

A PROPOSED WRITING SYSTEM FOR THE MANDARA LANGUAGE

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1981

(reformatted for Unicode and revised to IPA phonetics, 2008)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Geographical situation

- **Locality and Map**

The Mandara language is spoken on the plains to the north and west of the Mandara mountains in the northern province of Cameroon, and in adjacent areas of Borno State, Nigeria. A map of the area in which Mandara is spoken can be found in Annett and Kordass.

- **Number of Speakers**

Annett and Kordass estimate that there are some 25,000 mother tongue speakers of Mandara, and an additional 35,000 who speak it as a second language throughout the sub-division of Mora, Margui-Wandala.

1.2. Linguistic Situation

- **Names given to language**

Mandara is the name by which the language is known to the administration, and in official circles. Wandala is the name which the people use to refer to themselves and to their language.

- **Classification**

The language is classified by Hoffman (1971) as belonging to the Wandala group of the Biu-Mandara branch of Chadic languages. It is classified by Barreteau as belonging to the Central branch, sub-branch A, Wandala-Mafa of the Chadic language family.

- **Point of current research**

Research has been carried out from January 1980 to the present date under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in collaboration with the General Delegation for Scientific and Technical Research of the United Republic of Cameroon.

1.3. Sociological Situation

- **Dialect Differences**

Dialect differences have been well-documented by Annett and Kordass.

- **Standard dialect**

The dialect chosen as standard is that spoken at Mora, the trade center of the language, the home of the sultan (the traditional leader), and the administrative center of the sub-division of Mora.

- **Contact with adjacent language groups**

Fulani is spoken as a trade language throughout the Mandara region.

Annett and Kordass give figures of 30% of men between the ages of 20 and 50 as speakers of Fulani.

French is spoken as the language of administration, and by those who have attended secondary school. Annett and Kordass give figures of 30% of those under the age of 20, and 10% of those between 20 and 50 for speakers of French.

The Kanuri way of life has influenced vocabulary in Mandara, especially in the spheres of music and ceremonial life. Arabic religious terms are also found in the language since Islam is the prominent religion. Related ethnic groups with whom the Mandara come into contact are the Podoko, Matal, Ouldeme, Mada, and Mafa (the administrative terms are used).

2. PHONOLOGY

2.1. Basic Structures

- **Syllable types**

V	(i)	úlá	<i>to dry</i>
		íwe	<i>cricket</i>

NB (i) low tone is unmarked, (ii) e is consistently written for [ə].

V	(ii) in free variation with na-	apalapálá ~ napalapálá	<i>bat</i>
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VC	ekse	<i>village</i>
	ílmú	<i>knowledge (Ar.)</i>
	úgje	<i>hair</i>
CV	waa	<i>mountain</i>
	fé	<i>field</i>
	ɗaha	<i>scar</i>
	háaré	<i>sleep</i>
	káamba	<i>bush</i>
CVC	zalke	<i>pieb crow</i>
	bélsa	<i>horse</i>

- **Distribution of syllable types**

	initial	medial	final
V	+	-	-
VC	+	-	-
CV	+	+	+
CVC	+	+	loan

- **Syllable patterns in the word**

monosyllabic

V	a	<i>he</i>
CV	waa*	<i>mountain</i>
	yé	<i>neck</i>
	se	<i>to smell</i>

*The possibility of –aa word-final was pointed out to us by Barrateau and preliminary investigations seem to indicate its correctness.

disyllabic

V – VC		
	íva	<i>year</i>
	ire	<i>head</i>
	úzhe	<i>blood</i>
	éslá	<i>ox</i>
VC – CV		
	érva	<i>hand</i>
	ekse	<i>village</i>
	éñzlya	<i>morning</i>
	úkpá	<i>flour</i>
	úkfá	<i>comrade</i>
CV – CV		
	nama	<i>bee, honey</i>
	slyáslyé	<i>bone</i>
	téré	<i>moon, month</i>
	gúlá	<i>to diminish</i>
	háazla	<i>wood</i>
CVC - CV		
	slálwé	<i>root</i>
	yakke	<i>important, big</i>
	duksá	<i>thing</i>
	kúrshi	<i>chair</i>

The following patterns exist, though they are very rare and are no doubt loan words:

CV – CVC		
	patém	<i>host</i>
CVC – CVC		
	hartum	<i>kind of hat, associated colour yellow</i>
	máņzar	<i>glasses</i>
	kérteņ	<i>suddenly (ideophone?)</i>

trisyllabic

V – CV – CV		
	ílila	<i>basket</i>
	ívela	<i>40 day period after birth</i>
	úsusa	<i>hedgehog</i>
	évege	<i>hole</i>
VC – CV – CV		
	ektare	<i>nose</i>
	égdzere	<i>child</i>
	úgbene	<i>flower</i>
	émceda	<i>to suck</i>
VC – CVC – CV		
	érváunċe	<i>heart</i>
CV – CV – CV		
	yárábá	<i>duck</i>
	karabí	<i>dried skin of animal</i>
	zháabera	<i>guinea fowl</i>
	kitáapa	<i>religious history book (Ar.)</i>
CV – CV – CVC		
	munáafak	<i>dishonest (Kan.)</i>

CVC – CV – CV		
	kurgúná	<i>medicine</i>
	sláksláké	<i>cold season</i>
	dánkáali	<i>sweet potato</i>
CVC – CVC – CV		
	nalmalma	<i>kind of ant</i>
	múgderɓa	<i>kind of lizard</i>
	nyamlakke	<i>dirty</i>
	maukfaukfa	<i>liver</i>

4 syllable words (few)

V – CVC – CV – CV		
	ígagdzala	<i>bank</i> <i>(compound?)</i>
VC – CV – CV – CV		
	égdanzla	<i>thigh</i>
CV – CVC – CV – CV		
	belémkide	<i>trap</i>
CVC – CVC – CV – CV		
	báugdzardzare	<i>torn</i>

5 syllable words (few)

CV – CV – CV – CV – CV		
	bíbízuguru	<i>hippopotamus</i> <i>(Hausa)</i>
	kaashembáagí	<i>moustache (Kan.)</i>
CVC – CV – CV – CV		
	nalfáatiya	<i>prayer of</i> <i>thanksgiving</i>

6 syllable words (one attested)

CV – CV – CV – CV – CV – CV	
balamakaaciya	<i>ditch, hole</i>

• **Tone**

There are two contrastive tones in Mandara, high and low.

íga	<i>back</i>
irá	<i>and</i>
ire	<i>head</i>
íré	<i>iron</i>

The most frequently occurring tone is high tone with an approximate ratio of 3:2.

The principal functions played by tone in Mandara are the following:

distinguishing minimal pairs

distinguishing between the accomplished and the non-accomplished verb forms

There are very few minimal pairs in Mandara which occur in the same slot in the sentence and which, therefore, could be conceivably confused. Out of a sample of some 3,000 words the following pairs were found:

NOUN

ire	<i>head</i>	íré	<i>iron (most frequent contrastive tone pattern found)</i>
dala	<i>enclosure</i>	dála	<i>5 CFA</i>
ndera	<i>thirst</i>	nderá	<i>creature</i>
kurshí	<i>cucumber</i>	kúrshi	<i>chair</i>

Some 10 additional pairs were found in the category of noun.

VERB

náha	<i>to see</i>	náhá	<i>to fill</i>
vála	<i>to scold</i>	válá	<i>to sell (intensive form)</i>

OTHER

ka	<i>negation</i>	ka	<i>you (object pronoun)</i>
		ká	<i>question tag</i>

Tone on the subject pronoun plays an important role in distinguishing between accomplished and non-accomplished verb forms:

yá dém ekse *I go to the village, am going*

ya dém ekse *I went to the village*

yá maga slera *I work, am working*

ya magáa slera *I worked*

ya mága slera *I was working (this particular form is rare)*

ká háré *you sleep, are sleeping*

ka háré *you slept*

The examples cited in these sections above show where (and where only) it is crucial to mark tone in order to facilitate the reading task. To recap, we feel it is necessary to mark tone on **minimal pairs** which fill the same slot in the sentence (e.g., between noun and noun, or verb and verb, or negation and question tag), and on the **subject pronoun**. (It is worth noting in passing that the fluent reader has little or no difficulty reading with the correct tones, even if they are completely unmarked.) Although high tone is the most frequent tone, we would choose to mark it in these few contexts rather than low tone, since high tone is visually easier to perceive, and also tends to be the tone marked in the Chadic languages which indicate tone.

- **Tone patterns**

monosyllabic words

H	já	<i>to beat</i>
	fé	<i>field</i>
L	waa	<i>mountain</i>
	se	<i>to smell</i>

disyllabic words

H – H	sléksé	<i>sultan</i>
	jáde	<i>ring</i>
H – L	gúrme	<i>arrow</i>
	záde	<i>stick</i>
L – H	bubáa	<i>dress</i>
	duksá	<i>thing</i>
This pattern is fairly infrequent (L – H)		
L – L	zelje	<i>kind of anthill</i>
	suwa	<i>well</i>

trisyllabic words

H – H – H	tsákálá	<i>cockerel</i>
	kwálábá	<i>bottle</i>
H – H – L	páránti	<i>tray (loan)</i>
	ḏáawúsa	<i>peacock</i>
H – L – L	érvare	<i>lion</i>
	égdzere	<i>child</i>
H – L – H (rare)	nábehwá	<i>kind of carp</i>
	názasé	<i>perfume</i>
	ívelá	<i>40 days after birth</i>
L – L – L	tsakala	<i>trading</i>
	samaya	<i>sky</i>
L – H – L	palása	<i>trouble</i>
	larúsa	<i>wedding</i>
L – H – H	vacíyá	<i>sun</i>
	kelísé	<i>carpet</i>
L – L – H (rare)	vertalí	<i>kind of flute (loan?)</i>
	basasá	<i>waste (loan?)</i>
	mayaafí	<i>sheet (Ar.)</i>
	huḏegá	<i>sultan's court (compound)</i>

• Consonants

	initial		medial		final	
p	páká [páká]	<i>to wait</i>	tápá [tápá]	<i>to taste</i>	nápshe [nápʃe]	<i>placenta</i>
	pélá [pélá]	<i>to explain</i>			ájap [ádʒap]	<i>wow!</i>
b	báká [báká]	<i>to chase</i>	ďába [ďába]	<i>to follow</i>	nábzhe [nábʒe]	<i>pig</i>
	béďa [béďa]	<i>to chatter</i>				
ɓ	ɓáaka [ɓá:ka]	<i>nothing</i>	táɓara [táɓara]	<i>to prostrate oneself</i>		
	ɓélá [ɓélá]	<i>to send</i>				
mb	mbakulala [mbakulala]	<i>throat</i>	támbara [támbara]	<i>to roll up</i>		
	mbéďá [mbéďá]	<i>to fall</i>				
t	tála [téla]	<i>to stretch out</i>	táta [táta]	<i>place</i>		
	téďe [téďe]	<i>to roast</i>				
d	dala [dela]	<i>enclosure</i>	báda [báda]	<i>to flatter</i>		
	demme [dɛm:e]	<i>enormous</i>				
ɗ	ɗálá [ɗélá]	<i>to mount</i>	náďa [náďa]	<i>custom</i>		
	ɗemme [ɗɛm:e]	<i>finished</i>				

	initial		medial		final	
nd	ndáhá [ndáhá]	<i>to talk</i>	bandá [bandá]	<i>kind of smoked fish</i>		
	ndéǎǎé [ndéǎ:é]	<i>straight</i>				
f	fáyá [fájá]	<i>eternal life</i>	náfá [náfá]	<i>tree</i>	katafke [katafke]	<i>in front</i>
	fértá [fértá]	<i>to whistle</i>				
v	vaye [váje]	<i>often</i>	náve [náve]	<i>slave</i>		
	vertalí [vɛrtalí:]	<i>kind of flute</i>				
w	wáyá [wájá]	<i>hunger</i>	náwa [náwa]	<i>here</i>		
	wertáyá [wortájá]	<i>ant</i>				
h	háǎa [háǎa]	<i>to bury</i>	behamme [bəham:e]	<i>big</i>		
	háa [há:]	<i>compound</i>				
hw	hwáǎa [hwóǎa]	<i>to gallop</i>	behwa [bəhwa]	<i>bag</i>		
	hwá [hwá]	<i>wine</i>				
m	má [má]	<i>we (incl.)</i>	nyáama [ɲáama]	<i>to eat up</i>	námpíré [námpíré]	<i>use</i>
	mélá [mélá]	<i>to help</i>			sémté [sémté]	<i>to stroke</i>
n	na [na]	<i>this</i>	kwána [kwána]	<i>bend</i>	jantáu [dʒantó]	<i>calabasi instrument</i>

	initial		medial		final	
ŋ	ŋá [ŋá]	<i>we (excl.)</i>	nyáŋa [ŋáŋa]	<i>to arrange</i>	həŋkale [həŋkale]	<i>mind</i>
	ŋéra [ŋéra]	<i>to excite</i>				
ŋw	ŋwá [ŋwá]	<i>to satisfy</i>	daŋwe [dɔŋwe]	<i>black</i>		
sly	slyá [ʃjá]	<i>to be enough</i>	paslye [paʃje]	<i>mixture of fonio</i>		
	slyédɔuwe [ʃjéd:əwe]	<i>kind of grass</i>				
zly	zlyá [ʒjá]	<i>to save</i>	vázlya [váʒja]	<i>to throw</i>		
	zlyédé [ʒjédé]	<i>to knock out</i>	éŋzlya [éŋʒja]	<i>morning</i>		
sl	slálá [ʃálá]	<i>area of town</i>	páslé [páʃé]	<i>to nail</i>		
	slédé [ʃédé]	<i>place</i>				
zl	zlálá [ʒélá]	<i>to leave</i>	gázla [gáʒa]	<i>to frighten</i>		
	zlébere [ʒóbəre]	<i>gombo</i>	éŋzla [éŋʒa]	<i>to pick</i>		

l	láhé [léhé]	<i>song</i>	pala [pala]	<i>rock</i>	húlmba [húlmba]	<i>to crawl</i>
	lémlémé [lémlémé]	<i>bitter</i>				
r	ráwa [ráwa]	<i>bean paste</i>	bará [bará]	<i>to wash</i>	gúrme [gúrme]	<i>arrow</i>

	initial		medial		final	
s	sá [sá]	<i>to come</i>	nasaré [nasaré]	<i>loss</i>	keskí [kɛskí:]	<i>easy</i>
	sédé [sédé]	<i>to take off</i>	úsé [ú:sé]	<i>hello</i>		
z	zá [zá]	<i>to eat</i>	nazába [nazába]	<i>danger</i>		
	zébá [zébá]	<i>to whisper</i>	uza [u:za]	<i>hoe</i>		
sh	shá [ʃá]	<i>to drink</i>	nasháanáa [naʃá:ná:]	<i>match</i>	béshketa [bíʃkɛta]	<i>weevil</i>
	shébe [ʃébe]	<i>to hide</i>	páshá [páʃá]	<i>to dig</i>	matabésh [matabíʃ]	<i>gift</i>
			úshá [ú:ʃá]	<i>to mix</i>		
zh	zházhá [ʒáʒá]	<i>kind of tree</i>	mákwazhe [mókoʒe]	<i>cold</i>		
	zhégélá [ʒígélá]	<i>high</i>	úzhe [u:ʒe]	<i>blood</i>		
ts	tsáha [tsáha]	<i>to learn</i>	pátsá [pátsá]	<i>mane</i>		
	tsébe [tsébe]	<i>to pound</i>				
dz	dzáa [dzá:]	<i>game</i>	bádza [bádza]	<i>to ruin</i>		
	dzébá [dzébá]	<i>to plant</i>				
ndz	ndza [ndza]	<i>before</i>	mándzawe [mándzawe]	<i>evil</i>		
	ndzedá [ndzɛdá]	<i>strength</i>				

	initial		medial		final	
c	cáca [tʃátʃá]	<i>louse</i>	macágane [matʃágane]	<i>kind of frog</i>		
	céba [tʃíba]	<i>to beat</i>	úca [ú:tʃá]	<i>to wet</i>		
j	já [dʒá]	<i>to beat</i>	gaje [gadʒe]	<i>lip</i>		
	jeba [dʒiba]	<i>kind of</i>				
nj	njá [ndʒá]	<i>to stay</i>	nanje [nendʒe]	<i>intestines</i>		
	njéɲwá [ndʒíɲwá]	<i>fly</i>				
ny	nyáhé [ɲéhé]	<i>saliva</i>	gányé [gáné]	<i>ball</i>		
			unye [u:ɲe]	<i>poison</i>		
y	yá [já]	<i>to bear</i>	samaya [samaja]	<i>sky</i>		
	yétsétsé [jétsétsé]	<i>salted</i>	uye [u:je]	<i>kind of lizard</i>		
k	ká [ká]	<i>to lift</i>	makala [makala]	<i>doughnut</i>	fákta [fákta]	<i>start</i>
	keɖemme [kɪɖəm:e]	<i>timid</i>				
g	gá [gá]	<i>to marry</i>	mágálá [mágálá]	<i>kind of plant</i>		
	géja [gídʒa]	<i>to touch</i>			bújugja [búgdʒugdʒa]	<i>stump</i>

	initial		medial		final	
y	yá [fá]	<i>to leave</i>	héyeka [hífəka]	<i>to hiccup</i>		
	yéká [fíká]	<i>to pray</i>				
ŋg	ŋgáha [ŋgáha]	<i>noble</i>	gaŋga [gaŋga]	<i>drum</i>		
ky	kyá [kjá]	<i>to break</i>				
	kyedamme [kjɪdam:e]	<i>fresh</i>	kyakye [kjekje]	<i>sewing machine</i>		
gy	gyá [gjá]	<i>to prepare</i>	múgyé [mógjé]	<i>greedy</i>		
	gyéga [gjíga]	<i>to pound</i>				
ŋgy	ŋgyáká [ŋgjáká]	<i>to cover</i>	naŋgyúwé [nɪŋgjówé]	<i>clothing</i>		
	ŋgyekwa [ŋgjɪkwa]	<i>to point</i>				
kw	kwá [kwá]	<i>you (pl.)</i>	mákwakwa [mókwo kwa]	<i>chameleon</i>	maukfaukfa [mokfokfa]	<i>liver</i>
			kwaskwé [kwaskwé]	<i>market</i>		
gw	gwagwa [gwɔgwa]	<i>skin</i>	mágwe [mógwe]	<i>human</i>	daugdza [dogdza]	<i>bean leaves</i>
ŋgw	ŋgwáďá [ŋgwáďá]	<i>to tie</i>	kyanŋwala [kjanŋwala]	<i>snail</i>		
ŋw	ŋwá [ŋwá]	<i>to satisfy</i>	ďanŋwe [ďanŋwe]	<i>black</i>		
			ďelŋwe [ďəlŋwe]	<i>pick</i>		

- Chart of Mandara phonemes

		A	B			C		
		Labial	Alv	Alv- pal	Pal	Pal	Post- pal	Lab
stops	vl	p	t	ts	c	ky	k	kw
	vd	b	d	dz	j	gy	g	gw
	pre-glot.	ɸ	ɸ			y		
	pre-nas.	mb	nd	ndz	nj	ŋgy	ŋg	ŋgw
fricatives	vl	f	s	sl	sh	sly	h	hw
	vd	v	z	zl	zh	zly		
nasals		m	n		ny		ŋ	ŋw
liquids & semi- vowels			l	r	y			w

- Mandara consonant chart according to susceptibility to palatal and labial prosodies

-pal -lab		+pal -lab	+pal +lab	-pal +lab
p	t	ts	k	
b	d	dz	g	
ɸ		ɸ		
mb	nd	ndz	ŋg	
f	l	s		h
v	r	z		
		sl		
		zl		
m		n		ŋ

• **Vowels**

There are five vowel phonemes in Mandara: /i/ /e/ /a/ /aa/ /u/. These vowels are phonetically realized as follows:

/i/	[i:]	This vowel is long and tense, in contrast to the realization of /e/ (see below).	
		cíkam [tʃí:kam]	<i>royal guardian</i>
		shite [ʃi:te]	<i>pepper</i>
/e/	[ə]	patéle [patəle]	<i>cloth</i>
		dzéra [dzəra]	<i>to choose</i>
	[ɪ]	This realization of /e/ occurs in the environment of palatals. It contrasts with /i/, e.g.,	
		shíli [ʃí:li:]	<i>sand</i>
		zhélé [ʒílé]	<i>man</i>
		shélha [ʃílha]	<i>jealous</i>
	[ʊ]	This realization of /e/ occurs in the environment of labials. It contrasts with /u/, e.g.,	
		cúɗa [tʃú:ɗa]	<i>to jump</i>
		cékwa [tʃókwa]	<i>small</i>
		dzégwa [dzógwa]	<i>to be able</i>

/e/	[i]	This realization of /e/ occurs before /l/.	
		kelfe [kɪlfe]	<i>fish</i>
		bélsá [bɛlsá]	<i>horse</i>
	[e]	This realization of /e/ occurs word-final.	
		zhélé [ʒɛlé]	<i>man</i>
		patéle [patéle]	<i>cloth</i>
/a/	[a]	gaje [gadʒe]	<i>lip</i>
		pállé [pál:é]	<i>one</i>
	[ɛ]	This realization of /a/ follows a palatal consonant.	
		shágera [ʃégəra]	<i>good</i>
		slyáďá [ʃjédá]	<i>to sweep</i>
		It also often occurs before /l/, particularly in a /d_l/ or /dz_l/ syllable.	
		ígagdzale [ígagdzɛle]	<i>bank</i>
		dála [dɛla]	<i>5 CFA</i>
		nálle [nɛl:e]	<i>henna</i> But contrast the following
		pállé [pál:é]	<i>one</i>
[o]	This realization occurs between labialized velars.		
	kwakwa [kwokwa]	<i>baobab</i>	

/a/	[ɔ]	This realization occurs before labialized velars.	
		mágwe [mɔ́gwe]	<i>human</i>
/aa/	[a:]	This vowel is distinctively longer than /a/. There is contrast between:	
		gaje [gadʒe]	<i>lip</i>
		gaají [ga:dʒí:]	<i>youngest son</i>
		and between:	
		hashe [haʃe]	<i>hair product</i>
		háashi [há:ʃi:]	<i>stubborn</i>
/u/	[u:]	This vowel is long and tense, in contrast to the realization of /e/, see above.	
		dzúré [dzú:ré]	<i>to separate millet from stalk</i>
		bucé [bu:tʃé]	<i>mat</i>

Distribution of vowel phonemes within the syllable:

V	/i/	/a/	/u/
VC	/e/	/u/	plus /i/ and /a/ in loan words
CV	/i/	/e/	/a/ /aa/ /u/
CVC	/e/	/a/	

Vowels in initial position:

/i/	ice [i:tʃe]	<i>eye</i>
	ízlebe [í:ʒəbe]	<i>five</i>
	[í]lmu [ilmu:]	<i>knowledge (Ar.)</i>
/e/	ekse [əkse]	<i>village</i>
	eptsá [əptsá]	<i>to turn over</i>
	edda [əd:a]	<i>father</i>
/a/	áza ~ náza [áza] ~ [náza]	<i>belonging to</i>
	adaliye [adɛlije]	<i>again</i>
	algáita ~ nalgáita [algéta]	<i>flute</i>
/u/	úcé [ú:tʃé]	<i>fool</i>
	úgbene [úgbene]	<i>flower</i>
	úksuwe [úksəwe]	<i>chest</i>

Vowels in medial position:

/i/ *	dzíre [dzí:re]	<i>barren</i>
	fíké [fí:ké]	<i>flooded field</i>
/e/	dzéra [dzóra]	<i>to choose</i>
	féká [fáká]	<i>calabash</i>
	béshketa [bí[kəta]	<i>weevil</i>
	zeŋwe [zɔŋwe]	<i>first</i>
/a/	tatashi [tataʃi]	<i>pepper</i>
	mayaafí [maja:fí]	<i>sheet</i>
	cárgé [tʃórgé]	<i>yellow millet</i>
	sálla [sél:a]	<i>prayer</i>
	daŋwe [dɔŋwe]	<i>black</i>
/aa/ *	páalí [pá:lí]	<i>half (Kan.)</i>
	máafe [má:fe]	<i>eel</i>
/u/ *	zúzu [zú:zu:]	<i>owl</i>
	dzúré [dzú:ré]	<i>to separate millet from stalk</i>

* never occur in closed syllables

Vowels in medial positions peculiar to loan words:

Some of these words are recently borrowed, and their origin is clear; some exist in adjacent languages, and their ultimate origin can be argued; and some passed into the language long ago and parallels in other languages are no longer clear.

/au/	[o]	máuta [móta]	<i>car (Eng.)</i>
		maushé [moʃé]	<i>teacher (Fr.)</i>
		dáulai [dóle]	<i>obligatory (Hausa?)</i>
		sháule [ʃóle]	<i>father-in-law</i>
/ai/	[e]	láida [léda]	<i>leather (Eng.)</i>
		algáita [algéta]	<i>flute (Ar.)</i>
		háipa [hépa]	<i>sin</i>
		nailé [nelé]	<i>thief</i>

Vowels in final position:

/i/	kéní [kɛní]	<i>also</i>
	walaadí [wala:dí]	<i>servant (Ar.)</i>
	dáŋkáali [dánká:li]	<i>sweet potato (Kan.)</i>
/e/	ďálé [ďélé]	<i>vegetable</i>
	gaje [gadʒe]	<i>lip</i>
/a/	táasa [tá:sa]	<i>dish</i>
	vacíyá [vatʃíjáj]	<i>sun</i>
/aa/	These forms are very difficult to hear in isolation, but can be heard when the noun is followed by the demonstrative na .	
	háa na [há: na]	<i>compound</i>
	nasháanáa na [naʃá:ná: na]	<i>match</i>
/u/	ďaalú [da:lú:]	<i>ox (Kan.)</i>
	yaalu [ja:lu:]	<i>eggplant (Kan.)</i>

Vowels in final position peculiar to loan words:

/au/	[o]	kwáasáú [kwá:só]	<i>up till now</i>
		dáŋkau [dápko]	<i>elastic</i>
/ai/	[e]	Because these words behave phonologically distinctly from words ending in /e/ , we have retained the orthography < ai > .	
		daidái [dedé]	<i>average (Hausa?)</i>
		kendái [kændé]	<i>basket (Kan.)</i>

2.2. Phonological Changes

• Vowels

Final vowels on nouns occur unmodified in a breath group final position:

-i

-a

-e

-u

(-aa)

However, in a breath group medial position, the following modifications occur:

-a -e modify to [ə]

-u -i -aa are unchanged

Here are some examples:

mashídi na [maʃí:di na]	<i>this mosque</i>
daalú aara [da:lú a:ra]	<i>his ox</i>
waa na [wa:na]	<i>this mountain</i>
duksá na [dʊksə na]	<i>this thing</i>
duné na [du:nə na]	<i>this ankle</i> <i>bracelet</i>
ekse na [əksə na]	<i>this village</i>
larúsa na [laru:sə na]	<i>this wedding</i>

There are some variations to the modification of final -a and -e to breath group medial.

They can be summarized as follows:

- (i) following **l**, **w**, or **y** the vowel **a** or **e** is completely elided.
- (ii) often following **n**, or **m** the vowel is completely elided.
- (iii) elsewhere the modification is to [ə].

These variations apply to vowels followed by a consonant at the word juncture. When a vowel follows, complete elision of the vowel occurs.

Note: loan words ending in -ai, -au, never modify their final vowel.

Modifications of final -a, -e breath group medial preceding a consonant:

(i)	dawale na [dawalna]	<i>this young man</i>
	makala na [makalna]	<i>this doughnut</i>
	úksuwe na [úksu:na]	<i>this chest</i>
	vacíyá na [vatʃí:na]	<i>this sun</i>
	ḃélá na [ḃólna]	<i>this yam</i>
(ii)	kurgúná na [kurgú:nna]	<i>this medicine</i>
	belama na [bɛlamna]	<i>this chief</i>
<u>but</u>	nama na [naməna]	<i>this honey</i>
	nasháanáa na [naʃá:ná:na] or [naʃá:nóna]	<i>this match</i>
(iii)	éslá na [éʃóna]	<i>this ox</i>
	ektare na [ɛktarəna]	<i>this nose</i>
	cárgé na [cárgóna]	<i>this yellow millet</i>
Exceptions:	táihái na [téhé na]	<i>this orphan</i>
	dáarau na [dá:ro na]	<i>this measuring bowl</i>

Modifications of final -a, -e breath group medial preceding a vowel:

ekse aara [əksa:ra]	<i>his village</i>
kelísé ara [kəlí:sara]	<i>which carpet?</i>
éslá aha [éłáha]	<i>the cows, oxen</i>

3. Morphology and Syntax

3.1. Noun Phrase

- **Grammatical markers**

Grammatical markers such as plural, demonstrative and possessive are written apart from the noun they accompany. See previous section p.20 for the accompanying phonological changes.

We prefer to write them apart, since a learning reader learns words in isolation, and subsequently recognizes them by shape. The person who has learnt to read

múksé *woman*

should not find it difficult to read

múksé áara *his woman*

and to make the elision of the final vowel automatically.

It is worth noting, however, that many of those who write Mandara, whether of secondary level, or otherwise, have an automatic preference for writing the elided form, thus more closely representing the phonetic form in the surface structure, e.g.,

éksáara	<i>his village</i>
sléksáara	<i>his chief</i>
éslara	<i>which cow?</i>
dalaha	<i>the enclosures</i>
ígáaruwa	<i>my back</i>
but éslá na	<i>this cow</i>

This tendency can result in somewhat unwieldy forms, e.g.,

másálámaháatare *their swords*

but this does not seem to deter the majority of learning readers who tend to read only syllable by syllable for a very long time, rather than reading in chunks as we in the Western world (with our long exposure to the written page) have been shown to do.

• Genitives and adjectives

The genitival marker in Mandara is **aa** linking the nouns, or the verb and noun. An adjectival construction is often marked by **a**. As in the case of the grammatical markers (see above), we prefer to keep these detached, e.g.,

egdze áa náfá	<i>fruit</i>
egdze a náfá	<i>small tree</i>
émgwegwe a múksé	<i>old woman</i>
bélsá áa Sáali	<i>Saali's horse</i>
tahwe a duksá	<i>tracing things</i>

• Compound words

In Mandara, as in many languages, frequently co-occurring lexical items come to form a unity in people's minds, often undergoing phonological change in the process. The analyst may recognize the constituent parts of such a compound word, but if the constituent parts can no longer be separated by the demonstrative or other grammatical markers, then it should be written as one word, e.g.,

	íga ηanna	<i>that back</i>
	ígáabere ηanna	<i>that back of house (toilet)</i>
from	íga áa bere	<i>(back of house)</i>
	hudákse ara	<i>which town-centre?</i>
from	hude áa ekse	<i>(stomach of village)</i>
	fárváunde aara	<i>his patience</i>
from	fá érváunde	<i>(place heart)</i>

	á dézá Náali	<i>he goes to Naali</i>
from	á dé áza Náali	<i>(he goes to place of Naali)</i>
	yá dá Kerawa	<i>I go to Kerawa</i>
from	yá dé á Kerawa	<i>(I go to at Kerawa)</i>

3.2. Verb phrase

- **Markers**

When the verb is preceded or followed by aspectual or time markers, these are written separately from the verb. It is generally agreed that it would prove too unwieldy to do otherwise.

a <u>naba</u> zhágade	<i>he fled (decisive)</i>
ta <u>de</u> fante kára	<i>they went to light...</i>
ta <u>naba</u> <u>se</u> jatersé ha	<i>they came to marry them (dec.)</i>

- **Personal pronouns**

The subject pronoun, which always precedes the verb, is written separately from it.

<u>ká</u> píyá	<i>you (s.) feed (tr.)</i>
<u>ya</u> se háré	<i>I came to sleep</i>

The object pronouns, direct and indirect, are attached to the verb.

ya <u>vanté</u>	<i>I gave (it) to him</i>
a <u>beliyá</u>	<i>he sent me</i>
tá <u>dákdaka</u>	<i>they send you (once)</i>

- **Negation**

The negation marker **ka** follows the verb in Mandara. The verb final vowel preceding it undergoes the same changes as noted in a noun and demonstrative unit (see p. 20). However, whereas the majority of readers (even slow readers) have little difficulty reading a noun phrase correctly when the demonstrative causes modification to, or elision of, the final vowel of the noun, they nevertheless experience great difficulty in reading a simple verb phrase correctly if the negative is detached. This is very possibly attributable to the existence of two other words **ka** (*you*) and **ká** (*question tag*) which can occur in the same sentence slot, e.g.,

yá duwa ka	<i>I'm not going</i>
yá duwa ká	<i>I'm going, aren't I?</i>
yá máraka slera	<i>I'm showing you the work</i>
yá máraka slera	<i>I'm not showing the work</i>

Consequently we have decided that we should waive our basic principle of keeping elements separate and unmodified even when elision occurs as far as this particular case of the negative is concerned. We have chosen instead to write the modified form and to attach the negative.

yá zlalka	<i>I'm not going</i>
yá mareka slera	<i>I'm not showing my work</i>
yá puka	<i>I'm not writing</i>
yá cébéka	<i>I'm not killing</i>

- **Imperative**

Certain imperatives are formed in the singular by the doubling of the initial consonant or consonant group of the verb. For reasons of sanity we prefer to double only the first consonant of a cluster.

emmága	<i>do it!</i>
ezzlálá	<i>go away!</i>
enngyé	<i>fly off!</i>

The morpheme indicating a plural imperative is Mandara is **au**, e.g.,

magaumāga *do it!*

In certain cases the plural imperative incorporates object pronouns and verbal extensions: to avoid an unacceptable CV sequence within the word, we have chosen to write this plural marker as **aw**, e.g.,

vawitévá	<i>give me!</i>
fawiyarfé	<i>add me some more!</i>
puwawémpuwa	<i>pour in!</i>
eblyawaarébye	<i>throw him into!</i>

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NÚRAM ÁNTÁRÁ NÁÁLI (Model Adopted by A. Kordass)

- 1 Tsáttsé égdze a gyáále ám ekse, zhera áá ra Núram; má ta vanté zhélé
- 2 a ra kéní ba wayaa ka. Áí, tsáttsé zlaḃe ádalíé wá, égdze a dawale
- 3 wá zhera áá ra Nááli; ḡáné kéní, má ta vanté múksé a ra kéní wayaa ka,
- 4 sáí á kátá ba Núram, á bíná. Áí, vaciá áte úmele, emnde áá tara Núram,
- 5 ta naba eksananté ge sléksé á ba án ndzedá. Daací darannááda ge
- 6 sléksé zláúze wá, ba má á déza ḡará sléksé, á dagala, á fá hula.
- 7 Daací Nááli, itaré á ba á eḡkwá cenávcéné áá tare ántára Núram na;
- 8 dámmé tá báláávé úrá. Nááli a naba tsahave émtsá; ám ekse ḡáné na
- 9 bááka táta hédá úrá. Tsáhavétsahe émtsá Nááli, tá yá évege bááka.
- 10 Ta de eblyanmé ám balamakaacia. Áí, á njá ám balamakaacia na á
- 11 naha takala á dégáshé. Daací,
- 12 - Sawa, á bíná á élván ge takala na. Á bá ḡáné á élván ge takala
- 13 na : takala, takala, naba dua ekka, njínja áte ire áá bere áá Núram,
- 14 banánba wá, a beliá Nááli.
- 15 Núram tá páslá jantáú ántára égdzare gyáále aha áá tare ám bere áza áá
- 16 larúsiré na. Daací dámda égdze a takala na, a de njáá áte ire áá bere,

17 - Núram... (Kanuri)

18 Núram na, ndza án halaŋa ám dágave áá égdzare gyáále aha na, á ba

19 gáágusa áá ra wá, a naba se uŋmbéhé, á kyúá, á kyúá égdze a gyáále

20 na slákáté ŋará na kéní, á kyúá, ba keláá háre dámmé ba estúá.

21 Á dé gyá dáfá Núram kéní, á sáwá, má a dé njá áte évege Núram na á

22 maga kéní, á sáwá égdze a takala na. Hashááhasha ba húde áá égdze a

23 gyáále na slákáté ŋará na wá, á bá ŋáné wa :

24 - Árge úna, amáná ká tsahave émtsá, má tsahakaavétsahe émtsá wá, ábí

25 bááka táta yá évege umele; táta hédá úrá úmele áte íga ba balama-

26 kaacia na, á bíná. Daací, ba tá dákda ka he á dém hude áá ra, á bíná

27 - Áá, shágera.

28 A naba tsahave lápikíré Núram na. Sléksé ŋáné wayaawáyá Núram

29 án tsákáire seke ba shifa áá ra. Ba jáhá máálem aha, máálem aha á

30 hyévhyé débú tá ŋgyáká ám bá ŋáné na. Há, allái á tsa gévé ka vua áá

31 Núram na, á far ba farfé hattáá a naba tsahave émtsá. Daací, má ta de

32 yán áme évege kéní á ta gévé ka.

33 - De eblyauaaréblye ba ge Nááli áá ra, á bá sléksé.

- 34 Ta eblyaaare be ge Nááli na; eblyaraaréblye ge Nááli, daací kyárkyá
- 35 emnde badémmé sléksé kéní slélintá, diaadía njané gení ta tsahavé-
- 36 bántsahe émtsíré, daací a naba njá cékwáángudí áte wé áá balamakaacia
- 37 na wá, ba jarááveja emnde na wá, á bá Nááli kéní.
- 38 - Háháyye Núram áá émmááye.
- 39 Á bá Núram kéní.
- 40 Háháyye Nááli áá émmááye.
(Arabe)
- 41 Á bá sleksé
- 42 saumbare sauúsé ekkúre, á bá sléksé, diandía ge nakíní kwa tsahavá-
- 43 bántsahe, kwa fiaare ba uksañúire ge iya, sauúse ekkúré bááka
- 44 úrá á ndahakure élva.
- 45 Daací, ta halatersé á ségáshé, ta naba se jatersé há ádalíé ge
- 46 emnde na.

NURAM ANTARA NAALI (Model adopted by C. Fluckiger and A. Whaley)

- 1 Tsattse egdze a gyaale am ekse, zhera aara Nuram; ma ta vante zhele
- 2 ara keni, ba wayaaka. Ai, tsattse zlaɓe adaliye wa, egdze a dawale
- 3 wa, zhera aara Naali; ɲane keni, ma ta vante mukse ara keni, wayaaka,
- 4 sai á kata ba Nuram, á bina. Ai, vacaate umele, emnde aatare aa Nuram
- 5 ta naba eksanante ge slekse a ba an ndzedɓa. Daaci, darannaada ge
- 6 slekse zlauzle wa, ba ma á deza ɲara slekse, á dagala, á fa hula.
- 7 Daaci Naali itare a ba aɲkwa cenavcene aatare antara Nuram na,
- 8 damme tá balaave ura. Naali a naba tsahave emtsa; am ekse ɲanna
- 9 baaka tata a heɗa ura. Tsaavetsahe emtsa Naali, tá ya evege baaka.
- 10 Ta de eblyanme am balmakaaciya. Ai, á nja am balamakaaciya na, á
- 11 naha takala á de gashe. Daaci,
- 12 - Sawa, á bina, á elvan ge takala na. A ba ɲane, á elvan ge takala
- 13 na, Takala, takala, naba duwa ekka, njinja ate iraabere aa Nuram,
- 14 bananba wa, a beliya Naali.
- 15 Nuram tá pasla jantau antara egdzare a gyaale aha aatare am bere aza
- 16 larusire na. Daaci damda egdze a takala na, a de njaa ate iraabere.

17 - Nuram. . .

18 Nuram na, ndza an halaŋa am dagave a egdzare a gyaale aha na, a ba

19 gaagusa aara wa, a naba se uŋmbehe, á kyuwa, á kyuwa egdze a gyaale

20 na slakate ŋara na keni á kyuwa, ba kelaa hare damme ba estuwa.

21 Á de gya dafa Nuram keni, á sawa, ma a de nja ate evege Nuram na á

22 maga keni, á sawa egdze a takala na. Hashaahaha ba huđe aa egdze a

23 gyaale na slakate ŋara na wa, á ba ŋane wa,

24 - Arge una, ambane ká tsahave emtsa, ma tsakaavetsahe emtsa wa, abi

25 ɓaaka tata a ya evege umele, tata a heɗa ura umele ate iga ba balama-

26 kaaciya na, á bina. Daaci, ba tá dakdaka he adem huđe aara, á bina.

27 - Aa, shagera.

28 A naba tsahave lapikire Nuram na. Slekse ŋane wayaawayaya Nuram

29 an tsakaire seke ba shifa aara. Ba jaha maalem aha, maalem aha a

30 hyevhye debu tá ŋgyaka am ba ŋanna. Ha, allai á tsa gevka, vuwa aa

31 Nuram na, á far ba farfe hatta a naba tsahave emtsa. Daaci, ma ta de

32 yan ame, evege keni á ta gevka.

33 - De eblyawaareblye ba ge Naali aara, á ba slekse.

- 34 Ta eblyaaare ba ge Naali na; eblyaraareblye ge Naali, daaci kyarkya
- 35 emnde bademme slekse keni slelinta, diyaadiya njane geni ta tsahave
- 36 ba na tsahe emtsire, daaci a naba nja cekwangudi ate we aa balamakaaciya
- 37 na wa, ba jaraaveja emnde na wa, á ba Naali keni,
- 38 - Hayye Nuram aa emmaye.
- 39 Á ba Nuram keni,
- 40 - Hayye Naali aa emmaye.
- 41 Á ba slekse,
- 42 - Sawumbare sawuse ekkure, á ba slekse, diyandiya ge nakini kwa tsahave
- 43 ba an tsahe, kwa fiyaare ba uksanjwire ge iya, sawuse ekkure, baaka
- 44 ura a ndahakure elva.
- 45 Daaci ta halaterse a se gashe, ta naba se jaterse ha adaliye ge
- 46 emnde na.