

# Proposed writing systems for the HAMER language

Paul Bennett

## Structure of the Phonology

### Consonants

		Bilabial	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Stop	Voiced	b	d	ɟ	g		
	Voiceless	p	t	c	k		ʔ
	Ejective					q'	
	Implosive	ɓ	ɗ		ɠ		
Fricative	Voiced		z				
	Voiceless	f	s	ʃ	x		h
Affricate			ʈ				
Nasal		m	n	ɲ	ŋ		
Tap			ɾ				
Lateral			l				
Approximant		w		j			

Consonant length is phonemic non-initially. Long /r/ manifests as /r/. Glottal phonemes appear to be marginal, arising predictably based on the Categories of vowels and their placement.

# Vowels

Vowels Harmony exists. Roots and suffixes are either Category I or II. Suffixes may either be “strong”, causing umlaut on the root to which they are attached, or “weak”, taking umlaut from the root to which they are attached.

Liaison arises between Category I or II vowels of the same Category. Liaison between vowels of different categories introduces epenthetic /ʔ/ or /h/ if the second vowel is underlyingly Category I or II respectively.

## Category I and II

i			u
	e	o	
		a	

Category I is RTR, lowered, “harsh”, and shorter  
 Category II is ATR, raised, “hollow”, and longer

## Umlauts

The same five-vowel triangle exists for umlauts, which are plain, with length intermediate between the two primary categories.

## Harmonic Liaisons

First Vowel	Second Vowel				
	a	i	e	o	u
a	aʔ	aj	aj	aw	aw
i	ɛ	iʔ	je	jo	u
e	ɛʔ	ej	eʔ	jo	u
o	ɔ	oj	we	oʔ	ow

Liaisons where the first vowel is /u/ appear to be undocumented. Disharmonic liaisons are described above.

# Romanization

		Bilabial	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Stop	Voiced	B b	D d	J j	G g		
	Voiceless	P p	T t	C c	K k		'
	Ejective					Q q	
	Implosive	ɓ ɓ	ɗ ɗ		Ɯ Ɯ		
Fricative	Voiced		Z z				
	Voiceless	F f	S s	Š š	X x		H h
Affricate			Ts ts				
Nasal		M m	N n	Ñ ñ	ŋ ŋ		
Tap			R r				
Lateral			L l				
Approximant		W w		Y y			

I i			U u
	E e	O o	
	A a		

First Vowel	Second Vowel				
	a	i	e	o	u
a	Ā ā	Ay ay	Ay ay	Aw aw	Aw aw
i	Ī ī	Ī ī	Ye ye	Yo yo	U u
e	Ē ē	Ey ey	Ē ē	Yo yo	U u
o	Ō ō	Oy oy	We we	Ō ō	Ow ow

Doubling is used for consonants to show length. Note that “ts” technically has three case forms:

- lower case: ts
- title case: Ts
- upper case: TS

In handwriting, lower case “ts” may approach the (obsolete IPA) “ts” ligature.

Casing rules work exactly as in English – the first letter of the first word in a sentence goes into title

case, as do any proper nouns. Upper case is used for headlines, and may be used for emphasis.

## Marking of stress and umlaut

In the following table, the fictional verb root “kala” (verbs take initial stress) and the fictional noun root “peti” (nouns take final stress) are used with the fictional suffix “a” for the sake of illustration.

Root	Suffix			
	Category I		Category II	
	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak
Category I	kálā peté		kâlaa petîa	kálaa petía
Category II	kălaa petïa	kàlaa petia	kàlā petè	

## Gə'əz

Gə'əz sign values and ordering taken primarily from DANIELS & BRIGHT<sup>[2]</sup>, modified to place vowel carriers at the start. Additional information from APPLEYARD<sup>[3]</sup>.

	-u	-i	-a	-e	-Ø	-o
Category I	ḁ	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
Category II	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆	ḁ̇
Umlauts	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
l	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
m	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
r	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
s	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
š	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
q	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
b	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
ḁ	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
t	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆
c	ḁ̆	ḁ̇	ḁ̂	ḁ̄	ḁ̅	ḁ̆

	-u	-i	-a	-e	-Ø	-o
x	ᶘ	ᶙ	ᶚ	ᶛ	ᶜ	ᶜ
n	ᶛ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
ñ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
ŋ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
k	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
w	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
z	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
y	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
d	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
j	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
ɟ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
g	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
ɣ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
ts	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
f	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ
p	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ	ᶜ

See below for examples of writing Category I and II vowels, and umlauts, and on the use of the “single dot above” diacritic (which combines with the consonantal “double dot above” diacritic to form the “triple dot above” diacritic as needed). The letters **ᶛ** and **ᶜ** may be written at the end of morphemes where the Category is ambiguous, but may be omitted where the Category can be guessed from context. The letter **ᶜ** may be used in loan words to signal prevention of the usual liaison / elision rules, i.e. to show a consonant-free syllable break.

## Marking of stress and umlaut

Root	Suffix (-a, -ta)			
	Category I		Category II	
	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak
Category I (kála, onó)	ḥḶḶ	ḥḶḶ	ḥḶḶ	ḥḶḶ
Category II (kàla, onò)	ḥḶḶ	ḥḶḶ	ḥḶḶ	ḥḶḶ

The rules for placing the “single dot” diacritic may be summarized as follows:

- Category I roots with harmonic or weak disharmonic suffixes mark the stressed vowel
- Category I roots with strong disharmonic suffixes mark the suffix
- Category II roots with harmonic suffixes mark the stressed vowel
- Category II roots with disharmonic suffixes mark the suffix

## Examples

Here are some example phrases taken from BENDER<sup>[1]</sup>, presented in BENDER's orthography, plus both of my orthographies. I think it shows the various strengths and weaknesses of each system well.

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# *Bibliography*

1. BENDER, M Lionel. The Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia – Michigan State University, 1976
2. DANIELS, Peter T & BRIGHT, William. The World's Writing Systems - ???, ???
3. APPLEYARD, David. Colloquial Amharic – Routledge, 1995