

Landa Grammar  
with Texts and Vocabulary

*Cita gui Muha Landa  
hua Quehangone je Muhayune*

Nicolas Antonio Cloutier  
*Nicola Antonio Calutie*

January 1, 2024



*Eno cuhamen hua muha gui cono ticaluca  
mpalaquence, tano nxeja mpalaquence.*

—Teli Paxe

## *0 Introduction*

### **0.1 Abbreviations**

1: first person  
2: second person  
3: 3<sup>rd</sup> person  
ACC: Accusative  
ACT: action

PL: Plural  
SG: Singular  
STAT: state  
TRANS: transitive changing-of-state

UNWILL: unwillingly  
WILL: willingly

## 1 Phonology

Table I: Consonants

	Labial	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
<b>Plosive</b>	<sup>(m)</sup> p	<sup>(n)</sup> t <sup>(n)</sup> d			<sup>(ŋ)</sup> k <sup>(ŋ)</sup> g	ʔ
<b>Nasal</b>	<sup>(m)</sup> m	<sup>(n)</sup> n		<sup>(j)</sup> ɲ	<sup>(ŋ)</sup> ŋ	
<b>Fricative</b>	<sup>(m)</sup> f	<sup>(n)</sup> s	<sup>(n)</sup> ʃ			h
<b>Approximant</b>	w	l	j		(w)	

Table II: Romanization of consonants

	Labial	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
<b>Plosive</b>	<sup>(m)</sup> p	<sup>(n)</sup> t <sup>(n)</sup> d			<sup>(n)</sup> c/qu <sup>(m)</sup> g/gu	h
<b>Nasal</b>	hm m	hn n	hñ ñ		hng/hngu ng/ngu	
<b>Fricative</b>	<sup>(m)</sup> f	<sup>(n)</sup> z/c	<sup>(n)</sup> x			j
<b>Approximant</b>	hu	l	y			

Figure I: Vowels

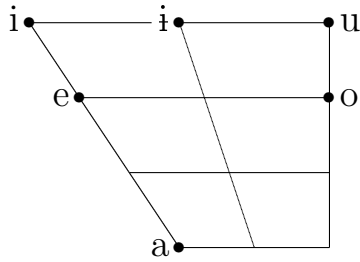
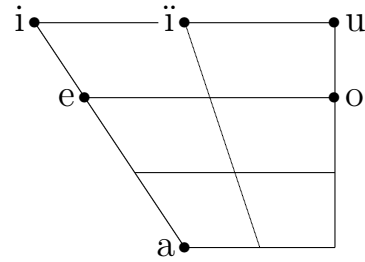


Figure II: Romanization of vowels



Spanish rules are followed when multiple romanizations given. For example, /si/ is written as ⟨ci⟩, but /sa/ is written as ⟨za⟩, /gi/ is written as ⟨gui⟩ but /ga/ is written as ⟨ga⟩. All syllables in Landa are (C)V, except word-finally, where they are (C)V(N), where (N) refers to any nasal. Adjacent vowels are treated as nuclei of separate syllables. Primary stress always falls on the penultimate syllable of a multisyllabic word and the only syllable of a monosyllabic word. This system does at times create ambiguous spellings, context is necessary to discern these cases.

## 2 Grammar

### 2.0 Verbs in Landa

Predicates form a unique part of Landa syntax. The way it handles verbs was inspired by the way that functional programming handles its predicates. In functional programming, common functions such as **filter**, **map**, and **reduce** describe a manner of performing an action, but not the semantics of the action itself. This is instead described by a predicate, passed in as an argument to a function just as typical arguments are passed into functions and methods in other programming paradigms. For example, one programmer may write a program utilizing the **filter** function that passes a condition predicate checking whether elements in an array of integers are above a certain threshold. In this case, the condition function would be defined separately and passed in, along with the array itself, to the **filter** function. Another programmer may only keep elements in this array that are even, defining their own predicate to check for even numbers and calling the same **filter** function. In both cases, the function call could be written in pseudocode as **filter(predicate, array)**, where **predicate** in the first case would refer to a previously defined function that returns a Boolean value of **True** when an integer is above a designated threshold and **False** otherwise, and in the second case would refer to another previously defined function that returns a Boolean value of **True** when an integer is divisible by two and **False** otherwise.

This design was the inspiration for the way verbs are handled in Landa. “Manner verbs” are considered the center of verb phrases, but include very little specific semantic information. They instead mark things such as whether an action was intentional and whether it is a state or action. Verbs describing specific semantic information are relegated to the status of suffixes on noun phrases, and are generally adjunct to whatever clause they appear in. Take the following sentence:

- (1)   jĩ-ye                               ndego-ca  
      UNWILL.sense.STAT-1.SG dog-exist  
      *I see the dog.*

The base verb stem here is *jĩ*, meaning “to unwillingly sense an object’s state.” The object itself is described in the noun phrase *ndegoca*, where *ndego* means “dog” and the suffix *ca* means “to exist.” Thus, the overall sentence *jĩye ndegoca* literally means “I unwillingly sensed the state of the dog, existing,” but can be more leniently translated to “I saw<sup>1</sup> the dog.” In future clauses, if *ca* is used again, it can be dropped, or replaced with the general proverb *zu*, which can be used to refer back to any previously used semantic verb. Semantic verbs can also be dropped entirely if previously mentioned, which will typically imply that whatever most recently previously used semantic verb still stands if one has previously been mentioned, and otherwise implies the semantic verb *ca*, “to exist.” Thus, the sentence could be rewritten as *jĩye ndego*, with no change in meaning.

### 2.1 Basic word order

Word order in Landa is fairly free, but a common basic word order is semantic accusative, manner verb, object NP. All of the following are appropriate orderings:

- (2)   cale-’n           jĩ-cu                               hempo-nce  
      money-ACC UNWILL.sense.STAT-2.SG person-have  
      *You notice that the person has money (neutral, slight emphasis on money).*
- (3)   jĩ-cu                               cale-’n           hempo-nce  
      UNWILL.sense.STAT-2.SG money-ACC person-have  
      *You notice that the person has money (emphasis on you noticing).*
- (4)   hempo-nce   jĩ-cu                               cale-’n  
      person-have UNWILL.sense.STAT-2.SG money-ACC  
      *You notice that the person has money (emphasis on the person having).*

When a noun is included in the subject position, it is typically the first thing to be mentioned, with other words taking a free order after it, as follows:

- (5)   ndego cale-’n           jĩ-Ø                               hempo-nce  
      dog   money-ACC UNWILL.sense.STAT-3.SG person-have  
      *The dog notices that the person has money (neutral, slight emphasis on money).*

---

<sup>1</sup>This could also refer to hearing or touching a dog unwillingly, to specify utilize instrumental statements with the body part used to sense in question.

- (6) ndego ji-Ø                                  cale-'n                  hempo-nce  
dog UNWILL.sense.STAT-3.SG money-ACC person-have  
*The dog notices that the person has money (emphasis on the dog noticing).*
- (7) ndego hempo-nce    ji-Ø                                  cale-'n  
dog person-have UNWILL.sense.STAT-3.SG money-ACC  
*The dog notices that the person has money (emphasis on the person having).*

## 2.2 Person verb conjugations

Personal verb conjugations for Landa, marked on manner verbs, are given as follows:

Table III: Verb inflection suffixes

Number	1 <sup>st</sup> person	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	3 <sup>rd</sup> person
Singular	<i>-ye</i>	<i>-cu</i>	-
Plural	<i>-ce</i>	<i>-no</i>	<i>-mpi</i>

## 2.3 Pronouns

Personal pronouns can be omitted in statements with conjugated verbs, but may be included for emphasis as necessary. The basic personal pronouns of Landa are:

Table IV: Personal pronouns

Number	1 <sup>st</sup> person	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	3 <sup>rd</sup> person
Singular	qui	he	zo
Plural	qui	pa	nzo

## 2.4 Possession

In Landa, possession of one noun to another is marked simply by placing the possessing noun after the possessed noun, with *gui*, “of,” in between, as follows:

- (8) ndego gui hempo  
dog of man  
*The man's dog.*

There is no special marking for pronouns, they are treated exactly as nouns, as follows:

- (9) ndego gui zo  
dog of 3.SG  
*His dog.*

## 2.5 Accusatives

In Landa, accusatives of semantic verbs are marked with the enclitic *-n*. In the case where the word already ends in a nasal, it goes phonologically unchanged, and an apostrophe is added to the end in written language. For example, *aceng*, “east,” would in the accusative be written *aceng'*, as follows:

- (10) jalozo-ju-'n            li-ye    he-ga  
music-type-ACC WILL.change.ACT.TRANS-1.SG 2.SG-hate  
*I made you hate that type of music.*
- (11) aceng-'      que-Ø    hempo-ca  
east-ACC WILL.change.STAT-3.SG person-be.located  
*The person moved eastward.*

## 2.6 The self

For certain sentences, *ne*, “the self,” can be used as the anchor of the semantic verb, as follows:

- (12) ncī-ye    ne-ti  
UNWILL.temporarily.STAT-1.SG self-be.happy  
*I am feeling happy.*
- (13) li-ye    ne-mpa  
WILL.change.ACT-1.SG self-smile  
*I smile.*

**2.7 Numbers** Landa uses base 10. Cry about it. A number is read out by saying the value of a digit followed by the name of that digit (e.g. hundred, thousand, ten). The following tables contain digits and place names, respectively.

*Table III: Digits 0-9<sup>2</sup>*

Name	Value
ñazo	0
mfeli	1
hmico	2
ntaju	3
huale	4
heho	5
eling	6
yeli	7
quenga	8
ncine	9

*Table IV: Digit places*

Name	Value
ndezo	$10^{-5}$
mfado	$10^{-4}$
xamfi	$10^{-3}$
pongui	$10^{-2}$
juhua	$10^{-1}$
mfeli	$10^0$ <sup>3</sup>
hñeye	$10^1$
luha	$10^2$
yaju	$10^3$
uhuilo	$10^4$
xehmi	$10^5$

---

<sup>2</sup>Note that in gloss in this grammar the digit values 1, 2, and 3 are glossed as “one”, “two”, and “three” in order to avoid confusion with the first, second, and third person markers that are glossed as “1”, “2”, and “3”, respectively, but all other digits are glossed in Arabic numerals.

<sup>3</sup>This need not be used if the ones digit comes at the end of a number, but it must be used otherwise.

### 3 Lexicon

#### 3.1 Nouns and Adjectives

<i>aceng</i> : “east, the east.”	<i>jalozo</i> : “music.”	<i>ne</i> : “the self.”
<i>caho</i> : “home, house, dwelling.”	<i>jalozoju</i> : “type of music.”	<i>nxeja</i> : “universe, world.”
<i>cale</i> : “money, gold.”	<i>landa</i> : “functional programming.”	<i>nxomo</i> : “time.”
<i>cingue</i> : “thing.”	<i>mpalaque</i> : “understanding.”	<i>pozu</i> : “happiness, happy.”
<i>cinguene</i> : “the universe, the world.”	<i>muha</i> : “language.”	<i>queha</i> : “written word.”
<i>cita</i> : “rule, convention.”	<i>muha Landa</i> : “language name, Landa.”	<i>quehango</i> : “piece of writing.”
<i>cuha</i> : “action.”	<i>muhango</i> : “speech, conversation.”	<i>ticalu</i> : “fruit.”
<i>hempo</i> : “person.”	<i>muhayu</i> : “word.”	<i>zaca</i> : “flat, level.”
<i>heni</i> : “tower, building.”	<i>ndego</i> : “dog, canine, wolf.”	<i>zacani</i> : “plains, flatlands.”
<i>jale</i> : “large in amount, plentiful.”		

#### 3.2 Manner verbs

<i>a</i> : “to fail at changing an object’s state.”	ject’s state.”	<i>to</i> : “to be unwillingly and persistently in a state.”
<i>co</i> : “to willingly change an object’s state.”	<i>li</i> : “to willingly change an object’s action.”	<i>za</i> : “to willingly sense an object’s state.”
<i>e</i> : “to willingly partake in an action.”	<i>nci</i> : “to be unwillingly in a temporary state.”	<i>zuca</i> : “to be unwillingly cognizant of an object’s state.”
<i>’e</i> : “to unwillingly partake in an action.”	<i>que</i> : “to willingly change state.”	
<i>ji</i> : “to unwillingly sense an ob-	<i>ta</i> : “to be willingly and persistently in a state.”	

#### 3.3 Semantic verb suffixes

<i>ca</i> : “to exist (for something), to be located (somewhere).”	<i>meñ</i> : “to discover something (about something).”	<i>nce</i> : “to have something.”
<i>ga</i> : “to hate (something).”	<i>mpa</i> : “to smile (towards something).”	<i>nza</i> : “to feel (something).”
<i>gui</i> : “to be equivalent (to something).”	<i>mi</i> : “to be an instance of something.”	<i>ti</i> : “to be happy (about something).”
<i>men</i> : “to try something.”		<i>zu</i> : “proverb.”

#### 3.4 Derivational affixes

<i>-ju</i> : “a type of something.”	thing.”	larger.”
<i>-ne</i> : “a collection of something.”	<i>-ngo</i> : “an instance of something.”	
<i>-ni</i> : “a place or land of some-	<i>-yu</i> : “a piece of something	

#### 3.5 Assorted

<i>gui</i> : “of.”	<i>je</i> : “and.”
<i>hua</i> : “with.”	<i>jagui</i> : “while.”
<i>huez</i> : “on, in, inside.”	<i>po</i> : “the self.”

#### 4 Short texts

##### The Tower of Babel *Papela heni*

Nxomo jale, Cinguene to muhance mfeli. Jagui aceng' quempï hempoca, 'empï zacanïmeñ huezo Xina, compï caho gui nzo.

- (14) nxomo jale      cingue-ne      to-Ø      muha-nce      mfeli  
time    plentiful thing-collection UNWILL.persistently.STAT-3.SG language-have one  
*Long ago, he world had one language.*
- (15) jagui aceng-'    que-mpï      hempo-ca  
while east-ABS WILL.change.STAT-3.PL person-be.located  
*While they moved eastward,*
- (16) 'e-mpï      zaca-nĩ-meñ      huezo xina,  
UNWILL.partake.ACT-3.PL flat-place-discover in      Shinar  
*they found plains in Shinar,*
- (17) co-mpï      caho    gui nzo  
WILL.change.STAT.TRANS-3.PL home of    3.PL  
*and made it their home.*