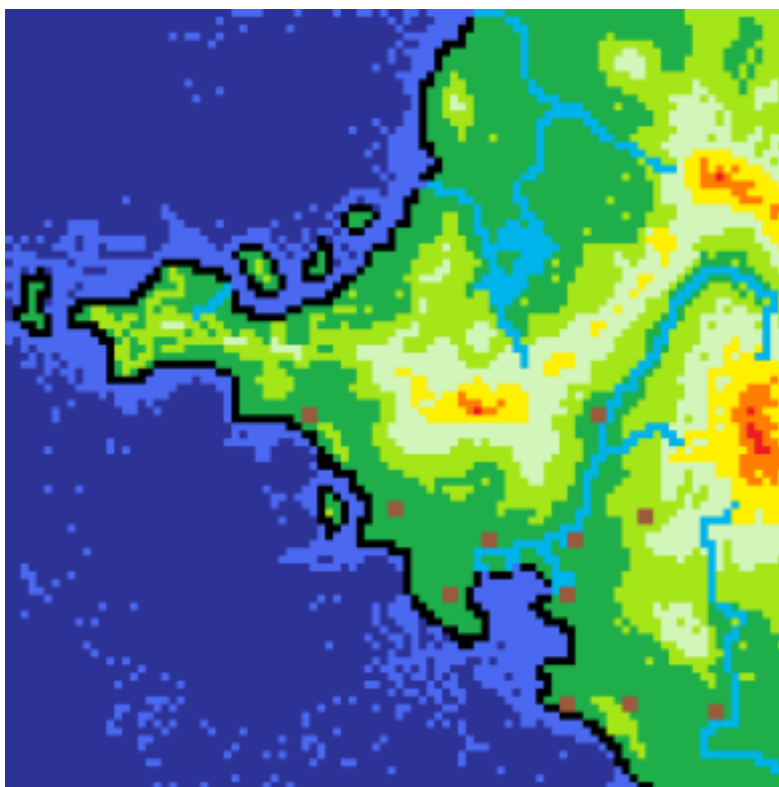


Màwâè

Heleuzyx

Map of the Màdípè (Homeland of the Màs People) and Màwâè Dialects



26th Speedlang Challenge

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Abbreviations

NOM Nominative

ACC Accusative

GEN Genitive

DAT Dative/Instrumental

LOC Locative

BEN Benefactive

□IM Similitive

VOC Vocative

□G Singular

PL Plural

P□T Past

PR□ Present

□UT Future

TOP Topic

IND Indicative

□UB Subjunctive

IMP Imperative

PART Participle

1 1st person

2 2nd person

3 3rd person

1. Introduction

Màwâè ['maɭβaɳ, ʔeɭ]

Hi, I'm Heleuzyx. This is my submission for the 26th speedlang challenge on r/conlangs, hosted by u/odenevo. The language I created, Màwâè, is a tonal language with a mostly agglutinating morphology. Here are the ways Màwâè comply to the constraints:

Phonological constraints:

- **Include tone and/or phonation that is contrastive on the level of the word or lower. This could be tone/phonation that works on a word, foot, syllable, or mora level.**

Tones are contrastive on the syllable level in Màwâè. For example, *mànè* "person.NOM.PL" is contrastive with *màné* "person.VOC.PL".

- **Have some asymmetries between the set of consonants allowed to occur in the onset and coda, meaning that either more or less consonants are allowed in the onset than in the coda, or having consonants that only occur in either the onset or the coda.**

All consonants are allowed in the onset, while only nasal vowels and the glottal stop are allowed in the coda. See the phonotactics section below.

- **Include at least two different strategies for resolving clusters or hiatus at morpheme boundaries, distinct from how clusters or hiatus are resolved within roots. These strategies must both be synchronically active.**

In Màwâè, clusters are resolved by deleting consonants and changing the tone of the syllables. Each deleted consonant creates a different tone on the syllable. For clusters within roots, the tones also undergo tone sandhi, while clusters across root boundaries do not.

Grammatical constraints:

- **Have a closed or near-closed set of words within a broader class (nouns, adjectives, verbs, demonstratives, numerals, etc) that take more and/or unique inflectional morphology. Morphology here could be stem alternations (gradation/consonant mutation/apophony), or tone changes, not necessarily affixes. How small this set of words is isn't really important, as long as it does not constitute a majority of a given class.**

Only certain animal and plant nouns use initial consonant mutation as a way to mark the plural, unlike adding changes on the conjugation suffix as normal nouns do.

- **Have more than one morpheme that are complete homophones with at least one other, but appear in different contexts. An example of this in a natural language are the various**

English morphemes of the shape -s /-z/. This does not have to be an affix or alternation, and could be two or more grammatical morphemes that are simply homophones with each other.

The nominative ending *-è* is identical to the 2nd person indicative agreement on verbs. The dative ending *-ùη* is identical to the 3rd person subjunctive on verbs.

Sociolinguistic constraints:

• Create at least two dialects, each of which differs from the main language in at least three grammatical or phonological features. These features need not be the same across dialects, but each dialect should have at least three clear distinguishing features from the main language. These dialects can be as distinct or similar to the main language, as long as they are still intelligible. Denote throughout your description where the dialects differ from the main language.

There are three dialects, the main one being the Central dialect. The other two, Eastern and Western, both differ in multiple places (See Sociolinguistics section below).

Tasks:

• Translate 5x 5MOYD (Just Used 5 Minutes of Your Day) or Conlang Syntax Test Cases sentences.

See Examples section below.

• Document and showcase the language.

• Submit your document on or by the 15th of October, 2025.

2. Phonology

2.1 Phonemic Inventory

Consonants

	Labial	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	<i>Pp</i> /p/	<i>Tt</i> /t/			<i>Kk</i> /k/	‘/?/
Implosive	<i>Bb</i> /b/	<i>Dd</i> /d/				
Fricative		<i>Ss</i> /s/	<i>Xx</i> /ʃ/		<i>Gg</i> /ɣ/	<i>Hh</i> /h/

Affricate			<i>Cc</i> /tʃ/ <i>Jj</i> /dʒ/			
Nasal	<i>Mm</i> /m/	<i>Nn</i> /n/			<i>Ŋŋ</i> /ŋ/	
Approxima nt	<i>Ww</i> /w/	<i>Ll</i> /l/	<i>Rr</i> /ɹ/	<i>Yy</i> /j/		

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	<i>Ii</i> /i/ <i>ih</i> /ĩ/		<i>Uu</i> /u/ <i>uh</i> /ũ/
Close-mid	<i>Ee</i> /e/ <i>eh</i> /ẽ/	<i>Əə</i> /ə/ <i>əh</i> /ẽ/	<i>Oo</i> /o/ <i>oh</i> /õ/
Open-mid	<i>ɛɛ</i> /ɛ/ <i>ɛh</i> /ẽ/		<i>ɔɔ</i> /ɔ/ <i>ɔh</i> /õ/
Low		<i>Aa</i> /a/ <i>ah</i> /ã/	

2.2 Tones

1. High	2. Low	3. Rising	4. Falling	5. Short (Checked)
44 á [a¹]	11 à [a]	24 ǎ [aʔ]	51 â [aʋ]	33 a [ǎʔ]

2.3 Phonotactics

CV(N/?)+Tone

C = all consonants, V = all vowels, N = nasal vowels {/m/ /n/ /ŋ/}

Màwâè is a tonal language, in which syllables containing vowels other than /ə/ has one of the five tones: High, Low, Rising, Falling, and Short (referred to below using their initials). The tones are pronounced as in the table above. Syllables with the S tone are pronounced shorter in duration in comparison to other vowels, for example [ǎʔ]. Syllables containing the vowel /ə/ are pronounced similar to syllables with S tone, but do not have a glottal stop in its coda, for example [ǎ]. All syllables must start with a consonant. When a syllable would have started with a vowel due to a morphological process, a glottal stop is inserted as the onset. Vowels in hiatus are therefore pronounced with a glottal stop intermediately. A syllable may have a nasal consonant in its coda, or in the case of the syllable having S tone, a glottal stop.

2.4 Tonogenesis and Nasal Vowels

Màwâè tones come from two sources: inherent tone or root coda deletion. All morphemes have an inherent tone, which is high tone by default. A small number of morphemes may have a different inherent tone. Roots mainly consist of one syllable, which can have extra consonants {/p/ /t/ /k/ /s/ /ʃ/ /ɣ/ /h/ /ɬ/ /l/} in the coda, different from the normal phonotactics. The consonant in coda is only present when the next morpheme begins with a vowel, or if that consonant is a nasal at the end of the word. If the consonant is not allowed in that position after morphological processes (for example the next morpheme begins with a consonant), the consonant in coda is deleted and the syllable takes on a different tone depending on the deleted consonant. Nasal vowels come from a deleted nasal coda. When a nasal in coda is deleted, the previous vowel becomes nasalised.

Coda consonant	Tone
/p/ /t/ /k/	S
/s/ /ʃ/	L
/ɬ/ /l/ /ɣ/*	R
/h/	F
/m/ /n/ /ŋ/**	H

* /ɣ/ is not deleted but becomes a nasal /ŋ/, and follows the rules for nasal consonants.

** /m/ /n/ /ŋ/ are not deleted when the following a consonant that matches the place of articulation of the nasal.

Examples:

sár /sár/ + *là* /là/ > *sǎlà* /sǎlà/

sám /sám/ + *kén* /kén/ + *tàŋ* /tàŋ/ > *sáhkéntàŋ* /sáhkéntàŋ/

2.5 Tone sandhi

Màwâè does not allow certain tone patterns within the same root. Tone sandhi occurs within syllables of the same root, and does not cross over morpheme boundaries. Compound words and affixes are counted as within the root, while conjugation morphemes or roots of a different part-of-speech are counted as a separate root. Tone sandhi is counted from right to left in groups of two syllables, and the second syllable of the group undergoes tone sandhi.

Before Sandhi	After Sandhi
LH	LF
RH	RF

RR	RL
FH, FR, FF	FL

Examples:

tá /tá/ + *kéh* /kéh/ + *níh* /níh/ > *tákênî* /tákênî/ > *tákênì* /tákênì/ (compound root)

kéh /kéh/ + *-î* /-î/ > *kêhî* /kêhî/ (conjugation suffix)

2.6 Vowel reduction

When three (or more) consecutive syllables have the same tone, the vowel of the middle syllable(s) is reduced to a short ə /ə/.

2.7 Allophony

Phonemes are mostly pronounced as transcribed.

/p/ /t/ /k/ are unaspirated [p] [t] [k]. Realised as voiced [b] [d] [g] intervocalically. /ʃ/ /tʃ/ /dʒ/ /ɹ/ are retroflex consonants. Alveolar [ɲ] [tɲ] [dʒ] [ɹ] are considered non-standard in the main dialect.

/w/ is realised as a voiced bilabial fricative [β] intervocalically.

The primary stress of the word is always on the first syllable, and the secondary stress on every other syllable that does not have /ə/ as the vowel..

3. Orthography

3.1 Latin Alphabet

Completely phoemic. See consonant, vowel and tone tables above. Letters *Ff*, *Qq*, *Vv*, *Zz* are not used. Additional letters are *Dɲ*, *Jɔ*, *Ɛɛ*, *Ɔɔ*. Tones are marked as diacritics above the vowel, and the S tone is unmarked. Nasal vowels are written with an *h* after the vowel. The glottal stop ‘ is normally unmarked.

4. Morphosyntax

4.1 Nouns

4.1.1 Case and Number

There are 8 cases and singular-plural distinction in Mawâè. They are marked by a conjugational suffix, directly added to the end of the word stem.

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	-è	-nè

Accusative	-à <i>n</i>	-nà <i>n</i>
Genetive	-î	-nî
Dative/Instrumental	-ù <i>ŋ</i>	-nù <i>ŋ</i>
Locative	-mè <i>m</i>	-lèm
Benefactive	-ká	-ŋá
Similative	-sà <i>m</i>	-là <i>m</i>
Vocative	-ré	-né

The tones on the conjugation suffixes do not undergo tone sandhi when combined with the root.

4.1.2 Irregular plural formation: initial consonant mutation

Some nouns do not follow the normal plural conjugation, but instead use initial consonant mutation as a way of marking the plural. Most of these nouns are types of animals and some plants. The conjugation endings are the same one as the singular ending for other nouns.

Initial consonant	After mutation
/p/ /b/ /m/	/w/
/t/ /d/ /s/ /n/	/l/
/k/ /ŋ/ /h/	/ɣ/
/ʃ/ /tʃ/ /dʒ/ /j/	/ɬ/

Examples: *bá-* (pig): *báè* (pig-NOM.□G) "pig" / *wáè* (pig-NOM.PL) "pigs"

4.1.3 Definiteness

There is no definite/indefinite article in Mawâè. If needed, the demonstrative articles *pówé* "this" and *pótè* "that" are used. They go before the noun.

4.1.4 Possession

Possessor - Possessed normally, Possessed - Possessor if the possessor is a pronoun. The possessor is in genetive case. There is no alienable distinction with possession.

Examples: *bá-î dóm-é* (pig-GEN.□G house-NOM.□G) "the pig's house"

dóm-é ìní (house-NOM. □ G 1.GEN. □ G) "my house"

4.2 Verbs

4.2.1 Personal agreement

Verbs agree with the subject person, but not number. When the pronoun is dropped, the number of the subject is unspecified.

4.2.2 TAM

-1: Prefix	0: Root	1: Tense	2: Personal agreement & mood: indicative/subjunctive/(imperative)
		Past: <i>-k-</i>	1st: <i>-ì / -ò</i>
		Present: <i>-m-</i>	2nd: <i>-è / -èη / -é</i>
		Future: <i>-Ø-</i>	3rd: <i>-à / -ùη</i>

There are three tenses: past, present and future, and three moods: indicative, subjunctive and imperative. Tenses are marked by a morpheme before the personal agreement ending, while mood is marked by different sets of personal agreement endings. Aspect is expressed using adverbs and particles.

Examples: *tá-m-ì* (hit-PR □ -IND.1) "I/We hit"

tá-Ø-à (hit- □ UT-IND.3) "He/She/It/They will hit"

4.2.3 Modality

Modality is expressed by adding prefixes to the verb (it is a type of derivation). Examples include *sél-* "can/be able to", *tún-* "must", and *jə-* "should".

4.2.4 Copula

The copula is a verb similar to English "to be". It is irregular in tense conjugation: *xək-* (P □ T) *xəm-* (PR □) *xəx-* (□ UT), and the third person indicative agreement is dropped in the present tense. The same verb also means "there is/are".

4.3 Adjectives

Adjectives can be expressed in two ways: by directly adding a root to the modified noun, or by using a standalone adjective that goes before the noun for extra emphasis. The standalone adjectives are formed by the adjectival root plus a suffix, usually decided by the meaning of the adjective. For example *-tək-* colour, *-yú-* shape/size, *-pə-* quality and so on. These adjectives take

the case ending that agrees with the modified noun.

Examples: *ló-tək-è bá-è* (red-colour-NOM. □G pig-NOM. □G) = *ló-bá-è* (red-pig-NOM. □G) "red

pig" Comparative and superlative adjectives are expressed with adverbs *gó* "more" and *xāη*

"most".

4.4 Participles

Participles are formed by {verb root + *-(ə)j(ə)-*} for intransitive verbs, or {verb root + *-(ə)n(ə)-* + Obj} for transitive verbs. They function like adjectives and agrees with the case of the noun.

4.5 Adverbs and particles

Adverbs go before the words they modify. Adverbs can be used to modify verbs and adjectives.

4.6 Postpositions

Postpositions go after the nouns. Depending on the case of the noun, the same postposition could have different meanings, for example:

ógó at (+LOC) / to (+ACC) / from (+GEN)

dóm-mèm ógó "at the house", *dóm-àn ógó* "to the house", *dóm-î ógó* "from the house"

4.7 Pronouns

Subject pronouns can be dropped (pro-drop language). When the pronoun is dropped the number of the subject is ambiguous. The conjugation of pronouns is irregular:

	1sg	2sg	3sg	1pl in.	1pl ex.	2pl	3pl	Reflex.
Nom.	<i>î</i>	<i>sé</i>	<i>káè</i>	<i>mě</i>	<i>dě</i>	<i>xó</i>	<i>nàè</i>	<i>rómè</i>
Acc.	<i>în</i>	<i>sèn</i>	<i>káàn</i>	<i>měñ</i>	<i>děñ</i>	<i>xòn</i>	<i>nààn</i>	<i>rómàn</i>
Gen.	<i>înì</i>	<i>sî</i>	<i>kái</i>	<i>měñî</i>	<i>děñî</i>	<i>xóî</i>	<i>nái</i>	<i>rómî</i>
Dat.	<i>înùη</i>	<i>sùη</i>	<i>káùη</i>	<i>měñùη</i>	<i>děñùη</i>	<i>xóùη</i>	<i>náùη</i>	<i>rómùη</i>
Loc.	<i>îmèm</i>	<i>sémèm</i>	<i>kámèm</i>	<i>měmèm</i>	<i>děmèm</i>	<i>xómèm</i>	<i>námèm</i>	<i>rómèm</i>
Ben.	<i>îkâ</i>	<i>sékâ</i>	<i>kákâ</i>	<i>měkâ</i>	<i>děkâ</i>	<i>xókâ</i>	<i>nákâ</i>	<i>róhkâ</i>
Sim.	<i>îsàm</i>	<i>sésàm</i>	<i>kásàm</i>	<i>měsàm</i>	<i>děsàm</i>	<i>xósàm</i>	<i>násàm</i>	<i>róhsàm</i>
Voc.	<i>îré</i>	<i>séré</i>	<i>karé</i>	<i>měré</i>	<i>děré</i>	<i>xóré</i>	<i>naré</i>	<i>róhré</i>

4.8 Syntax

4.8.1 Word order

VSO is the default word order.

Example: *Tá-m-à mäs-è bá-àn jét-ùŋ*. (hit-PR-IND.3 person-NOM. G pig-ACC. G stick-DAT. G)

"The person hit the pig with the stick."

4.8.2 Topic marker

Màwâè is a topic-prominent language. When needed, the topic is moved to the beginning of the sentence before a topic marker. There are three topic markers for different subjects: *ũ* for people, *ě* for pronouns, and *wà* for other nouns.

Examples:

Támà mäsè báàn jétùŋ. The person hits the pig with the stick.

Ũ mäsè támà báàn jétùŋ. It is the person that hits the pig with the stick.

Ũ báàn támà mäsè jétùŋ. The pig is hit with the stick by the person.

Wà jétùŋ támà mäsè báàn. It is the stick that the person hit the pig with.

4.8.3 Complex sentences

Complex sentences can be expressed either using participles or relative clauses. The relative pronoun is *jó*.

4.8.4 Questions

Yes-no questions are formed by adding a particle *kǎ* to the end of the sentence. W-Questions are formed by putting the question pronouns *tó-* in the place of the noun.

Example: *Wà tò-mèm ǒgǒ xəm dóm-è?* (TOP what-LOC. G at be.PR-IND.3 house-NOM. G)

"Where is the house?"

4.9 Derivations

Màwâè is a right-headed language, i.e. the head of the noun phrase is at the end. New words are formed by compounding root morphemes.

Example: The language name Màwâè comes from the roots *mäs-* "person" and *wá-* "language", combined into *màwâ-* (tone sandhi), with the nominative ending *-è*.

5. Sociolinguistics

5.1 Dialects

There are three dialects of the language: Central, Western and Eastern. See the map at the end of the document for their locations. The central dialect is the standard as described above. All dialects are mutually intelligible. The differences in the other dialects are explained below:

5.2 Western dialect

This dialect is closer to the Central dialect than the Eastern one. The main differences are slight variations in lexical roots and differences in phonology, while the grammar is mostly the same.

Phonological differences:

Retroflex consonants /ʂ/ /ʈʂ/ /ɖʂ/ /ɳ/ are realised as palatal consonants [ʃ] [tʃ] [dʒ] [ɲ].

Palatalisation of alveolar obstruents before high vowels /i/ /e/ result in /t/ /d/ /s/ being palatalised into [tʃ] [dʒ] [ʃ].

/a/ is realised as a front [æ].

Implosives /ɓ/ /ɗ/ are often realised as prenasalised consonants [ᵐb] and [ᵐd].

Grammatical differences:

The subjunctive mood was lost and replaced with the past tense and adverb *cín* (from verb *cíŋ*- "become")

5.3 Eastern dialect

This dialect diverges more significantly compared to the Western dialect. Other than differences in vocabulary and phonology, the main highlight is the different syntax of this dialect.

Phonological differences:

/ɣ/ and /h/ are realised as uvular fricatives [ʁ] and [χ].

/w/ is realised as [v].

Vowels /ɛ/ /ɔ/ were raised to [e] and [o], while original /e/ and /o/ were lengthened into [e:] and [o:].

Grammatical differences:

Due to the loss of the topic marker, the word order became V2, with the topic of the sentence before the verb. Starting a sentence with a verb or using a topic marker is only used in formal settings.

Examples:

Word order in this dialect: *Másè támà báàn jétùŋ*.

Unnatural orders: *Támà másè báàn jétùŋ*. / *Ũ másè támà báàn jétùŋ*.

6. Examples

6.1.

<i>Làsòkà búyúè búmóè ìní.</i>
[ˈlaʌsoʌ,kaʌ ˈbuʌjuʌ,ʔeʌ ˈbuʌmoʌ,ʔeʌ ˈʔiʌniʌ]

láh-sóx-k-à	bú-yú-è	bú-mó-è	îni.
away-walk-P□T-IND .3	small-size-NOM.□ G	small-cat-NOM.□ G	1.GEN.□G
"My little kitten walked away." (CSTC17)			

6.2.

<i>Wà pówé gíxè séló lápuṇà.</i>				
[waɪ 'poɪβeɪ 'ɣiɪsɛɪ 'seɪloɪ 'laɪpuɪ,ŋaɪ]				
wà	pówé	gíx-è	séló	láh-pún-Ø-à
TOP	this	fog-NOM.□ G	maybe	away-disperse-□UT-IND.3
"This mist will probably clear away." (CSTC33)				

6.3.

<i>Wà hújî dĩnàn ḡónkà Tómè.</i>				
[waɪ 'huɪdʒiɪ 'diɪnanɪ 'ŋonɪkaɪ 'toɪmeɪ]				
wà	húj-î	dír-nàn	ḡón-k-à	Tóm-è
TOP	monkey-GEN.□ G	trick-ACC.PL	laugh-P□T-IND. 3	Tom-NOM.□G
"Tom laughed at the monkey's tricks." (CSTC64)				

6.4.

<i>Lúhkà múnè tóbólənwəséhne búkõnè kāmèm cú.</i>			
['lũɪkaɪ 'muɪneɪ 'toɪboɪlǎɪnǎɪ,βɛʔɪsɛɪ,neɪ 'buɪkoɪ,neɪ 'kaɪmemɪ [ʂuɪ]			
lúm-k-à	mú-nè	tó-ból-ənə-wék-sén-nè	bú-kór-nè
dan		head-wear-PART-flower-ring-NOM.P L	small-girl-NOM.PL

káh-mèm	cú		
bonfire-LOC. □ G	around		
"Many little girls with wreaths of flowers on their heads danced around the bonfire." (CSTC68)			

6.5.

<i>Kéé pówé mihàn esóhjiàn dò.</i>				
['keʔeɪ 'poʔbeɪ 'miʔhan] 'eʔʰsɔʔ, dʒiʔʰan] dɔʔ]				
ké-m-é	pówé	míh-àn	ék-sóm-jí-àn	dò
keep-PR □ -IMP. 2	this	secret-ACC. □ G	next-sun-time-ACC. □ G	until
"Keep this secret until tomorrow." (CSTC105)				