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# AYU LANGUAGE ALMANAC

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Version 5.3



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CANIS  
Poland

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## MAJOR CHANGES

- Version 1 was the most archaic and least used.
- Version 2 introduced changes to phonetic system, by allowing separate /e/ among others.
- Version 3 introduced textual translations and declension.
- Version 4 introduced morphosyntactic markers for past and present-future tenses and cuneiform abugida.
- Version 5 introduced a standard for handwritten Greek, adopted bone-style font for Tangian cuneiform, removed the ergative alignment for past tense, introduced the first system of stress-reduced vowels, semantically changed the “ni”, overhauled the system of personal pronouns (moving the possessives again to the back) and added a “and” prefix. It enforced that all verbs have a -κᾱ ending, which can change to -κᾱν in past tense.

## FOREWORD



Ταγιαρι: αγιυ αγιανεο!

I designed the Ayu language in 2010. There is no grand purpose behind it. It is an artificial, constructed language (conlang, for short), like many that language nerds make.

It is not based on any real life language, and although it was supposed to superficially look like a child of Polynesian and Greek languages in a way, in the years that it was being developed, it changed significantly from its earliest days of pitch tones and restrictive phonology. Today it is its own thing, even though a flavour of that original goal remains distinctly visible.

## ALPHABET AND PRONUNCIATION

Description of every language begins with pronunciation. Ayu has a very simplistic pronunciation, inspired by Polynesian languages, and its pronunciation should cause no trouble to anyone. Ayu is written in Greek alphabet, which, while also simple, needs learning.

### Syllable structure

Words cannot begin with a vowel. If no written consonant begins a word, it means that a glottal stop does it. Therefore, «αγυι» is pronounced /ʔajy/. Usually it is only /n/, /ŋ/, /t/, /w/, /j/ and rarely /m/ and in specific circumstances /t/ will end a word, so vowel-ended words dominate the lexicon.

### Vowels

First to learn are base letters. There are six base letters.

A α	E ε	H η	I ι	O ο	Y υ
/a/	/ɛ/	/ej/	/i/	/o/	/ɯ/
Like “o” in “done”.	Like “e” in “bed”.	Like “a” in “same”.	Like “ee” in “need”, but short.	Like “o” in “more”, but short.	Like “oo” in “goose”, but short.

These were the monographs: situations where one letter stands for a sound. Next to learn are digraphs: where two letters stand for a sound. Of those, first to learn is the -u final series.

Aυ αυ	Ευ ευ			Oυ ου	
/œɪ/	/œɪ/			/ow/	
Like German “ö” in “schön”, but long.	Like German “ö” in “schön”, but long.			Like “ow” in “stow” in American English.	

As is seen above, with front and central vowels, the rounded /ɯ/ prevails, turning an ancient diphthong into an elongated front rounded vowel. However, where both /o/ and /ɯ/ were rounded, the diphthong remains as it was.

Next, we will take a look at reduced vowels.

Ǻ ǻ			Ǫ ǫ		Ǻ ǻ
/ə/			/Ǫ/		/ə/

These represent historical vowels that were shortered, but which may still be relevant to note, or shortening of which is uncertain or still undecided. Finally, we will look at a special vocalic letter.

					ÿ ü
					/ɥ/

The upsilon with a diaeresis above it is used to highlight that this is not a /w/. This is important in initial syllables with diphthongs, such as «vüα» /nɥa/. Without it, suspected pronunciation would be /n<sup>w</sup>a/, with stress on /a/, and probably spelled «vuá» for extra clarity, as diaeresis is often skipped.

Now, let’s investigate allophones: variants of pronunciation not dependent on user, but on phonetic context.

Letter	Base	Allophone	Context	Example
Υ υ	/ɥ/	/y/	After /x/, /h/, /k/	Κυ /cy/
Ι ι	/i/	/ɪ/	Often when accented.	Ιλ /ɪɪ/
Σ σ ς	/h/	/s/	Optional. Ayu has no /s/, this letter is used in loanwords and can be pronounced as /h/ or /s/.	Συμερ /sɥmeɥ/

Challenge with vowels lies in pronunciation of letters «Υ, υ», which is rather unstable. The phoneme, so the goal that we keep in mind while trying, is /ɥ/. However, [u] and [y], or even [i], can be found. Even more issues are caused by diphthongs, which, if the phoneme is final, tend to be dominated by it and shift the first vowel forward. For example, «κυ» is pronounced [kɥ], «κυα» is pronounced [ˈkua], but «κayu» is practically pronounced [cœɪ].

## Diacritical symbols

Name	Symbol	Examples	Purpose	Obligatory to use in writing?
Νῦμά (Acute, Oxeia)	◌́	Ά ά	Main stress mark.	Capitals: NO Standard: YES Casual: YES
Κοεῦν (Gravis, Bareia)	◌̀	Ά ᾶ	Special mark. Used for agglutinated affixes, distinguishing them from the word root.	Capitals: NO Standard: YES Casual: NO
Φυερη (Breve, Brachy)	◌̆	ÿ ŷ	Vocalic reduction mark.	Capitals: NO Standard: YES Casual: NO
Χευρενα (Diaeresis)	◌̈	ÿ ü	Hiatus. Vowels are pronounced one after another, instead of forming a diphthong.	Capitals: NO Standard: YES Casual: YES
Αρορι (Macron)	◌̄	Ȳ ū	Abbreviation Used to shorten «γῆ» into «ū».	Capitals: NO Standard: YES Casual: NO

## Stress, reduction and aspiration

Stress is initial by default and is unmarked. About a third of words have stress falling on a different syllable, and then it is marked. Compare: «τανα» [t<sup>h</sup>ana] and «τανά» [t<sup>h</sup>ə'na]. When affixes seem to interfere with the stress, then even if it is retained, it becomes marked, if it is no longer initial: «τανα» and «κάτάνα». Stress has the capacity to suppress other vowels in a word or phrase, which may be marked with a varia, as in the example before. Also, initial plosives in stressed syllables will typically be aspirated.

## Consonants

Ayu's consonantal inventory is very poor.

Letter	Sound	English (UK) and Spanish (Madrid) equivalents	Commentary and nuisances
Γ γ	/j/, /ɲ/	/j/: EN: “Yell”, ES: “Patio” /ɲ/:EN: “Singing” ES: “Domingo”	Does not occur independently. Means /j/ in «γι» and /ɲ/ in «vγ».
Κ κ	/k/	EN: “Key” ES: “Con”	Aspirated if stressed syllable follows. Will become /c/ if /i/ follows.
Λ λ	/ɫ/	EN: “Well”, known as “dark l” <sup>1</sup> ES: No equivalent. See Catalan “altres”	Will turn to /l/ if followed by «i».
Μ μ	/m/	EN: “Mother” ES: “Mirá”	
Ν ν	/n/	EN: “No” ES: “No”	
Π π	/p/	EN: “Parent” ES: “Padre”	Aspirated if stressed syllable follows.
Ρ ρ	/r/ ~ /ɾ/	EN: “There after” <sup>2</sup> , known as “rolled R” or “tapped R”. Scottish: “run” ES: “Pero”	Trill is phonemic, but tap is most commonly used, also in transliteration.
Τ τ	/t/	EN: “Stone”. Unaspirated ES: “También”	Aspirated if stressed syllable follows.
Φ φ	/f/	EN: “Father” ES: “Fantasma”	

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1 Occurs in Received Pronunciation UK English only at end of syllables. Occurs in some American English accents in all positions.

2 From widely known accents, occurs in Scottish as standard and in Received Pronunciation between vowels and sometimes initially, where it then is considered posh. Does not occur in American English accents.



X χ	/h/, [x]	Typically voiced. If «κ» is preceding another consonant, it will turn into a voiceless velar fricative [x] and then will be spelled with this letter.	
'	/?/	No equivalents in EN or ES, but known in both. It is the characteristic abrupt stop in the throat in English “uh-oh” (/ʔaʔəʊ/). Cockney, Scottish and Estuary English: “cat”.	

Some consonants can be prolonged. This in particular concerns N ν, but does appear also with Λ λ and M μ.

### Foreign words

Foreign words that contain /s/ and similar sounds tend to have those sounds retained, but it is then written using the Sigma: Σ σ ς. Words where this borrowing is old tend to have the sigma pronounced with an /h/-phoneme. Newer words, neologisms and fancy speech will pronounce them with /s/.

# GRAMMAR

## Pronouns

### Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns in Ayu exist in singular and plural numbers. Third person singular is divided into three genders, which are real genders. Pronouns are inflected by Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Comitative and Vocative cases, and their Genitive form affects nouns by having them occur in Possessive forms.

The full table is presented below. Notice the lack of Accusative case.

	Pronoun	Dative	Genitive	Comitative	Vocative
1st sg. (I)	<b>Ιλ</b> [ɪtʰ]	<b>Ιλλᾶν</b> [ɪtʰ.tən]	<b>Ιλά</b> [ɪtʰa]	<b>Φ/Χυὰ'ιλ</b> [fʷa'ɪtʰ], [hʷa'ɪtʰ]	<b>Ιλέ!</b> [ɪə'te]
2nd sg. (you)	<b>Νε</b> [neʔ]	<b>Ενεν</b> [ʔenən]	<b>Νεοι</b> [ne(h)oɟ]	<b>Φ/Χυὰνε</b> [fʷa'neʔ], [hʷa'neʔ]	<b>Νεέ!</b> [nə'he]
3rd sg. (he, animate, decorative)	<b>Το</b> [tʰoʔ]	<b>Τον</b> [tʰɔn]	<b>Τοι</b> [tʰoɟ]	<b>Φ/Χυὰτο</b> [fʷa'tʰo], [hʷa'tʰo]	<b>Τονέ!</b> [tʰə'ne]
3rd sg. (she, animate, decorative)	<b>Μη</b> [meɟ]	<b>Μηῖν</b> [meɟjin]	<b>Μεῖ</b> [mə'ji]	<b>Φ/Χυὰμη</b> [fʷa'meɟ], [hʷa'meɟ]	<b>Μηγιέ!</b> [məɟ'je]
3rd sg. (it)	<b>Ρο</b> [roː]	<b>Ρον</b> [ʔan]	<b>Ροι</b> [ʔoɟ]	<b>Φ/Χυὰρο</b> [fʷa'roː], [hʷa'roː]	<b>Ροέ!</b> [ʔa'e]
1st pl. (we)	<b>Ιλιυ</b> [ɪliɟy]	<b>Ιλλίν</b> [ʔəɪ'tɪn]	<b>Ιλλοι</b> [ʔəɪ'toɟ]	<b>Φ/Χυὰλίλ</b> [fʷaɪ'tʰɪtʰ], [hʷaɪ'tʰɪtʰ] [fʷaɪ'tʰɪw], [hʷaɪ'tʰɪw]	<b>Ιλιυέ!</b> [ɪliɟy'we]
2nd pl. (you)	<b>Τυα</b> [tʰwa]	<b>Τυαν</b> [tʰwan]	<b>Τυαγι</b> [tʰwaji]	<b>Φ/Χυὰτυα</b> [fʷa'tʰwa], [hʷa'tʰwa]	<b>Τυαυέ!</b> [tʰaw'we]
3rd pl. (they)	<b>Νη</b> [nej]	<b>Νην</b> [nejn]	<b>Νηγι</b> [nejji]	<b>Φ/Χυὰνη</b> [fʷa'nej], [hʷa'naj]	<b>Νηγιέ!</b> [nej'je]

Example: „My house” is: «**Ιλά** κυρο**λά**». „Dog’s house” will be «**Ηκavί** κυρο**ι**», or „Its house”, is «**Ροι** κυρο**ι**». The pronoun may be dropped, and often is, but does not have to be.

## Dative

Dative case generally adds an -v to the word. Dative tends to stretch words phonetically, if the root is too short, e.g. via an elongation of the preceding consonant: «Τοκυ» struggle – «τοκκυυ» „for the struggle”, or via addition of extra vowels, e.g. «εβεν», meaning „to you”.

## Genitive

Genitive is formed by adding «-οι» or «-ι» to the word. Adjectives of this function are formed by adding «-νε» (following /i/ or /e/ of preceding syllable) or «-να» (otherwise).

## Comitative

Comitative serves a more decorative or emphatic function and is therefore closer to Latin „-que” than Comitative case used in other languages. In common speech, this tends to take the form of «φυὰ-» or «χυὰ-», pronounced [f<sup>w</sup>a']- or [h<sup>w</sup>a']-, however, in a more floral, theatrical and pompous language (as one would expect in translation of Latin „SPQR”), the older<sup>3</sup> forms of «φὺο-» and «χυὸ-» pronounced [f<sub>u</sub>.o']- or [h<sub>u</sub>.o'] generally prevail.

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<sup>3</sup> Up to Ayu version 5.0 inclusive, changed from 5.1 on.

## Verb

The Ayu infinitive verb ends with -κά. «Κα» is also a verb itself, meaning „is” or „to be”.

<b>ΑΓΙΑΚΑ</b>	<b>Me («ιλ»)</b>	<b>You («νε»)</b>	<b>It («λα»)</b>
<b>Present</b>	Ιλ αγιαρί	Νε αγιανή	Λα αγιαλι
<b>Past</b>	Ιλ αγιαρίν	Νε αγιανάν	Λα αγιαλιν
<b>Future</b>	Ιλ αγιαριάν	Νε αγιανιάν	Λα αγιαλιάν
<b>Imperative</b>		Αγιαλή, Αγιανχά	

Example: «Νε κητινιάν Αυρό Κυρονᾶν.» „You will reach Auró Kuro.”

## Tenses

**Present tense** just ends with «κά», like «αγιακά» „speak” or «νιμικά» „request”.

### 1st person

Verb	Αγιακά („To speak”)
<b>Present: “I speak”</b>	«Ιλ αγιαρί»
<b>Past generic: “I spoke”</b>	«Ιλ αγιαρίν»
<b>Past complete: “I spoke.”</b>	«Ιλ αγιαρινί»
<b>Repetitive: “I speak, as I do”</b>	«Ιλ αγιαράον»
<b>Future: “I will speak”</b>	«Ιλ αγιαριάν»

Please bear in mind that <sup>α</sup> here and in the following tables constitute a schwa /ə/ sound.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> person

Verb	Αγιακά („To speak”)
<b>Present: “You speak”</b>	«Νε αγιανή»
<b>Past generic: “You spoke”</b>	«Νε αγιανάν»
<b>Past complete: “You spoke.”</b>	«Νε αγιανανί»
<b>Repetitive: “You speak, as you do”</b>	«Νε αγιαναόν»
<b>Future: “You will speak”</b>	«Νε αγιαναγί»

Here, it is worth noting that in Ayu, usually not only words begin with a glottal stop if they do not start with other consonants, but short and often used words also often end with a glottal stop. Thus, «νε» is actually usually rendered /neʔ/, while «νε αγιανη» is usually /neʔ ʔajanej/.

Notice: „You will be okay...” – «Νε κανί» υνε...»

*3<sup>d</sup> person*

Verb	Αγιακά („To speak”)
Present: “It/He/She speaks”	«Μη αγιαλι»
Past generic: “It/He/She spoke”	«Μη αγιαλιν»
Past complete: “It/He/She spoke.”	«Μη αγιαλανιν»
Repetitive: “It/He/She speaks, as she does”	«Μη αγιαλάον»
Future: “It/He/She will speak”	«Μη αγιαλιαν»

Here, the word «μη» „she” is not open-ended, and thus it is not glottalised. It is pronounced /mej/. However, because the next word begins with a glottal stop, the phrase «μη αγιαλιν» is still pronounced /mej ʔajalin/. In practice, the pronoun is usually dropped.

This can be gendered. Male get endings «-ε», while female gets ending «-α». If «μα λομιακά» means „to scream”, then it is possible to say «το λομιαλιε» for males and «μη λομιαλια» for females.

*1<sup>st</sup> person plural*

Plural forms are formed by an intrusive «-υ-» /w/.

Plural for 1 <sup>st</sup> person	Αγιακά („To speak”)
Present: “We speak”	«Ιλιυ αγιαρυά»
Past generic: “We spoke”	«Ιλιυ αγιαρυάνιν»
Past complete: “We have spoken.”	«Ιλιυ αγιαρυανί»
Repetitive: “We speak, as usual”	«Ιλιυ αγιαρυάον»
Future: “We will speak”	«Ιλιυ αγιαρυαγιάν»

*2<sup>nd</sup> person plural*

Verb	Αγιακά („To speak”)
Present: “You speak”	«Νε αγιανυή»
Past generic: “You spoke”	«Νε αγιανυάν»
Past complete: “You spoke.”	«Νε αγιανυανί»
Repetitive: “You speak, as you do”	«Νε αγιανυαόν»
Future: “You will speak”	«Νε αγιανυαγί»

*3<sup>rd</sup> person plural*

Verb	Αγιακά („To speak”)
Present: “It/He/She speaks”	«Μη αγιαλυι»
Past generic: “It/He/She spoke”	«Μη αγιαλυιν»
Past complete: “It/He/She spoke.”	«Μη αγιαλυανιν»
Repetitive: “It/He/She speaks, as she does”	«Μη αγιαλυάον»
Future: “It/He/She will speak”	«Μη αγιαλυγιάν»

**Mood***Hypothetical*

The hypothetical “if..., then...” mood is formed with words «μι ..., αμυ...»

## Noun

### Plural form

The plural ending is «-λῦν» pronounced  $-[t̥u̯n]$ ,  $-[t̥u̯ũ]$ . It may be seen spelled «-λῦ» or «-λν», but this is not common.

### Cases

The Ayu language has the following cases:

- Nominative,
- Possessive:
  - Genitive,
  - Possessive cases depending on pronoun,
- Dative,
- Locative:
  - Static inessive (inside),
  - Static locative (at or in vicinity of),
  - Illative (inwards, towards),
  - Elative/ablative (outwards, out of),
  - Perlative (across, through),
- Uncommon and theatrical cases:
  - Comitative,
  - Vocative.

### Nominative

The nominative is the noun's default form. It may take an indefinite or introducing article «μα» before it, which is considered to be a separate word.



## Genitive and the possessive cases

A noun in Genitive form implies that this noun is the owner, while the owned takes a possessive form.

	Open-ended nouns «Κομο» „fish”	Closed-ended nouns «Αυρον» „tin”
<b>Genitive</b> Owner	Κομοἶ	Αυρονἶ
<b>Mine</b> Owned	Κομομῖ	Αυρονμῖ
<b>Yours sg.</b> Owned	Κομονὸ	Αυροννὸ
<b>His/Hers/Its</b> Owned	Κομοτ	Αυρονὰτ
<b>Ours</b> Owned	Κομονέν	Αυρονέν
<b>Yours pl.</b> Owned	Κομορὸ	Αυρονρὸ
<b>Theirs</b> Owned	Κομοκέν	Αυρονκέν

## Dative

### Locative cases

	Open-ended nouns «Κυρο» „house”	Closed-ended nouns «Αυρον» „tin”
<b>Static inessive</b> Inside	Κομο <b>ν</b> ὰι	Αυρον <b>ν</b> ὰι
<b>Static locative</b> At, near	Κομο <b>ν</b> ὰ	Αυρον <b>ν</b> ὰ
<b>Illative</b> Inwards	Κομο <b>ν</b> ῖν	Αυρον <b>ν</b> ῖν
<b>Elative/ablative</b> Outwards, out of	Κομο <b>ν</b> ᾶν	Αυρον <b>ν</b> ᾶν
<b>Perlative</b> Across, through	Κομο <b>φ</b> ἔν	Αυρον <b>φ</b> ἔν

### Uncommon cases

## Adjectives

Adjectives are formed by adding -να or -νε, depending on preceding vowel.

### Comparatives and superlatives

Comparatives are formed by adding «-τυ» and superlatives by adding «-τιο», usually with article «μα» preceding the adjective, much like in English.

	Regular adjectives «Ρανγνα» „bright”	Irregular adjectives «Ταυ» „big”
<b>Adjective</b> Descriptive	Ρανγ <b>να</b>	Ταυ <b>ν</b>
<b>Comparative</b> x than y	Ρανγ <b>να</b> τυ	Ταυ <b>ν</b> τυ
<b>Superlative</b> x > y	Μα ρανγ <b>να</b> τιο	Μα ταυ <b>ν</b> τιο

## TEXT SAMPLES