Kala grammar

Introduction

Kala is intended to be a personal constructed language based on my aesthetic preferences. This language draws on natlangs (natural language), other conlangs, and of course imagination. Kala was started in late 2009. The phonemic inventory is based on Classical Nahuatl while the syllable structure and vowels are based on the strict (C)V structure of Japanese, and the presence of prenasalized stops is influenced by Bantu languages. Kala’s grammar was initially based on Japanese but has changed based on influence from several natural and constructed languages. Many – if not most – of Kala lexemes are derived or inspired by natural languages. A few have been taken from previous projects or constructed languages such as Ajara (a cipherlang from my youth), Qatama (a conlang that I abandoned several years ago).

There are three distinct parts of speech in Kala; noun, particle and verb. However, many Kala lexemes straddle a combination of these categories. A word that is used as both a verb and a noun is often categorized as a uati, or verb. Kala strives for short yet specific phrases, it discards all redundancies. In English we say “two boys came yesterday”; in Kala (yomaye tahi ta’o tala) “yesterday boy two come.” It is clear that more than one boy is already indicated by ‘two,’ while ‘yesterday’ shows the time, or tense of the verb.

Numerous natlangs have inspired or influenced Kala lexemes, including but not limited to: Arabic, Japanese, Spanish, Cherokee, Nahuatl, Swahili, Finnish, Mandarin, Tagalog, Hawaiian…

Phonology

Consonants

Where ~ appears, it indicates free variation between phonemes.

Nasals: m ~/m/, n ~/n/, ny ~/ny/
Plosives: p ~/p~b/, t ~/t~d/, k ~/k~g/, ‘ ~/ʔ/
Affricates: tz ~/ts~ʧ/, tl ~/tl~tl/
Continuants: s ~/s~ʃ/, h ~/h~ɦ/, l ~/l~ɾ/
Semivowels: u ~/u/, y ~/j/

Labialized consonants: /pʷ/, /kʷ/, /mʷ/, /nʷ/, /sʷ/, /hʷ/, /ʃʷ/
Palatalized consonants: /pʲ/, /kʲ/, /mʲ/, /hʲ/, /tʲ/

Vowels

Kala has five vowels /i/, /e/, /a/, /o/ and /u/.
Diphthongs

Both of the falling diphthongs, ai [ar] and ao [ao], as well as uai [war] and yao [jao] tend to only occur word finally.

Allophony

/h/ becomes /fi/ when preceded or followed by a front vowel

The glottal stop is not phonemic but is included in the chart above. It is pronounced between two vowels and/or diphthongs that are not connected.

The continuant s is [ʃ] in most positions but is [s] when adjacent to ts. However, one could pronounce them either way (e.g. always [s] & [ts]) and still be understood.

Example:

sitsa – /'siː.tsa/ – be warm; hot
tsasu – /'tsə.su/ – cursive or flowing writing

Syllable structure

All syllables are of the form (C)V(N), that is, optional consonant + vowel + optional final nasal.

Collating order

The collating sequence (alphabetical order) is based on the order established in the Naua script.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonants</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>k</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>ts</th>
<th>tl</th>
<th>l</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vowels</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>ua</td>
<td>ue</td>
<td>ya</td>
<td>ye</td>
<td>yo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above can be spoken as pa ta ka ma na nya sa ha tsa tla ua la ya a for memorization.

Based on this order, mye would come before ha, etc. Below is a chart of Kala syllables. Other syllables can be used sparingly, most especially in proper names, or borrowed words that rarely occur. Prenasalized syllables are ordered after their non-prenasalized counterparts, i.e. mpi comes after pyo but before ta. The red syllables occur infrequently and most often in the ultimate, or final position.
Stress

In Kala stress falls on the penultimate syllable with the exceptions of negatives and words that end with a syllable onset palatal approximant, in which case stress is ultimate.

Prenasalized consonants

In Kala, almost every consonant can be prenasalized, but primarily the plosives /p/, /t/ and /k/ can be analyzed as prenasalized, while most other instances should be analyzed as cases of syllabic /ⁿ/. It often assimilates to bilabial [ᵐ] before [p] and velar [ⁿ] before [k]. mp /ᵐpⁿ/ nt /ⁿtⁿ/, nk /ⁿkⁿ/

Phonotactics

Kala phonotactics does not allow the onsets of adjacent syllables to be identical, nor both to be labialized or palatalized. (There are a few exceptions to this, such as tata for the informal/familiar form of father, etc.) Syllables beginning with /l/ do not occur as the first syllable of a headword.

Word Order

Kala has a fairly regular word order: SOV

(subject) — (object) — verb
By extension: (temporal/locative adverb) – (subject) – (indirect object) – (object) – verb – (adverbial/stative verb)

yohano empa – John runs
maliya yohano anu – Maria hears John

A noun phrase has this order:
(determiners —) noun (—quantifiers) (— stative verb)

tlakaha ha’o nisin – The three large western men…
nakahimpa pako – The many small young women…

A verb phrase has this order:
(adverbial —) verb (— modifier) (— adverb)

inhaeye kyolon – …needed to eat quickly…
inhaetli tsipuen – …will have to eat slowly…

A locative phrase generally precedes what it modifies, and has this order:
locative — noun phrase

nahe kuhasa – …in the kitchen
pue huatso – …after midnight

**Nouns**

gender

Gender is typically not indicated. If necessary, nouns may be affixed with -ta (male) or -na (female):

umata / umaña – a stallion / a mare

This usage extends to familial terms:

hyana, hyata – grandmother, grandfather
tahi, nahi – daughter, son
nahya, tahya – granddaughter, grandson
nahue, tahue – niece, nephew, etc
quantity

General plurals are formed with –m (or –lo if the final syllable contains m).

tsaka / tsakam – house / houses  
yama / yamalo – mountain / mountains

Mass nouns include liquids, powders, and substances, such as maya (water), hyeka (sand), and tleno (wood). They do not normally require determiners or the plural. However, one may add these to indicate specific examples or different types:

tlenom – woods (e.g. various kinds)  
mayam – waters (e.g. various locations)

The collective plural is marked by tli-, derived from tatli, meaning group; collection; gathering. It is mainly used to indicate collectives of animals, but can also indicate groups of flora, geographic features, and various other groupings. This is called the collective plural (COL).

mita – dog / tlimita – pack of dogs  
yama – mountain / tllyamalo – mountain range  
tsaka – house / tlitsaka – neighborhood  
puku – clothing / tlipuku – wardrobe

quantifiers

Quantifiers are most often affixed to the noun they modify:

kua [-kua] — all; every  
oli [-li] – each; every  
ula [-la] – some; any; whichever; whatever  
nke [-k] — none, zero

To express “many, much” or “few, little” amounts, the following affixes are used:

-mpa — many, much  
-mi — few, little (paucal)

Other quantifiers have only an independent form:

maha — more  
ohi — less, fewer  
ua — other  
itlo — same; equal  
kue — such; as
quality

The quality of a noun can be indicated by various affixes;

unfavorable; bad -\textit{mpo}
red -\textit{kai}
nice; good -\textit{ni}
damned; cursed -\textit{tsa}
honored; esteemed -\textit{o-}

degree

The size or importance of a noun can be indicated by one of a few suffixes;

excessive; too many/much -\textit{pye}
augmentative [AUG] -\textit{ha}
diminutive [DIM] -\textit{hi}
aggressive; drastic -\textit{hu}
almost; nearly -\textit{tsua}

These are also used to differentiate hue, or shade.

\textit{yanahi} – light yellow
\textit{kuyaha} – dark green

other modifiers

Word building in Kala can be done through compounding, as in \textit{tsukimila} (word order), however, there are several affixes that act as categorical word builders.

-\textit{pe} – piece/part of
-\textit{pu} – clothing
-\textit{pyo} – disease; sickness
-\textit{to} – manner; method
-\textit{kan} – chief; leader
-\textit{tlo} – agentive
-\textit{kyo} – school; university
-\textit{mo} – location; place
-\textit{nai} – food
-\textit{nyo} – tool
-\textit{sa} – room
-\textit{so} – class; kind; type
-\textit{su} – shop; market
-\textit{hua} – flower
-\textit{hya} – animal; beast
-\textit{hyo} – juice
tsi- – angle; corner
-tso – middle; mid
-tsu – meat
-tla – language; dialect
-ya – in-law; related by law
-u – double for redundant syllable

compounding

Kala compounding is right-branching. Kala also reduces redundant syllables.

nyepa – cloud, pana – rain / nyepana – raincloud
tsuki – order; sequence, mila – word; lexeme / tsukimila – word order
naho – rule; law, kala – speak; language / nahoakala – grammar
hanya – nation; state, nyaue – be external; outside / hanyae – foreign; abroad; overseas

Determiners

Kala makes a three-way distinction between demonstratives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>i- “this” (by me)</th>
<th>ua- “that” (by you)</th>
<th>ye- “that” (over there)</th>
<th>-k not; none (negative)</th>
<th>kua all; every (inclusive)</th>
<th>ula any; some (indefinite)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thing; object</td>
<td>itla</td>
<td>uatla</td>
<td>yetla</td>
<td>nok</td>
<td>kua</td>
<td>ula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place</td>
<td>hina</td>
<td>uana</td>
<td>yemua</td>
<td>mok</td>
<td>moku</td>
<td>mola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>way; manner</td>
<td>yoto</td>
<td>uato</td>
<td>ato</td>
<td>tok</td>
<td>tokua</td>
<td>tola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person</td>
<td>iko</td>
<td>uko</td>
<td>yeko</td>
<td>tlo</td>
<td>tloku</td>
<td>kola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>ina</td>
<td>uama</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>amak</td>
<td>kuma</td>
<td>tla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kind; type</td>
<td>iso</td>
<td>so’o</td>
<td>yeso</td>
<td>sok</td>
<td>soku</td>
<td>sola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amount</td>
<td>iku</td>
<td>uaku</td>
<td>yeku</td>
<td>ok</td>
<td>kua</td>
<td>ula</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

itla [i-] – this; near speaker [proximal]
uatla [ua-] – that; near listener [medial]
yetla [ye-] – that; away from speaker and listener [distal]

These appear in full form when used as pronouns, but are prefixed when in the determiner role:

uatla nayo – MED 1SG.POSS – That is mine
iteye nkanu – PROX-sentence be.short – This sentence is short
Pronouns

Kala generally distinguishes four persons, the fourth person indicating abstract and inanimate nouns – both in the singular and plural numbers. There is also a distinction between inclusive (I/we and you) and exclusive (EXCL) (we but not you) forms of the first person plural.

- **na** – first person (speaker)
- **ta** – second person (listener)
- **ha** – third person [does not distinguish gender]
- **tla** – fourth person [inanimate; impersonal]

- **m** – plural
- **nku** – reciprocal
- **e** – patient [object] of verb
- **i** – reflexive
- **yo** – possessive

**na’am** – 1PL.EXCL – We, but not you

**kam** – 3PL – They

When both subject and object of a verb are pronouns, they are linked in a pronominal construction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1sg</th>
<th>2sg</th>
<th>3sg</th>
<th>4sg</th>
<th>1pl</th>
<th>1pl.excl</th>
<th>2pl</th>
<th>3pl</th>
<th>4pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg</td>
<td>na’eta</td>
<td>na’e’ha</td>
<td>na’etla</td>
<td>na’emam</td>
<td>na’ena’am</td>
<td>na’etam</td>
<td>na’ekam</td>
<td>na’etlam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg</td>
<td>ta’ena</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ta’e’ha</td>
<td>ta’etla</td>
<td>ta’emam</td>
<td>ta’ena’am</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ta’ekam</td>
<td>ta’etlam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg</td>
<td>ha’ena</td>
<td>ha’e’ha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ha’etla</td>
<td>ha’emam</td>
<td>ha’ena’am</td>
<td>ha’etam</td>
<td>ha’ekam</td>
<td>ha’etlam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4sg</td>
<td>tla’ena</td>
<td>tla’etla</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>tla’etam</td>
<td>tla’emam</td>
<td>tla’ena’am</td>
<td>tla’etam</td>
<td>tla’ekam</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>nameta</td>
<td>nameha</td>
<td>nametla</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>nameam</td>
<td>namekam</td>
<td>nametlam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl.excl</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>na’ameta</td>
<td>na’ameha</td>
<td>na’ametla</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>na’ametam</td>
<td>na’amekam</td>
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<td>2pl</td>
<td>tamena</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>tamenam</td>
<td>tamena’am</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl</td>
<td>kamena</td>
<td>kameta</td>
<td>kameha</td>
<td>kametla</td>
<td>kamanam</td>
<td>kamena’am</td>
<td>kametam</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>kametlam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4pl</td>
<td>tlamena</td>
<td>tlameta</td>
<td>tlameha</td>
<td>tlametla</td>
<td>tlamenam</td>
<td>tlamena’am</td>
<td>tlametam</td>
<td>tlamekam</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no gender distinctions between “he” and “she”. If gender is significant, one can use words like **naka, tlaka, nahi, tahì** (the woman, the man, the girl, the boy), etc.

The fourth person is also used as an indefinite or impersonal pronoun “one”:

**tla na’ho otsihe** — IMPRS rule obey-NEC — One must follow the rules.
The reflexive is marked with the affix –i:

na’i tlaye – 1SG-REFL wash-PST – I washed myself.
ha’i itsa – 3SG-REFL love – He loves himself.

The possessive is marked with the affix -yo:

neko tayo yemua – cat 2SG.POSS DIST-place – Your cat is over there.
ke ueha nayo pakan – 0 want 1SG.POSS fool-ADV – My desire is foolish.

Other pronouns include the following:

tlokua — everyone, everybody
kola — someone, somebody; whomever, anyone, anybody
tolk — no one, nobody
nokua – everything
nola – something; anything; whatever
nok – nothing

Verbs

A typical verb denotes the occurrence or abandonment of an action (run, stop), a relationship (have, lose), or a state (stand, melt). The majority of Kala verbs can also be nouns…so; they can be classified as either verbal nouns, or nominal verbs.

verb diagram

Verbs can be marked with several suffixes to add or change meaning. Some of these can be optional and their sequence varied, but in general they should be ordered:

STEM-(SIZE)-(MOOD)-(ASPECT)-(TENSE)-(NEGATIVE)

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb stem</th>
<th>size</th>
<th>mood</th>
<th>aspect</th>
<th>tense</th>
<th>negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>empa</td>
<td>hi</td>
<td>pa</td>
<td>nko</td>
<td>ye</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>run</td>
<td>DIM</td>
<td>able</td>
<td>PROG</td>
<td>PST</td>
<td>NEG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

na empahipankoyek – 1SG run-DIM-able-PROG-PST-NEG – I was not able to keep jogging.

tense

There are three simple tenses in Kala, three aspects, and numerous modals that are marked on the verb; however verbs are not marked for number or person.
The present tense is not marked in Kala:

TLAKA INA – MAN EAT – The man eats / The man is eating

The present tense is also used to indicate habitual actions and states, facts of nature, and as a “historical” tense, such as when relating a story that has been clearly established as occurring in the past:

SAMA NAHE TIMU UAYA – The sun rises in the east.
NA HAKYOHUE KEMA – I work at the university.

The past tense is indicated by the suffix –YE from AYE, meaning the past; “it was”:

TLAKA INAYE – MAN EAT-PST – The man ate / The man did eat

The future tense is indicated by the suffix –TLI from ATLII, meaning the future; “it will be”:

TLAKA INATLI – MAN EAT-FUT – The man will/shall eat

Certain adverbs and verbal constructions add precision to the tenses:

IMA NA INA – NOW 1SG EAT – I am eating now
YOMATLI NA INA – DAY-FUT 1SG EAT – I will eat tomorrow

There are a few temporal adverbials that help to specify tense…or at least add nuance. They are placed at the beginning of the verb phrase.

AYEHI [AHYE] – From AYE “past” and –HI diminutive; this is used to mark recent happenings (just, recently)
AYEHA – From AYE “past” and –HA augmentative; this is used to mark remote past (a long while ago)
ATLIIHI [ATLAI] – From ATLII “future” and –HI diminutive; this is used to mark immediate future (soon; presently)
ATLIHA – From ATLII “future” and –HA augmentative; this is used to mark distant future (a long while from now)

(ahye and atlai are informal variants)

expressions of time

Tense markers are often replaced by time expressions. Here are a few of the more common ones:

IYOMA – today
YOMAYE – yesterday
YOMATLI – tomorrow
IYOMUA – this morning
yomuatli – tomorrow morning
puamatli – tomorrow evening
iyohuwa – tonight
yohuaye – last night
anyotlipua – end of next year
anyoye ue’o – ten years ago
sayotli ta’o – in two months; two months from now

aspect

The three aspects are perfective, progressive (continuous), and inchoative (inceptive):

na inapua – 1SG eat-PVF – I have eaten (This suffix indicates that an action is completed. It is often translated by the English present perfect (have done some-thing)
yomatli na inanko – day-FUT 1SG eat-PROG – I will be eating tomorrow
semaye na empahimu – week-PST 1SG run-DIM-INCH – I began to jog last week

other modifiers

Other verbal modifiers in Kala, which include modals, relativizers, and various qualifiers, usually precede the tense and/or aspect. However, the negative mood is always final.

The negative mood (always marked finally) is indicated by the suffix –k or –nke (when the last syllable contains /k/):

tlaka inak – man eat-NEG – The man does not eat / The man is not eating
mita moku nke – dog sleep-NEG – The dog is not sleeping

The imperative (jussive) – used to give commands – mood is marked by the particle kya, which is used as a suffix to mark the (co)hortative or optative moods:

kya ina – IMP eat – Eat!
inakya – eat-HORT – Let’s eat!
nam asakya taman – 1PL live-OPT be.good-ADV – May we live well!

The causative suffix –mya indicates that the subject is causing the object to do something. If the verb to which it is added is transitive, the object becomes the indirect object. Many Kala words are derived this way. For example, the verb “to anger” (enomya) is derived from the verb “to be angry”.

na maya uakimyaye – 1SG water boil-CAUS-PST – I boiled the water
maliya topo nyetemyaye – Mary door open-CAUS-PST – Mary opened the door

The passive is formed by adding the prefix e- to pronouns or the particle ke before nouns to mark them as the patient or object of the verb.
ke tiya inaye – O bread eat-PST – The bread was eaten
eha anyatli – P.3SG see-FUT – She will be seen
ke misa tami – O road repair – The road is repaired

A list of some common verbal modifiers:

-pa – potential; abilitative [POT]
-po – compulsive [CMP]
-pya – try; attempt
-tai – so-called; hearsay
-te – precative [PREC]
-k – negative [NEG]
-ke – dubitative [DUB]
-kya – (co)hortative [HORT]
-kyo – quickly; rapidly
-ma – time for X
-me – cancel; repeal; undo
-mya – cause; do; make [CAUS]
-mye – resume; redo
-myo – permissive [PERM]
-n – verb > adverb
-ne – suggestive [SUG]
-nke – negative [NEG]
-sue – preparative [PREP]
-he – necessitative [NEC]
-ho – assertive; assumptive [ASS]
-tse – seems; apprently
-tsue – late; delayed; slow
-tle – relative clause marker [REL]
-ue – desiderative (intend; want) [DES]
-la – become; change into
-le – relative clause marker [REL]

Adjectives

Kala does not have adjectives as a distinct part of speech. Instead, nouns are modified by stative verbs, in which case they follow the noun they modify.

maya sitsa – water be.warm – warm water
mita malo – dog be.brown – brown dog
tsaka kapi – house be.ugly – ugly house

This means that the copula a is most often unnecessary.
**Adverbs**

Any verb in Kala can be used as an adverb by adding the suffix –n. It correlates to the English endings –ly, -ish, -ity, -ous, -ness, -ship, etc.:

- *tlaka mase noyan* – man dance be.happy-ADV – The man dances happily
- *na’eta anupak taman* – 1SG-P.2SG hear-able-NEG be.good-ADV – I cannot hear you well

Examples of common adverbs include the following:

- *ima* – now; present; yet
- *uama* – then; at that time (always affixed with either –ye or –tli)
- *kuama* – always; forever
- *amak* – never
- *inta* – even
- *yomaye* – yesterday
- *iyoma* – today
- *yomati* – tomorrow
- *hina* – here
- *uana* – there
- *yemua* – over there

**Prepositions**

Kala does not have prepositions as a distinct part of speech. Instead, many locative verbs can be used as prepositions, in which case they precede the noun they modify. There is one general locative (*-hue*) which is affixed to nouns (and occasionally verbs) to indicate the sense of “at; in; on”.

- *na tsakahue* – 1SG house-LOC – I am at home
- *iyoma tahi nayo hakyohue* – today son 1SG.POSS school-LOC – My son is in school today

Almost any locative verb can be used in the preposition role.

- *mita tsakam maye* – dog house be.among – The dog is among the houses
- *mita naye yohua inak* – dog during night eat-NEG – The dog does not eat during the night
- *mita tsaka nahe* – dog house inside – The dog is inside the house
- *mita nahe tsaka ina* – dog inside house eat – The dog is eating inside the house

There is a special suffix (*-la*) to indicate motion. It can be added to a locative verb only in the verb role and is never affixed to *-hue*. 

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**na nyota** – 1SG thirst – I thirst. (instead of “I am thirsty.”)

**tla kihalaye** – 4SG be.long-change-PST – It became long. / It grew.

**na punka ketla inaye** – 1SG fruit be.red eat-PST – I ate red fruit.
mita tsaka ka’ela – dog house toward-go – The dog is going toward the house
mita ka’e tsaka yala – dog toward house go – The dog is going toward the house
mita yempa tahelaye – dog table under-MOT-PST – The dog went under the table

In certain expressions a preposition is unnecessary. Most often this is because of the pronominal constructions.

kamena ke mita yetaye – 3PL-P.1SG O dog give-PST – They gave me a dog. / They gave the dog to me.
na’ameta ke apua tayo makatli – 1PL.EXCL-P.2SG TOP song 2SG.POSS play.music-FUT – We will play your song to/for you.

A list of some common locative verbs:

ma’a – with [accompanied by / furnished with]
ma’ak – without; with no…
nyahe – by means of; per; via
hue / -hue – at; in; on
pahe – against; touching
sahe – across; opposite; other side
saye – along; following [a line]
tsae – across; through
ma’e – before; in front
pue – after; back; behind; rear
ua’e – above; over / on
tahe – below; beneath; under
ka’e – to; towards; at [moving toward]
uayye – from [moving out of or away from]
nahe – in [located inside of]; internal
nyaue – outside of; exterior to
ya’e – near; close to
mahe – around; approximate; close to
maye – between; among
kaye – around; encircling; surrounding
tsaye – since; until; up to; as far as
paye – beyond; exceeding; farther than

Conjunctions

Kala conjunctions are simple: any constituents can be joined with a conjunction.

kue – in the same way
ma – and; also; too; as well
nya’e – in order that
nye – because
ehe – but; however; yet
ua – or (inclusive; X and/or Y)
uahe – instead of; rather than
ue – or; either (exclusive; either X or Y)
uek; uenke – nor; neither (exclusive; neither X nor Y)
yatli – therefore (if X then Y)
yema – both (both X and Y)

In the coordinating role, a few of these have specific functions:

ha tala yatli na yala – 3SG come if.X.then.Y 1SG go – If he comes then I go
mita pomalo uek mputsa ina – dog apple-PL neither/nor cheese eat – The dog is eating neither apples nor cheese

Particles

object particle

The object particle ke, derived from Spanish que and Chinese 个, serves multiple roles;

Marking the object, or patient of the verb:

ke mita malo – O dog be.brown – As for the dog, it is brown / The dog is brown

(Note: in the above phrase the object particle is not grammatically required)

Making comparisons:

tsaka hayo ke nayo taha’u – house 3SG.POSS O 1SG.POSS big-AUG – His house is bigger than mine

As a nominalizer:

na ke ina anya – 1SG NOM food see – I see (the) food

other common particles

ka – interrogative particle
kye – indirect speech particle
kyo – Hurry up! [imperative particle]
ya – Hey, Oh (vocative particle)
e – um, er, uh
interjections

a – yes
oko – yes sir/ma’am (honorable affirmative)
ak – no; it is not
nke – no; not
nka – no! [EMP.NEG]
yata – hello / goodbye
hala – hey, hi / bye (informal)
uatsa – welcome
tsepa – please
nyasa(mpa) – thank you (very much)
hako(mpa) – you’re (very) welcome
niha – fine, OK, great

cursing

punya – jab; poke; stab [fuck]
kotsa – epithet; similar to “bastard”, “bitch” or “asshole” (from ko (agentive) and tsaya)
kuna – shit (lit: to defecate)
kyosa – fornicate; have sex
nanka – general invective; “Damn it!”
tsaya (-tsa) – general invective; “Fuck!”, “Damn!”, or “Shit!”

Questions

Any statement in Kala can be changed to a question by adding the interrogative particle ka.

ta ina – You are eating.
ta ina ka – Are you eating?

ha mokuye – She slept.
ha mokuye ka – Did she sleep?

nanku tanatli – We will fight each other.
nanku tanatli ka – Will we fight each other?

Polar

Yes or no questions in Kala are marked with the interrogative particle ka (Q). These questions are answered with either a meaning be; exist; yes or ak which is the negated form of a. Questions can be emphatically answered in the negative with the special particle nka.

ta tama ka – 2SG good Q – Are you well?
ha hinaye ka – 3SG be.here-PST Q Was she here?
“wh” questions

To specify the desired information various particles and pronouns are used.

*ta tsuama ta’o inatli* – You will eat two sandwiches.
*ku ta tsuama inatli ka* – How many sandwiches will you eat? [amount; quantity]
*ula ta tsuama ina ka* – Which (what kind of) sandwich are you eating? [selection; specification]
*mo ta tsuama ina ka* – Where are you eating the sandwich? [place; location]
*ko ke tsuama ina ka* – Who is eating the sandwich? [person]
*ama ta tsuama ina ka* – When will you eat the sandwich? [time; occasion]
*to ta tsuama ina ka* – How will you eat the sandwich? [manner; method]
*n耶 ta tsuama ina ka* – Why are you eating the sandwich? [reason; cause]

Clauses

Relative clauses (or adjective clauses) function like adjectives. The suffix –*tle* (–le when the preceding syllable contains /tl/) creates a relative clause. In English, a relative clause usually has a relative pronoun. The relative clause modifies a noun.

Consider the sentence:

*tlaka empa* – A man runs.

The relative clause is based on this sentence. The phrase “the man who is running” is comprised of a relative clause and a head noun. The relative clause is “who is running” and the head noun is “a man”.

In Kala, the relative clause is formed by adding –*tle* to the verb to give *empa-tle*.

So we have:

*tlaka empatle* – a man who is running

This phrase, relative clause and head noun, together function in a sentence as a noun; this noun can occur as either subject or object. So, as subject:

*tlaka empa-tle anya* – A man who is running sees

Or as object:

*ha tlaka empa-tle anya* – He/she sees a man who is running

In English, we can also phrase this sentence using a present participle. The present participle functions as an adjective, and there is no relative clause or relative pronoun.

In this example the participle would be “running”: 
ha tlaka empa-tle anya – He/she sees a running man

A relative clause can also be used to translate constructions such as “a man in a coat”. This can be rendered:

**tlaka ke taki puku-tle** – a man who is wearing a coat

More examples:


**ima ke poma uaye motsi nayo tipua-tle-ye ina-pa-k** – now P apple away.from bag 1SG.POSS fall-REL-PST eat-POT-NEG – The apple which fell from my bag is now inedible

**Numbers**

Numbers in Kala are as follows:

- **ye’o** – zero; 0
- **na’o** – one; 1
- **ta’o** – two; 2
- **ha’o** – three; 3
- **ma’o** – four; 4
- **ya’o** – five; 5
- **tsa’o** – six; 6
- **ka’o** – seven; 7
- **pa’o** – eight; 8
- **sa’o** – nine; 9

- **ue’o** – ten; 10
- **nye’o** – hundred; 10^2
- **nya’o** – five hundred; 500
- **tle’o** – thousand; 10^3
- **mue’o** – ten thousand; 10^4
- **kye’o** – hundred thousand; 10^5
- **nte’o** – million; 10^6
- **hue’o** – billion; 10^9

Higher numbers are constructed as follows:

- **uen*a’o** – eleven; 11
- **taue’o** – twenty; 20
- **nyeka’o** – one hundred and seven; 107
- **hanyetauena’o / hanyetana’o** – three hundred twenty one; 321
Numbers that express quantity or order follow the noun and eliminate the plural:

tlaka ha’o – “the three men”
tlaka kia’o – “the third man”

Ordinals are formed with the prefix ki- from tsuki meaning “next; (in) order; sequence”.

kina’o – first
kita’o – second
kiha’o – third
kima’o – fourth
etc.

Fractions are constructed with i-:

ita’o – one of two; half
iha’o – one of three; a third
ima’o – one of four; a quarter
etc.

Multiples are formed with the prefix ti- from tiha meaning to multiply.

tita’o – twice; double
tiha’o – thrice; triple
tima’o – quadruple
tiya’o – quintuple
etc.

Notes

Abbreviations

1 – first person
2 – second person
3 – third person
4 – fourth person
ADV – adverbial
ASS – assumptive; assertive mood
ATT – attemptive mood
AUG – augmentative
C – consonant
CMP – compulsive mood
CUAS – causative
DES – desiderative mood
DIM – diminutive
DIST – distal
DUB – dubitative mood
EMP – emphatic
EXCL – exclusive
FUT – future tense
HORT – (co)hortative mood
IMP – imperative mood
IMPRS – impersonal pronoun
INCH – inchoative/inceptive aspect
MED – medial
N – nasal
NEC – necessitative mood
NEG – negative mood
O – object
OPT – optative mood
P – patient (object)
PAUC – paucal
PERM – permissive mood
PFV – perfective aspect
PL – plural
POSS – possessive
POT – potential; abilitative mood
PREC – precative mood
PREP – preparative mood
PROG – progressive/continuous aspect
PROX – proximal
PST – past tense
Q – interrogative mood
RECP – reciprocal
REFL – reflexive
REL – relativizer
SG – singular
SUG – suggestive mood
V – vowel; verb