

Lanfali Reference Grammar

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Background and Worldbuilding

((Inspiration: I originally wanted to create a homebrew Dungeons & Dragons race and make a conlang for them. D&D does not elaborate much on the culture of “evil” races like demons, so I wanted to create some interesting lore for them, but not completely flip the tropes and make them good, so in D&D terms they’d probably still be Lawful Neutral/Evil.))

Lanfali is the language spoken in the fictional city-state of Lanfa, which is home to a race of demons.

History: In the far far past, many races walked the earth, but several hundred years ago, a apocalypse descended onto the world. We believe this apocalypse was caused by foolish mortal sorcerers meddling in the realms of the arcane.

Some races escaped to other worlds, but the humans could not find a way to escape. As a last resort, human sorcerers around the world tried to create some kind of soul vessel that would help them survive the apocalypse. They succeeded in creating artificial bodies that can withstand the maddening psychic shrieks from the sky, drink the poisoned waters of the earth, and withstand the scorching heat of volcanos, but they didn’t achieve their goal of mass-producing these vessels before their time was up. All in all, only 200 bodies were created.

The rich and powerful fought and bid furiously for these vessels, but in the end, most of the vessels were claimed by the most powerful sorcerers. What followed was a time of madness. All those without soul vessels died off, the survivors were mostly raving mad sorcerers who roamed the scorched surface of the earth in their new physically immortal forms, seeking penitence for what they had done.

However, one rational-minded group of survivors believed they could rebuild society. We know that this group put all their efforts into salvaging and recording the remnants of knowledge from the old world. Then they moved into an underground cave, and sealed themselves off from the outside world. They became the founders of the city of Lanfa, and prospered while the other survivors languished.

Years later, it became evident that their artificial bodies were not as immortal as they were designed to be. The founders created a ritual of childbirth, so they could continue their society. However, their children were degenerate, and only had a shadow of their parents’ magical abilities. In time, the Lanfans forgot the history of their origins, and the apocalypse faded into myth. They now believe that their race, like the other races, were created in the first age, and they are the only ones meant to inherit this world. Why else would it be so perfectly suited for them?

But as the surface cools and heals, the races of the old world are beginning to come out of hiding and return to their homeland. For now there is no conflict, as the surface races cannot breach the caverns that hide the underground city, but one day, a great war may erupt and cause the fall of Lanfa.

Biology: Demons superficially resemble humans, but they have skin colour ranging from red to grey to black, cloven hooves, clawed hands, and pointed tails. Only sorcerers have horns on their heads. They can withstand incredible heat. Their blood looks like lava and quickly cools outside the body.

Internally, their body looks nothing like a human's body. Essentially they're just complex flesh golems animated by ancient magic. They are genderless, and incapable of natural reproduction, instead they reproduce artificially. Their lifespan is about twice a human's lifespan.

Diet: Demons eat highly processed organics like coal, chalk, and petroleum. Living plants and animals are considered low quality food, and they only recently invented the processing techniques necessary to eat them.

Their food culture is not as varied as ours, but they still put effort into preparing their food for texture and visual aesthetics. They like to set their food on fire before eating it.

Technology level: Very early industrial. Their immunity to heat means they can utilize extremely high temperatures produced by volcanism, which has allowed them to advance quickly in metalworking, even experiment with creating early rubbers and plastics.

The hostile, mutant animals of their world are oddly resistant to domestication. This, combined with the lack of living things in their diet, means their animal industry is very underdeveloped. They have plant-based or mineral-based substitutes for many animal-based products (fibers, skins, soap, dyes) we have.

Magic: Demons can only cast illusions, do mind control, mind reading, etc. Nothing that can physically affect the real world. Their illusions work on other races and animals. Most individuals have weak powers, a few have strong enough magic to be qualified as a sorcerer.

Sorcerers tend to enjoy elevated status in Lanfa society. There is a pervasive belief that the magically inclined are gifted at seeing the truth in all manners of things, so sorcerers tend to hold civil service and judicial positions, even though those professions are not inherently magical.

As for those who prefer to not enter civil service, sorcerers can also be fantastic entertainers, using their illusions to create dazzling displays. They can also tame and handle dangerous animals with their magic.

Culture and Beliefs: Remnants of ancient history from before the apocalypse remain in their myths. Illusion magic greatly affects their philosophy about the nature of reality, so their philosophy tends toward the "everything is an illusion nothing is real" type.

Outsiders have speculated much about why Lanfan people are so argumentative. Some say it's because their illusion magic causes them to be distrustful of their senses. Some say all the debating is an outlet for the aggression they can't express physically due to their pacifist culture.

Others hypothesize that their minds are like machines, and they need to constantly exercise it to keep it from degrading.

Regardless of the reason, argument and debate is central to Lanfan culture. Important business and government duties are conducted through intense month-long debates. Their social structure is mind boggling complex and bureaucratic, and yet, somehow this doesn't impede their society from functioning and staying relatively peaceful, if somewhat oppressive.

In everyday business, they're a little more casual, but they still engage in barter and arguments that would thoroughly confuse an outsider. From childhood, they're taught the full details of oral discourse.

Also, they always keep track of favours and debts, and don't really have a concept of gifts. They believe being overly generous is foolish, and maintaining balanced social relationships is key to unity.

Religion: Lanfa's main religion is polytheistic. Each house typically has an associated patron god and a whole host of household deities. Lanfans worship through holidays and celebrations, but also through arguing why their patron god is great.

The universe is described as a great waterfall. Many Lanfans believe in a soul, they believe that while the body is bound to follow the flow of time, as if endlessly falling down, the soul is free to wander.

They believe gods and spirits travel along the same stream of time with them. The future is the domain of gods and souls of dead heroes, forging ahead and protecting us, while the past houses malevolent gods constantly trying to catch up to the present.

Societal Structure: Lanfa has a population of ~100,000. Surrounding settlements have a populations from enclaves less than a dozen in number up to villages of a couple hundred.

Lanfa has an highly centralized government that controls nearly all of the city's institutions. Their society is split into many *lawuv*, which may be translated as "houses" in the institutional sense, but they can function like anything from worker's guilds, to academic/art societies, to frat houses. Commercial and living places are integrated in houses. A Lanfa citizen can associate with multiple houses, but they probably have a primary house where they work and live. By law, one can join whatever houses they'd like, but the more prestigious ones are quite hard to get into. It's common for powerful and important people in society to start their own house.

Philosophy: Lanfan culture actually cares a lot about maintaining social order. They consider sociology to be a type of philosophy, and have a lot of philosophers thinking about ways to get a lot of people to live together in relative peace. As a result, they have surprisingly advanced theories about how societies function.

Social experimentation is very mundane to Lanfans, they don't bat an eyelid at it unless it outright harms somebody, so Lanfa has a lot of laws that seem convoluted and downright

tyrannical to outsiders, but these laws are actually social experiments. The upper class is particularly interested in philosophy, so prestigious upper-class houses are like experimental societies, they often have eclectic rules their members must live by. Many of the small settlements surrounding Lanfa were settled by the really strange houses who wanted to leave the city's restraints.

Childbirth and Family: In Lanfa, all reproduction and child-raising are the duty of one house, with the parents also acting as educators. Practices in other settlements vary, though there is usually a lot of community support for raising children.

To qualify for the job of a parent, one must be both well-educated and physically tough. The role is fairly esteemed and well-respected by all of society. There are holidays where children visit their birth parent.

Demons cannot have children naturally, instead they must perform a ritual, after which they get pregnant and give birth, usually in threes or fours. Childbirth leaves a vertical scar from the chest down to the abdomen. The details of this ritual is a closely guarded secret, what we know is that one essential ingredient can only be harvested from the surface.

The parent does not genetically influence the child, but how the ritual is performed can affect the offspring's physical appearance and personality. Different towns have their own variant of the ritual. "Cold towns" are settlements that do not have a ritual at all, and rely on immigrants to maintain their population. They tend to last only a few generations.

Historically, warring settlements have tried to exterminate others by barring their knowledge of the ritual or access to the ritual materials. Or they captured other villages and forced them to bear children. In the present day, having unsanctioned children is illegal in Lanfa and usually results in exile for the parent and children.

Clothing: Showing the abdomen is taboo. The most basic clothing is a cloth wrapped around the abdomen and draped down past the knees. Clothes are most commonly made from plant fibre and dyed with mineral dye. Jewelry is valued decoration.

War and Combat: Lanfan does not have a strong military force due to how isolated it is. Generally, they are not good at direct combat, and prefer other means such as subterfuge. If Lanfa is trying to stamp out a neighbouring village, they wouldn't send in an army. Instead, they might sabotage the surrounding areas to cause a flood, or poison the food exported to the village, or send a sorcerer to infiltrate the village, then cast illusions to drive everyone to insanity.

Relations with other races: As the surface of the planet cools down, races from other planes, such as humans, elves, and halflings, have reappeared to explore and settle the surface. Lanfans call them the "surface people" and have made occasional contact to trade. Thanks to their giftedness with language, Lanfans learn languages quickly and can easily communicate

with other races. Among the surface races, demons have a reputation of being deceitful, tricky, and have a tendency to twist words. But of course that is just their way of life.

Current Events / Sources of conflict:

1: Industrialization and resource depletion

Lanfa is growing and industrializing, since their primary food source is non-renewable they've had to expand their mining operations and create new food sources. The use of coal and oil for industry is also competing with its use as food.

2. Splintering

Many of the small settlements surrounding Lanfa were originally houses in Lanfa who wanted to leave the city, sometimes fueled by political or ideological reasons. Throughout history, Lanfa has subjugated or stamped out any settlements that grows too large and threaten its power.

3. Class conflict

There are ideological differences between classes. The lower classes are less interested in social experimentation - especially because their participation are usually less voluntary. The city is in a powerful but precarious position, and the governing class struggles to keep it united and operating smoothly.

Phonology and Phonotactics

Phonemes are listed in romanized forms, with IPA symbols in parenthesis, if it differs. All examples will be in the romanized form.

Consonants:

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Labiovelar	Velar	Glottal
Stop	p		t					k k ^w	
Nasal	m			n					
Tap/Flap			r (ɾ)						
Fricative		f v		s z	sh (ʃ) zh(ʒ)				h h ^w
Affricate				ts dz					
Approximant						j	w		
Lateral Approximant				l					

Vowels:

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i	eu (i)	u
Mid	e		o
Open			ɑ

Diphthongs: ai, ao, ei, iu, oi, ui

Syllable Structure: (C)(N)V(N)(C) / (C)S(C)

C: all consonants

V: all vowels

N: h, w, y, m, n, r, l (sonorants)

S: m, n, r, l (syllabic consonants)

Syllable combining rules

The following vowel clusters are illegal:

any vowel + itself
 a + any vowel
 any vowel + i
 e + o
 eu + u
 eu + o
 u + o
 cluster with any diphthong

When joining two morphemes that would form illegal vowel clusters, we drop one of the vowels, typically we drop the second vowel:

kwera + ov => kwerav

Exceptions are clusters ending with diphthongs, and clusters starting with u or e. Then we drop the first vowel.

ko + ein => kein
 evave + ov => evavov

Finally there are some morphemes denoted with the vowel in parenthesis, such as -(i)s. In that case, always drop the vowel in parens when applicable.

rowu + (i)s => rowu

Basic Sentences

Lanfali is nominative-accusative, pro-drop, and head marking.

The subject and object are marked by prefixes on the verbs according to person and number. Verb prefixes are always ordered by subject, then object. It's common for verbs to have both intransitive and transitive meanings with the same form, only being distinguished by the prefixes.

Verb case marking	1s	2s	3s	1p	2p	3p
Subject	a-	i-	mo-	pa-	pi-	na-
Object	n-	z-	r-	nen-	zen-	lu-

Lanfali has free word order. For straightforward declarative statements, the default is SOV. More on what word order signifies later.

Sentence with just an actor:

alalei

a- lalei
SUB.1s-sleep
I-sleep
I sleep.

Sentence with actor and undergoer:

lawin iluhok

lawin i- lu- hok
house SUB.2s-OBJ.3s-make
house you-it-make
You build the house.

Double marking the nouns is only needed for ambiguous sentences. For example, in sentences where the subject and object are both in the third person singular, the subject and object are marked. However pronouns never receive nominative or accusative markings.

Nominative	-(a)m
Accusative	-(i)s

Apoam Karuzis morkote

Apo-am Karuzi-s mo-r-kote

Apo-NOM Karuzi-ACC SUB.3s-OBJ.3s-hit

Apo Karuzi he-him-hit

Apo hits Karuzi.

Pronouns

Lanfali has 6 pronouns, they are purely distinguished by person and number. The pronouns are typically dropped from a sentence unless they're part of a larger noun phrase.

	Singular	Plural
1st	to	tan
2nd	mre	mren
3rd	lis	lisan

Number

Lanfali has singular and plural number.

The plural suffix is *-(o)v* for most nouns:

mas	river
masov	rivers

The plural suffix *-an* is used instead for some animate nouns. For example, it can still be seen in the plural pronouns. It is used in the plural form of words for people and body parts. Some words are homonyms that use different plural suffixes:

piva	tooth/arrowhead
pivan	teeth
pivav	arrowheads

Perhaps Lanfali once had animate/inanimate classes. However the distinction is not productive anymore. So more recently coined words all use *-ov* even if they describe people.

sor	person
soran	people

korasor	fighter
korasorov	fighters

-an is still productive as an associative plural. When attached to names it means “X and company”

Apoan	Apo and his associates
--------------	------------------------

For generic statements about all instances of a noun, you need the plural, and also the auxiliary *eiz* in front to encompass all members.

sor	person
eiz soran	all people, mankind

Mass Nouns

Mass nouns are treated as plural. The category of mass nouns typically include words for liquids, or things that are composed of individual objects. For example, the word for “crowd / herd” is a mass noun:

amez narowuyi

amez na- rowu- yi
 crowd SUB.3PL-big- PRES
 crowd they-big now
 The crowd is big.

Because they are plural, *eiz* appears in front of mass nouns in generic statements about the noun.

(Generic + mass noun)

eiz leili namenui

eiz leili na- menui
 GENER water SUB.3PL-blue
 all water they-blue
 Water is blue.

The prefix *kei-* can change the meaning of a mass noun into a count noun, semantically, it divides the mass noun into categories with distinguishing properties, the meaning is approximately “kinds of NOUN”:

keileiliov

kei- leili-ov
 TYPE-water-PL
 type-waters
 The bodies of water / The kinds of water.

Noun Cases

Lanfali has 6 noun cases in total. We've seen nominative and accusative, the next sections will give an overview of each case.

Noun cases	
Nominative	-(a)m
Accusative	-(i)s
Dative	-lo
Possessive	ain-
Instrumental	vel-
Locative	ko-

Dative:

For sentences with actor, undergoer, and recipient, the indirect object is marked with the dative case. Note that there is no marking on the verb for the indirect object.

evavov alusash mrelo

evav-ov a- lu- sash mre-lo
 book-PL SUB.1sg-0BJ.3pl-give 2SG-DAT
 books I-them-give you-to
 I give you the books.

The dative case also works as a benefactive:

lizn arsoyayi lislo

lizn a- r- soya- yi lis-lo
 song SUB.1S-0BJ.3S-create-PAST 3SG-DAT
 song I-it-create for him
 I wrote a song for him.

Possessive:

Lanfali is predominantly head-marking, so the possessive marker goes on the head, or the thing being possessed.

Lanfali makes distinctions for two types of possession: alienable and inalienable. The possessive case is only used for inalienable possession.

Things that fall under inalienable possession include:

- Attributes (name, age, color, size, etc)
- Body parts
- Mental states (thoughts, emotions, beliefs)
- Relationships between people (friend, neighbour, sibling)
- Part/whole relationship, members of a collective.

ainyai to

ain- yai to
POSS-head 1SG
of-head me
My head.

Note that the first person pronoun is present. It cannot be dropped here because it is a part of a noun phrase.

Instrumental:

Alienable possession is marked by the instrumental case. Things that fall under alienable possession include:

- Personal property
- Objects physically held by the possessor
- Things that can be easily separated from the possessor

vellawin to

vel- lawin to
INSTR-house 1SG
with-house me
My house.

There are other use of the instrumental case, for one, indicating that the noun is an instrument:

aromeyi velpiva

a- r- ome-yi vel- piva
SUB.1S-OBJ.3S-cut-PAST INSTR-dagger
I-him-cutted with-dagger
I cut him with a dagger.

The other is indicating accompaniment by another being.

evave velapo arsoyawe

evave vel- Apo a- r- soya- we
book INSTR-Apo SUB.1S-OBJ.3S-create-PRES
book with-Apo I-it-write now
I am writing a book with Apo.

Possessor agreement:

A noun can have multiple stacked cases. Possessor agreement occurs when a noun has the possessive case and another case, then the possessor must also take the other case. In this example, the possessor has to agree with the accusative marker on the possessed.

ruro-potem ainruros tos moryulyi

ruro-pote- m ain-ruro-s to- s mo- r- yul- yi
 work-animal-NOM POSS-hand-ACC 1SG-ACC SUB.3S-OBJ.3s-sense-PAST
 dog(nom) of-hand(acc) me(acc) he-it-sensed
 The dog saw my hand.

Here is another example of the possessor agreeing with the dative case on the possessed:

arleumyi mate ainkusolalo tolo

a- r- leum-yi mate ain- kusola-lo to- lo
 SUB.1S-OBJ.3S-buy- PST bowl POSS-friend-DAT 1SG-DAT
 I-it-bought bowl of-friend-for me-for
 I bought a bowl for my friend.

Locative:

The locative case indicates a location. In its basic form it's a general "at the object" relationship.

(Locative case)

kolawin asuizo

ko- lawin a- suizo
 LOC-house SUB.1S-sleep
 at house I-sleep
 I sleep in the house.

In order to indicate some other locational relationship to the marked noun, we can specify a location or part of the object. Notice the possessor agreement with the locative:

asuizo kainyal koto

a-suizo ko-ain-yal ko-to
 I-sleep at-of-head at-you
 I sleep above you ((Lit. I sleep at your head))

Many locational parts are body part metaphors, there are also directional metaphors. A basic list of them:

Word	Meaning	Literal meaning
kainyal	above	at one's head
kainfo	behind	at one's back
kainluf	below	at one's foot

Word	Meaning	Literal meaning
kainteu	beside	at one's arm
kainma	inside	at one's box

The locative combined with the verb “go” can indicate motion to an object.

kolawin anuyi

ko- lawin a- nu-yi

LOC-house SUB.1S-go-PAST

at house I-went

I went to the house.

Tense, Aspect, Mood

Tense:

Lanfali has a total of 10 tenses, it seems like a lot, but it is very logically organized.

Lanfali distinguishes between past, present, and future tense, and each of those tenses can be in a past, present, or future reference point, creating a 3x3 table of nine tenses. Plus a “neutral” tense that is a null morpheme.

Frame \ Time	Past	Present	Future
Past	-yila	-wela	-onla
Present	-yi	-we	-on
Future	-yihan	-wehan	-ohan

The three tenses of the present time frame are the closest equivalent to English’s present, past and future tenses.

ahokwe

I am building.

ahokyi

I built / I was building

ahokwon

I will build / I will be building

The “neutral” tense is for general statements, or habitual actions, that do not have a time frame.

ahok

I build habitually / I build.

Reference points:

The reference point indicates what time the overall context of the sentence take place in relative to the context of the current conversation.

In this example, Apo *said* something in the past, so the sentence shifts to the past reference frame when talking about what he said.

Apo moleiya Karuzi mosuizoweta

Apo mo- lei-ya Karuzi mo- suizo-weta

Apo 3SG-say-PST Karuzi 3SG-sleep-PRES.IN.PST
 Apo he-said Karuzi he-sleep-in-past
 Apo said Karuzi was sleeping / Apo said: "Karuzi is sleeping"

***Apo moleiya Karuzi mosuizoyi**

Ungrammatical

Another usage case is for conditional statements. This conditional sentence starts with simple future tense, the sentence then shifts to the *future* reference frame when talking about the outcome of the conditional.

vi lawin irleumon, pev evave arsashohan mrelo

vi lawin i- r- leum-on pev evave a- r- sash-ohan mre-lo
 if house SUB.2s-OBJ.3s-buy- FUT then book SUB.1s-OBJ.3s-give-FUT.IN.FUT 2SG-DAT
 if house you-it-will buy then book I-it-will give (in future) you-for
 If you buy the house, I will give you the book.

Note: The reference point still exists relative to the context of the conversation, not absolute time, so you wouldn't write an entire historical account in the past reference frame. You would use either the simple present or the simple past.

Aspect and Mood:

Lanfali doesn't have any other special grammatical constructions for aspects and moods. However, the TAM system is very tangled, so we can analyze its many tenses and conclude that some of the tenses actually also express mood and aspect.

As seen in the last example above, the future reference frame is being used for a hypothetical situation. In fact, the future or past reference frame is often used to express the irrealis.

Here is another example of using the future-in-the past tense to express a completely hypothetical statement, one that did not actually happen:

vi lawin irleumyi, pev evave arsashonla mrelo

vi lawin i- r- leum-yi pev evave a- r- sash-ohan mre-lo
 if house SUB.2s-OBJ.3s-buy- PAST then book SUB.1s-OBJ.3s-give-FUT.IN.PAST 2SG-DAT
 if house you-it-bought then book I-it-will give (in past) you.
 If you had bought the house, I would have given you the book.

The past-in-future tense can also express an imperative mood.

isuizoyihan

i- suizo-yihan
 SUB.2S-sleep-PAST.IN.FUT
 you will have slept
 Sleep!

As for aspect, while Lanfali doesn't mark the aspect normally, it is possible to use the past or future reference point, combined with the present tense, to emphasize that an action was ongoing:

alakowela

a- lako-wela
SUB.1S-eat- PRES.IN.PAST
I-eat now (in past)
I was eating (when something happened...)

Contrast this with the same statement in the simple past tense, which does not indicate whether the action was perfective or imperfective:

alakoyi

a- lako-yi
SUB.1S-eat- PAST
I-ate
I ate / I was eating.

Note on etymology:

The etymology of the reference point system is quite transparent. The past and future reference frames derived from "lal" (up) and "hani" (down). Time is viewed as falling downwards, so the past is "up" and the future is "down".

yi + lal => yila
yi + han => yihan

we + lal => wela
we + han => wehan

on + lal => onla
on + hani => ohan

More Verb Morphology

Passives

The passive prefix is “ke-“, it turns the object of an active sentence into the subject and decreases the valence of the verb by one.

lawin mokehokyi

lawin mo- ke- hok- yi
house SUB.3S-PASS-build-PAST
house it-passive-built
The house is built.

There's no grammatical construction to add the former subject back into a passive sentence as an oblique. If you need to include the former subject, you have to attach it in another clause.

arkinyi lis mo lawin mokehokyi

a- r- kin-yi lis mo lawin mo- ke- hok- yi
SUB.1S-OBJ.3S-do- PAST 3SG REL house SUB.3S-PASS-build-PAST
I-did that house it-passive-built
The house is built by me. (Lit: I did it that the house is built)

Reflexives and Reciprocals

Reflexives and reciprocals are grammatically the same and distinguished by meaning. Simply decrease the valence of a transitive verb to an intransitive. For reciprocals, include both the actor and undergoer in the subject.

Normal transitive sentence:

Apom Karuzilo molfami

Apo-m Karuzi-lo mo-l-fami
Apo-NOM Karuzi-ACC SUB.3s-OBJ.3s-like
Apo Karuzi he-him-like
Apo likes Karuzi.

Reciprocal:

Apo wi Karuzi mafami

Apo wi Karuzi ma- fami
Apo and Karuzi SUB.3PL-like
Apo and Karuzi they-like
Apo and Karuzi like each other.

Reflexive:

to afami

to a- fami
1SG SUB.1SG-like
I I-like
I like myself.

Certainly, the reflexive construction could cause ambiguity if the verb already had an intransitive meaning. The above sentence is fine because “like” is always transitive, but imagine if the verb was “eat”, then there’d be no difference between “I eat” and “I eat myself”!

However, this does not occur too often, because for most physical actions one does to oneself, we make the undergoer “one’s body” instead of using a reflexive construction:

arvian ainpadza to

a- r- vian ain- padza to
SUB.1S-OBJ.3S-wash POSS-body 1SG
I-it-wash of-body me
I wash my body / I wash myself.

Copulas

Copulas link a subject with a predicate. Lanfali has two main copulas that are both roughly equivalent to the English word “to be”.

nan

“nan” is the identity copula. It indicates that both arguments are equivalent ($A = B$). It is typically only used when both the subject and the predicate are definite.

kusolam Apos mornan

kusola-m Apo-s mo- r- nan
 friend-NOM Apo-ACC SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-COP.ID
 My friend is Apo / The friend is Apo.

“nan” in its intransitive form can also be used to express existential statements:

rulzi monan

rulzi mo- nan
 sun SUB.3S-be
 sun it-be
 There is a sun.

evave monanwe mo lis morson konedza

evave mo- nan-we mo lis mo- r- son ko- nedza
 book SUB.3S-COP-now REL 3SG SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-COP LOC-table
 book it-be that it-it-be on table (There is a book that it is on the table)
 There is a book on the table.

son

“son” is the class copula, it’s used when the subject and predicate are not equivalent. It can indicate a class membership relationship ($A \in B$):

Karuzi sowesors morsoni

Karuzi sowesor-s mo- r- son- i
 Karuzi writer- ACC SUB.3SG-OBJ.3SG-COP.CLASS-PAST
 Karuzi writer he-it-was
 Karuzi was a writer.

Or it can indicate a class inclusion relationship ($A \subseteq B$):

mitsam potes morson

mits-am pote- s mo- r- son
 bug- NOM animal-ACC SUB.3SG-OBJ.3SG-COP.CLASS
 A bug is an animal.

Adjectives

This chapter covers both modifiers of nouns and modifiers of verbs. There is little grammatical difference between the two except for the suffix.

Predicate Adjectives

Predicate adjectives are adjectives such as the one in “My house is red”. In Lanfali they are treated like verbs.

lawin mopn

lawin mo-pn

house SUB.3s-red

house reds

The house is red.

Attributive Adjectives

Attributive adjectives are adjectives such as the one in “The tall man sings”.

lawin pnli arhokr

lawin pn- li a- r- hok- r

house red-OBJ SUB.1s-OBJ.3s-make-PAST

house red I-it-made

I built the red house.

Attributive adjectives must have an agreement marker. If the head is a verb, the adjective takes an adverbial marker. If the head is a noun, the adjective takes a marker depending on the case of the head noun.

Adjective Agreement	Head Type	
Nominative	Nominative case	-(e)n
Accusative	Accusative case	-(i)s
Adverbial	Verb	-ra
Oblique	Dative, Possessive, Locative, Instrumental case	-li

Unlike English, attributive adjectives are allowed to modify pronouns:

mre senezis azyulyi

mre senez- ø- is a- z- yul- yi
 2SG beautiful-INAL-ACC SUB.1SG-0BJ.2SG-sense-PAST
 you beautiful I-you-saw
 I saw you, you were beautiful.

Alienable Adjectives:

Like possessives, adjectives in Lanfali also distinguish between alienable and inalienable. Inalienable adjectives implies the modifier is an intrinsic property of the head. Alienable adjectives implies the modifier is a temporarily afflicted property of the head. Inalienable adjectives are not marked.

An alienable predicate adjective is indicated by the simple present tense:

lawin mopnwe

lawin mo- pn- we
 house SUB.3S-red-PRES
 house it-reds now
 The house is red temporarily. ((i.e. splashed with red paint))

An alienable attributive adjective is indicated by the suffix *-w*, which goes before the agreement marker. It likely evolved from the *-we* marker on predicate adjectives.

fansei aoleiwen mozakawi

child aolei- w- en mo- zaka-wi
 child hungry-ALIEN-SUB SUB.3s-yell-PRES
 child hungry-now he-yell now
 The hungry child screams.

Adjective Ordering:

The adjective is typically adjacent to the word it modifies, but for artistic reasons it can be placed far away from the word it modifies and still be unambiguous due to the case agreement marker.

Whether modifiers come before or after the head depends on the sentence's basic word order. Typically head-modifier for SOV sentences, or modifier-head for VSO sentences. Detailed explanation in the chapter on discourse structure.

However, compound words and certain phrases tend to get cemented into a certain order over time. Whether these compounds are head first or modifiers first depends on the time period when the phrase was coined.

Participles:

The participle marker can change any verb into an attributive adjective. It can also have an alienable/inalienable distinction.

sor ruroten

sor ruro-t- en
 person work-PTCP-SUB
 person working

The working man (man who works habitually.)

sor ruowen

sor ruro-w- en
 person work-PTCP.ALIEN-SUB
 person working now

The working man (man who is currently working.)

Questions

Yes-No questions:

You can ask yes-no questions by just adding the question particle *yin* to a regular declarative sentence. Attaching *yin* in front of a word emphasizes it as the focus of the question. Placing it at the very end of the sentence does not place focus on any particular part of the question.

irfemi ainlzn to yin

i- r- femi ain- lzn to yin
 SUB.2S-OBJ.3S-like POSS-song 1SG QUES
 you-it-like of-song me ?
 Do you like my song? (No emphasis on any particular word)

irfemi yin-mre ainlzn to

i- r- femi- yin- mre ain- lzn to
 SUB.2S-OBJ.3S-like QUES-2SG POSS-song 1SG
 you-it-like question-you of-song me
 Do you like my song?

What-questions:

What-questions are formed using the pronoun *ane*:

ilimi ane

i- limi ane
 SUB.2S-call what
 you-call what
 What is your name? (Lit: What are you called?)

Note on politeness: In formal contexts, direct questions are considered rude, and yes-no questions are especially rude, because it forces the other person to pick one of two choices. The simplest way to turn a yes-no question into a polite form is to add “tumein” (please) to the beginning, and add “sat ane” (or what) to the end, which gives the other person an option to not answer yes/no.

tumein irfemi menui sat ane yin?

tumein i- r- femi menui sat ane yin
 please SUB.2S-OBJ.3S-like sea or what QUES
 please you-it-like sea or what ?
 Do you like the sea? (polite)

But it's better to completely reword into open ended questions whenever you can. Simple yes-no questions are okay in informal contexts.

Response to Questions:

Responding to yes-no questions is done through echoing:

Q: Tumein irfemi menui sat ane yin?

tumein i- r- femi menui sat ane yin
 please SUB.2S-OBJ.3S-like sea or what QUES
 please you-it-like sea or what ?
 Do you like the sea?

A: Eni, menui afemi.

eni menui a- r- femi
 INTERJ sea SUB.1S-OBJ.3S-like
 (joy) sea I-it-like
 Yes, I like the sea.

Note that “eni” might seem like it means “yes”, but it doesn’t mean that. It is an interjection that expresses happiness or joy. It is often added to positive responses, but by itself it doesn’t form a complete response.

Negation of Clauses

Lanfali expresses negation by the word *ika*, it inflects like a verb and takes the place of the verb in the clause. What was originally the main verb of the clause now goes after *ika*, takes the participle form, and an adverbial agreement marker.

azenika femitra

a- zen- ika femi-t- ra
 SUB.1S-OBJ.2PL-NEG like-PTCP-ADV
 I-y'all-not likeingly
 I don't like you people.

Like any other verb, *ika* can be conjugated for tense, its form in different tenses is rather irregular. Here it is in the past-in-future tense, expressing an imperative sentence.

pirihika kotetra

pi- r- ihika kote-t- ra
 SUB.2PL-OBJ.3SG-NEG.PAST.IN.FUT hit- PTCP-ADV
 y'all-him-not (past in future) hittingly
 Don't hit him!

Conjunctions

Non-clause conjunctions

These clauses cannot be used to connect clauses. They can only connect two noun phrases, or two adjectives.

sat

The conjunction “sat” can combine two nouns into one subject or object. It expresses “either one or the other”:

fanseim morwes mates sat panis

fansei-m mo- r- wes mate-s sat pani- s
 child-ACC SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-have bowl-ACC or basket-ACC
 child he-it-has bowl or basket
 The child has a bowl or a basket.

wi

The conjunction “wi” means “and”, it can combine two nouns into one subject or object:

Apo wi Karuzi nashino

Apo wi Karuzi na- shino
 Apo and Karuzi SUB.3P-evil
 Apo and Karuzi they-evil
 Apo and Karuzi are evil.

“wi” can also combine two adjectives, so that they independently apply to the head. The example below has the unambiguous meaning of “I like the green gems, I also like the blue gems”.

saolov armens wi menuis alufemi

saol-ov armen-s wi menui-s a- lu- femi
 gem -PL green-ACC and blue- ACC SUB.1S-OBJ.3P-like
 gems green and blue I-them-like
 I like the green gems and blue gems.

If a head has multiple adjectives with no conjunctions, then the adjectives all additively apply to the head. For example, the very similar example below has the unambiguous meaning of “I like gems that are both green and blue”.

saolov armens menuis alufemi

saol-ov armen-s menui-s a- lu- femi
 gem -PL green-ACC blue- ACC SUB.1S-OBJ.3P-like
 gems green blue I-them-like
 I like the green-blue gems.

Clause conjunctions

Connecting two clauses, as opposed to two nouns/verbs/adjectives, requires a whole different set of conjunctions.

zi

This is the “and” / “then” conjunction for clauses. It occurs between two clauses, and indicates that the two clauses are related, but one doesn’t cause the other. Depending on context and tense markings, it may mean that the second clause happened after the first temporally, or that they are related but take place over approximately the same time.

Example: this sentence is in the neutral tense, which indicates there’s not a temporal order:

leili namenui, zi keitisun morowu

leili na- menui zi kei- tisun mo- rowu
 water SUB.3PL-blue and TYPE-sand SUB.1S-large
 water they-blue and beach it-large
 The water is blue, and the beach is large.

vi... pev

We have seen sentences with these conjunctions before in the chapter on tense. It literally means “one... two”, but its function is to connect two clauses with a causal relationship.

vi a-aoleiyi, pev alakoyi tenara

vi a- aolei- yi pev a- lako-yi tena-ra
 one SUB.1S-hungry-PAST, two SUB.1S-eat- PAST fast-ADV
 one I-hungried, two I-eated fastly.
 I was hungry, so I ate quickly.

If the first clause is in the future tense, and the second clause is the future reference frame, this indicates a conditional statement, the clauses are in an “if...then” relationship.

vi lawin irleumon, pev evave arsashohan mrelo

vi lawin i- r- leum-on pev evave a- r- sash-ohan mre-lo
 if house SUB.2s-OBJ.3s-buy- FUT then book SUB.1s-OBJ.3s-give-FUT.IN.FUT 2SG-DAT
 one house you-it-will buy, two book I-it-will give (in future) you-for
 If you buy the house, I will give you the book.

mo

“mo” introduces a relative clause. Relative clauses modify a noun.

First, insert a pronoun where you want the relative clause to be. This is the resumptive pronoun, and it is obligatory. Then add the relative clause somewhere in the sentence, with *mo* in front of the relative clause. The position of the relative clause in the sentence is free because the presumptive pronoun clarifies what part of the sentence it is.

As an example, take this simple sentence:

soram evaves morweswe

sor -am evave-s mo- r- wes- we
 person-NOM book- ACC SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-have-PRES
 person book he-it-has
 The man has a book

Suppose we want to relativize the subject, because we want to express: “*The man who built the houses has a book*”. We make the subject of the sentence the third person singular pronoun “lis”, then we insert the relative clause at the beginning of the sentence. The clause itself is the simple sentence “The man built houses” with “mo” at the front.

For clarity, the relative clause is highlighted in blue:

mo sor lawinov moluhokyi, lis evaves morweswe

mo sor lawin-ov mo- lu- hok -yi lis evave-s mo- r- wes- we
 REL person house-PL SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-build-PAST 3SG book- ACC SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-have-PRES
 who person houses he-they-built, he book he-it-has
 The man who built the houses has a book.

We could also place the relative clause at the end:

lis evaves morweswe mo sor lawinov moluhokyi

lis evave-s mo- r- wes- we mo sor lawin-ov mo- lu- hok -yi
 3SG book- ACC SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-have-PRES REL person house-PL SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-build-PAST
 he book he-it-has, who person houses he-them-built
 The man who built the houses has a book.

We can even put the relative clause immediately after the pronoun:

lis mo sor lawinov moluhokyi, evaves morweswe

lis mo sor lawin-ov mo- lu- hok -yi evave-s mo- r- wes- we mo
 3SG REL person house-PL SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-build-PAST book- ACC SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-have-PRES REL
 he who person houses he-they-built, book he-it-has
 The man who built the houses has a book.

However, we can never split the relative clause:

***lis** mo **sor** evaves morweswe **lawinov** **moluhokyi**
 Ungrammatical

Relative clauses can be used to make locative constructions, in combination with the existential construction:

evave monanwe mo lis moson konedza

evave mo- nan-we mo lis mo- son ko- nedza

book SUB.3S-COP-now REL 3SG SUB.3S-COP LOC-table

book it-be that it it-be on table

There is a book on the table. (Lit: There is a book that it is on the table)

Numbers

Lanfali has a base 12 system.

esh	0
vi	1
pev	2
tei	3
lon	4
pol	5
tul	6
koti	7
toti	8
kasi	9
otsu	10
petsu	11
veu	12
jr	12^2
lati	12^3

Multiples of 12 are formed with place + digit + *-la* suffix:

veupevla	24	twelve two times
veuteila	36	twelve three times
veulomla	48	twelve four times
...		

Multi-digit numbers are expressed from largest to smallest place, inserting *wi* between each digit:

veu wi vi	13	twelve and one
veu wi pev	14	twelve and two

veu wi tei	15	twelve and three
...		
veupevla wi vi	25	twelve-two-times and one
veupevla wi pev	26	twelve-two-times and two

If there are non-trailing zero digits (i.e. zero digit(s) between non-zero digits), avoid the zero by reinterpreting as a multiple of a lower place, using the suffix *-kwin*:

59 ₁₂	= veupola wi gosi	"dozen-five-times and nine"
509 ₁₂	= veupolakwin veu wi gosi	"dozen-five-times-fold dozen and nine"
5009 ₁₂	= jrpolakwin veu wi gosi	"gross-five-times-fold dozen and nine"
5090 ₁₂	= veupolakwin jr wi veugosila	"dozen-five-times-fold gross and dozen-nine-times"

Ordinal: add the suffix *-pe*

vipe	first
pevpe	second
teipe	third
lonpe	fourth
...	

Distributives: add the suffix *-ton*

viton	singly/one by one
pevton	doubly/two by two
teiton	triply/three by three
...	

Fractions:

Numerator in multiplier form + *rez* + Denominator in cardinal form
A numerator of one is omitted.

rez kodi	1/7
teikwin rez todi	3/8
otsukwin rez jr wi vi	10/143

Time System

Assume their planet's days are the same length as Earth's. The Lanfan time system is based on the tides of underground oceans, however, they do sometimes venture to the surface, so their time system has been modified to sync with the solar days, to create a kind of hybrid tidal-solar time system.

Tidal patterns differ depending on the geological location, but this particular time system would have been developed in a place with semi-diurnal tides (2 regular tide cycles per lunar day, which is a bit longer than a solar day).

Unit	Conversion	Real time equivalent
zinin	-	~1 second
zin	144 zinin	~2.5 minutes
umo	144 zin	~6 hours
kwera	8 umo	~49 hours

One *umo* is the time for the tides to go from the highest point to the lowest point or vice versa. The beginning of an *umo* always coincides with high tide or low tide.

Kwera are the “days” that Lanfans structure their routines around, one *kwera* contains 8 *umo* (~49 hours), except every 6th day, one *umo* is *removed* to keep the *kwera* roughly in sync with solar days. These days skip the first *umo* and start at the second.

Umos have ancient names, they are named after its traditional functions. Eating and sleeping are considered communal social activities, so traditionally everyone eats at hour #5, and sleeps until hour #1 the next day.

#	Name	Approx. meaning	Traditional Function
1	Azuwi	proposing	starting negotiations
2	Prale	journeying	best time to go to the surface
3	Jire	kiln-firing	when craftsmen fire up their kilns
4	Lasmikeu	deal-making	finishing negotiations
5	Nanlr	feasting	eating
6	Kwimumo	Kwima's hour	sleeping, it is thought that the soul wanders free during sleep and can mingle with spirits and deities. These hours are named after said deities.
7	Iko-umo	Iko's hour	
8	Tseltumo	Tselta's hour	

For precise timekeeping, an *umo* is divided into 144 *zin* (~2.5 minutes). You can express time by giving the precise hour and some rough quantifier:

hais palukomwe meikwimumo kusols

hais pa- lu- kom- we mei-kwimuno kusol-s
 1PLI 1PL-3SG-live-PRES to- kwimuno half- ACC
 We live now to-Kwimuno half
 It is halfway to Kwimumo.

Though unnecessary for everyday conversation, you could express time by giving the precise hour and minute:

hais palukomwe prale ainzin veupevlape

hais pa- lu- kom- we Prale ain- zin veupevla -pe
 1PLI 1PLI-3SG-live-PRES Prale POSS-minute twentyfour-ORD
 We live now Prale minute's twenty-fourth
 It is the twenty-fourth minute of Prale.

Discourse Structure

Lanfali has a unique feature in how it explicitly encodes structure on a conversational level. So far, we've said that Lanfali has free word order, but that is not quite true. The word order doesn't affect semantic meaning, but it is used to convey something about the conversation. Some information that can be encoded by word order are:

- Whether the speaker is finished talking
- Who the speaker expects to talk next
- Whether the speaker expects agreement or disagreement
- The relative social ranks of the speakers

This kind of information is not explicitly encoded at all in English, but we English speakers can still convey this information through subtle cues such as body language, intonation, or pauses.

So why does Lanfali encode this information explicitly? Remember that debate and argument is central to Lanfan culture. This system suits their language and culture well because it generally helps to facilitate their debates, and it decreases confusion that could be caused by the subtle cues.

Essentially, when speaking Lanfali you can't only think about what you're going to say. You have to consider how the other person might respond, and change your word order to accomodate them. The consequence of not using this system is that you disrupt the whole conversation. You could make perfect grammatical sense, but your listeners will be confused, slower to respond, and possibly offended.

Sentence Direction

Sentences have a subjective property that we'll call "direction". Sentences can be either "upward" or "downward".

An upward sentence is "nouns last". The word order is typically VSO or VOS, modifiers tend to go before the head.

Here's an example of an upward sentence. For clarity we'll color code the **subject** in red, **object** in green, **verb** in blue. Modifiers are the same hue as the head, but underlined.

morvaimwe **rowun** **fanseim** **uholis**
 mo- r- vaim-we rowu-n fansei-m uhol-is
 SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-find-PRES big- NOM child- NOM hat- ACC
 he-it-find big child hat
 The older child finds the hat.

A downward sentence is "nouns first". The word order tends to be SOV or SVO, modifiers tend to go after the head. Here's an example of the same sentence in a downward word order:

fanseim rowun uholis morvaimwe

fansei-m rowu-n uhol-is mo- r- vaim-we
 child- NOM big- NOM hat- ACC SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-find-PRES
 child big hat he-it-find
 The older child finds the hat.

These word orders signify the sentence's role in the conversation. An "upward" sentence typically signifies a lead-in, such as a question, introduction, command, or greeting. An "downward" sentence typically signifies a follow-up, such as an answer, response, repost, or acknowledgement.

Use in Conversation

A simple, basic conversation between two people tend to alternate between upward and downward: one person leads in with an "upward" sentence, the other completes it with a "downward" sentence.

An analogy is matching brackets in programming languages. An "upward" sentence is like an open bracket, and a "downward" sentence is like a closed bracket. An upward sentence should be matched by a corresponding downward sentence, but it doesn't have to be matched immediately, there can be nested brackets (In this example, names are always included to show the sentence structure better. In an actual conversation, Apo's name might be omitted after the first sentence):

A: Ahilwe Apoam evaves yo. (Upward, VS0)
 a- hil- we Apo-am evave-s yo
 SUB.1S-want-PRES Apo-NOM book- ACC some
 I-want book some.
 Apo wants a book.

B: Molufemi Apo eiz evavov ainane yin? (Upward, VS0)
 mo- lu- femi Apo eiz evave-ov ain-ane yin
 SUB.3S-OBJ.3P-like Apo GENER book -PL PTV-what QUES
 you-like some books of what ?
 What kind of books does he (Apo) like?

A: Ainevaves eiz potov Apoam morhilwe. (Downward, OSV)
 ain-evave-s eiz pote- ov Apo-am mo- hil- we
 POSS-book-ACC GENER animal-PL Apo-NOM SUB.3S-want-PRES
 of-book some animals I-want
 He (Apo) wants a book about animals.

B: Ainevaves eiz mitsov sife Apoam wai mofemi (Downward, OSV)
 ain-evave-s eiz mits-ov sife Apo-am wai mo- femi
 POSS-book-ACC GENER bug- PL here Apo-NOM maybe SUB.3S-like
 of-book this some bugs maybe you like
 He (Apo) might like this book about bugs.

In this example, you can see a major point of difference with politeness registers such as in Japanese. One person doesn't have to use the same word order throughout the whole

conversation. The conversational roles can switch between people multiple times in one conversation.

Of course, the analogy is not perfect. Unlike programming languages, Lanfali is more flexible and doesn't require strictly matching pairs. Furthermore, we've been analyzing sentence direction as a binary state, either "upward" or "downward" for simplicity. But there are many possible word orders for a given sentence, which can express subtle degrees of meaning within the "upward" and "downward" categories.

Secondary Meanings

Here's an example of subtle meanings you can indicate through word order:

Unless you were making a direct response to an upward sentence, ending a topic on an downward sentence can indicate that you have not finished speaking, while ending on an upward sentence indicates you are finished speaking and invites the listener to respond.

Example: Assume the speaker is starting a new topic of conversation with this sentence (that is, they are not answer a question like "What did you do for him?").

lizn lislo arsoyayi

lizn lis-lo a- r- soya- yi
 song 3SG-DAT SUB.1S-OBJ.3S-create-PAST
 song he-for I-it-create
 I wrote a song for him... (Likely will elaborate)

The downward direction implies the speaker has more to say, and doesn't want a response. In contrast, the next sentence implies the speaker has nothing else to say about this, so they expect a response or reaction from the listener:

arsoyayi lizn lislo

a- r- soya- yi lizn lis-lo
 SUB.1S-OBJ.3S-create-PAST song 3SG-DAT
 song I-it-create for him
 I wrote a song for him. (Finished speaking, expects response)

Generally, understand that the rules of this system are not strict, so you can purposefully break the conversation flow without ruining the conversation, and it can be very impactful and impressionable if done correctly. In Lanfali literature, you will often see characters deftly swapping conversation roles and word order with great subtlety and complexity.

Indicating Social Roles and Politeness

When speakers have similar social status, conversation roles can freely switch between speakers, downward doesn't imply low social standing. However, when there is a large status difference between speakers, the low-status speaker may be careful to stick to downward

sentences, allowing the high-status speaker to “lead” the conversation, essentially. This is only necessary for very formal contexts.

Don’t assume that sticking to the “follower” conversation role is the most polite, safe option when you don’t know what word order to use. It is almost as impolite to grovel towards a peer as it is to talk down to a king. The most important function of this system is to mutually create the natural flow of conversation.

Uses in Non-Conversational Speech

Since Lanfali speakers are so used to this system, they still use it even when just one person is speaking. When telling a story, a Lanfali speaker will switch word order back and forth to indicate ups and downs in the story’s flow, or relations between things interacting in the story. Often they will insert filler sentences or rhetorical questions to maintain the alternating up-down pattern.

Culture and Communication

Here are some Lanfali phrases for communication, as well as some cultural information, so as to explain the meaning behind these phrases.

Greeting

awes tanwa

a- wes tanwa
SUB.1S-have trust
I-have trust.
Hello.

This is the typical polite greeting, literally translates to “I have trust”, because demons practice illusion magic, it’s important for people to establish that they’re really who they claim to be. Changing the word order of the greetings will change how the other person responds. The response is the same greetings but with downwards word order:

tanwa awes

Tanwa a- wes
trust SUB.1S-have
trust I-have.
Hello.

Farewell

This is the typical expression of farewell, taken literally, it wishes the other person a good journey:

iven it

i- ven it
SUB.2S-travel good
you-travel well
Goodbye.

Apology and Thanks

This is the typical polite apology phrase:

acori tumein

a- cori tumein
SUB.1s-apologize please
I-apologize please
Sorry.

This is the typical phrase for expressing thanks:

mai mrelo

mai mre-lo
 praise 2SG-DAT
 praise for you
 Thank you.

The typical response, either forgiveness or acceptance, to both of these is the same:

mokozeɫ

mo- ko- ozeɫ
 SUB.3S-PASS-balance
 it is repaid
 You're welcome.

This is because Lanfan culture look down on favours and gifts. They believe kindness must be repaid, so their expressions of apology/thanks are both centered around repayment, rather than forgiveness. Essentially, the person making the apology or thanks is symbolically repaying the other person with a public statement about their character, and in return, the other person accepts the repayment.

Appendix

Sample Text

naokuyihan to velita, narika mualtra pha.¹

na- oku- yihan to vel- lita, na- rika mual-t- ra pha
SUB.3P-lift-IMP 1SG POSS-word, SUB.3P-NEG HARM-PTCP-ADVB blood
yous-take my word, they-no harmingly blood
Take my words, they do not harm the blood.

nizef teim potesim nananwe mo lisan,²

nize- f tei- m potesi-m na- nan-we
sibling-PL three-NOM brave- NOM SUB.3P-COP-PRES
siblings three brave they-be
There are three adventurous siblings,

mo lisan pitu kasis narankvenwe.

mo lisan pitu kas- is na- r- ank- ven- we.
who 3PL land high-ACC SUB.3P-OBJ.3S-walk-road-PRES.
who they land high travel
who are traveling across the highlands (the surface).

nartulwe lisan ainkusola, mo lis moshumyi kotinr ainluf,

na- r- tul- we lisan ain- kusola, mo lis mo- shum-yi ain- luf
SUB.3P-OBJ.3S-find-PRES 3PL POSS-friend, REL 3SG SUB.3P-fall-PAST POSS-foot
they-him-find their friend, who he he-fell at-cart's foot
They find their friend who had fallen off a cart,

mohaienyi kohani pani velakelof.

mo- haien-yi ko- hani pani vel- akel- of
SUB.3P-drop- PAST LOC-down bag INSTR-fruit-PL
he-dropped at down basket with-fruits
and spilled a basket of fruit.

ai, mits malaimowela ainpon kolis.³

ai, mits ma- laimo-we -la ain- pon ko- lis
oh, bug SUB.3S-fly- PRES-up POSS-top LOC-3SG
oh, bug it-flying (in past) at his above.
Oh, a bug was flying over him.

zi, naruron fanseian ane yin.

zi, na- r- uron fansei-an ane yin
next, SUB.3P-OBJ.3S-do child-PL what QUES
next they-it-do children what?
What do the children do next?

zhot narsashwe ainkulosalo

zhot na- r- sash-we ain- kulosa-lo
 aid SUB.3P-OBJ.3S-give-PRES POSS-half -DAT
 help they-it-give their-friend-to.
 They give help to their friend.

fanseianen nui akelis naluhilwe kopani ainma

fansei-an-en nui akel- is na- lu- hil- we ko- pani ain-
 ma
 child-PL-NOM small fruit-ACC SUB.3P-OBJ.3P-gather-PRES LOC-bag POSS-
 inside
 children little fruit they-them-gather to-bag of-inside
 The little children put the pears in the basket.

hazn nanui, narika westra zhuan,⁴

hazn na- nui , na- rika wes- t- ra zhu-an
 but SUB.3P-small, SUB.3P-NEG have-PTCP-ADVB leg-PL.ANIM
 but they-small, they-not havingly legs.
 But they are young, they don't have legs,

anelo naluwe hanitra, narikawe latatra lamyolo.

anelo na- lu-we hani-t- ra na- rika-we lata- t- ra lamyo-lo
 why SUB.3P-go-PRES down-PTCP-ADVB SUB.3P-NEG- PRES trade-PTCP-ADVB thing-
 DAT
 why they-go downly, they-not tradingly for thing
 (That is) why they walk away, and don't ask for anything in return.

zi, morvaimwe rowun fanseim uholis,

zi , mo- r- vaim-we rowu-n fansei-m uhol-is
 next, SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-find-PRES big- NOM child- NOM hat- ACC
 then, he-it-find big child hat
 Then the older child finds the hat,

mo uhol mokehaienwe.

mo uhol mo- ke- haien-we
 REL hat SUB.3S-PASS-drop- PRES
 who hat was dropped
 the hat that was dropped.

morokuwe, makesashwe kofansei mo veltinr.

mo- r- oku- we, mo- ke- sash-we ko- fansei mo vel-
 tinr
 SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-lift-PRES SUB.3S-PASS-give-PRES LOC-child that with-
 cart
 he-it-lift, it-him-given to child who with-cart
 He picks it up, and gives it to the child with the cart.

marshal meni fansei ozela,⁵

ma- r- shal meni fansei ozel- a
 SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-know this child balance-N

he-it-know this child balanceness
This child understands the balance.`

teili velakel naozelwe.

tei- li vel- akel na- ozel- we
three-OBL INSTR-fruit SUB.3P-balance-PRES
three with-fruit they-reciprocate
He repays him with three fruit.

moankwe hani, naozelwe fansei wi nizef.

mo- ank- we hani, na- ozel- we fansei wi nize-f
SUB.3S-walk-PRES up , SUB.3P-balance-PRES child and friend-PL
he-walk up, they-reciprocate child and friends
He walks back, the child trades the fruit with his siblings.

nalei, lata mozel kofo.

na-lei, lata mo-ozel ko-fo
SUB.3P-say, trade SUB.3S-balance LOC-back
they say, trade it-balances to-back
And so, the trade is balanced again.

Derivational Morphemes

		From	To	Ety m.	Meaning	Example word	Root word
Person	-sor	V/N	N	sor	person who ____	korasor - fighter	kote - to hit
Place	-it	V/N	N	pitu	place of ____	masit - tributary	mas - river
Animal	-wo	V/N	N	bot	animal, beast	menuiwo - shark	menui - sea
Subject inanimate	-u	V	N		thing that ____	omeu - cutter, blade	ome - to cut
Object inanimate	en-	V	N		thing that you do ____ to	enfemi - beloved thing	femi - love
Reversal	-(e)fo	V	V	fo	reverse the action		
Augmentative + Superlative*	*o-	N	N		big ____ more ____	lolawu - society	lawu - house
Diminutive*	-in	N	N		part, young, small	zinin - second	zin - minute
Affectionate *	-y*	N	N		colloquial, familiar, nicknaming	lakoko - eatery	lako - to eat
Movement	mu-	N	V		<i>to move like a</i> ____	mumits - to skitter	mits - bug
To verb**	-o	N	V		variable		
Adjective	-o	N	A		variable, tends to be more literal	toliro - hard, rough	tolir - rock
Characteristic	-si	N	A		variable, tends to be more abstract, describes people	tolirsi - dependable, stoic	tolir - rock
Collection*	kei-	N	N		collection of ____	keitisun - desert	tisun - sand
To noun	-a	A/V	N		quality of ____	kusola - friend	kusol - half
Negation*	ka-	A/V	A/V	ika	not ____	kasenez - ugly	senez - beautiful
Language	-li		N	liyn	language/sound of ____	Lanfali	Lanfa

* Can be duplicated for intensity.

Lexicon

Part of Speech Gloss:

a: adjective
 v: verb
 n: noun
 pro: pronoun
 adpos: adposition
 conj: conjunction
 interj: interjection
 part: particle
 num: numeral

Tags Gloss:

anim: animate, uses the -an plural suffix
 mass: mass noun
 inal: typically inalienably possessed, or inalienable adjective

Word	POS	Tags	Meaning	Derivation
acori	v		to apologize, to say sorry	
ai	interj		ah, sigh ah! ow!	
akel	n		seed, fruit	
amez	n	mass	crowd, herd, flock, group (of people or animals)	
ane			what	
anelo	a		why	from “ane”(what) + locative
ank	v		to walk	
ankven	v		to travel	from “ank”(walk) + “ven” (road)
aolei	a		hungry	
armen	a		1. green	from “armen” - zero derived
armen	n		2. copper ore	
ede	interj		so, well,	
eiz	part		all auxiliary word for quantifying all members of a kind	
eni	interj		yes! joy	

Word	POS	Tags	Meaning	Derivation
esh	num		zero	
evave	n		book	
fal	v		to die	
fansei	n		child, infant	
femi	v		to like, to love	
fila	n	anim	soul	
folan	n		horned animal goat, sheep	
folanin	n		baby goat	from “folan” + diminutive
folansi	a		fearsome, volatile	from “folan” + characteristic
folansi	n		magic user (slang)	from “folansi” - zero derived
fu			may, be allowed to	
haien	v		to drop	
haiz	part		1. indefinite first person plural pronoun used in some phrases such as time	
hani	adpos		down	
hazn	conj		but, however	
hil	v		to grab/take multiple things, to gather, scoop to want	
hok	v		to build	
irn	n		1. pitchfork (used for stirring resin and tar) 2. a fork-like weapon	
it	a		good	
jita	n		word, speech question	
kas	a		high	
kasi	num		nine	
keitisun	n		beach	from collective + “sand”
keme	v		to give birth	from old passive form of “omes”(slice)
kenare	part		existential particle	from ke + nal + wes “it is with”

Word	POS	Tags	Meaning	Derivation
kin	v		to do	
kodi	num		seven	
kom	v		to be in	
korasor	n		fighter (for sport)	from “kote” (hit) + “sor” (person)
kote	v		to hit	
kusol	quant		half	
kusola	n		friend	from “kusol” (half) + to noun
kwera	n		day (time)	
kwera-hani	n		tomorrow	from “kwera” (day) + “down”
kwera-lal	n		yesterday	from “kwera”(day) + “up”
kwia	quant		whole	
laimo	v		to fly	
lako	v		1. to eat (food) 2. to consume fuel (as a machine)	
lal	a		up	
lamyo	n		thing, object, something	
lamyo	v		to touch	
lata	v		to trade	
lati	num		thousand (base 12)	
lawin	n		house (literal)	from “lawu” + diminutive
lawinin	n		small shabby house, hovel, shack	from “lawu” + 2 diminutives
lawu	n		1. union, house, a guild-like organization 2. society 3. profession 4. general indoors place	
lawu-evave	n		library	from “house” + “book”
lawu-suizo	n		bedroom, sleeping quarters	from “house” + “sleep”
lawuo	v		1. to work (at a job) 2. to contribute to society	from “lawu” + verb
lei	v		to say, to speak	
leili	n	mass	water	
leum	v		to buy	

Word	POS	Tags	Meaning	Derivation
limi	v		to name	
lis	pro		he/she/it, singular third person pronoun	
lisan	pro		they, plural third person pronoun	
lizn	n	inal	1. song, music 2. meaning	
lon	num		four	
luf	n		foot	
ma	n		in, inside	from “mate” (container)
mai			greatness, praise, compliment, kudos	
mas	n		river	
mate	n		bowl, cup, container	
menui	a	inal	dark blue	from “menui” (sea)
menui	n		sea, large lake	
menuiwo	n		fish, shark	from “menui” (sea) + beast
mez	n	mass	hair fiber, strand	
mits	n		bug, critter, bird	
mo	conj		marks a dependent clause or subordinate clause. that, who.	
mre	pro		you	
mren	pro		you plural	from “mre”
mual	v		to harm, to destroy	
mumits	v		to move in a bug-like manner to skitter, to twitch to dart	from movement + “mits”(bug)
murote	v		to move on all fours, to crawl	from movement + “pote” (beast)
nal	det		indefinite singular pronoun	
nan	v		to be copula, identity	
nedza	n		table	
nit	v		to steal	
nize	n		sibling	
nu	v		go, to, towards	

Word	POS	Tags	Meaning	Derivation
nui	a		small, little, young	
oku	v		to take (an object)	
ome	v		to cut, slice, slash	
osha	n	anim	moon	
ote	interj		ah! wow! positive surprise	
otsu	num		ten	
ozel	v		to balance to repay, to reciprocate	from “ozel” (circle)
ozel	n		circle	
padza	n		body	
pani	n		bag, basket	
petsu	num		eleven	
pev	num		two	
pha	n		1. body fluid, blood 2. life force	
pi	conj		therefore, then (as in if.... then...)	from “pev” (two)
piva	n	inal anim	1. tooth 2. small, pointed projectiles: bullets, arrowheads 3. small dagger, stiletto knife	
pltu	n		1. cave 2. land, ground	
pn	a	inal	red	
pol	num		five	
pomi	a	anim	mouth, politeness	
pote	n		animal, beast	
rami			again	
rika / ika	part		not, forms negative clauses	
rowu	a		large	
rulzi	n		sun	
ruo	v		to work, craft, labour (intransitive)	from “ruo” zero derived
ruo	n	inal	hand (body part)	
sani	a		long, tall	

Word	POS	Tags	Meaning	Derivation
saol	n		jewel, gem	
sash	v		to give	
sat	conj		or	
sela	v		to be in present-in-past tense.	from “sonwela”
senez	a		beautiful, attractive	
shal	v		to know, to understand	
shar	n		bread gross organic food lump/loaf shaped things	
shin	n		1. evilness 2. imp, spirit	
shino	a		evil	from “shin” + o
shum	v		to fall over, to collapse	
sife			this, here	
son	v		to be copula. for indefinite	
soni	v		to be in past tense. was, were.	from “sonyi”
sor	n	anim	person, demon	
sowesor	n		writer (of stories mostly)	from “soya”(create) + person
soya	v		perform, create artistically	
suin	v		1. think 2. feel (emotionally)	
suizo	v		to sleep	
talyo	a		really, very	
tan	pro		we	
tanwa	n		trust	
tei	num		three	
telo			to ask	
tena	a		fast, quick	
teu	n		arm	
tinr	n		cart, hand powered vehicle	
tisun	n	mass	sand	
to	pro		I, first person singular pronoun	

Word	POS	Tags	Meaning	Derivation
todi	num		eight	
tolir	n		rock, stone	
tsusi	interj		bye, casual farewell, goodbye	
tul	num		six	
tumein			please, put before questions to be polites	
uhol	n		hat (clothing worn on head)	
umo	n		hour (time)	
urm	a		single	
vaim	v		find	
ven	n		road, street, path	
veu	num		twelve	
vi	conj		if (for conditional statements)	from “vi” (one)
vi	num		one	
vian	v		1. to wash 2. to clean	
vura	n		ear (body part)	
wai	a		maybe, might, possibly	
wes	v		to possess (alienably) to have to be with	
wi	conj		and (connects two subjects or two objects)	
yai	n	inal	head (body part)	
yin	part		question particle	
yr	num		hundred (base 12) = 144	
yul	v		sense, feel (restricted to purely physical feelings)	
zaka	v		to yell, scream (human) to cry (animal)	
zhem	n		plant	
zhemez	n		moss	from “zhem” (plant) + “mez” (hair)
zhot	n		aid, help	

Word	POS	Tags	Meaning	Derivation
zhu	n		leg	
zi	conj		then, next, after	
zin	n	inal	minute (time)	
zinin	n	inal	a unit of time equivalent to a second	from “zin” + diminutive

Gloss Abbreviations

Gloss	Meaning
SUB.1S	Case marking on verb: first person singular subject
OBJ.3P	Case marking on verb: third person plural object
NOM	Nominative case or agreement
ACC	Accusative case or agreement
DAT	Dative case
LOC	Locative case
POSS	Possessive case
INSTR	Instrumental case
PL	Plural
SG	Singular
PAST	Past tense
PRES	Present tense
FUT	Future tense
PRES.IN.PST	Present tense in past reference point
PASS	Passive
REL	Relativizer
COP.ID	Identity copula
COP.CLASS	Class copula
OBL	Oblique agreement
PTCP	Participle
ADVB	Adverbial
QUES	Question marker
INTERJ	Interjection
NEG	Negative
ORD	Ordinal