerse</i>	40 <i>șîm</i>
2 <i>zvim</i>	12 <i>homerzvim</i>	22 <i>zvîmerzvim</i>	50 <i>sebom</i>
3 <i>bezâ</i>	13 <i>homerbezâ</i>	23 <i>zvîmerbezâ</i>	60 <i>vigvom</i>
4 <i>șî</i>	14 <i>homerșî</i>	24 <i>zvîmerșî</i>	70 <i>êm</i>
5 <i>seb</i>	15 <i>homerseb</i>	25 <i>zvîmerseb</i>	80 <i>yesâm</i>
6 <i>viğ</i>	16 <i>homerviğ</i>	26 <i>zvîmerviğ</i>	90 <i>dezom</i>
7 <i>ê</i>	17 <i>homerê</i>	27 <i>zvîmerê</i>	91 <i>dezomerse</i>
8 <i>yesâ</i>	18 <i>homeryesâ</i>	28 <i>zvîmeryesâ</i>	92 <i>dezomerzvim</i>
9 <i>des</i>	19 <i>homerdes</i>	29 <i>zvîmerdes</i>	93 <i>dezomerbezâ</i>
100 <i>tenâ</i>		1000 <i>malê</i>	
101 <i>tenârse</i>		1099 <i>malêrdezomerdes</i>	
102 <i>tenârzvim</i>		1100 <i>malêrtenâ</i>	
151 <i>tenârsebomerse</i>		2605 <i>zvimmalêrviğtenârseb</i>	
200 <i>zvimtenâ</i>		10,000 <i>hommalê</i>	
587 <i>sebtentênâryesâmerê</i>		50,000 <i>sebommalê</i>	
999 <i>destenârdezomerdes</i>		100,000 <i>tenâmalê</i>	
397,156 <i>bezâtenârdezomerêmalêrtenârsebomerviğ</i>			
1,000,000 <i>totajicim</i>		1,000,000,000 <i>totajicmûm</i>	
2,000,000 <i>zvimtotajic</i>		1,000,000,000,000 <i>totajicita</i>	
6,391,472 <i>viğtotajicimerbezâtenârdezomersemalêrșîtenârêmerzvim</i>			

Some numbers may have alternate shortened forms in colloquial speech, in particular:

- *totajicim* “million” → *toçic*
- *totajicmûm* “million” → *toçicmûm* or *toçicmum*
- *totajicita* “million” → *toçicita* or *toçicta*

Different components «terminology?» of a number are connected using the linking suffix *-er*, or *-r* if the preceding numeral ends in a vowel. For example:

viğ “six”

homerviğ “sixteen”

êtenârhomerviğ “seven hundred and sixteen”

VERBS

10.1 Types of verb

...

10.1.1 Intransitive

...

10.1.2 Transitive

...

10.1.3 Stative

In Balak there are no true adjectives. Instead, the role of adjectives is assumed by a category of verbs called stative verbs. These verbs can roughly be translated as “to be X”, and behave mostly identically to intransitive verbs; the primary exception lies in how the gerund forms of stative verbs are constructed.

When used in the active voice, stative verbs play the role of predicative adjectives (i.e. “X is Y”, where Y is the adjective), as in the following examples:

Koşlen beyer. “[The] Gushli is mute.”

Yanaşaş. “[I think] you’re cute.”

Balâçik yuşadamşar. “Balakia is eternal/forever.”

Vonânok hâd beren cer dacâşar. “[The] fighting in Vonan is of no concern to us.” (lit. “[The] fighting in Vonan is not serious to us.”)

Relative forms of stative verbs (see section 10.10 for more information on relative clauses) are used in much the same way as attributive adjectives are in other languages. Taking the above examples and relativising the subject gives us the following:

beyê koşlen “[the] mute Gushli”

yanâ şê “cute you”

yuşadamê Balâçik “eternal Balakia”

Vonânok beren cerimê hâd “[The] fighting in Vonan that’s of no concern to us” (lit. “[The] not serious to us fighting in Vonan”)

10.2 Personal endings

...

Table 10.1: Base personal endings

	<i>Back conjugation</i>	<i>Front conjugation</i>
1S	-et	-et
2S	-aş	-Yiş
3I	-şar	-şir
3SA	-ar	-Yir
1P	-mas	-mis
2P	-em	-em
3PA	-cak	-çik

10.3 Tenses

...

X. Tense distinctions are only made in the realis mood. X.

10.3.1 Non-past

The non-past tense is the default unmarked tense in Balak. This tense is used to form both present and future statements, X. ... As an unmarked tense, the non-past is not characterised by the use of any particular affix.

«EXAMPLES TBD»

10.3.2 Past perfective

...

«EXAMPLES TBD»

10.3.3 Past imperfective

...

«EXAMPLES TBD»

10.4 Evidentiality

Balak makes a grammatical distinction between direct and indirect evidentiality. X. X. Grammatical evidentiality distinctions are only made in the realis mood; there are no such distinct direct/indirect evidential forms in the irrealis mood.

10.4.1 Direct evidentiality

The direct evidential can be seen as the ‘default’ or unmarked evidential in Balak, with there being no suffix to specifically mark it. It indicates that the information provided by the speaker has been reported or experienced directly or firsthand, i.e. the speaker has experienced the event visually, audially, or through other sensory means, as well as X. ...

Although indirect speech can be seen as indirect evidence, the direct evidential is also used for such, when the speaker is not expressing doubt about the veracity of the quoted statement.

- (38) Vaha pâşâ Zumağdarok şe
 Vaha-Ø pâş-Ø-â Zumağdar-ok şe
 Vaha-DR father-DR.SG-3SA.POSS Zumaghdar-LOC in
 dânar.
 dâ-Ø-ar.
 live-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 ‘Vaha’s father lives in Zumaghdar.’
- (39) Vaha pâşâ Zumağdarok şe Qasamyâ
 Vaha-Ø pâş-Ø-â Zumağdar-ok şe Qasam-yâ
 Vaha-DR father-DR.SG-3SA.POSS Zumaghdar-LOC in Qasam-POST
 vusvâ dânar.
 vusvâ dâ-Ø-ar.
 according.to live-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 ‘According to Qasam, Vaha’s father lives in Zumaghdar.’
- (40) Qasamyâ vusvâ Vaha pâşâ
 Qasam-yâ vusvâ Vaha-Ø pâş-Ø-â
 Qasam-POST according.to Vaha-DR father-DR.SG-3SA.POSS
 Zumağdarok şe dânar.
 Zumağdar-ok şe dâ-Ø-ar.
 Zumaghdar-LOC in live-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 ‘According to Qasam, Vaha’s father lives in Zumaghdar.’

10.4.2 Indirect evidentiality

The indirect evidential, characterised by the suffix *-oş* on back conjugation verbs and *-Yeş* on front conjugation verbs before tense and person marking, indicates that the information provided by the speaker has been reported or experienced indirectly or secondhand, such as through hearsay. It is also used when the speaker is inferring an event or outcome based on circumstantial evidence. Thus, the indirect evidential carries a meaning roughly equivalent to “apparently,” “I gather,” “I hear that,” “it appears that,” etc. An extension of this is that the indirect evidential is typically used to discuss or narrate folklore, as well as in other narrative contexts. It is common for the source/provider of the information to be denoted with the postposition *vusvâ* “following, according to,” with its complement taking the postpositional case. Additionally, the indirect evidential can also be used to express the speaker’s opinions without necessarily asserting them as fact; this is seen most frequently in formal speech.

Aside from these basic uses, the indirect evidential can also be used to imply doubt or uncertainty in the validity or veracity of the information the speaker has received, with this usage being most common in indirect speech. The indirect evidential can also be used as a mirative, expressing the speaker’s surprise or unpreparedness of their mind.

- (41) Vaha pâşâ Zumağdarok şe
 Vaha-Ø pâş-Ø-â Zumağdar-ok şe
 Vaha-DR father-DR.SG-3SA.POSS Zumaghdar-LOC in
 dânar.
 dân-Ø-ar.
 live-NPST.DIRE-3SA
 ‘Vaha’s father lives in Zumaghdar.’
- (42) Vaha pâşâ Zumağdarok şe
 Vaha-Ø pâş-Ø-â Zumağdar-ok şe
 Vaha-DR father-DR.SG-3SA.POSS Zumaghdar-LOC in
 dânoşar.
 dân-oş-ar.
 live-NPST.IDRE-3SA
 ‘[I hear that] Vaha’s father lives in Zumaghdar.’
- (43) Vaha pâşâ Zumağdarok şe Qasamyâ
 Vaha-Ø pâş-Ø-â Zumağdar-ok şe Qasam-yâ
 Vaha-DR father-DR.SG-3SA.POSS Zumaghdar-LOC in Qasam-POST
 vusvâ dânar.
 vusvâ dân-oş-ar.
 according.to live-NPST.IDRE-3SA
 ‘According to Qasam, Vaha’s father lives in Zumaghdar.’

- (44) Vaha pâşâ Zumağdarok şe
 Vaha-Ø pâş-Ø-â Zumağdar-ok şe
 Vaha-DR father-DR.SG-3SA.POSS Zumaghdar-LOC in
 dânoşar, Qasam neyeşir.
 dânoş-ar, Qasam-Ø ney-Yeş-ir
 live-NPST.IDRE-3SA Qasam-DR say-NPST.IDRE-3SA
 ‘Qasam says Vaha’s father lives in Zumaghdar [but I doubt that].’
- (45) Seğârenok doriyeşir.
 Seğâren-ok dorig-Yeş-ir.
 Segharen-LOC sketchy-NPST.IDRE-3SA
 ‘As for Seğâren, [I believe] he’s sketchy.’

...

10.5 Realis and irrealis moods

10.5.1 Realis

...

10.5.2 Irrealis

The irrealis mood in Balak indicates that an event is not known to have happened, particularly if it is hypothetical. It covers a wide range of grammatical moods, among them the subjunctive, conditional, optative, and potential moods. No tense, aspect, or evidentiality distinctions are made in the irrealis mood. The irrealis mood is characterised by the suffix *-(m)ek* for verbs in both conjugations, applied to the verb’s *qumta* stem if applicable, exhibiting an additional *-m-* only when the stem it’s attaching to ends in a vowel (*qumta* vowels included). ...

10.5.3 TAM ending tables

Where there are two allomorphs given for an ending, the first one is used when any following suffixes begin with a vowel, while the second is used when any following suffixes begin with a consonant.

Table 10.2: TAM endings (direct evidentiality)

	<i>Back declension</i>	<i>Front declension</i>
Non-past	-Ø	-Ø
Past perfective	-nam / -nâ	-yim / -yî
Past imperfective	-şam / -şâ	-şim / -şî
Irrealis	-(m)ek	-(m)ek

Table 10.3: TAM endings (indirect evidentiality)

	<i>Back declension</i>	<i>Front declension</i>
Non-past	-oş	-Yeş
Past perfective	-oşnam / -oşnâ	-Yeşyim / -Yeşyî
Past imperfective	-oşsam / -oşşâ	-Yeşsim / -Yeşşî

10.6 Imperative and prohibitive moods

The imperative mood is used to give direct commands or requests. X. X. When transitive verbs are used in the imperative, there is an implied object; no pronoun such as “it” needs to be given (e.g. in *Zerçi* “Burn it!”). The prohibitive form has a similar purpose, but instead indicates that the action is not permitted.

To form the imperative form of a verb, the citation form of the verb is used. For the prohibitive form, the suffix *-am/-Yim* is added. No additional endings are used, such as for tense or person.

şiş “to be quiet”
Şiş! “Be quiet!”
Şişim! “Don’t be quiet!”

kâkon “to copy”
Kâkon! “Copy [it]!”
Zon kâkon! “Copy me!”
Zon kâkonam! “Don’t copy me!”

...

10.7 Negation

Verbs are negated through the use of the negative auxiliary verb *dacam*. This verb is an n-stem irregular verb (see section 10.14) X. ...

10.8 Passive voice

The passive voice is used to promote the object of a transitive verb in the active voice to a subject. In *Balak*, the passive form of a transitive verb is formed using the suffix *-tor* or *-dor* for back conjugation verbs and *-çer* or *-jer* for front conjugation verbs, applied to the verb’s *qumta* stem if applicable. The consonantal variation is a result of the process of softening; when the suffix is applied to a verb root ending

in a consonant, the variants *-tor* and *-çer* are used, whereas if the verb root ends in a vowel the variants *-dor* and *-jer* are used. This can be summed up in the table below:

Table 10.4: Passive voice suffixes

	<i>Back conjugation</i>	<i>Front conjugation</i>
After a consonant	<i>-tor</i>	<i>-çer</i>
After a vowel	<i>-dor</i>	<i>-jer</i>

The following examples showcase each of the forms of the suffixes:

Ğaşir bayottorar. “[The] student is being helped.” (*bayot* “to help”)

Doğasaş zanâdorar. “Your dog is being cared for.” (*zanâ* “to care for”)

Neyçeryimê nây neyçeryîşir. “What’s been said has been said.” (lit. “The said thing has been said.”) (*ney* “to say”)

Şezejerçik. “They are being annoyed.” (*şez* “to annoy”, *qumta* stem *şeze-*)

It should be noted, however, that certain groups of irregular verbs (see section 10.14) exhibit the consonant-root form of their respective passive suffix despite the suffix immediately following a vowel, one example being *pân* “to give” vs *pâtor* “to be given” (as opposed to expected *pâdor* given the environment).

10.8.1 Mentioning the agent

In order to specifically mention the agent in a passive sentence, the postposition *şim* “from” can be used with the agent (inflected for the postpositional case) in the sense of “by”. This construction tends to remain unused unless specific attention needs to be drawn to the agent, however. Modifying some of the previous examples to mention a subject can give us the following:

Ğaşir zêyinâ şim bayottorar. “[The] student is being helped by his/her friends.”

Doğasaş majayanyâ şim zanâdorar. “Your dog is being cared for by [our] assistant.”

Şimze şezejerçik. “They are being annoyed by me.”

10.9 Subordinate clauses

The most basic subordinate clauses in Balak are formed using the conjunction *bez* “that”. ... Subordinate clauses are typically positioned after the main clause, but may also occur before the main clause, particularly for emphasis. The following examples exhibit the use of *bez*:

Vudok mâr. “[The] wolf is sleeping.” → *Hamodet bez vudok mâr.* “I know that [the] wolf is sleeping.”

ALSO *Vudok mâr.* “[The] wolf is sleeping.” → *Bez vudok mâr hamodet.* “I know that [the] wolf is sleeping.”

Ren ŝen yirimin pânamar. “[The] man gave you the book.” → *Kênet bez ren ŝen yirimin pânamar.* “I know [the] man gave you the book.”

10.9.1 Usage in place of an infinitive construction

...

10.9.2 Adverbial clauses

Some additional conjunctions can be used to form subordinate clauses. In particular, Balak has two subsets of adverbial conjunctions which form adverbial clauses: *realis* and *irrealis* conjunctions. These sets are used in differing contexts, and are transparently related to demonstrative and interrogative adverbs respectively (see section 8.4). Realis conjunctions are used in positive declarative statements (i.e. when what they are referring to is known), while irrealis conjunctions are used in negative declarative statements and any indirect questions (i.e. when what they are referring to is unknown).

Table 10.5: Adverbial conjunctions

Realis	Irrealis	Meaning
<i>besnad</i>	<i>karnad</i>	“when”
<i>besgey</i>	<i>kargey</i>	“where”
<i>bezar</i>	<i>karzar</i>	“how”
<i>besnon</i>	<i>karnon</i>	“how many/much”
<i>besmom</i>	<i>karmom</i>	“why”
<i>bes- + [postposition]</i>	<i>kar- + [postposition]</i>	“[postposition] what/where”

For example, using realis conjunctions instead of the conjunction *bez* in the sentence *Hamodet bez kamaŝ.* “I know that you’re going.”:

besnad “when” - *Hamodet besnad kamaŝ.* “I know when you’re going.”

besgey “where” - *Hamodet besgey kamaŝ.* “I know where you’re going.”

bezar “how” - *Hamodet bezar kamaŝ.* “I know how you’re going.”

besnon “how much” - *Hamodet besnon kamaŝ.* “I know how much [far]

you're going.”

besmom “why” - *Hamodet besmom kamaş*. “I know why you're going.”

besric “where to” - *Hamodet besric kamaş*. “I know where you're going to.”

Taking the first example and modifying it to use the respective irrealis conjunction:

Hamodet besgey kamaş. “I know where you're going.” (positive declarative statement)

Hamot dacamet kargey kamaş. “I don't know where you're going.” (negative declarative statement)

Hamot yinet kargey kamaş. “I want to know where you're going.” (positive indirect question)

Hamot yin dacamet kargey kamaş. “I don't want to know where you're going.” (negative indirect question)

10.10 Relative clauses

10.10.1 Relativising a subject or object

Relative clauses in Balak where the subject or object of a verb is relativised use the relative participle of a verb. This is formed through the addition of the suffix *-ê* to a verb stem ending in a consonant, triggering softening in the process if applicable, or by lengthening the word-final vowel if it is not already long (e.g. *a* → *â*). The qumta stem of a verb is used to form the relative participle. The relative participle suffix can be applied to any verb stem inflected for tense and evidentiality but not person, and in either active or passive voice. The relative participle of a verb is placed at the end of the relative clause, and the whole clause is placed directly before the noun it modifies. Relative participles are not modified based on the animacy or number of the noun itself.

Vudok mâr. “[The] wolf is sleeping.” → *mâ vudok* “[the] sleeping wolf”

Ren şen yirimin pânamar. “[The] man gave you the book.” → *şen yirimin pânamê ren* “[the] man who gave you the book”

Şemâ cvutşar. “[The] desert is barren.” → *cvudê şemâ* “[the] barren desert”

Relative clauses of this type can be connected using the conjunction *er* “and” in the following manner:

Balâk qarimbele tessir er hacvâşar. “Our Balak flag is red and yellow.” →
tesê er hacvâ balâk qarimbele “our red and yellow Balak flag”

These relative clauses can also be applied to pronouns, although this is typically only the case with shorter clauses (usually consisting of only a stative verb).

Zanâdorê şê. “Poor you.”

Çenê’r zê le! lit. “Good old him/her!”

Negative relative participle

There is also a negative relative participle, formed using the suffix *-amê* for back conjugation verbs and *-Yimê* for front conjugation verbs. If the verb stem ends in a vowel, the initial vowel of the suffix is omitted, and like the positive relative participle, the qumta stem of a verb is used to form the negative participle if applicable. This suffix, however, is only used in the non-past direct tense; for negative relative and adverbial forms in other tenses, a construction using a relative form of the negative verb *dacam* (see section 10.7) and the infinitive is used instead. This may also apply to non-past direct forms in informal speech.

Vudok mâ dacamar. “[The] wolf isn’t sleeping.” → *mâm vudok* “[the] not sleeping wolf”

Ren şen yirimin pân dacânamar. “[The] man didn’t give you the book.”
 → *şen yirimin pân dacânamê ren* “[the] man who didn’t gave you the book”
 (NOT *şen yirimin pânamamê ren*)

10.11 Infinitive

The infinitive form of a verb is its unmodified citation form. It appears only when used in conjunction with a modal verb *with the same subject*; a subordinate clause must be used when the subjects of the modal verb and the lexical verb differ (see section 10.9.1).

10.12 Auxiliary verbs

A small group of verbs can be used as auxiliary verbs to carry additional grammatical information, such as negation or modality. When auxiliary verbs are used, the lexical verb remains undeclined (i.e. in its infinitive form). Here is a list of auxiliary verbs modifying the sentence *Svansakyâ ric kamet*. “I’m going to the shop.”:

âm beşim “to try” (reflexive; see section 10.13) - *Svansakyâ ric kab âm beşimet.* “I’m trying to go to the shop.”
cvîn “to be able” - *Svansakyâ ric kab cvînet.* “I can go to the shop.”
cvîyim “to be unable” - *Svansakyâ ric kab cvîyimet.* “I can’t go to the shop.”
dacam “to not do” (see section 10.7) - *Svansakyâ ric kab dacamet.* “I don’t go to the shop.”
miy “to hope” - *Svansakyâ ric kab miyit.* “I hope to go to the shop.”
yîn “to want” - *Svansakyâ ric kab yinet.* “I want to go to the shop.”
yiyim “to not want” - *Svansakyâ ric kab yiyimet.* “I don’t want to go to the shop.”
zem “to need” - *Svansakyâ ric kab zemet.* “I need to go to the shop.”
zemim “to not need” - *Svansakyâ ric kab zemimet.* “I don’t need to go to the shop.”

The negative verb *dacam* can be used in conjunction with the other modal verbs when the main lexical verb needs to specifically be negated, such as in *Svansakyâ ric kab dacam zemet.* “I need to not go to the shop.” (i.e. the speaker needs to avoid going, as opposed to not having to go).

10.13 Reflexive verbs

Reflexive verbs are characterised by the presence of *âm*, the oblique form of the reflexive pronoun, immediately before the base verb. They indicate that the subject is doing the action to themselves. All transitive verbs can be made into a reflexive verb through the use of *âm* as their direct object. Some reflexive verbs in Balak convey the same meanings as certain intransitive verbs in English.

10.13.1 Verbs of movement

Certain verbs of movement come in transitive/reflexive pairs. In these cases, the use of the transitive verb on its own indicates that the subject is causing something else to move in that fashion, with the passive implying that the subject is being caused to move, perhaps against their own volition, while the use of the reflexive verb indicates that the subject is voluntarily moving themselves in the stated fashion. Take the following example with the verb *von* “to fly”:

Şozasanyâ ric vonar. “[S]he’s flying [sth/sbd] to Shozasan” (implies the subject is a pilot, focus on transporting either passengers or cargo)

Şozasanyâ ric vontorar. “[S]he’s being flown to Shozasan” (implies the subject is a passenger)

Şozasanyâ ric âm vonar. “[S]he’s flying themselves to Shozasan” (could imply the subject is a pilot (focus on transporting yourself), could also imply some form of private transportation)

10.14 Irregular verbs

...

10.14.1 N-stem irregulars

N-stem irregular verbs are those whose citation form ends in a nasal consonant (i.e. *m* or *n*), which is elided in certain forms of the verb, triggering compensatory lengthening of the previous vowel. More specifically, this happens when the stem occurs before an ending, personal or tense, that begins with a consonant; this can include certain derivational suffixes. This elision does not occur when the stem occurs before a vowel-initial ending, and compensatory lengthening does not occur if the preceding vowel is already long. When inflected for the passive voice, the consonant-stem variant of the verb’s respective passive suffix is used, as opposed to the expected vowel-stem variant. Compare the following examples (stems underlined):

- *tvayon* “to bribe” (regular):
 - *tvayonar* “[s]he bribes”
 - *tvayonmas* “we bribe”
 - *tvayonnamar* “[s]he bribed”
 - *tvayontor* “to be bribed”
- *zem* “to need” (irregular):
 - *zemir* “[s]he needs”
 - *zêmis* “we need”
 - *zêyimir* “[s]he needed”
 - *zêçer* “to be needed”
- *pân* “to give” (irregular):
 - *pânar* “[s]he gives”
 - *pâmas* “we give”
 - *pânamar* “[s]he gave”
 - *pâtor* “to be given”

10.14.2 Ğ-stem irregulars

...