

I. Phonology

Consonants	Labial	Alveolar	Alveolo-Palatal	Guttural
Nasal	m	n		
Stop	p b	t d		k ~ q
Affricate		ts dz	tʃ dʒ	
Fricative	f	s z	ʃ ʒ	x ~ χ ~ ħ ~ h
Approximant	w	l ~ r	j	

<p b t d k~q ts dz ch dj f s z sh j h m n w l~r y>

Vowels	Front	Back	Front Emphatic	Back Emphatic
Close	i i:	u u:		
Mid	ε e:		ε' e'	o'
Open	a a:		a'	

“Emphatic” vowels are transcribed with an underline and realized as harsh-voiced in most circumstances, although their articulation can be exaggerated into stridency (coarticulation with an epiglottal trill) as a means for the speaker to emphasize a word. /e' o'/ correspond to plain /i,i: u,u:/. Stems never end with long vowels, which are romanized as <ii uu ē aa>.

Ib. Allophony

/l~r/ is realized as [r] only in consonant clusters. Consonants preceding emphatic vowels tend to be lightly pharyngealized, and the phoneme /k~q/ is realized as the latter only before back and/or emphatic vowels. The guttural fricative is realized as /ʃ/ in syllable codas, making the preceding vowel emphatic. Its exact realization varies broadly by dialect. The vowels /i,i: u,u:/ become the approximants /j w/ when bordering other vowels, and /i: u:/ become /jj ww/ when between vowels. The stops /b d/ are lenited to /v z/ intervocalically. Finally, the alveolar consonants /t ts s/ and /d dz z/ become /t̪/ and /r/ respectively when preceding a strident vowel (not an emphatic vowel in general). Vowels preceding a coda nasal are nasalized, and said coda nasals are often elided in casual speech, leaving only the vowel nasality.

Ic. Prosody

Stress is placed depending on the “weight” of a syllable, and tends to coincide with a rise in pitch on top of loudness. Syllables with a coda consonant, a long vowel, and/or an emphatic vowel are heavy, and syllables with both an emphatic or long vowel and a coda consonant are superheavy. All other syllables are light. Accent falls on the first superheavy syllable, the first heavy syllable in words that contain no superheavy syllables, or on the final syllable in words that contain only light syllables. Vowels are not reduced or altered in unstressed syllables.

II. Verbs

Verbs take inflection for tense, aspect, and mirativity. Inanimate pronouns are incorporated into the verb complex as the proximate affix *-e/* and the obviate affix *-ek*, which are used as agreement markers to track inanimate referents. These come in subject-object order.

Tense and aspect are conveyed via a biconsonantal root system, wherein most verb roots consist only of two consonants, and vowels are inserted into that consonant template in order to conjugate them. A vast number of nouns are derived from verbs using this system, to the point that Fayat scholars divide their lexicon between “derived nouns” and “root nouns”. While the majority of verbs fit this biconsonantal system, a fair number have one or more medial syllables.

Root Patterns	Remote Past	Past IPFV	Past PFV	Persistent	Progressive	Habitual
Template	1e2i	1ε2i	1u2	1ε ¹ 2u	1ε2u	1a2o ¹
Example (sing, T-M)	tēmi	temi	tum	t <u>ε</u> mu	temu	tam <u>o</u>
Translation	"sang a while ago"	"was singing"	"sang"	"is still singing"	"is singing"	"sings"
Gnomic	Realis Future	Irrealis Future	Instrument Noun	Location Noun	Diminutive Location Noun	Augmentative Location Noun
1o ¹ 2u	1u2u	1u:2i	o ¹ 12ε	a12u	a12wi	a12wa
t <u>o</u> mu	tumu	tuumi	o <u>t</u> me	atmu	atmwi	atmwa
"sings"	"will sing"	"might sing someday"	"voice"	"theater"	"stage"	"great theater"
Discipline Noun	Fragment Noun	Concatenation Noun	Collection Noun	Adjective of Agent Ability	Adjective of Patient Ability	Adjective of Quality
1a2u	ε1ε2u	1eje2	wε1u2	a1a2	a ¹ 1ε2	1iwa2
tamu	etemu	tēyem	wetum	atam	a <u>t</u> em	tiwam
"singing"	"note"	"concert"	"songbook"	"sweet-voiced"	"singable"	"melodious"
Nonpast Participle	Habitual Noun	Adjective of Comparison	Adjective of Relation	Iterative Noun	Abstract Noun 1	Event Noun
i1wa2	1ajja2	i12awa	e ¹ 1a2	1ε ¹ 2ja	1a:2aj	a ¹ 12e
itwam	tayyam	itmawa	ētam	t <u>ε</u> mya	taamay	a <u>t</u> mē
"singing"	"mantra"	"songlike"	"musical"	"chant"	"song"	"a song"
Past Participle	Honorific Noun	Person Noun	Affection Noun	Abstract Noun 2	Instance Noun	Animal Noun
u1o ¹ 2a	u1ye ¹ 2	1aw2e	1i:2	1a2jaw	1a2e ¹	1awwε2u
ut <u>o</u> ma	uty <u>ε</u> m	tawmē	tiim	tamyaw	tam <u>ε</u>	tawwemu
"singing"	"hymn"	"singer"	"ditty"	"song"	"verse"	"songbird"

Mandatory mirative suffixes convey the speaker's attitude to the information being conveyed: neutral, surprised, doubtful, positive, or negative. All of these except neutrals may be stacked in the order they are presented. When the surprise and excitement affixes are stacked, the /t/ in the surprise affix elides.

Mirativity	Neutral	Surprised Mirative	Doubtful Mirative	Excited Mirative	Disgusted Mirative
	-(e)k	-(e)ft	-(u)j	-(e)sht	-(a)b

IIb. Copulae

The copula takes one of eight forms based on the person of its subject and whether it expresses transient states of being or inherent properties. When either the subject or the predicate nominal have an attached demonstrative, the copula is omitted. Copulae have a formal aura, and wherever this document mentions a circumstance where they may be omitted, that construction is most likely to be used in everyday speech.

Copulae	Stative 1P	Stative 2P	Stative 3P PROX	Stative 3P OBV	Essential 1P	Essential 2P	Essential 3P PROX	Essential 3P OBV
	ab	an	at	ak	ub	un	ut	uk

III. Nouns

The structure of Fayat nouns is simple, taking marking only for number and case. Consonant-final nouns are pluralized with the suffix *-a*, while vowel-final nouns are pluralized by lengthening their final vowel, except when the final vowel is /i/ or /u/, in which case the *-a* suffix is used and it becomes a semivowel /j/ or /w/. There are three cases: zero, accusative, ergative, and subordinate. The accusative is marked with the suffix *-(u)n*, while the ergative is marked with the suffix *-(u)z*. The subordinate is discussed in IV. The following table shows what noun roles they mark, as Fayat displays a rather complicated system of split ergativity based on tense and volitionality. These cases typically mark only animate arguments due to the agreement tracking system for inanimates.

	Volitional Subject	Nonvolitional Subject	Object
Past Transitive	Ergative	Zero	
Nonpast Transitive	Zero		Accusative
Past Intransitive	Ergative	Zero	
Nonpast Intransitive	Zero		

The aforementioned "derived nouns" display some behaviors of verbs. They can take mirative affixes to convey basic adjectival meanings such as *taamayab* "the bad song", may take inanimate person agreement markers to differentiate two instances of the noun through obviation as in *atmwel set atmwek* "the theater and the other theater", and may be placed in apposition with pronouns to express copular meanings like *nef tqmu* "I am a singer" without need for an actual copula. They may also be used as verbs with the auxiliary J-K, which follows them and is conjugated to convey their tense-aspect-mood information.

IIIb. Pronouns and Demonstratives

Pronouns	1P	2P	3P PROX	3P OBV
Plain	nef	mek	tez	fez
Possessive	nefrut	mekrut	tezrut	fezrut
Plural	nafa	maka	taza	faza
Plural Possessive	nafrut	makrut	tazrut	fazrut

The obviate third person is used to distinguish between animate referents. These pronouns are used almost exclusively for animate referents due to the existence of verbal marking for inanimates, but will occasionally be used for inanimates in a syntactic pinch.

The deictic demonstratives are proximal *dzuk*, proximal plural *dzaka*, distal *chum*, and distal plural *chama*. When used for the tracking of physical objects rather than of discursive ideas, they become *dzuku*, *dzakwa*, *chumu*, and *chamwa*. These follow their referent nouns.

IIIc. Adpositions and Possession

Postpositions	Comitative-Instrumental	Genitive	Locative	Allative	Ablative	Conditional	Benefactive
	wek	lut	dwu	kit	han	sam	jwē

Fayat exhibits a rich system of postpositions used for role-marking. These postpositions almost always cliticize to the end of their head nouns, using the epenthetic vowel <e> to break clusters of only obstruents formed in this manner. The guttural fricative <h> is an exception, able to cluster with other obstruents. The benefactive may be attached to a verb to transitivize it; and locatives, allatives, and ablatives may convey additional information about motion verbs. Possessed nouns take the suffix *-(e)fr*.

IIId. Modifiers and Attributives

Modifiers follow their nouns, and are derived from verbs through the biconsonantal system. Some simply use the participle templates, but many use more specific adjectival templates. Attributive phrases can be formed using copulae, but more often use the demonstrative zero-copula construction mentioned in IIb. Thus, *bevu ut hekuf* “the woman is beautiful” is grammatically correct, but one is more likely to say *dzuku bevu hekuf* “this woman beautiful”.

IV. Subordinate Clauses

Subordinate clauses are introduced using the distal deictic demonstrative that matches the plurality of their subject, and that subject is subordinated with the prefix *al-*. Adverbial clauses are an exception, introduced with a copula that agrees with the independent clause’s subject in person. This construction can be literally translated as something along the lines of “he rowed, being in the boat”.

IVb. Coordination

The conjunction *set* is used to list nouns, and the conjunction *ib* to link them semantically as in *mek ib nef* “you and I”. Standalone postpositions are used to string verbal phrases together. The comitative-instrumental expresses simultaneity with the same subject and/or agent, the locative expresses general simultaneity, the allative expresses movement towards the current moment, and the ablative expresses movement away from the current moment.

IVc. Negation

Negation is expressed with a verbal auxiliary that carries the tense and aspect information normally marked on the verb, created using the biconsonantal root Z-L. This auxiliary follows the verb, which in turn adopts the appropriate participle conjugation. Derived nouns are negated in this same manner, becoming participles while the auxiliary takes on their derivational template, and root nouns are negated with the suffix *-(e)zwi*.

V. Nominal and Verbal Syntax

The default word order is subject-verb-object, and as mentioned, modifiers and demonstratives follow their heads. However, the mandatory case marking for animate nouns and polypersonal agreement for inanimate nouns means that word order frequently shifts to convey subtleties of meaning. Object nouns meant to be emphasized may be moved before the verb, and subject nouns meant to be backgrounded may be moved after the verb. Verbs are occasionally fronted to emphasize them as a crucial happening, a veridical event, or the answer to a question. Finally, the interrogative particle *qə*, the hortative particle *mə*, and the imperative particle *nə* are placed at the beginning of the phrase, and the noun meant to be the focus of the question, request, or command (respectively) is moved to immediately after the particle. When the subject of such a phrase is a second person pronoun, it may be omitted. Passive voice is expressed with an object-verb-subject word order.