

2. The phoneme inventory

The phoneme inventory of the Kilivila language includes 19 consonants, five vowels and six diphthongs, viz. *p, b, t, d, k, g, m, n, p^w, b^w, k^w, g^w, m^w, r, s, β, l, w, y; i, u, e, o, a; ai, au, ei, eu, oi, ou*. Also stress may have phonemic status. These phonemes are tabulated below.

Table 1. Consonants

		Labialised bilabial	Bilabial	Alveolar	Velar	Labialised velar
Stops	vl	<i>p^w</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>k^w</i>
	vd	<i>b^w</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>g^w</i>
Fricatives			<i>β</i>	<i>s</i>		
Nasals		<i>m^w</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>		
Laterals				<i>l</i>		
Flaps				<i>r</i>		
Semivowels			<i>w</i>			<i>y</i>

Table 2. Vowels and diphthongs

	Front	Central	Back
High	<i>i</i>		<i>u</i>
Mid	<i>e</i>		<i>o</i>
Low		<i>a</i>	
High			
Mid-close	<i>ei</i>		<i>ou</i>
Mid-open	<i>eu</i>		<i>oi</i>
Low		<i>ai au</i>	

The general feature of labialisation on all stops and nasals articulated at front and back extremes of the oral cavity may be seen in the above tabulation. This manifests as a rounding on the final margin of the phoneme, and is demonstrably of phonemic status in contrast with the unrounded forms:

ba-la *wa b^wala*.
 'I will-go to house.'

tama-ma *tama-m^wa*
 'the father-of us two' (excl dl) 'the father-of you (pl)'

pa- *p^wa-*
 'rigid flat piece' 'anything rotten'
 (classifier) (classifier)