Introduction to Ijunta

1   What is Ijunta?

1.1   Origins

Ijunta is a microlanguage which takes inspiration from several sources, most notably Mini (invented by S.C. Gruget in 2020) as well as Toki Pona, Latin, Manmino, and Interlingua.

Approximately 50% of the vocabulary is drawn from Mini, with almost all of the remainder derived from classical Latin and (occasionally) Proto-Indo-European roots.

1.2   Purpose

With a target base vocabulary of under 1000 words, Ijunta has several goals:

- An aesthetically pleasing language to write, read, and speak
- A compact vocabulary that is easy to memorise and learn
- A flexible but simple system of affixes to express nuanced, socially robust meanings
- Easy pronunciation, using only common consonants and a simple 5 vowel system with no diphthongs and limited hiatus

2   Basics

2.1   Phonotactics

Ijunta words use a (C)V(C) syllabic structure, where the final C may only be **m** or **n**. The only vowel combinations that may appear adjacent to each other are **eo**, **ia**, **io**, **ua**, **ui**, and **uo**, all of which are pronounced syllabically with hiatus rather than as diphthongs.

All vowel length is non-contrastive but should be pronounced short wherever comfortable to do so. The vowels **a**, **o**, and **u** tend to be pronounced slightly longer in stressed syllables, while **e** and **i** are almost always short.

While Ijunta includes both **l** and **r**, they are not used in minimal pairs and in practice are interchangeable without loss of meaning. Similarly, while the official pronunciation of **j** is /dʒ/, some speakers may find it more comfortable to pronounce these words using /j/ and should still be intelligible to other speakers if they do so.

2.2   Alphabet

Ijunta is written using the following letters of the standard Latin alphabet. The IPA pronunciation for the neutral dialect of Ijunta is shown below each character:

Character	a	b	d	e	f	g	i	j	k	l
IPA	ä	b	d	e̞	f	g	ɪ	dʒ	k	l
Character	m	n	o	p	r	s	t	u	v	
IPA	m	n	o̞	p	ɹ	s/z	t	ʉ	v	

Note that the vowels for Ijunta tend to be quite centered, and [s] is generally allophonically pronounced /z/ following an [o].

2.3 Basics of word order

Sentences and clauses in Ijunta are arranged in subject-verb-object (SVO) order.

Since most words may be flexibly used in multiple parts of speech, the meaning of words must be inferred through position and context. The word immediately following the subject noun phrase is always assumed to be a verb unless a subject complement is used as a copula.

The two primary complements are:

Ijunta	Function
a	Marks the next word / phrase as a noun complement.
e	Marks the next word / phrase as an adjective when following a noun, or as an adverb when following a verb.

The meaning of a phrase can change substantially depending on whether a complement marker is present and if so, which one is used:
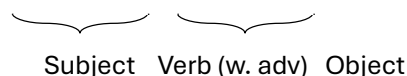
Ijunta	Translation
Animale manja.	The animal eats.
Animale a manja.	The animal is food.
Da animale e manja.	That is an edible animal.
Animale manja veji.	The animal eats the plant.
Di duro melanje.	This hardens the mixture.
Da e duro.	That (thing) is durable.
Da a duro.	That is hard (difficult).
A vasa.	There is water.
E vasa.	It's wet.

Further description of the use of these words is found in following sections.

The use of **o** marks the next word as the owner in an associative relationship with the preceding noun or attributional adjectives:

Ijunta	Translation
Mi aroma pan.	I smell bread.
Mi amo aroma o pan.	I like the smell of the bread.
Viro jeti e duro kon sio kera.	The man hits hard with his stick.
Kera o viro jeti e duro mi.	The man's stick hits me hard.

Note how **a**, **e**, and **o** are always tightly coupled to their parent word:

<div align="center">

Kera o viro   *jeti e poten*   *mi.*

Subject   Verb (w. adv)   Object

</div>

This is necessary to remove ambiguity. However it can result in sentence word orders that seem initially unintuitive to English speakers, where adverbs are most naturally placed after the object (for example, *I ate the apple quickly* is *I ate quickly the apple* in Ijunta).

3 Talking about things

3.1 Nouns

Words are identified as nouns through context as the subject or object of a sentence. For example, a word like **ludi** can mean either *play* or *game* depending on its location in a sentence:

Ijunta	Translation
Da a mio ludi.	That's my game.
Da a ka? ... A ludi.	What's that? ... [It's] a game.
Tu uludi kon mi.	You can play with me.
Tuo ludi e ameno!	Your game is fun!
Tu vole ludi?	[Do] you want the game?
Vole iludi?	[Do you] want to play [a game]?
Vole iludi di?	[Do you] want to play this?
Miale uludi e nun da?	Can we play that now?

Disambiguation is used through the addition of context markers as required. A possessive pronoun like **mio** (*my*), a determiner like **da** (*that*) or an attributive phrase like **ludi o etudila** (*game of the school*) makes it clear when a word is to be treated as a noun.

Sentences can also use verbal markers such as the past tense marker **du** or the permissive mood clitic **u-** to explicitly signify words as verbs, in turn clarifying which words are the nouns in a sentence. This approach is discussed in more detail in the section on verbs.

If a verb and object would otherwise share the same root (and therefore be technically redundant), the object is omitted or substituted with a generic pronoun like **di** (*this*) or **da** (*that*).

In Ijunta, nouns are not routinely inflected in any way for person, number, or gender. Where it is explicitly necessary to indicate the gender of a noun, the adjectival markers **e fem** (*female*) or **e viro** (*male*) are used instead.

The following suffixes are used to systematically modify nouns:

Suffix	Function
-du, -edu	Make an abstract noun from adjective or verb; similar to English -*ness*, -*ment*
-la, -ela	Indicates a type of place or situation relating to the base noun
-le, -ale	Creates a group noun from a singular noun object
-ni, -i	Indicates an object of a type or kind, often diminutive, template for color names
-ro, -ero	Marker of a person with a role or profession

The second form of suffix is used for words that end in **m** or **n**, or words that already end with that suffix (so not **karoro**, but **karero** for *driver*). Some more examples of using these suffixes:

Ijunta	Translation
adere	sticky
aderedu	stickiness

Ijunta	Translation
vende	sell
vendela	shop
ito	person
itole	people, humans
kama	bed
kamala	bedroom
kamale (kamalale)	hotel
kelun	sky, atmosphere
keluni	blue (by analogy: sky is blue)
leon	lion, tiger
leoni	predator
sano	health, heal
sanoro	doctor
ade	aid, care
adero	nurse
kapo	head
kaporo	boss, chief
kaponiro	manager, supervisor

Creativity and expressivity is encouraged in use of these suffixes. Over time, it is expected these derivations will increasingly have conventional meanings encoded.

3.2 Pronouns

There are three basic pronouns in Ijunta: **mi** (1st person), **tu** (2nd person) and **si** (3rd person), which can be used in either the subject or object position.

Pronouns may be used uninflected, but also have inflected forms for number and type that may be used for emphasis or to remove ambiguity.

Personal pronouns		Possessive pronouns	
Ijunta	**Translation**	**Ijunta**	**Translation**
mi	I, me	*mio*	my, mine
miale	we, us	*mialo*	our, ours
tu	you	*tuo*	your, yours
tuale	you (plural)	*tualo*	your, yours (plural)
si	he, she, it, him, her	*sio*	his, hers, theirs
siale	they	*siale*	theirs
sikosa	it	*sikoso*	its

The possessive pronouns may also be used adjectivally; compare **mio kani** (*my dog*) to **kani o mio** (*dog of mine*).

If it is necessary to refer to a third person specifically as being of feminine or masculine gender, use **dafem** for *she/her* and **daviro** for *he/him*. In most ordinary conversational contexts this is not used.

Demonstrative pronouns also exist in singular and alternative plural forms:

Ijunta	Translation
di	this
diale	these
da	that
dale	those

On the other hand, interrogative and indefinite pronouns remain the same in all contexts:

Interrogative pronouns		Indefinite pronouns	
Ijunta	Translation	Ijunta	Translation
ka	what	*ale*	all
kafase	how	*mui*	very, many
kato	who	*aliki*	some, few
kakosa	why	*non*	none
kaloke	where		
kano	which		
kanun	when		

When creating a question with interrogative pronouns, simply use the same sentence structure as a statement, but use the appropriate pronoun for the information being sought.

Ijunta	Translation
Vendela e aloke?	Where are the shops?
Vendela e vida.	The shops are over there.
Kato veni e kalite?	Who is coming tonight?
Jan veni e kalite.	Jan is coming tonight.

Pronouns that can also be used as adjectives may be placed before their corresponding nouns without a complement, thus **ale bebe e joli** (*all babies are happy*).

4 Doing and being

4.1 Verbs

There are four basic kinds of sentences in Ijunta:

- Describing an action or event
- Describing the essence of an entity ("a" statements)
- Describing the state or an attribute of an entity ("e" statements)
- Describing the position of an entity ("en" statements)

The first type is a standard subject-verb-object formation:

Ijunta	Translation
Mi ado pan.	I bring the bread.
Si loke polo.	He found the chicken.
Oro tu puro mio kasa.	Please clean my house.

The second sentence type uses a copula to link the subject to a noun complement. Most commonly this structure uses **a**, which is translatable in English to "is a".

The words **idem** (*is identical to*), **sama** (*is similar to*), **pule** (*is more than*) and **meno** (*is less than*) can also be used for this construction.

Ijunta	Translation
Mi a viro de duo-sen sinko ano.	I am a twenty-five year old man.
Si a panero.	He is a baker.
Da kasa idem mio kasa.	That house is the same as my house.
Di kafe sama de tuo mama.	This coffee is just like your mother's.

The third type uses a copula to link the subject to an adjective complement describing a state or other attribute. (Note that an adjectival noun should be linked using **a**, not **e**.)

Words like **apara** (*appear*) and **ato** (*act*) can also be used in place of **e** for this sentence structure.

Ijunta	Translation
Siale e fatigo.	Everyone is tired out.
Tuo kinde apara mise.	Your child appears sad.
Mio makina o kara e mui fugo!	My vehicle's engine is very hot!
Da kasa e no mui opesa.	That house is not expensive.

Lastly, sentences that describe an entity's position or orientation have an implied copula:

Ijunta	Translation
Mio kara en domo.	My vehicle is at home.
Selebi via jalan.	The party is across the street.
Si de juraniro.	She is from the police.

To add an adverb to a verb, simply append **e** and the adverbial descriptor directly after the verb:

Ijunta	Translation
Tuo kara imotu e rapima.	Your car is travelling too fast.
Si salu e joli mi.	She greets me happily.
Si e joli salu mi.	She is happy to greet me.
Ito jeti e poten sikosa.	The man strikes it powerfully.

4.2 Verb strength

Any verb can be intensified in its urgency, strength and/or power through addition of the suffix **-ma**. Use the suffix **-mia/-nia** instead if the word ends in **m**, **ma**, **n**, or **na**.

Ijunta	Translation
Mi jeti sio rama.	I hit his arm.
Mi jetima sio fasi.	I punched his face.
Tu manja e jenti, danke.	You eat politely, thank you.

Ijunta	Translation
No! Tu manjama sama bete!	No! You gobble like a monster!
Juraniro poten ito de tera.	Police force the person to the ground.
Si potenia an liga noga o ovi.	He overpowers and binds the sheep's legs.

4.3 Tense, aspect, and mood

If an action as taking place in the past or future, prefix with **du** (past tense) or **go** (future tense).

Ijunta	Translation
Mi du mira siale en feneta	I saw them in the window.
Mi du kipa opesa.	I kept the money.
Si go veni de kalite.	They are coming tonight.
Da go fugo e rapima.	That will burn very quickly.

The prefix **me** is used in situations where an action has not yet occurred, but is hypothesized as likely or possible. To actively push for the occurrence of the action or event, pair **me** with the **-ma** suffix to act as a command or demand; or **-mia** if already ending in -**ma**.

Ijunta	Translation
Si me veni de seki o dia.	He may come tomorrow.
Mi me vole karo e ruja.	I would like the red car.
Tu me venima a mialo selebi.	You must come to our party.
Me ekima!	Get out of here!

The prefix **i-** (or **in-** before vowels) is used in three situations:

- To mark a verb as progressive tense – can also be paired with **du** or **go**)
- To use as a gerund (noun form)
- When paired with a verb of intent or causation such as **deside** (expect) or **vole** (want)

Ijunta	Translation
Inimbe didia.	It is raining today.
Mi du imira po sio reveni.	I was watching for his return.
Di lusa volema irepare.	This light needs fixing.
Miale go toma si kon mialo ipoten.	We will take it with our power.
Imanja keki a mui moti.	Eating cake is very messy.
Mi vole imanja jelum o laki!	I want to eat the ice cream!

The prefix **u-** (or **us-** before vowels) is used to:

- Indicate that an action is possible to complete, or that a state may occur in the future
- Politely invite someone to undertake an action

When a **u-** prefix is combined with **-ma**, it acts as a polite request or exhortation; use **-mia** instead if the word already ends in -**ma**.

Ijunta	Translation
Si uveni ka?	When can he come?
Tu usave di karo de seki o semana.	You can have this car next week.
Tu uvenima a mialo selebi.	Please do come to our party.
Tu usadema ineki e didia mi.	I need you to help me to leave today.

4.4 Bare assertions

When a topic is established, Ijunta has several special words that are specifically used to talk about existence or completion of something without having to re-reference the topic of a previous clause or sentence.

Ijunta	Translation
isi	is, am doing [it]
iside	was, have done [it]
isigo	will be, will do [it]
usi	can be, can do [it]
uside	could be, might be [it]
usidema	had to be, should be [it]
usima	must, must do [it]

Some examples of these words in use:

Ijunta	Translation
A tori? — Ja, isi.	Is that a bird? — Yes, it is.
De fasi tuo mano o etudi? — Ja, iside.	You've done your homework? — Yes, it's done.
Tu eki disipa? — No e punto, pero mi isigo	Have you put out the trash? — Not yet, but I will.
Mi no umira tu de di semana, pero Jan usi.	I can't come this week, but Jan can.
A ke Toni e vida? — Uside.	Is that Tony over there? — It might be.
Lamen, tuo kia e no da. — Mi no savi, usidema da!	Sorry, your keys aren't there. — I don't understand, they should be there!
A ke tu ige ada selebi? Tu usima!	Will you be at the party? You really ought to!
Mi no vole imotu etudila. — Pero tu me usima, ekima!	I don't want to go to school. — But you must, get going!

5 Further concepts

5.1 Spaces and relationships

Ijunta has a small range of flexible prepositions, with the most important being:

Ijunta	Function	Equivalent to
en	Being at a place or existing in a state	in, on, at (place), inside, on
de	Origin, agent, or consideration of verb	from, of, about, by
ada	A directed effort or targeting	to, at (time), into
kon	A possession or co-location	with, among, during

Use of these words in a sentence with no verb always implies a present tense statement of fact, for example **Mi ada etudila** means *I am going to school*. The past and future can be specified by prefixing prepositions with **du** and **go**, respectively, with **en** having the special contractions of **den** (du + en) and **gen** (go + en).

Ijunta	Translation
Miale selebi en kaloke?	Where can we celebrate?
Lamenia, mi den kasa.	(I am) very sorry, I was in bed.
De kalite si gen fabula.	Tonight she will be at the theatre.
A ke tu ada vendela?	Are you going to the shops?
Mi du repare de jene o duro.	I have fixed the cause of the problem.
Papa, mi vole imotu kon amiko.	Father, I want to go with my friends.

To reference relative distance of places, Ijunta uses a three-way distance contrast system with **di** (*here*), **da** (*there*) and **vida** (*over there*).

5.2 Conjunctions and connections

Ijunta conjunctions function mostly the same as in English, with the most important being:

Ijunta	Translation
an	and, also, furthermore
u	or, else, otherwise
pero	but, except, besides
ankora	yet, even still

Note that all of these terms can also function independently at the beginning of sentences or clauses, in which case they have the adverbial meaning.

Ijunta	Translation
Mi manja ovo an suse.	I am eating eggs and ham.
An mi no savi kosa ke tu idire ka.	Also, I don't know what you are talking about.
Tu me vole te u café?	Do you want tea or coffee?
Ukitema e nun! U tu go no veni e punto bon.	You should leave now! Otherwise, you won't arrive in time.
Si du dona dikosa pero mi no pensa da e poten.	They have provided a reason, but I don't think it's convincing.
Miale me kita! U sio aviso igo no mudi.	We must leave! Otherwise her warning will be meaningless.
Si kare, ankora si nonun tado itenta.	He loses, yet he never stops trying.
Ankora, mi pensa miale usintero.	Even still, I think we should investigate.

Ijunta also has several idiomatic adverbial connecting phrases:

Ijunta	Translation
e junta	(consequential) so, as a result
e pende	(period of time) at the time that, when
e punto	(point in time) sometimes, from time to time, occasionally

To emphasise temporal placement, these phrases can be combined with **di** or **da** to reflect a short-term and long-term focus, for example:

Ijunta	Translation
e da junta	eventually this means
e da pende	over the long term
e di punto	at this moment, right now

Unlike other **e** clauses, these can be used independently of a verb. In this case they are placed either independently or alongside a 'primary' conjunction word at the start of a clause:

Ijunta	Translation
E di junta, mira sange igotama de kata.	Instantly, blood started gushing from the cut.
Mi bibe e punto kafe en antimedia.	Sometimes I drink coffee in the morning.
E pende juraniro du loke si, du su sera.	When the police found him, it was too late.
Si e malo, pero e punto miale no kite.	It is bad, but at the moment we are not leaving.

Coordinating clause words can be used independently, when placed between two phrases, or combined with **posi** to articulate an "A *then* B" relationship.

Ijunta	Function	Equivalent to
se	A conditional truth	if, in case, whether
po	A meaning, purpose, or reason	for, in order to
kodo	A cause-effect relationship	because, since
pera	An enabler, means, or method	through, by means of

Note that generally the choice to use **posi** or not leads to an inversion of phrase order:

Ijunta	Translation
Tu me usedo se tu no manja e nun.	You will be hungry if you don't eat now.
Se tu no manja, posi tu me usedo.	If you don't eat, then you will be hungry.
Tu umanoma po seki.	You must work hard for success.
Po tu vole iseki, posi umanoma!	If you want to succeed, then work hard!
Viva e duro po siale kodo sio papa e mori.	Life is hard for them since their father died.
Kodo sio papa e mori, posi viva e duro	Since their father died, life has been hard.
Inadomo opesa peru tu me fini di pagina o juradu.	To get the money, you must fill out this government form.
Pero ifini di pagina, tuo opesa me libera.	Once you complete this form, your money will be released.

Complementizers are rarely omitted in Ijunta to increase clarify about the part of speech for surrounding words and so a range of options are available:

Ijunta	Translation
ke	that
ki	which, who, whose
kide	which of

Ijunta	Translation
daki	that which
deke	of that

The latter terms are usually reserved for sentences which relate to consequential, evidential, or selective statements.

Ijunta	Translation
Mi du no savi ke si du kare da.	I didn't know that he lost that.
Fugobatero ki den mio domo ide ubuntu.	The firefighter who was at my house was kind.
Mama petito mi kide mialo sibi go veni de uno.	Mum asked me which of our siblings will be arriving first.
Tu udirema daki tu vole po dona.	You need to tell what you want as a gift.
Mi mira deke mi me kapama po no imori	I see what I must obtain to stay alive.

5.3 Numbers

Ijunta	Translation
uno	one
duo	two
dari	three
fio	four
sinko	five
sita	six
seben	seven
ete	eight
nin	nine
sen	ten
sen-uno	eleven
sen-duo	twelve
duo-sen	twenty
duo-sen-uno	twenty-one
keto	one hundred
duo-keto	two hundred
dari-keto-uno	three hundred and one
kilo	one thousand
mega	one million
giga	one billion

Ordinal numbers are prefixed by **de**, for example**:**

Ijunta	Translation
de uno	first
de duo	second
de dari	third

5.4 Dates

Dates in Ijunta are written in DD/MM/YYYY format, and spoken as written using **ano** (*year*), **lunon** (*month*), and **dia** (*day*):

Ijunta	Translation
De sinko dia o duo lunon an 2024 ano.	5 February 2024
De dua-sen dia o fio lunon an di ano.	12 April this year

5.5 Times

Times in Ijunta use 24-hour notation HH:MM. Expressing times as relative to an hour or noon is permitted but uncommon.

Ijunta	Translation
Sen-fio duo-sen or *sen-fio an duo-sen minu.*	14:20 (or 2:20 PM)
Nin ora meno sen.	08:50 (10 minutes to nine)
Dari oro de posimedi	15:00 (Three hours past noon)
Seben de kalite.	19:00 (Seven in the evening)
Medi pule uno ora.	13:00 (One hour after noon)

6 Appendix A: Loans and foreign words

Nouns may be freely borrowed into Ijunta from source languages, as long as the words are commonly understood or context is established around their definition and usage.

Borrowed words are not formal dictionary terms but act as convenient shorthand which is established in context. Best practice in written text is generally to include a brief definition of the word in parentheses on first use. For example:

Ijunta	Translation
Da muso (kasa o antikale) en di e pate e sekidia.	That museum (house of many antiques) near here is open tomorrow.

When transliterating foreign words into Ijunta, seek to incorporate words that align to the phonotactics where possible. For example, the word **sivila** (city) is derived from Latin *civilas* as more compatible than the triple consonant cluster found in *urbs*. Where unavoidable, use these transformations for syllables:

Diphthongs:

- reduce to most prominent vowel sound (typically final)

English phonemes not used in Ijunta:

- **θ, ð** → substitute **t, d**
- **w** → substitute **v**
- **z** → substitute **s**

Onset:

- **bl**, **cl**, **fl**, **gl**, **pl**, **sl**, **st** → add infixed **a**, ie **bl** becomes "bal"
- **br**, **cr**, **dr**, **fr**, **gr**, **pr**, **tr**, **sp**, **sw** → add **u**, ie **cr** becomes "cur"

Coda:

- **lp**, **rb**, **mp** and other similar words with **l, r, m** + consonant → drop l, r, m
- **st** → substitute **suta**
- cluster with final fricative (f, v, θ) → substitute **e**
- other final consonant → add trailing **a** or **o**