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KARON ORTHOGRAPHY

**An explanation and justification of the rules of orthography in the Karon
language**



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Introduction

The Karon language (called *kuloonay by its speakers*) is spoken by around 16,000 people split between the region of the Casamance in the south of Senegal, and the Gambia. They are originally all from the islands known as the Karones, in the delta to the north of the river Casamance, and despite the strong influence of other languages in the region, the Karon maintain with pride their language and culture.

The Karon orthography is based on a phonological study undertaken by SIL, following as much as possible the Senegalese government decrees concerning national languages, in particular Jola-Fonyi. There doesn't yet exist an official Karon orthography, but several people have tried to write it using the orthographic rules of French or English. Standardization will result in a unity across the border, and in a system that is closer to the other national languages which have already been officially recognized (Wolof, Mandinka, Jola-Fonyi). This will in turn make it easier for those who already read one of those languages.

This document aims to provide an explanation and justification of the rules of Karon orthography that have been agreed. It is divided into two parts, the first explains the Karon alphabet and the second how are words are divided up.

A phonological study of Karon can be found in the document "Phonologie du Karone (Esquisse)" by Janet and Pascal Frésard of SIL.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

ACC	perfective aspect (accompli)
CL	nominal class
DEF	definite article
DEM	demonstrative
Excl	exclusive
FUT	future
HAB.NEG	habitual aspect negative
incl.	inclusive
INF	infinitive
NEG	negative
NOM	nominaliser
OBJ	object
POSS	possessive
PRES.CONT	present continuous
RECIP	reciprocal
REDUP	reduplicated
REL	relative pronoun
1SG, 2SG, 3SG	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd person singular
1PL, 3PL	1 st , 3 rd person plural

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Part 1:

THE KARON ALPHABET

A. Fundamental principles of the alphabet

1. In Karon, unlike in English, all the letters are pronounced. So there are no silent letters (like the letters **gh**, in the English word eight etc).

2. The pronunciation of a letter never changes.

So for example:

a) The **s** is always voiceless, even between two vowels.

E.g. **kaasiin** ‘horn’

b) The **c** is always realised as [c]. It is never pronounced [s] or [k] as in English.

c) The **h** is always realised as [h]. It is never mute.

The only exception to this principle is in the case of the letter combinations [ɲf], [ɲc], [ɲk] and [ɲh], which are written **nf**, **nc**, **nk** and **nh** respectively (see section B.2.2).

3. Words are written as if they were said slowly.

For example ‘I know how to climb’ should be written **yíniyini pisilo** and not **yíniini pisilo**.

B. The letters of the Karon alphabet

The Karon alphabet has 24 letters, of which 14 are consonants and 10 are vowels. They are given below in alphabetical order:

Capita	Small	Example	Meaning in English
A	a	<u>a</u> cifa	tailor
Á	á	<u>á</u> wi	friend
C	c	<u>c</u> aanak	sun
E	e	<u>e</u> kumpaan	house
É	é	<u>é</u> saapun	well
F	f	<u>f</u> álinj	donkey
H	h	<u>h</u> isenkec	lizard
I	i	<u>i</u> haay	piece of meat
Í	í	<u>í</u> m	sing!
K	k	<u>k</u> asel	spoon
L	l	<u>l</u> úutoo	mango
M	m	<u>m</u> an	water
N	n	<u>n</u> ikopu	rope
Ñ	ñ	<u>ñ</u> ow	wash!
Ŋ	ŋ	<u>ŋ</u> aam	grab hold!
O	o	<u>o</u> kop	ring
Ó	ó	<u>ó</u> hkon	stool
P	p	<u>p</u> ikin	village
S	s	<u>s</u> eemak	fire
T	t	<u>t</u> íya	peanut
U	u	<u>u</u> li	rice
Ú	ú	<u>ú</u> tiŋ	sky
W	w	<u>w</u> un	give!

Y y **yaac** bee

B.1. Karon Vowels

The ten vowels are all oral (that is produced through the mouth alone) and voiced (that is the vocal chords vibrate when they are pronounced). The vowel qualities correspond more or less to those in Jola-Fonyi.

B.1.1. The short vowels: a, á, e, é, i, í, o, ó, u, ú

There are ten short vowels, consisting of five pairs of +ATR/-ATR equivalents. Note that an accent placed over the first lowercase vowel of a word marks the whole word as +ATR (see section).

Orthograph	Approximat e realisation	Examples	Meaning in English
y			
a	[ɐ] (-ATR)	<u>a</u>n pi<u>s</u>amata awic<u>a</u>	human being shoe sculptor
á	[ə] (+ATR)	á<u>y</u>iin púnt<u>a</u>lo áyif<u>a</u>	man scorpion drummer
e	[ɛ] (-ATR)	<u>e</u>cont ey<u>e</u>n ela<u>a</u>m<u>e</u>	heel dog machete
é	[e] (+ATR)	é<u>k</u>ink káah<u>e</u>ntinoolu n'kásiit<u>a</u>n<u>e</u>	to enclose feather for scratching they listened
i	[ɪ] (-ATR)	<u>i</u>haay hili<u>y</u>a wul<u>i</u>	piece of meat shark rice

í	[i] (+ATR)	í <u>h</u> inu	to do
		pí <u>c</u> ipo	to go down
		é <u>s</u> oli	arrow
o	[ɔ] (-ATR)	o <u>o</u> pa	to be in the process of
		ih <u>o</u> ku	to put out
		etopokoo <u>o</u>	marsh
ó	[o] (+ATR)	é <u>s</u> osi	arrow
		pú <u>w</u> uulo	wear a hat
u	[ʊ] (-ATR)	u <u>l</u> i	rice
		al <u>u</u> ta	builder
		elumu <u>u</u>	kidney
ú	[u] (+ATR)	ú <u>t</u> iŋ	sky
		pú <u>k</u> umut	thick liquid
		kénu <u>h</u> u	to pound palm nuts

B.1.2. Long vowels

Each short vowel has a corresponding long vowel; which is identical in quality but is roughly twice the length in duration.

Orthograph	Approximate realisation	Examples	Meaning in English
y			
aa	[ɛ:] (-ATR)	<u>aal</u> soka <u>asok</u>	woman I said
áa	[ɔ:] (+ATR)	<u>ási</u> káaha <u>afeen</u>	maternal uncle to sift
ee	[ɛ:] (-ATR)	<u>piteen</u> akee	boat someone
ée	[e:] (+ATR)	<u>ásiitenee</u> élukule <u>en</u>	he was listened to animal; snake
ii	[ɪ:] (-ATR)	<u>hifinu</u> kii	family name dance!
íi	[i:] (+ATR)	<u>síiten</u> wánti <u>i</u>	listen! throw here!
oo	[ɔ:] (-ATR)	etopok <u>oolo</u> sok <u>oo</u>	marsh tell him!
óo	[o:] (+ATR)	<u>cóopii</u> lúuto <u>o</u>	bring! mango
uu	[u:] (-ATR)	<u>epuuk</u> esu <u>um</u>	children wrestler
úu	[u:] (+ATR)	<u>pútuun</u> súumaasu <u>um</u>	god it is sweet, delicious

Here are some examples of contrasts between short and long vowels:

a – aa	can	‘drop of water’
	caan	‘estuary, canal’
o – oo	ekon	‘piece of
	ekoon	wood’
		‘seed’
ú - úu	fúl	‘to go out’
	fúul	‘to be blue’

B.1.3. Other sequences of two vowels.

In Karon there are no combinations of two consecutive different vowels found in the basic word roots. However when certain affixes are added to these roots, there can be cases where two vowels would be expected to be found next to each other. In these situations Karon speakers, almost without exception, insert a **y** or a **w** (a semi-vowel) between the two vowels, and so the general rule is to write this semi-vowel.

In most cases the **y** is used, but in certain cases it is **w**. There appears to be consistency across speakers as to which semi-vowel is chosen in which case.

Examples:

hili ‘to eat’ (root **li**) → **liyaali** ‘I ate’

áwi ‘friend’ → **áwiyam** ‘my friend’

atu ‘younger brother’ + **-i** ‘your’ → **atuwi** ‘your younger brother’

puhoonju ‘face’ + **-oo** ‘his’ → **puhoonjuyoo** ‘his face’

hifinu ‘family name’ + **-am** ‘my’ → **hifinuyam** ‘my family name’

We note here one exception to this rule, which is the word **anooan** (‘everybody’). In this case it was decided by the Karon language committee to write it as **anooan**, rather than as **anoowan**, so as to better reflect the pronunciation of the word, and to avoid confusion with the word **wan** (‘hair’).

B.1.4. Vowel Harmony

Like the other Jola languages, the choice of vowels in a Karon word is restricted by *vowel harmony*. The ten vowels can be divided into two non-interchangeable groups. The vowels in one group are referred to as *light*¹, and are pronounced without advancing the root of the tongue [-ATR] : **a, e, i, o, u**. For each of these five vowels there is a corresponding *heavy* vowel where the tongue root is advanced [+ATR]. These vowels are written with an accent: **á, é, í, ó, ú**.

Vowels from the two groups are not found in the same word. A word is either light or heavy. For this reason it is not necessary to write an accent over each heavy vowel in a word. So, following the Senegalese Government decree for Jola languages, only the first vowel in a heavy word is marked with an accent.

Here are some examples of contrasts between light and heavy words.

kawufan	‘to give’	káwufan	‘to recover’
ihawu	‘to chop’	íhawu	‘to bark’
hicutu	‘to harvest’	hícutu	‘thread a piece of string through something’
hipuku	‘to give birth’	hípuku	‘to be soaked’
hikoosu	‘to gather’	híkoos	‘navel’
hiluulu	‘threat’	éluulu	‘fly’
kankalaŋ	‘roof’	ínkalaŋ	‘drum’
hiwoomu	‘to pound’	híwoomu	‘to curse’

¹ In the literature, the labels “tense/lax” or “clear/dark”, are sometimes used. But in the Karon case, the distinction, “light/heavy” corresponds better to the phonetic reality.

The vowels in most affixes change to match the weight of the vowels in the root. For example **aalam** ‘my wife’ (where the suffix is pronounced **-am**), but **áyinam** ‘my husband’ (where the suffix is pronounced **-ám**). However certain affixes are intrinsically heavy and transform all other vowels in the word into heavy vowels. Here are some examples:

Affix	Function					
-ín	reversing		verb	→		verb
		kop	‘tie a wreath!’	→	kópin	‘untie, explain!’
		pank	‘close!’	→	pánkin	‘open!’
-íi	direction approachin g		verb	→		verb
		coop	‘take!’	→	cóopii	‘bring!’
		want	‘throw!’	→	wántii	‘throw here!’
-úma	place		verb	→		noun
		yik	‘cook!’	→	káayikuma	‘a kitchen’
		hinto	‘go to bed!’	→	káahintum a	‘bed room’
e- -úma	instrument		verb	→		noun
		laan	‘drink!’	→	élaanuma	‘cup’

In these cases and others, it possible to hear that the heaviness has propagated leftwards. It isn’t rare to find that for such words that heaviness varies from one speaker to another. However whether or not the heaviness comes from the suffix, or the word itself, it is always marked in the same way with an accent on the first vowel in the word.

B.2. The Karon Consonants

All 14 Karon consonants can be found at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of words.

B.2.1. Karon consonants that are similar to those in English

Orthography	Phonetic realisation	Examples	English meaning
c	[c]	<u>c</u> apa e <u>c</u> ula miya <u>a</u> c	onion mouse wood
f	[f]	<u>f</u> álinj e <u>f</u> il híle <u>l</u> uuf	donkey goat tongue
h	[h]	<u>h</u> eeh hina <u>h</u> aane eno <u>h</u>	egg axe crocodile
k	[k ^h]	<u>k</u> ahatal kase <u>k</u> eyu kalifa <u>k</u>	leaf basket used spade
l	[l]	<u>l</u> úutoo ka <u>l</u> emp kawu <u>l</u>	mango place (of rest) fingernail
m	[m]	<u>m</u> iyaac e <u>m</u> eloon put <u>m</u>	wood cobra mouth
n	[n]	<u>n</u> ikopu páawu <u>n</u> u píte <u>n</u>	rope nest canoe
ñ	[ɲ]	<u>ñ</u> ow a <u>ñ</u> ii	wash! baby

		hítukaañ	honey comb
ŋ	[ŋ]	ŋaasuwan	ten
		eŋenu	wrist
		eloŋ	life
p	[p ^h]	piteen	canoe
		ésaapun	well
		eñaap	elephant
s	[s]	súmsu<u>m</u>	palm wine
		hi<u>s</u>isu	cooking stone
		e<u>p</u>ees	hand; arm
t	[t ^h]	tútu<u>u</u>f	lung
		é<u>t</u>aakoon	monkey
		hi<u>c</u>aṭ	bissap
w	[w]	w<u>o</u>ot	feet; legs
		e<u>w</u>eesu	fishing cloth
		mu<u>n</u>ow	stomach
y	[j]	y<u>u</u>us	oyster
		e<u>y</u>aale	female
		es<u>a</u>amay	tiger

B.2.2. Consonant combinations

Whenever a nasal consonant is followed by another consonant in Karon, the nasal consonant will always assimilate to the place of articulation of the other consonant. However, for simplicity and for consistency with other Jola languages, the rules given in the following table will be followed:

Combination (phonetic)	Combination (phonemic)	Combination (orthographic)	Example	Meaning in English
---------------------------	---------------------------	-------------------------------	---------	--------------------

[mp]	→	/mp/	→	mp	ekumpul	palm nut
[nt]	→	/nt/	→	nt	hánant	night
[ɲc]	→	/ñc/	→	nc	hifincu	hammer a nail
[ɲk]	→	/ɲk/	→	nk	cánkut	a piece of cloth for carrying a baby on the back
[ns]	→	/ns/	→	ns	pisens	grain
[ɲf]	→	/mf/	→	nf	asonfaaf	paternal aunt
[ɲh] ~ [h:] ²	→	/nh/	→	nh	(i)nhemool	during

Other combinations of consecutive consonants do not normally occur in Karon words. The only exceptions are compound words, and redoubled verb forms. These will be dealt with in sections C.2.1.2 and C.2.4.2 respectively.

B.2.3. Double consonants

Long consonants do not exist in Karon. But sometimes two identical consonants, belonging to two different syllables, can be found in the same word. They are not found in opposition to “normal” consonants, and have a very limited distribution.³ Also this phenomenon only occurs with nasals, the lateral **l** and the semi-vowels **w** and **y**. Because of these facts double consonants are considered as sequences of two consonants.

These only appear in the boundary between two syllables, as in the following examples:

ll	cillas	‘débroussailler’
mm	cemmek	‘termite’
ɲɲ	peyme <u>annote</u>?	‘where <u>did you sleep</u> ?’

² In the case of some speakers, the nasalisation more or less drops out entirely, resulting in the lengthened glottal fricative.

³ FRESARD, Pascal and Janet (2006) : Phonologie du karone, SIL

yy élukuleen ‘this animal’
eyye

B.3. Jusitification of the choice of letters in the Karon alphabet

The letters of the Karon alphabet have been chosen to conform to the symbols give in the decrees published by the Senegalese government. They have been chosen taking into account the facts of the Karon language, but also the facts of other languages (in particular Jola-Fonyi, Mandinka, French and English) which influence, one way or another, all Karon speakers, either through their education, or through the environment in which they grew up. This choice will equally ease the transition from Karon into these other languages.

B.3.1. The letters a, e, f, i, k, l, m, n, o, p, s, t, u, w, y

The choice of these letters is explained by the fact that they are already known to those Karon who can read English, French, Jola-Fonyi or Mandinka. This fact means they are a factor in the ease of learning Karon. It is possible to transfer the knowledge of, and the ability in an already known language to reading Karon, and vice versa.

B.3.2. The letters c, h, η, ñ

The choice of these letters is explained by the fact that they are already known to those Karon who can read Jola-Fonyi, Mandinka or Wolof (and English, in the case of **h**).

B.3.3. The letters aa, á, áa, ee, é, ée, ii, í, íi, oo, ó, óo, uu, ú, úu

The choice of these letters is explained by the fact that they are already known to those Karon who can read Jola-Fonyi.

Part Two :

WORD BREAKS

C. Word breaks in the Karon sentence

C.1. Linguistic criteria

Word boundaries are based on different linguistic criteria: semantic, grammatical, and phonological. These criteria can be found in the book *Alphabets of Africa*.⁴ This section gives some examples from Karon of each criterion.

C.1.1. Referential Independence

“A morpheme qualifies as a word, if it clearly communicates meaning even when seen in isolation. Thus when mother-tongue readers see a given word in an isolated list or set off by a space or punctuation, it should recall to their mind the thing, person or event being referred to” (p.7)

Examples:

an	‘person’
li	‘eat!’

“Conversely each language also has a certain number of morphemes which cannot communicate meaning independently and therefore are typically written as affixes.” (p.7)

Examples:

CLASS	<u>ka</u>-hatal	‘leaf’
	CL-leaf	
INFINITIVE	<u>hi</u>-sap-<u>u</u>	‘to hit’
	INF-hit-INF	
POSSESSIVE	hi-lim-<u>am</u>	‘ <u>my</u> voice’
	CL-voice-	

⁴ HARTELL, Rhonda L. (1993) : *Alphabets of Africa* ; UNESCO – Dakar Regional Office, SIL

Examples :

sícalukun <u>sa</u>	‘ <u>the</u> pigs’
sícalukun súsupak <u>sa</u> *	‘ <u>the</u> two pigs’
punuun <u>empe</u>	‘ <u>these</u> trees’
punuun penfakat <u>empe</u>	‘ <u>these</u> big trees’

*This example is unusual, because even though it is correct, one can also say **sícalukun sa súsupak sa**. But it still shows that the definite article can be separated from the word it determines.

C.1.4. Substitutability

“A functor (grammatical morpheme) is also separated off as a distinct word when it can fill the same position in a sentence as other independent words defined by the above criteria. Any morpheme substituting for a free-standing word takes on the function of the word it replaces and can therefore be written an independent word.” (p.11)

Examples :

Áyiin a acukaacuk <u>kisenkec ka</u> .	‘The man saw the <u>lizards</u> ’
Áyiin a acukaacuk <u>ko</u> .	‘The man saw <u>them</u> ’
<u>Híkon eehu</u> hitii	‘ <u>That stool</u> is for you’
<u>Eehu</u> hitii	‘ <u>That one</u> is for you’

C.1.5. Vowel harmony

“In other languages a word-level phonological unit may be defined on the basis of such factors as ... vowel harmony considerations ... Typically the vowels of such languages divide into two sets, and vowels belonging to only one set can occur any non-compound word.” (p.12)

Examples :

níkin na	‘ <u>eye</u> ’	The vowel in the definite article does not harmonise with the noun it determines. It is therefore written separately (see section C.2.2.1).
níkinam	‘ <u>mon</u> eye’	The vowel in the possessive affix does harmonise, therefore it is not separable.

C.1.6. Morphophonological changes

As we have seen in section B.1.3, there are cases where one or two non-identical vowels could occur together when certain morphemes are added to a root. In these cases, a semi-vowel is inserted to aid their pronunciation, even in slow speech, and so will be written. The insertion of a semi-vowel therefore gives a good criterion for writing two morphemes as one word, and inversely the absence of such a change gives a good criterion for separating them into two words. This is the case for the definite article (see section C.2.2.1)

A second possibility for making the pronunciation of a combination of morphemes easier is the insertion of a nasal. For verbs which take the suffix **-fi** (approaching) and for which the root finishes with an **o**, this vowel is lengthened and the nasal **n** is inserted, as shown in the second example below.

Examples:

puhoonju	‘face’	+	am	‘my’	→	puhoonjuyam	‘my face’
tiyo	‘carry (on the head)’	+	-fi	‘approaching’	→	tíyoonii	‘carry (on the head) towards here’
añii	‘baby’	+	-oo	‘his’	→	añiino	‘his baby’

Some Karon names are constructed from a redoubled root. These exceptional cases are described in section C.2.1.2.

C.2. Word breaks by grammatical category

C.2.1. Nouns

C.2.1.1. Noun class markers

Nouns in Karon, which are independent words, start with a classifier (except in a few rare cases where the classifier is absent for the singular, but appears in the plural).

The classifier is attached to the word as a prefix because it does not communicate an independent meaning itself, but gives the noun the necessary form for its grammatical context. Therefore the classifier functions only as a grammatical morpheme, and not as a lexical unit. No independent word can be inserted between the classifier and the root; the classifier is never mobile and can never take the function of another word. In addition, the vowel of the classifier becomes “heavy” if the vowels of the root are heavy. There is therefore no reason to write them separately.

The following table shows the noun class markers:

Class prefix (singular)	Example	Meaning in English	Class prefix (plural)	Example	Meaning in English
a-	áwi	friend	paka-	pákawi	friends
e- (y-)	efil	goat	pV-	pifil	goats (uncountable, general plural)
			sV-	sifil	goats (small countable number)
kV- / kaa-	kahatal	leaf	u- (w-)	uhatal	leaves
hV-	hifaafay u	papaya	kV-	kifaafayu	papayas
nV-	níkin	eye	ñV-	ñíkin	eyes
pV-	piteen	canoe	ñV-	ñíteen	canoes
			m- / mV-	micempanu	salt

cV- **ciyaac** branch **mV-** **miyaac** wood

‘V’ represents a vowel which varies depending on the phonological context. As a general rule, this vowel is **i** if the first vowel of the root is a front vowel and **u** if the first vowel is a back vowel.

The term ‘class consonant’ will be used henceforth in this report to refer to the first letter of the classifier. In the case of the prefixes **e-** and **u-**, the class consonants are the semi-vowels **y-** and **w-** respectively.

Nouns, which are independent words, always start with a classifier. By the principle of consistency, therefore, a new word should begin every time there is a new classifier. This applies not just to nouns, but also to verbs, pronouns and certain determiners that also begin with a classifier.

C.2.1.2. Compound words

There are very few compound words in Karon. These are words formed from the combination of two others, where the meaning of the word formed cannot be worked out from the two original concepts. A word like this expresses one inseparable idea and so it is written with a hyphen. Where one of the two words is heavy, this doesn’t influence the other; the accent is written on the first vowel of the heavy word.

Example:

níkin ‘eye’ + **ecaw** ‘calf’ → **níkin-ecaw** ‘tibia’

A compound noun can be recognised by the fact that although all suffixes are attached to the second noun, the words in the noun phrase agree with the first noun.

Example:

níkin-ecawam náali ‘my right tibia’

There are also nouns with a redoubled root that is formed from a repeated root. The peculiarity of these is that they only have one class marker, and often create combinations of consonants which are not otherwise found. In general these are onomatopoeic words which describe an instrument or an animal according to the sound they make. Because the root in question cannot exist in isolation, it would be pointless and imprecise to separate these into two words.

The decision has therefore been taken to write these words in the same way as compound words, with a hyphen between the two roots. An exception is made in certain case where the speakers pronounce, even at slow speed, a vowel between the two roots: these will be written as pronounced (see section C.1.6).

Examples:

ekalat-kalat	‘musical instrument (percussion)’
kaakosukos	‘grasshopper’

C.2.2. Noun determiners

C.2.2.1. Definite article

In Karon, the definite article agrees with the class of the noun, and takes its class consonant. This definite article will always be written as an independent word. There are three reasons for this, of which the first two are phonological:

- The definite article is always light. That is if the noun which it determines is ‘heavy’, the vowel harmony never spreads to the definite article, except partially in a few cases.

Examples :

elumu <u>ya</u>	‘ <u>the</u> heart’	écalukun <u>ya</u>	‘ <u>the</u> pig’
hilim <u>ha</u>	‘ <u>the</u> voice’	hícintook <u>ha</u>	‘ <u>the</u> lizard’
naas <u>na</u>	‘ <u>the</u> ron palm’	nínkonk <u>na</u>	‘ <u>the</u> root’

Note: we have noticed that there exists variation in the “heaviness” in the pronunciation of the definite article. Though most people pronounce it as light, there are those who have the tendency to pronounce it as heavy after heavy words. However, in considering this, we have noticed that there are certain heavy words, where the definite article is never given a heavy pronunciation; for example in **síis sa** ‘the cow’ it is clearly an **a** and not an **á**. This observation was very useful to us in the final decision to treat the definite article as a separate word.

- None of the morphophonological changes mentioned in section C.1.6 apply here. Firstly if the noun ends with a consonant, there are then two consonants next to each other, with the definite article starting with the class consonant. (This is different to Jola-Fonyi). In fast speech an inserted vowel can be heard, in general ‘i’, which is absent in slow speech. In addition there is no assimilation between the final consonant of the noun and the initial consonant of its determiner, which would be expected if the determiner was a suffix.

Example:

eyen ‘dog’ + **ya** DEF → **eyen ya** ‘the dog’
 and not **eyenya**
 nor **eyeniya**

A note here about this orthographic decision compared with that taken in the case of verbs with a redoubled root: (see section C.2.4.2). The verbal root in its isolated form is in fact the imperative, whilst the definite article has no other meaning. Therefore writing them separately should not cause a problem, even for a beginning reader.

- A number, already classified as an independent word, can be inserted between the noun, and the definite article :

sícalukun **súsupak** **sa** **sitoom** ‘my two pigs’
 CL-pig CL-two CL-DEF CL-my

C.2.2.2. Demonstrative

In Karon, the demonstrative follows the noun and forms an independent word. There are three reasons for this:

- A phonological reason: The demonstrative invariably contains light vowels. That is, if the noun which is determined is heavy, vowel harmony does not propagate to the demonstrative:

kasekeyu **kenke** ‘this basket’ **káyita** **kenke** ‘this palm tree’
heeh **eehe** ‘this egg’ **hícintook** **eehe** ‘this lizard’

naas enne

‘this ron palm’

níkin enne

‘this eye’

- Another word can be inserted between the noun and the demonstrative:

enuun enfakat eyye

‘this big tree’

sikumpaán súsupak
ensa

‘those two
houses’

- The demonstrative can replace the noun it determines:

Ekumpaán eyye híciimant
neelute

‘This house was built last
year’

Eyye híciimant neelute

‘This one was built last year’

The demonstrative is marked by the class consonant of the classe of the noun it detremines. It takes the form **eNCe**, with free variation **CeNCe**, where **C** is the class consonant and **N** its homorganic nasal. The exceptions to this are the singular classes **a-**, **e-** and **h-** and the plural classes **pak-** et **w-** which result in, respectively, **añe**, **eyye**, **eehe**, **payenke** and **ewwe**.

C.2.2.3. Possessive

As its name indicates, the possessive is used to express possession. In Karon, there are two kinds of possessives: one which attaches to the noun it describes and which is called the *possessive index*, and the other which is a separate word, called the *possessive pronoun*.

C.2.2.3.1. Possessive index

This form of the possessive is used especially for the things which are inalienable, such as parts of the body, close members of the family etc.

The form of the possessive index does not agree with the noun it determines, it is invariable for each person (except for certain phonological changes such as **-yam** - see section B.1.3).

	Person	Possessive	Example	English meaning
SINGULAR	1 st	-am	hisiikam	my finger

	2 nd	-i	ñíkini	your (sg) eyes
	3 rd	-oo	kootoo	his foot
PLURAL	1 st inclusive	unaa	kikaw unaa	our heads
	1 st exclusive	unii	pákawi unii	our friends
	2 nd	aluu	ñíkin aluu	your (pl) eyes
	3 rd	-ii	sipeesii	their hands

(Note that there is also a 1st person plural dual suffix, but this is sufficiently rare that we will not include it in our tables in the document).

It will be noticed that certain of these are given as suffixes, while others are given as independent words. This decision was taken on the basis of vowel harmony. Those that are given as suffixes are influenced by the vowel harmony of the preceding noun, while those that are given as independent words are not.

C.2.2.3.2. Possessive pronoun

This form of the possessive is used especially for things which are alienable, such as possessions. It follows the noun and is an independent word. This is for three reasons:

- The possessive pronoun never directly follows the noun, but is always preceded by the definite article or a demonstrative pronoun.

Examples:

káyita ka <u>kutoom</u>	‘ <u>my</u> palm tree’
élukuleen eyye <u>etoom</u>	‘this animal is <u>mine</u> ’

- It is mobile; its position relative to the other determiners can vary.

Examples:

sícalukun sa <u>sitoom</u> súsupak sa	‘ <u>my</u> two pigs’
--	-----------------------

sícalukun súsupak sa sitoom

'my two pigs'

- The possessive pronoun, as its name suggest, can replace the word it qualifies.

Examples:

piteen pa putoom

'my canoe'

putoom

'mine'

hisiik ha hiteyoo

'his manioc'

hiteyoo

'his'

As for the definite article, the possessive pronoun varies according to the class and the number of the noun it determines. The noun classifier attaches to the possessive as a prefix.

	Person	Possessive	Example	English meaning
SINGULAR	1 st	-toom	ekaleela ya etoom	my pot
	2 nd	-ti	kaakit ka kiti	my field
	3 rd	-teyoo*	páhin pa piteyoo	his work
PLURIEL	1 st inclusive	-tuunaa	písiyool pa putuunaa	our agreement/relation
	1 st exclusive	-toonii	káahinuma ka kutoonii	our place of work
	2 nd	-taaluu	ekumpaán ya etaaluu	your house
	3 rd	-teyii	econ ya eteyii	their island

*in free variation with **-tiyoo** in spoken language

We have reached the same conclusion in the cases where the possessor belongs to a nominal class. We give here the paradigm according to all the consonants concerned:

CLASSIFIE	POSSESSIVE	CLASSIFIE	POSSESSIVE
e- (y-)	eteyyo	hV-	eteeho
pV-	etempo	nV-	etenno

sV-	etenso	ñV-	eteñño
kV- / kaa-	etenko	mV-	etempo
u- (w-)	etewwo	cV-	etenco

They are used exactly like their personal equivalents:

Examples:

kíyaani <u>síis sa</u>	‘the tails <u>of the bulls</u> ’	kíyaani <u>etenso</u>	‘ <u>their</u> tails’
hisiik ha <u>hiti écalukun</u>	‘the manioc <u>of the pig</u> ’	hisiik <u>eteyyo</u>	‘ <u>its</u> manioc’

C.2.2.4. Adjectives

The Karon use very few adjectives, qualifiers usually being expressed by stative verbs (see C.2.4.2). As we have already said the class index appears on all the elements of the noun phrase, including adjectives.

Examples:

enuun <u>enfakat</u>	‘a <u>large</u> tree’
níkinam <u>naamay</u>	‘my left <u>eye</u> ’
pakan <u>pákasupak</u>	‘ <u>two</u> people’

C.2.3. Pronouns

C.2.3.1. Personal subject pronoun

In Karon, it is not necessary to use the pronoun for the subject in a neutral phrase; it is the verb prefix which indicates the person and number of the subject (see section C.2.4.1). As the most common prefix for the first person is Ø-, the corresponding pronoun **inci** is used more often than the other pronouns in order to avoid confusion.

The table below gives a complete list of the personal subject pronouns:

Person (sg)	Pronoun	Person (pl)	Pronoun
1 st	inci	1 st inclusive	unaa
		1 st exclusive	unii
2 nd	awe	2 nd	aluu
3 rd	akina	3 rd	pako/poko*

*this is a dialectal variant.

The independent personal pronoun is used to give prominence to the subject or the object. It is written separately from the verb because there is a referential independence, and there is no change due to vowel harmony. In addition as is shown in the last three examples, it is mobile.

Examples:

<u>Pako</u>	kálafilafi	pinimo		‘ <u>Them</u> , they want to get married’ (subject in focus)
3PL	they want	to marry		
Inci	hikiicuyi			‘I’m writing to you’
1SG	write-2SG			
<u>Awe</u> ,	inci	hikiicuyi	iiyaake	‘ <u>To you</u> I’m writing’
2SG	1SG	write-2SG	1SG-PRES.CONT	
Inci	awe	iiyaake	hikiicu	‘I’m writing to you
1SG	2SG	1SG- PRES.CONT	write	
Hikiicu	awe	inci	iiyaake	‘It’s to you that I’m writing’
Write	2SG	1SG	1SG- PRES.CONT	

C.2.3.2. Object marker

In Karon there are two forms of the object marker, depending on whether it refers to a human or a non-human

C.2.3.2.1. Object marker – human

The object marker has, in most cases, the same form as the possessive index (see section C.2.2.3.1), with one important addition to note: in the redoubled verb form the object marker is inserted between the two roots of the verb. This does not apply in the case of the 1st and 2nd person plural (**unii**, **unaa** and **aluu**), which gives another reason for considering these as independent pronouns rather than as pronominal suffixes. In this case the default **-aa-** infix is used, and the pronoun follows the verb, as in the final pair of examples in the table below.

It should be noted as well that in some cases **-am-** becomes **-aam-** for the 1st person singular, and **-i-** becomes **-uu-** for the 2nd person singular.

Examples:

Hijes <u>epuuk ya</u> inci iyaake	‘I’m looking for <u>the children</u> ’
Hijesij inci iyaake	‘I’m looking for <u>them</u> ’
Áyiin a acukaacuk <u>acifa ya</u>	‘The man saw <u>the worker</u> ’
Áyiin a acukoocuk	‘The man saw <u>him</u> ’
Inci cokaacok <u>epuuk ya</u>	‘I hold <u>the children</u> ’
Inci cokaacok <u>aluu</u>	‘I hold <u>you</u> ’

When there are two object pronouns in a sentence, their positions depends firstly on their function, but also on whether or not they represent a human. If possible, an indirect object comes before a direct object, but when the direct object is non human, the order is reversed and a preposition is inserted between the two.

Example:

Áafiyisanj híteeni ha	‘He is going to show <u>you</u> the kapok’
-----------------------	--

Áafiyisani ho ‘He is going to show you it’

Inci coope ahoopam po ti ekumpaan ya ‘I brought my sister to the house’

Inci coopoo po te yo ‘I brought her there’

C.2.3.2.2. Personal object pronoun – non-human

All other object pronouns follow the verb. They are written as independent words as they are not affected by vowel harmony and they are not placed between the two roots of the verb in the redoubled form of the past.

Like the definite article, the demonstrative and the possessive, the non-human object pronoun varies according to the class of the noun that it determines. The class consonant attaches to the object pronoun as a prefix.

Examples:

N’kañow soon sa ‘They are washing the fish’ N’kañow so ‘They are washing them’

Áhinaahin páhin pa ‘He did the work’ Áhinaahin po ‘He did it’

Coop miyaac ma ‘Take the wood!’ Coop mo ‘Take it!’

As these pronouns are separate from the verb, it is always possible to write the indirect object before the direct object in the cases where they are both used.

Example:

Aawufane élukuleen ya heeh ha? ‘Did you give the snake the egg?’

Aawufane yo ho? ‘Did you give it it?’

C.2.3.3. Relative clauses

Both subject and object head-nouns are relativised in the same way, and we treat them together here.

The following examples show how a relative clause works in Karon:

añii	<u>aña</u>	nacook	<u>ya</u>		‘the child <u>who</u> is singing’
child	REL	he sings	(REL)		
saate ya	<u>eyya</u>	n’kasok	<u>ya</u>	Campanceeli	‘the village <u>that</u> they call Jambanjelly’
the village	REL	they call	(REL)	Jambanjelly	
páhin	<u>empe</u>	nuyemaa	<u>pe</u>	tempo	‘the work <u>that</u> we are doing at the moment’
work	REL	we are	(REL)	at this moment	

There are two separate words in each case to mark the relative clause. First, there is a relativiser (which can also function as a relative pronoun) that immediately follows the head-noun. This relativiser takes the same form as the demonstrative (section C.2.2.2). Secondly, immediately following the verb of the relative clause, there is also an optional particle that takes the same form as the definite article (section C.2.2.1). As with the case of the demonstrative and the article, both of these are written as independent words.

There are other types of relative clauses in Karon that use, for example, the prefix **ee-**. However, these are straightforward from the point of view of orthography, and so won’t be discussed here. For an explanation of these see, for example, Lowry, Discourse in Kuloonay (SIL, 2011).

C.2.3.4. Interrogative Pronouns

There are two sorts of interrogative pronouns: those which are invariable (that is, the same for all the classes) and those which are depend on the noun class of the noun that they determine. Both sorts are written as a word apart according to the principle of analogy.

There are seven invariable interrogative pronouns, which can all be accompanied by the interrogative mark **-me** (which, however, can appear on its own to mean ‘where’). If this mark is present, it directly follows the interrogative pronoun, with nothing else being allowed to come in between. It is for this reason that we consider the **-me** as a suffix rather than as an

independent word, even though it is allowed to exist independently. Vowel harmony plays no part in this decision, since none of the words to which it can be suffixed are heavy.

Pronoun	English meaning
ay	who (singular)
pakay	who (plural)
wey	what
pey	where (general)
ley	where (precise)
puu	how, which
tey	when

The interrogative pronoun precedes the verb in a sentence and takes the position of the noun which will replace it in the answer.

Examples:

<u>Ay(me)</u> añowe hukan?	‘ <u>Who</u> washed (the clothes) yesterday?’
<u>Tina</u> añowe hukan	‘ <u>Tina</u> washed (the clothes) yesterday’
Pool <u>me</u>?	‘ <u>Where</u> is Paul ?’
Pool <u>ehee yoo</u>	‘Paul is <u>here</u> ’
Hifinuyi <u>puu(me)</u>?	‘ <u>Which</u> is your family name?’ (lit. ‘Your name <u>how</u> ?’)
Hifinuyam <u>Sámpu</u>	‘My family name is <u>Sambou</u> ’
<u>Pey(me)</u> efikaŋot?	‘ <u>Where</u> will they sleep?’
<u>Páhantuwa</u> efikaŋot	‘They will sleep <u>inside</u> ’ (lit. ‘It is inside that they will sleep’)

There are two series of interrogative pronouns that depend on the noun class of the noun that they determine, as follows (letters in brackets are optional):

CLASSIFIER	‘WHICH?’	‘WHERE?’	CLASSIFIER	‘WHICH?’	‘WHERE?’
a-	ay(me)	uuwey	u- /w-	(w)ewwey(me)	(w)uwwey
paka- /ka-	pakay(me)	unkey	hV-	(h)enhey(me)	(h)uuhey
e- /y-	(y)eyyey(me)	(y)uyyey	nV-	(n)enney(me)	(n)unney
pV-	(p)empey(me)	(p)umpey	ñV-	(ñ)eñney(me)	(ñ)uñney
sV-	(s)ensey(me)	(s)unsey	mV-	(m)emmey(me)	(m)ummey
kV- / kaa-	(k)enkey(me)	(k)unkey	cV-	(c)encey(me)	(c)uncey

For example:

Káyita enkey(me) aafisilo? ‘Which palm tree did you climb?’

Hineerju ha huuhey? ‘Where is the broom?’

C.2.4. Verbs

C.2.4.1. Verbal subject prefixes

In Karon the verbs agree in number and in class with the subject. Remember that pronouns are not used for the subject in a neutral sentence: it is the affix on the verb that indicates the class and number of the subject.

There are two series of personal prefixes, which are mutually exclusive⁵. The second series arises from the addition of a nasal consonant to the first series. It is hard to be sure, but this nasal consonant probably arises from a contraction and prefixation of the conjunction **nij**. This word, **nij**, elsewhere means ‘with’, ‘and’ or ‘if’, but in the verbal case it seems to function rather as an aspectual marker. See section D.2.2 for further explanation of the use of this word **nij** as well as for explanation of the use of the apostrophe.

⁵ For a more detailed study of these prefixes, see Berndt & Wilkinson, “Esquisse de grammaire de la langue karone” (SIL, 2011)

Person (sg)	Prefixes	nin + prefixes	Person (pl)	prefixes	nin + prefixes
1 st	Ø-	iN*-	1 st inclusive	u- -aa***	nuu- -aa***
			1 st exclusive	u-	nuu-
2 nd	aa-	aN*-	2 nd	ni-	n'ni-
3 rd	a-	naa- (na-**)	3 rd	ka-	n'ka-

* The N here denotes a nasal that assimilates to the place of articulation of the following consonant. It becomes l before l, w before w and y before y.

** The **naa-** is the most commonly used. The **na-** is used for the habitual aspect in the present tense.

*** The **-aa** suffix is also added for the 1st person plural inclusive. This is how differentiation is made between the inclusive and exclusive forms.

These are definitely prefixes because they are not mobile, and it is not possible to insert other independent words between them and the verb root. In addition they do not simply replace another word; either there is the noun and prefix, or there is just the prefix.

For non-humans, the verb takes the class prefix from the class of the subject noun. The following table shows what happens in the case of the contracted form of **nin** being prefixed to these words.

Class index:	nin + index	Example	Meaning in English
c-	n'c-	caanak ca <u>n'</u> cisap	The sun beat...
e- /y-	nee-	efil ya <u>nee</u> kaay	The goat went
h-	nih-	haac ha <u>nih</u> ipilifi	The bees stang
k-	n'k-	kampiis ka <u>n'</u> kúsokiyoo	The horn sounded
m-	m'm-	múkum ma <u>m'</u> mahañ <u>m'</u> mileño	The honey was more and more sweet

n-	n'n-	niket na <u>n'nikete</u>	the plant died
ñ-	ñ'ñ-	ñikinii <u>n'ñipiyeno</u> ñipaakiil	their eyes met (lit. became four)
p-	m'p-	pifil pa <u>m'pukaay</u>	the goats went
s-	n's-	sifil súsupak sa <u>n'sukaay</u>	the two goats went
u- /w-	nuu-	uli wa <u>nuuliyee</u>	the rice was eaten

C.2.4.2. Reduplication

There are two cases where the root of the verb, or part of the root, is redoubled to express the aspect of the verb.

- 1) The first case is that of the perfective which is marked by **-aa** at the end of the verb root, but also by repeating the verb root after this morpheme. This is all written as one word, for two main reasons: first because when there are heavy vowels, the heaviness is carried over to all the vowels in the construction, and secondly because the verbal root on its own has a meaning. This decision avoids all confusion, even if it results in quite long words.

Examples:

hín	‘work!’	hínaahin	‘I worked’
tantak	‘witness!’	aatantakaatantak	‘he has witnessed’

- 2) The verbal root is completely repeated without any intervening morpheme in order to mark the habitual aspect in the present. This form presents a problem for the orthography, because it creates combinations of consonants that are not normally pronounced in the language. It was decided, however, to write it as one word, knowing that readers will be able to distinguish the morphemes. Therefore every verb, whether the root finishes in a consonant or a vowel, will be treated in the same way.

Examples:

m'pili	'they (the goats) <u>are eating</u> '	m'pilili	'they eat (habitually)'
n'kasok	'they (the people) <u>are saying</u> '	n'kasoksok	'they say (habitually)'

It is the same for stative verbs, where the root often ends with **-í**.

Examples:

piteen pa pínapinapi	'the canoe <u>is heavy</u> '
píya áciiticiiti	'to cultivate, <u>it's difficult</u> '
seeñaamseeñ	' <u>it hurts</u> ' (lit. ' <u>it is painful</u> to me')

C.2.4.3. Negation

Negation can be expressed in several different ways, most of which use affixes.

1) *The suffix -ut*

This is used with verbs with redoubled roots (either in the past or for the habitual and stative verbs in the present.) This suffix sometimes changes to **-it** or **-aat** to depending on the final vowel of the verb root. In the order of suffixes it precedes the object pronoun.

Examples:

taakut	miyaac		'I don't have any wood'
have-NEG	wood		
á-lafi-ut		→	álafit 'he doesn't want to'
3SG-want-NEG			
cuk-ut-oo		→	cukutoo 'I didn't see him'
see-NEG-3SG			

2) *The negative future prefix.*

This case is treated in the next section (C.2.4.4).

3) *The prohibitive prefix timpi-* (with variants *m’pi-*, *tiki-* and *tuku-*)

These are definitely prefixes because their vowels change to match the vowel harmony of the word to which they are attached. Their position for the imperative in the plural is before the personal prefix.

Examples:

sincan	‘Look!’	<u>timpisincan</u>	‘ <u>Don’t</u> look!’
kúp	‘Speak!’	<u>tímpinikup</u>	‘ <u>Don’t</u> speak!’
li	‘Eat!’	<u>tikili</u>	‘ <u>Don’t</u> eat!’

4) *The suffix –antoo*

This marks the habitual aspect in the negative.

Examples:

<u>ákupantoo</u>			‘he <u>doesn’t</u> speak’
Cankeen aliy <u>-antoo</u>	tíya		‘Cankeen <u>doesn’t</u> eat
Cankeen he_eats <u>-HAB.NEG</u>	peanuts	peanuts’	

5) *The independent word, tom*

This can be used to negate either a noun or a verb. As this word can follow either a noun or a verb, it cannot be considered as a suffix; in addition it is invariable in regards to vowel harmony. The second example shows its position after nominal suffixes.

Examples:

unii pikaayu	‘we go’	unii pikaayu <u>tom</u>	‘we <u>don’t</u> go’
aṅa púnuwam	‘he is my older brother’	aṅa púnuwam <u>tom</u>	‘he is <u>not</u> my older brother’

C.2.4.4. The future

The future tense is expressed by a prefix of the underlying form **efi-**, which precedes the personal or nominal prefix and which undergoes phonological changes according to its

environment. Its negative equivalent is **eti-**; in general there is simply a replacement of **f** by **t**. but there are some cases where this does not happen. We give here the complete paradigm of the positive and negative personal prefixes for the future, with some notes below which explain the multiple variations possible.

Person (sg)	Future positive	Future negative	Person (pl)	Future positive	Future negative
1 st	efi-	eti-	1 st incl.	efuu-/ufuu- (with suffix -a)	etuu-/utuu-
			1 st excl.	efuu-/ufuu-	etuu-/utuu-
2 nd	aafi-	aati-	2 nd	efini-	etini-
3 rd	afaa-	ata-	3 rd	efika-	etika-

Notes:

1. The vowel ‘i’ is often replaced by ‘a’ in the case of the first and second person in the singular.
2. The **eti-** of the first person singular is sometimes pronounced **etiti-** by some people. Likewise for **etuu-** (1^{ère} pluriel) with **etutuu-**.
3. The second person singular, **aati-**, is a shortening of **awe eti-** which can sometimes be heard.
4. As we noted in section B.1.4, heaviness varies a lot from one speaker to another. Therefore there may be some speakers who say these prefixes as light when attached to a heavy verb. In the case of some of the longer prefixes, they may even switch from light to heavy part way through the prefix.
5. For non-humans, the prefixes of the future are also **efi-** and **eti-**, preceding the class prefix and changing to **ufuu-** and **utu-** before the classifier ‘u’.

Examples:

nipak na éfinijanti ‘the baobab will germinate’

siyen sa etisili ‘the dogs will not eat’

uli wa ufuuliyee ‘the rice will be eaten.’

C.2.4.5. Verbal suffixes

In Karon, there are many suffixes for expressing the tense, mode or aspect of the verb; some of which are a lot more productive than others. They are definitely suffixes because they are never found on their own and they are always subject to vowel harmony. Further, certain verb roots have no sense without one of these suffixes. We show below some examples:

Suffix Function

-an	‘transitive’	yeno*	‘sit!’	→	yen<u>an</u>	‘put down (something)!’
-al	‘repeated action’	piyook	‘to go and get water’	→	kayook<u>al</u>	‘to go and get water repeatedly’
-ín	‘reversive’	pank	‘close!’	→	pán<u>kin</u>	‘open!’

*In this case, the root **yen** doesn’t exist on its own

C.2.4.6. Adverbs

The adverbs are, without exception, invariable words. Their vowels never harmonise with the vowels of other words and undergo no other morphological changes. Usually they directly follow the verb, but, as we noted in section C.1.2, adverbs of time have a variable position in the sentence; they can be at the beginning or end of the sentence.

Examples:

sok <u>nene</u>					‘say that <u>again</u> ’
súumaamsuum <u>meemak</u>					‘I am <u>very</u> happy’ (or ‘that pleases me’)
<u>kacom</u>	ufuukaay	ti	elampa		‘ <u>tomorrow</u> we will go to the bush’
tomorrow	we will go	to	bush		
ufuukaay	ti	elampa	<u>kacom</u>		‘we will go to the bush <u>tomorrow</u> ’
we will go	to	bush	tomorrow		

C.2.4.7. Auxiliary verbs

The Karon language uses several auxiliary verbs which are treated in orthographic terms like main verbs. It is the auxiliary verb that takes the person, tense and aspect affixes, whilst the main verb takes the infinitive form.

Examples:

Éfikayini **ékey** **n'inci ?** ‘Will they be able to come with me?’
 They will be able to come with me

Afaaconam **kayankanan** ‘He is ready to help me’
 He will agree to me to help

C.2.4.8. Progressive aspect

The Karon language employs two semi-verbal forms for the progressive aspect. That is **oopa** (which changes to **unka** in the plural, and is different for every noun class) ‘to be (in the process of)’ and its opposite **neetaat** (in free variation with **nootaat**) ‘to not be (in the process of)’, both of which are followed in the sentence by **ti**. Neither of the two takes a suffix and **oopa** doesn’t even take prefixes, whilst **neetaat** takes class and person prefixes.

The following table gives all the different forms of **oopa** for the different noun classes:

CLASSIFIER	PROGRESSIVE SEMI-VERB	CLASSIFIER	PROGRESSIVE SEMI-VERB
a-	oopa	u- /w-	uuwa
paka- /ka-	unka	hV-	uuha
e- /y-	oopa	nV-	unna
pV-	umpa	ñV-	uñña
sV-	unsa	mV-	umma
kV- / kaa-	unka	cV-	unca

Examples:

Isatu <u>oopa</u> ti enuuf	‘Isatou <u>is</u> in the house’
Isatu <u>aneetaat</u> ti enuuf	‘Isatou <u>is</u> not in the house’
Pakaal paka <u>unka</u> ti hiik	‘The women <u>are in the process of</u> cooking’
Pakaal paka n’ <u>kaneetaat</u> ti hiik	‘The women <u>are not in the process of</u> cooking’
Epuuk ya <u>kayeniit</u> pahaaño	‘The children <u>are not currently</u> playing’
Pifil pa <u>umpa</u> ti hili mukum	‘The goat <u>is in the process of</u> eating honey’
Haac ha <u>uuha</u> ti katey	‘The bees <u>are in the process of</u> running’

C.2.5. Conjunctions

The conjunctions **ti** ‘of, at’, **nin** ‘and, with’ and **nii** ‘if, like’ aren’t affected by vowel harmony; and they are therefore written apart. Here we have an application of the principle of slow speech; phrases containing these words are written as they are pronounced if they are said slowly. In particular, the word **nin** is written where it appears in the numbers (see section C.2.6). Even so, the apostrophe is used where it is relevant (see section D.2).

Examples:

inci	pikaayu	ti	hiyanu	‘I’m going <u>to</u> the river’
I	go	to	river	
Ti	ésaapun	ánfuli?		‘You have come <u>from</u> the well?’
from	well	you come here		
élaañalaan	t’inci			‘It is far <u>from</u> me’
it is far	from me			
inci	nin	pako	ulie	‘I ate <u>with</u> them’
1SG	with	3PL	we ate	(lit. ‘me with then we have eaten’)

kakaayaakaay	Kúupa	<u>nij</u>	Hílool	‘They went to Kouba <u>and</u> to Hilol’
they went	Kouba	and	Hilol	
inci	pikaayu	<u>nii</u>	Lemi	‘I walk <u>like</u> Remy’
1SG	to walk	like	Remy	

C.2.6. Numbers

Amongst the numbers less than one hundred, there are only eight which consist of an independent word. The Karon use the following numbers to form all the others: one, two, three, five, ten, fifteen and twenty. The way of expressing these combinations by multiplication (the multiplier takes the class index of the number that it multiplies) and addition (using **nij** ‘and, with’) leads without problem to the decision to separate all these constituents into individual words.

Examples:

isak	nij	yoonool	‘six’
five	and	one	

áwi	ésupak	‘forty’
twenty	CL-two	

áwi	epaakiil	nij	kaat	nij	sipaakiil	‘ninety nine’
twenty	CL-four	and	fifteen	et	four	

D. Punctuation

D.1. Capitals and lower case

Capital letters will be used at the beginning of each sentence, after a full stop, question mark and exclamation mark as well as at the beginning of a quote after a colon.

Example:

Naasokoo : “**Unii piteŋenool núufulii.**” ‘She said to him: “We’re coming from a meeting”’

David naañahanoo: “**Kásumay lamma**” ‘David replied to him, “peace only”’

The first letter of names of people, families, countries, towns, etc. is always a capital

Examples:

Inci hicoopu Akoli te enuf ‘I’m taking Akoli to the house’

Pool ati Máhamuta ‘Paul comes from Mahamouda’

D.2. Contraction/elision

The apostrophe is used to indicate the elision, even in slow speech, of one or more letters at the boundary between two words. Using it in this way to represent the actual pronunciation will make it easier for those learning to read. The only case where we have found it necessary is with the conjunction **niŋ**. As we have seen above, this can mean ‘and’, ‘with’, or ‘if’ and is also used, in a slightly more difficult to translate sense, with verbs of various aspect. We will consider it here as it is used before a verb and before a noun or pronoun.

D.2.1. Niŋ before a noun or pronoun

Before a noun or pronoun, **niŋ** always means ‘and’ or ‘with’ or ‘if’. An apostrophe will always be used. The second nasal is always omitted, and generally the vowel **i** is assimilated or omitted.

Examples:

Pútuun pa piyeno ‘God be with you’
na'aluu

Naayito nu'ulap ‘He got up in the morning’
(lit. He got up with the
dawn)

Note that the apostrophe is used to write two independent words as one word, but the two parts are still independent. Therefore if one of them is heavy it doesn't influence the other, and the orthography reflects this fact.

Examples:

Inci hili ‘I ate with my friend’
na'áwiyam

Inci hili ni áwiyam ‘I ate like my friend’

D.2.2. Niŋ before a verb

Before a verb, **niŋ** often functions as an aspectual marker with no clear translatable meaning of its own. This is treated differently to that above, because the connection between this **niŋ** and the **niŋ** of section D.2.1 seems to be quite loose in the minds of most Karon. It is hard to be sure whether the two are in fact two different morphemes that just happen to behave identically at the level of morphology.

In this case, the principle that has been followed is that an apostrophe will only be used if the contraction of **niŋ** gives rise to a syllabic nasal at the start of the word.

Examples:

n'kasok ‘they said’

n'nicuk ‘you saw’

m'pilenken ‘they (the goats) laughed’

But note the absence of apostrophe in:

naasok ‘he said’ (not **na’asok**)

incuk ‘I saw’ (not **in’cuk**)

It can be argued that in different contexts, the verbal **nij** sometimes has, to varying degrees, the force of a conjunction, as with the nominal **nij**. To avoid complication, this principle of omitting the apostrophe in the verbal case is followed, even in the case where the **nij** can naturally be translated as ‘and’ or ‘with’.

E. A Karon text

‘Címmak apuke ñusuu’

Célimank aleemaya éesiye meemak. Hinom hoonool, náamak nii áfaamukii pakaasonoo himisawoot. Eti kacom eteyyo, naayito nu'ulap apikaay leema. Naamuusool fo caanak ca niñ cisiñan ti hikaw, pale acukut wah. Pitafaali pa empa náalafiit pa háni poonool, m'piyeno kaakaaweenoo, pusuuwanoo.

Caanak ca niñ cisap eyam, Célimank peemukut wah. Náameyi nii ñusuuwoo ñicolaa. Kaatu, putumoo picasaacas ti címmak. Célimank náañohoonii la pitafaali pa m'piyeniye la caalenkenoo, niñ kaakaaweenoo, kati árukii háni yoonool. Pale inhemool pikina lompo pihañcooliyaa. Célimank naahañ náasuwate kamma ñusuu, ñiyoka, niñ pakaah penfakat. Fiye, Célimank naamukut ápicokii pítin pa piti enuuf. Ápilohanii saatee ya, pakati enuuf niñ pakaasonoo, n'kási ékili ya etiyoo esokaa PUUUM! Niñ súmii meemak, kamma efoofa ya eti himisawoot ha eyya n'kakaakaaya hiteñu, páawo Célimank asok akina ápulantoo.

Célimank ápicolii ti enuuf, naamuus hank ha: fít! Náasiten hikawoo, naayeno káakumutool. Náafulenii ti epootak ya eteyoo, eyya nakaaya neyyo leema, efoofa ya eyya n'kacoke ya nii himisawoot; náawantii yo: fíl! Caham efaan náamukii pakaasonoo!

Címmak cenfakat nasuuwansuuwan atiyoo.

‘Shame comes to those who boast’

Célimank is a very famous hunter. One day, he boasted that he was going to kill an antelope for his in-laws. The following day, he got up early and he went on the hunt. He wandered until the sun was directly above his head, but he hadn't seen anything. The monkeys that he didn't like at all were shouting at him and mocking him.

The day came towards its end, and Célimank hadn't killed anything. He realised that he will be shamed, because he boasted too early in front of his in-laws. Célimank went back to the place where the monkeys were mocking him and shouting down to him, so that he could at least kill one of them. But unfortunately they had all disappeared. Célimank was sweating more and more, because of the shame, the exhaustion and the great thirst that he felt. Now, Célimank could hardly bear to take the road home. When he approached the village, his in-laws heard the sound of his gun: BOOM! They were very happy, because they were going to eat antelope meat, since Célimank said that he never misses.

When Célimank arrived at the house, he passed by the compound: *fit* ! He bowed his head in shame and mumbled. He took out of his bag that he would always use for the hunt, the meat that they all thought was antelope. He threw it down: *fi!* ! He had killed a monitor lizard for his in-laws!

Great boasting brings great shame.