



Lannang Orthography (LO)

Wilkinson Daniel Wong GONZALES, Ph.D.

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Introduction

The Lannang Orthography is a broad phonetic writing system based on nearly a decade of research within the Lannang community, originally developed in June 2020 by Lannang-identifying Dr. Wilkinson Daniel Wong Gonzales (Assistant Professor, CUHK). It draws significant inspiration from the ways Lannangs commonly spell Lánnang-uè during texting and on social media platforms, a method informed by interviews with over 150 Lannangs in metropolitan Manila.

Lánnang-uè is primarily an oral language in the Philippines and has historically lacked a standardized writing system. The language includes not only Hokkien-derived words but also incorporates elements from Tagalog, English, and other Philippine languages. The absence of a consistent writing system complicates efforts in language and cultural preservation, which are facilitated by stable orthographies—as seen with Latin and Korean. In the Philippines, attempts to adapt existing systems like Peh-oe-ji and Tailo to Lánnang-uè have not been entirely successful, particularly with non-Hokkien words. A pilot survey indicated that these systems are perceived as opaque and challenging for beginners. These findings led to the creation of a tailored Lannang Orthography.

This orthography is detailed in this document and is accompanied by an interactive online pronunciation guide (www.lannangarchives.org/pronounce).

If you are interested in seeing how Lannang Orthography or Lannang spelling works in long paragraphs, you can visit [Prof. Gonzales dissertation abstract](#) or the following website: <http://lannangarchives.org/translations>

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I. The sounds of Lánnang-uè

This section is accompanied by a free, interactive, open-access online pronunciation guide (www.lannangarchives.org/pronounce), which lists the sounds and tones found in Lánnang-uè (as accurately as possible), represented using the International Phonetic Association (IPA) system, and linked to Lannang Orthography. The guide includes audio clips of sample words, along with transcriptions in Lannang Orthography, word origins, English translations, and word frequency. The entries are initially organized by the place of articulation. For enhanced navigation, users are encouraged to filter entries by type—such as consonant, vowel, or tone—or by specific places of articulation. You could also filter the list by directly typing the Lannang Orthography spelling.

A. Consonants

| Place of articulation | Orthography | Allophones represented (in IPA) | Lánnang-uè example | English gloss | Origin of Lánnang-uè word |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| bilabial | b | [b] | <i>bá</i> | ‘question marker’ | Tagalog |
| | p | [p], [p ^h]* | <i>pá</i> | ‘father’ | Hokkien |
| | ph | [p ^h] | <i>phē</i> | ‘blanket’ | Hokkien |
| | m | [m] | <i>má</i> | ‘mother’ | Hokkien |
| labiodental | f | [f] | <i>feathèr</i> | ‘feather’ | English |
| | v | [v], [b]* | <i>violín</i> | ‘violin’ | English |
| | ph | [f] | <i>grâph</i> | ‘graph’ | English |
| | gh | [f] | <i>enoûgh</i> | ‘enough’ | English |
| dental | th | [θ], [t]* | <i>thoûght</i> | ‘thought’ | English |
| | | [ð], [d]* | <i>thèn</i> | ‘then’ | English |
| alveolar, postalveolar | t | [t] | <i>tiaú</i> | ‘a string of’ classifier | Hokkien |
| | th | [t ^h] | <i>thiaù</i> | ‘jump’ | Hokkien |
| | d | [d] | <i>diaú</i> | ‘wrinkled’ | Hokkien |
| | s | [s] | <i>siaú</i> | ‘crazy’ | Hokkien |
| | z | [z] | <i>zebrà</i> | ‘zebra’ | English |
| | x | [s] | <i>xerôx</i> | ‘photocopy’ | Tagalog, English |
| | c | [s] | <i>celery</i> | ‘celery’ | English |
| | kn | [n] | <i>knîght</i> | ‘knight’ | English |
| | n | [n] | <i>niaú</i> | ‘cat’ | Hokkien |
| | l | [l] | <i>liaú</i> | ‘complete’ | Hokkien |
| | r | [ɹ] | <i>Russià</i> | ‘Russia’ | English |
| | wr | [ɹ] | <i>writèr</i> | ‘writer’ | English |
| | sh | [ʃ] | <i>shaú</i> | ‘crazy’ | Hokkien |
| | t | [ʃ] | <i>statiòn</i> | ‘station’ | English |
| | j | [dʒ] | <i>jail</i> | ‘jail’ | English |
| | ts | [ts] | <i>tsiá</i> | ‘here’ | Hokkien |
| | tsh | [ts ^h] | <i>tshiā</i> | ‘car’ | Hokkien |
| | ch | [tʃ̥] | <i>chá</i> | ‘here’ | Hokkien |
| | chh | [tʃ] | <i>chhā</i> | ‘car’ | Hokkien |
| | palatal | y | [j] | <i>yá</i> | ‘very’ |
| velar | k | [k] | <i>kō</i> | ‘paste’ | Hokkien |
| | kh | [k ^h] | <i>khō</i> | classifier for currency | Hokkien |

| | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| | c | [k], [k ^h]* | <i>còw</i> | ‘cow’ | English |
| | q | [k], [k ^h]* | <i>qualify</i> | ‘qualify’ | English |
| | g | [g] | <i>gō</i> | ‘five’ | Hokkien |
| | ng | [ŋ] | <i>ngâ</i> | discourse particle | Tagalog |
| labiovelar | w | [w] | <i>tsiûwâ</i> | ‘how’ | Hokkien |
| | wh | [w] | <i>whèy</i> | ‘whey’ | English |
| glottal | ∅ (no letter) | [ʔ] | <i>_aū, ngâ_</i> | ‘after,’ discourse particle | Hokkien, Tagalog |
| | h | [ʔ] | <i>duáh</i> | ‘hot’ | Hokkien |
| | | [h] | <i>hiá</i> | ‘there’ | Hokkien |

B. Vowels

| Orthography | Allophones represented (in IPA) | Lánnang-uè example | English gloss | Origin of Lánnang-uè word |
|-------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| a | [a], [ʌ] | <i>bâh</i> | ‘meat’ | Hokkien |
| ann | [ã] | <i>kânn</i> | ‘child’ | Hokkien |
| e | [e], [ɛ] | <i>bê</i> | ‘horse’ | Hokkien |
| ay | [e], [ej] | <i>bày</i> | ‘bay’ | English |
| ey | [e], [ej] | <i>whèy</i> | ‘whey’ | English |
| i | [i], [ɪ] | <i>bî</i> | ‘rice’ | Hokkien |
| inn | [ĩ] | <i>ínn</i> | ‘round’ | Hokkien |
| o | [o], [ɔ] | <i>bô</i> | ‘wife’ | Hokkien |
| u | [u], [ʊ] | <i>bû</i> | ‘female’ | Hokkien |
| unn | [ũ] | <i>siūnn</i> | ‘ponder’ | Hokkien |
| uh | [ə], [ʊ], [ʏ] | <i>túhng</i> | ‘long’ | Hokkien |

C. Tones

| Orthography | Tone | Allophones represented (in IPA) | Lánng-uè example | English gloss | Origin of Lánng-uè word |
|---|---------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| â | high | [55] | <i>kaû</i> | 'dog' | Hokkien |
| ā | mid | [33] | <i>kau</i> | 'submit' | Hokkien |
| a (none) | low | [22], [11] | <i>lo</i> | 'already' | Hokkien |
| à | falling | [51], [31] | <i>còw</i> | 'cow' | English |
| á | rising | [35] | <i>kaú</i> | 'monkey' | Hokkien |
| --a (and subsequently =a) (see section XI) | neutral | [31], [5], [11], etc. | --bò or --bô (<i>Dî bêh</i> --bò?) | 'negation marker' (Do you want this or not?) | Hokkien |

II. Concept of word

The concept of the “word” in Lánnang-uè follows the English and Tagalog way of operationalizing a word, or the Chinese way of operationalizing a phrase (詞). A ‘Han character’ is not necessarily a word.

WORDS

| | | |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|
| atsî | Hokkien-origin | ‘sister’ |
| tshiamâ | Hokkien-origin | ‘fork’ |
| pangkhùn | Lánnang-uè-unique | ‘for sleeping’ |
| siōpaū | Hokkien-origin | ‘bun’ |

NOT WORDS

| | | |
|------|----------------|-----------------------|
| â | Hokkien-origin | ‘diminutive’ |
| pāng | Tagalog-origin | ‘instrumental marker’ |

III. Word boundaries

Word boundaries are marked using a single space. If two morphemes (e.g., prefix, root, suffix) are part of the same word, then there should be no spaces in between them.

RECOMMENDED

| | | |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|
| atsî | Hokkien-origin | ‘sister’ |
| tshiamâ | Hokkien-origin | ‘fork’ |
| pangkhùn | Lánnang-uè-unique | ‘for sleeping’ |

NOT RECOMMENDED

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------|----------------|
| a tsî | Hokkien-origin | ‘sister’ |
| tshiam â | Hokkien-origin | ‘fork’ |
| pang khùn | Lánnang-uè-unique | ‘for sleeping’ |

IV. Non-Hokkien-origin words

Words that are derived from non-Hokkien languages such as English, Tagalog, and Mandarin in Lánnang-uè generally follow the original spelling, with the exception of some words derived from Tagalog (examples with asterisk).

RECOMMENDED

| | | |
|---------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| erasèr | English-origin | ‘eraser’ |
| pillòw | English-origin | ‘pillow’ |
| kasî | Tagalog-origin | ‘because’ |
| sayâng | Tagalog-origin | ‘waste’ |
| xiaokaî | Mandarin-origin | ‘paper for calligraphy’ |
| *basù | Tagalog-origin | ‘cup’ |

NOT RECOMMENDED

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| ereysèr | English-origin | ‘eraser’ |
| pillòu | English-origin | ‘pillow’ |
| siaukhaî | Mandarin-origin | ‘paper for calligraphy’ |

V. Diacritic (or tone mark) placement

a. The diacritics or tone marks are to be placed on the vowel.

| | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| hê | [he ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘fire’ |
| kāsî | [ka ³³ si ⁵⁵] | Tagalog-origin | ‘because’ |

b. All morphemes have tone in mainstream-style Lánnang-uè, but not all morphemes get assigned a diacritic when spelled out. This is true for the case for morphemes with low tones and neutral tones.

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|----------------|---------------------|
| cartoòn | [ka ²² tun ⁵¹] | English-origin | ‘cartoon’ |
| tshiamâ | [ts ^h jam ¹¹ (m)a ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘fork’ |
| pàng--tshu=lai=lo | [paŋ ⁵³ ts ^h u ³² laj ²¹ lo ¹¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘has been expelled’ |

c. If there are multiple vowels, particularly in consecutive vowel sequences like diphthongs, only the rightmost vowel gets the diacritic.

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|----------------|----------|
| hiá | [hja ³⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘there’ |
| kaû | [kaw ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘dog’ |
| iaū | [ʔjaw ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘hungry’ |

d. If there are no vowels, particularly in the case of syllabic nasals, then add “uh” and put the diacritic on the “u.”

| | | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| hūhng | [hŋ ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘far’ |
| ūhmsī | [m ³³ si ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘is not’ |

e. If there are no vowels, particularly in the case of English-derived words that end in “y”, then do not place diacritics.

| | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------|
| fancy | [fan ²² si ⁵¹] | English-origin | ‘fancy’ |
|-------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------|

f. Alternatively, if one has access to keyboards that allow diacritic placement on nasals like “m” and “n,” then put the diacritic on top of the consonant.

| | | | |
|--------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| hñg | [hŋ ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘far’ |
| mñsī | [m ³³ si ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘is not’ |
| fancỳ | [fan ²² si ⁵¹] | English-origin | ‘fancy’ |

VI. Capitalization

Proper nouns and words that are usually capitalized in English and Tagalog are recommended to be capitalized when writing using the orthography.

| | | |
|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| Bikôk | Hokkien-origin | 'United States' |
| Cebù | Tagalog-origin | 'Cebu' |
| Sokbù | Hokkien-origin | 'Cebu' |

VII. Glottal stops

a. Beginning of the word. If the glottal stop is found at the beginning of a word, then no explicit marking is needed.

| | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| aú | [ʔaw ³⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘throat’ |
| âh | [ʔaʔ ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘duck’ |
| ièng | [ʔjen ⁵¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘use’ |
| awây | [ʔa ²² waj ³⁵] | Tagalog-origin | ‘fight’ |

b. Middle of the word. A single dash is used to indicate or represent a glottal stop in the middle of the word: that is, before vowels if there are other sounds or morphemes within the same word that precede the glottal stop and vowel.

| | | | |
|---------|---|----------------|-------------------|
| siō-âh | [sjo ³³ ʔaʔ ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘roast duck’ |
| dien-aū | [djen ²² ʔaw ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘after that/then’ |
| în-éh | [ʔin ⁵⁵ ʔeʔ ³⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘hiccup’ |

c. End of the morpheme/word. An “h” is used to represent a glottal stop at the end of the word or morpheme.

| | | | |
|----------|--|----------------|------------------|
| pêhsuānn | [pɛʔ ⁵⁵ swã ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘climb mountain’ |
| thuéh | [t ^h wɛʔ ³⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘take’ |

VIII. Nasalization

If a vowel is nasalized, then putting “nn” after the vowel is recommended.

| | | | |
|-------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| suānn | [swã ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘mountain’ |
| tānn | [tã ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘gall’ |

IX. Aspiration

If consonant has aspiration, then putting “h” after the consonant is recommended. Aspiration is highlighted in boldface.

| | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| kè | [ke ⁵¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘to cross’ |
| khè | [k ^h e ⁵¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘to place’ |
| tsè | [tse ⁵¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘for a bit’ |
| tshè | [ts ^h e ⁵¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘to find’ |

X. Glides, diphthongs, and triphthongs

- a. For Hokkien-origin words, the letter “w” is used to represent the [w] or “w” or “u”-sounds at the beginning of a word if the beginning does **NOT** have a glottal stop.

RECOMMENDED

| | | | |
|--------|--|----------------|----------|
| tsiuwâ | [tsju ⁵⁵ wa ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘hungry’ |
| wà | [wa ⁵¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘wow’ |

NOT RECOMMENDED

| | | | |
|--------|--|----------------|----------|
| tsiuuâ | [tsju ⁵⁵ wa ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘hungry’ |
| uà | [wa ⁵¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘wow’ |

- b. In all other cases (e.g., beginning has a glottal stop or other consonants), when the sound sounds like a “w” or an “u,” the letter “u” is used to represent the sound.

RECOMMENDED

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|----------------|----------|
| iaū | [ʔjaw ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘hungry’ |
| uè | [ʔwe ⁵¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘speech’ |
| huē | [hwe ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘flower’ |

NOT RECOMMENDED

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|----------------|----------|
| yāw | [ʔjaw ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘hungry’ |
| wè | [ʔwe ⁵¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘speech’ |
| hwē | [hwe ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘flower’ |

- c. For Hokkien-origin words, the letter “y” is used to represent the [j] or “y” or “i”-sounds at the beginning of a word if the beginning does **NOT** have a glottal stop.

RECOMMENDED

| | | | |
|----|---------------------|----------------|--------|
| yá | [ja ³⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘very’ |
|----|---------------------|----------------|--------|

NOT RECOMMENDED

| | | | |
|----|---------------------|----------------|--------|
| íá | [ja ³⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘very’ |
|----|---------------------|----------------|--------|

- d. In all other cases (e.g., beginning has a glottal stop or other consonants), when the sound sounds like a “y” or an “i,” the letter “i” is used to represent the sound.

RECOMMENDED

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|----------------|----------|
| iaū | [ʔjaw ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘hungry’ |
| saî | [saj ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘feces’ |
| siānn | [sjã ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘sound’ |

NOT RECOMMENDED

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|----------------|----------|
| yāw | [ʔjaw ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘hungry’ |
| sây | [saj ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘feces’ |
| syānn | [sjã ³³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘sound’ |

XI. Neutral tones

a. Double dashes can be used to indicate a neutral tone or a series of neutral tones. Morphemes with neutral tones are highlighted in boldface.

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|----------------|--------------------------|
| Dî bêh bô? | [di ⁵⁵ bɛʔ ⁵⁵ bo ⁵⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘Do you want a wife?’ |
| Dî bêh-- bô ? | [di ⁵⁵ bɛʔ ⁵⁵ bo ⁵] | Hokkien-origin | ‘Do you want it or not?’ |
| Dî bêh bô? | [di ⁵⁵ bɛʔ ⁵⁵ bo ⁵¹] | Hokkien-origin | ‘Do you want a grave?’ |
| Dî bêh-- bô ? | [di ⁵⁵ bɛʔ ⁵⁵ bo ⁵³] | Hokkien-origin | ‘Do you want it or not?’ |

b. If it introduces a series of neutral tones, then the morphemes carrying the neutral tones should be linked using an equal sign.

pàng--**tshu=lai=lo** [paŋ⁵³ **ts^hu³²laj²¹lo¹¹**] Hokkien-origin ‘has been expelled’

c. In most cases (e.g., quick and casual Lannang-to-Lannang conversation), neutral tone marking can be omitted and instead be inferred from context.

pàng **tshulai lo** [paŋ⁵³ **ts^hu³²laj²¹lo¹¹**] Hokkien-origin ‘has been expelled’