

LÚGBÀRÀTI

ORTHOGRAPHY GUIDE

revised version

December 2013

TABLE of CONTENTS

1. The Lǎgbàràti alphabet	5
2. The Consonant letters	5
2.1 Additional remarks on consonants	7
3. The Vowel sounds	8
3.1 The Vowel letters	8
3.2 Additional remarks on vowels	10
4. Tone	11
4.1 Lexical function of tone	11
4.2 Grammatical function of tone	11
5. Syllable structures	15
6. Nouns and noun phrases	15
6.1 Singular / Plural formation	15
6.2 Diminutives	16
6.3 Numerals	17
6.4 Demonstratives	18
6.5 Possessive pronouns	19
6.5.1 Alienable possession	19
6.5.2 Inalienable possession	19
7. Pronouns	20
7.1 Subject pronouns	20
7.2 Object pronouns	21
8. Verbs	22
8.1 Infinitives	22
8.2 Subject prefixes	23
8.3 Imperative	23
8.4 Perfective: past tense	24
8.5 Imperfective: present tense	25
8.6 Imperfective: future tense	25
8.7 Obligation	26
8.8 Subjunctive	26
8.9 Negation	27
8.10 Expressions consisting of a verb and a noun as complement	27
9. Postpositions	28
10. Appendix	33

INTRODUCTION

This Orthography Guide gives rules for writing and reading Lugbarati. It describes the key features of the revised orthography.

The revision was undertaken from 28 May-14 June, 2013 by the Lugbarati Language Board, under the auspices of the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), with support from USAID-School Health and Reading Program implemented by RTI. The review process was facilitated by experts from SIL LEAD. Some LB members, including the Chairperson, as well as prominent Lugbarati-speaking linguists from higher institutions of learning participated and helped build preliminary consensus in the review process and the outcomes.

Any good writing system needs to be developed with the specific needs of the language and its people in mind, and that is what we did here. Each language has a well-organized sound system and grammatical structure. The rigorous revision process analyzed the sound system and certain aspects of the grammar of Lugbarati. The group discovered and became aware of additional vowels and consonants that required specific writing rules.

The key changes in the revised orthography are that:

- Lugbarati has seven contrastive vowels yet only five were thus far being used in writing the language. (In the Lugbarati Bible, six vowels were used, the extra symbol being <u> for the light ‘u’. No distinctive symbol is seen in the Bible for a ‘light’ <i>.) In this revised edition, the proposal is to use the symbols <i> and <u> for the new, ‘light’ vowels. This gives the seven vowels needed for writing Lugbarati as: *a e i i o u u*
- Lugbarati has 38 consonants, all contrastive in nature. A ‘glottal stop’ was found occurring between vowels, and is therefore a phonemic consonant that has to be represented in the orthography.
- Lugbarati is tonal with three level tones: Low, Mid, and High and a Rising contour tone while some syllables have a HM contour tone. Tone has a very heavy functional load, both in the lexicon and in the grammar. It needs to be represented in the orthography. Nearly every word written with just the vowels and consonant can be pronounced on different tonal melodies for different meanings.

As basic principle for orthography design, the review proposals included representation and teaching of all the contrastive sounds in the orthography with clearly distinguishable

symbols right from the beginning to reduce too much confusion for the reader. This way, readers will be helped a lot to at once recognize many words of the language which otherwise would have to be guessed while reading. If this principle is not adhered to, there will be reduced readability.

A comprehensive draft of the orthography was presented by the Language Board to their speech community which consisted of political, administrative, civic, cultural, religious, and education leaders for their approval on July 17, 2013 at Arua. Subsequently, the orthography rules were applied in the development of instructional materials in August – September 2013.

This orthography is now being tested. That is, it is suitable for use in the language community for publishing of materials for testing purposes only. Before developing the materials, the Writing Panelists were trained to write correctly using their revised orthography and gathered texts and wordlists of in Lugbarati. The primary focus for the materials development workshop from August 15- September 13, 2013 was to write drafts of Pupil Books and Teacher Guides of the four local languages (Lugbarati, Lëb Acoli, Lumasaaba, and Runyoro-Rutooro).

To establish the suitability and ease with which the pupils and teachers work with the developed materials, the materials were tested in two selected schools in each of the four language areas in October 2013. Special emphasis was put on the teaching procedures, methodology, language, materials design and illustrations. RTI, SIL LEAD, NCDC staff, Tutors and Writers trained in methodology and content conducted the Alpha Test.

We would like to thank the entire Lugbarati community, especially members of the Lugbarati Language Board (LLB) and the Panelists, who have worked tirelessly over the years to develop and to revise the orthography and produce this booklet. Our sincere thanks go to SIL LEAD, which provided technical assistance and training during the orthography development period and in the preparation of this document.

During this phase, users are encouraged to give their feedback and raise questions or concerns. All feedback should be sent to the office of the Lugbarati Language Board at the address below:

Chairperson, Lugbrati Local Language Board

1 The Lúgbàràti alphabet

The Lúgbàràti alphabet consists of 45 letters; there are 38 consonants (including the two semi-vowels <w> and <y>) and 7 vowels. Following is the Lúgbàràti alphabet in order, with the capital and lower case forms of each letter:

A a B b 'B 'b C c D d 'D 'd Dr dr E e F f G g Gb gb H h Hw
hw ' I i I i J j K k Kp kp L l M m Mb mb Mgb mgb Mv mv
N n Nd nd Ndr ndr Ng ng Ny ny Nz nz Ij ij O o P p R r S s T t
Tr tr U u U u V v W w 'W 'w Y y 'Y 'y Z z

Since Lúgbàràti has 7 contrastive vowels, there are 2 additional vowel symbols: <i> and <u>, which are treated in section 3 below. Two consonant symbols from the English alphabet are lacking in Lúgbàràti, since the sounds they represent do not exist: <q> and <x>.

2 The Consonant letters

Lúgbàràti has 38 consonants, including a 'glottal stop' which occurs between vowels, written as <'>. The full set of consonants (including the complex consonants and all the digraphs and trigraphs) is therefore the following, in alphabetical order:

B b 'B 'b C c D d 'D 'd Dr dr F f G g Gb gb H h
Hw hw ' J j K k Kp kp L l M m Mb mb Mgb mgb Mv mv
N n Nd nd Ndr ndr Ng ng Ny ny Nz nz Ij ij P p R r S s
T t Tr tr V v W w 'W 'w Y y 'Y 'y Z z

Examples of words with each consonant

b	bà	breast
'b	'bá	person
c	cúù	market

d	dà	to pour
'd	'da	to insult
dr	drà	death
f	fa	to sow (seeds)
g	ga	to cut, chop
gb	gbà	to hit, kick
h	ho	empty
hw	hwî	all
'	à'ú	chicken
j	ja	to heal (of wound)
k	kàkà	maize
kp	kpò	to knock; peel
l	là	to count, read
m	ma	I
mb	mbá	moon
mgb	mgbo	open
mv	mvá	child
n	na	three
nd	ndà	to look for
ndr	ndrí	goat
ng	nga	to work; stand; wait
ny	nya	to eat
ŋ	nyòŋá	happiness
nz	nza	to toil
p	pá	leg
r	ra	to flow (of water)
s	sa	to plant
t	ta	to tolerate
tr	trà	to satisfy
v	và	to understand
w	wa	to ripen (of fruit); to be clean
'w	'wî	to dry

y	ya	to pump
'y	'ye	to do; arrow
z	zá	meat

2.1 Additional remarks on consonants

The consonant <'> represents a glottal stop, which occurs always between two vowels, as in the following examples:

à'ú	chicken
à'í	salt
a'á	(to) stay
a'í	(to) ask, pray

The glottal stop is also used in the emphatic pronouns:

ma'í	I myself
mí'í	you yourself
èrì'í	he himself
àma'í	we ourselves
èmí'í	you yourselves
èyí'í	they themselves

In addition, an apostrophe is used before four other consonants: the implosives <'b> and <'d> and the pre-glottalised sounds <'y> and <'w>:

'bé	hill	'dú	millet
'be	to throw	ò'dú	leopard
'bá	person	é'dí	porridge
e'bú	hoe	a'dí	to cook
'bìlì	chair	o'du	to carry

e'yó matter	'wàrà big (in size)
'yé arrow	'wàrà very dry
à'yà jealousy	'wí dry (v.i)
o'yú horn	à'wí something dry
'yè poison (of a snake)	e'wí dry (v.tr)

3 The Vowel sounds

3.1 The Vowel letters

Lúgbàràti has seven contrastive vowels, represented by seven different vowel letters:

A a E e I i Ɔ ɔ U u Ɔ ɔ

So far, only five have been used in writing the language. However, in the Lugbara Bible, six vowels are used: There is an extra symbol for the light 'u', which is the <u> symbol without a tail. No distinctive vowel symbol can be found in the Bible for a 'light' i. Several linguists who studied the language in the past have indeed recognised seven different vowel sounds, but this has not been represented in the practical alphabet so far. A basic principle for orthography design is that all contrastive vowels and consonants be represented in the orthography. If this principle is not adhered to, there will be reduced readability. Therefore, seven distinct vowel letters have been proposed and accepted.

The vowels may be 'light' (a e ɪ o ɯ) or 'heavy' (i u). The terms 'heavy' and 'light' are popular terms used to differentiate two vowel qualities which in linguistic terms are called [+ATR] and [-ATR] (where ATR means 'Advanced Tongue Root'). Since the 'heavy' vowels are pronounced in the same way as what has been taught and learned as [i] and [u] in schools, the vowel letters <i> and <u> should be used for the 'heavy' vowels. Two new vowel symbols have been chosen for the 'light' vowels: <ɪ> and <ɯ>. Choosing

these symbols makes it possible to place accents on top of the vowel to mark tone.

The vowels <e>, <a> and <o> are inherently ‘light’ vowels, but can be found next to ‘heavy’ vowels in the root. Their pronunciation is then slightly different, but since this is automatic it does not need to be represented in the orthography.

Any written word with a mixture of ‘light’ and ‘heavy’ vowels is likely a compound noun, a noun combined with a postposition, or another combination of two different roots.

Examples of words with each vowel:

a	là	to read, count
e	fè	to give
i	tí	cow
ĩ	fĩ	intestines
o	jó	house
u	rú	name
ũ	fũ	flower

The following are some minimal pairs between <i> and <ĩ> to demonstrate that they are contrastive and need to have separate letters in the alphabet.

sì	to pound	tri	to smear
sì	to write	trĩ	to curse
tí	cow, cattle	sí	tooth
tĩ	in vain	sĩ	hailstone
aví	to sigh		
avĩ	to play		

The following are some minimal pairs between <u> and <ɯ> to demonstrate that they are contrastive and need to have separate letters in the alphabet.

lù	to look	òlù	to look at (plural action)
lɛ̀	to tell	òlɛ̀	to drill holes; to preach
ògù	to steal		
ògɛ̀	to overturn		

3.2 Additional remarks on vowels

Long vowels

There are some words with a lengthened vowel. It is quite possible that these words originally had two syllables with identical vowels, and the middle consonant was subsequently lost. The two vowels can and should be written as double vowels. It would be good to compile a list with such words, so that writers can use that as a guide for writing, until such words will have received an established spelling, and so as to avoid an inconsistent spelling.

Some examples of long vowels that should be written as double vowels are following:

zíi	daughter
mvíi	son
amvíi	sister
adríi	brother
óyóó	monkey
ètóó	rabbit
ngúu	white ants

Care should be taken not to confuse a High tone or a Low-High contour tone with a long vowel. The number of words with two identical vowel symbols is

quite limited. Further study is required to get a better grasp on this phenomenon.

4 Tone

Lúgbàràti has three level tones, Low, Mid, High, and, much rarer, a rising contour tone, LH or a falling contour tone HL. It is not yet completely clear what is causing these. This needs further research. There are also syllables with a HM contour. These sound a lot longer and are probably two vowels, the first with a H tone, the second with a M tone. Here are the proposed ways to write the tones in the orthography:

- Low tone will be written with a grave accent <à>
- High tone will be written with an acute accent <á>
- Mid tone will remain unmarked <a>
- Rising (LH) tone (if necessary) will be written with a combination of the accents for Low and High tone: <ǎ>
- Falling (HL) tone will be written with a combination of the accents for High and Low tone: <â>. (hwî ‘all’).

Nearly every word can be pronounced on different tones or tonal melodies. If tone is not represented and well taught, there will too much confusion for the reader.

4.1 Lexical function of tone

Tone has a very significant lexical function. It makes the difference between two nouns or verbs with different meanings:

Nouns with different tones and different meanings:

èwá	elephant	òrì	fear	tí	cow
éwá	beer	órí	snake	ti	mouth
		òrí	louse/lice		

drí	hand	ètú	sun	ágó	husband
drì	head	étù	coconut	àgó	pumpkin
à'bí	thatching grass	ónzí	cobra		
a'bi	culture	ònzí	bad		

Verbs with different meanings according to their tones:

là	to read, count	yà	to quake, shiver	tò	to fill; to accuse
la	to lie down	ya	to sieve, sort out	to	to heat (water)
zì	to hide	sì	to pound		
zi	to ask, greet	si	to climb down		

4.2 Grammatical function of tone

Tone also has a significant function in the grammar: Certain grammatical constructions are differentiated by tone alone.

1. Tone may mark the difference between singular and plural nouns. Generally, the singular carries High tones, and the plural Low and Mid tones.

ágúpí	àgùpi	man / men
àwúzí	àwuzi	widow
átáláá	àtalaa	pastor, priest
ízíó	ìzio	bridegroom
ízínáká	ìzinaka	bride, newly married woman
óléó	òleo	wizard
ójíó	òjio	middleman, go-between
òríó	òrio	coward
ójóó	òjoo	(witch) doctor
àmbá	àmba	elder
ènzó'bá	ènzò'bá	liar

2. Tone marks the difference between the Subject prefixes

á- 'I' and à- 'we'
 í- 'you sg' and ì- 'you pl'

áfè séndè mvá ní I gave money to the child
 àfè séndè mvá ní we gave money to the child

ánya ényá 'bo I have already eaten food
 ànya ényá 'bo we have already eaten food

ífè séndè mvá ní you (singular) gave money to the child
 ìfè séndè mvá ní you (plural) gave money to the child

ínya ényá 'bo you (singular) have already eaten food
 ìnya ényá 'bo you (plural) have already eaten food

3. Tone marks the difference between singular and plural imperative:

ízi	ask, sg	íngo	sing, sg
ìzi / ìzí	ask, pl	ìngo / ìngó	sing, pl

ílù	look, sg	ílù	tell, sg
ìlù / ìlǔ	look, pl	ìlù / ìlǔ	tell, pl

4. Tone marks the difference between the 3rd person singular and the 3rd person plural of the verbs:

fè he gave gà he crawled
 fě they gave gǎ they crawled

nya he ate ga he dug (a hole)
 nyá they ate gá they dug (a hole)

5. Tone marks the difference between the Future tense and the Obligation ‘had to’ tense. The difference is only in the tone of the pronouns:

Future mà nga ényá nya I will eat food
 Obligation má nga ényá nya I had to eat food

Future èrì nga ényá nya he will eat food
 Obligation èri nga ényá nya he had to eat food

6. The Pronouns *ma* ‘1 sg’ and *mi* ‘2 sg’ can be pronounced on any one of three tones, according to the tense of the verb which follows it.

ma	ma ényá nya	I am eating food
má	má nya ényá	I ate food
mà	mà nga ényá nya	I will eat food

mì	mì séndè fè mvá ní	you are giving money to the child
mí	mí fè séndè mvá ní	you gave money to the child
mì	mì nga séndè fè mvá ní	you will give money to the child

All other pronouns can be pronounced tonally in two ways, according to the tense of the verb which follows:

èrì	Future	èri	Obligation
------------	--------	------------	------------

Èrì nga séndè fè mvá ní. He will give money to the child

Èri nga séndè fè mvá ní. He has to give money to the child

àmà Future	àma Obligation
-------------------	-----------------------

Àmà nga ényá nya. We will eat food

Àma nga ényá nya. We have to eat food

èmì Future	èmi Obligation
-------------------	-----------------------

Èmì nga séndè fě mvá ní. You (pl) will give money to the child

Èmi nga séndè fě mvá ní. You (pl) have to give money to the child

èyì Future	èyi Obligation
-------------------	-----------------------

Èyì nga ényá nya. They will eat food

Èyi nga ényá nya. They have to eat food

5 *Syllable structures*

Lúgbàràti has only open syllables, which means that all syllables end in a vowel. The syllable structures found in the written form of Lúgbàràti are the following: V, CV, CCV, CCCV. When combinations of two or three consonants are found in the orthography, they represent complex consonants: <ny>, <tr>, <mgb>, <ndr>.

6 *Nouns and noun phrases*

6.1 *Singular / Plural formation*

Most nouns have no separate plural form, but nouns referring to humans do have separate singular and plural forms. They often form their plural by a tone change and/or the addition of **-yi**, which is written attached to the noun. The suffix **-yi** causes the previous tone to fall from H to L or from M to L, which is automatic, and does not need to be represented in the tone orthography.

Examples:

òkú	òkúyì	woman / women
òkúàkà	òkúàkáyì	old woman
òmú	òmúyì	visitor, guest
orí'bá	orí'báyì	relative(s)
á'bí	á'bíyì	grandfather
à'bipí	à'bipíyì	grandfather
ónyíá	ónyíáyì	boyfriend
àmúruá	àmúruáyì	newly-married woman
àzì'bá	àzì'báyì	worker
'bá	'báyì	person / people
ezó	ezóyì	girl friend
èdrá	èdrápíyì	mother-in-law
ányá	ányapíyì	father-in-law

In addition, a number of very common animals and the word 'tree' form their plural in the same way as nouns referring to humans:

ànyàpá	ànyàpáyì	animal
tí	tíyì	cow
kàb̀l̀d̀	kàb̀l̀d̀yì	sheep
ndrí	ndríyì	goat
patí	patíyì	tree

6.2 *Diminutives*

Diminutives in Lugbara are formed by making compound nouns with the root for 'child' **mvá**, and 'children' **anzi**. These are also used for marking the young of animals. When two vowels meet in compound nouns, these should be written with a hyphen, for clarity for the reader. This is the case with all compounds with **-anzi**.

dríámvá	drí-anzi	finger(s) (from hand)
pámvá	pá-anzi	toes (from leg/foot)
àríámvá	àríá-anzi	little bird
àdròmvá	àdrò-anzi	nephews, nieces, grandchildren
ròbímvá	ròbí-anzi	baby hippo
èwámvá	èwá-anzi	baby elephant
óyómvá	óyó-anzi	baby monkey

6.3 Numerals

Numerals from 1-10 are single words. After that, they are phrases. The two morphemes *dri* and *ni* should be written separately since the *ni* is a postposition.

1	àlɛ
2	ìrì
3	na
4	su
5	tòwí
6	ázíá
7	ázîrì
8	àrò
9	óròmì
10	mudrí
11	mudrí dri ni àlɛ
12	mudrí dri ni ìrì
13	mudrí dri ni na
14	mudrí dri ni su
15	mudrí dri ni tòwí
16	mudrí dri ni ázíá
17	mudrí dri ni ázîrì
18	mudrí dri ni àrò
19	mudrí dri ni óròmì
20	kàlì ìrì (bundles - two)

30	kàlí na
40	kàlí su
50	kàlí tòwí
60	kàlí ázíá
70	kàlí ázíîrì
80	kàlí àrò
90	kàlí óròmì
100	tárú àlú

Numerals follow the noun and are written separately from the noun:

jó àlú	one house
à'ú ìrì	two chicken
patí na	three trees
kómé su	four chairs
'bá tòwí	five people
tí ázíá	six cows
àríá ázíîrì	seven birds
anzi àrò	eight children
gàrì óròmì	nine bicycles
kópò mudrí	ten cups

6.4 Demonstratives

There are demonstratives in three degrees: close, a bit further, and very far away. In addition, there is a contrast between singular and plural of the noun it modifies. There is a difference between a plain demonstrative and an emphatic demonstrative.

The demonstratives follow the noun.

DEM: singular	DEM.sg,emphatic	DEM: plural	
'dò	'dò'í	'dòyi	close to speaker
'dî	'dî'í	'dîyi	close to hearer
'dà	'dà'í	'dàyi	far away

6.5 Possessive pronouns

There are two kinds of possessive constructions in Lúgbàràti: alienable and inalienable possession. In the alienable possessive construction, the noun is the first element, followed by the pronoun, followed by the postposition *ní*, which should be written separately from the pronoun.

6.5.1 Alienable possession

jó mâ ní	my house
jó mî ní	your house
jó èrì ní	his house
jó ì ní	his (own) house
jó àmà ní	our house
jó èmì ní	your house
jó èyì ní	their house

6.5.2 Inalienable possession

Inalienable possessive constructions are mostly found with body parts and kinship terms. The possessive pronoun comes first, followed by the morpheme *mà* (whose meaning is not clear at present), and then the noun. The first and second person possessives have the pronoun on a falling HL tone. The question has come up if that maybe represents a combination of *má mà*, and *mí mà*. This is not clear at present.

mâ pá	my legs
mî pá	your legs
èrì (mà) pá	his legs
ì (mà) pá	his own legs
àma (mà) pá	our legs
èmi (mà) pá	your legs
èyi (mà) pá	their legs

7 *Pronouns*

There is a full set of independent pronouns, including a reflexive/logophoric pronoun for the 3rd person singular, and possibly also for the 3rd person plural. Independent pronouns should always be written separately from the verb. These pronouns may function as Subject pronoun or Object Pronoun. Their tones may change in different situations. The first one cited is considered the underlying form.

In the tenses in which the verb comes before the Object, there is free choice between the Subject Pronoun and the Subject Prefix. The Subject Prefix is attached to the verb, the Subject Pronoun stands by itself. The reason is that another word, in this case the Object, can come in between when the verb is conjugated in another tense. In the cases where the Object comes before the verb, it is not possible to conjugate the verb with the Subject Prefixes, but only with the independent Subject Pronouns.

1 sg ma, má, mà

2 sg mi, mí, mì

3 sg èri, èrì

3 sg refl ì

1 pl àma, àmà

2 pl èmi, èmì

3 pl èyi, èyì

3 pl refl yi

7.1 *Subject pronouns*

The Subject pronouns have different tones according to the Tense of the verb. The subject pronouns *ma* and *mi* (Mid tone) are used in the present tense; the H-tone pronouns *má* and *mí* are used in the past tense. All other pronouns are used in their basic form in those two tenses. The Low-tone pronouns *mà* and

mì are used in the future tense. At the same time, the other pronouns with the Low tone at the end are also used in the future tense: *èrì, àmà, èmì, èyì*. (This in contrast to the ‘Obligation’ which uses the ones with the Mid tone at the end: *èrì, àma, èmì, èyì*).

ma ényá nya I am eating food
má nya ényá I ate food
mà nga ényá nya I will eat food.

7.2 Object pronouns

Object pronouns may follow the verb (in the Perfective: Subject – Verb - Object), or they come between the Subject and the verb (in the Imperfective: Present Continuous, Future: Subject – Object - Verb).

Examples of Object Pronouns in the Perfective Aspect are the following:

ndrè ma	he saw me	ndrě ma	they saw me
ndrè mî	he saw you	ndrě mî	they saw you
ndrè èrì	he saw him	ndrě èrì	they saw him
ndrè ì	he saw himself	ndrě àma	they saw us
ndrè àma	he saw us	ndrě èmì	they saw you.pl
ndrè èmì	he saw you.pl	ndrě èyì	they saw them
ndrè èyì	he saw them	ndrě yi	they saw themselves

In the Imperfective Aspect: Present

èrì ma ndrě	he sees me
èrì mî ndrě	he sees you
èrì èrì ndrě	he sees him
èrì ì ndrě	he sees himself
èrì àma ndrě	he sees us

èrì èmì ndrě	he sees you.pl
èrì èyì ndrě	he sees them

8 Verbs

All verb roots in the language consist of a short monosyllabic root, CV, although a number of verbs have, in addition, a short prefix. Such verbs are structured VCV. Anything longer which is translated by a verb in English must be considered in detail, cf. 8.10 below, it is probably a combination of a verb plus a noun as complement, which need to be written as two separate orthographic words.

8.1 Infinitives

The infinitive forms of the verbs are formed by a morpheme *zú*, which follows the verb root. Short CV-infinitives have a L tone or a M tone. The VCV infinitives have three tonal patterns: L.L, M.M, and M.H.

Examples of CV-verbs:

Low-tone verbs		Mid-tone verbs	
zìzú	to hide	zizú	to ask
lèzú	to tell	sazú	to plant
làzú	to read, count	lazú	to lie down

Examples of VCV verbs:

L.L verbs		M.M verbs		M.H verbs	
ògùzú	to steal	o'duzú	to carry	a'dízú	to cook
ògèzú	to overturn			avízú	to sigh
òlùzú	to look at			avízú	to play

8.2 *Subject prefixes*

Subject prefixes should always be written together with the verb that is following.

1 sg á-
2 sg í- ~ í-
3 sg zero prefix

1 pl à-
2 pl ì- ~ -ì
3 pl zero prefix, but H tone added at the end: L + H -> LH; M + H -> H

Important for writers and readers!

There is tone contrast on the subject prefix between 1sg and 1 pl: ‘I’ and ‘we’.

There is tone contrast on the subject prefix between 2sg and 2 pl: ‘you sg’ and ‘you pl’.

There is tone contrast between 3 sg and 3 pl on the verb root itself: because of an added (floating) High tone, a L-tone verb gets LH and a M-tone verb get H.

In addition, the 2 sg/pl prefixes are *í-* when they precede a verb root with a ‘light’ vowel, and *ì-* when they precede a verb root with a heavy vowel. (See the section on Imperative, immediately below).

8.3 *Imperative*

The Imperative is formed by the root of the verb, preceded by the 2sg subject prefix *í- ~ i-* or the 2pl subject prefix *ì- ~ ì-* (according to vowel harmony). Since there is vowel harmony, this is considered a prefix, which is attached to the verb. For every verb, there is a tonal minimal pair between the singular imperative and the plural imperative forms. Whenever there is a lexical tonal minimal pair between two verbs, this would result in 4 forms which are tonally contrastive, with 4 different meanings!

Mid tone CV-verbs

ízi	ask! (sg)	ímu	go! (sg)
ìzi / ìzí	ask! (pl)	ìmú / ìmú	go! (pl)
íngo	sing! (sg)	ínze	speak! (sg)
ìngo / ìngó	sing! (pl)	ìnze / ìnzé	speak! (pl)
ítà	dance! (sg)	íla	lie down! (sg)
ìtá / ìtá	dance! (pl)	ìla / ìlá	lie down! (pl)

Low tone CV-verbs

ílù	look! (sg)	ínzì	open! (sg)
ìlù / ìlǔ	look! (pl)	ìnzì / ìnzǐ	open! (pl)
íhà	tell! (sg)	ífè	give! (sg)
ìhà / ìhǎ	tell! (pl)	ìfè / ìfě	give! (pl)
í'yà	dig!, cultivate! (sg)		
ì'yà / ì'yǎ	dig!, cultivate! (pl)		

8.4 Perfective: past tense

The Past Tense has SVO word order, and can be formed with the independent pronoun as well as the subject prefix.

with Subject Prefix	with Subject Pronoun	
á nya ényá	má nya ényá	I ate / have eaten
í nya ényá	mí nya ényá	you ate / have eaten
nya ényá	èri nya ényá	he ate / have eaten
à nya ényá	àma nya ényá	we ate / have eaten
ì nya ényá	èmi nya ényá	you ate / have eaten
nyá ényá	èyi nya ényá	they ate / have eaten

A particle can be added for confirmation: **'bo** 'already'. It needs to be written as a separate word.

8.5 Imperfective: present tense

The Present Tense is formed by the Pronoun, followed by the Object, and then the Verb (SOV word order). Since the subject is not next to the verb, this tense cannot take the Subject Prefixes.

with Subject Pronoun	
ma ényá nya	I am eating food
mì ényá nya	you are eating food
èrì ényá nya	he is eating food
àma ényá nya	we are eating food
èmi ényá nya	you are eating food
èyi ényá nya	they are eating food

Adding the suffix **-riá** would emphasise that it is an ongoing process: 'I am in the process of eating'. This suffix **-riá** is probably composed of a form of the verb 'to be' – **ri-**, followed by the locative suffix **-á**.

8.6 Imperfective: future tense

The Future tense is formed by a Subject Pronoun (never a Subject Prefix), followed by an auxiliary **nga** then the Verb and then the Object. The Subject Pronouns have a Low tone.

with Subject Pronoun	
mà nga ényá nya	I will eat food
mì nga ényá nya	you will eat food
èrì nga ényá nya	he will eat food

àmà nga ényá nya	we will eat food
èmì nga ényá nya	you will eat food
èyì nga ényá nya	they will eat food

8.7 Obligation

The Obligation, ‘had to’ is segmentally the same as the Future Tense; however, the tones are different: in the 1st and 2nd person sg., the Subject Pronoun has a High tone instead of a Low tone in the Future. In all the other Subject Pronouns, the basic form, L.M, is retained, instead of L.L in the Future Tense.

with Subject Pronoun	
má nga ényá nyá	I had to eat food
mí nga ényá nyá	you had to eat food
èri nga ényá nyá	he had to eat food
àma nga ényá nyá	we had to eat food
èmi nga ényá nyá	you had to eat food
èyi nga ényá nyá	they had to eat food

8.8 Subjunctive

At first sight, the Subjunctive is marked by an initial particle *lè* and following the pronoun another particle *mà*. There is no further insight as yet into the meaning of these particles or any connection with other verbs.

lè áje à'búà	I should buy bananas
lè má mà je à'búà	I should buy bananas
lè íje à'búà	you should buy bananas
lè mí mà je à'búà	you should buy bananas
lè mà je à'búà	he should buy bananas

lè àje à'búà	we should buy bananas
lè àma mà je à'búà	we should buy bananas
lè ìje à'búà	you should buy bananas
lè èmi mà je à'búà	you should buy bananas
lè èyi mà je à'búà	they should buy bananas

8.9 Negation

Negation is marked by a negative marker, **ku**, invariable and always at the end of the clause. The negative marker **ku** is mutually exclusive with the affirmative marker **'bo**. Both are written as independent orthographic words. In some tenses, the negative marker **ku** is accompanied by **ní**.

Past: má nya ényá **ku** I have not eaten

In the Present Tense negative, the word order is reversed to SVO, and an additional morpheme **ní** is added:

Present: má nyaní ényá **ku** I am not eating

In the Future Tense, there is an additional morpheme **ní**, which forms the negative together with **ku**. The **-ní** may be written together with the auxiliary **nga**.

Future: má nganí ényá nya **ku** I will not eat

8.10 Expressions consisting of a verb and a noun as complement

There are many expressions consisting of a verb root preceded by a noun. At first sight, it looks like it is one verb, but more investigation has shown that the first part is a noun which serves as complement. The two should therefore be

written separately. This is further confirmed by their behavior in sentences: in the infinitive, the noun precedes the verb; in the past tense, the verb comes first, followed by the noun. This shows that the two elements are separate orthographic words.

àfú fuzá	wrestle to wrestle	(and not: afufuzɛ)
àcó cozá	fight fo fight	(and not: acocozɛ)
drì cezá	head to lead	(and not: dricezɛ)

9 Postpositions

Lágbàràti has no prepositions but only postpositions, which follow the noun rather than preceding it. It appears that there is one general locative postposition: *-á* ‘in, at’. This general locative postposition is written together with the noun it follows. Other postpositions should be written separately from the noun they follow. However, the final vowel *-á*, present in all locative postpositions, is written attached to the noun or the postposition (which is derived from a noun).

The examples in the left columns are nouns followed by the postposition; those in the right columns are the same postpositions, now following pronouns.

locative suffix *-á*, written attached to the noun, often translated by ‘in’ or ‘at’

kúkù	kúkùá	in the kitchen
sùkúlù	sùkúlùá	in school
àkú	àkùá	at home
cû / cúù	cùá / cúùá	at the market
á’bulé	á’buléá	in the valley
gèrì	gèrìá	on the road

drìá ‘on’ (from drì ‘head’)

óní	óní drìá	on the hill	má mà drìá	on me
kómé	kómé drìá	on the chair	mí mà drìá	on you
mésà	mésà drìá	on the table	èrì mà drìá	on him
bírísí	bírísí drìá	on the mat	àma mà drìá	on us
kàtìpálá	kàtìpálá drìá	on the stool	èmì mà drìá	on you pl
kàtándà	kàtándà drìá	on the bed	èyì mà drìá	on them

síá ‘on’ (from sí ‘teeth’)

pàtí	pàtí síá	on the tree
garì	garì síá	on the bike
kómé	kómé síá	on the chair
mútùkà	mútùkà síá	on the car
pìkìpìkì	pìkìpìkì síá	on the motorbike
báká	báká síá	on the rope

aléá ‘in’ (from alé ‘stomach, inside’)

jó	jó aléá	in the house	má mà aléá	in me
yí	yí aléá	in the water	mí mà aléá	in you
òce	òce aléá	in the bush	èrì mà aléá	in him
ámvú	ámvú aléá	in the field	àma mà aléá	in us
ímṽú	ímṽú aléá	in the pot	èmì mà aléá	in you pl
írífúrá	írífúrá aléá	in the dust	èyì mà aléá	in them

ètíá ‘under’ (from ètí ‘buttocks’)

èró	èró ètíá	under the granary	má mà ètíá	under me
pàtí	pàtí ètíá	under the tree	mí mà ètíá	under you
kàlàtùsì	kàlàtùsì ètíá	.. eucalyptus tree	èrì mà ètíá	under him
sámbyá	sámbyá ètíá	.. acacia tree	àma mà ètíá	under us
kábàdì	kábàdì ètíá	under the cupboard	èmì mà ètíá	under you pl
kàtándà	kàtándà ètíá	under the bed	èyì mà ètíá	under them

ngúkúá ‘behind’ (from ngúkú ‘back’)

jó	jó ngúkúá	behind the house	má mà ngúkúá	behind me
kúkù	kúkù ngúkúá	behind the kitchen	mí mà ngúkúá	behind you
jówere	jówere ngúkúá	behind the latrine	èrì mà ngúkúá	behind him
sàkàtì	sàkàtì ngúkúá	... bathshelter	àma mà ngúkúá	behind us
cúù	cúù ngúkúá	behind the market	èmi mà ngúkúá	behind you pl
árójó	árójó ngúkúá	behind the hospital	èyi mà ngúkúá	behind them

èjèléá ‘beside’ (from èjèlé ribs; jó-èjèlé ‘neighbour’)

kúkù	kúkù èjèléá	beside the kitchen	má mà èjèléá	at my side
àkú	àkú èjèléá	beside the home	mí mà èjèléá	at your side
èró	èró èjèléá	beside the granary	èrì mà èjèléá	at his side
árójó	árójó èjèléá	beside the hospital	àma mà èjèléá	at our side
cúù	cúù èjèléá	beside the market	èmi mà èjèléá	at your pl side
kànísà	kànísà èjèléá	beside the church	èyi mà èjèléá	at their side

tia ‘near, in front of’ (from ti ‘mouth’)

jó	jó tia	in front of the house
yí	yí tia	at the shore
àkú	àkú tia	near the home
gèrì	gèrì tia	near the road
òce	òce tia	near the bush
kànísà	kànísà tia	near the church

àgeyíá ‘near’ (close distance)

jó	jó àgeyíá	near the hous	má mà àgeyíá	near me
yí	yí àgeyíá	near the water	mí mà àgeyíá	near you
kúkù	kúkù àgeyíá	near the kitchen	èrì mà àgeyíá	near him
árójó	árójó àgeyíá	near the hospital	àma mà àgeyíá	near us
àkú	àkú àgeyíá	near the home	èmi mà àgeyíá	near you pl
sàkàtì	sàkàtì àgeyíá	... bathing shelter	èyi mà àgeyíá	near them

miléá ‘at’ (from milé ‘eyes’)

jó	jó miléá	at the ceiling	má mà miléá	before my eyes,
yí	yí miléá	at the shore	mí mà miléá	in my presence
ètú	ètú miléá	at the sun	èrì mà miléá	
mbá	mbá miléá	at the moon	àma mà miléá	
’bá	’bá miléá	before people	èrì mà miléá	
anzi	anzi miléá	before children	èyì mà miléá	

ní ‘for’

mvá	mvá ní	for the child	má ní	for me
ágúpí	ágúpí ní	for the man	mí ní	for you
àgùpì	àgùpì ní	for the men	èrì ní	for him
òkú	òkú ní	for the woman	àma ní	for us
			èmì ní	for you
			èyì ní	for them

sì ‘with, by’

drí	drí sì	by hand
àókó	àókó sì	with anger
àyìkò	àyìkò sì	with joy
àv́á	àv́á sì	with pleasure
àf́ú	àf́ú sì	with pride
òkpó	òkpó sì	with force

v́ú (ògògò) ‘near, close to’

jó	jó v́ú ògògò	close to the house	má v́ú (àgògò)	close to me
ótókó	ótókó v́ú ògògò	close to the anthill	mí v́ú	close to you
dúkà	dúkà v́ú ògògò	close to the shop	èrì v́ú	close to him
àkú	àkú v́ú ògògò	close to the home	àma v́ú	close to us
Kampala	Kampala v́ú ògògò	close to Kampala	èmì v́ú	close to you
			èyì v́ú	close to them

be 'with'

mvá	mvá be òcé be tí be ndrí be	with the child with the dog with the cow with the goat	má be mí be èrì be àma be èmi be èyi be	with me with you with him with us with you pl with them
-----	--------------------------------------	---	--	--

10 Appendix

LUGBARA NAMES and ADDRESSES

		Institution / School / PTC	
1. Maasikuru Grace	0773-196031	Lodonga PTC	Wr. Panel
2. Amaoko Kefa	0782-486640	Arua PTC	Wr. Panel
3. Candiru Eunice	0774-487922	Arua Dem P/S	Wr. Panel
4. Ojobiru Alice	0782-823082	Mvara SSS	L. Board
5. Aluonzi Moses	0774-741888	Arua Dem P/S	Wr. Panel
6. Dravile Ben	0782-995488	Retired AC/TE	L. advisor
7. Osoa Flavia	0772-464136	Maracha DEO	L. Board
8. Drazu Isaac	0772-892127	Muni NTC	L. Board
9. Saka Wilfred	0777-777502	Arua LCV	L. Board
10. Dravule Akulino	0772-323001	Arua CPTC/CCT	L. Board
11. Ndebua Symeons	0785-500278	Yole Polytechnic	Wr. Panel