

JITA ORTHOGRAPHY STATEMENT



SIL International
Uganda-Tanzania Branch

Jita Orthography Statement

Approved Orthography Edition

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1. Introduction

1.1 Classification

Jita is a Bantu language spoken in the Mara Region of Tanzania, on the southeastern shore of Lake Victoria, south and west of Musoma town. It is classified as JE25 in the JE20 Haya-Jita Group of Bantu (Maho 2009: 60) and is part of the Lacustrine languages, a name given because of the proximity to Lake Victoria. The ISO 639-3 code is [jit].

1.2 Data

The data in this study comes primarily from the Jita people (Samson Zablon, George Masatu, Chriford Musyangi, Anna Lucas, Joyce Msesa Kamara, and others) who attended SIL workshops in the Mara region of Tanzania between 2007 and 2009. At the first workshop, approximately 1700 lexical items were collected. At the second and third, the Jita worked together with SIL linguists to discover the phonological and morphological processes in their language and to decide how to write them. Further insight into their orthographic preferences was gleaned from various orthography testing events, as well as ongoing use of the orthography by the Jita translators working fulltime on Jita Bible translation. We are indebted to the Jita participants who sacrificed their time to see this work accomplished.

1.3 Dialects

The Kwaya and Ruri languages are north of the Jita. Jita and Kwaya have 78% lexical similarity. Jita and Ruri share 88% lexical similarity (Hill et al. 2007). Within Jita, there is little variation as far as internal dialects are concerned. A 2007 survey including the Jita language explains, “The Jita people in both research locations agreed that there are no differences within the Jita language. They reported that if you were to hear a person speaking the Jita language you would not be able to tell which part of the Jita speaking area he was from by the way he spoke” (Hill et al. 2007).

Another dialect survey of the Jita language was completed in March 2013. The villages that were visited during the survey are as follows: Isanjo, Kashunga, Masuanga, Rusoli, Bugoji, and Kusenyi. Jita speakers reported that there are two main dialects. One dialect, which is considered the more “pure” Jita is in the northern region of the Jita territory, while the other dialect is found in the southern regions of the Jita territory. The southern dialect is said to borrow more vocabulary from other languages, primarily

Kerewe. In both areas Jita speakers informed us that any translation of the Bible into Jita should be translated into the northern region's dialect. Even though there is a perceived difference in dialect, all Jita speakers from both areas can easily understand one another.

Linguistically, there was no significant difference observed between any of the Jita speaking villages that were included in the survey.

1.4 Format and Purpose of this Orthography Statement

This orthography statement is designed to show the proposed approved orthography of Jita and the reasons behind the orthographic decisions which were made. Although there is phonological and grammatical information in this paper, the intent is not to elaborate on it for any purpose other than giving necessary documentation for the orthographic information. For a basic overview of Jita morphosyntax, see Odom and Robinson (2016).

All data is written using the orthography itself, unless otherwise stated. All glosses are in English. Note that footnotes are used to provide a brief history of the changes of various writing rules over time.

The following three sections focus on phonology, morphophonology, and word-boundary rules. The remaining sections include spelling rules regarding loan words, capitalization, punctuation, difficult words, and a sample Jita text implementing this orthography.

2. Phonology

2.1 Vowels

2.1.1 Vowel Inventory

Jita has a five-vowel, three-height system, with contrastive long vowels (vowel length will be discussed more in-depth in §2.1.2 and §2.1.3). As is common, Jita's five-vowel system is symmetrical with nearly equal spacing to distinguish between vowels. In Table 2.1-a, each vowel is exemplified within a noun root.

Table 2.1-a: Jita Vowels: Graphemes and Phonemes with Examples

Phoneme	Grapheme	Jita Example	English Gloss
/a/	a	isatu	<i>python</i>
/ɛ/	e	omutekere	<i>yam</i>
/i/	i	echisiki	<i>stump</i>
/ɔ/	o	risonono	<i>grasshopper</i>
/u/	u	bhutuku	<i>agama lizard</i>

2.1.2 Vowel Length

Contrastive vowel length exists in Jita, as is demonstrated in either identical or analogous environments in Table 2.1-b below. Jita follows the typical rules for writing long vowels in Bantu languages, in that long vowels are written with two identical vowels.

Table 2.1-b: Contrastive Vowel Length in Jita

	Short		Long	
Vowel	Example	English Gloss	Example	English Gloss
a	orubha <u>a</u> fu	<i>rib</i>	orubha <u>aa</u> ra	<i>side (of something)</i>
e	rite <u>e</u> ka	<i>hole</i>	omuke <u>ee</u> ka	<i>mat</i>
i	risi <u>i</u> na	<i>tree trunk</i>	risi <u>ii</u> na	<i>name</i>
o	okuku <u>o</u> ra	<i>to do</i>	okuku <u>oo</u> ra	<i>to be late</i>
u	isu <u>u</u> ka	<i>hoe</i>	isu <u>uu</u> ka	<i>bed sheet</i>

Note that vowel length is contrastive in both nouns and verbs, and it is also used to distinguish some inflected verb forms. For instance, vowel length is the only difference between the anterior aspect (ANT) and the completive aspect (COMPL), e.g. **bhasimbire** ‘they have dug’ but **bhaaasimbire** ‘they have already dug’.

The following table illustrates where long vowels can occur within stems. As can be seen, long vowels can occur in the initial, medial, or final syllable of a stem.

Table 2.1-c: Long Vowels in Stems

Root Syllable Structure	Jita Example	English Gloss
CVV ¹	ind <u>oo</u>	<i>bucket</i>
CVVCV	eta <u>anu</u>	<i>five</i>
CVVCVCV	orusa <u>abhujo</u>	<i>bailer (for a boat)</i>
CVCVVCV	imba <u>aajo</u>	<i>adze</i>
CVVCVVCV	akase <u>emuuta</u>	<i>bundle</i>
CVCVVCVCV	rinyawa <u>akoma</u>	<i>type of grass</i>

Note that there is not evidence that long vowels occur stem initially.

Vowel length can also occur in some noun prefixes. For classes 5, 9, and 10 the vowel length of the noun class prefix appears to be determined by the syllable count of the following noun stem. For monosyllabic stems the prefix is clearly perceived as long, however on disyllabic stems and longer the prefixes are generally perceived as short. This general perception was confirmed during an orthography testing workshop in July 2015 in which the Jita speakers advised that writing the prefix long on monosyllabic stems and short on longer stems was the best way to accurately represent the Jita language. The following table provides a few examples of nouns in each of these noun classes.

Table 2.1-d: Class 5, 9, and 10 Prefix Vowel Length

Syllables	Class 5	Gloss	Class 9	Gloss	Class 10	Gloss
1	<u>ri</u> igi	<i>egg</i>	<u>i</u> ing'a	<i>cow</i>	<u>ji</u> ifwi	<i>mold</i>
2	<u>ri</u> kara	<i>charcoal</i>	<u>i</u> susi	<i>bedbug</i>	<u>ji</u> maro	<i>knife</i>
3	<u>ri</u> nyinyiga	<i>drizzle</i>	<u>i</u> sikiri	<i>donkey</i>	<u>ji</u> tambara	<i>problem</i>

2.1.3 Vowel Length in Conditioned Environments

Phonetically, vowels sound longer before prenasalized consonants and after palatalized and labialized consonants (see §2.2.3). However, it has been concluded that, in Jita, this length is not phonemic. Therefore, *within roots*, even though these vowels are phonetically long to some degree, they will be written short.

Table 2.1-e gives examples of vowel length after palatalized and labialized consonants.

¹ Word-final long vowels are not common. This example is a borrowed word from Swahili.

Table 2.1-e: Vowel Length Following Cy and Cw

	Cy	Cw
i	-	oku <u>bhw</u> ira <i>to tell</i>
e	is <u>y</u> eka <i>fig</i>	echi <u>m</u> wesi <i>green mamba</i>
a	it <u>y</u> anyi <i>wild animal</i>	ama <u>ch</u> wata <i>saliva</i>
o	oruro <u>f</u> yo <i>whistle</i>	if <u>w</u> ofu <i>turkey</i>
u	-	-

Table 2.1-f provides examples of vowel length before prenasalized consonants. Whenever possible a root-initial or root-medial example is given. If the example is word-final or word-initial, then another example was not available for that environment.²

² The empty boxes in the table indicate that an example has not yet been located. It does not mean that the environment is impossible.

Table 2.1-f: Vowel Length Preceding NC

	i	e	a	o	u
mb	okus <u>i</u> mba <i>to dig</i>	im <u>e</u> mbe <i>hyena</i>	rit <u>a</u> mbi <i>footstep</i>	echik <u>o</u> mbe <i>cup</i>	in <u>u</u> mbu <i>potato</i>
mp	j <u>i</u> mpirya <i>money</i>	-			
nd	okur <u>i</u> nda <i>to wait</i>	okug <u>e</u> nda <i>to go</i>	ribh <u>a</u> ndo <i>blessing</i>	mut <u>o</u> ndo <i>tomorrow</i>	-f <u>u</u> nde <i>narrow</i>
nf	<u>i</u> nfwa <i>grave</i>	-			
ng	is <u>i</u> nga <i>needle</i>	is <u>e</u> nga <i>den</i>	echiy <u>a</u> nga <i>skull</i>	echis <u>o</u> nge <i>summit</i>	imb <u>u</u> ngi <i>jigger</i>
nk	j <u>i</u> nkuma <i>qualities</i>	-			
nj	okuch <u>i</u> nja <i>to slaughter</i>	riy <u>e</u> nje <i>roach</i>	iny <u>a</u> nja <i>lake</i>	is <u>o</u> nji <i>cripple</i>	sun <u>u</u> je <i>cocoon</i>
ns	<u>i</u> nsonga <i>reason</i>	-			
nt	<u>i</u> ntumwa <i>disciple</i>	-			

Exceptions to this rule are some vowels across morpheme boundaries. See §0 for more discussion on preserving morphemes across morpheme boundaries, including instances of writing long vowels in seemingly conditioned environments.

2.1.4 Vowel Clusters and Intervocalic Semivowels

Aside from some exceptions listed below, it is not common to have vowel clusters (i.e. adjacent non-identical vowels) in Jita. When the consonant between two vowels is a semivowel, there is sometimes confusion about whether or not the semivowel <y> or <w> is “really present” and should be written. Research and testing, both formal and informal, was conducted to determine whether or not these intervocalic semivowels are regularly perceived by Jita speakers.³ The presence of Jita semivowels may be in a state

³ A wordlist of 105 Jita words containing intervocalic semivowels and adjacent vowels was recorded. The recordings indicate that many of the words in question truly do contain an intervocalic semivowel in pronunciation, even in some inflected verb forms in which the semivowel is not present underlyingly.

of transition at the moment, which complicates efforts to develop a consistent spelling rule. Nonetheless, our conclusion is that, (1) there are many Jita words in which an intervocalic semivowel is truly present stem-internally and/or across a morpheme boundary and therefore should be written, (2) there are other Jita words in which an intervocalic semivowel is *not* present underlyingly, but there is phonological semivowel insertion (Downing 1996) of which many speakers are aware and therefore should be written, (3) there are many words borrowed into Jita which should be written with “inserted” semivowels in order to preserve normal Jita syllable structure, and (4) there are a few exceptions, that is, words in which vowel clusters *are* allowed, and semivowels are *not* written.

First, Table 2.1-g lists some words in which intervocalic semivowels are deemed truly present (based on Jita speaker perception, as well as linguistic evidence) and are therefore written.⁴

Table 2.1-g: Intervocalic Semivowels

	Jita Example	English Gloss
a)	okubhoya	<i>to close or imprison</i>
	ibhoyero	<i>prison</i>
	okuriya	<i>to pay</i>
	obhufuyi	<i>shortness</i>
b)	imbewo	<i>cold</i>
	okuwora	<i>to get well</i>
	riguwa	<i>bone</i>
	okwawura	<i>to choose</i>

Second, Table 2.1-h lists words in which semivowels are not clearly present underlyingly, but there is evidence that they are inserted phonologically, and they are

Also, there is often a difference between fast speech and slow speech. Many semivowels are not pronounced in fast speech, but they are pronounced in slow speech. Informal interviews were also conducted with Jita speakers. They were asked how they would spell the few words in which no semivowel was clearly pronounced in either fast or slow speech. They agreed that generally, even in many of these words, the semivowels should be written.

⁴A well-attested historic sound change in Jita is that Proto-Bantu *p has become the semivowel **y** in many words (see Table 2.1-G below, examples in (a)), but it is **w** in other words (see examples in (b)). This helps to explain the large number of words with intervocalic **y** and **w** in Jita.

written orthographically.⁵ The majority of Jita speakers tested are highly aware of the presence of these semivowels.

Table 2.1-h: Semivowel Insertion

	Jita Example	Morphemes	English Gloss
a)	owukora	o-u-kor-a	<i>you are doing</i>
	eyitura	e-i-tur-a	<i>it is passing</i>
b)	okwiyesya	o-ku-i-esy-a	<i>to purify oneself</i>
c)	abheeyingisha	a-bha-i-ingish-a	<i>they are inserting themselves</i>
	neeyumbakira	ni-a-i-umbak-ir-a	<i>I have built for myself</i>

The words in a) are present tense verbs, for which the subject is either 2nd person singular or class 9. A semivowel is written between the two vowels of these subject prefixes.

Semivowels are also commonly inserted when three or more vowels meet across morpheme boundaries. For example, in b) desyllabification (see §3.1.2) of **u** blocks desyllabification of the reflexive morpheme **i-**. A semivowel is inserted between **i-** and the vowel-initial verb stem in order to prevent a vowel cluster. In c) coalescence of **a** and **i** (see §3.1.3) results in the long vowel **ee**. When a long vowel is followed by another vowel, a semivowel is phonologically inserted to prevent a vowel cluster.

Third, Table 2.1-i lists some borrowed words which are written with intervocalic semivowels, many of which are Biblical words or names.

⁵ There are various morphophonological rules which prevent vowel clusters (see §0). For example, when the first vowel in a sequence is either **i** or **u**, these high vowels usually desyllabify. If the first vowel is **a**, **a** coalesces with the following vowel, thus creating a long mid-vowel. However, when the first vowel in a sequence is a mid-vowel, or when a long vowel is followed by another vowel, semivowel insertion is the only “repair strategy” used to prevent vowel clusters.

Table 2.1-i: Borrowed Words

Jita Example	English Gloss
riyekaru	<i>temple</i>
jijambarawu	<i>purple</i>
ingamiya	<i>camel</i>
Dawudi	<i>David</i>
Pawuro	<i>Paul</i>

Fourth, the remaining tables in this section show a variety of types of exceptions. These are all words in which intervocalic semivowels are consistently deemed not correct by Jita speakers and are therefore written with adjacent vowels. One exception is reduplicated words. The primary example of reduplication is with demonstratives. The following table provides a few examples of reduplicated demonstratives.

Table 2.1-j: Vowel Clusters with Reduplication

Jita Example	English Gloss
awoawo	<i>right there</i>
eyoeyo	<i>this same one</i>

There may be other exceptions, and they can be added to this list as they arise.

2.2 Consonants

2.2.1 Consonants

The consonant system for Jita consists of 17 consonants, listed in chart form below.

Table 2.2-a: Jita Consonants

Grapheme	Phoneme	Jita Example	English Gloss
bh	/β/	akab <u>b</u> h <u>e</u> b <u>h</u> a	<i>small rat</i>
ch	/tʃ/	ri <u>ch</u> umu	<i>spear</i>
d	/d/	ri <u>d</u> u <u>d</u> u	<i>insect</i>
f	/f/	if <u>f</u> ubu	<i>hippopotamus</i>
g	/g/	oku <u>g</u> uru	<i>leg</i>
j	/dʒ/	ij <u>ang</u> u	<i>cat</i>
k	/k/	omu <u>k</u> ingo	<i>bunch of banana</i>
m	/m/	okubhir <u>m</u> a	<i>to run</i>
n	/n/	omwa <u>n</u> a	<i>child</i>
ng'	/ŋ/	okwitu <u>ng'</u> ana	<i>to pass</i>
ny	/ɲ/	echi <u>ny</u> ara	<i>calf</i>
p	/p/	i <u>p</u> ete	<i>ring</i>
r	/r/	echima <u>r</u> i	<i>truth</i>
s	/s/	i <u>s</u> a <u>s</u> i	<i>fly</i>
t	/t/	oru <u>t</u> ub <u>h</u> a	<i>bowl</i>
w	/w/	echi <u>w</u> una	<i>hut, booth, kiosk</i>
y	/j/	omu <u>y</u> eero	<i>wage, pay</i>

Note that **p** occurs almost exclusively in loanwords, and **d** occurs only in loanwords. There are only two sounds in Jita that do not also occur in Swahili. First is the voiced bilabial fricative [β], represented by the grapheme <bh>. Second is the palatalized alveolar nasal <n'y>, which is not listed in the table above but is discussed in §2.2.2.

All of the Jita consonants can occur both stem initially and stem medially. The table below shows the distribution of these consonants in stems.

Table 2.2-b: Consonant Positioning in Stems

	Stem Initial	English Gloss	Stem Medial	English Gloss
bh	b hura	<i>hide</i>	echifu b ha	<i>chest</i>
ch	ri ch umu	<i>spear</i>	o ch a	<i>burn</i>
d	oru d aara	<i>bridge</i>	isa a di	<i>shirt</i>
f	ri f iro	<i>bubble</i>	orubha f u	<i>side, rib</i>
g	omu g aju	<i>oil</i>	ge g a	<i>take</i>
j	in j agi	<i>zebra</i>	ja a ji	<i>grandfather</i>
k	k aama	<i>write</i>	oruko k a	<i>ditch</i>
m	m aama	<i>uncle</i>	ara m a	<i>wail</i>
n	ama n aga	<i>strength</i>	echina n i	<i>thigh</i>
ng'	ing' oma	<i>small drum</i>	ta ang' ana	<i>begin</i>
ny	ri ny aasi	<i>grass</i>	rifu ny o	<i>curve</i>
p	ri p apai	<i>papaya</i>	ripa p ai	<i>papaya</i>
r	r aasya	<i>announce</i>	ri r ara	<i>town</i>
s	s imba	<i>dig</i>	obhwenge s o	<i>wisdom</i>
t	ri t ama	<i>cheek</i>	imbi t a	<i>sweat</i>
w	omu w ofu	<i>blind person</i>	imbew w o	<i>cold (weather)</i>
y	omu y aga	<i>wind</i>	angu y a	<i>hasten</i>

2.2.2 Digraphs and Trigraphs

The digraph **ny** is the voiced palatal nasal [ɲ]. This digraph was chosen because it is the Swahili grapheme for the same consonant.

The trigraph **ng'** is the velar nasal [ŋ]. This trigraph also was chosen because it is the Swahili grapheme for the same consonant.

The digraph **bh** is the bilabial fricative [β]. This digraph was chosen because Jita speakers want to show that this sound is different from the Swahili consonant . When **bh** is prenasalized it becomes a stop, [ᵐb], and is written as **mb**. When **bh** is followed by either **y** or **w**, it remains a fricative and is written as **bhy** and **bhw**, respectively.

The other digraph **ch** represents the same sound, [tʃ], as in Swahili.

The trigraph **n'y** is the palatalized alveolar nasal /nʲ/. This trigraph was chosen in order to differentiate the palatal nasal [ɲ] represented by **ny** and the palatalized alveolar nasal [nʲ], represented by **n'y**.⁶

2.2.3 Consonant Combinations

The table below shows possible consonant combinations in Jita, in categories of labialization, palatalization, prenasalization, and any combinations of prenasalization plus labialization or palatalization. Words were chosen with a consciousness of whether the segments in question occur stem-internally or across morpheme boundaries. So, if the example of a segment occurs across a morpheme boundary in the following data, it can be assumed it does not exist in the data stem-internally.

Table 2.2-c: Possible Consonant Combinations in Jita

Consonants	Jita Example	English Gloss
Labialization		
bhw	oku bh wira	<i>to tell</i>
chw	ama ch wata	<i>saliva</i>
fw	omu f wimi	<i>hunter</i>
gw	echi g wato	<i>weapon</i>
jw	oku j wirira	<i>to squeak</i>
kw	echi kwa kwa	<i>gill</i>
mw	oku m wega	<i>to cut hair</i>
nw	omu n wa	<i>mouth</i>
ng'w	ing' wena	<i>crocodile</i>
nyw	obhwe ny wa	<i>game</i>
rw	omu r wani	<i>soldier</i>
sw	ji s waro	<i>shame</i>
tw	ama t wasyo	<i>fruit</i>
yw	omubho y wa	<i>prisoner</i>

⁶ The palatalized palatal nasal **nyy**, which is a consonant combination of a palatalized palatal nasal, is illustrated in §2.2.3 below.

Consonants	Jita Example	English Gloss
------------	--------------	---------------

Palatalization

bhy	orurab <u>h</u> yo	<i>lightning bolt</i>
fy	okukof <u>f</u> ya	<i>to gather</i>
gy	okunyeeg <u>y</u> a	<i>loosen, relax</i>
ky	okusik <u>k</u> ya	<i>to cause something to sink</i>
my	okumaam <u>m</u> ya	<i>to put to bed, lay</i>
n'y	okun' <u>n</u> ya	<i>to lay eggs</i>
nyy	okurin <u>y</u> ya	<i>to raise up, put up</i>
ry	omur <u>r</u> ango	<i>door</i>
sy	is <u>y</u> eka	<i>fig</i>
ty	jity <u>t</u> anyi	<i>wild animals</i>

Prenasalization

mb	okum <u>b</u> aka	<i>to build</i>
nd	omund <u>n</u> urume	<i>brother</i>
ng	rire <u>n</u> gesi	<i>shade, shadow</i>
nj	echigan <u>n</u> ja	<i>palm</i>
ns	an <u>s</u> i	<i>under, down</i>

Combinations

mbw	wam <u>b</u> w	<i>fox, jackal</i>
ndw	omusan <u>d</u> wa	<i>fiance (female)</i>
ngw	obhung <u>w</u> ani	<i>compromise</i>
njw	okwiy <u>n</u> ja	<i>to be seated</i>
mby	rigom <u>b</u> ya	<i>kind of tree</i>
ndy	okukon <u>d</u> ya	<i>to amuse</i>
ngy	obhwikum <u>n</u> gya	<i>pride, glory</i>
njy	okwiny <u>n</u> ja	<i>to welcome</i>
nsy	okwan <u>s</u> ya	<i>to bother, annoy</i>

Note that, in general, labialization is more common than palatalization; it occurs with more consonants and at greater frequency, and more clearly within stems. Concerning prenasalization, only five consonants are listed above because these are the only examples of prenasalized consonants which can occur within stems. It is not uncommon in Bantu languages for only voiced consonants to be prenasalized, so it is likely not a coincidence that four of the five prenasalized consonantes involve voiced consonants.

Other consonants, such as **k**, can only be prenasalized as a result of adjacency with other morphemes, such as the class 9/10 nasal prefix on nouns and the 1SG verbal object marker **n-**, for instance: **jinkuma** ‘praise’ or **okunkora** ‘to make me’.

When **r** is prenasalized, it is pronounced and written as **nd**. For example, compare the verb **okurora** ‘to see’ with its form when the 1SG verbal object marker **n-** is used, **okundora** ‘to see me’.

2.3 Tone

Jita has an active lexical and grammatical tone system, which is briefly described in the following section. This description is limited to orthography decisions regarding tone.

2.3.1 Lexical Tone

Despite an active lexical tone system (Downing 1996), very few minimal pairs have been identified, none of which are likely to be ambiguous in context. In the past (from late 2007 until mid 2009), lexical tone was written on nouns and verbs to represent an underlying high tone, whereas words with only low tones were unmarked.⁷ However, it was concluded that writing tone was not necessary in order to read Jita with the correct lexical tone pattern.⁸

2.3.2 Grammatical tone

In Jita, it has been decided to write grammatical tone only in certain cases where there are grammatical minimal pairs distinguished by tone. In grammatical minimal pairs differentiated by tone, the form that has a high tone is marked, whereas the form that has no H tone is not. There are two instances of marking grammatical tone in Jita.

2.3.2.1 Distant Past

To distinguish the distant past tense (P_3) from the completive aspect (COMPL), the distant past tense is marked with a colon before the word, as seen immediately below:

⁷ In nouns, lexical tone was marked with an acute accent on the final vowel of the word, e.g. **omusimú** ‘season’ as opposed to **omusimu** ‘arrow’. Now these words are written identically, without tone marking. In verbs, this was marked with an acute accent on the first vowel of the verb stem, e.g. **okusúbha** ‘to return’ as opposed to **okusubha** ‘to give away one’s daughter in marriage’. Now these words are written identically, without tone marking.

⁸ Further reasearch conducted in March 2009 with five new Jita readers, as well as ongoing informal observation as more and more Jita speakers have learned to read and write, has confirmed this conclusion.

Table 2.3-a: Distant Past and Completive Tone Markings

Jita Example	Morphemes	English Gloss
bhaarimire	bha-a-rim-ire 3PL.SBJ-COMPL-farm-COMPL	<i>they have already farmed</i>
:bhaarimire	bha-a-rim-ire 3PL.SBJ-P ₃ -farm-P ₃	<i>they farmed (long ago)</i>
naateekere	ni-a-teek-ere 1SG.SBJ-COMPL-cook-COMPL	<i>I have already cooked</i>
:naateekere	ni-a-teek-ere 1SG.SBJ-P ₃ -cook-P ₃	<i>I cooked (long ago)</i>
aamukaamiye	a-a-mu-kaam-ir-ire 3SG.SBJ-COMPL-3SG.OBJ-write-APPL-COMPL	<i>s/he has already written to him/her</i>
:aamukaamiye	a-a-mu-kaam-ir-ire 3SG.SBJ-P ₃ -3SG.OBJ-write-APPL-P ₃	<i>s/he wrote to him/her long ago</i>

As shown in the “Morphemes” column above, both the distant past and completive aspect are represented by identical morphemes: the prefix **a-** and suffix **-ire**. For this reason, the forms are always segmentally the same but tonally different.⁹

Questions arose concerning the extent to which the colon should be used on other types of verbs which also refer to the distant past. The colon, as a grammatical tone marker on the distant past, is used for both the affirmative and negative forms of the distant past, but it is not used with the past habitual form (discussed below) or for the auxiliary verb form **-ariga** ‘was’ which is used in compound verbs.¹⁰

The completive form does not have a negative counterpart, so the negative form of the distant past has no tonal minimal pair. There is, however, a vowel length minimal pair between the negative distant past and the negative anterior. The colon is therefore

⁹ Note in the table above the various forms that the suffix can take. These forms are due to phonological processes, namely vowel harmony and imbrication. The suffix **-ire** becomes **-ere** when the vowel that immediately precedes it is a mid-vowel. Imbrication occurs with the suffix **-ire/-ere** when it is immediately preceded by an /r/, either in the verb root or the applicative suffix (see §3.4).

¹⁰ The question of whether to use the colon on the negative, habitual and **-ariga** form was raised during an orthography testing workshop in July 2015 with a group of Jita readers. As a general principle to guide these decisions, they advised that if there is a minimal pair or even a near minimal pair, then they would prefer to write the colon.

helpful with the negative distant past form to quickly differentiate these two forms. The following table provides some examples.

Table 2.3-b: Negative Distant Past and Negative Anterior

Jita Example	Morphemes	English Gloss
bhatarimire	bha-ta-rim-ire 3PL.SBJ-NEG-farm-ANT	<i>they have not farmed</i>
:bhataarimire	bha-ta-a-rim-ire 3PL.SBJ-NEG-P ₃ -farm-P ₃	<i>they did not farm (long ago)</i>
nitateekere	ni-ta-teek-ere 3PL.SBJ-NEG-cook-ANT	<i>I have not cooked</i>
:nitaateekere	ni-ta-a-kor-ere 3PL.SBJ-NEG-P ₃ -cook-P ₃	<i>I did not cook (long ago)</i>
atamukaamiiye	a-ta-mu-kaam-ir-ire 3SG.SBJ-NEG-3SG.OBJ-write-APPL-ANT	<i>s/he has not written to him/her</i>
:ataamukaamiiye	a-ta-a-mu-kaam-ir-ire 3SG.SBJ-NEG-P ₃ -3SG.OBJ-write-APPL-P ₃	<i>s/he did not write to him/her long ago</i>

The colon does not need to be written with the past habitual form or with the **–ariga** form because these past tense forms are composed of different morphemes, and there is no minimal pair or near minimal pair that could be confused with these forms.

Concerning the past habitual, the recent past prefix (**a-**) plus the habitual suffix marker (**-ag**) combine to create a general past habitual, but is often perceived of as a distant past event. This general past tense has a completely different form than the remote past. Therefore, even though past habitual verbs can semantically refer to the distant past, the actual verb form does not look like a distant past verb and thus does not risk being confused with a completive verb. The following table provides some examples.

Table 2.3-c: Distant Past with Habitual Marker

Distant Past	+ Habitual	Morphemes	English Gloss
:bhaarimire	bhaarimaga	bha-a-rim-ag-a 3PL.SBJ-PST-farm-HAB-FV	<i>they were farming habitually</i>
:naateekere	naateekaga	na-a-teek-ag-a 1SG.SBJ-PST-cook-HAB-FV	<i>I was cooking habitually</i>
:aamukaamiiye	aamukaamiraga	a-a-mu-kaam-ir-ag-a 3SG.SBJ-PST-3SG.OBJ-write-HAB-FV	<i>s/he was writing to him/her habitually</i>

The **–ariga** form is a past tense copula which is regularly used as the first verb in past tense compound verbs. As with the past habitual verbs, even though **–ariga** can have a remote past meaning, the actual form is different, and there is no other verb form that could be confused with it. So, it also will not be written with a colon. The following table illustrates this verb form with various subjects.

Table 2.3-d: Copular Distant Past

Subject	Jita Example
1 st person singular	naariga
3 rd person singular	aariga
3 rd person plural	bhaariga
noun class 5	ryariga
noun class 6	gaariga
noun class 7	chaariga
noun class 9	yaariga

2.3.2.2 Third Person Singular Narrative

To distinguish the first person singular recent past (P₁) from the third person singular narrative (NAR), the third person singular narrative is marked with a caret (^) before the word, as seen immediately below:

Table 2.3-e: First Person Singular Recent Past and Third Person Singular Narrative

Jita Example	Morphemes	English Gloss
naasigara	ni-a-sigar-a 1SG.SBJ-P ₁ -remain-FV	<i>I have remained</i>
^naasigara	ni-a-sigar-a NAR-3SG.SBJ-remain-FV	<i>and s/he remained</i>
naagega	ni-a-geg-a 1SG.SBJ-P ₁ -take-FV	<i>I have taken</i>
^naagega	ni-a-geg-a NAR-3SG.SBJ-take-FV	<i>and s/he took</i>

2.3.2.3 Compound Verb Forms

If a verb form that is usually marked with a grammatical tone marker is used in a compound verb form, the grammatical tone marker is still used. Since these grammatical tone markers are meant to communicate grammatical information, not just tonal information, it is seen as helpful to mark the third person singular narrative verb every time, even if context might otherwise differentiate it. This can be seen in the following example.

aariga ^naarofya *he was whistling*

There is no verb form which could possibly necessitate using two grammatical tone markers on the same verb form. Only one grammatical tone marker will occur at a time on a verb form.

3. Morphophonology

This section describes the orthographic conventions concerning phonological changes which occur across morpheme boundaries. Generally, these changes are written as they are pronounced.

3.1 Vowel Adjacency at Morpheme Boundaries

This section describes how vowels interact when they meet across morpheme boundaries, and even across some word boundaries.

3.1.1 Vowel Elision

In Jita, there is one main type of word-internal elision. There is a set of agreement prefixes which have a final *i* in their underlying forms, but the *i* elides before a vowel-initial stem. The prefixes which exhibit this pattern are in the table below.

Table 3.1-a: Elision of *i* Before a Vowel-Initial Stem¹¹

	Prefix	Jita Example	Morphemes	English Gloss
1SG	ni-	naayika	<u>ni</u> -a-yik-a 1SG.SBJ-P ₁ -arrive-FV	<i>I arrived</i>
1PL	chi-	chaarora	<u>chi</u> -a-ror-a 1PL.SBJ-P ₁ -see-FV	<i>we saw</i>
4	ji-	joone	<u>ji</u> -one 4-all	<i>all (cl. 4)</i>
7	chi-	echaara	e-chi-ara AUG-7-finger	<i>finger</i>
10	ji-	ejeene	e- <u>ji</u> -ene AUG-10-self	<i>themselves</i>

Note that there are two other agreement prefixes which end in *i*, but in these cases the *i* palatalizes before another vowel (see §3.1.2 regarding palatalization).

Table 3.1-b: Palatalization of *i* Before a Vowel-Initial Stem

	Prefix	Jita Example	Morphemes	English Gloss
5	ri-	ryariga	<u>ri</u> -a-ri-ga 5.SBJ-PST-COP.LOC-HAB.FV	<i>it was</i>
8	bhi-	ebhyara	e-bhi-ara AUG-8-finger	<i>fingers</i>

Note the difference between how the class 7 and class 8 prefixes interact with vowel-initial stems. The class 7 prefix vowel elides **echaara** ‘finger’ while the class 8 prefix vowel palatalizes **ebhyara** ‘fingers’.

Note that the order of the adjacent vowels is crucial for determining how the vowel adjacency will be resolved. If the *first* vowel in the sequence is *i*, then either elision or

¹¹ These prefixes for classes 4 and 10 are used for various pronominal forms as well as subject and object markers, but are not used for nouns. The class 7 prefix, however, is used for all class 7 agreement, including nouns.

palatalization will take place. If the *second* vowel in the sequence is *i*, then a different process, coalescence, will take place. See §3.1.3 for examples of coalescence.

Elision can also be the result of vowel hiatus at word boundaries, some of which is written and some of which is not. See §4, especially the introduction, which outlines some of the common elision patterns which occur with small words and clitics, as well as the corresponding rules concerning how to write elision across various word boundaries.

Many cases of elision across word boundaries involve the augment vowel, but even in environments other than those dealt with in §4, native speakers and advanced writers of Jita have noted that sometimes the augment vowel is pronounced while other times it is not. A full understanding of the semantic role of the augment vowel is not currently available. It has been determined that there is a general rule that the augment vowel is written if it is pronounced. If it is not pronounced, then it is not written.¹²

3.1.2 Palatalization and Labialization

Desyllabification occurs at morpheme boundaries when *i* or *u* in one morpheme precedes another different vowel-initial morpheme. The vowel *u* labializes, and *i* palatalizes. Noun class prefixes often desyllabify in combination with vowel-initial noun stems, such as the class 3 **omwasi** ‘udder’ and the class 5 **eryuma** ‘iron, metal’.

Another environment in which consonants are palatalized or labialized is when verbal extensions are added to the end of a verb root. This is most clearly seen with the passive suffix **-u**, such as **okwibhurwa** ‘to be born’ or the causative suffix **-y**, such as **okumaamya** ‘to cause to lie down’.

The causative suffix **-y**, when preceded by an alveolar nasal, results in a palatalized alveolar nasal. As mentioned in §2.2.2, the orthographic representation of this sound is <n’y>. The causative suffix **-y**, when preceded by a palatal nasal, results in a palatalized palatal nasal. As illustrated in §2.2.3 the orthographic representation of this sound is <nyy>.

¹² Originally the augment vowel was preserved in writing in all instances. Through informal observation as more and more Jita speakers learned to read, and in discussion with advanced Jita writers, it was concluded that writing these vowels every time hinders fluency of reading and writing.

3.1.3 Assimilation

In Jita, when the final vowel of a morpheme meets the same vowel of a stem, the two vowels join to become a long vowel.

Table 3.1-c: Identical Vowels at a Morpheme Boundary

abha-	+	-ana	→	abhaana	<i>children</i>
eri-	+	-ino	→	eriino	<i>tooth</i>

The vowel sequences /a + i/ and /a + e/ coalesce to form /ee/ in Jita, while /a + u/ and /a + o/ coalesce to form /oo/.

Table 3.1-d: Vowel Coalescence

abha-	+	-ifi	→	abheefi	<i>thieves</i>
ama-	+	-eyo	→	ameeyo	<i>brooms</i>
ahba-	+	-ungwa	→	abhoongwa	<i>they are hearing</i>
ama-	+	-obho	→	amoobho	<i>pits</i>

When this vowel coalescence process occurs it creates a long vowel across a morpheme boundary. Accordingly, spelling rules regarding long vowels across morpheme boundaries are followed, even in seemingly conditioned length environments, as can be seen in the example above **abhoongwa** ‘*they are listening*’ (see §3.2)

3.2 Vowel Length in Conditioned Environments

As stated in §2.1.3, there is an exception to the compensatory lengthening (CL) rule. Within lexical roots, vowels are not written long if they are before a prenasalized consonant or after a palatalized or labialized consonant. But across morpheme boundaries, various vowels are likely to meet and create a long vowel. It is desirable to preserve each of those morphemes and their vowels, so both vowels are written.¹³

These vowels are in fact present underlyingly (not just phonetically lengthened), even if they are in *seemingly* conditioned environments. The following table provides some examples illustrating seemingly conditioned environments in which long vowels are written.

¹³ The exact vowel quality may not be preserved (e.g. when vowels coalesce across morpheme boundaries (see §3.1.3)), but the resulting vowel length is preserved.

Table 3.2-a: Long Vowels in Seemingly Conditioned Length Environments

Orthographic	Morphemes	English Gloss
okwamba	oku-amb-a INF-start-FV	<i>to start</i>
bhaambire	bha-amb-ire 1PL.SBJ-start-ANT	<i>we have started</i>
okuungwa	oku-ungw-a INF-hear-FV	<i>to hear</i>
chichoongwa	chi-cha-ungw-a 1PL.SBJ-PER-hear-FV	<i>we are still hearing</i>

There are also cases in which Jita verbs can have a sequence of three identical vowels underlyingly, but only two vowels are written. For example, if a vowel-initial verb such as **okwayika** ‘*to say*’ is in the 3SG present tense, its underlying morphemes are **ka-a-ayika**, but it is written as **kaayika** ‘*s/he is saying*’, not ***kaaayika**.

Long vowels can be written in CL environments across morpheme boundaries in nouns and infinitives as well. For example, the word **omwenga** ‘*bride*’ in the plural is **abheenga** ‘*brides*’. Due to coalescence (see §3.1.3), it is easy to discover which nouns belong to this exception. As the example **abheenga** ‘*brides*’ illustrates, the low vowel in **abha-** coalesces with the following **e** to become **abhe-**. Similarly, the infinitive verb **okuungwa** ‘*to hear/obey*’ is written with a long vowel in a CL environment.

3.3 Adjacent Nasals

Due to Jita verbal morphology, it is necessary to allow adjacent nasals in the orthography. This preserves meaning that otherwise would be lost. There is only one environment in which adjacent nasals are expected to occur.

The first person singular object marker is /n-/, and its point of articulation depends on the following consonant or vowel. When the following verb root is nasal-initial, then the use of adjacent nasals preserves the object marker. The following examples illustrate this.

Table 3.3-a First Person Singular Adjacent Nasals

Infinitive Verb	English Gloss		With 1SG.OBJ	English Gloss
okunara	<i>to adapt</i>	→	okun <u>nn</u> ara	<i>to adapt me</i>
okunyaasya	<i>to bother</i>	→	okun <u>ny</u> aasya	<i>to bother me</i>
okumaamya	<i>to lay down</i>	→	okum <u>mm</u> aamya	<i>to lay me down</i>
okung'oorotera	<i>to growl at</i>	→	okun <u>ng</u> 'oorotera	<i>to growl at me</i>
okumbakila	<i>to build for</i>	→	okum <u>mm</u> bakila	<i>to build for me</i>

Note in the table above that when the stem initial nasal is one of the digraph nasal letters (**ny** or **ng**), the entire letter is not repeated, only **n**. This can be seen in the examples above '*to bother me*' and '*to growl at me*'.¹⁴

3.4 Imbrication

Imbrication occurs with Jita verbal suffixes when the suffix **-ire** is preceded by an **r** (**r** + **ire**). The **r** could be part of the applicative suffix **-ir**, or could be the end of the verb stem. The resulting imbricated verb ending is most commonly **-iiye**. However, during the imbrication process the **i** of the **-ire** suffix assimilates to the immediately preceding vowel and therefore can also be **-aaye**, **-eeye**, **-ooye**, and **-uuye**.¹⁵ The chart below provides examples of each of these verb endings.

¹⁴ Even though this initially might seem strange to Jita readers and writers, once they understand the significance of the difference in meaning represented by these adjacent nasals, they are very accepting of this convention.

¹⁵ It is only in the process of imbrication that the **i** can become any of the five Jita vowels. Otherwise this suffix follows normal vowel height harmony rules and can be either **-ire** or **-ere**.

Table 3.4-a: Imbrication in Suffixes

Jita Example	Morphemes	English Gloss
bhamariye	bha-mar-ir-ire 3PL.SBJ-finish-APPL-ANT	<i>they have finished</i>
:yaagendereeye	i-a-gender-er-ere 9.SBJ-P ₃ -travel-APPL-P ₃	<i>it traveled towards</i>
eekaaye	a-ikar-ire 3SG.SBJ-reside-ANT	<i>s/he has resided</i>
gaabhooye	ga-a-bhor-ire 6.SBJ-COMPL-rot-COMPL	<i>they have already rotted</i>
akwibhuuye	a-ku-ibhur-ire 3SG.SBJ-2SG.OBJ-birth-ANT	<i>s/he has given birth to you</i>

When a passive suffix is also included in this imbrication process, then the passive suffix **-u** follows the **y** of the imbricated suffix. The resulting suffixes are **-iiywe**, **-aaywe**, **-eeywe**, **-ooywe**, and **-uuywe**.

4. Word Boundaries

The word boundary rules described in this section are needed because of various patterns of elision which take place following some small words and clitics, particularly with the copula, locatives, associatives and the conjunction. There are two main patterns of elision across word boundaries: (1) the noun's augment vowel elides, but the final vowel of the preceding word or clitic remains, and (2), the final vowel in the preceding word or clitic elides while the noun's augment vowel remains. For cases in which the noun's augment elides (pattern 1), this elision does not seem to be a result of fast speech, as these processes occur even in slow, deliberate speech. Therefore, the rule is to follow the pronunciation and *not* to write the elided vowel. For cases in which the final vowel of a preceding word or clitic elides (pattern 2), this is more of a fast-speech phenomenon, so the elided vowels *are* written.

Examples of the first pattern are the copula and the locatives. In the case of the copula, the noun augment elides when the copula **ni** 'is' precedes the noun (see §0). Noun augments also elide when joined with a locative, e.g. **ku-mutegi** 'at/with a fisherman' (see §4.2).¹⁶

¹⁶ In addition to these environments, the augment vowel elides following the adverb **bhuri** 'every'. This can be seen in the text at the end of this document, pages 40 and 42. The augment can also elide as a

Examples of the second pattern are the associative and conjunction. In the case of the associative, often the final vowel of the associative elides, and then the associative is pronounced together with the following word (see §0). The conjunction behaves like the associative, in that the vowel of the conjunction often elides, and the conjunction is pronounced as a clitic at the beginning of the following word (see §4.4). Note, that in both of these cases in which the vowels of the associative and conjunction elide, this elision is not written. Instead, these words are each written as separate words in their full forms.

4.1 Copula

The copula in Jita is **ni**, and it is written as an independent word.¹⁷ The following noun is written without its augment. The following table provides examples of the copula being followed by nouns from various classes.

Table 4.1-a: Copula

	Isolated Noun	Jita Example	English Gloss
1	omutegi	unu <u>ni</u> mutegi	<i>this is a fisherman</i>
3	omukingo	gunu <u>ni</u> mukingo	<i>this is a bunch of banana</i>
6	amabhabhi	ganu <u>ni</u> mabhabhi	<i>these are leaves</i>
7	echibhutu	chinu <u>ni</u> chibhutu	<i>this is a piece of board</i>

For a class 9 noun that follows the copula, the augment vowel elides as expected, but the nasal that forms part of the class prefix does not elide. In class 10, however, the entire **ji-** class prefix elides in pronunciation, again leaving only the nasal. These copular phrases are written as they are pronounced, which means that class 9 and 10 nouns look identical following the copula, but context differentiates them.

discourse feature. According to some Jita speakers, dropping the augment adds flavor to the story and keeps the reader interested. An example of this environment can be seen in the text at the end of this document on page 41.

¹⁷ The copula was originally written with a hyphen, and the augment of the following word was not written. Translators naturally began to write the copula disjunctively (without the hyphen) and found it increasingly difficult to remember the hyphen. Testing was carried out with additional Jita speakers in September 2011, which confirmed that the hyphen is not necessary. When the translators stopped writing the hyphen they began writing the augment vowels on the following noun. Over time it was seen that this was not a helpful rule. It hindered correct pronunciation for new readers and advanced readers and it was not seen as correct Jita.

Table 4.1-b: Copula and Class 9/10

	Isolated Noun	Jita Example	English Gloss
9	inyumba	inu <u>ni nyumba</u>	<i>this is a house</i>
9	idiini	inu <u>ni diini</u>	<i>this is a religion</i>
10	jinyumba	jinu <u>ni nyumba</u>	<i>these are houses</i>
10	jidiini	jinu <u>ni diini</u>	<i>these are religions</i>

Regarding class 9/10 there is an exception that allows the prefix to be written on monosyllabic stems. This is due to the fact that Jita speakers have reported it looking odd and “not being Jita” when they see an example such as **ni swi** ‘*is a fish/are fish*’. So, for these monosyllabic class 9/10 nouns, the prefix vowel is preserved in the orthography, e.g. **ni iiswi** ‘*is a fish/are fish*’. Note that the **j-** of the class 10 prefix still elides.

There are two different types of class 5 nouns, and each type behaves differently following the copula. There are a small set of class 5 nouns which still retain the augment vowel and prefix, **erii-**, and these nouns behave much like the examples above, e.g. the augment simply elides following the copula. However, the majority of class 5 nouns do not have an augment vowel, and when these words follow the copula, the entire prefix **ri-** elides, much like in class 10. In the table below, the first two examples illustrate the small set of words which undergo the normal augment deletion, and the second two examples illustrate the majority of class 5 words, which undergo prefix deletion.

Table 4.1-c: Copula and Class 5

Isolated Noun	Jita Example	English Gloss
eriiso	rinu <u>ni riiso</u>	<i>this is an eye</i>
eriino	rinu <u>ni riino</u>	<i>this is a tooth</i>
ribhabhi	rinu <u>ni bhabhi</u>	<i>this is a leaf</i>
risiina	rinu <u>ni siina</u>	<i>this is a name</i>

The copula is also written disjunctively preceding demonstratives, even when there are unpredictable vowel changes. This can be seen in the following example: **ni eryo** ‘*it is that one (cl. 5)*’ which is pronounced **niiryo**, or **ni oyo** ‘*it is him/her*’ which is pronounced **nuuyo**. It was suggested to write these conjunctively with the vowel change, however it was reported that advanced readers could easily pronounce the vowel change when reading, even when written disjunctively. Writing them disjunctively also reduces

ambiguity with certain forms. The two phrases **ni inu** ‘*it is this one (cl. 9)*’ and **ni enu** ‘*it is that place*’ are both pronounced **niinu**, but they can be distinguished orthographically.

There are a few exceptions to this copula rule. The copula is written conjunctively with the following word when it is followed by a first or second person personal pronoun. These were originally written disjunctively, however, it was observed that this is not “good Jita” and it is hard for readers to pronounce correctly. So, these forms will be written conjunctively. Additionally, the copula is written conjunctively with the short question words **ga** ‘*who*’ and **ki** ‘*what*’. The following table illustrates each of these forms.

Table 4.1-d: Copula Written Conjunctively

Underlying Form	Orthographic Form	English Gloss
ni anye	naanye	<i>it is me</i>
ni awe	naawe	<i>it is you</i>
ni eswe	neeswe	<i>it is us</i>
ni emwe	neemwe	<i>it is you all</i>
ni ki	niki	<i>what is it?</i>
ni ga	niga	<i>who is it?</i>

As the examples above illustrate, when the copula precedes a personal pronoun, a different process is taking place compared to when the copula precedes a noun. Before a noun, the noun’s augment elides, but before a pronoun, the vowel of the copula elides. This is likely part of the difficulty which Jita readers have had with reading this phrase if it is written disjunctively.

4.2 Locatives

Nominal locatives are class 17 and class 18 proclitics, which are written with a hyphen. Even in slow speech, augments and some prefixes elide as a result of the locative, and these elided elements are not written. Therefore, the locative rule matches slow speech pronunciation. Table 4.2-a provides examples of both the class 17 locative **ku** and the class 18 **mu** in combination with nouns from several classes. Note that class 17 generally means ‘*above*’ or ‘*around*’, whereas class 18 means ‘*inside*’ or ‘*among*’. Note that the combination of some locatives with some nouns has an unnatural meaning, which explains the gaps in the following table.

Table 4.2-a: Nominal Locatives

	Jita Example	English Gloss	17	18
1	omutege	<i>fisherman</i>	<u>ku</u> -mutege	-
2	abhategi	<i>fishermen</i>	<u>ku</u> -bhategi	<u>mu</u> -bhategi
11	oruguuyo	<i>village/street</i>	<u>ku</u> -ruguuyo	<u>mu</u> -ruguuyo
12	akabhebha	<i>small rat</i>	<u>ku</u> -kabhebha	-

For class 5 nouns, the initial consonant **r** elides, causing the vowels of the class 17 and 18 clitics to labialize, and they are written as they are pronounced.¹⁸ An exception to this is a small set of nouns in class 5 which have the augment, **e-**. When a noun in this set follows a locative, the augment elides, but the consonant of the prefix remains, so the vowel of the locative does not labialize.

Table 4.2-b: Locatives and Class 5

	Jita Example	English Gloss	17	18
5	ribhabhi	<i>leaf</i>	<u>kw</u> -ibhabhi	<u>mw</u> -ibhabhi
5	erikirisya	<i>faith</i>	<u>ku</u> -rikirsya	<u>mu</u> -rikirsya

When a class 9 or 10 noun follows a locative, the prefix vowel elides. The prefix nasal, however, does not elide. This is much like the pattern seen with the copula in the previous section.

Table 4.2-c: Locatives and Class 9/10

	Jita Example	English Gloss	17	18
9	itare	<i>lion</i>	<u>ku</u> -tare	-
9	injira	<i>path</i>	<u>ku</u> -njira	<u>mu</u> -njira
10	jitare	<i>lions</i>	-	<u>mu</u> -tare
10	jinjira	<i>paths</i>	<u>ku</u> -njira	<u>mu</u> -njira

Proper nouns behave as other nouns when preceded by a locative clitic, and the first letter of the proper noun is capitalized (see §6 for additional information on capitalization).

¹⁸ These locatives have been written in this manner since at least 2010, when the orthography sketch was finalized. No feedback has been received that indicates that this rule is a hindrance to reading fluency or that the writing rule is difficult to follow.

Table 4.2-d: Locatives and Proper Nouns

Jita Example	English Gloss	17	18
Pawuro	<i>Paul</i>	<u>ku</u> -Pawuro	<u>mu</u> -Pawuro
Asiya	<i>Asia</i>	<u>kw</u> -Asiya	<u>mw</u> -Asiya

Adjectives, associatives, and possessive pronouns do not agree with classes 17 or 18; even if the clitic is attached to a noun, these words will still agree with the class of the original noun.

There are four verbal locative forms following verbs in Jita, which are the class 17 and 18 enclitics, **ko** and **mo** respectively, as well as **wo** and **yo**.¹⁹ In writing, these locatives are separated by a hyphen, as can be seen in the following table.

Table 4.2-e: Verbal Locatives

Jita Example	English Gloss
okukukuun'ya- <u>ko</u>	<i>to touch you there</i>
atari- <u>mo</u>	<i>s/he is not in there</i>
ˆnaamusiga- <u>wo</u>	<i>then s/he left him/her there</i>
bhaaje- <u>yo</u>	<i>they should come there</i>

The class 23 clitic **e** is written conjunctively with the following word. This clitic is primarily used with some place names, cardinal directions and 'left' and 'right'. Not all place names, however, allow for this clitic, for example **Emusoma** 'at Musoma' is acceptable, but **Ebhunda** 'at Bunda' is not. This clitic seems to be frozen on a limited number of words. So, the decision has been made to treat it differently than the much more productive class 17 and 18 locatives.

4.3 Associatives

The associative is a prepositional morpheme which associates two nouns, and it agrees in class with the first noun of the construction. Its vowel is underlyingly **a**, but in pronunciation this vowel assimilates to the augment vowel of the following word. However, the Jita people have decided to retain the underlying form in writing the associatives, and to write them disjunctively.²⁰

¹⁹ The enclitics **wo** and **yo** may be class 16 and 23, respectively, but additional research is needed to fully determine the semantics and class of these enclitics.

²⁰ Note that the associative was originally written with vowel changes. That is, the class 9 associative would be written as either **ya**, **yo**, or **ye**. The augment was then not written on the following noun. This

Table 4.3-a provides a variety of examples, showing the correct spelling of each phrase, as well as its actual pronunciation. Associatives are underlined and bolded.

Table 4.3-a: Associatives

Orthographic Representation	Pronunciation of Associative	English Gloss
obhwiganiirisya <u>bhwa</u> abhaanu	<u>bhw</u> abhaanu	<i>thoughts of people</i>
ingani <u>ya</u> Echijita	<u>yech</u> ijita	<i>story of Kijita</i>
omuyarakaji <u>wa</u> Echikerebhe	<u>wech</u> ikerebhe	<i>daughter of Kikerewe</i>
omusaani <u>wa</u> omutwasi	<u>womut</u> wasi	<i>friend of groom</i>
omusango <u>gwa</u> okuruguusya	<u>gwokur</u> uguusya	<i>matter of amazement</i>
abhaanu <u>bha</u> ku-chaaro	<u>bha</u> ku-chaaro	<i>people of on-land</i>

One exception exists for this rule. The associative is written conjunctively when it is followed by the question word clitic **ga** ‘who’. The resulting word is **waaga** ‘whose is he/she’, **ryaga** ‘whose is it (cl. 5)’ etc.²¹

Typically the associative is not written with an initial augment vowel, however, the augment of the associative is written if it is pronounced. When the associative occurs with the augment vowel, it changes the meaning from ‘of’ to ‘who has’ as the following examples illustrate.²²

rule was used from the initial orthography workshop in February 2008 until it was changed to the current rule in April 2010. Once readers and writers are taught the current rule they seem to have no problem with applying it correctly. It does not seem to prevent proper pronunciation when reading.

²¹ It has been suggested that the underlying form is **wa niga**, literally ‘of is who’. When the copula **ni** is dropped, the associative and question word clitic contract into a single word form. Jita children are more likely to say **wa niga**, whereas adult Jita speakers would say **waaga**. Advanced Jita readers reported that it is easier to read this phrase when written conjunctively, and it is more natural Jita.

²² Originally the augment vowel was always written on associatives. In a meeting with Jita translators in November 2014, it was seen that there is a meaning difference when the augment is pronounced versus when it is not pronounced. It was determined that it is necessary to only write the augment vowel on the associative when it is pronounced in order to preserve meaning.

Table 4.3-b: Associatives with Augments

Jita Example	English Gloss
Nyamuwanga <u>owa</u> obhuturo	<i>God who has ability</i>
abhaanu <u>abha</u> obhurame	<i>people who have life</i>

4.4 Conjunction

The conjunction, which is **na** underlyingly, is written disjunctively. In pronunciation, the vowel of the conjunction elides, and the conjunction is pronounced together with the following word, whether that is an augment vowel or any other word-initial vowel. In writing, however, the underlying form of the conjunction is written.²³ Table 4.4-a below illustrates the correct way to write the conjunction, as well as its pronunciation in combination with words from a variety of noun classes.

Table 4.4-a: Conjunction

	Orthographic Representation	Pronunciation	English Gloss
1	<u>na</u> omutegi	nomutegi	<i>and a fisherman</i>
2	<u>na</u> abhategi	nabhategi	<i>and fishermen</i>
5	<u>na</u> ribhabhi	naribhabhi	<i>and a leaf</i>
6	<u>na</u> amabhabhi	namabhabhi	<i>and leaves</i>
7	<u>na</u> echibhutu	nechibhutu	<i>and a small piece of board</i>
9	<u>na</u> itare	nitare	<i>and a lion</i>
11	<u>na</u> oruguuyo	noruguuyo	<i>and a village</i>
15	<u>na</u> okuguru	nokuguru	<i>and a leg</i>

4.5 Question Word Clitics

There are three question word clitics in Jita: **ki** ‘*which, what*’, **ga** ‘*who*’, and **ri** ‘*when*’. These are all written separately without a hyphen. The following table provides examples of each of these question word clitics.

²³ Note that the conjunction was originally written with vowel changes. That is, it would be written as either **na**, **no**, or **ne**. The augment was then dropped off of the following noun. This rule was used from the initial orthography workshop in February 2008 until it was changed to the current rule in April 2010.

Table 4.5-a: Question Word Clitics

Jita Example	English Gloss
Ni muunu <u>ki</u> ?	<i>It is which person?</i>
Chiri-wo <u>ki</u> ?	<i>What is there?</i>
Naawe <u>ga</u> ?	<i>Who are you?</i>
Naanye <u>ga</u> ?	<i>Who am I?</i>
Orusiku <u>ri</u> ?	<i>When? (which day?)</i>
Jirikorekana <u>ri</u> ?	<i>When will they be done?</i>

There are, however, a few exceptions to this rule. If one of these question words is preceded by the copular verb, a preference has been shown to write these as a single word, as follows: **niki** ‘*is what?*’ and **niga** ‘*is who*’. Additionally, associatives are written conjunctively with **ga** ‘*who*’ (see §0).

Finally, the words **kutiki** ‘*how*’ and **korereki** ‘*in order*’ are written conjunctively. They are written conjunctively, even though they appear as if they might have been formed with the same **ki** clitic as the other examples above. When **ki** is separated from the first part of each of these words, the resulting word has no meaning of its own, so it is clear that these words are a single lexical item and must be written conjunctively.

4.6 Reduplication

When a word is reduplicated in Jita it is treated as one word. Verbal, pronominal, and demonstrative reduplication has been noted in Jita, and in all instances of reduplication they are written conjunctively. Table 4.6-a provides some examples.

Table 4.6-a: Reduplication

Jita Example	English Gloss
okusekaseka	<i>to laugh a lot</i>
orwoorwo	<i>this very one</i>
woonewoone	<i>anybody</i>

4.7 Compound Words

There are some words that are clearly compounded into a single word, and native speakers are generally aware that they should be written as a single word as the following examples illustrate.

Table 4.7-a: Compound Words

Jita Example	Orthography	English Gloss
echirumira <i>to hurt</i> + abhiri <i>two places</i>	echirumiraabhiri	<i>type of snake</i>
orwesya <i>purification</i> + abhagore <i>queen</i>	orwesyabhagore	<i>type of grass or tree</i>

There are, however, other lexical items formed by multiple words which are written disjunctively and we consider these to be idiomatic expressions, not compounds. For example, the directional words **ebhuwuruka esuubha** ‘east’ and **ebhugwa esuubha** ‘west’ are written as two words.

5. Loan Words

Loan words are written as they are pronounced in Jita. If the word is borrowed from Swahili and there are sounds in the words that do not occur in Jita (such as [ð, h, b, z]), then the word is adapted to the Jita sound system. For example, the word ‘denomination’ in Jita is borrowed from Swahili (*dhehebu*) and includes three of the sounds listed above. In keeping with Jita phonology it is written **rijeebhu**. Note that the Swahili letter **dh** becomes **j**, the Swahili **h** is dropped resulting in a long vowel, and the Swahili stop **b** becomes the Jita fricative **bh**.

Another example is the Biblical name ‘Boaz’. In Swahili this name is written **Boazi**, but in Jita it is written **Bhowaaji**. As noted above the Swahili stop **b** becomes the Jita fricative **bh**, a semivowel is inserted intervocalically, the **a** is lengthened, and the Swahili letter **z** becomes **j**.

6. Capitalization

Several traditional capitalization rules are followed in the Jita language. The first letter of the first word in a sentence is capitalized. The first letter of proper nouns is capitalized. The first word in a quote is also capitalized.

Nyamuwanga niwe wa okwamba okuta-wo indagano inu.

God surely is the first to bring this covenant.

Niwe Nyamuwanga wa okwamba okuta-wo indagano inu.

Surely God is the first to bring this covenant.

Yeesu [^]naayika ati, “Awe omusigaji, enikubhwira ati, imuka!”

Jesus said, “You boy, I tell you, wake up.”

In the past the first letter of the noun stem was capitalized on proper nouns, **ebhuYawudi** ‘Jewish area’, for example. This convention was changed due to a preference to have the first letter of the whole word capitalized, rather than the first letter of the noun stem, as the following example illustrates.

Pontiyo Piraato omwene, aariga ari mwinangwa wa Ebhuyawudi.

Pontius Pilate himself, he was a ruler of the Jewish area.

If a proper noun is preceded by a locative, such as **ku** or **mu**, the locative is not capitalized, just the proper noun. If a noun preceded by a locative is sentence-initial, then the locative is capitalized. When the sentence-initial noun with a locative is also a proper noun, then both the locative and the noun are capitalized.

Risabhwa ryawo ku-Nyamuwanga inguru ya okubhona omwana, :aaryunguuywe.

Your request to God about finding the child, has been heard.

Ku-Nyamuwanga, gutari-wo gunu gutakuturikana.

With God, there is nothing that is impossible.

7. Punctuation

The following sections outlines the basic rules of punctuation for Jita. In general these rules follow conventional punctuation rules.

7.1 Sentence-Final Punctuation

The period <.> is used at the end of every declarative sentence.

Ku-Nyamuwanga, gutari-wo gunu gutakuturikana.

With God, there is nothing that is impossible.

The question mark is used at the end of an interrogative sentence.

Ni bhukeesya ki bhunu?”

*What are these
greetings?*

The exclamation mark is used at the end of an exclamatory sentence.

Neeya maraayika oyo ^naabhura!

Then that angel disappeared!

7.2 Commas < , >

The comma is used to separate quotations from other portions of the sentence.

Yeesu ^naayika ati, “Awe omusigaji, enikubhwira ati, imuka!”

Jesus said, “You boy, I tell you, wake up.”

The comma is also used to separate different items in a list.

Aagura omuunyu, inyaanya na amafuta ga okuteekera.

He has bought salt, and oil for cooking.

The comma appears after a name when it is mentioned at the beginning of a sentence.

^Naayika ati, “Yowana, nsakire-ko omurimu omukomeeye ogwo.”

He said, “John, help me here in this hard work.”

In general the comma is used when a reader would naturally pause in the course of reading.

7.3 Colon

In addition to its use as a grammatical tone marker (see §2.3.2.1), the colon is also used to begin a list of three or more items. This double use of the colon does not seem to be difficult for readers.

Jitumwa ejo nibho bhanu: Peetero, Yowana, Yakobho, Andereya, Firipo, Tomaasi, Bhatoromaayo, Mataayo, Yakobho omwana wa Arufwayo, Simooni unu aariga ari Omujeroote na Yuuda omwana wa Yakobho.

Those disciples are indeed these: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was a Zealot and Judas the son of James.

The colon is also used in notation of time and scripture references.

Saa 4:00

4:00 o'clock.

Luka 6:7

Luke 6:7

7.4 Quotation Marks

Double quotation marks are used to open and close quotes.

^Naayika ati, “Yowana, nsakire-ko omurimu omukomeeye ogwo.”

He said, “John, help me here in this hard work.”

Single quotation marks are used when there is a quote inside of another quote.

Noongwa ^naamubhwira ati, “Omuunu oyo ni mwifi mukungusi! Bhaamubhuma, ^naarira ati, ‘Maayi awe, bhaanyita!’” Agandi nitagoongwa kisi.

I heard him saying, “That person is a chronic thief! They hit him, he cried, ‘Oh Mom, they have killed me!’” I did not hear the rest well.

8. Difficult Words

8.1 Vowel Length Across Morpheme Boundaries

Words with vowel length at morpheme boundaries are often spelled with a short vowel by mistake, especially when this contradicts the normal rule for writing short vowels in compensatory lengthening environments. For example:

Table 8.1-a: Long Vowels Across Morpheme Boundaries

Morpheme Boundaries		Jita Example	English Gloss
abha + ungwa	=	abhoongwa	<i>they are obeying</i>
eki + ingira	=	ekiingira	<i>we are entering</i>

8.2 Near Minimal Pairs

The verb **okuuja** ‘to come’ has three forms which look similar, as the following examples illustrate.

:eejire	a-a-(i)j-ire		<i>s/he came (long ago)</i>
	3SG.SBJ-P ₃ -come-P ₃		
eejire	a-a-(i)j-ire		<i>s/he has already come</i>
	3SG.SBJ-COMPL-come-COMPL		
ejire aarora	a-(i)j-ire	a-a-ror-a	<i>when s/he saw</i>
	3SG.SBJ-come-ANT	3SG.SBJ-P ₁ -see-FV	

As seen in §2.3.2.1, the colon is used to differentiate a verb inflected for distant past and one inflected for completive aspect. The third form is a specific construction in which the first word is an anterior form of **okuuja**, and the second word is the main lexical verb inflected for recent past (P₁). The anterior verb is pronounced with a short pre-stem vowel and is therefore written with a short vowel. This construction carries a temporal meaning such as ‘*when* __’.

9. Example Text

The following Jita folk tale illustrates the practical use of the orthography:

Abhagasi :bhaarigire Nyamanyimooche

Wanawake Walidanganya Nyamanyimooche

Women tricked Nyamanyimooche

Kara awo mu-chaaro cha Emajita bhaariga bhari-wo
Kale hapo kwenye nchi ya Majita walikuwa wapo huko
Once upon a time in the country of Majita there were

abhamura abhabhiri, owumwi ^naatogwa Nyamanyimooche, owundi
vijana wawili mmoja akaitwa Nyamanyimooche, mwingine
two young boys, one named Nyamanyimooche, the other

^naatogwa Muyigasiku. Nyamanyimooche na Muyigasiku bhaariga
akaitwa Muyigasiku. Nyamanyimooche na Muyigasiku walikuwa
was called Muyigasiku. Nyamanyimooche and Muyigasiku were

bheekasyanyiisye aamwi oruguyo orumwi. Nyamanyimooche aariga ari
jirani pamoja kijiji kimoja. Nyamanyimooche alikuwa yupo
neighbors in one village. Nyamanyimooche was

omufwimi wa jityanyi mw-ibhara, nawe Muyigasiku aariga ari omutungi
mwindaji wa mnyama porini lakini Muyigasiku alikuwa yupo mtunzi
a hunter of bush animals, but Muyigasiku was a keeper

wa jiing'a. Ku-bhubhiri bhwebhwe bhoone bhaariga bhaagabhuuye,
wa koo. Kwenye uwili wao wote walikuwa wameshaoa,
of cows. In their partnership both of them were already married,

bhari na abhagasi. Mbe orusiku orumwi Nyamanyimooche ^neemuka
wapo na wanawake. Basi siku moja Nyamanyimooche akaamka
they had wives. So, one day Nyamanyimooche got up

katondo okuja okufwima. Orusiku orwo ^neeta jityanyi jinyafu
asubuhi kwenda kuwinda. Siku ile akaua mnyama wengi
in the morning to go hunting. That day he killed many animals

^naareetera omugasi waaye amanyi. Mbe bhuri runu aagendaga okufwima
akaletea mke wake maini. Basi kila mara alipokuwa anaenda kuwinda
and he brought his wife livers. So, every time he went hunting

jityanyi, akeeta, aareeteraga omugasi waaye amanyi. Mbe anu
wanyama, akiua, alikuwa akimlelea mke wake maini. Basi hapa
animal, if he kills, he brings livers to his wife. So, here

aajaga na amanyi okureetera omugasi waaye oyo, obhwenji bhwa
alikuwa akija na maini kuletea mke wake huyo, upendo wa
he was coming with livers to bring his wife, this wife of his, the love of

omugasi waaye nibhwiyoungesya muuno ku-murume. Mbe abhakuru
mke wake ukaongezeka sana kwa mume wake. Basi wahenga
his wife increased a lot for her husband. So, the ancestors

:bhaayikire ati, “Nyakubheeyabheeya, :ataamaamisye orusiku!”
walisema kwamba, “Mbeya hakulaza siku!”
said, “A gossip never sleeps!”

Nijimubhona omugasi wa Nyamanyimooche. Bhuri runu bhaaryaga
Zikampata mke wa Nyamanyimooche. Kila mara walipokuwa wanakula
These things were true of the wife of Nyamanyimooche. Every time when they ate

amanyi, ^naagendaga, ^naabhwira-ko omunyaruguuyo waaye omugasi wa
maini, akaendaga, akasema huko mwanakijiji wake mke wa
livers, she was going, she said to her neighbor the wife of

Muyigasiku ati, “Mbe waajimenyere-ko weejaasu!” Omwene ati,
Muyigasiku kwamba, “Basi umeshazijua huko mwenzangu!” Mwenyewe kwamba,
Muyigasiku, she said, “So you have already known, my friend!” Herself she said,

“Uri! Chaabha-yo ki bhe?” “Mbe anye ewaani eyi jisiku jinu
“Hapana kumetokea nini mama? “Basi mimi kwangu huko siku hizi
“No! What happened?” “Anyway, me, at my place, these days

ni bhwa amanyi era!” Mbe omugasi wa Muyigasiku okuungwa kutyo,
ni wa maini tu!” Basi mke wa Muyigasiku kusikia hivyo,
is all livers! So, the wife of Muyigasiku hearing this

^naagenda, ^naabhwira-ko omurume ^naayika ati, “Ee omurume,
akaenda, akaambia huko mume akasema kwamba, “Ee mume,
went and told her husband saying, “Hey my husband,

waajimenyere-ko?” Omurume ati, “Uri! Aa chaabha-yo ki
umeshazijua huko?” Mume kwamba, “Hapana! Aa kumetokea nini
have you already known?” Her husband said, “No! Ah what happened,

omugasi?” “Ambe yungwa-ko jinu! Wa omwikasyanya weeswe eyi
mke?” “Sawa sikiliza hapa hizi! Wa jirani wenu huko
my wife?” “Ok, listen to these things! That of our neighbor there
Nyamanyimooche, omugasi waaye kaayika ati bhuri rusiku
Nyamanyimooche, mke wake anasema kwamba kila siku
Nyamanyimooche, his wife says that every day

ni kurya amanyi era!” Muyigasiku okuungwa kutyo, ^naamubhwira ati,
ni kula maini tu!” Muyigasiku kusikia hivyo, akamwambia kwamba,
is eating only livers!” Muyigasikua heard this, he said to her,

“Ogwo era nigwo ogukunyaasya omugasi! Rinda urore!”
“Hayo tu ndiyo yanakutesa mke! Ngoja uone!”
“These things truly are bother you, my wife! Wait, you will see!”

Mbe Muyigasiku ^neengira mw-igutu ryaye ^naagwata iing’a ^neeta
Basi Muyigasiku akaingia kwenye zizi lake akashika ng’ombe akaua
So, Muyigasiku entered his cattle pen, grabbed a cow and killed it

korereki omugasi waaye wone arye amanyi rwa omugasi wa Nyamanyimooche.
ili mke wake pia akule maini kama mke wa Nyamanyimooche.
in order that his wife also could eat livers like Nyamanyimooche’s wife.

Mbe emisango ejo nijigenderera, kwa okubha bhuri kutyo
Basi mambo hayo yakaendlea kwa kuwa kila hivyo
So, these things continued because every time

Nyamanyimooche aareeteraga omugasi waaye amanyi, Muyigasiku wone
Nyamanyimooche alikuwa anaitea mke wake maini, Muyigasiku pia
that Nyamanyimooche was bringing his wife livers, Muyigasiku also

^naagwata iing’a mw-igutu ryaye ^neetira omugasi waaye, korereki wone
akashika ng’ombe kwenye zizi lake akaulia mke wake ili pia
grabbed a cow from his cattle pen and killed it for his wife in order that she also

arye amanyi. Abhamura bhanu bhoone nibhabha wuti abhayajana
ale maini. Vijana hawa pia wakawa kama wanashindana
should eat livers. Those young boys also were competing
bhuri umwi ^neenda akondisye omugasi waaye.
kila mmoja akaenda apendeze mke wake.
each one was trying to make his wife happy.

Mbe, bhanu :bhaayikire ati, “Omwoyo gwa omuunu ni Bhuraaya!”
Basi, hawa walisema kwamba, “Moyo wa mtu ni Ulaya!”
So, they said, “The heart of a person is Europe!” (One’s heart is hidden)

:Bhataayabhire uri! Omugasi wa Nyamanyimooche unu, na bhwenji bhwone
Hawakukosea hapana! Mke wa Nyamanyimooche huyu, na upendo wote
They were not mistaken! The wife of Nyamanyimooche, with all (that) love

bhunu omurume aamweresyaga, kasi omwene ari na
huu mume alikuwa anamwonyesha kumbe mwenyewe yupo na
for her husband was showing him that she herself was with

ejaaye mu-mwoyo!
zake kwenye moyo!
him in her heart!

Mbe orusiku orumwi Nyamanyimooche ^naakoora okusubha okusooka
Basi siku moja Nyamanyimooche akachelewa kurudi kutoka
So, one day Nyamanyimooche was late returning from

mw-ifwima ryaye eryo. Ejire aasubha okukinga iika kaasanga
kwenye windo lake lile. Wakati aliporudi kufika nyumbani anakuta
his hunting. When he arrived home he found

omugasi waaye bhari-mo bhasatu! Nyamanyimooche aariga achaatuura emijigo
mke wake wapo ndani watatu! Nyamanyimooche alikuwa hajatua mizigo
he wife, inside there were three! Nyamanyimooche had not yet put down (his) loads

jaaye era kutya omugasi waaye ^naareetwa okusooka mu-nju eyo! Okukinga
yake tu hivi mke wake akaletwa kutoka ndani huko! Kufika
in this way and his wife came out from inside there! Arriving (outside)

^naabhuusya omurume waaye chinyabhururu ati, “Ee Nyamanyimooche
akauliza mume wake kiukaliukali kwamba, “Ee Nyamanyimooche
she asked her husband harshly, “Hey, Nyamanyimooche

marefu unu, ni kurwa ki reero waakoora kutya okusubha iika?”
madevu huyu, ni kwa nini leo ulichelewa hivi kurudi nyumbani?”
bearded one, why were you late returning home today?”

Nyamanyimooche ^naamubhuusya ati, “Aa chinu chaakubhiyira
Nyamanyimooche akamwuliza kwamba, “Aa ambacho kilikukasirika
Nyamanyimooche asked her, “Ah, (what) is it that has made you mad

niki omugasi?” Omugasi waaye ^naamusubhya ati, “Eeyi naayigwa!
ni nini mke?” Mke wake akamjibu kwamba “Ah nimechoka!
wife?” His wife answered him, “Ah, I am tired!

Okuguma niisigara iika wenyere bhuri rusiku inguru ya efwima
Kuendelea nikabaki nyumbani mwenyewe kila siku juu ya windo
Going on, me remaining at home by myself every day during (your) hunting

ryawo ati enirwasya amanyi! Araabha ni manyi gaawo, genda
lako kwamba ninauguza maini! Ikiwa ni maini yako, nenda
I am waiting for livers! If it is your livers, go

nago eyo nitachaagenda, noorwo awe wone nitachaakwenda chimwi!”
nayo huko siyataki tena hata wewe pia sikutaki tena kabisa!”
with away with them, I don’t want them anymore, and even you I don’t want at all!

^Naagega amanyi garya Nyamanyimooche aariga areetere,
Akachukua maini yale Nyamanyimooche alikuwa ameleta,
She took the livers, those that Nyamanyimooche was bringing,

^naajuguna eyo! Mbe anu aariga ari Nyamanyimooche
akarusha kwa nguvu hiyo! Basi hapa alikuwa yupo Nyamanyimooche
she threw them away! So, there was Nyamanyimooche,

^naatang’ang’ara, ^naamara, ^neeyayikira mu-mwoyo ati, “Ayi raata!
akashangaa, akamaliza akajisemea moyoni kwamba “Ayi baba!
he was surprised, and he finished, and he said in his heart, “Oh my father!

Reero Nyamanyimooche waachikuna-ko na amanyi gaawo! Jinu joone
Leo Nyamanyimooche umekoma na maini yako! Hizi zote
Today, Nyamanyimooche you have stopped with your livers! All these

naariga niimukorera jaabhuma aasi inda, reero aandema na
nilikuwa nikamfanyia zimepiga chini tumbo, leo amenikataa na
I was doing for her, they have come to nothing, today she has refused me and

okunyeesera amanyi gaani! Kasi nikwo okukora abhakuru :bhaayikire
kunitupia maini yangu! Kumbe ndivyo kufanya wahenga walisema
thrown my livers at me! Surely that is why the old men said

ati, ‘Abhagasi bhataamiisye!’ Reero neerorera omwene!”
kwamba, ‘Wanawake ni wa ajabu!’ Leo nimeionea mwenyewe!”
‘Women are very strange!’ Today I have seen this myself!”

Mbe okwambira orusiku orwo Nyamanyimooche ^naamenya ati,
Basi kuanzia siku ile Nyamanyimooche akajua kwamba,
So, since that day Nyamanyimooche knew that,

‘Sanga niimenya eyisooka inyuma!’
‘Ingekuwa nikijua inatoka nyuma!’
‘Regrets come after the event!’

Orugani niruteera awo!
Hadithi ikaishia hapo!
The story ends here.

Appendix A: Noun Class Augments and Prefixes

Jita has a canonical noun class system. Out of the roughly twenty-four noun classes from Proto-Bantu (PB), Jita has classes 1-15 (listed below), as well as locative classes 17-18 and various remnants of classes 16 and 23. Jita also makes use of the augment, but its exact function syntactically is yet to be determined. The table below lists the augments and class prefixes, along with Jita examples.

Table Appendix A-a: Noun Class Augments and Prefixes in Jita

Class	Augment	Prefix	Jita Example	English Gloss
1	o-	-mu-	omujungu	<i>European (singular)</i>
1a	Ø	Ø	saaja	<i>grandfather</i>
2	a-	-bha-	abhajungu	<i>Europeans (plural)</i>
2a	Ø	bha-	bhasaaja	<i>grandfathers</i>
3	o-	-mu-	omugunda	<i>garden</i>
4	e-	-mi-	emigunda	<i>gardens</i>
5	(e)-	-ri-	ribhabhi	<i>leaf</i>
	e-	Ø	egana	<i>hundred</i>
6	a-	-ma-	amabhabhi	<i>leaves</i>
	Ø	-ma-	magana	<i>hundreds</i>
7	e-	-chi-	echitebhe	<i>chair</i>
8	e-	-bhi-	ebhitebhe	<i>chairs</i>
9	Ø	iN-	injagi	<i>zebra</i>
9a	Ø	i-	isuka	<i>hoe</i>
10	Ø	jiN-	jinjagi	<i>zebras</i>
10a	Ø	ji-	jisuka	<i>hoes</i>
11	o-	-ru-	oruganda	<i>clan</i>
12	a-	-ka-	akabhutu	<i>piece, part</i>
13	o-	-tu-	otwanabhusi	<i>kid (of a goat)</i>
14	o-	-bhu-	obhuremo	<i>war</i>
15	o-	-ku-	okuguru	<i>leg</i>

The next table lists noun class pairings, with the standard pairing listed first in each case.

Table Appendix A-b: Noun Class Pairing

Class	Singular Prefix	Class	Plural Prefix
1	omu-	2	abha-
1a	Ø	2a	bha-
3	omu-	4	emi-
5	(e)ri-	6	ama-
7	echi-	8	ebhi-
9	iN-	10	jiN-
9a	i-	10a	ji-
11	oru-	10 10a	jiN- ji-
12	aka-	8	ebhi-
14	obhu-	6 8	ama- ebhi-
15	oku-	6	ama-

Appendix B: History of Orthography Development and Changes

History of pre-trial status orthography events:

Date	Event or Orthography Issues Tested or Changed
October 2007-February 2008	Initial word collection workshop and series of two orthography development workshops were held, resulting in an experimental orthography.
August 2008	Writers Awareness workshop.
November 2008	Orthography testing which focused on initial writing rules for the associative, conjunction, verbal tone, palatal nasal, and verbs ending in ny .
July 2009	Trial orthography status granted.

History of testing events and orthography changes and additions during the trial orthography period:

Date	Place and Group	Event or Orthography Issues Tested or Changed
September 2011	SIL office, Musoma. This testing occurred during a literacy workshop for shell book production.	Writing the underlying form of the conjunction and associative: The translators suggested that it would be better to write the underlying form of the associative and conjunction in April 2010. In September 2011, testing showed that it would indeed be better to write the underlying -a of the associative rather than writing the surface form.
		Capitalization of the first letter of the whole word: Initially the first letter of the stem of a proper noun was capitalized. The literacy department suggested that it could be better to capitalize just the first letter of the whole word, rather than the stem (February 2011). Jita readers confirmed that capitalization of the first letter of the whole word was preferred.
		Writing the copula disjunctively: Both literacy and translation departments raised the issue of writing the copula with a hyphen. It was more natural, in most cases, to write it disjunctively. Jita readers

		agreed that the copula should be written disjunctively.
January 2014	SIL office, Musoma. Meeting with relevant office staff to discuss orthography issues.	Differentiating :eejire, eejire, and ejire: This was a standardization that was made to differentiate the distant past :eejire ‘ <i>s/he came</i> ’, completive eejire ‘ <i>s/he has come</i> ’, and anterior ejire ‘ <i>when s/he was...</i> ’.
		Use of the colon limited to distant past and negative distant past: It was seen that only the distant past and negative distant past needed to be marked with the colon. The other forms, which also carry a distant past meaning, are not minimal pairs, or near minimal pairs, and therefore do not need the colon to differentiate them (e.g. the distant past habitual, and –ariga forms). We also tested this issue in July 2015 and those results can be seen below.
November 2014	SIL office, Musoma. Review of all orthography issues in Jita with relevant office staff.	Writing copula and personal pronoun conjunctively: It was observed that the copular verb, if followed by a personal pronoun, is pronounced together with the pronoun, and the translators advised that it has confused readers to see them written disjunctively. They advised that these should be written conjunctively so we agreed to test this issue. See below (July 2015 testing) for these results.
		Adjacent nasals: It was observed that when a 1 st person singular prefix is followed by a nasal-initial morpheme, then information would be lost without allowing adjacent nasals in the orthography. Upon discussion with the translators they agreed that it was necessary to write adjacent nasals in this context. (See §3.3 regarding adjacent nasals)
		Write the augment vowel when it is pronounced:

		Originally the augment vowel was written every time, on associatives and nouns. It was observed that the augment is not always pronounced, and writing it everywhere was hurting the readability of the orthography. It also seems as though the augment can affect the word semantically (e.g. see §4.3 regarding associatives). It was determined that it is better to generalize the augment rule by saying “write the augment only if it is pronounced”.
May 2015	SIL office, Musoma. Meeting with Jita translators to clarify orthography questions raised during a spell check of the book of Acts.	Intervocalic semi-vowels: There was no rule in the orthography sketch addressing non-identical vowel adjacency. It was noted that the translators were regularly writing semi-vowels intervocalically. Translators declared a clear and strong preference for inserting these as often as possible, as it was a more accurate representation of the Jita language. Additional research on this issue took place in 2016 (see below), confirming the appropriateness of writing these semivowels.
July 2015	Jita reading group: Butata *See <i>Results of Jita orthography testing</i> 28-29.7.2015	<p>Vowel length of class 5, 9, and 10 prefixes: We wanted to verify that it was accurate to write monosyllabic stems with a long prefix and longer words with a short prefix. The reading group confirmed that this is accurate.</p> <hr/> <p>Use of the colon on negative & aariga forms: It was unclear whether the colon should be used on negative distant past tense forms or the aariga form. The Jita reading group voiced a clear preference for writing the colon on the negative form since there is a near minimal pair, and the colon would be useful for differentiating these forms. However, since the aariga form is unique</p>

		<p>and there is no near minimal pair with this form, a preference was voiced for not using the colon in such a situation.</p> <p>Pronunciation of imbrication of verbal suffixes: There is a pronunciation shift occurring currently in Jita. The older generation pronounces this imbrication as –iiywe, while the younger generation is shifting to –iiwe. There was a clear and strong preference to write like the older generation speaks when a conflict arises such as this.</p>
2016	Musoma, Tanzania	Additional research and informal testing was carried out concerning how to write intervocalic semivowels. The rule which had previously been in use was confirmed, meaning that very few vowel clusters are allowed in Jita.
July 2016	Jita language committee: Bunda	The Jita language committee gave their approval of the Jita orthography.
September 2016	Musoma, Tanzania	Approved Orthography Status Granted

Appendix C: Abbreviations

1	first person; class 1
2	second person; class 2
3	third person; class 3
4	class 4, etc
C	unspecified consonant
V	unspecified vowel
N	unspecified noun
ANT	anterior aspect
APPL	applicative
AUG	augment
COMPL	completive
COP.LOC	copular locative
HAB	habitual
NAR	narrative
FV	final vowel
NEG	negative
OBJ	object marker
P ₁	recent past
P ₃	distant past
PER	persistent
PL	plural
INF	infinitive
PST	past
SBJ	subject marker
SG	singular

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