The Grammar Basics of Jita
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Contents

About Jita

Jita is a Bantu language, classified as JE25 (Maho 2009:60) and spoken in the Mara Region of Tanzania.

Purpose of this document

This document is intended to be a very basic reference to the common morphosyntactic structures of Jita. Though we hope that other linguists will be able to make use of it, its primary purpose is to help non-linguists (who have at least a small amount of linguistic training) who are working with the language, e.g. literacy workers, translators, translation consultants, spell-checkers, etc. For this reason, data is written in the Jita orthography, with the aim that it is more accessible to our intended audience.

A note about the Jita orthography

The following language data is written in orthographic form. Occasional reference to phonetic and underlying forms is made when helpful. There are five vowels and seventeen consonants in Jita. Graphemes (letters) are shown below, along with the phonemes (sounds) which they represent.

Vowels:

graphemes	i	e	a	o	u
phonemes	i	ɛ	ɑ	ɔ	u

Consonants:

graphemes	bh~b	ch	d	f	g	j	k	m	n	ng'	ny	p	r	s	t	w	y
phonemes	β~b	tʃ	d	f	g	dʒ	k	m	n	ŋ	ɲ	p	ɾ	s	t	w	j

Note that all five vowel phonemes have long vowel counterparts. There is both contrastive and conditioned vowel length, but only contrastive length is written. See the Jita Orthography Statement (Odom 2016) for more information.

1. Noun classes

Jita nouns usually consist of a noun stem, a noun class prefix and an augment vowel.

Table 1-A: Noun Classes

Class	Augment	Prefix	Jita Example	English Gloss
1	o-	mu-	omurume	*man*
1a	Ø	Ø	raata	*father*
2	a-	bha-	abharume	*men*
2a	Ø	bha-	bharaata	*fathers*
3	o-	mu-	omurimu	*job*
4	e-	mi-	emirimu	*jobs*
5²	Ø	ri-	risiina	*name*
	e	ri-	eriino	*tooth*
6	a-	ma-	amasiina	*names*
7	e-	chi-	echitebhe	*chair*
8	e-	bhi-	ebhitebhe	*chairs*
9	i-	N-	injagi	*zebra*
9a	i-	Ø	idara	*light*
10	Ø	jiN-	jinjagi	*zebras*
10a	Ø	ji-	jidara	*lights*
11	o-	ru-	oruganda	*clan*
12	a-	ka-	akasinga	*small island*
14	o-	bhu-	obhuremo	*war*
15	o-	ku-	okuguru	*leg*
17	Ø	ku-	ku-ruguuyo	*around the village*
18	Ø	mu-	mu-ruguuyo	*in the village*
22	Ø	gaa-	gaabhutuku	*lizards*
23³	Ø	e-	Emusoma	*at Musoma*

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² There are two forms of the class 5 prefix. The most common is just the prefix **ri-**. The less common form includes the augment vowel **e-**, and it most often occurs with monosyllabic stems.

³ This noun class has minimal attestation in Jita and is not productive. There are class 23 demonstratives, and the class 23 prefix **e-** seems to be frozen onto a limited number of place names and other nouns.

Note that in classes 9 and 10 there is a nasal that is articulated homorganically with the first consonant of the noun root. The class 9 and 10 nasals are articulated as [ŋ], written as **ny**, when followed by a vowel-initial root, as is seen in the example **inyayika** '*language*'.

Class 17 and 18 locatives are prefixed to nouns. This causes the augment vowel to elide, as seen in the chart above (**oruguuyo** '*village*', but **ku-ruguuyo** '*around the village*').

Usual singular-plural noun class pairings include 1/2, 1a/2a, 1a/22, 3/4, 5/6, 5/22, 7/8, 9/10, 11/10, 12/8, 14/6, and 15/6.

2. Personal pronouns and their agreement

The following table lists the personal pronouns and their subject and object agreement prefixes on verbs. The final column lists the possessive pronoun root for each person and number.

Table 2-A: Personal Pronouns

Person	Pronoun	Subject prefix	Object prefix	Poss. pronoun
1SG	anye	ni-	n- / ny- / m-[4]	-ani
2SG	awe	u-	ku-	-awo
3SG	omwene[5]	a-	mu-	-aye
1PL	eswe	chi-[6]	chi-	-eswe
2PL	emwe	mu-	bha-	-emwe
3PL	abheene	bha-	bha-	-ebhwe

3. Noun class agreement

The following table shows the nominal prefixes for each class, as well as the corresponding pronominal, enumerative, and verbal agreement prefixes. The nominal prefix is used on adjectives to show agreement with the head noun. The pronominal prefix is used for a variety of pronominal forms (§0), associatives (§3.2),

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[4] This prefix is a nasal whose point of articulation is determined by the following consonant or vowel.

[5] Note that the 3SG and 3PL pronouns are not likely the historical forms.

[6] When followed by a consonant, this prefix is **chi-**. However, when preceding a vowel-initial morpheme, instead of undergoing the expected process of palatalization, the vowel of this prefix elides, and the following vowel is compensatorily lengthened. Several other prefixes behave in the same way, including the 1PL object marker **chi-**, the 1SG subject prefix **ni-**, the narrative tense prefix **ni-**, all of the class 7 **chi-** agreement prefixes, and all of the class 4 and 10 agreement prefixes with the shape **ji-**.

possessives (§3.3), and demonstratives (§3.4). The enumerative prefix is used for numerals (§3.5) and the '*how many*' form (§0). Note that with some forms the augment vowel is present, whereas with others it is not. This variation is indicated with parentheses around the augment vowels.

Table 3-A: Nominal Prefixes

NC	Nominal	Pronominal	Enumerative	Subject	Object
1	(o)mu-	u- / owu-[7]	u-	a-	mu-
2	(a)bha-	(a)bha-	bha-	bha-	bha-
3	(o)mu-	(o)gu-	gu-	gu-	gu-
4	(e)mi-	(e)ji-	e-	ji-	ji-
5	(e)ri-	(e)ri-	ri-	ri-	ri-
6	(a)ma-	(a)ga-	ga-	ga-	ga-
7	(e)chi-	(e)chi-	chi-	chi-	chi-
8	(e)bhi-	(e)bhi-	bhi-	bhi-	bhi-
9	(i)N-	i- / eyi-[8]	i-	i-	i-
10	(ji)N-	(e)ji-	e-	ji-	ji-
11	(o)ru-	(o)ru-	ru-	ru-	ru-
12	(a)ka-	(a)ka-	ka-	ka-	ka-
14	(o)bhu-	(o)bhu-	bhu-	bhu-	bhu-
15	(o)ku-	(o)ku-	ku-	ku-	ku-
16[9]		a-	a-		
17	ku-	(o)ku-			
18	mu-	(o)mu-			
22	gaa-	(a)ga-	ga-	ga-	ga-
23	e-	e-			

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[7] When this prefix occurs without the augment vowel, it is **u-**, but when the augment is present, a semivowel is inserted, and it is written as **owu-**.

[8] When this prefix occurs without the augment vowel, it is **i-**, but when the augment is present, a semivowel is inserted, and it is written as **eyi-**.

[9] Class 16 has minimal attestation in Jita, and its agreement prefixes are not fully understood. One reason for some of this confusion is likely related to a set of historical sound changes in which Proto-Bantu ***p > y, w**, or Ø in Jita. All three of these sound changes can be observed in different Jita words. Because PB class 16 was ***pa**, present-day occurrences of class 16 agreement are sometimes realized as **a-** (evidence of ***p** deletion; e.g. the numeral **aamwi** '*together/one place*', the demonstratives such as **anu** '*here*' and the set pronoun **andi** '*another place*'). In this table and the remaining tables in §3, forms are not always given for the locative classes 16, 17, 18, and 23, as many of these forms have not been found. More research is needed to better understand these classes.

In Jita, noun class agreement following a locative noun is based on the original noun's class, not the locative itself as the following examples illustrate.

> **mu-rikirisya ryaye**   *in his faith*
> **ku-chigobho cha omusi**   *at the bridge of the city*

3.1 Quantificational, set and interrogative pronouns

The following four pronouns (quantificational **–one**, set pronouns **–ene** and **–ndi**, and interrogative **–Vya**[10]) take the pronominal prefix. The set pronouns, however, also have the augment vowel. Note some irregularity in the set pronoun prefixes for class 1. The interrogative **–ringa** *'how many'* is also listed, which takes the enumerative prefix.

Table 3.1-A: Quantificational, Set and Interrogative Pronouns

NC	-one *'all'*	-ene *'self'*	-ndi *'other'*	-Vya *'which'*	-ringa *'how many'*
1	woone	omwene[11]	owundi	wuuya	
2	bhoone	abheene	abhandi	bhaaya	bharinga
3	gwone	ogwene	ogundi	guuya	
4	joone	ejeene	ejindi	jiiya	eringa
5	ryone	eryene	erindi	riiya	
6	goone	ageene	agandi	gaaya	garinga
7	choone	echeene	echindi	chiiya	
8	bhyone	ebhyene	ebhindi	bhiiya	bhiringa
9	yoone	eyeene	eyindi	iiya	
10	joone	ejeene	ejindi	jiiya	eringa
11	rwone	orwene	orundi	ruuya	
12	koone	akeene	akandi	kaaya	
14	bhwone	obhwene	obhundi	bhuuya	bhuringa
15	kwone	okwene	okundi	kuuya	kuringa
16	woone[12]		andi		

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[10] V represents an unspecified vowel, meaning that this vowel assimilates to the immediately preceding vowel.

[11] Note that this form is exceptional in that the nominal prefix **omw-** is used instead of the pronominal **owu-** prefix, which is expected.

[12] Note that **woone** *'everywhere'* is recorded as both class 16 and class 23. This is due to the fact that **woone** can take both class 16 and class 23 agreement. For instance, **woone anu** *'everywhere there (16)'* and **woone enu** *'everywhere there (23)'* (for a full set of demonstratives see §3.4). More research is needed to fully understand the remaining remnants of these locative classes, as was also mentioned in footnote 9 above.

17					
18					
22	goone	ageene	agandi	gaaya	garinga
23	woone				

3.2 Associatives

The associative vowel, underlyingly **–a**, assimilates to the augment vowel of the following word in fast speech, but the underlying vowel is preserved in the Jita orthography even when the pronunciation changes.

Table 3.2-A: Associatives

NC	Associative		NC	Associative
1	wa		9	ya
2	bha		10	ja
3	gwa		11	rwa
4	ja		12	ka
5	rya		14	bhwa
6	ga		15	kwa
7	cha		22	ga
8	bhya			

3.3 Possessive pronouns

The following table shows a list of the personal possessive pronouns for class 1-15, 20 and 22. The final column shows those which agree with a class 3 possessor, which is used as an example of possessor agreement with all other noun classes.[13]

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[13] There are additional possessive forms which agree with possessors in other noun classes, that is, not just with the first, second and third person possessive roots. An exhaustive list of these forms is beyond the scope of this document, but some examples can be given. For example, **yaabhyo** agrees with the possessed (class 9 **y-**) and the possessor (class 8 **–bhyo**), and **bhyagwo** agrees with the possessed (class 8 **bhy-**) and the possessor (class 3 **–gwo**).

Table 3.3-A: Possessive Pronouns

NC	1SG '*my*' -ani	2SG '*your*' -awo	3SG '*his*' -aye	1PL '*our*' -eswe	2PL '*your*' -emwe	3PL '*their*' -ebhwe	Class 3 -agwo
1	waani	waawo	waaye	weeswe	weemwe	weebhwe	waagwo
2	bhaani	bhaawo	bhaaye	bheeswe	bheemwe	bheebhwe	bhaagwo
3	gwani	gwawo	gwaye	gweswe	gwemwe	gwebhwe	gwagwo
4	jaani	jaawo	jaaye	jeeswe	jeemwe	jeebhwe	jaagwo
5	ryani	ryawo	ryaye	ryeswe	ryemwe	ryebhwe	ryagwo
6	gaani	gaawo	gaaye	geeswe	geemwe	geebhwe	gaagwo
7	chaani	chaawo	chaaye	cheeswe	cheemwe	cheebhwe	chaagwo
8	bhyani	bhyawo	bhyaye	bhyeswe	bhyemwe	bhyebhwe	bhyagwo
9	yaani	yaawo	yaaye	yeeswe	yeemwe	yeebhwe	yaagwo
10	jaani	jaawo	jaaye	jeeswe	jeemwe	jeebhwe	jaagwo
11	rwani	rwawo	rwaye	rweswe	rwemwe	rwebhwe	rwagwo
12	kaani	kaawo	kaaye	keeswe	keemwe	keebhwe	kaagwo
14	bhwani	bhwawo	bhwaye	bhweswe	bhwemwe	bhwebhwe	bhwagwo
15	kwani	kwawo	kwaye	kweswe	kwemwe	kwebhwe	kwagwo
22	gaani	gaawo	gaaye	geeswe	geemwe	geebhwe	gaagwo

3.4   Demonstratives

Demonstratives agree with the class of the noun to which they refer. There are three types of demonstratives for each noun class, shown below.

Table 3.4-A: Demonstratives

NC	proximal	referential	distal
1	unu	oyo	urya
2	bhanu	abho	bharya
3	gunu	ogwo	gurya
4	jinu	ejo	jirya
5	rinu	eryo	rirya
6	ganu	ago	garya
7	chinu	echo	chirya
8	bhinu	ebhyo	bhirya
9	inu	eyo	irya
10	jinu	ejo	jirya
11	runu	orwo	rurya
12	kanu	ako	karya
14	bhunu	obhwo	bhurya
15	kunu	okwo	kurya
16	anu	awo	arya
17	kunu	okwo	kurya
18	munu	omwo	murya
22	ganu	ago	garya
23	enu	eyo	erya

Regarding the four locative noun classes, class 16 is used as a general or specific location that is nearby, class 17 can have the meaning of '*above*' or '*on*', class 18 means '*inside*', and class 23 is used for a general location that is far away.

3.5 Numerals

Jita has a base five counting system. There are no simple forms for numbers six to nine; instead six is expressed as '*five and one*', seven is '*five and two*', etc. Eleven is '*one ten and one*', and fourteen is '*one ten and four*'. The following table shows numerals as they are inflected for noun class 1-10.

Table 3.5-A: Inflected Numerals

NUM \ NC	1/2	3/4	5/6	7/8	9/10
1	umwi	gumwi	rimwi	echimwi	imwi
2	bhabhiri	ebhiri	gabhiri	bhibhiri	ebhiri
3	bhasatu	esatu	gasatu	bhisatu	esatu
4	bhana	ena	gana	bhina	ena
5	bhataanu	etaanu	gataanu	bhitaanu	etaanu
6	bhataanu na umwi	etaanu na gumwi	gataanu na rimwi	bhitaanu na chimwi	etaanu na imwi
7	bhataanu na bhabhiri	etaanu na ebhiri	gataanu na gabhiri	bhitaanu na bhibhiri	etaanu na ebhiri
8	bhataanu na bhasatu	etaanu na esatu	gataanu na gasatu	bhitaanu na bhisatu	etaanu na esatu
9	bhataanu na bhana	etaanu na ena	gataanu na gana	bhitaanu na bhina	etaanu na ena
10	ekumi rimwi	ekumi rimwi	ekumi rimwi	ekumi rimwi	ekumi rimwi
11	ekumi rimwi na umwi	ekumi rimwi na gumwi	ekumi rimwi na rimwi	ekumi rimwi na chimwi	ekumi rimwi na imwi
14	ekumi rimwi na bhana	ekumi rimwi na ena	ekumi rimwi na gana	ekumi rimwi na bhina	ekumi rimwi na ena

Ordinal numbers begin with the prefix **ka-** and are followed by the root of the cardinal number. They are also preceded by an associative which agrees with the preceding noun, for example: **omuunu wa akabhiri** *'the second person'*.

4. Tense/Aspect/Mood

This section lists Jita verb forms, beginning with basic (single-word) forms (§4.1), followed by negative forms (§4.2), copular forms (§4.3), and some compound forms (§4.4).

4.1 Basic forms

Basic aspects and tenses are usually expressed with a single-word verb form. In Jita, this includes three past tenses, a present tense, three future tenses and several aspects and moods. Many tenses and aspects can also be combined, sometimes in a

single-word form, sometimes as a multi-word form. These combinations are shown in §4.4 below.

In the current section, basic verb forms are illustrated with two examples each. For each example, the first line shows the orthographic form, the second shows the constituent morphemes of each form, and the third and forth lines give morpheme glosses and word glosses, respectively. Note that subject prefixes are marked only for their person and number.

TAM	Template	bhuma '*to hit*'	rora '*to see*'
remote past **(P$_3$)**	:SBJ-**a**-R-**ire**	**:bhaabhumire** bha-a-bhum-ire 3PL-P$_3$-hit-P$_3$ *they hit (long ago)*	**:aarorere** a-a-ror-ire 3SG-P$_3$-see-P$_3$ *he saw (long ago)*

*The colon marks P$_3$, disambiguating it from the completive, which is segmentally the same but tonally distinct. The **-ire** suffix alternates to **-ere** following mid vowels. It is also common for the **-ire** suffix to cause imbrication when joined with a variety of different stems and verbal extensions, such as **–eeye** in **:yaagendereeye** '*it continued*'. See more examples at the end of §4.1.

TAM	Template	bhuma	rora
medial past **(P$_2$)**	SBJ-**ama**-R-**a**	**bhaamabhuma** bha-ama-bhum-a 3PL-P$_2$-hit-FV *they hit (yesterday)*	**aamarora** a-ama-ror-a 3SG-P$_2$-see-FV *they went (yesterday)*

*The medial past usually refers to events which happened "yesterday".

TAM	Template	bhuma	rora
recent past **(P$_1$)**	SBJ-**a**-R-**a**	**naabhuma** ni[14]-a-bhum-a 1SG-P$_1$-hit-FV *I (recently) hit*	**aarora** a-a-ror-a 3SG-P$_1$-see-FV *he (recently) saw*

*The recent past usually refers to events which happened earlier in the day of speaking. It is often translated as '-me-' in Swahili. The **a-** tense prefix is also used as a more general past tense in some compound constructions (see §4.4 and §7 below).

[14] See footnote 6 above concerning the shape of this prefix before a vowel-initial morpheme.

present	AUG-SBJ-R-**a**	**enibhuma**	**echirora**
(**PRS**)		e-ni-bhum-a	e-chi-ror-a
		AUG-1SG-hit-FV	AUG-1PL-see-FV
		I am hitting	*we are seeing*

*PRS is unique in that it takes an augment vowel before the SBJ. The augment is a mid-vowel which is either front or back depending on the vowel in the subject prefix. 3SG marker has an initial **ka-** instead of an augment vowel. The paradigm for first, second and third person agreement is listed below, and this pattern can be extended to the verbal subject agreement prefixes for all other noun classes.

1SG: eni-	1PL: echi-
2SG: owu-	2PL: omu-
3SG: kaa-	3PL: abha-

near future	SBJ-**raa**-R-**e**	**niraabhume**	**niraarore**
(**F$_1$**)		ni-raa-bhum-e	ni-raa-ror-e
		1SG-F$_1$-hit-F$_1$	1SG-F$_1$-see-F$_1$
		I will hit	*I will see*

* F$_1$ refers to events occurring on the day of speaking. There are two tonal variations of this form which signal degree of certainty. The pronunciation [niɾááβɔ́nɛ] expresses doubt, whereas [niɾaaβɔ́nɛ] is more certain.

Future events can also be expressed using a present tense form of '*come*' followed by an infinitive verb. E.g. **abhaaja okumuyaana** '*they will give to him*' (literally: they are coming to give to him).

medial future	SBJ-**aka**-R-**e**	**waakabhume**	**bhaakarore**
(**F$_2$**)		u-aka-bhum-e	bha-aka-ror-e
		2SG-F$_2$-hit-FV	3PL-F$_2$-see-FV
		you will hit	*they will see*

*F$_2$ refers to events that will take place either "tomorrow" or "the day after tomorrow". It is segmentally and tonally identical to COND$_3$ (see below). It is possible that these forms are identical due to the lack of certainty regarding future events that will not take place in the near future.

remote future (F$_3$)	SBJ-**ri**-R-**a**	**aribhuma**	**bharirora**
		a-ri-bhum-a	bha-ri-ror-a
		3SG-F$_3$-hit-FV	3PL-F$_3$-see-FV
		he will hit	*they will see*

*The remote future is by far the most common future tense. It refers with certainty to events happening three or more days in the future.

narrative (NAR)	**ni**-SBJ-R-**a**	**nibhabhuma**	**ˆnaarora**
		ni-bha-bhum-a	ni-a-ror-a
		NAR-3PL-hit-FV	NAR-3SG-see-FV
		they hit	*he saw*

*3SG.NAR is identical to 1SG.P$_1$ except for tone. The caret (ˆ) marks the 3SG.NAR, disambiguating it from 1SG.P$_1$. Note that the Jita NAR form is used not only in reference to past events but can also function as a progressive marker in certain compound verb constructions (see §4.4). In these cases it is usually preceded by a present tense verb, and the narrative forms are often translated into Swahili using the present tense.

anterior (ANT)	SBJ-R-**ire**	**nikubhumire**	**nirorere**
		ni-ku-bhum-ire	ni-ror-ire
		1SG-2SG.OBJ-hit-ANT	1SG-see-ANT
		I have hit you	*I have seen*

completive (COMP)	SBJ-**a**-R-**ire**	**aabhumire**	**aarorere**
		a-a-bhum-ire	a-a-ror-ire
		3SG-COMP-hit-COMP	3SG-COMP-see-COMP
		he has already hit	*he has already seen*

*This form is segmentally identical to P$_3$ but is different tonally. As noted above, P$_3$ verb forms are preceded by a colon orthographically in order to disambiguate these two forms.

habitual (HAB)	SBJ-R-**ag**-a	**owubhumaga**	**eriroraga**
		o-wu-bhum-ag-a	e-ri-ror-ag-a
		AUG-2SG-hit-HAB-FV	AUG-5-see-HAB-FV
		you (habitually) hit	*it (habitually) sees*

*This suffix not only has the specific habitual meaning but can also have a

broader imperfective meaning. Nonetheless, it is always glossed as HAB. See more discussion and examples combined with other tenses in §4.3 and §4.4.

conditional (COND₁)	SBJ-**ka**-R-**a**	**ukabhuma** u-ka-bhum-a 2SG-COND₁-hit-FV *if you hit*	**akarora** a-ka-ror-a 3SG-COND₁-see-FV *if s/he sees*
conditional (COND₂)	SBJ-**aka**-R-**a**	**mwakabhuma** mu-aka-bhum-a 2PL-COND₂-hit-FV *if you all hit*	**aakarora** a-aka-ror-a 3SG-COND₂-see-FV *if s/he sees*
conditional (COND₃)	SBJ-**aka**-R-**e**	**gwakabhume** gu-aka-bhum-e 3-COND₃-hit-COND₃ *it if hits*	**chaakarore** chi-aka-ror-e 2PL-COND₃-see-COND₃ *if we see*

*COND₃ is segmentally and tonaly identical to F₂. The difference between these three conditional forms is not fully understood.

hypothetical (HYP₁)	SBJ-**aka**-R-**ire**	**waakabhumire** u-aka-bhum-ire 2SG-HYP₁-hit-HYP₁ *if you would hit*	**bhaakarorere** bha-aka-ror-ire 3PL-HYP₁-see-HYP₁ *if they would see*
hypothetical (HYP₂)	SBJ-**ka**-R-**ire**	**ikabhumire** i-ka-bhum-ire 9-HYP₂-hit-HYP₂ *if it would hit*	**ukarorere** u-ka-ror-ire 2SG-HYP₂-see-HYP₂ *if you would see*

*The difference between these two hypothetical forms is not fully understood.

subjunctive **(SBJV)**	SBJ-R-**e**	**ubhume** u-bhum-e 2SG-hit-SBJV *you should hit*	**bharore** bha-ror-e 3PL-see-SBJV *they should see*
persistive **(PER)**	SBJ-**chaa**-R-a	**muchaabhuma** mu-chaa-bhum-a 2PL-PER-hit-FV *you are still hitting*	**nichaarora** ni-chaa-ror-a 1SG-PER-see-FV *I am still seeing*

Note that imbrication often occurs in Jita verbal suffixes when the **–ire** suffix is preceded by a root-final **r** or the applicative extension **–ir/-er**. The combination of **r** + **ire** results in **–iiye**. Due to vowel harmony, this imbricated ending can take the following forms: **-iiye, -eeye, -aaye, -ooye, -uuye**. The following examples illustrate this process.

Table 4.1-A: Imbricated Verb Endings

Jita Example	Morphemes	English Gloss
:aabhwir<u>iiye</u>	a-a-bhwir-ir-ire 3SG-P$_3$-tell-APPL-P$_3$	*s/he told*
:bheetog<u>eeye</u>	bha-a-itoger-ire 3PL-P$_3$-think-P$_3$	*they thought*
bheek<u>aaye</u>	bha-ikar-ire 3PL-live-ANT	*they have lived*
bhaw<u>ooye</u>	bha-wor-ire 3PL-heal-ANT	*they were healed*
ikeekum<u>uuye</u>	i-ka-i-kumur-ire 9-HYP$_2$-REFL-bump-HYP$_2$	*if it would bump itself*

4.2 Negative verbs

The following table lists some of the most basic verbs in both affirmative and negative forms. Negative verbal constructions use the negative prefix **ta-** following the SBJ and preceding any tense or aspect prefix. All affixes which are present in the affirmative forms are also present in the corresponding negative forms. The negative present tense is exceptional in that it does not have the unusual augment which

occurs in the affirmative form, and instead it has the **ku-** morpheme following the negative prefix.

Table 4.2-A: Negative Verbs

	Affirmative		**Negative**	
ANT	**nimenyere** ni-meny-ire	*I have known*	**nitamenyere** ni-**ta**-meny-ire	*I have not known*
PRS	**kaatura** kaa-tur-a	*he is able*	**atakutura** a-**ta**-**ku**-tur-a	*he is not able*
P₃	**:bhaaremere** bha-a-rem-ire	*they refused*	**:bhataaremere** bha-**ta**-a-rem-ire	*they did not refuse*
P₁	**aabhasakira** a-a-bha-sakir-a	*he helped them* *(recently)*	**ataabhasakira** a-**ta**-a-bha-sakir-a	*he did not help* *them (recently)*
F₃	**bharirora** bha-ri-ror-a	*they will see*	**bhatarirora** bha-**ta**-ri-ror-a	*they will not see*

4.3 Copular verbs

The most basic copular verb is the word **ni**, which is used only as a present tense copula. Another copular root is **ri**, which is referred to as the copular-locative[15] (COP.LOC). The COP.LOC has a present form, as well as a past form. For future '*to be*' forms the stem **bha** is used. The COP.LOC and future '*to be*' forms are below.

Table 4.3-A: Inflected Copular Verbs

	Present SBJ-ri(LOC)	**Past** SBJ-a-ri-ga (SBJ-ri)(LOC)	**Future** SBJ-ri-bha
1SG	niri	naariga (niri)	niribha
2SG	uri	waariga (uri)	uribha
3SG	ari	aariga (ari)	aribha
1PL	chiri	chaariga (chiri)	chiribha
2PL	muri	mwariga (muri)	muribha
3PL	bhari	bhaariga (bhari)	bharibha

---

[15] This copular root is called a copular-locative due to the fact that it can carry a locational meaning even when it is not followed by a locative clitic.

Note that in the past tense, the habitual suffix **–ga** is always present. It does not, however, necessarily carry a habitual meaning.

The past tense form of the COP.LOC is used as an auxiliary verb in past tense compound verbs (see §4.4). When the past tense copula is itself the main verb in a clause, a two-word verb form is used. The first word is the past copula, and the second is the present copula (shown in parentheses in the chart above). Some examples include:

bhaariga bhari   *they were*
gwariga guri   *it (3) was'*
naariga niri na   *I had*

For a COP.LOC, a locative suffix **–wo, -yo, -mo**, or **-ko** can be added to the present tense form, with a corresponding meaning such as **ari-wo** '*he is there*'. In the past tense, the two-word form (mentioned directly above) is used, and the locative suffix is attached to the second word, as in **bhaariga bhari-wo** '*they were there*'.

The 3PL forms from the chart above are parsed as follows:

Table 4.3-B: Third Person Plural Copular Verbs Parsed

Present	Past	Future
bhari	**bhaariga bhari**	**baribha**
bha-ri	bha-a-ri-ga bha-ri	bha-ri-bh-a
3PL-COP.LOC	3PL-PST-COP.LOC-HAB 3PL-COP.LOC	3PL-F$_3$-be-FV
they are	*they were*	*they will be*

Negative copular forms are below, formed with the same **ta-** prefix as other negative verbs. In the past tense, negative copular forms are expressed with two words, just like their affirmative counterparts, and the negative **ta-** prefix occurs on the second word, never on the first word.

Table 4.3-C: Negative Copular Verb Forms

	Present SBJ-ta-ri	**Past** SBJ-ri-ga SBJ-ta-ri	**Future** SBJ-ta-ri-bha
1SG	nitari	naariga nitari	nitaribha
2SG	utari	waariga utari	utaribha
3SG	atari	aariga atari	ataribha
1PL	chitari	chaariga chitari	chitaribha
2PL	mutari	mwariga mutari	mutaribha
3PL	bhatari	bhaariga bhatari	bhataribha

In the present tense, the form **toga** '*is not*' can be used as a general negative copula without noun class agreement, much like **si** '*is not*' in Swahili.

4.4 Compound verbs

Combinations of tense and aspect are sometimes expressed as a single word and sometimes as a multi-word form. When two verbs are used to express a tense/aspect combination, the first verb in the construction is a copula marking tense (see §4.3). The second word carries the lexical verb and is marked for aspect and negation. The chart below shows the results when the tenses (top row) are combined with some of the more common aspects (left column).

Table 4.4-A: Combined Verb Forms

Tense / Aspect	Past		Future	
Anterior -ire	**bhaariga**	**bhasirire**	**bharibha**	**bhamaamire**
	bha-a-ri-ga	bha-sir-ire	bha-ri-bha	bha-maam-ire
	3PL-PST-be-HAB	3PL-taken-ANT	3PL-F$_3$-be	3PL-sleep-ANT
	they had taken		*they will have fallen asleep*	
Habitual -ag	**bhaasigaga**		**bharyayikaga**	
	bha-a-sig-ag-a		bha-ri-ayik-ag-a	
	3PL-PST-leave-HAB-FV		3PL-F$_3$-say-HAB-FV	
	they were leaving		*they will be saying*	
Progressive ni-	**aariga**	**ˆnaatogwa**	**chiribha**	**nichigenda**
	a-a-ri-ga	ni-a-tog-w-a	chi-ri-bha	ni-chi-gend-a
	3SG-PST-be-HAB	PROG-3SG-call-PASS-FV	1PL-F$_3$-be	PROG-1PL-go-FV
	he was being called		*we will be going*	

Note that the contrast between the three past tenses (P$_1$, P$_2$, and P$_3$) seems to be neutralized in combined verb forms. In these cases, the past prefix **a-** is used as the general past.

The progressive verbs above are unusual because the progressive aspect uses a form which is identical to the narrative tense (that is, an initial **ni-** prefix). The exact history of this form in Jita is unknown, but this same form is used for the progressive aspect in the Rutara languages (see Muzale 1998). In Jita, when it occurs as the second word of a compound verb, it clearly has a progressive meaning. When it occurs as a single-word form with no other aspectual affixes, it is clearly a narrative.

The narrative tense prefix **ni-** can be combined in a single word with the habitual aspect **–ag**, as in the following examples:

> **ˆnaatogwaga** *he was called / being called*
> **ˆnaayikaga** *he said / saying*

The narrative-habitual combination results in a form which seems to be dependent. It makes a clear link to the preceding main clause, as do normal narrative verbs, but it seems to denote an event which is simultaneous, not sequential. Additional research regarding the narrative and habitual forms is warranted, as these two

forms have varying uses and meanings (see §4.3 for additional habitual marker uses).

5. Verbal extensions

Verbal extensions are suffixes which are added to the verb root, often modifying the valency of the verb. The most common and productive verbal extensions are shown below. For each extension, a mid-vowel root and a high-vowel root example is given, showing the vowel height harmony which occurs with the causative, applicative and stative extensions.

Table 5-A: Verbal Extensions

	a, i, u roots		**o, e roots**	
Causative **-isy**	okusubh**isy**a o-ku-subh-**isy**-a	*to (cause to)* *return*	okumeny**esy**a o-ku-meny-**esy**-a	*to introduce*
Passive **-w**	okwibhur**w**a o-ku-ibhur-**w**-a	*to be born*	okuteek**w**a o-ku-teek-**w**-a	*to be cooked*
Applicative **-ir**	okubhum**ir**a o-ku-bhum-**ir**-a	*to hit for*	okuteek**er**a o-ku-teek-**er**-a	*to cook for*
Stative **-ik**	okwit**ik**a o-ku-it-**ik**-a	*to be poured out*	okubhon**ek**a o-ku-bhon-**ek**-a	*to be available*
Reciprocal **-an**	okuruubh**an**a o-ku-ruubh-**an**-a	*to follow each* *other*	okusook**an**a o-ku-sook-**an**-a	*to result from*

There is a second form of the causative extension, **-y**, which is exemplified below.

<div align="center">

okusubha   **okusubhya**

oku-subh-a   →   oku-subh-**y**-a

to return   *to answer*

</div>

An alternate passive extension is **-ibhw**. When the passive extension **–ibhw** follows **sy**, then the palatalization is lost, and the consonant is realized as **s**. This is seen in the following examples.

<div align="center">

okuraasya   **okuraasibhwa**

oku-raasy-a   →   oku-raas-**ibhw**-a

to preach   *to be preached*

</div>

<div align="center">

okwambisya   **okwambisibhwa**

oku-amb-isy-a   →   oku-amb-isy-ibhw-a

to cause to begin   *to be caused to begin*

</div>

When the nasal **n** is palatalized by the causative extension **–y,** it results in the palatalized alveolar nasal [nʲ]. The palatal nasal and the palatalized alveolar nasal are distinct sounds to Jita speakers, and the later is written as **n'y**. For example:

<div align="center">

okubhina *to play*   → **okubhin'ya** *to cause to play*

okuneena *to suckle* → **okuneen'ya** *to cause to suckle*

</div>

6. Relative clauses

Relative clauses are formed with a proximal demonstrative pronoun acting as a relativizer, followed by a verb phrase (see §3.4 for a chart of the proximal demonstratives). A wide variety of verb forms are possible, and below are examples of some of them. The demonstrative (relativizer) and the verb of the relative clause are underlined for ease of reference.

<div align="center">

abhayarakaji <u>bhanu</u> <u>bhari</u> ayeeyi

daughters who are (PRS) near

obhwato <u>bhunu</u> <u>:bhwatubhiiye</u>

canoe which sunk (P₃)

omuunu <u>unu</u> <u>akeyeeywe</u>

person who has been diminished (ANT)

abhaanu <u>bhanu</u> <u>bhaariga</u> <u>bhasirire</u> omutwasi

people who had taken (PST.ANT) the groom

<u>gunu</u> <u>gwakorekana</u>

what happened (P₁)

</div>

Relative clauses can also modify the word **omwanya** '*time*', creating a temporal clause, as illustrated with the following examples.

<div align="center">

omwanya <u>gunu</u> <u>abhamara</u>

time when they are finishing (PRS)

omwanya <u>gunu</u> <u>urigenda</u> okuyenja

time when you will go to search (F₃)

</div>

7. Temporal adverbial clauses

Aside from the relative clauses formed with **omwanya** '*time*', which are described in the previous section, there are two other common types of temporal adverbial clauses. The first is very similar in form to the relative clause, and it involves the class 14 demonstrative **bhunu** '*when*'. The demonstrative never occurs together with a head noun. The presence of the demonstrative alone signals that it is a temporal clause. Just like the relative clauses shown above, a variety of verb forms are used. Some are illustrated here:

> **bhunu bhaagendaga**
> *while they were going (PST.HAB)*
> **bhunu Yoona aariga ari mu-nda ya inswi eyo**
> *when Jonah was (PST) in the stomach of that fish*

A much different construction is a two-word verb form called the "ejire + P₁" construction. This construction involves the anterior form of the verb **Vja** '*come*' followed by the P₁ form of the main verb. Both verbs are inflected for the subject of the clause. The construction has a past temporal meaning such as '*when he X'ed*', and it is most common in narrative texts. Some examples are:

> **ejire aakinga**   *when s/he arrived*
> **ejire aarora**   *when s/he saw*
> **bhejire bhaatubhira** *when they had sunk*

Abbreviations

1	first person; Class 1		NC	noun class
2	second person; Class 2		NUM	numeral
3	third person; Class 3		OBJ	object
4	Class 4, etc		P_1	recent past
ANT	anterior aspect		P_2	yesterday's past
APPL	applicative		P_3	remote past
AUG	augment vowel		PASS	passive
COMP	completive		PB	Proto-Bantu
$COND_1$	conditional 1		PER	persistive aspect
$COND_2$	conditional 2		PL	plural
$COND_3$	conditional 3		PROG	progressive aspect
COP.LOC	copular locative		PRS	present tense
F_1	near future tense		PST	past
F_2	medial future tense		R	verb root
F_3	remote future tense		REFL	reflexive
FV	final vowel		SBJ	subject
HAB	habitual		SBJV	subjunctive
HYP_1	hypothetical 1		SG	singular
HYP_2	hypothetical 2		V	unspecified vowel
LOC	locative		Ø	null morpheme
NAR	narrative tense			

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