

C O N V E R S A T I O N A L  
T I C U N A

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All right.  
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## UNIT I

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I'm going home.  
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What's your name?

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INTERROGATIVE who; PLURALIZING SUFFIX; IM-  
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## UNIT II

### CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

black	Be quiet.	Of course.
don't	Come here (sing.).	Perhaps.
or	Give it here.	Sit down.
red	Give it to him.	Take care of it or him.
white	Go over there.	Take it.
	Leave it alone.	Watch out.
	No.	What color?

#### C. What are you doing?

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**SUBJECT PRONOUNS; OBJECT PRONOUNS; VERBS**  
to do or make, to fix or arrange, to rubberize, to  
cook, to cultivate, to fish with a hook, to fish with a  
spear, to work, to eat, to write.

### CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

with  
to cause to

## II. GRAMMATICAL AND CULTURAL HELPS

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$\kappa$  This is a "Summary of contents" of Tone Drills, not a detailed listing.

**UNIT III**

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**A. Working and Playing.**

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**DESIDERATIVE SUFFIX** to want to do; **LOCATIVE in**;  
**PREPOSITION for**; **NOUNS**; **VERBS** to stay, to wash,  
to see, to play, to play ball, to mend, to fold, to sew,  
to cut out dress, to pull out (manioc), to toast (man-  
ioc), to know, to touch, to smile at, to deceive, to  
lack.

**CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:**

just (following verbs)                      Because?  
probably  
today

**B. Eating and Drinking.**

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**BOUND AND FREE FORM INTENSIFIERS** very, very  
much so; **NOUNS**; **VERBS** to be thirsty, to get a drink,  
to drink, to be hungry, to eat, to exist, to eat raw  
foods, to shoot.

**CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:**

also    And you?  
large quantity                              Oh?  
me also

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**PRESENT PERFECT EXPRESSION** has or have done;  
**NOUNS**; **VERBS** to be tired, to rest, to have, to be  
sleepy, to go to bed, to sleep, to be awakened, to get  
up, to hear, to be tired of something.

**CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:**

a little bit (time)  
right now

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100

**ADJECTIVES; INTERROGATIVE** whose; **NOUNS; VERB**  
to like.

**CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:**

a little  
number one  
that one

It's nice.

UNIT IV

B. How?

110

INTERROGATIVE how; ADVERB then; NOUNS; VERBS to fry, to prepare meal, to simmer, to pour out, to dump, to mix or stir, to happen, to damage, to be torn, to be mildewed or moldy, to get burned, to be dry, to boil, to talk, to dry, to sweep, to close, to open, to place, to be empty, to be sweet, to be bitter, to be full (a person), to be full (a container), to be drunk, to be flat (lacking seasoning).

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PAST TENSE INDICATORS; INTERROGATIVES when, and why; CONJUNCTIONS but, because (present and past); NOUNS; VERBS to return or come back, to take (animate object), to watch or care for, to have a headache, to have a cold, to take (inanimate object), to take from place to place, to talk badly, disagreeably or detrimentally, to talk well, pleasantly, or beneficially, to talk fast, to talk slowly, to talk quietly, to talk loudly.

CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

later  
tomorrow  
tomorrow at this time

Ah. I don't know.  
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II. GRAMMATICAL AND CULTURAL HELPS

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UNIT IV

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CONDITIONAL if; PREPOSITIONS outdoors, below, under the house, above, beside or around, behind, inside, outside, before, the middle of, ahead of, on top of; NOUNS; VERBS to buy, to sell.

MONEY TERMS

CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

a long time ago  
recently

For whom?  
How much does it cost?  
That's all.  
What for?

B. Colors.

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ADJECTIVES (some colors); NOUNS; VERBS to be black, to be yellow, to be blue-green, to be white, to be red, to be green or blue, to be orange or red-yellow, to bring (sing.), to think upon, to fit well, to tear.

C. Large and small.

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VERB PREFIX go to do; NOUNS; VERBS to be large,

## UNIT V

to be small, to ask, to find, to look for, to go down, to go to pick up (one heavy object), to go to pick up (plural object), to not feel like doing something, to enjoy doing something.

### NUMBERS

#### CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

another one	just one	How big is it?
everyone	many	How many?
everything	quite a few	How many do you want?
just a few	this big	

## II. GRAMMATICAL AND CULTURAL HELPS

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- A. Time - Day and night.

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## UNIT VI

NOUNS; VERBS to appear, to be light, to be dark, to arrive, to be for, to wait for, to object to, to be close, to answer.

### CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

afternoon	midnight	Forget it.
afterwhile	morning	Okay.
cock's crow	night	What time is it?
darkness	noon	
day	quickly	
early morning	sunrise	
late afternoon	yesterday	
light		

### B. Days and weeks.

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UPWARD ACTION SUFFIX; INTENTIONAL SUFFIX to plan or feel like doing; NOUNS; VERBS to stay, to finish, to put.

### DAYS OF THE WEEK

#### CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

about	To me it is ____.
first	Truly?
next	What day is today?
on the left	
on the right	
sometime after tomorrow	
the day after the day after tomorrow	
the day after tomorrow	
the day before yesterday	
this present day	
week	

### C. Months and years.

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UNINTENTIONAL SUFFIX; PRESENT CONTINUATIVE SUFFIX; COMPARATIVE SUFFIXES; SUPER-

## UNIT VI

**LATIVE SUFFIX; NOUNS; VERBS** to study, to be  
ripe, to stop, to go down (river), to come out (pl.),  
to rise (river), to pass, to fly.

**NAMES OF MONTHS**

**CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:**

again	summer	What month is this?
better	superior	
month	winter	
river-rise	year	

### II. GRAMMATICAL AND CULTURAL HELPS

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- A. Telling time
- B. Preposition "for"
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### III. TONE DRILLS

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New three-syllable words presented with tones 3 3 3.  
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## UNIT VII

### I. BASIC CONVERSATION

#### A. Fat and thin.

**NOUNS; VERBS** to be sick, to be fat, to be thin, to have fat arms, to have fat legs, to have thin legs, to be born, to be light-skinned, to be sun-tanned, to be dark-skinned, to have nice clothes, to be dirty, to be happy, to be sad, to have clothes, to put on shoes, to dress, to be cross, to be good-natured, to be fussy, to be gay, to be angry, to be happily smiling, to be lazy, to have a tantrum.

#### CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

and that is why	Change his diaper.	Put shoes on.
	Get dressed.	Take the shoes off.
	Put a hat on.	Undress.

#### B. Long and short.

221

**DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN** these; **NOUNS; VERBS** to be long, to be short, to bring (pl.), to help, to call, to chop with axe, to begin, to be finished, to be hard, to be soft, to be thick, to be thin, to saw, to plane, to chisel, to sand, to chop, to paint, to nail, to sing, to stand up.

#### NAMES OF WOODS

#### CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

Begin.	Make it hard.
Finish it.	Make it soft.
Help him.	That's fine.

#### C. Wide and narrow.

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**SIMILITUDE SUFFIX** to be like; **NOUNS; VERBS** to be wide, to be narrow, to sew, to be old, to be new,

## UNIT VII

to be printed, to be worn (dirty), to mend, to have a toothache, to be naughty, to frown, to smile, to laugh.

### CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

like that	Chisel it.	Paint it.
	Chop it.	Sand it.
	Nail it.	Saw it.

## II. GRAMMATICAL AND CULTURAL HELPS

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- A. Plumpness
- B. Anger
- C. Conjunction "if"
- D. Noun suffix "made of"
- E. Adverb "again"
- F. Adverb "quickly" or "fast"

## III. TONE DRILLS

240

New three-syllable words presented with tones 3 3 2.  
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Drills contrasting two-syllable words with tones 3 1, 3 2, 3 3, and 3 5.

UNIT VIII

I. BASIC CONVERSATION

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A. Being sick.

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NOUNS; VERBS to have a fever, to vomit, to have diarrhea, to evacuate, to bang one's head, to have a dirty face, to have sore eyes, to have a dripping nose, to touch one's mouth, to have an earache, to have a stiff neck, to have dirty hands, to have strong arms, to have aching legs, to kneel, to cut one's foot, to have a stomach-ache, to have a backache, to have long fingernails, to nurse, to not have milk, to itch, to be swollen, to bleed, to cough, to faint, to be cold (dead), to be dead, to have bloody-discharge, to ache all over, to take verbascum poison, to be in labor, to be pregnant, to give birth to one's child, to be weak, to go on to delivery, to have no pulse, to fail to respond to sensory stimuli.

BODY PARTS; COMMON SICKNESSES

CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

deep inside  
outside

How many times \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
What's the matter?  
Who else?

B. Giving medicine.

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SUFFIX EQUIVALENT TO ENGLISH -ly; ADVERBS strongly or powerfully, happily, sadly, usually, often, never, always, almost; NOUNS; VERBS to swallow, to keep or save, to keep (commemorate), to have bloody-diarrhea, to hurt, to have burning on urination, to urinate, to give an injection, to give, to have a sore head, to walk, to be listless, to crush or pulverize, to object or refuse, to respond (to medicine), to take liquid medicine, to treat with medicine, to dance, to drum, to work slowly, to work rapidly, to fight, to cut one's self, to love one another, to hold animosity, to object to a person.

UNIT VIII

CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

carefully  
cold water  
hot water  
like that  
like this  
only  
the same  
whatever

Apply the medicine.  
Bring him here.  
Close your eyes.  
Come again tomorrow.  
Don't eat anything or take  
a snack.  
Don't forget it.  
Don't open your eyes.  
Don't touch it.  
Drink a large quantity of  
water.

Drink this.  
Give him this.  
I hope \_\_\_\_\_.  
Make him swallow this.  
Put in eye medicine.  
Swallow this.  
Wash the sore well.  
Wash your face.  
Wash your hands.

C. Convalescing.

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NOUNS; VERBS to recover, to sting, to be relieved of pain, to recover, to bite, to be cold, to bathe, to catch cold, to be wet (the ground).

CONVERSATIONAL ITEMS:

anything  
each  
finally  
shouldn't  
times

Bathe.  
Don't get up soon.  
Dress him.  
Each one of you take one.  
Even if \_\_\_\_\_.

Forget it.  
How is \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
It doesn't matter.  
Keep it in cold water.  
Make him drink boiled water.

## UNIT VIII

Make him drink milk.	Sit down.
Put the blanket over him.	Stand up.
Put the feet up.	Stay in bed.
Put the head up higher.	Wrap him.
Rest in the hammock.	You shouldn't eat anything.
Rest well.	You shouldn't touch it.

## II. GRAMMATICAL AND CULTURAL HELPS

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- A. Verb "to sit"
- B. Sickness
- C. Medicine
- D. Insects
- E. Childbirth

## III. TONE DRILLS

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New two-syllable words presented with tones 4 2.  
Drills contrasting two-syllable 4 2 words with 3 2 words.  
Contrast of all tones 1 through 5 on two-syllable and three-syllable words.

Drills contrasting level tone 3 and glide 35,  
level tone 2 and glide 23,  
level tone 2 and glide 25,  
level tone 1 and glide 15,  
level tone 5 and glide 15.

Illustrations including tones 1 through 5.

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## INTRODUCTION

### The Alphabet and the Pronunciation of Ticuna

The Ticuna alphabet consists of the following twenty-six letters:

a b c ch d e f g i j l m n

ñ ng o p q r s t u ù w x y

In learning the Ticuna language, the pronunciation is of utmost importance. One could memorize hundreds of useful phrases but if his pronunciation of the letters is faulty, or, if he uses incorrect tones (pitch levels), he will not be understood. Therefore, it is advisable to work on a small amount of material at a time, seeking to acquire the ability to repeat the phrases exactly as they are spoken on the record before going on to new material.

Ticuna vowels are pronounced as follows: \*

a	is pronounced like English a in father.	nama <sub>23 3</sub>	road
e	is pronounced like English e in bet.	nape <sub>2 23</sub>	he sleeps
i	is pronounced like English i in police.	nipa <sub>25 2</sub>	it's dry
o	is pronounced like English o in obey.	otere <sub>3 3 5</sub>	species of fruit
u	is pronounced like English u in rule.	ucapu <sub>3 3 5</sub>	room or enclosure
ù	is pronounced like English oo in took. (with lips spread apart as when smiling).	tù <sub>2</sub> ✕✕	thread (spool of)

\* Due to the transition from Ticuna to English sounds, all examples are necessarily approximations.

✕ See drills for pronunciation of ù on page xxiii.

x is pronounced like the sound an English speaker gets between the o's of "oh-oh." This occurs frequently in Ticuna and is treated like a consonant (glottal stop): x

boxo  
4 3

large white larva

y is usually pronounced like English j in "Jude". This sound may be pronounced like either j, or y of English "yes" when it precedes a:

yura  
3 5

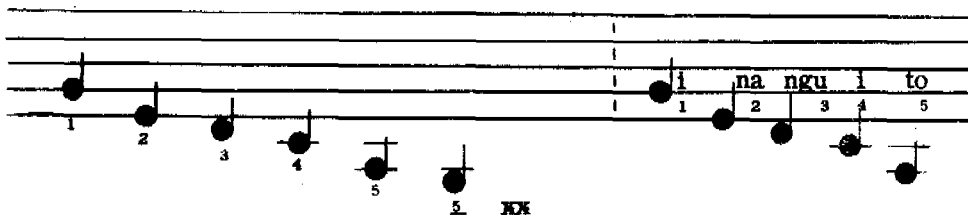
species of palm

yapuna  
3 3 5

oven

Sometimes when the Ticunas speak, their words sound almost like a song. Each syllable seems to correspond to the pitch of a certain note. Different speakers vary in their range; that is, some speakers' whole range seems to be higher or lower, and the over-all expanse of the range may be narrower or broader. Excitement seems to move the individual's whole range higher in pitch:

#### LEVELS



Inangu i to. "Another one is arriving." would be spoken on the notes G,  
1 2 3 4 5

E, D, C, and A, as illustrated above.

x See Drills for pronunciation of x on page xxiv.

KK When the lowest tone is pronounced deep in the throat (laryngealization), it sounds about one note lower. It is distinguished by the line under the vowel.