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Tanol

A Reference Grammar

A comprehensive description of
phonology, morphology and syntax

Harry Cook

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*Éralór ózér pémashas tér, téyízhózhér pamaraha yé,
tayan tas... ukar kérathu ankhakh, ath khés óré te téyazakh kés?*

It is said that tradition is the preservation of the flame,
not worship of the ashes; but one wonders what fuels the fire.

IZVAZATHIR UM KVÓMTHA: MEYOZAYER THATHAZAV

"The Wisdom of the World: The Sayings of Meyozay" 1:3

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For Lisbeth

Vikas nóénímém, su meria

1 Introduction

Tanol is the language of the Ruhem, the main people group of the Anthes sub-continent. It is a mostly synthetic language, with a consonant mutation system, vowel harmony and split-ergativity.

1.1 Development

The initial idea and name for Tanol are from as far back as mid-2018, from a language called "Mekrian" which was ultimately abandoned, although this language did feature my first attempt at a Celtic-style consonant mutation system. I then happened across the name "Tanolic" which I was rather fond of, eventually shortening it to "Tanol". I had a bad habit at this time of naming languages before making them, meaning I had to work backwards to create etymologies for these names. The similarity to the English pronunciation of the Dravidian language Tamil is not lost on me and remains an unfortunate coincidence.

I wanted to keep the Celtic-style mutation system I had conceived for Mekrian, and resolved to create it naturalistically. After some experimentation I had a system that worked, with two types of mutation, one coming from intervocalic sound changes that happened across word boundaries (soft mutation) and the other coming from words that use to end in /x/ or /h/ causing the following sound to either spirantise or lose voicing (hard mutation).

In order to have a language whereby mutation was fairly common, I needed a system where prepositive elements would mutate the following word. From this, the idea of using a series of obligatory auxiliary verbs to create the majority of tense-aspect-mood meanings came about. In order to create a wider range of meanings, I decided to also include a dual verb root system. This became the core of the language, the auxiliary verb system with the long and short verb roots and the consonant mutation system.

The next idea I included was ATR vowel harmony, which came from some reading on west and sub-Saharan African languages I was doing at the time, especially Akan and Maasai. I did not have a particularly strong phonaesthetic for Tanol, but I was weary of not being too similar to the Celtic languages, especially Welsh and Irish. A harmony system inspired by these African languages would help to make the language sound less like those languages.

The ergative system was added on a whim, and led to some difficulties in development, especially due to the ergative splits. The ergative system was inspired initially by Basque and Guaraní. Further reading I did later added more depth to the language, and a wider range of linguistic influences. The rest of the verb system was inspired by Bulgarian and Basque, especially in terms of the auxiliaries, and also Korean for the converb system.

I started full development of Tanol in around September of 2020; the bulk of the main development was only around five months, spanning the end of 2020 to the beginning of 2021, with some revisions made over the summer 2021 and the original version of the grammar document was written over September-November of that year. I came back to the language in 2023 to do some revisions and to rewrite the grammar in L^AT_EX.

These revisions focused primarily on the syntax where I tried to explain why Tanol, which typologically one would expect to be SVO, is SOV. I came up with a syntactic explanation for this, and at the same time also changed how the language handled negation, interrogatives, reflexives and elements of the ergative split, as well as clearing up how the language handled animacy.

I came back to the language once again in 2025 and fully revised the ergative system,

updating how the language dealt with fluid-S ergativity, and how ergativity interacted with animacy. I also slightly revised negation once again, as well as reflexives and verbal voice and added the prepositional case. The long verb form derivation system was also revised, and several verb forms were changed as a result. I also felt that the dialects were somewhat lacking in depth so I added some more to how the dialects work and were different to each other.

This means that, at time of writing, Tanol has had, arguably, three versions over five years, spanning my time as an undergraduate and post-graduate, and as a result reflects my linguistic understanding and its development over my time at university. Tanol is now a very well-developed language, in my opinion, and lives up well to the goals I had for it back in 2020. While it has changed in some distinct ways over the last few years, the final version is not overly dissimilar to the language presented here, and many of the key original elements have stayed more or less the same.

1.2 Influences

I drew influence from a large variety of languages for Tanol, which are given in table 1.

Language	Native Name	Language Family	Sub-Division	Region	Status	Influence
Ancient Greek	Hellēnikḗ	Indo-European	Hellenic	Eastern Mediterranean	Classical	Nominal morphology
Akan	Ākán	Atlantic-Congo	Tano	Coastal West Africa	Living	Morphophonology
Basque	Euskara	Isolate		Western Pyrenees	Living	Ergativity
Bulgarian	Bǎlgarski Ezik	Indo-European	Slavic	Eastern Balkans	Living	Verbal morphology
Classical Tibetan	Bod Skad	Sino-Tibetan	Tibetic	Qinghai-Tibet Plateau	Classical	Ergativity
Georgian	Kartuli Ena	Kartvelian		South Caucasus	Living	Ergativity
Guaraní	Avañe'ẽ	Tupian	Tupi-Guarani	Central South America	Living	Ergativity
Irish	Gaeilge	Indo-European	Celtic	Ireland	Endangered	Morphophonology
Quiché	K'iche'	Mayan		Guatemalan Highlands	Living	Ergativity
Korean	Han'gugeo	Koreanic		Korean Peninsula	Living	Verbal morphology
Lakota	Lakȟótiyapi	Siouan		Missouri Plateau	Endangered	Ergativity
Maasai	ɔl Maa	Nilotic	Eastern Nilotic	African Great Lakes	Living	Morphophonology
Nez Perce	Nimipuutímt	Sahaptian		Columbia River Plateau	Endangered	Ergativity
Persian	Fārsī	Indo-European	Iranian	West Asia	Living	Verbal morphology
Russian	Rússkij Jazyk	Indo-European	Slavic	Eastern Europe, Northern Asia	Living	Nominal morphology
Spanish	Español	Indo-European	Romance	Iberia, Latin America	Living	Phonology
Tlingit	Lingít	Na-Dene		American Northwest Coast	Endangered	Ergativity
Welsh	Cymraeg	Indo-European	Celtic	Wales	Living	Morphophonology

Table 1: Influences on Tanol

Many of the influences informed how I handled ergativity in the language, while also ensuring that the language did not feel too Indo-European, especially as much of the phonology, and many elements of morphology, were influenced by Bulgarian, Greek, Irish, Persian, Russian, Spanish and Welsh. In mid-2020, I was reading about a wide range of languages and wanted to incorporate these ideas I was getting from them, while also making sure I didn't "overstuff" the language and end up with a kitchen sink language. Tanol does pull from a very large range of influences, and this results in a highly complex language, which is also not easily explained typologically. Certain elements of the language look agglutinative, others look fusional, and others still look analytic. This is also the case for most natural languages, one cannot simply declare that a language is simply "agglutinative", as this betrays how human language, and by extension, cognition actually works. I wanted this for Tanol too, making sure that the language didn't look too much like its influences, and having the complexity of natural languages without looking incongruous.

1.3 Context

Within the context of its fictional world, Tanol is a member of the Tarikhic language family, the largest language family in the known world by native speakers and geographical area. The speakers of Tanol are the Ruhem, who live on the Anthes sub-continent in northern Toromeran. Anthes is a little larger than the Iberian peninsula on Earth, but more like Anatolia in shape. A map of Anthes is shown in figure 1. Tanol has around seven million native speakers, around 90% of whom are ethnically Ruhem, and around two million non-native speakers on top of this, mostly merchants, sailors and scholars. This makes Tanol one of the most spoken languages in the known world, along with Imperial Paghade. The Ruhem have a long tradition of horse-riding and sailing.

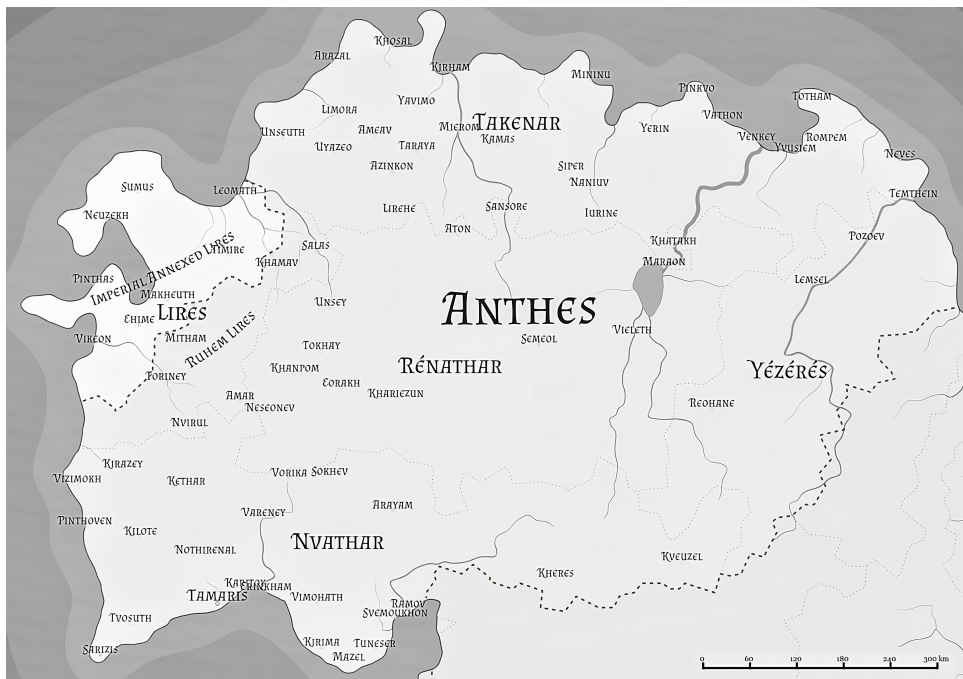


Figure 1: Map of Anthes

On account of their strong trade routes and links, Tanol is often associated with trade, and many of the largest port cities in the known world will use, at least partially, Tanol in matters of trade. Due to the cities *Tamaris*, *Khamav*, *Khasal*, *Khatakh* and *Mazel* having either very old and/or prestigious universities, Tanol is also associated with education and academia, with much academic work in the world being either written in, or soon translated into, Tanol.

Anthes is not a country, and the Ruhem do not have a nation as such. There are numerous cities states which are each associated with a historical area. There are five of these historical areas, each with an associated dialect group. The three most populated areas are the north, *Takenar*, the east, *Lires* and the south *Nvathar*, and their *de facto* capitals and the three largest cities in Anthes are, respectively, *Arazal*, *Neuzekh* and *Tamaris*. The other two areas, *Rénathar* and *Yézérés* are vast and sparsely populated due to the rugged landscape and dangerous animals that live in both areas.

The Ruhem used to have numerous kingdoms, at the height the kingdoms period, the most powerful of these were *Takenar*, *Lires* and *Nvathar*. They had been at war for many centuries, with smaller breakaway kingdoms forming and the borders constantly shifting. Many felt that Anthes was going to be torn apart by the fighting between the kingdoms,

especially *Takenar* and *Nvathar*.

A philosopher by the name of Meyozay um Tamaris started becoming popular around the end of the kingdoms period, and promoted the idea of *kékhantú* "nearness"¹. This philosophy advocated the end of kingdoms and empires, instead, people should just focus on their local areas and the reach of a government should end at its city walls. The Ruhem should be united in culture, history and language, but not by a state or nation.

His followers and students created a book of his sayings, written around 40 years after his death, called *Izvazathir um Kvómtha* "Wisdom of the World". It contains around 200 *tathazav* "sayings" or "proverbs", which are incredibly famous within Anthes and form the basis of modern Ruhem philosophy and culture. Meyozay's philosophies and theories were the catalyst for the merchants' rebellion, which collapsed the kingdoms and created the modern system of Ruhem rule, where each city is considered its own state, with a sphere of influence around it proportional to the importance of that city. Cities are ruled by counsellors, and groups of cities form regional councils. There is also the Great Council of the Ruhem, which is the closest the Ruhem have to a national alliance. They meet very seldom and are made up of the largest/oldest cities in Anthes.

The closest thing to a standard form of the language is *svókazavér thiveme* "the merchants dialect", which is based on the dialect of Tamaris which is used as a kind of lingua franca between the different dialects and as the standard language of trade around the known world. On account of the large amount of dialectal variation, and the substantial number of non-native speakers, when speakers struggle to understand one another, they use the *svókazavér thiveme*, the merchants' dialect. This is the version of the language presented in this reference grammar, unless otherwise stated. It should be noted that not all Ruhem know or speak *svókazavér thiveme*.

1.4 Final remarks

Tanol is, despite over five years of work, not a finished conlang by any means and this reference grammar will need to be updated as parts of the language inevitably need to be updated. Moreover, the lexicon is currently, while not insignificant, still rather small (nearly one thousand words), and the pragmatics and writing system are still forthcoming. Right now, this grammar serves as a current look at the main aspects of this conlang. Tanol at the time was my best conlang so far, while I believe I've made better languages since, Tanol was a huge milestone in my conlangs. I enjoy Tanol from a technical standpoint, it comes together extremely well as a language. However, unlike Old Paghade, I do not find myself composing texts in Tanol particularly often, owing to the complexity of Tanol's syntax.

¹A more academic translation might be "localism".

2 Phonology

Tanol has quite an interesting phonology, with an average sized consonant inventory, but with a relatively large vowel inventory on account of its vowel harmony and some strict phonotactic rules.

2.1 Consonants

The consonants of Tanol are shown in table 2.

Consonants		Labial	Dental	Coronal		Palatal	Velar	Glottal
				Central	Lateral			
Nasal		m		n				
Stop		p		t			k	
Fricative	Voiceless	f	θ (th)	s	ɬ (lh)	ʃ (sh)	x (kh)	h
	Voiced	v		z				
Approximant				r	l	j (y)		

Table 2: Consonant phonemes in Tanol

Voiceless stops are always pronounced without aspiration, as in "spout", "stout" and "scout" in English. /n/ and /t/ are pronounced as laminal denti-alveolar, with the blade of the tongue on the alveolar ridge and teeth. /r/ is pronounced as a full trill at the beginning of an utterance or at the beginning of a word if the previous word ends in a consonant. It is more like a tap or short trill intervocalically and is usually devoiced finally. /l/ is retracted to be post-alveolar in coda position. /ʃ/ becomes [ç] before high vowels. /k/ is fronted and slightly fricated before high vowels and /x/ is more palatal [ç] before high front high vowels. Final /v/ devoices to /f/ at the end of an utterance, or when the following segment is voiceless.

2.2 Vowels

Due to the ATR vowel harmony, Tanol has essentially two vowel inventories, seen in table 3.

+ATR	Front	Back	-ATR	Front	Back
High	i	u	High	ɪ (í)	ʊ (ú)
Mid	e	o	Mid	ɛ (é)	ɔ (ó)
Low	a		Low	a	

Table 3: Vowel phonemes in Tanol

Exact pronunciation of vowels is incredibly important not just because of the harmony system but also because there are grammatically distinct words which are distinguished only by their ATR vowel quality (in the southern dialect). This is especially common for -ATR vowel-initial short form verbs, where the long form is made by making the vowels +ATR.

2.3 Prosody

Stress in Tanol categorically falls on the first syllable of a word, as in (1). The only exception are the few prefixes that exist in the language, namely the converbs, in which case stress falls on the first syllable of the root.

- (1)
- a. Yazan
/ˈja.zan/
"Sun."
 - b. Leyokun
/ˈle.jo.kun/
"Wine."
 - c. Púnvóray
/ˈpʊ.nvɔ.raj/
"Chair."

Tanol is syllable-timed isochronically, so every syllable takes up roughly the same amount of time and unstressed vowels maintain their quality. The lack of long vowels and geminates paired with syllable timing gives the language a very quick, "rapid fire" sound, especially in normal speech.

2.4 Phonotactics

Tanol disallows geminates and word final clusters. Any consonant may begin a word, but words can only end with the following consonants: nasals, some fricatives (/v/, /θ/, /s/ and /x/) and approximants. High front vowels are also not permitted to end a word in most dialects.

A /v/ is permitted to follow any consonant in a word except /h/. In cases where there would be a /hv/ cluster, /h/ becomes /x/. Tanol is quite strict in how word consonant clusters may be formed, intervocalically any nasal followed by an obstruent (except /h/), and then optionally also followed by /v/. Nasal-stop clusters match in place of articulation. Vowel hiatus is permitted, and any vowel may be in hiatus, although hiatus with /a/ is rare for historical reasons², but it does happen in some modern derivations.

²When /a/ clustered with another vowel historically, it shifted to /e/.

3 Morphophonology

Tanol features three different morphophonological systems and some phonological irregularity in inflection and derivation.

3.1 Vowel harmony

As previously mentioned Tanol features an ATR (advanced tongue root) vowel harmony system, in which +ATR vowels (or tense vowels) may not occur in the same word as -ATR vowels (or lax vowels). /a/ is transparent to harmony and may occur with either set of vowels. This system means that any affix containing a vowel other than /a/ has two forms, one with a +ATR vowel and one with a -ATR vowel.

There are no major exceptions to vowel harmony, the only notable ones being some loan words, although many speakers will force these words to adhere to vowel harmony, usually decided upon by the quality of the vowel in the stressed syllable.

3.2 Initial consonant mutation

Tanol features initial consonant mutation, where the first consonant of a word will change depending on the word that comes before it. Tanol features two types of consonant mutation: soft and hard mutation. Soft mutation has three different forms depending on the history of the word. These mutations are shown in table 4.

Radical	Mutation		
	Palatal	Soft De-Af. Lenition	Hard
/m/			/p/
/n/	/j/		/t/
/p/			/v/
/t/		/s/	/θ/
/k/	/j/		/x/
/v/			
/s/			/z/
/x/			/h/
/h/			
/r/			/h/
/l/	/j/		/t/
/j/			/f/

Table 4: Initial consonant mutation in Tanol

Mutations do not always affect every word beginning with a certain radical, and the same word can cause different mutations on the following word. For example, one of the auxiliaries present in Tanol, *eyo* causes soft mutation, this means that an initial /t/ could become /s/, /θ/ or just not change at all, seen in (2)-(4).

- (2) a. Ku tórím
 3SG.ERG run
 "He³ runs away."

- b. Ku eyo sóríṁ
3SG.ERG AUXII.PERF run
"He ran away."
- (3) a. Ku menva tíyúné
3SG.ERG woman draw
"He draws a woman."
b. Ku menva eyo thíyúné
3SG.ERG woman AUXII.PERF draw
"He drew a woman."
- (4) a. Ku tuz - ay
3SG.ERG hit - 1PL
"He hit us."
b. Ku eyo tuz - ay
3SG.ERG AUXII.PERF hit - 1PL
"He (did) hit us."

There are some rules that are, more or less, universal across the mutations like all words beginning with /s/ and /x/ undergoing soft mutation and all words beginning with a sonorant undergoing hard mutation. Other than that, the exact mutation class must be memorised (especially words beginning with voiceless stops which are quite unpredictable). The words that trigger mutation are mostly function words like auxiliaries, demonstratives, prepositions and some high frequency adjectives and adverbs. Mutations are not always treated the same way across different dialects, for example some dialects ignore de-affricating mutation, though there is discussion of this in section 6.

There is also an irregular paradigm, whereby some words beginning with /v/ with gain /x/ word initially in hard mutation, and other words beginning with a vowel will gain an initial /h/. This has to do with the history of these words and they must be memorised on a case-by-case basis.

- (5) a. Vón
night
"Night."
b. Kó khvón - é
in night - PREP
"At night."
- (6) a. Eme
breathe.in
"She takes a breath."
b. Eyo heme
AUXII.PERF breath.in
"She took a breath."

3.3 A-mutation

A-mutation is the next of the major morphosyntactic processes in Tanol. A small, but relatively prominent, set of suffixes in the language cause the final vowel of the stem to

³Tanol lacks sex-based gender distinctions in pronouns or verbal marking. It would just be as correct to translate this with "she" or singular "they".

lower. These include the plural suffix for C-class nouns as well as some derivational affixes. As seen in (7), *írvór-* becomes *írvár-* due to the plural suffix.

- (7) a. Írvór ékhóth
pale.ale be.tasty
"The pale ale is tasty."
b. Írvar - av ékhóthv - ír
pale.ale - PL be.tasty - 3PL
"The pale ales are tasty."

In some cases of A-mutation, when a /u/ is lowered to /o/ in mutation a /v/ will excrete before it. But this is irregular and does not affect all instances of /u/.

- (8) a. Núnúl
cloud
"A cloud."
b. Núnvól - av
cloud - PL
"Clouds."
(9) a. Sózóyúr
lesson
"A lesson."
b. Sózóyór - av
lesson - PL
"Lessons."

3.4 R-dissimilation

Another very common phonological process in Tanol is R-dissimilation. If two /r/-sounds appear in adjacent syllables, then the intervocalic one will become /z/. If both are intervocalic, then the right-most one will become /z/. This dissimilation occurs as a result of inflectional or derivational morphology, or even as a result of initial consonant mutation. In (10) for example, the final /r/ of the nouns becomes /z/ when the augmentative suffix *-ír* is added. In (11), we see the medial /r/ of *líríhóné* "to win" become /z/ when the initial consonant becomes /r/ due to initial mutation.

- (10) a. Kemer, kemezír
room, pub
"A room, a pub."
b. Kayér, kayézír
chicken, rooster
"A chicken, a rooster."
(11) a. Ath ké rakh líríhóné
what Q AUXII.IMPF win.PERF
"S/he has won something."
b. Ath ké eyo ríríhóné
what Q AUXII.PERF win.PERF
"S/he had won something."

3.5 Phonological irregularities in inflection

There is also a large number of words which undergo consonant mutation when inflected, or sometimes sounds just appear, seemingly at random. The examples in (12), (13) and (14) feature a few of these irregular patterns, but of course do not capture the full complexity of inflection in Tanol.

(12) /s/ appearing

- a. Kó khemer - e svóka tér
in room - PREP merchant be.3SG
"The merchant is in the room."
- b. Kó khemer - e svókas - av tír
in room - PREP merchant - PL be.3PL
"The merchants are in the room".

(13) /n/ mutating to /j/

- a. Yóvósé eyo khvózín
1SG sword AUXII.PERF forge
"He will forge a sword."
- b. Yóvósé - v eyo khvózíy - ír
sword - PL AUXII.PERF forge - 3PL
"They will forge some swords."

(14) /v/ excreting

- a. Ke tír
3SG hear - 1SG
"He hears it."
- b. Se tírv - os - e
1SG hear - 2PL - INV
"I hear you."

4 Morphosyntax

Tanol morphosyntax is unusual to say the least, typologically it shows elements of agglutination, synthesis and also arguably analyticity, it is not particularly rich in inflectional morphology, especially compared to the western Tarikhic languages, it does make ample use of the morphology it does have. The morphology is generally quite irregular, as shown in the previous section, and the syntax is relatively complex. On top of this the language features two different ergative splits, one for intransitive verbs and the other for transitive verbs.

4.1 Verbal forms and person marking

Verbs in Tanol have two forms, a short form and a long form which are used to create a wide array of tense, aspect and modal meanings when combined with the four auxiliary verbs. These short and long forms come from an old reduplication paradigm in the proto-language. In the gloss, the long form is written as .PERF, and the bare form is implicitly .IMPF, so aside from in table 5 I don't write .IMPF when glossing. This is a result of the etymology of these forms, but the verbal meanings have long since drifted from the old imperfective-perfective distinction of Proto-Tarikhic.

Class	Method	Example		
		Short	Long	Morphology
I	Infix	Lémís sleep.IMPF	Léyamís sleep.PERF	-ya-
II	Reduplication	Natev stab.IMPF	Nanatev stab.PERF	-na-
IIIa	Suffix	Amer fight.IMPF	Amerath fight.PERF	-ath
IIIb		Insas swim.IMPF	Insazana swim.PERF	-ana
IV	Ablaut	Éyén bite.IMPF	Ayen bite.PERF	N/A
V	Suppletion	Téó go.IMPF	Némpa go.PERF	

Table 5: Formation of long verb forms

While very often these forms are etymologically related, there are often unpredictable changes that happen to the short form to create the long form. The five different methods of forming the long form from the short are shown in table 5, but these methods are somewhat of a simplification for the actual complexity at work. It should be noted that *-na-* and *-ya-* in table 5 are how these particular verbs are inflected for their long forms. For example the long form of *kóyé* "leave", another class II verb, is *kókóyé*, not **kónayé*; or that *nóthékh* "hunt", another class I verb, becomes *nónthékh*, not **nóyathékh*. The analysis in table 5 is a synchronic way of viewing these patterns, from a diachronic point of view, class I verbs also used to be formed through reduplication, but sound changes from Proto-Tarikhic now make it appear that there is a kind of infixation when forming the long form.

Moreover, some class IV verbs beginning with /ɔ/ do not undergo ablaut, instead having a /v/ prefixed to the form, so *óriésakh* "to clothe" becomes *vóriésakh* in the long form. Such verbs are still classed as class IV for historical reasons, as they used to have an initial /u/ which then shifted to /v/ (through an intermediate [β]). In this way, table 6 is a slight oversimplification of the pattern, and a synchronic analysis of a necessarily diachronic system.

These forms can have person-marking suffixed to them. Verbs are marked for only one argument, but this argument is neither exactly the subject or the object, it is either for one of them depending on the case marking and transitivity in the sentence, and the verb may be left entirely unmarked in some circumstances too.

There is a set of suffixes which ostensibly mark the absolutive argument in a sentence, rather than the solely the subject or the object. This suffix always goes on the lexical verb, not the auxiliary. The person suffixes are shown in table 6. The vowel of the suffix replaces the final /a/ in the class IIIb suffix, and the second vowel in vowel hiatus.

Person	Number		
	Singular	Dual	Plural
1 st	-e/é	-o/ó	-ay
2 nd	-a	-as	-os/ós
3 rd	-Ø	-ir/ír	

Table 6: Verbal person markers

These endings are suffixed directly onto the stem, regardless of whether it ends in a vowel or consonant. However, if the stem ends with two vowels, or if the final vowel of the stem matches the initial vowel of the verb marking, then an epenthetic *-s-* is added. As discussed in the previous section, sometimes sounds excrete or mutate when the verb is inflected.

- (15) In a stative intransitive sentence, the suffix marks the subject.
- a. Puran - e
bleed - 1SG
"I bleed."
 - b. Lémízv - é
sleep - 1SG
"I sleep."
- (16) In an active intransitive sentence, the verb is left unmarked.
- a. Su tórím
1SG run
"I am running."
 - b. Su unthan
1SG.ERG jump
"I jump."
- (17) In a transitive sentence with an ergatively marked subject, the suffix marks the object.
- a. Su turan - ir
1SG.ERG open - 3PL

- "I open them."
- b. Su meri - a
1SG.ERG love - 2SG
"I love you."
- (18) In a transitive sentence with an animate absolutive subject, the suffix marks the subject.
- a. Kéréis te pénkún - as
onion AUXI.IMPF cut.PERF - 2DL
"(I can tell) you two have cut the onion."
- b. Khenthvor més - ír
cheese eat - 3PL
"They're eating the cheese."

As well as this person marking there is also the inverse marker, its function is explained fully in section 4.8.1. It takes the form of *-s* when the person marking ends in a vowel, or *-e/é* when it ends in a consonant. If the verb is left unmarked for 3rd person singular, then it is of the form *-e/és*.

- (19) a. Se éhanú - a
1SG know - 2SG
"You know me."
- b. Se éhanú - a - s
1SG know - 2SG - INV
"I know you."

4.2 Auxiliaries and tense-aspect-mood

A core element of Tanol grammar is the use of auxiliary verbs combined with the two verb forms to create a wide range of tense-aspect-mood meanings, as well as distinction between active and passive. The auxiliary verbs derive from copulae in the Proto-Tarikhic, originally they were formed with reduplication but now the forms are largely suppletive and completely unrelated to each other etymologically.

These verbs are now called auxiliary I and auxiliary II (AUXI and AUXII in the gloss), and their forms are shown in table 7. The short form of auxiliary I *te* causes soft mutation, and the long form of auxiliary II *eyo* causes hard mutation. The auxiliaries often elide with other words in the phrase, especially when the following verb begins with a vowel. All of the passive auxiliaries cause soft mutation.

Auxiliary verbs	Active		Passive	
	Auxiliary I	Auxiliary II	Auxiliary I	Auxiliary II
Short	Te	Rakh	Tayan	Rakan
Long	Vóm	Eyo	Anka	Eyatha

Table 7: Auxiliaries

The tense-aspect-mood meanings are created by combining these auxiliaries with the short and long verb forms, as in table 8. The present tense is created by using the short verb form with no auxiliary, the long form by itself can be used nominally as a de-verbal noun, or verbally as a perfective converb (more on converbs in section 4.7).

Verb form	Auxiliary I		Auxiliary II	
	Short	Long	Short	Long
Short	Subjunctive	Imperative	Future	Aorist
Long	Inferential	Renarrative	Perfect	Pluperfect

Table 8: Tense-aspect-mood meanings

4.2.1 Present

The short form of the verb with no auxiliary is the present tense form. This encodes any action still ongoing.

- (20) a. Uhakh méthéú - sé
fish cook - 1SG
"I am cooking (a) fish."
b. Kítín - é
be.happy - 1SG
"I am happy."

4.2.2 Subjunctive

The subjunctive is a general irrealis, encoding hypothetical situations, but it also used to frequently describe habituals and often used in marking subordinate clauses.

- (21) a. Víkas ta - kókóyé vayu lekh ran - im te pizu
now COND - leave.PERF 1PL.ERG more be.fast - ADV AUXI.IMPF arrive
"If we leave now we will arrive sooner."
b. Ékas te héyé
water AUXI.IMPF flow
"Water flows."
c. Vónóra tas [Énkéis uhakh te lhéthé é]
Vonora say [Enkeis fish AUXI.IMPF catch that]
"Vonora says that Enkeis caught⁴ a fish."

4.2.3 Imperative

The imperative is used to create commands, and is generally restricted to the second person, although there are some cases where it may be used with the third person generally with jussives. In this way, the imperative is better thought of as an imperative-jussive mood, depending on the person.

⁴The tense here is ambiguous, it may also be interpreted as the present.

- (22) Imperative
- a. Vóm amer - a
AUXI.PERF fight - 2SG
"(You) fight!"
 - b. Vóm amer - as
AUXI.PERF fight - 2DL
"(You two) fight!"
 - c. Vóm amer - os
AUXI.PERF fight - 2PL
"(You lot) fight!"
- (23) Jussive
- a. Ameriz - ú ath y' én⁵ vóm nayakh
soldier - ERG who Q NEG AUXI.PERF kill
"May the soldier kill no one."
 - b. Vóm kóy - ír
AUXI.PERF live - 3PL
"Let them live!"

4.2.4 Inferential

The inferential is one the ways of marking the "simple past" in Tanol, any action that took place in the past that no longer influence the future. The inferential is also one of the two evidential moods in Tanol, and it marks when the speaker came by the information through their own intuition/by drawing from the available evidence.

- (24) a. Ku t' ekav
3SG.ERG AUXI.IMPF speak.PERF
"(It is evident that) he spoke."
b. Uhakh tayan mémathéú
fish AUXI.IMPF.PASS cook.PERF
"(I can tell) the fish was cooked."

4.2.5 Renarrative

The renarrative is another kind of evidential marking, marking when the speaker came by the information through someone else, essentially marking hear-say.

- (25) a. Ku vóm ekavana
3SG.ERG AUXI.PERF speak.PERF
"(It is said) he spoke."
b. Uhakh anka mémathéú
fish AUXI.PERF.PASS cook.PERF
"(Someone told me) the fish was cooked."

4.2.6 Future

The future tense marks any action that is yet to occur.

⁵There is a subtle difference between *yé* and *an* as negators which is explained in section 4.5.

- (26) a. Rakh léimízv - é
 AUXII.IMPF sleep - 1SG
 "I will sleep."
 b. Níthókh rakan óríé
 dress AUXII.IMPF.PASS carry
 "The dress will be worn."

4.2.7 Aorist

The aorist marks the basic simple past, essentially any action which has been completed and does not effect the present.

- (27) a. Eyo ekav
 AUXII.PERF speak
 "He spoke."
 b. Neza - u yinza - v eyo réthé - ír
 cat - ERG mouse - PL AUXII.PERF catch - 3PL
 "The cat caught the mice."

4.2.8 Perfect

The perfect is similar to the aorist, but marks the action as still being relevant to the present tense.

- (28) a. Tathe é shóvósé rakh kvókhvózín
 father DET sword AUXII.IMPF forge.PERF
 "(My) father has forged this sword."
 b. Vay rakh ameran - os - e
 1PL AUXII.IMPF fight.PERF - 2PL - INV
 "We have fought you."

4.2.9 Pluperfect

The pluperfect is similar to the perfect, but marks an action took place even further in the past, and was relevant earlier.

- (29) a. Tathe é shóvósé 'yo khvókhvózín
 father DET sword AUXII.PERF forge.PERF
 "(My) father had forged this sword."
 b. Vay eyo ameran - os - e
 1PL AUXII.PERF fight.PERF - 2PL - INV
 "We had fought you."

4.3 Voice

Tanol has two verbal voices: active and passive, although the passive can be used like the middle in some circumstances. When an auxiliary verb is used it takes voice marking, as in table 7, when no auxiliary is present then the suffix *-(y)an* is applied, after any verbal marking (if is present), and it causes A-mutation. Verbal markers are not affected by A-mutation, and block it from affecting the stem. The passive is used to promote

the object of a clause to the subject. The original agent may be reintroduced by the preposition *ne* "with".

- (30) a. Kharath - u lúthé véól
man - ERG dog see
"The man sees the dog."
b. Lúthé véar - an
dog see - PASS
"The dog is seen."
- (31) a. Ameris yóvósé eyo kím
soldier sword AUXII.PERF hold
"The soldier held the sword."
b. Yóvósé ne ameres - as eyatha yím
sword with soldier - PREP AUXII.PERF.PASS hold
"The sword was held by the soldier."

As previously stated, the passive also serves as a kind of middle voice. The middle voice is mostly used to create a reflexive or anti-causative meaning, and interacts with the active-stative split in the language, which is explored in section 4.8.2. The agency of the verb dictates the marking on the agent, ergative vs absolutive.

- (32) Agentive vs patientive reading
- a. Menva - u tayan yéyarakh
woman - ERG AUXI.IMPF.PASS wash.PERF
"The woman washed herself."
b. Menva tayan yéyarakh
woman AUXI.IMPF.PASS wash.PERF
"The woman got washed."

When the passive suffix is appended to verbs such as verbs of grooming, changes of state, etc., a middle interpretation is gained. Active verbs gain a reflexive or possessive reading, stative verbs gain an anticausative readings.

- (33) Grooming verbs
- a. Su lvóthénó narakh - an
1SG.ERG two.hands wash - PASS
"I'm washing my hands."
b. Alu yé tayan kérvó
2SG.ERG NEG AUXI.IMPF.PASS shave
"You shouldn't shave yourself."
c. Líhóníz - ú eyatha vóriésakh kés
emperor - ERG AUXII.PERF.PASS clothe.PERF Q
"Had the emperor dressed himself?"
- (34) Change of state verbs
- a. Mvókhan rakan thuthuran
door AUXII.IMPF.PASS open.PERF
"The door has opened."
b. Óyénó eyatha yimay
two.eyes AUXII.PERF.PASS close

- "My eyes closed."
 c. Yureyul nóvéróth - an
 clothes dry - PASS
 "The clothes are drying."

4.4 Copulae

Tanol has a copula *tér*, *ézóth* (to be) which is used roughly how English speakers would expect it to be used. The subject of the copula never takes the ergative case and because of this person marking on the copula always refers to the subject. There are many instances in Tanol where the copula can be dropped, especially when it is clear from context.

Short	Singular	Dual	Plural	Long	Singular	Dual	Plural
1 st	Té	Tó	Eray	1 st	Ézé	Ezó	Sathay
2 nd	Ta	Aras	Eros	2 nd	Aza	Sathas	Sóthós
3 rd	Tér		Tír	3 rd	Ézóth		Ézír

Table 9: Copulae

- (35) a. É kharath téntaza tér
 DET man teacher be.3SG
 "That man is a teacher."
 b. Réyó Inarin (tér)
 name Inarin (be.3SG)
 "(My) name is Inarin."

4.5 Negation

In Tanol, negation is handled by way of two negative adverbs. The first, and more common of the two, is *yé*, which is a general negator, used to indicate something is not the case. It is derived from Proto-Tarikhic **caso*, which was the general negator, but, instead of the /c/ becoming /k/ as in the regular development of initial palatals from Proto-Tarikhic to Tanol, due to the frequency of this word being preceded by a vowel, it was subject to "permanent mutation". Speakers generalised its usually post-vocal position to the point where the /c/ became /j/ instead of /k/ in all environments.

The other negator is *én*, which is used in imperatives and jussives, and when expressing wants and wishes. In this way, *én* is used when negating will or thought. In any case where the animate indefinite construction is used and it would be followed by *yé*, it would lead to two *yés* in sequence. To avoid this repetition, *én* replaces the negator *yé*; this also makes *én* an elsewhere item for *yé* to avoid the obligatory contour principle (OCP).

The negator is placed immediately before the verb complex. *Yé* also elides with the vowel-initial verbs, and the vowel in *én* elides with the final /e/ or /ε/ of the preceding word.

- (36) Use of *yé*
 a. Aler kharath y' éhanú - ay
 2SG.GEN man NEG know - 1PL
 "We don't know your husband."

- b. Yé núnkha
NEG rain
"It is not raining."
- (37) Use of *én*
- a. Se én vóm nayakh - a
1SG NEG AUXI.PERF kill - 2SG
"Don't kill me!"
- b. Kes vó - kikhévér én néth - é
3SG.PREP PURP - visit.PERF NEG want - 1SG
"I don't want to visit him."
- (38) Use of *én* to replace *yé*.
- a. Kharath - u ath yé 'n vóm nénayakh
man - ERG who Q NEG AUXI.PERF kill.PERF
"(I've been told) the man didn't kill anyone."
- b. Su ath yé 'n rakh píth
1SG.ERG who Q NEG AUXII.IMPF chase
"I won't chase anyone."

4.6 Interrogatives

In Tanol there is a general question particle *ké(s)*, which, when placed directly after the verb it marks the phrase as a polar question. It is one of the only elements which frequently occurs post-verbally.

- (39) a. Alu kónsé - v te khón - ir kés
2SG.ERG horse - PL AUXI.IMPF ride - 3PL Q
"Do you ride horses?"
- b. Témak - av - u ménérak - av te péz - ir kés
peasant - PL - ERG offal - PL AUXI.IMPF eat - 3PL Q
"Do peasants eat offal?"

In terms of wh-questions, Tanol makes use of a wh-element which pied-pipes the question particle to the front of the sentence. When used like this, the coda /s/ on the question particle is dropped, unless ergative or prepositional marking is required. To this, the words for "who" and "what" are homophonous, but they cause different mutations, *ath* "what" causes hard mutation and *ath* "who" causes soft palatal mutation. This means that the animacy of the wh-element is reified by mutation of the following word; whether *ké(s)* becomes *khé(s)* (inanimate "what") or *yé(s)* (animate "who").

Leaving the wh-question and particle *in-situ* leads to an affirmative indefinite reading. The *in-situ* position is technically after the verb, however, speakers often place the wh-complex before the verb in transitive sentences. While this is optional, it is extremely common, and placing the indefinite complex after the verb is seen as somewhat archaic.

- (40) a. Ath khé témak - avu te pés
what Q peasant - PL.ERG AUXI.IMPF eat
"What do peasants eat?"
- b. Témak - avu ath khé més
peasant - PL.ERG what Q eat
"Peasants eat something."

- (41) a. Vúyé ath yés ku rakh azeun
 for who Q 3SG.ERG AUXII.IMPF sing.PERF
 "To/for whom did s/he sing?"
 b. Ku vúyé ath yés rakh azeun
 3SG.ERG for who Q AUXII.IMPF sing.PERF
 "S/he sang for/to someone."
- (42) a. Ath yés ekav kés
 who Q speak Q
 "Who is speaking?"
 b. Ath yés ekav
 who Q speak
 "Someone is speaking."
- (43) a. Ath khé eyo thuran kés
 what Q AUXII.PERF open Q
 "What opened?"
 b. Ath khé eyo thuran
 what Q AUXII.PERF open
 "Something opened."

Examples (42-a) and (43-a) could also be translated as "did someone speak" and "did something open", respectively, depending on the context. This construction is nuanced and does not translate well to a language such as English.

4.7 Converbs

The last major morphological marking that verbs take is a prefix rendering them as a converb. These converbs are relatively recent innovations in Tanol grammar, evolving in Proto-Tanolic from suffixing prepositions onto the long verb forms. In order to form a converb therefore, one takes the long verb form and adds the relevant prefix, shown in table 10, the perfective converb is just the basic long form of the verb and takes no prefix. These converbs are used in clause chaining and for creating periphrastic verbal constructions.

Converb	Meaning	Prefix
Perfective	After...	Ø-
Imperfective	While...	Um/úm-
Purposive	In order to...	Vo(y)/vó(y)-
Conditional	If...	Ta(r)-

Table 10: Converbs

Clauses containing a converb tend to come before the main clause but can come after if the speaker wants to front the main clause. Converbs must have the same subject as the main verb, otherwise a new clause is required. The object of a converb may be marked, in which case it is in the absolutive case.

- (44) a. Ke nénayakh su eyo kóyé
 3SG kill.PERF 1SG.ERG AUXII.PERF leave
 "After I killed him I left."

- b. Kókóyé athvor eyo méthéú - sé
 leave.PERF food AUXII.PERF cook - 1SG
 "Having left, I cooked a meal."

The examples in (44) make use of the perfective converb, which is simply just the long verb form. The perfective form carries the meaning of "after" or "having done", signifying the verb has been completed. There are three other types of converbs in Tanol are all formed by prefixing the perfective/long verb form.

The imperfective converb creates the meaning of "while" or "in the process of". Note that the nasal undergoes assimilation with the non-labial stops.

- (45) a. Um - amerana kharath eyo yíral
 IMPF - fight.PERF man AUXII.PERF stand
 "The man stood while fighting/and fought."
 b. Un - títhéyúné menva írvór sitha
 IMPF - draw woman ale drink
 "As she draws, the woman drinks ale."

The purposive converb has the meaning of "in order to" or often more simply just "to". While it is used in clause chaining it is most often used to write phrases with an infinitive verb in English or modal constructions.

- (46) a. Vó - léyamís renseis - u khomonokh eyo sóyúr
 PURP - sleep.PERF councillor - ERG book AUXII.PERF read
 "In order to sleep the councilor read a book."
 b. Tanol - im voy - ethakav izvoz - e
 Tanol - ADV PURP - speak.PERF can - 1SG
 "I can speak Tanol."
 c. Níthókh vó - kíkhayakh ku kínthé
 dress PURP - dye.PERF 3SG.ERG begin
 "She begins to dye the dress."

The conditional creates a condition which the main clause fulfils. The verb in the main clause will be marked with the subjunctive.

- (47) a. Ta - néntha Tanol te senkuth - e
 COND - want.PERF Tanol AUXI.IMPF learn - 1SG
 "If I wanted to I would learn Tanol."
 b. Se tar - amerana alu te sórím
 1SG COND - fight 2SG.ERG AUXI.IMPF run
 "If you were to fight me you'd run."

4.8 Ergative split

Tanol is an ergative language, meaning that the agent of transitive verbs receive the argument marking, namely the ergative case. In such languages, the ergative is normally split in some way. Tanol has person/animacy split in transitive clauses, and a fluid-S split, or active-stative split, in intransitive clauses.

4.8.1 Person-Animacy split

Generally, 1st and 2nd person subjects are not marked with the ergative case and are just left in the absolutive in Tanol. They can be marked with the ergative, but it is completely optional, and relatively uncommon, especially when the object is inanimate. An important thing to note here is verb agreement. As was briefly mentioned in section 4.1, verbal marking gets somewhat confusing when interacting with ergativity. The arguments in a clause in Tanol exist in a kind of hierarchy as in (48).

(48) 2 > 1 > 3AN > 3IN

It is not uncommon in Tanol for there to be no ergatively marked arguments in a clause in Tanol. Recall that the verb in Tanol generally agrees with the absolutive argument. Tanol lacks polypersonal agreement, so in these cases, the verb is marked for the most animate argument as in the hierarchy in (48). Meaning that in a sentence like "I love you", "you" is the most animate argument in the hierarchy, and so the verb is marked for 2nd person, and this is interpreted as the subject.

- (49) a. Se meri - a
1SG love - 2SG
"You love me."
b. Se meri - a - s
1SG love - 2SG - INV
"I love you."

If the inverse meaning is desired then the inverse marker is added, which reverses the interpretation, making the subject suffix into the object. This marker is only used if *both* arguments are absolutive. One can avoid using it by placing the subject in ergative. The sentences in (50), (51) and (52) are semantically identical, differing only in morphology. The inverse marker is therefore most common in 1st and 2nd person contexts, where absolutive marking is pervasive in the clause; inanimate subjects, for the most part, must be marked ergatively, and so inverse will not be used.

- (50) a. Se meri - a
1SG love - 2SG
b. Alu meri - e
2SG.ERG love - 1SG
"You love me."
(51) a. Ke véór - é - s
3SG see - 1SG - INV
b. Ku véór - é
3SG.ERG see - 1SG
"He sees me."
(52) a. Ke amer - e
3SG fight - 1SG
b. Su amer - Ø
1SG.ERG fight - 3SG
"I fight her."

In 3rd person contexts, with an animate subject and inanimate object, the subject can be

marked with the ergative, but like 1st and 2nd person, it's optional. As animacy decreases, likelihood that a 3rd person subject is marked ergatively increases. Tanol lacks, unlike most Tarikhic languages, an animacy split in its 3rd person pronouns; meaning that often, but not always, if a 3rd person pronoun is marked with the ergative, it is more likely to be referring to an inanimate subject.

- (53) a. Ke 'yo pín - a - s
 3SG AUXII.PERF harm - 2SG - INV
 "He will hurt you."
 b. Ku eyo pín - a
 3SG.ERG AUXII.PERF harm - 2SG
 "It will hurt you."

Figure 2 shows the tendency of ergative marking in the language. The further to the left a subject type is, the less likely it is to be marked with the ergative, and the further to the right, the more likely it is.

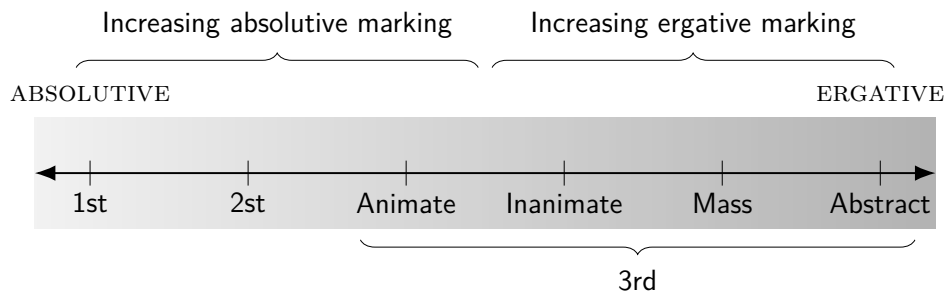


Figure 2: Alignment of marking in transitive clauses

- (54) 1st person
 a. Al meri - e
 2SG love - 1SG
 b. Su meri - a
 1SG.ERG love - 2SG
 "I love you."
 (55) 2nd person
 a. Unvor énké - a kés
 honey hate - 2SG Q
 b. Alu unvor énké kés
 2SG.ERG honey hate Q
 "Do you hate honey?"
 (56) 3rd person animate
 a. Naye khenthvor mere
 child cheese love
 b. Naze⁶ - u khenthvor mere
 child - ERG cheese love
 "The child loves cheese."
 (57) 3rd person inanimate

- a. ??Sómkhé tvómakhór te pémanarakh
 key lock AUXI.IMPF break.PERF
- b. Sómkhé - ú tvómakhór te pémanarakh
 key - ERG lock AUXI.IMPF break.PERF
 "(I can tell) the key broke the lock."
- (58) 3rd person mass
- a. *Yureyul yé kin - e
 clothes NEG make - 1SG
- b. Yureyul - u yé kin - e
 clothes - ERG NEG make - 1SG
 "The clothes don't fit me."
- (59) 3rd person abstract
- a. *Éralór yé kuth - as
 tradition NEG please - 2DL
- b. Éralór - ú yé kuth - as
 tradition - ERG NEG please - 2DL
 "You two don't like tradition."

4.8.2 Fluid-S split

Tanol also features a split in intransitive sentences, to say it is a true fluid-S split is something of an over-generalisation. In practice, most intransitive verbs are classed as either active or stative, the former being marked with the ergative, and the latter being marked with the absolutive. Some verbs may switch between the two, being marked with either the absolutive *or* the ergative, depending on the volitionality.

Intransitive verbs with high agency are marked with the ergative, such as verbs to do with movement or physical actions which one has a choice in doing. Stative verbs are generally verbs which one has no or little choice in doing, or ones where their subject would typically be inanimate and thus have no agency. Fluid-S verbs are verbs which may be marked either way, depending on the context of the sentence.

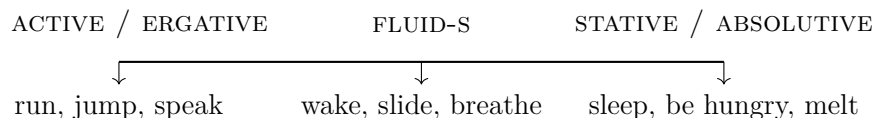


Figure 3: Alignment of marking in intransitive clauses

For example, *néúkh* can mean either "to slip" or "to slide" depending on the marking on the subject, as "to slip" has essentially the same meaning as "to slide" just without volition.

- (60) a. Eyo zéúkh
 AUXII.PERF slide
 "He slipped."
- b. Ku eyo zéúkh
 3SG.ERG AUXII.PERF slide
 "He slid."

⁶When /j/ borders vowel hiatus, it becomes /z/.

Similar verbs include *ríyér* "to wake", *eme* "to breathe", *rvóth* "to blink", *keva* "to turn", and even *kvesa* "to cough". The exact change in meaning that these verbs get when more or less agentive marking is present in the clause is context dependent, and can create some very fine changes in meaning.

- (61) a. Ku eyo ríyér
 1SG.ERG AUXII.PERF wake
 "I woke up (normally)."
 b. Eyo ríyér - é
 AUXII.PERF wake - 1SG
 "I was woken (by a noise)."
- (62) a. Su eyo heme
 1SG.ERG AUXII.PERF breathe
 "I took a breath (to calm myself)."
 b. Eyo heme - se
 AUXII.PERF breathe - 1SG
 "I breathed."
- (63) a. Su eyo rvóth
 1SG.ERG AUXII.PERF blink
 "I winked."
 b. Eyo rvóthí - é
 AUXII.PERF blink - 1SG
 "I blinked."
- (64) a. Su eyo yeva
 1SG.ERG AUXII.PERF turn
 "I turned around."
 b. Eyo yevaz - e
 AUXII.PERF turn - 1SG
 "I turned (in my sleep)."
- (65) a. Su eyo kvesa
 1SG.ERG AUXII.PERF cough
 "I coughed (to get someone's attention)."
 b. Eyo kvesa - e
 AUXII.PERF cough - 1SG
 "I coughed (from sickness)."

Some transitive verbs like *més* "to eat" may be used intransitively, and in such cases the marking of their subject may flip due to the change in transitivity. Note the difference between (66) and (67). When transitive, the subject (if highly animate) may be marked directly on the verb as it is in the absolutive, as in figure 2. When transitive, as *més* is a agentive verb as in figure 3, the same subject would be marked ergatively.

- (66) Transitive
 Namtheu mézí - é
 curry eat - 1SG
 "I'm eating curry."
- (67) Intransitive
 Su més
 1SG.ERG eat

"I'm eating!"

As detailed in section 4.3, transitive verbs given passive morphology are treated like pseudo-intransitive verbs and may be given ergative or absolutive morphology, depending on the context. More active verbs gain a reflexive, possessive, or even benefactive reading, while stative verbs gain a more anticausative or unaccusative reading.

(68) Active

- a. Ameriz - enu eyatha amer
soldier - DL.ERG AUXII.PERF.PASS fight
"The two soldiers fought each other."
- b. Menva - u athvor méthéo - zan
woman - ERG food cook - PASS
"The woman's cooking a meal for herself."

(69) Stative

- a. Mathaok lésóth - an
ice melt - PASS
"The ice is melting."
- b. Athvor tékhún - ím méthéo - zan
food be.easy - ADV cook - PASS
"The food is easy to cook."

The difference in meaning to an English speaker may seem inconsequential or even non-existent but to Tanol speakers it is an intuitive part of the language, though equally an infuriating part for learners. Mastering this very fine point of Tanol grammar is one of the hardest aspects of the language for learners.

4.9 Nominal declension

Nouns in Tanol take marking for case and number. There are four different cases and three numbers that nouns decline for. The cases are absolutive, ergative, genitive and prepositional. The numbers are singular, dual and plural, respectively. There are two forms for each nominal ending, one for nouns ending in a vowel and one for nouns ending in a consonant, as in 12. Shaded cells signify that the ending causes A-mutation .

Case	-V			-C		
	Singular	Dual	Plural	Singular	Dual	Plural
Absolutive	-Ø	-no/nó	-v	-Ø	-eno/énó	-av
Ergative	-u/ú	-nu/nú	-vu/vú	-u/ú	-enu/énú	-avu/avú
Genitive	-er/ér	-ner/nér	-ver/vér	-er/ér	-ener/énér	-aver/avér
Prepositional	-se/sé	-nas	-vas	-as	-enas	-avas

Table 11: Nominal declension

Table 16 demonstrates the full paradigm for two animate nouns, *rume* "cow" and *ameris* "soldier". Unlike other Tarikhic languages, the nominal declension of Tanol is very simple and fairly transparent in terms of how the morphemes come together. Despite this, some nouns that end in a vowel actually have a silent /s/ or /t/ that surface when declined, and often (but not always) final /s/ voices to /z/ during declension.

Case	-V		
	Singular	Dual	Plural
Absolutive	Rume	Rumeno	Rumev
Ergative	Rumeu	Rumenu	Rumevu
Genitive	Rumer	Rumener	Rumever
Prepositional	Rumese	Rumanas	Rumavas

Case	-C		
	Singular	Dual	Plural
Absolutive	Ameris	Amerizeno	Amerezav
Ergative	Amerizu	Amerizenu	Amerezavu
Genitive	Amerizer	Amerizener	Amerezaver
Prepositional	Amerezas	Amerizenas	Amerezavas

Table 12: Declension of *rume* and *ameris*

The functions of the cases are not entirely what one might expect for an ergative language.

4.9.1 Absolutive

The absolutive case generally marks the subjects of intransitive verbs and the objects of transitive verbs. But the ergative split in the language complicates this somewhat, as detailed in the previous section. In intransitive clauses, the absolutive marks the subject of patientive verbs, and in transitive clauses, the absolutive can mark the subject if it is (highly animate).

- (70) a. Ékas ónakh
water boil
"The water is boiling."
b. Sírós meri - a - s
brother love - 2SG - INV
"My brother loves you."

4.9.2 Ergative

Like the absolutive, the ergative does some quirky things in Tanol, as a result of the split in intransitive verbs. The ergative can mark the subject of intransitive verbs, if that verb is agentive, or if it is fluid and the speaker wishes to convey volition or agency on the part of the speaker.

- (71) a. Kharath - u tórím
man - ERG run
"The man runs."
b. Sírós - ú menva mere
brother - ERG woman love
"My brother loves my wife."

4.9.3 Genitive

The genitive marks possession, as one would expect. Possessors in the Tanol always precede the possessee. The genitive in Tanol also causes the following word to undergo hard mutation. The mutation affects whatever the following word is, whether it's the noun itself or a modifier, but it only affects whatever directly follows it, nothing else.

- (72) a. Ameriz - er shóvósé eyo sín - é
 soldier - GEN sword AUXII.PERF take - 1SG
 "I took the soldier's sword."
 b. Nóthékhís - énérlhunev nózé - v eyo kír - a kés
 thief - DL.GEN rotten egg - PL AUXII.PERF throw - 2SG Q
 "Did you throw the two thieves' rotten eggs?"

4.9.4 Prepositional

Finally, the prepositional case marks a noun when is in a prepositional phrase. The prepositional case is derived from marking that went on to become the accusative case in many other Tarikhic languages, espeically western ones (such as Paghade and Awana).

- (73) a. Ke ésé urvol - as
 3SG near mountain.range - PREP
 "He's near the mountains."
 b. Su um kúva - sé eyo més
 1SG.ERG from bowel - PREP AUXII.PERF eat
 "I ate from the bowel."

4.10 Animacy

Unlike in many other Tarikhic languages, animacy in Tanol is not a formal gender distinction. Despite this, animacy still plays a role in Tanol morphosyntax.

4.10.1 Argument marking

As shown in section 4.8.1, animacy places a role in the ergative split in transitive verbs, for most human/animate nouns, for example, ergative marking is optional/contextual, so long as the object is inanimate. If both arguments are 3rd person are animate, then the subject is marked in the ergative, lest the meaning be obfuscated.

- (74) a. ?Tathe mame mere
 father mother love
 "Father loves mother."
 b. ?Mame tathe mere
 mother father love
 "Mother loves father."
 (75) a. Tathe - u mame mere
 father - ERG mother love
 "Father loves mother."
 b. Mame tathe - u mere
 mother father - ERG love

- "Father loves mother."
- c. Mame - u tathe mere
mother - ERG father love
"Mother loves father."
- d. Tathe mame - u mere
father mother - ERG love
"Mother loves father."

4.10.2 Number marking

There are also restrictions on less animate nouns taking dual marking. The dual, aside from non-3rd person pronouns, can apply to kinship terms, human nouns, some body parts, some animals and a few assorted other nouns (mostly words relating to time). Use with other nouns is seen as ungrammatical or very poorly formed, as in (77).

- (76) a. Sírós - éno tomiya rakh lérathé - ír
brother - DL cave.bear AUXII.IMPF catch.PERF - 3PL
"The two brothers caught a cave bear."
- b. É lhíhóníz - énú ezeru amez - ír
DET emperor - DL.ERG each.other fight - 3PL
"Those two emperors fight each other."
- c. Lúthé - nó ath khé sitha - ír
dog - DL what Q drink - 3PL
"The two dogs are drinking something."
- d. Patha tirose - no nív
hero ear - DL have
"The hero has two ears."
- e. Athion Inomen - eno éim reyukh mva lhúzéóha - nó
sometimes day - DL so important as year - DL
"Sometimes, two days are as important as two years."
- (77) a. *Nózé - nó nív - é
egg - DL have - 1SG
"I have two eggs."
- b. Veku nózé nív - é
two egg have - 1SG
"I have two eggs."

A handful of nouns have lexicalised dual forms, mostly nouns that naturally come in pairs.

- (78) a. Óyéha, óyénó
eye, two.eyes
"An eye, two eyes."
- b. Lvóthén, lvóthénó
hand, two.hands
"A hand, two hands."
- c. Emvokh, emvono
foot, two.feet
"A foot, two feet."

Animacy in Tanol is majoritively semantic, with some morphosyntactic effects. The

general rule of thumb is that all humans are animate, and most domesticated animals. Even then, words relating to time and body parts are not semantically animate, strictly speaking, but some can still take the dual.

4.11 Modifiers

Modifiers in Tanol are fairly simple compared to other parts of the language.

4.11.1 Adjectives

Adjectives in Tanol are entirely verb-like, being stative verbs, with a short and long form, and when used predicatively they function in exactly the same way as verbs, being conjugated as such. When the used attributively, they are placed directly before the noun with no special marking.

- (79) a. Kharath péyín
man be.tall
"The man is tall."
b. Péyín kharath
be.tall man
"The tall man."

Other verbs like *sóyúr* "to read" can be made into an adjectival verb by using the imperfective converb prefix.

- (80) Úm - sózóyúr menva
IMPF - read.PERF woman
"The reading woman/the woman who is reading."

Adjectives have no inflected superlative, comparative or any other form, these meanings are created with the word *lekh* "more", which also triggers IV mutation. Used by itself it creates the comparative degree, when used in conjunction with the demonstrative *é* it creates the superlative. The compared element in a comparative construction precedes the noun and adjective and is used with the preposition *tal* "on, pertaining to".

- (81) a. Lekh zayev
more be.far.away
"It is further away."
b. Lekh véyín kharath
more be.tall man
"The taller man."
c. É lkek sayev
that more be.far.away
"It is furthest away."
d. É lkek véyín kharath
that more be.tall man
"The tallest man."
e. Tal menva - se kharath lek véyín
on woman - PREP man more be.tall
"The man is taller than the woman."

The equative degree is created with construction literally meaning "the X is at/by the Ys Zness", where the long form of the adjective is used.

- (82) Kharath ésé menva - er vévayén - as (tér)
 man by woman - GEN be.tall.PERF - PREP (be)
 "The man is as tall as the woman."

4.11.2 Demonstrative

In Tanol there is only one demonstrative pronoun/determiner, *é*, which becomes *és* when the following word begins with a vowel. This particle serves as both a proximate and distal determiner, Tanol does not distinguish between "this" and "that". It takes no case nor number marking and causes the following word to under hard mutation when used attributively.

- (83) É ser penva
 that 1SG.GEN woman
 "This is my wife."
 (84) É shur énké - sé
 that weather hate - 1SG
 "I hate this weather."

4.11.3 Adverbs

Adverbs of time or place tend to come at the beginning of a sentence, whereas those of manner come immediately before the verb phrase, but there is variation in this. Non-lexical adverbs are created from the short form of the stative verb or the absolutive form a noun with the suffix -im/ím.

- (85) Naye ran - im Tanol - im véy ekav
 child be.fast - ADV Tanol - ADV now speak.impf
 "Right now the child is speaking Tanol quickly."

4.12 Numerals

Tanol features, like most Tarikhic languages, a base-12 number system, meaning in terms of base-10, Tanol speakers count up to 12 before starting the next set of numbers.

4.12.1 Cardinal numbers

Cardinal numbers, like all modifiers, precede the noun they modify, and nouns modified by numerals do not take number marking. It should also be noted that *ór* "one" and *veku* "two" cause soft mutation.

Base-12	Base-10	Tanol	Base-12	Base-10	Tanol
1	1	Ór	20	24	Vakam
2	2	Veku	30	36	Saram
3	3	Svól	40	48	Tvónam
4	4	Tun	50	60	Letham
5	5	Lith	60	72	Úkhéyam
6	6	Uzath	70	84	Khézam
7	7	Khís	80	96	Anamam
8	8	Vakuzo	90	108	Navam
9	9	Nev	χ 0	120	Énazam
χ	10	Éné	ε 0	132	Lenvam
ε	11	Lenvo	100	144	Léné
10	12	Kem	1000	1728	Lénkha

Table 13: Select numerals in Tanol

- (86) a. Ór yíhónís
one emperor
"(Exactly) one emperor."
b. Veku yíhónís
two emperor
"Two emperors"

4.12.2 Ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers are formed with the suffix *-akh* on the cardinal number, which replaces a final vowel (if present), lowers the last vowel in the stem, and causes soft style mutation of the previous consonant. While the forms are related, the formation of the ordinal is not so simple as simply adding *-akh* to the cardinal. Nouns following an ordinal are subject to hard mutation.

Cardinal	Tanol	Ordinal	Tanol
1	Ór	1 st	Arakh
2	Veku	2 nd	Vakakh
3	Svól	3 rd	Sarakh
4	Tun	4 th	Tvónakh
5	Lith	5 th	Lethakh
6	Uzath	6 th	Uzavakh
7	Khís	7 th	Khazakh
8	Vakuzo	8 th	Vakazakh
9	Nev	9 th	Navakh
χ	Éné	χ th	Énazakh
ε	Lenvo	ε th	Lenakh
10	Kem	10 th	Kamakh

Table 14: The ordinal numbers from 1-10

- (87) a. Arakh lhíhónís
first emperor
"The first emperor."
b. Vakakh lhíhónís
second emperor
"The second emperor."

4.13 Pronouns

Pronouns are one of the most prosaic elements of the grammar, and they function very similarly to nouns in many circumstances.

4.13.1 Personal pronouns

Like nouns, pronouns in Tanol decline for case and number. While there has been some phonological reduction in the forms, pronominal declension is fairly simple and transparent.

Person	Number			Person	Number		
	Singular	Dual	Plural		Singular	Dual	Plural
1 st	Se	Vé	Vay	1 st	Su	Vu	Vayu
1 nd	Al	Khas	Pós	1 nd	Alu	Khazu	Pózú
1 rd	Ke	Hír		1 rd	Ku	Hírú	

Person	Number			Person	Number		
	Singular	Dual	Plural		Singular	Dual	Plural
1 st	Ser	Vér	Vayu	1 st	Ses	Vés	Vayes
1 nd	Aler	Kher	Pér	1 nd	Alas	Khazes	Pósés
1 rd	Ker	Hér		1 rd	Kes	Hírés	

Table 15: Pronominal declensions

As shown early the use of ergative personal pronouns, in particular 1st and 2nd person, in transitive sentences, where the core roles are clear from context, is not so common, and instead the verbal person markers are used instead.

The 1st person dual and the 2nd person plural pronouns are also the polite/formal second person pronouns. There is a dialectal split in their usage; 2nd person plural is more popular in the south, and 1st person dual is more popular in the north and west. This is not to say that one cannot use the other form in a different region, but it is somewhat marked.

- (88) a. Insasir tó
high.king be.1D
"You are the high king."
b. Insasir eros
high.king be.2PL
"You are the high king."

4.13.2 The relative pronoun

In Tanol there is one relative pronoun, which is of the same form as the demonstrative pronoun, *é*. The relative pronoun in Tanol is completely optional, and can be used when

the speaker wishes to fully differentiate an embedded clause from the matrix. In (89), one can also see that the C position in Tanol is head-final (there is much discussion of this later).

- (89) a. Menva tas [kharath eyo síkh é]
 woman say [man AUXII.PERF come that]
 "The woman said that the man came."
 b. Menva tas [kharath eyo síkh]
 woman say [man AUXII.PERF come]
 "The woman said the man came."

There are some restrictions on in what environments using the relative pronoun is allowed. (90) shows an environment where the inclusion of the relative pronoun results in an ungrammatical sentence, and (91) shows an environment where it results in a corrupted reading.

- (90) a. *Menva nena [kharath eyo síkh é kés]
 woman ask [man AUXII.PERF come that Q]
 "The woman asks [that did the man come]."
 b. *Menva nena [kharath eyo síkh kés é]
 woman ask [man AUXII.PERF come Q that]
 "The woman asks [that did the man come]."
 c. Menva nena [kharath eyo síkh kés]
 woman ask [man AUXII.PERF come Q]
 "The woman asks [did the man come]."
 (91) a. Menva_i tas [kharath_j kéth_{*i/j} te véól é]
 woman say [man REFL AUXI.IMPF see that]
 "The woman says that the man saw himself."
 b. Menva_i tas [kharath_j kéth_{i/j} te véól]
 woman say [man REFL AUXI.IMPF see]
 "The woman says that the man saw himself."

Because this relative pronoun occurs at the edge of the clause boundary, even if there is another embedded clause following it, it will not trigger consonant mutation. In (92) for example, *yur* does not mutate to *shur*.

- (92) Menva tas [kharath nókhór é [yur éra é]]
 woman says [man think that [weather bad that]]
 "The woman says that the man thinks that the weather is bad."

4.13.3 Anaphora

Tanol has a reflexive pronoun *kéth*. It is a general reflexive, being used for all persons. It is used in any case where the verb is not typically expected to have the same subject and object. It is more common for the subject to be marked ergatively when *kéth* is used, even with 1st and 2nd person, but it is not ungrammatical to just use verb marking.

- (93) a. Su kéth mere
 1SG.ERG REFL love

- b. Kéth meri - e
REFL love - 1SG
"I love myself."

The reflexive pronoun in Tanol can also be long-distance if the embedded clause is in the subjunctive and there is no relative pronoun in the embedded clause. The reflexive is also weakly subject oriented, readings with an object or prepositional phrase are possible, but usually need to be forced. The reflexive also has a genitive form *kéthér*, and a prepositional form *kéthés*.

- (94) a. Insa_i tas [nenth_a_j kéth_{i/j} te pere]
king say [servant REFL AUXI.IMPF love]
"The king says the servant loves him/himself."
b. Inarin - u_i nena - e [su kéth_i te khere]
Inarin - ERG ask - 1SG [1SG.ERG REFL AUXI.IMPF get]
"Inarin asked me (that) I (would) look for him(self)."
- (95) a. Inarin_i Énkéis_j eyo zíyén [ku_{i/j} kéth_{i/*j} mere]
Inarin Énkéis AUXII.PERF tell [3SG.ERG REFL love]
"Inarin told Énkéis he loves himself."
b. Inarin_i éhanú [Énkéis_j Vónóra_k tal kéthés_{i/j/?k}/kes_{?i/*j/k} eyo
Inarin know [Énkéis Vónóra on REFL.PREP/3SG.PREP AUXII.PERF
zíyén]
tell]
"Inarin knows Énkéis told Vónóra about him/himself."
- (96) a. Inarin_i kéth - ér_{i/*j} penva eyo muse
Inarin REFL - GEN woman AUXII.PERF kiss
"Inarin kissed his (own) wife."
b. Inarin_i tas [Énkéis_j kéth - ér_{i/j} penva te puse]
Inarin say [Énkéis REFL - GEN woman AUXI.IMPF kiss]
"Inarin says Énkéis kissed his (own) wife."

Tanol also has a reciprocal pronoun, *ezeru*, which comes from the word *eru* reduplicated (with regular R-dissimilation). *Ezeru* cannot be bound outside of its clause, its co-index must be local.

- (97) a. Naye - v_i ezeru_i eyo yezen
child - PL each.other AUXII.PERF insult
"The children insulted each other."
b. Kharath - av tas [naye - v ezeru te khezen]
man - PL_i say [child - PL_j each.other_{*j/j} AUXI.IMPF insult]
"The men say the children insulted each other."

4.14 Prepositions

As Tanol lacks local case marking, prepositions are the primary way to mark locational adjuncts. Most prepositions also trigger some kind of consonant mutation. Nouns in prepositional phrases always take the prepositional case.

- (98) a. Ekh khvóham - avas su eyo sórim
 because.of snake - PL.PREP 1SG.ERG AUXII.PERF run
 "Because of the snake I ran away."
 b. Kó urol - as su eyo rúma
 in mountain - PREP 1SG.ERG AUXII.PERF walk
 "I walked on the mountain(s)."
 c. Résé lhéthan - as su eyo rúma
 from house - PREP 1SG.ERG AUXII.PERF walk
 "I walked (away) from the house."

Tanol speakers use *kó* to describe many spatial relations where English speakers would use different prepositions. *Kó* is used to encode meanings such as "in", "on", "at", "upon", "into", "toward" and "within". Where speakers want a more specific spatial relationships, a larger noun phrase is often used.

- (99) Kó urul - er lhasva - se su eyo rúma
 in mountain - GEN inside - PREP AUXII.PERF walk - 1SG
 "I walked inside the mountain."

Besides this prepositions in Tanol are fairly self-explanatory, the language has a relatively small number of prepositions, and, as previously stated, many of them cause some kind of mutation of the following word (not necessarily the noun).

- (100) a. Ésé rune v yúrav - as tér
 near rotten fruit - PREP be.3SG
 "It's near the rotten fruit."
 b. Résé lhunav yúrav - as ithonir eyo khínthé - sé
 from rotten fruit - PREP soup AUXII.PERF move - 1SG
 "I moved the soup away from the rotten fruit."

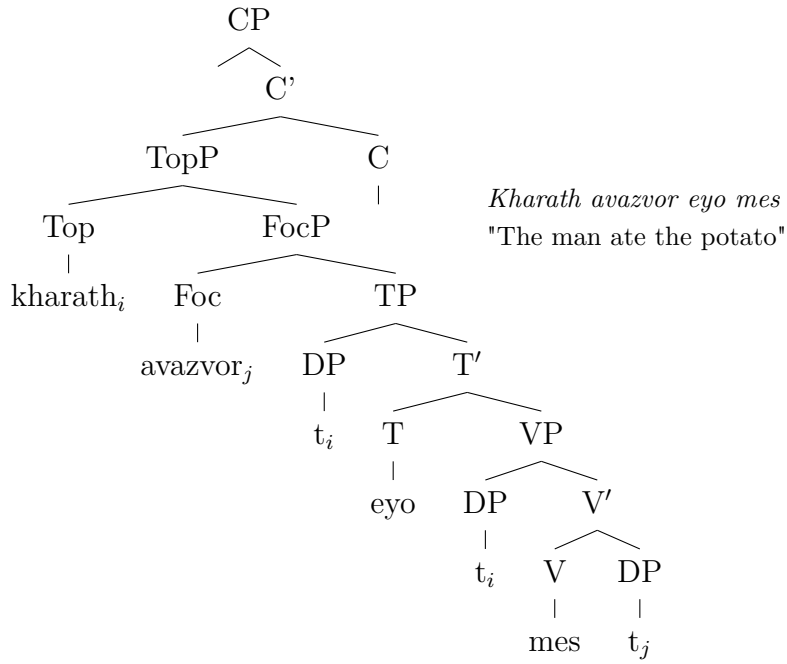
4.15 Syntax

Tanol syntax is very complex, with a somewhat incongruous structure, and, as displayed through this section of the grammar, ergativity plays a substantial role in the syntax.

4.15.1 Basic word order and information structure

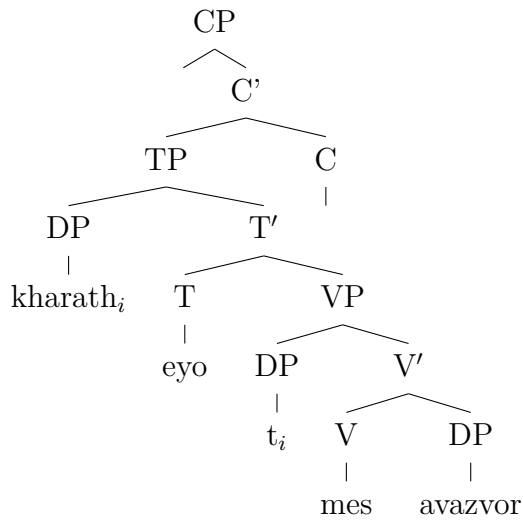
Tanol, despite surface appearances, is not in fact underlyingly SOV, it is in fact SVO. Core arguments appear pre-verbally nearly always, but this is due to the topic-focus information structure. The topic is always the first element of the sentence, which is then followed by the focus. The core arguments may either occupy the topic or focus position, but the standard order is for the subject to be in topic position, seen in (101).

(101)



There are several pieces of evidence for this, a major one is that many dialects permit post-verbal objects still, where the topic and focus projections seem to be less obligatory than in the standard dialects. This can be seen in the dialect spoken in Arazal.

(102)

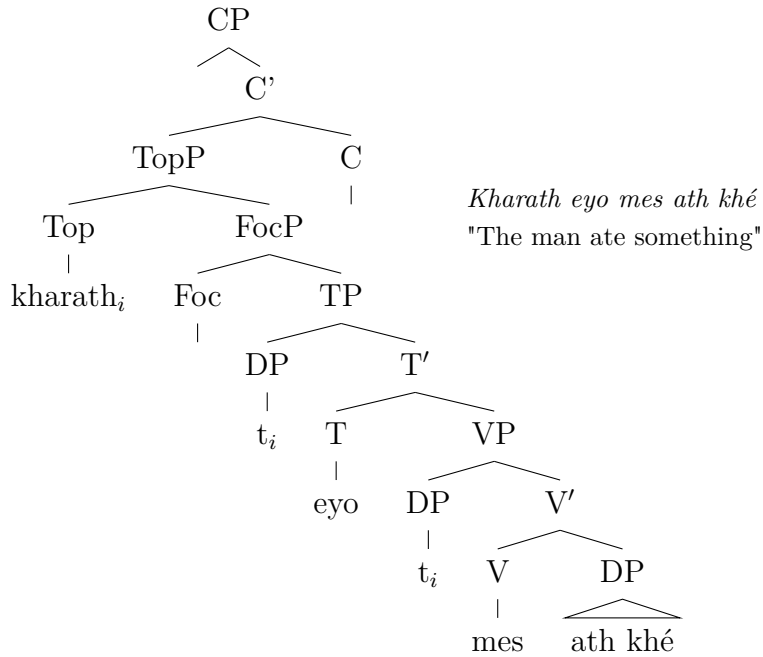


Here the linear order would produce a sentence seen in (103).

(103) *Kharath eyo mes avazvor*
 man AUXII.PERF eat potato
 "The man ate the potato."

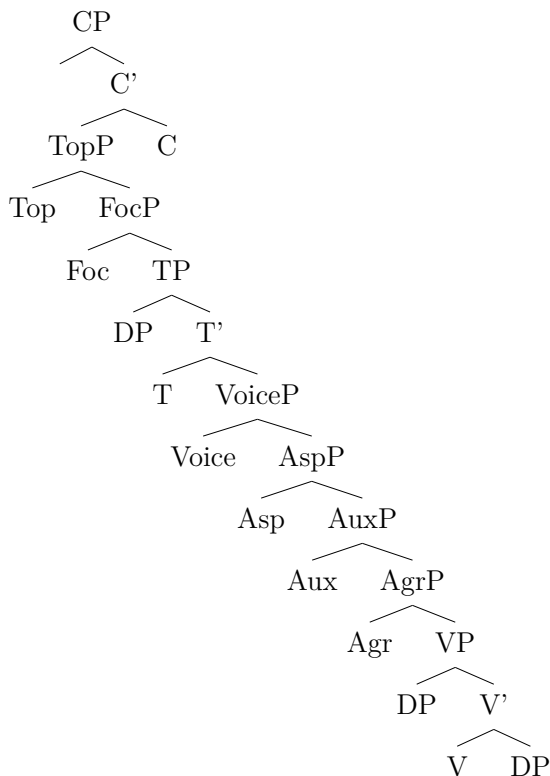
Adding to this dialectal evidence, there is also the true *wh*-in-situ position seen in all the dialects, where speakers often leave the *wh*-complex in post-verbal. While *ath khé* can move up to focus position, it can also stay *in-situ*.

(104)



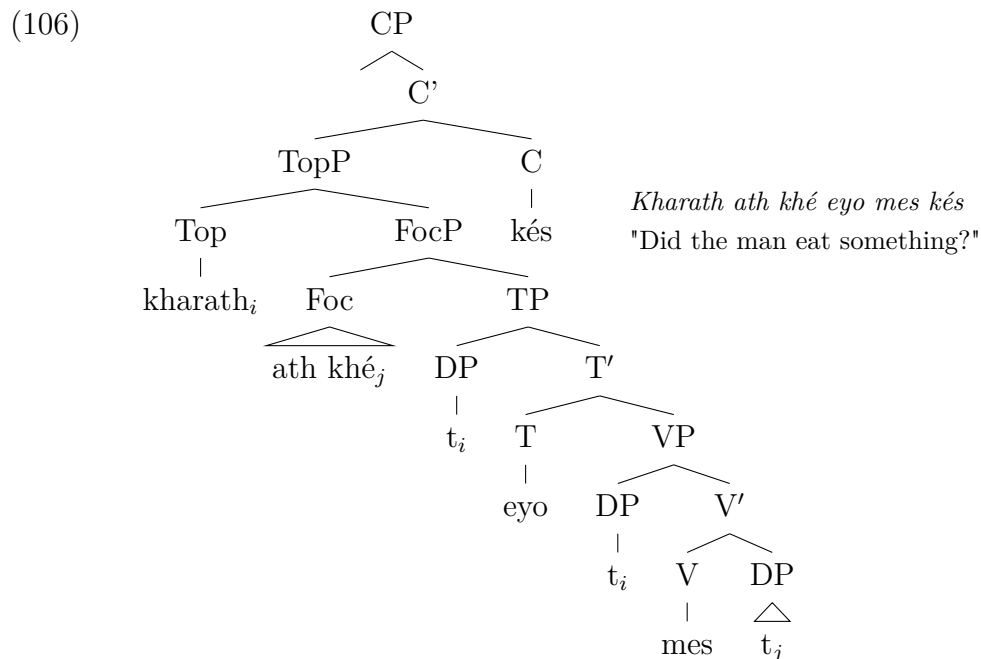
In terms of the verbal system, there are actually a couple of distinct projects associated with the verbal complex. The verb actually goes through a number of projects before it ends up at its landing sight in spec,T. If no auxiliary verb is present then the lexical verb does this movement. This structure also accounts for why the auxiliary verb never receives person marking. The auxiliary verb is base generated in AuxP, and then moves up to T, thereby by-passing AgrP, whereas the lexical verb, generated in the VP, moves through AgrP to receive verbal marking. The complexity of this structure means that it is not shown in other tree structures, but this is Tanol's overall syntactic structure.

(105)



4.15.2 The status of C and FOFC violation

As can be seen in previous tree structures, a head-final CP dominates a head-initial TopP or TP. This appears to be a FOFC violation (first over final constraint), and should not be allowed based on several syntactic accounts. However, there are several pieces of evidence that this configuration, while disharmonic, is not FOFC violating. As nothing ever moves to C in the narrow syntax (more on this shortly), there is no rightward dependency meaning that there is FOFC violation. In (106), the question particle is based generated in C, it doesn't move to it, seen by the fact the other question particle is pied-piped with *ath* to the focus position.



Two elements are also not permitted to fill the C position, which is why one cannot have a question particle and a relative pronoun in the same clause, as in (107). This sentence violates this restriction of two elements in the same position.

- (107) *Menva nena [kharath eyo síkh é kés]
 woman ask [man AUXII.PERF come that Q]
 "The woman asks [that did the man come]."

Leading on from this, there is an explanation of why the reflexive pronoun cannot have a long-distance reading in Tanol if there is an element at C. The movement of *kéth* out of the clause in order to gain a long-distance reading happens at LF (the logical form), where a rightward dependency is permitted. If there is an element at C, this blocks this movement as a subadjacency violation, therefore limiting the reflexive pronoun to the clause, limiting its reading from long-distance to local, even if the verb is subjunctive.

5 Derivation

Tanol is not rich in derivational morphology, it has a few derivational suffixes, a couple of which are still productive, mostly for nouns. The older suffixes originating from Proto-Tarikhic, for which there have been significant semantic shifts from the original meanings.

5.1 Nominal derivation

Many nouns are derived from verbs, and most derivational affixes attach to verbs. Some of these affixes are much more productive and others are left over from Proto-Tarikhic or late Proto-Tarikhic derivational morphology.

Older suffixes tend to lead to some phonological changes to the root whereas newer suffixes tend to attach to the root with no changes. Similarly, there is sometimes some semantic extension from the meaning of the root in older suffixes whereas newer suffixes tend to stay close to the original root. For example, the old diminutive in Tanol is *-e/é*, coming from Proto-Tarikhic **-es*. The new, productive diminutive is *-ay*.

- (108)
- a. Insvor, insvore
stone, bone
"A stone, a bone."
 - b. Insvor, insvoray
stone, pebble
"A stone, a pebble."
 - c. Kemer, kemeray
room, small.room
"A room, a small room/closet/cupboard."

The old and new human agentive suffixes, *-a* and *-is* respectively, are similar in this regard.

- (109)
- a. Ruzu, rvóza
farm, person
"To farm, a person."
 - b. Ruzu, ruzuis
farm, farmer
"To farm, a farmer."

In many cases, such as *rusu* to *rvóza*, speakers no longer see the old derivational suffix as such. This does not mean there are no examples of more transparent relationships in old derivational suffixes.

- (110)
- Nie, nieze
branch, stick
"A branch, a stick."

There are a couple of older suffixes which are still productive, but they often trigger some phonological mutation similar to nominal inflectional morphology. Such a suffix would be the locative suffix *-ar* which causes A-mutation.

- (111)
- a. Lémís, lémézar
sleep, bedroom

- "To sleep, a bedroom."
- b. Ruzu, rvózar
farm, habited.area
"To farm, a habited/popular area."

As you may be able to guess from the example of *ruzu*, sometimes the semantic shift has affected the root as well as the derived form. *Ruzu* comes from the Proto-Tarikhic word **rs* (to settle, begin to dwell, cultivate), which then drifted to the modern Tanol word *ruzu* (to farm). So, the original meaning of *rvóza* (or **rsas* as the Proto-Tarikhic form was) was something like "one who settles" or "one who dwells", and *rvózar* (**rsare* in Proto-Tarikhic) was "a place that is settled", which then shifted to mean a place that is populated. *Ruzuiz* first saw usage in Proto-Tanolic, where *ruzu* had started to mean to farm. Thus, with two different agentive suffixes, the verb yields two nouns with different meanings.

There are other examples of semantic shifts causing interesting derivational histories. For example, the word for wolf in Tanol is *lúthésír*. This word is made of *lúthé* (dog) + *ír* (augmentative), so literally a "big dog". The word *lúthé* comes from Proto-Tarikhic **lyut* (wolf) and **-es* (diminutive), so a "small wolf". Thus, etymologically *lúthésír* literally means something like a "a small big wolf". Proto-Tarikhic **lyut* was lost in the Tanolic subbranch but was retained in other Tarikhic languages.

5.2 Plural reanalysis

Due to a derivational suffix in Proto-Tarikhic, there are a lot of singular words in Tanol that end in *-av*, which, through sheer coincidence, is also the plural suffix. As a result, speakers started to reanalyse these nouns as ending in *-a* with a plural *-v* suffix. This plural reanalysis was common in the south, but much less so in the north, where the original *-av* ending was retained, with the additional *-av* plural ending added when pluralising the noun.

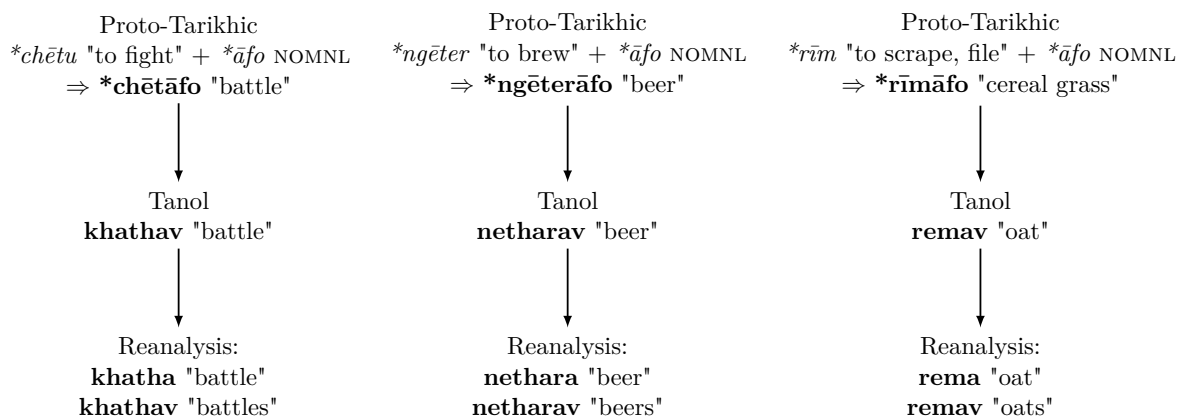


Figure 4: Etymological development of *khathav*, *netharav*, and *remav* with the reanalysis of final *-v*.

Figure 4 shows how these nouns appeared in Tanol after several millennia of evolution, which resulted in them being seen as plural nouns, and how the final *-v* was then lost. In the north, the plural of *khathav* is *khathvav*, the loss of /a/ in this environment is very common in the north. This reanalysis took place around 200 years ago, and has become

standard in the south, that is to say, using *netharav* in a singular context in Tamaris would be regarded as improper use of the language.

There are few nouns ending with *-v* and a vowel other than /a/ which were subject to reanalysis, such as *tómzév* "island", which in some dialects is now *tómzé* in the singular. For some reason, the *-av* ending was more commonly reanalysed in the dialects where it is common.

5.3 Verbal derivation

Verbal derivation is somewhat limited, the language makes use of its inflectional verbal system to create many specific verbal meanings, especially the fluid-S ergative split and the converb prefixes. There are a handful of verbal derivational suffixes.

Some nominal derivational suffixes, the augmentative and diminutive, can be used on verbal roots.

- (112)
- a. Mékún, mékúnír
cut, dig
"To cut/pierce, to dig."
 - b. Túmvó, túmé
tie, sew
"To tie, to sew."
 - c. Túmvó, túmvóír
tie, moor
"To tie, to moor."

The most productive suffix is left over from Proto-Tarikhic, the causative *-akh*.

- (113)
- a. Nél, nayakh
die, kill
"To die, to kill."
 - b. Kérú, karakh
be.empty, wipe
"To be empty, to wipe."

The original meaning of *kérú* was "to be dry", so *karakh* originally meant "to make dry". Overtime, both words shifted in meaning away from each other and the original meaning.

5.4 Borrowings and loanwords

Tanol tends not to take on many loan words, preferring to derive words from native sources, but there are couple of loanwords, especially in more specialist fields. Tanol has taken on words from the languages around it, especially Sān-P̄ymo and Hazarii.

The speakers of Sān-P̄ymo, the M̄ynó, trade a lot with the city states of Anthes, especially those in the east, which border the territory of the M̄ynó. This trade is mostly made up of spices, herbs, and other foods which grow in the island archipelagos stretching south-east of the Toromeran continent. Hence the borrowings from Sān-P̄ymo tend to be words related to these things.

For example, the word for "tea" in Tanol, *senir* comes from Sān-P̄ymo *sēn-hel*, literally "bitter leaf". Another borrowing with a similar root is *sensose* (coriander), which comes from Sān-P̄ymo *sēn-šòse*, literally "fragrant leaf". Two more borrowings are *osa* (cumin)

and *kís* (cloves), which both come from Sān-Pȳmo, *ósá* and *qýs*.

There are also more recent borrowings from Imperial Paghade, especially in the west. For example, Imperial Paghade *sédhēshre* (pub) has been loaned into Tanol as *setheser*. The word *vraðes* "armour" (specifically a special kind of armour worn by imperial soldiers) was loaned over as *varate*. A final example of an Imperial Paghade loanword is *nómísa* "spice merchant", borrowed from the Imperial Paghade *nomisa*, with the same meaning.

6 Dialects

Tanol has many millions of speakers spread across a large geographical area, shown back in figure 1, meaning that the language is rich in dialectal variation. These dialects are grouped into three large dialect groups based on common linguistic features. These groups are northern, western, central, eastern and southern. As stated in section 1.3, these regions account for well over 85% of speakers and are therefore the focus of this section. The dialects of Tanol all stem from Proto-Tanolic, which is the last time the Ruhem people were united in a specific geographical region, largely around the Neuzekh peninsula. This section covers some of the main features of the three largest dialect groups, but is by no means exhaustive.

6.1 Southern Tanol

The southern dialect of Tanol is the one which has been discussed in this grammar so far, as the *svókazavér thiveme* is based on the southern dialect of the language, but a slightly older form of it. There are several phonological changes that have taken place in the southern group since the *svókazavér thiveme* was standardised some 120 years ago. A very common change was glide formation of front vowels. In a vowel sequence of a front high or mid vowel and another vowel, the high or front vowel is often pronounced as a /j/. For example, *órié* "to carry" is pronounced /'ɔɾ.jɛ/, rather than /'ɔɾ.i.ɛ/, and *méthéú* "to cook" is pronounced /'mɛ.θjʊ/, rather than /'mɛ.θɛ.ʊ/.

Some speakers started dropping /h/ intervocalically, especially when /h/ was not in a stressed syllable. So for many speakers, *éhanú* "to know" shifted from /'ɛ.ha.nʊ/ to /'ja.nʊ/. As a result of hypercorrection, many speakers therefore started adding /h/ between vowels which never featured an intervocalic /h/, or did thousands of years ago. *Khíúin* "to be last, final" was therefore pronounced /'xi.hʊn/. In this case, the excrescence of a /h/ in the short form was also influenced by its long form, *khíhéúin* /'xi.hɛʊn/. In many southern dialects, the word *kéréís* "onion" is now treated as having a /h/ as standard, /'kɛ.rɛ.hɪs/, although in more rural areas the word is pronounced /'kɛ.rjɪs/, as one might expect for the south. Both are technically "non-standard", but the one with the glide is often proscribed.

There are some specific differences in lexicon that have evolved in the south. For example the word for "pale ale" *írvór* is often generalised to mean any kind of beer, including those which aren't even of a similar style or colour. In other parts of Anthes, *írvór* specifically refers to pale ale, especially warm-fermented ale made with pale malts, with other styles of beer referred to with the more general word *nethara*. In the south *nethara* is used, but usually to refer to foreign beer.

Morphologically speaking, the southern dialect group mostly follows what has been established in this grammar. As discussed in section 5.2, several nouns ending in *-v*, or more specifically *-av* were reanalysed in the south as being plural, and the final *-v* was removed to create a new singular form. Similarly, the dual is not particularly common in the south, it sees frequent use with a few nouns in particular, as in (114), but otherwise it has mostly fallen out of use.

- (114) a. Nouns referring to time
- *Inomeno* "two days"
 - *Tanoreno* "two hours"

- *Lúzóóhano* "two years"
- b. Body parts
 - *Óyénó* "two eyes"
 - *Lvóthénó* "two hands"
 - *Emvono* "two feet"
- c. Clothing
 - *Kúónénó* "two shoes"
 - *Ténénó* "two sleeves"
 - *Khéthéréno* "two (ear)rings"
- d. Kinship terms
 - *Kérakhanó* "two parents"
 - *Nénkhanó* "two siblings"
 - *Vekatheno* "(two) twins"
- e. Miscellaneous
 - *Kúthénó* "two horns"
 - *Ekeokénó* "two wings"
 - *Púyathasénó* "two tools"

6.2 Western Tanol

Western Tanol features a glottal stop instead of a glottal fricative and a rather notable reduction in the vocalic distinctions made in unstressed syllables. Specifically, in unstressed syllables, /i/ shifts to /e/, /a/ shifts to /ə/ and /o/ shifts to /a/⁷, shown in table 16. In the western variety therefore, there are actually only three vowel distinctions in unstressed syllables, /e/, /u/, /a/ and the schwa. This shift is one of the most salient features of Western Tanol, and is often noted by speakers of the southern dialects.

Word	Meaning	Standard	Western	Change
<i>Lémís</i>	"to sleep"	/ˈlɛ.mɪs/	/ˈlɛ.mɛs/	/i/ → /e/
<i>Tayakan</i>	"tomorrow"	/ˈtɑ.jɑ.kan/	/ˈtɑ.jə.kən/	/a/ → /ə/
<i>Kérókh</i>	"cup"	/ˈkɛ.rɔx/	/ˈkɛ.rax/	/o/ → /a/

Table 16: Vowel reduction in western dialects

Another phonological difference of the western dialect is that Proto-Tanolic */w/ did not shift to /v/ as in the south, but rather /ʋ/. So in the southern dialect, the words *vónéósé* "neck" and *vómakh* "pig" are both pronounced with an initial /v/, but in the west, "neck" is pronounced with an initial /ʋ/, /ˈʋɔ.nɛɑ.sɛ/, and "pig" is pronounced with an initial /v/, /ˈvɔ.məx/. This system of having both /v/ and /ʋ/ contrastively is both rare typologically and, therefore, unstable. In fact, most speakers have actually now began entirely to using /v/, in places where one would expect /ʋ/.

Due to the influence of the Sadhes Empire, much of Western Tanol has been heavily influenced by Imperial Paghade, especially in terms of vocabulary. Table 17. It should be noted however, that not all of Lires is under Imperial control, and so there is somewhat a

⁷Here /i/, /e/ and /o/ refers to both +ATR and -ATR.

divide in the region linguistically. Those not directly under Imperial control have resisted Paghade vocabulary. The Imperials have enacted strict language laws for the Ruhem under their control, whereby Tanol may not be spoken in education, court or government.

Native word	Meaning	Borrowing	Imperil Paghade
<i>Levor</i>	"ship"	<i>Thirikes</i>	<i>Dhrikés</i>
<i>Nvéł</i>	"city"	<i>Khakas</i>	<i>Khaksas</i>
<i>Líhónís</i>	"emperor"	<i>Kikhas</i>	<i>Agighas</i>
<i>Urul</i>	"mountain"	<i>Kúnayé</i>	<i>Gunaye</i>
<i>Khenthvor</i>	"cheese"	<i>Etor</i>	<i>Ēdór</i>

Table 17: Borrowings from Imperial Paghade into Western Tanol

Grammatically, the western dialects have started to evolve pronominal clitics, possibly under the influence of Paghade, although some evidence points to the evolution of clitics beginning prior to the annexing of the Neuzekh penninsula. The absolutive pronouns appear directly before the lexical verb and eliding with it in many cases.

- (115) a. Rakh se = nayakh - a - s
 AUXII.IMPF 1SG = kill - 2SG - INV
 "I will kill you."
 b. Rakh s = óríésakh - a - s
 AUXII.IMPF 1SG = clothe - 2SG - INV
 "I will clothe you."

6.3 Northern Tanol

The northern dialect is very different to the southern dialect. In fact, speakers of the souther dialect often struggle to understand those from the north, especially outside of Khosal and Arazal. It retains several features of Proto-Tanolic that were lost in the other dialects, while also innovating some new features which makes it especially tricky for learners.

In terms of conservatism, Proto-Tanolic /w/ did shift to /v/ or /ʋ/ in northern dialect, instead keeping its original value. Although, /ɱ/ still became /w/, so neither /v/ nor /w/ are not subject to mutation. The voiceless trill /ʀ/ did not shift to /h/, and the voiceless palatal approximant did not shift to /ʃ/ but rather /ç/.

Word	Meaning	No mutation	Hard mutation
<i>Róthar</i>	"place"	/ˈrɔ̌.θar/	/ˈrɔ̌.ðar/
<i>Yínza</i>	"mouse"	/ˈjɪn.zə/	/ˈçɪn.zə/

Table 18: Mutation of /r/ and /j/ in Northern Tanol

Staying on the topic of mutation, northern Tanol actually lost the de-affricating kind of soft mutation. That is, /t/ never mutates to /s/, instead the lenition kind of soft mutation was generalised, so where in other dialects, a /t/ would mutate to /s/, in the north it becomes /θ/.

- (116) Southern

- (117) Northern
- a. Kéyé tóvan - as
without north - PREP
"Without the north."
 - b. Kó sóvan - as
in north - PREP
"In the north."

Similar to the western dialect, and as seen in (117), Northern Tanol features vowel reduction, though of a different variety to the western dialect. Northern Tanol went through a similar shift of /a/, and also /o/, to /ə/ as in the west, but in the northern variety the schwa was fully lost in post-tonic position and when another syllable followed, and when the resulting consonant cluster would be valid. Valid consonant clusters are nasals or stop followed by an approximant or vice-versa, or a sibilant (/s/) followed by a stop.

Word	Meaning	Standard	Northern	Type
Ménarakh	"to break"	/ˈmɛ.na.rax/	/ˈmɛn.rəh/	Nasal-Approximant
Kírazé	"to suffer"	/ˈkɪ.ra.zɛ/	/ˈkɪr.zɛ/	Approximant-Obstruent
Ísótún	"stream"	/ˈɪ.sɔ.tʊn/	/ˈɪs.tʊn/	Sibilant-Stop

Table 19: Northern vowel reduction

Following on from table 19, final /x/ in the northern dialect is always realised as /h/. When /j/ is followed by /w/, it shifts to /i/, instead of *yvóthé* "to suck" as /jvɔ.θɛ/, it is pronounced /ɪ.wɔ.ðɛ/. Intervocalic /θ/ is voiced to /ð/. And finally, result of the lack of /ʃ/, the /s/ in Northern Tanol has the retracted pronunciation that was in Proto-Tanolic.

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About the author

Harry Cook is a linguist and language creator from the UK. He has a BA in Linguistics with German and a BSc in Linguistics, both from the University of York. He has been interested in languages from a very young age, and started creating languages as a teenager. From an academic standpoint, his interests lie in comparative and historical linguistics, especially syntax. He is developing a theory of anaphora based on parameterisation and phase theory, and has done work on the diachrony of reflexives, especially in Indo-European languages, and clitics in the Romance and Hellenic language families.

His language creation exclusively focuses on *a priori*, naturalistic conlangs. Tanol is part of a larger world-building project, which mostly focuses on linguistics and anthropology in a pseudo-fantasy world, which in the "current era" is somewhat analogous to the late-17th to mid-18th centuries in western history; the so-called "Age of Discovery".

This project is the setting of a series of fantasy one-offs which Cook writes when he finds the time. His languages feature extensively in these stories, especially in the shorter pieces of work which are usually in the form of in-world documents. In this way, his languages add depth to the world; being used to compose "original" texts such as plays, poems, history books, and even religious texts.

Besides linguistics and conlanging, Cook is interested in the arts and humanities, and in particular music and history. He is fond of Classical Greek literature, and is doing his own translation of Homer's Iliad. He has read the New Testament in the original Koine Greek and is interested in Biblical Composition, and the history of religion in general. These interests feed into his world-building and conlanging, and he approaches world-building from a linguistic and/or historical point of view most often.

Tivamavu te harakhay

This reference grammar provides a comprehensive and rigorous description of Tanol, encompassing its phonological inventory, morphosyntactic structure, and clause-level and discourse-level syntactic patterns. Drawing on both elicited and naturally occurring data, it offers detailed analyses of inflectional paradigms, derivational processes, argument structure, and constituent order, alongside notes on dialectal variation. Structured for linguists and advanced researchers, the work combines theoretical precision with descriptive thoroughness, serving as a definitive resource for comparative, typological, and diachronic studies of Tanol.