

A Short Introduction to Juubes

1. Motivation

Though the original intention for creating a new ‘natural’ language was just to supply a basic vocabulary of words for the new programming language I am inventing, Juubes should also be thought of as a language that can be spoken and written.

Note that inventing a natural language may introduce ambiguities since the same word may be used with different meanings in Juubes. This is intended and reflects the behavior of languages as a whole.

When inventing the vocabulary I tried to free my mind from thinking in ‘mainstream’ natural languages. However, since there are more than 7000 natural languages you may ‘recognize’ some words in a language that you know. That may or may not be coincidentally...

2. Writing System and Pronunciation of Juubes

For denoting the words of the new language the Latin alphabet is used. The intended pronunciation is – of course – not English. If not stated otherwise, the IPA value of the letter is meant. There are, however, some deviations from the IPA system:

- x is pronounced as [ç] or [ɕ] (voiceless postalveolar or alveolo-palatal fricative)
- j is pronounced as [j] (voiced palatal plosive)
- c in word final position is to be pronounced as [ʔ] (glottal stop)
- q in word final position is to be pronounced as [ŋ] (velar nasal)
- y in syllable initial position is pronounced as [j] (voiced palatal fricative)
- y in other positions is pronounced as [u] (close back unrounded vowel)
- if a vowel or consonant is doubled it is to be pronounced long
- if a consonant is followed by h it means that the consonant is aspirated
- word final p, t, k, c tend to have almost no plosion
- if a word ends in a voiced plosive the plosive is longer than normal, namely [b:] instead of [b], this is not reflected in writing
- There is no distinction between half open and half closed vowel phonemes in Juubes, so pronunciation of e may vary between [e] and [ɛ] while pronunciation of o may vary between [o] and [ɔ].

Stress is even and not significant.

Word formation:

- in word initial position, only the following consonant clusters are allowed: ph, th, ch, kh, pr, kr, sw, sh, nn, mm, ff
- in word final position only the following consonant clusters are allowed: nn, mm, ss
- of two consecutive vowels only the first may be long

A syllable may be described by the following formula:

[Ci]Vn[Ce]

where

- Vn: a sequence of 1-3 vowels, only the first may be doubled
- Ci: initial consonant or cluster, where a cluster may be any of the following: ph, th, ch, kh, pr, kr, sw, sh, nn, mm, ff

- Ce: final consonant or cluster, where a cluster may be any of the following: ss, nn, mm
- elements in [] are optional

New words may be formed by putting syllables together. However, not all consonant combinations are allowed in word intermediate positions. The most important rules are:

- a syllable ending with a consonant cluster may not be followed by a syllable beginning with a cluster
- it is not possible to have a sequence of 3 equal consonants or vowels
- it is not possible to have a sequence of more than 3 vowels (a long vowel counts as two vowels).

Note that Juubes doesn't use uppercase letters at the beginning of a sentence.

Words of foreign origin are usually enclosed in angle brackets, like so:

<tiicho> = teacher

3. A Basic Introduction to Juubes

Please be aware that many words in Juubes have more than one meaning so all translations given below may only be one of several possibilities.

3.1. Sentence Formation

There is only one strict rule governing word order: The verb always comes at the end of a sentence. Most other parts of the sentence may be arranged to the liking of the speaker and thus are more a matter of personal style and preferences as of syntax – with some limitations, see chapter 3.3. If possible, the subject of the sentence is left out.

Thus, strictly speaking, Juubes is not to be regarded as an SOV language, but rather [N]NV, where [] indicates an optional phrase.

In Juubes there is no such notion as an indirect object, rather things that are given or received are thought of as influencing the state of the receiver and thus usually have the ending ‘~nyr’ which denotes instrumental or causation.

The word ‘jan’ may be used to end an attributive phrase. Note that a noun phrase may only have one noun (at the end) while all other words have attributive meaning (i.e. are to be understood as adjectives).

If the speaker is the subject of the sentence (i.e. ‘I’) it is usually left out – but not in reflexive sentences.

3.2. Parts of Speech

Words usually cannot be assigned to just one part of speech but may be understood as verb, noun or adjective depending on their position in the sentence. Thus in the vocabulary, these words are given the class ‘vna’ meaning verb, noun or adjective. Certain markers (see below) may be attached to the word stem to clarify their meaning.

3.3. Case Markers

all case markers are suffixes and can only be affixed to nouns (or vna, see above).

case	word	meaning
Benefactive	~xi	someone who gains an advantage
Detrimentive	~et	someone who suffers or is used

Instrumental	~nyr	causative, instrumental
Locative	~hi	locative
Similative	~emi	like, as
Conjunctive	~lea	and, with
Comparative	~mool	more than, most

Notes:

Here and in all following chapters the character ~ is used solely to mark an affix, it is not written in itself.

While ~et ‘officially’ is used to mark the noun phrase of someone suffering, the actual usage is somewhat extended: It may also serve to simply mark the end of a noun phrase if no other marker is appropriate. This is especially true in written language where you cannot indicate the end of a phrase by prosodic means.

A noun phrase can only have one case marker. While the positioning of most noun phrases in a sentence is free (as long as they come before the verb phrase), there are some restrictions:

- a similative phrase must always immediately follow the phrase it refers to.
- a conjunctive phrase must follow the phrase it refers to and may only be separated from it by a similative phrase.

Examples:

banihi soxi taqiet viilnyr joqana. ‘He/she/they write(s) a book with a pen at home.’

(Here the book itself is thought of as ‘suffering’ since there can only be more than one benefactor in a sentence, if one noun phrase is marked with ~et.)

juu taqiet joqana. ‘(I) read a good book’.

juu taqiet leeknyr joqana. ‘(I) read a good book with my glasses’.

In a reflexive sentence, the subject takes the benefactive or detrimental case marker, like so:

thooet sirutnyr chorana. ‘I hurt myself with a knife’.

However: *thooet sirutnyr chorqinana. ‘Who hurt me with a knife?’*

Note that there is no passive voice in Juubes.

If I want to express that somebody else hurt me some hint as to who hurt me would be given like so:

thooet syaxi sirutnyr chorana. 'Somebody hurt me with a knife.'

If the noun has several suffixes (see 3.5), the case marker comes last.

If appending the case marker to a noun would violate word formation rules (see above), a 'y' is inserted between the noun and the case marker.

3.4. Verb Markers

all verb markers are suffixes and can only be affixed to verbs (or vna's).

marker	position	meaning
~(g)e (*)	final	one by one (1)
~(g)ain (*)	final	both, two at a time (2)
~(g)ana (*)	final	all (normal ending)
~(g)osuul (*)	final	repeatedly, over and over again
~(y)doo (+)	final	nominalisation
~(o)fo (#)	final	converbial form, before..., while
~melo	intermediate	uncertain, questionable, unbelievable, unsure
~mu	intermediate	negation
~(y)soor (+)	intermediate	please, suggest, wish
~qin	intermediate	asking for a benefactor
~taaj	intermediate	question

(*) if the verb complex ends with a vowel, a [g] is prefixed to the suffix.

(+) if the last sound before the marker is a consonant, a [y] is prefixed

(#) if the last sound before the marker is a consonant, an [o] is prefixed

There are no verb tenses or aspects in Juubes, so from the verb phrase alone one cannot infer if the action happens in past, present or future. To make that clear, temporal particles may be used. Thus the following translations are just suggestions:

soet sece. 'They were killed one after the other'.

seet syaxi khacain. 'We were both fooled by somebody'.

'yii'et bes ikxi ikmusoorana. 'Please don't replace 'yii' by a named reference.

3.5. Verbal Attributes

In some cases, the instrumental case marker serves as a kind of adverbial clause if it immediately precedes the verb. In English this usage may correspond to using an auxiliary verb, for instance:

guahetnyr + <verb> = must + <verb>

3.6. Copula Usage

In a sentence where swi (to be) is the final verb, usually nouns are not marked with a case marker:

london thoobani swigana. 'London is my home.'

thoo <tiicho> swigana. 'I am (a) teacher.'

Note:

- this doesn't apply if 'swi' is used to denote existence.
- Speakers may use ~et for the first noun phrase to mark its end.
- in these sentences we use the male form for 'I', see below.
- Having a property or profession is no thought of as being good or bad.

Compare:

londonhi thooxi wahana. 'I live in London.'

(if the speaker thinks that living in London is good).

thooet suunavhi theerana. 'I am here/there.'

(lit. I am at a place): 'to be' used locally.

3.7. Word Formation

There are a number of markers that may be affixed to a word to affect its meaning, namely:

word	classes	position	meaning
~av	vna	suffix	diminish, weaken
~cho	vna	suffix	turning a word into its opposite
eno~	na	prefix	(group, set of things, plurality, team, multitude)
~(k)uon	vna	suffix	maker of...

~mu	vna	suffix	not, negation
~nien	vna	suffix	thing used for ...
~(o)ryy	vna	suffix	intensify, reinforce, increase

Notes:

- In some cases, the meaning of a word may be intensified by using ‘yy’ instead of the ‘normal’ vowel. In these cases, if a final consonant is present it may be lost. ~oryy may also sometimes be shortened to ‘yy’. The usage is irregular.
- In principle eno~ could be used to denote plural, but this is not the juubesian usage of this particle. Rather it is used to denote a certain group of things, people, ideas etc., not the notion of plurality alone.

3.8. Personal and Possessive Pronouns

Syntactically all personal pronouns function like nouns. You may, however, use a personal pronoun form as a possessive pronoun by prefixing a noun with it. There is a partial gender distinction in pronouns as shown in the following table.

person	speaker	addressee	word	meaning
1SG	MASC	all	thoo	I (male speaker)
1SG	FEM	all	thaa	I (female speaker)
2SG	MASC	MASC	bu	you (spoken to person of same gender)
2SG	MASC	FEM	bi	you (spoken to person of opposite gender)
2SG	FEM	MASC	bi	you (spoken to person of opposite gender)
2SG	FEM	FEM	bu	you (spoken to person of same gender)
3SG	all	all	so	he/she
1PL.EX	MASC	all	ka	we (exclusive, male speaker)
1PL.EX	FEM	all	ke	we (exclusive, female speaker)
1PL.IN	MASC	MASC	se	we (inclusive, spoken to person of same gender)
1PL.IN	MASC	FEM	sa	we (inclusive, spoken to person of opposite gender)
1PL.IN	FEM	MASC	sa	we (inclusive, spoken to person of opposite gender)

1PL.IN	FEM	FEM	se	we (inclusive, spoken to person of same gender)
2PL	all	all	so	you (plural)
3PL	all	all	so	they

Here:

EX = exclusive we: addressee is not included

IN = inclusive we: addressee is included

In cases where it isn't clear who is addressed (i.e. the reader of a book) it is up to the speaker to choose the form he/she likes. However, in the last years it has become more and more common to use the form 'so' in these cases.

3.9. Place Specification

Juubesians usually do not often specify place. Only if urged to do so or absolutely necessary (which happens very rarely). If you ask them why they will usually argue that this is an unnecessary confinement: If you want to meet me at a certain place then why should I specify that place exactly? This would only mean that I would have to wait there until you come. Given that time specifications are very vague in Juubes this may be a lot of idle waiting.

word	meaning
ci	above
xo	under, below
qem	around, near
uq	behind (spatially)
uqycho	in front of

Note that the place specification is regarded as a kind of attribute to a noun and therefore must precede that noun. The noun phrase it belongs to must have a locative marker:

uqycho banihi theerana. 'I am in front of the house.'

3.10. Time Specification

Juubesians usually do not specify time – at least not exactly. The concept of measuring time (by instruments that in fact only 'measure' space by going

round in circles or even only display digits) to them is very alien. So at best you can get some vague information if you try. You may already have noticed that there is no means of specifying ‘traditional’ tenses with the verb.

word	meaning
muyue	some time ago or later
xab	some day (maybe today)
wayit	(around) noon
wayavit	some time before or after noon
muvosit	morning or evening

Note that juubesians are very reluctant in adopting western thinking about time. To them all days have equal value so they do not feel the need to introduce weeks and weekdays or months: Everybody should be free to use his/her own rhythm for doing things. If the weather on Sundays is suited for work then why shouldn’t you work? If you need more rest then why should you have to wait until next Sunday?

Juubes only contains very few nouns/adjectives/verbs that somehow refer to time. Thus there are no (native) words for ‘new’, ‘old’, ‘fresh’,.. in this language.

3.11. Text References

You may reference previously stated phrases or sentences by certain particles. Though we chose to translate these particles with ‘this’ and ‘that’ you should not think of them as demonstrative pronouns but exclusively as references to preceding phrases or sentences in a text.

word	function	meaning
yii	reference	‘this’ – preceding phrases
ya	reference	‘that’ – phrases preceding ‘this’
ha	reference	phrases preceding ‘that’

3.12. Colors

In Juubes there are seven colors:

word	meaning
idiim	white
rooq	red
rean	yellow
umaq	green/blue
maan	black
madiim	gray
roman	brown

Colors like orange, pink and purple will most likely be perceived as red.

3.13. Numbering System

In Juubes numbers are always written out. The traditional basis of the numbering system was twelve.

word	function	meaning
bu	number or part of	zero
te	number or part of	one
da	number or part of	two
sol	number or part of	three
swe	number or part of	four
phoo	number or part of	five
yaak	number or part of	six
serif	number or part of	seven
joor	number or part of	eight
juban	number or part of	nine
neel	number or part of	ten
gitaq	number or part of	eleven
sak	part of a number	(indicate repeat)

Thus:

$$solyaak = 36_{\text{base}12} = 42.$$

joorbute = 801base12= 1153
joorbu = 80base12= 96

It is, however, avoided to repeat the same digit more than once, instead the special marker ‘sak’ is used followed by a digit that states the number of repeats, thus:

tebusakswe = 10000base12 = 20736.

Note that only the first digit after ‘sak’ indicates the repeat.

Ordinal numbers are indicated by the word ‘sipar’ preceding the number. They usually follow the noun they refer to.

While there are no problems with the outside world when talking about integers, Juubes speakers soon recognized that things are more difficult for number fractions. The decimal system used outside juubesian territory isn’t really compatible with the base12 system: Since 0.1 in juubesian isn’t a finite fraction anymore, trying to communicate results with people using a decimal system always leads to rounding errors and thus misunderstandings.

Therefore a considerable group of juubesians advocate using a different system for fractions than for integer numbers. We call that system base12.30. We give the digits that are needed in the following table:

word	meaning
hubu	twelve
hute	thirteen
huda	fourteen
husol	fifteen
huswe	sixteen
huphoo	seventeen
huyaak	eighteen
huserif	nineteen
hujoor	twenty
hujuban	twenty-one
huneel	twenty-two

hugitaq	twenty-three
fybu	twenty-four
fyte	twenty-five
fyda	twenty-six
fysol	twenty-seven
fyswe	twenty-eight
fyphoo	twenty-nine
bute	thirty

There are, however, some groups preferring other systems. While some still stick to base12.12 others prefer base30.30 or base12.60, base60.60 etc.. All that can be said at this time is that the usage of the system will probably change in the future. There is even a more radical group in juubesian society suggesting that anybody should be free to use the system that they want.

Be aware that as a consequence all juubesian numbers from 12 on upwards have at least two names, depending on whether one uses the base12 or base30 system. Also be aware that written numbers from 12 on upwards may have two different meanings, dependent on the base intended.

It may also be interesting to note that recently there has been a change in court rulings. While in former times, judges usually ruled in favor of base12 there is now a shift towards base30. Whereas some people advocate this swing as a step towards more internationalization other commentaries soberly remark that this switch simply increases court fees by a factor of at least 2.5.

Nowadays, when communicating with the outside world, usually base 30 is the preferred way to exchange numerical results, where the base applies to both integers and fractions (base30.30 in our nomenclature). ***This is the base currently also used in BESYQIT.***

3.14. Foreign Words

If no known translation in Juubes exists, a word from a foreign language may be used, written in angle brackets. By and by these words may be replaced by newly introduced Juubes words or phrases.

3.15. Juubes Vocabulary

see documents juubes-fiiar.csv and fiiar-juubes.csv.