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Preface

This is a distilled overview of the Lojban language.

Major concepts of the language are introduced by saying as much with as little as possible.

That is to say:

- For each concept the most crucial aspects are presented
- However, some details may be glossed over or simplified
- Some details are only mentioned or explained by their mere appearance in example sentences. Look carefully!

Finally, some aspects of Lojban are omitted entirely!

However incomplete - the goal of the following is to present, in the most immediate and expedient manner possible, a **conceptualization** of the language. Lojban is characterized in many ways from being "<https://mw.lojban.org>logical"<https://mw.lojban.org> and "<https://mw.lojban.org>unambiguous"<https://mw.lojban.org> to "<https://mw.lojban.org>culturally neutral"<https://mw.lojban.org>. The characterization that this text aims to reveal is that Lojban is both rational (it makes sense) and regular (it always works the same).

From this rationality and regularity comes a simplicity that makes Lojban easier to learn than anyone really ever expects it to be at first.

Tip:

If you take the following passages at reading speed you will likely find yourself lost in the forest very quickly. Each tiny section is a conceptual neutronium diamond. The slower you go, the better time you'll have at absorbing what it is trying to tell you.

In the end, if you're confused use that as inspiration to dig deeper and you'll be fine!

Special Thanks

A number of people have contributed to the creation of this document in various ways:

A general thanks goes to the entire IRC community, since it is the largest driver of Lojban's on-going promotion and evolution.

Thanks goes to `la selpa'i ku` who's article on ZAhO was the inspiration for the section on "[https://mw.lojban.org/Understanding Time](https://mw.lojban.org/Understanding%20Time)" <https://mw.lojban.org> and has made a number of corrections to errors in this document as well as helping along my own study of Lojban. And of course their many contributions to the language itself.

Additional thanks to those who have contributed minor corrections:

`la ilmen`, `la cirko`, `la kalmari`, `la gleki` and `la tsani`

Core Grammar

Parts of Language

In Language there are three major parts:

nouns: the things we talk about

verbs: tell us what the nouns do

sentences: says something using nouns and verbs

Types of Words

Lojban only has two kinds of words:

particles: short words that perform grammar functions

verbs: tell us what nouns do

What about Nouns?

What about nouns?!

Hold that thought.

Standard Form

Every sentence follows the form:

`i x1 VERB x2 x3 xN`

`i` separates multiple sentences. The first noun appears before the verb, additional nouns follow the verb.

Verbs Say What Nouns Do

Verbs tell us what the nouns do:

dunda: x1 donates gift x2 to beneficiary x3

[donor]	dunda	[gift]	[benefactor]
x1	verb	x2	x3

Simple Pro-nouns

Some particles act like pro-nouns:

mi - me, the speaker

do - you, the listener

ti - this, something nearby

Verbs and Nouns

Nouns can be put in the places and the verb says what they do:

mi	dunda	ti	do
[donor]		[gift]	[beneficiary]
x1	verb	x2	x3

"<https://mw.lojban.org>I give this to you."<https://mw.lojban.org>

Rearranging Nouns

Putting the nouns into different places changes what they do:

do*	dunda	ti	mi*
[donor]		[gift]	[beneficiary]
x1	verb	x2	x3

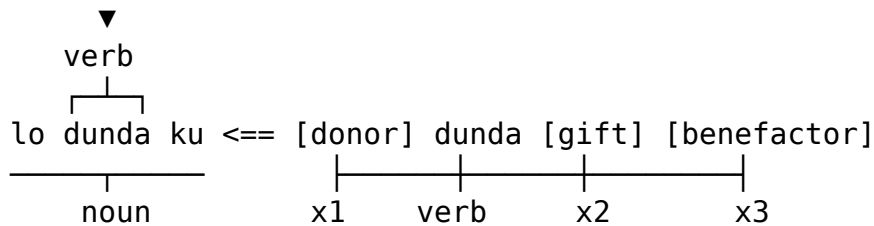
"<https://mw.lojban.org>You give this to me."<https://mw.lojban.org>

Converting Verbs to Nouns

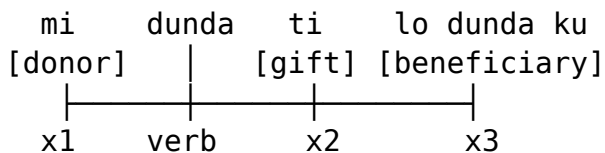
The particles lo and ku convert verbs to nouns from the x1 role:

Pattern: lo VERB ku => NOUN from x1

dunda: x1 donates gift x2 to beneficiary x3



lo dunda ku creates a noun-description which refers to "https://mw.lojban.orga donor" "https://mw.lojban.org



"https://mw.lojban.orgI gave this to a donor."https://mw.lojban.org

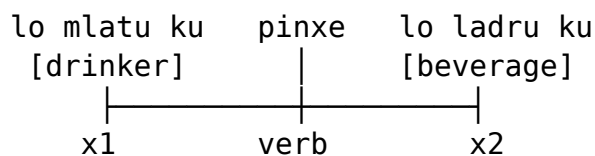
Complex Sentences

Using multiple verbs, complex sentences can be formed:

mlatu: x1 is a cat

pinxe: x1 drinks beverage x2

ladru: x1 is milk



"https://mw.lojban.orgA cat drinks some milk."https://mw.lojban.org

The Drama of Language

The previous example can be thought of as a kind of stage-play, directed by the Verb and starring the Nouns.

Breakfast Time, a play by Pinxe!

The Verb Director tells us what Roles are available and What Happens:

Pinxe says, "https://mw.lojban.orgx1 drinks beverage
x2" https://mw.lojban.org

Story Outline: [drinker] pinxe [beverage]

SCRIPT:

1. A Drinker drinks!

2. A Beverage is imbibed!

CAST:

The lead Drinker : lo mlatu ku (mlatu's x1 - "https://mw.lojban.orga cat"https://mw.lojban.org)

The supporting Beverage: lo ladru ku (ladru's x1 - "https://mw.lojban.orgsome milk"https://mw.lojban.org)

STAGE:

lo mlatu ku	pinxe	lo ladru ku	<= actors in the play
[drinker]		[beverage]	<= roles in the play

role1	director	role2	

"https://mw.lojban.orgA cat drinks some milk."https://mw.lojban.org

Rearranging Verbs

The particles of the SE family rearrange verbs:

Pattern: SE VERB => VERB'

The roles of the x1 and xN nouns, what they do, is swapped in the new modified verb:

klama: x1 travels to destination x2 from origin x3 via route x4 in vehicle x5

	X1	VERB	X2	X3	X4	
X5						
	traveler	klama	destination	origin	route	
vehicle						
x1◄►x2	destination	se klama	traveler	origin	route	
vehicle						
x1◄►x3	origin	te klama	destination	traveler	route	
vehicle						
x1◄►x4	route	ve klama	destination	origin	traveler	
vehicle						
x1◄►x5	vehicle	xe klama	destination	origin	route	
traveler						

se klama: to destination x1, traveler x2 goes from origin x3 via route x4 in vehicle x5
and so on..

SE In Action

These SE modified verbs are useful both in making nouns and as the main verb of sentences:

fraxu: x1 forgives x2 for x3

vecnu: x1 sells x2 to buyer x3 for price x4

dakfu: x1 is a knife

lo se fraxu ku te vecnu lo dakfu ku
[buyer] | [goods]
└──────────┴──────────┘

"<https://mw.lojban.org>The forgiven buys a knife."<https://mw.lojban.org>

friti: x1 offers x2 to x3

xamgu: x1 is beneficial to x2

ginka: x1 is an encampment of x2

lo se friti ku xamgu lo se ginka ku
[benefit] | [beneficiary]
└──────────┴──────────┘

"<https://mw.lojban.org>The offering is good for the
campers."<https://mw.lojban.org>

FA Labels

The FA family of particles allows for breaking the default noun ordering of sentences without modifying the verb:

Pattern: FA NOUN => NOUN'

fa : x1 Each particle from the FA family
fe : x2 simply specifies what the following
fi : x3 noun is doing in the sentence. In
fo : x4 other words which role from the verb
fu : x5 it fills.

This allows putting all of the nouns after the verb:

dunda fa mi ti do - "<https://mw.lojban.org>I donate this to
you"<https://mw.lojban.org>

Or skip some places entirely:

mi dunda fi do - "<https://mw.lojban.org>I donate to you"<https://mw.lojban.org>

Counting resumes from any FA particle:

fe ti dunda fa mi do - "<https://mw.lojban.org>I donate this to
you"<https://mw.lojban.org>

└──┴──┬──┐
x2 x1 x3

Cmavo and Brivla

Lojban has names for the two kinds of words that make up its dictionary:

"https://mw.lojban.orgcmavo" https://mw.lojban.org - mi, ti, do, lo, ku
- small word that performs a grammatical function
- categorized into families

"https://mw.lojban.orgbrivla" https://mw.lojban.org : dunda, klama, mlatu, ladru
- a word that produces a grammatical verb
- has a definition with 1 or more noun roles

Selbri Sumti and Bridi

It also has names for the different parts of speech that come to life in lojban sentences:

"https://mw.lojban.orgselbri" https://mw.lojban.org - the verb phrases central to sentences and nouns

"https://mw.lojban.orgsumti" https://mw.lojban.org - the noun phrases that take on semantic roles

"https://mw.lojban.orgbridi" https://mw.lojban.org - the combination of a selbri and its sumti

LEGEND:

- <> - selbri verb
- [] - sumti noun
- { } - bridid statement

Notice how selbri verb phrases appear throughout:

lo <se <jdice>> ku <nandu> lo <sonci> ku

Sumti nouns are placed around the root selbri:

[lo se jdice ku] nandu [lo sonci ku]

And the whole structure, a selbri with its sumti, is a bridid:

{lo se jdice ku nandu lo sonci ku}

Tanru

By combining multiple consecutive independent selbri, a tanru or compound-selbri verb can be created:

mi <<djica> <citka>> lo <plise> ku
"https://mw.lojban.orgI want-eat an apple." https://mw.lojban.org

Two brivla cidja and dunda come together below to create a compound-selbri inside a sumti:

Simple Selbri
┌───┐
└───┘

lo <<cidja> <dunda>> ku <prami> lo <prenu> ku
 └──────────┘
 Selbri Tanru

"https://mw.lojban.orgThe food-donor loves people."https://mw.lojban.org

But what is the definition of a composite-selbri or tanru?

Tanru are metaphorical, so their full meaning is ambiguous. However, basic structure of the definition is that of the **right most** selbri component:

gleki : x1 is happy about x2

cadzu : x1 walks on surface x2

gleki cadzu : x1 happy-walks on surface x2

What does "https://mw.lojban.orghappy-walk"https://mw.lojban.org really mean? Only the speaker knows for sure!

Conversation

Proper Nouns

Proper nouns are created by using la instead of lo:

mi prami lo rozgu ku
 ─ ─

"https://mw.lojban.orgI love roses."https://mw.lojban.org

mi prami la rozgu ku
 ─ ─

"https://mw.lojban.orgI love Rose."https://mw.lojban.org

Names are sumti just like any other.

Introductions

Introducing one's own self is done with the cmavo mi'e:

Pattern: mi'e NAME

mi'e la rozgu ku
 ─

"https://mw.lojban.orgI'm Rose."https://mw.lojban.org

Greetings

Greeting another person is done with the cmavo coi:

Pattern: coi SUMTI

coi la rozgu ku

"https://mw.lojban.orgHello, Rose."https://mw.lojban.org

coi lo tadni ku

"https://mw.lojban.orgHello, student"https://mw.lojban.org

coi do

"https://mw.lojban.orgHello, you."https://mw.lojban.org

Or just, "https://mw.lojban.orgcoi"https://mw.lojban.org

Farewells

Farewells are offered with the cmavo co'o:

Pattern: co'o SUMTI

co'o la rozgu ku

"https://mw.lojban.orgGoodbye, Rose."https://mw.lojban.org

Requesting Attention

Requests for attention are made with the cmavo ju'i:

Pattern: ju'i SUMTI

ju'i la rozgu ku

"https://mw.lojban.orgHey, Rose."https://mw.lojban.org

If multiple listeners paying attention you can address them individually with doi:

Pattern: doi SUMTI

doi la mirli ku ko mipri

"https://mw.lojban.orgKeep it secret, Moose"https://mw.lojban.org

Yes No Questions

"https://mw.lojban.orgYes or No"https://mw.lojban.org questions can be asked by using the xu cmavo:

i xu do citka lo plise ku

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgDid you eat an apple?"https://mw.lojban.org

Notice that even though the sentence is now a question rather than a statement the overall structure hasn't changed.

The xu is placed after the sentence separator i so as to apply to the whole sentence equally. By placing xu after a specific word emphasis can be placed on it:

i do citka lo xu plise ku
—

"https://mw.lojban.orgWas it an apple you
ate?"https://mw.lojban.org"https://mw.lojban.org

Yes No Answers

"https://mw.lojban.orgYes"https://mw.lojban.org and "https://mw.lojban.orgNo"https://mw.lojban.org answers can be supplied with the following replies:

In the affirmative, "https://mw.lojban.orggo'i"https://mw.lojban.org is used:

Q: xu do citka lo plise ku

A: go'i
—

The denial is supplied by: na go'i

Sumti Questions

Sumti specific questions can be asked by using the ma cmavo in place of the sumti in question.

do citka ma
—

"https://mw.lojban.orgWhat did you eat?"https://mw.lojban.org

ma catra ma
— —

"https://mw.lojban.orgWho killed who?"https://mw.lojban.org

To answer sumti questions simply state what fills the missing place:

lo plise ku

Or restate the question with the places filled in:

do catra mi

Selbri Questions

Selbri specific questions can be asked by using the mo cmavo in place of the selbri in question.

mo fa mi do ti

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgWhat are we doing with this?"https://mw.lojban.org

do mo

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgYou are/doing what?"https://mw.lojban.org

do mo fengu mi

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgWhat kind of angry are you at me?"https://mw.lojban.org

Attitude Questions

A special kind of question using the cmavo pei asks the listener to share their feelings or disposition about some topic:

i pei mi cliva

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgHow do you feel about me leaving?"https://mw.lojban.org

"https://mw.lojban.orgpei"https://mw.lojban.org is another word which can direct its emphasis by way of right-attachment:

i mi jukpa lo jipci ku pei

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgHow do you feel that its chicken that I cook.

Attitude Cmavo

In addition to making an explicit statement about one's self, an answer to pei can be given with cmavo from the UI Family of "https://mw.lojban.orgattitudinals"https://mw.lojban.org.

ui - "https://mw.lojban.orgI'm happy"https://mw.lojban.org

a'o - "https://mw.lojban.orgI hope"https://mw.lojban.org

i'e - "https://mw.lojban.orgI approve"https://mw.lojban.org

There are many attitudinals and they all express, in one way or another some aspect of the speaker's disposition about the speech the attitudinal is appears in.

i ui do prami mi

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgYou love me, and I'm happy about
it."https://mw.lojban.org

i a'o do snada

"https://mw.lojban.orgI'm hopeful you succeed."https://mw.lojban.org

Like many other cmavo, UI attitudinals give emphasis to the part of speech they attach to:

do pinxe lo birje ku e'u

"https://mw.lojban.orgI suggest beer to be what you
drink."https://mw.lojban.org

Attitude Ranges

Attitudinals have an inherent "https://mw.lojban.orgrange"https://mw.lojban.org or
"https://mw.lojban.orgintensity spectrum"https://mw.lojban.org which can be altered from the
default.

Without any modifier you get the default attitude. However, nai and other cmavo can affect the
sense of the UI cmavo:

ui cai - "https://mw.lojban.orgI'm happy as
possible"https://mw.lojban.org
ui sai - "https://mw.lojban.orgI'm very happy"https://mw.lojban.org
ui - "https://mw.lojban.orgI'm happy"https://mw.lojban.org
ui ru'e - "https://mw.lojban.orgI'm kinda/sorta
happy"https://mw.lojban.org
ui cu'i - "https://mw.lojban.orgI'm neutral in my
happiness"https://mw.lojban.org
ui nai - "https://mw.lojban.orgI'm unhappy"https://mw.lojban.org
ui nai sai - "https://mw.lojban.orgI'm very unhappy"https://mw.lojban.org

and so on...

Evidential Cmavo

A sub-family of the attitudinals, the UI2 Evidentials, express an epistemological claim. In other
words, how the speaker came to know or state whatever it is they are saying:

i ti'e do nelci mi

"https://mw.lojban.orgI hear rumored that you like me."https://mw.lojban.org

i pe'i lo plise ku xamgu

"https://mw.lojban.orgIt is my opinion that apples are
beneficial."https://mw.lojban.org

i za'a do mutce xagji

"https://mw.lojban.orgI observe that you are very hungry."https://mw.lojban.org

i ba'a la rozgu ku zvati lo zdani ku

"https://mw.lojban.orgI expect Rose is at the house."https://mw.lojban.org

Discursive Cmavo

Another sub-family of the attitudinals, the UI3

"https://mw.lojban.orgdiscursives"https://mw.lojban.org express the point or purpose of a part of or a whole statement.

i do citka lo titla ku po'o

"https://mw.lojban.orgYou only eat sweets."https://mw.lojban.org

i ji'a mi nitcu lo jdini ku

"https://mw.lojban.orgAlso, I need money."https://mw.lojban.org

i si'a mi terpa lo jukni ku

"https://mw.lojban.orgSimilarly, I'm afraid of spiders."https://mw.lojban.org

i ku'i lo jenmi ku daspo

"https://mw.lojban.orgHowever, armys are destructive."https://mw.lojban.org

Humor

Having a sense of humor is key to any conversation:

Sarcasm:

i xo'o lo se platu ku banli

"https://mw.lojban.orgOh jeeze, great plan."https://mw.lojban.org

i xo'o nai lo skaci ku melbi

"https://mw.lojban.orgSeriously, that skirt is beautiful."https://mw.lojban.org

Levity:

i zo'o se ckaji do

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgHo! Typical you."https://mw.lojban.org

i zo'o nai mi nelci lo cutci

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgI do like these shoes..."https://mw.lojban.org

Amusement:

i u'i xu do mulno

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgHaha, are you done yet?"https://mw.lojban.org

i u'i nai xu do mulno

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgYea.. are you done yet?"https://mw.lojban.org

Changing the Subject

If things get tense you can always change the subject with ta'o:

i ta'o do klama ma

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgBy the way, where are you going?"https://mw.lojban.org

You can also return to a previous topic by adding nai:

i ta'o nai mi'o casnu ma

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgReturning, what were we discussing?"https://mw.lojban.org

Requests and Commands

Ultimately if things go completely sour you may have to request your interlocutor to leave:

i e'o do cliva

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgPlease, you leave."https://mw.lojban.org

Or if they have been particularly offensive you might demand it!

i ko cliva

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgI implore you to leave."https://mw.lojban.org

Any command is possible by using
"https://mw.lojban.orgko"https://mw.lojban.org in place of the normal
"https://mw.lojban.orgdo"https://mw.lojban.org.

Sumti Manipulation

Saying "https://mw.lojban.organd"https://mw.lojban.org and "https://mw.lojban.orgor"https://mw.lojban.org

To make statements about different sumti at the same time the connective cmavo je can be used:

Pattern: SUMTI je SUMTI => SUMTI'

i mi nelci [[lo plise ku] je [lo perli ku]]

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgI like apples and pears."https://mw.lojban.org

Similarly, ja can be used for "https://mw.lojban.orgor"https://mw.lojban.org:

i ko cuxna [[lo dakfu ku] ja [lo mruli ku]]

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgPick the knife or the spear"https://mw.lojban.org

Grouping

To group multiple sumti together to say that they do something together, jo'u can be used:

Pattern: SUMTI jo'u SUMTI => SUMTI'

i [[mi] jo'u [do]] bevri lo pipno

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgYou and I carry the piano"https://mw.lojban.org

i mi se catra [[lo fagri ku] jo'u [lo bisli ku]]

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgI was killed by fire and ice."https://mw.lojban.org

Ownership

To associate one sumti with another by way of ownership the cmavo po is used:

Pattern: SUMTI po SUMTI => SUMTI'

i [[lo karce ku] po [mi]] spofu

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgMy car is broken."https://mw.lojban.org

i ko cpacu [[lo ckiku ku] po [do]]

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgGo get your keys."https://mw.lojban.org

Association

For a weaker association than ownership you can use pe:

Pattern: SUMTI pe SUMTI => SUMTI'

i mi vasxu [[lo vacri ku] pe [do]]

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgI'm breathing your air."https://mw.lojban.org

i ko zutse [[lo stizu ku] pe [mi]]

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgSit in my chair."https://mw.lojban.org

Pluralities

To specify how many of a sumti there are, a number can be placed before the sumti:

Pattern: PA SUMTI => SUMTI'

Numbers:

no	pa	re	ci	vo	mu	xa	ze	bi	so
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

i mi viska [mu [lo bakni ku]]

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgI see 5 cows."https://mw.lojban.org

i mi se raktu [so so [lo nabmi ku]]

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgI am troubled by 99 problems."https://mw.lojban.org

Subjective Numbers

Other kinds of "https://mw.lojban.orgsubjective numbers"https://mw.lojban.org exist too which are pretty handy:

i xu do citka [du'e [lo plise ku]]

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgDid you eat too many apples?"https://mw.lojban.org

so'u lo plise ku - "https://mw.lojban.orga few
apples"https://mw.lojban.org

so'o lo plise ku - "https://mw.lojban.orgseveral
apples"https://mw.lojban.org

so'i lo plise ku - "https://mw.lojban.orgmany
apples"https://mw.lojban.org

so'e lo plise ku - "https://mw.lojban.orgmost of the
apples"https://mw.lojban.org

ro lo plise ku - "https://mw.lojban.orgall the
apples"https://mw.lojban.org

rau lo plise ku - "https://mw.lojban.orgenough
apples"https://mw.lojban.org

mo'a lo plise ku - "https://mw.lojban.orgnot enough

apples"https://mw.lojban.org
da'a ci lo plise ku - "https://mw.lojban.orgall but three
apples"https://mw.lojban.org

Selbri Manipulation

Negation and Affirmation

Most selbri manipulation is performed via prefix cmavo. For example negation is done with na:

Pattern: NA SELBRI => SELBRI'

i mi <na <xagji>>
—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI'm not hungry"https://mw.lojban.org

On the flip-side you can say something is certain:

i mi <ja'a <xagji>>
—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI am definitely hungry"https://mw.lojban.org

Scaling Relevance

Other cmavo have related effects which specify how strongly the selbri is applied:

i mi <no'e <xagji>>
—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI'm not really that hungry."https://mw.lojban.org

i mi <to'e <xagji>>
—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI'm full!"https://mw.lojban.org

Saying "https://mw.lojban.organd"https://mw.lojban.org and "https://mw.lojban.orgor"https://mw.lojban.org

Similarly to sumti, selbri can be joined with the very same connective words:

i mi <<tatpi> je <xagji>>
—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI'm tired and hungry"https://mw.lojban.org

i mi'o e'u <<citka> ja <cliva>>.
—

"https://mw.lojban.orgWe should eat or leave."https://mw.lojban.org

Tense

While Lojban bridi don't have any implicit tense, selbri can be modified to have such tense:

mi <pu <viska>> do

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI saw you."https://mw.lojban.org

mi <ca <viska>> do

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI see you."https://mw.lojban.org

mi <ba <viska>> do

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI will see you."https://mw.lojban.org

Temporal Distance

In addition to direction, temporal distance can also be provided:

mi <pu zi <viska>> do

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI just saw you!"https://mw.lojban.org

mi <pu za <viska>> do

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI saw you a while ago."https://mw.lojban.org

mi <pu zu <viska>> do

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgIt has been a long while since I've seen you."https://mw.lojban.org

Proximity

Selbri can also be modified in terms of spatial proximity:

mi <vi <viska>> do

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI saw you right here!"https://mw.lojban.org

mi <va <viska>> do

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI saw you nearby."https://mw.lojban.org

mi <vu <viska>> do

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI saw you elsewhere."https://mw.lojban.org

Preloading

Selbri can be "https://mw.lojban.orgpre-injected"https://mw.lojban.org with a sumti, removing a sumti place from the definition, with the be cmavo:

Pattern: SELBRI be SUMTI => SELBRI'

dunda : x1 donates gift x2 to beneficiary x3

dunda be lo plise ku : x1 donates apples to beneficiary x2

By default be injects a sumti into the x2 place, but the FA family can be used to specify which place should be filled:

vecnu be fi lo jecta ku : x1 sells x2 to the state

Multiple sumti places may be filled, separated by bei:

vecnu be lo xarci ku bei lo jecta ku : x1 sells weapons to the state

Preloaded Sumti

Note that be forms a new selbri even though it incorporates a sumti:

<<vecnu> be [lo xarci ku]> = x1 sells weapons to x2
base selbri injected sumti

This is a little strange when used as the main verb of a sentence:

(who) (sells guns) (the state)
ma <vecnu be lo xarci ku> lo jecta ku
[seller] [buyer]

lo xarci ku could just have been provided as x2 to a normal vecnu. The be appears unnessecary. However, this is very useful for creating interesting sumti!

mi tavla [lo <<vecnu> be [lo xarci ku]> ku]
"https://mw.lojban.orgI talk to the seller of weapons.

ko na lebna [lo <<sidbo> be fi [mi]> ku]
"https://mw.lojban.orgDon't you take ideas of mine."https://mw.lojban.org

This is far more explicit than using pe or po.

Subordination

Facts

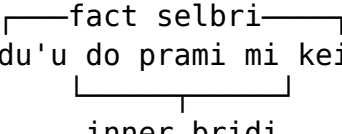
Similar to the transformation of selbri into sumti the same can be done for whole bridi into selbri

with the help of du'u and kei:

Pattern: du'u BRIDI kei => SELBRI

The definition of such a selbri is something like:

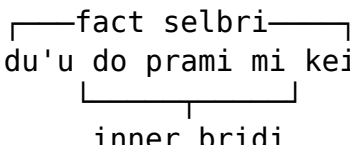
x1 is the fact represented by the inner bridi


du'u do prami mi kei = x1 is the fact that: you love me
inner bridi

Adding lo and ku, the selbri is transformed into a sumti allowing one to talk about the fact inside:

[lo <du'u {do prami mi} kei> ku] = "https://mw.lojban.orgthe fact that you love me"https://mw.lojban.org

These nested fact sumti can be used as any other:


mi djuno [lo du'u do prami mi kei ku]
inner bridi

"https://mw.lojban.orgI know that you love me."https://mw.lojban.org

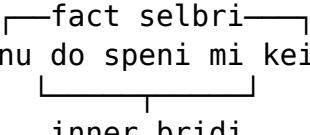
Events

Where du'u gets at the truth of a matter, nu can emphasize the time and location in which a bridi takes place:

Pattern: nu BRIDI kei => SELBRI

The definition of such a selbri is something like:

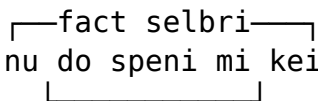
x1 is the event described by the inner Bridi


nu do speni mi kei = x1 is the event of: you are married to me
inner bridi

Just like with du'u these nu selbri can be turned into sumti with lo and ku:

[lo <nu {do speni mi} kei> ku] = "https://mw.lojban.orgthe event of our marriage"https://mw.lojban.org

And can be incorporated into larger sentences:


mi djica [lo nu do speni mi kei ku]
inner bridi

"<https://mw.lojban.org>I desire our marriage."<https://mw.lojban.org>

A third word, *ka* can also create a selbri from a bridi much like *du* 'u and *nu*:

The bridi must contain at least one *ce' u* sumti:

The *ce'u* has no meaning of its own. The *selbri* that receives the property specifies what it refers to. In this case, it is *cnici* taking the property as its *x2*.

x1 is orderly/neat/ordered in property x2

"https://mw.lojban.orgI am orderly in the eating of cookies."https://mw.lojban.org

"<https://mw.lojban.org>You feel the emotion of Mother being important to you."<https://mw.lojban.org>

"<https://mw.lojban.org>You are more than me in the eating of

cookies."https://mw.lojban.org

"https://mw.lojban.orgYou eat more cookies than me."https://mw.lojban.org

Numerous property relations exist within the Lojban lexicon.

Relative Phrases

Additional information about a sumti can be provided by attaching a bridi to it with noi:

Pattern: SUMTI noi BRIDI ku'o => SUMTI'

Similarly to the properties created with ka, noi bridi have a stand-in word ke'a:

ko penmi la rozgu ku noi mi prami ke'a ku'o
└──────────┘
inner bridi

Meet Rose, who I love.

The noi bridi is attached to la rozgu ku and so it is her to whom ke'a refers to.

If the information is not merely incidental but necessary to discern which thing is being talked about poi can be used instead:

ko penmi lo bruna ku poi mi prami ke'a ku'o
└──────────┘
inner bridi

Meet the brother I love (compared to whichever I don't.)

Understanding Time

The basic tenses pu, ca and ba were covered previously but there is a bit more to say about time.

Basic Tenses

The tense for stating something is currently happening is ca:

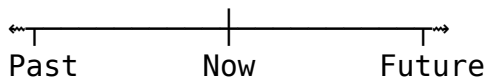
mi ca citka

—
"https://mw.lojban.orgI am currently eating."https://mw.lojban.org

Another way of stating this (which will be helpful later) is:

"https://mw.lojban.orgThe present coincides with my eating."https://mw.lojban.org

citka



How about the other tenses?

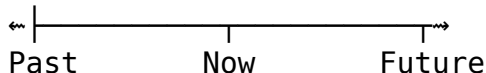
mi pu pensi

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI was thinking."https://mw.lojban.org

"https://mw.lojban.orgThe past coincides with my thinking."https://mw.lojban.org

pensi



do ba jimpe

—

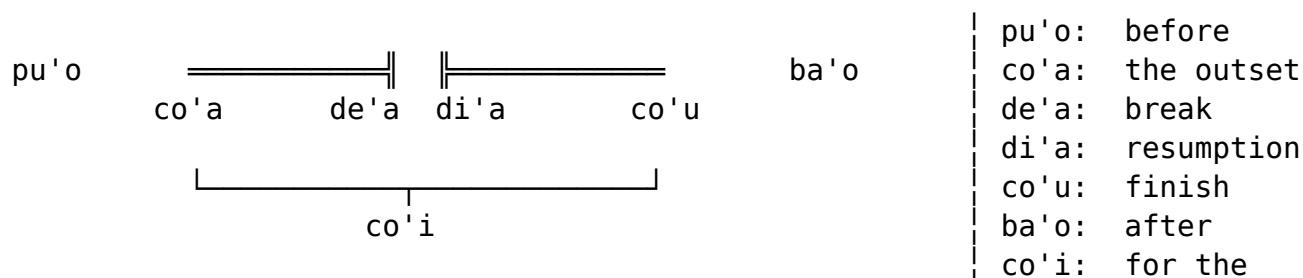
"https://mw.lojban.orgYou will understand."https://mw.lojban.org

"https://mw.lojban.orgThe future coincides with your understanding."https://mw.lojban.org



Event Contours

All events have a "https://mw.lojban.orgtemporal extent"https://mw.lojban.org or lifetime. It is often useful to describe the various events "https://mw.lojban.orgwithin"https://mw.lojban.org an event. The ZAhO family of tenses can be used for accessing them:



duration

Like basic tenses, they modify a selbri to create a new one:

Pattern: ZAhO SELBRI => SELBRI

mi <co'a <citka>> lo plise ku

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI'm starting to eat an apple."https://mw.lojban.org

mi pacna lo nu <co'u <carvi>> kei ku

—

"https://mw.lojban.orgI wish for it to finish raining."https://mw.lojban.org

ko <de'a <tadni>>

"https://mw.lojban.orgTake a break from studying."https://mw.lojban.org

mi <pu'o <sipna>>

"https://mw.lojban.orgIts before my bedtime."https://mw.lojban.org

mi <ba'o <prami>> do

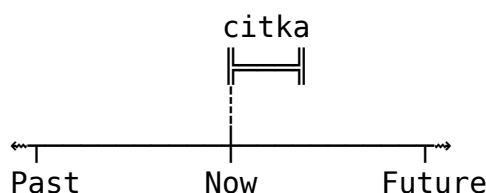
"https://mw.lojban.orgMy loving you has
passed."https://mw.lojban.org"https://mw.lojban.org

Tensed Contours

If no basic tense is provided, ca or present-tense is assumed:

mi <ca <co'a <citka>> lo plise ku

"https://mw.lojban.orgI'm starting to eat an apple"https://mw.lojban.org
"https://mw.lojban.orgThe present coincides with the start of my apple
eating."https://mw.lojban.org



But how do the ZAhO contours interact with different CA tenses?

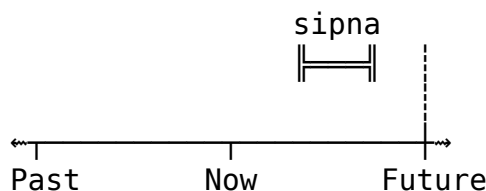
mi <pu <pu'o <sipna>>>

"https://mw.lojban.orgIt was before my bedtime."https://mw.lojban.org
"https://mw.lojban.orgThe past coincides with the runup to my
bedtime."https://mw.lojban.org



mi <ba <ba'o <prami>>> do

"https://mw.lojban.orgMy loving you will have passed."https://mw.lojban.org
"https://mw.lojban.orgThe future coincides with the aftermath of our
love."https://mw.lojban.org



Prepositions

Additional sumti places can be added to a bridi by importing them with `fi'o`:

Pattern: `fi'o SELBRI SUMTI => SUMTI`

The x1 place of the specified selbri is added to the bridi and filled with the specified sumti:

┌──────────fi'o clause──────────┐
mi citka lo titnanba ku fi'o <jukpa> [la rozgu ku]
"https://mw.lojban.orgI'm eating the cookies baked by
Rose"https://mw.lojban.org

Stage Additions

This can be understood in terms of the stage-play metaphor used before. `fi'o` terms act as assistant directors adding additional roles:

STAGE:

mi	citka	lo	titnanba	ku	fi'o	jukpa	la	rozgu	ku	<= actors
in the play										
[eater]			[meal]					[cook]		<= roles
in the play										
role1	director		role2		asst. director			jukpa-role		

SE Prepositions

Any selbri is compatible and that includes ones modified by SE:

lo cinfo ku kalte fi'o se pilno lo kanla ku
"https://mw.lojban.orgThe lion hunts with its eyes."https://mw.lojban.org

lo kalte ku cizda'u fi'o te jvinu lo se citka ku
"https://mw.lojban.orgThe hunter is a monster from the perspective of the meal."https://mw.lojban.org

Spatial Prepositions

Some useful selbri for prepositions stating where the bridi takes place:

selbri	gloss
se zvati	located at
se jibni	located near
se nenri	located in
te ragve	across from

se gapru	above
se cpana	ontop of
se cnita	underneath
se sruri	surrounding

Temporal Prepositions

A few selbri useful for prepositions denoting when a bridi takes place:

selbri	gloss
tcika	at time
detri	on date
balvi	before
cabna	during
purci	after

Causal Prepositions

Some selbri useful for propositions explaining how a bridi came about:

selbri	gloss
mukti	motivated by
rinka	caused by
krinu	justified by
jalge	with result

BAI Prepositions

A small number of cmavo in the BAI family can be used for specifying useful prepositions as a shortcut:

Pattern: BAI SUMTI => SUMTI

Just like fi'o prepositions each cmavo from the BAI family encodes a particular sumti place:

selbri	BAI	gloss
mukti	mu'i	motivated by
rinka	ri'a	caused by
krinu	ki'u	justified by
jalge	ja'e	with result
vanbi	va'o	under conditions
gasnu	gau	performed by
tadji	ta'i	with approach
catni	ca'i	by authority

cusku		cu'u		said by
se pilno		sepi'o		using tool

These can result in slightly more terse prepositional clauses:

			BAI clause	
lo cinfo ku kalte	sepi'o	[lo kanla ku]		

"<https://mw.lojban.org>The lion hunts with its eyes."<https://mw.lojban.org>