

Modern Taiwanese Language (MTL)

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1. Introduction

Language is the foundation of all human communication, without which no civilization is possible; therefore, all historical records of human activities cannot but rely on the use of language, be it in spoken or written form. As one of the many valuable languages on earth, spoken Taiwanese, which is still used by the majority on the island of Taiwan, is deemed as a fortunate cultural relic from the Formosan ancestors. Just as many spoken tongues in Asia, spoken Taiwanese is typically a tone language that is not only rich in vowel sounds, but also has a set of seven tones accompanied with particular tonal variations (i.e. Tone Sandhi). Of interest is the fact that a vowel sound, which is produced without friction or stoppage, can carry musical pitch far better than consonants; furthermore, the niceties of tonal variations in spoken Taiwanese are such as to increase the euphony of the sentences. In brief, spoken Taiwanese is an interesting and beautiful sounding language in its own right, as if it were a gift from Heaven.

As human activity is forever changing, so language changes with it. To ensure the survival of any spoken tongues a good written language must be created in time. Currently many Asian languages, such as Chinese and Japanese, use *Harnji* (a written character or an ideogram) as the basic unit for writing sentences. Each written character represents an object, an idea, an action, or a relationship, but these characters give no indication of proper sound quality. Aside from the difficulty in writing and learning so many relatively complicated ideographs, there are three other major problems confronting the usage of *Harnji* as the basic unit of written Taiwanese. First, there are many homonyms, that is, characters that sound identical but have different meanings; second, there are many homographs, characters that are written alike but that differ in meaning and pronunciation; third, spoken Taiwanese imbued with a deep affection cannot adequately be expressed by the recourse to ideograms. To remedy these difficulties, Church Romanized Phoneticism (CRP) first emerged as early as 1832 and later was progressively improved through the work of such respected scholars as Talmage, Doty, Douglas, Campbell, and Barclay.

The development of CRP was indeed a great contribution to the Taiwanese people in the areas of religious belief, culture, as well as language; however, CRP has some limitations. First, it appears that CRP is merely a phonetic system of alphabetic writing. As is well known, written language is an expression of thought rather than a recording of sound. Yet, CRP uses a set of subsidiary phonetic symbols, such as accent marks, macrons, dots, and circumflexes, over vowels to indicate a modified pronunciation of the script in question. It also uses many hyphens to connect syllables in the words, and for that matter, the entire article thus written looks fragmentary at best.

In view of the shortcomings as described above, and the cumbersomeness of processing Romanized scripts or *Harnji* with modern technology, Prof. Liim

Keahioong, formerly of the Cheng-Kung University in Taiwan, pioneered the Taiwanese Modern Spelling System (TMSS) in the year 1943. Since then TMSS has become the foremost building block for written Taiwanese, which will be designated as Modern Taiwanese Language (MTL).

By adopting the English alphabet and making use of no subsidiary scripts or symbols in MTL, each word is cleanly constructed by attaching a tone indicator to a basic sound to signify its proper variation of pitch; in this regard, it integrates its pronunciation with the spelling into a new definite, meaningful word. The cleanliness and tidiness of an essay as created by such words is quite impressive. By and large, MTL is an internationally compatible written language, as it possesses the striking features of simplicity and integrity. Last but not least, it lends itself very well to computer applications and Internet technology. The emergence of MTL stands out so particularly among many ideographic or phonetic systems of writing in that it unfolds as a refreshing breakthrough of the traditional Asian languages. Indeed, MTL has thus far proved to be an excellent written form for the Taiwanese language. It is worthy of promotion and even further development. We hope that those of you just embarking on its study now will bring it to greater heights of development in the future.

1.1 MTL Web Site

<http://LearnTaiwanese.org>

1.2 Contact

Modern Taiwanese Language Association (MTLA)
kloa@learntaiwanese.com

2. MTL Writing System

2.1 MTL Alphabet

MTL alphabet adopts the English alphabet that has 26 letters.

2.2 Syllabic Patterns in MTL

A MTL word, like each English word, can be formed by only one syllable or several syllables, with the two syllables being the most typical. Each syllable in MTL follows either one of the two underlying patterns:

1. [Consonant] + [front nasal-sound] + vowel + [tone indicator]
2. [Consonant] + vowel + [tone indicator] + [rear nasal-sound]

A vowel has important features: not only is it an indispensable phoneme in a syllable, but also it can stand by itself as a syllable. It is worthy of note that there can exist no two nasal-vowels simultaneously in a syllable. Here, phoneme is defined as unit of the system of sounds of a language. Note: Those phonemes inside the bracket [] are optional.

A nasal-sound is a sound produced by letting the air pass through the nose. There are two nasal-sounds: front nasal-sound and rear nasal-sound. Refer to section 4.4 and 4.5 for details.

A tone indicator is devised for the indicating of tonal pitch variation in a syllable. There are various tone indicators, which are represented by some symbolic letters, (such as **f**, **r**, **x**, etc.), each of which is right after the vowel. Refer to section 5, and 6 for details.

Examples:

- sviu (*think*) - pattern1
”s” is a consonant. “v” is a front nasal-sound, and “iu” is a compound vowel.
- goarn (*us*) - pattern 2
”g” is a consonant. “oa” is a compound vowel. “r” is a tone-indicator. “n” is an ending nasal-sound.

2.3 Three Special Symbols

2.3.1 Apostrophe (')

The spelling of a multi-syllable word in MTL can sometimes have two totally different meanings by pronouncing the word in two different sets of syllables; therefore, to make such a spelling to possess two distinctive meanings (and thus creating two different words), an apostrophe is added to demarcate the proper pronunciation. There is no need for an apostrophe in the spelling, if the word can be naturally pronounced without ambiguity.

Examples: ok'ix (*bad intention*), okix (*black mole*).

2.3.2 Hyphen (-)

A hyphen is used to join two, or more isolated words to make a new compound word with its own meaning.

Examples: Taioaan-laang (*Taiwanese*); Bykog-kongbiin (*American citizen*).

2.3.3 Back-quote (')

When a word contains a back-quote, all the syllables behind the back-quote are accented in a weaker tone -- either a low-falling tone or a low stop. Refer to section 6.2 for more details.

Example: au`jit (*the day after tomorrow*) vs. auxjit (*some other day*).

3. Consonant

There are 18 consonants.

Bilabial	p	ph	m	b
Alveolar	t	th	n	l
Velar	k	kh	h	g
Palatal	c	ch	s	j
Dental	z	zh	s	j

Table I: MTL Consonant Examples

	MTL	Example	English
Bilabial	p	papaf	<i>father</i>
	ph	phaq	<i>hit</i>
	m	mi	<i>noodle</i>
Alveolar	b	baq	<i>meat</i>
	t	tit	<i>straight</i>
	th	theh	<i>take</i>
Velar	n	nii	<i>year</i>
	l	laang	<i>person</i>
	k	kaf	<i>add</i>
Palatal	kh	khix	<i>go</i>
	h	hii	<i>fish</i>
	g	go	<i>five</i>
Dental	c	ciaf	<i>here</i>
	ch	chiaf	<i>vehicle</i>
	s	si	<i>yes</i>
	j	jit	<i>day</i>
	z	zef	<i>this</i>
	zh	zhaix	<i>vegetable</i>
	s	svaf	<i>clothes</i>
	j	joah	<i>hot</i>

4. Vowel

There are simple, compound, special, front-nasal, and rear-nasal vowels in MTL.

4.1 Simple Vowel

The simple vowels in MTL are **a, i, u, e, o, ø, m, ng**, among which the vowel **ø** is unique in its pronunciation – it has the similar vowel sound as in the English word 'girl'. Both **m** and **ng** are nasal-vowels.

Examples: **ka** (*bite*); **ti** (*chopstick*); **u** (*have/has*); **ke** (*low*); **lo** (*road*); **tøar** (*knife*); **pŋg** (*rice*); **m** (*no*).

4.2 Compound Vowel

A compound vowel in MTL is formed from joining two or three simple vowels. There are eleven of such vowels: **ai, au, ia, iu, iø, iau, ui, oa, oe, øe, and oai**. The vowel **øe** can be pronounced as either **oe** or **e**, depending on regional dialects. As a result, “miphøe” (*comforter*) can be pronounced as “miphoe” or “miphe”.

Examples: **lai** (*sharp*); **nau** (*noisy*); **ia** (*spread*)

4.3 Special Vowel

A special vowel possesses two functions: it is a vowel and has a characteristic tone as well. There are two groups of special vowels: special vowels in high tone and shouting-out tone respectively.

4.3.1 Special vowel in high tone

- “**y**” is the high tone of “**i**”. Examples **ty** (*pig*), and **kym** (*gold*).
- “**w**” is the high tone of “**u**” Examples: **kw** (*turtle*), and **zw** (*book*)

Refer to section 5.1.2 for details.

4.3.2 Special vowel in shouting-out tone

There are five special vowels in shouting-out tone: **ae, ie, uo, ea, ao**

Table II Special Vowel Examples

Special vowels in						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

shouting-out tone						
Basic tone	Shouting-out tone	Example	English			
ai	ae	hae	<i>sea</i>			
i	ie	lie	<i>you</i>			
u	uo	kuo	<i>a while</i>			
e	ea	bea	<i>horse</i>			
au	ao	kao	<i>dog</i>			

Refer to section 5.1.4 for details.

4.4 Front nasal-vowel

The letter **v**, that substitutes the originally devised Greek letter ν for convenience in computer processing, represents a front nasal-sound. It is always followed by a vowel to form a *front nasal-vowel*.

Examples: **va** (*filling*); **hvi** (*ear*); **pvi** (*disease*); **phvi** (*nose*)

4.5 Rear nasal-vowel

There are three rear nasal-sounds (**m**, **n**, **ng**). Each of them is always preceded by a vowel to form a rear nasal-vowel. The rear nasal-sounds are always at the end of a syllable.

- **m**: bilabial - a sound produced by bringing the lips together. It has three ending forms: **am**, **im**, and **iam**.

Examples: **lam** (*mix*); **imgak**(*music*); **liam** (*nagging*)

- **n** - a sound produced by positioning the tip of the tongue at or near the upper teethridge. It has 5 ending forms: **an**, **in**, **un**, **ien**, **oan**.

Examples: **an'uix** (*to comfort*); **kin** (*near*); **unto** (*temperature*); **tien** (*electric*); **Taioaan** (*Taiwan*)

- **ng** - sounds produced by raising the tongue rather high without touching the teethridge. It has 5 ending forms: **ang**, **eng**, **ong**, **iang**, **iong**.

Examples: **angtau**(*red bean*); **enghioong**(*hero*); **onglaai**(*pineapple*); **liang** (*bright*); **iong** (*use*);

Table III: MTL Vowels Examples

	MTL	Example	English
Simple	a	ka	<i>bite</i>
	i	hvi	<i>ear</i>
	u	u	<i>have/has</i>
	e	ke	<i>low</i>
	o	lo	<i>road</i>
	ø	hør	<i>good</i>
	m	m	<i>no</i>
	ng	hng	<i>far</i>
Compound	ai	lai	<i>sharp</i>
	au	au	<i>back</i>
	ia	ia	<i>spread</i>
	iu	chviu	<i>elephant</i>
	iø	kiøø	<i>bridge</i>
	iau	tiau	<i>tone</i>
	ui	ui	<i>stomach</i>
	oa	toa	<i>big</i>
	oe	hoe	<i>meeting</i>
	øe	øe	<i>able</i>
	oai	koaix	<i>weird</i>
Special high tone	y	kym	<i>gold</i>
	w	titw	<i>spider</i>
Special shouting-out tone	ae	hae	<i>sea</i>
	ie	lie	<i>you</i>
	uo	Taiguo	<i>Taiwanese language</i>
	ea	bea	<i>horse</i>
	ao	kao	<i>dog</i>

	MTL	Example			English
Front nasal-vowel	va	va			<i>filling</i>
	vi	hvi			<i>ear</i>
	ve	gve			<i>stiff</i>
	vo	kiaugvo			<i>proud</i>
	vai	vai			<i>to cary on the back</i>
	vau	liengvau			<i>the lotus root</i>
	via	thviaf			<i>listen</i>
	viu	sviu			<i>think</i>
	viau	gviaugviau			<i>itchy</i>
	voa	voa			<i>exchange</i>
	voai	kvoai			<i>county</i>
	vy	tvv			<i>sweet</i>
	voay	kvoay			<i>close</i>
	vuy	kvuy			<i>close</i>
	viw	kviw			<i>ginger</i>
	viaw	gviaw			<i>tickle</i>
	vae	zvae			<i>finger</i>
	vie	pvie			<i>flat</i>
	viuo	hauxtivuo			<i>principal</i>
	vea	gvea			<i>choke</i>
Rear nasal-vowel	am			lam	<i>mix</i>
	im			akim	<i>aunt</i>
	iam			liam	<i>nagging</i>
	an			ban	<i>slow</i>
	in			kin	<i>near</i>
	un			tun	<i>dull</i>
	ien			lien	<i>practice</i>

	oan			goan	<i>wish</i>
	ang			bang	<i>dream</i>
	eng			teng	<i>hard</i>
	ong			gong	<i>dumb</i>
	iang			liang	<i>bright</i>
	iong			iong	<i>use</i>

5. Tone

- Taiwanese is a tone language. The assignment of different tones to a sound creates different words.

Examples: sy (*poetry*); si (*yes*); six (*four*); sie (*dead*); sii (*time*)
 kaw (*ditch*), kau (*thick*); kaux (*arrive*); kao (*dog*); kaau (*monkey*)

- According to the pitch, length, and strength of a vowel sound, there are seven tones in Taiwanese: five of them are long tones and the other two are short tones.
- Long tones are basic tone, high tone, and low-falling tone, shouting-out tone, and curving tone.
- Short tones are high stop, and low stop.

5.1 Long tone

5.1.1 Basic tone

A basic tone is a mid level tone. Not only it is the base of intonation in MTL, but also a monotonous tone by itself, which is neither too high nor too low, and it does not contain a tone indicator.

Examples: kaki (*self*), kihoe (*opportunity*), thotau (*peanuts*).

5.1.2 High tone

A high tone is derived from raising a basic tone, and is represented by adding a tone indicator "f" after a vowel, except "i" and "u", in a syllable. The high tone of "i" and "u" are "y" and "w" respectively. Note that the tone indicator "f" is voiceless.

Examples: mam**af** (*mother*); kat**of** (*scissors*); khykh**of** (*dentist*);
tit**w** (*spider*); haypv**y** (*seashore*).

5.1.3 Low-falling tone

A low-falling tone is derived from lowering a basic tone, and is represented by adding a tone indicator "x" after a vowel. Note that the tone indicator "x" is voiceless.

Examples: pa**x** (*leopard*); zha**ix** (*vegetable*)

5.1.4 Shouting-out tone

A shouting-out tone is derived from shouting out a basic tone, and is represented by adding a tone indicator "r" after a vowel, except “ai”, “i”, “u”, “e”, and “au”, in a syllable.

Examples: za**r** (*early*); bo**r** (*wife*); seak**ie** (*century*); siuk**ae**(*correct*); thiaobu**o**
(*dancing*).

Refer to section 4.3.2 for details.

5.1.5 Curving tone

A curving tone is derived from first lowering the basic tone and then slightly raising and prolonging simultaneously of a vowel. The rules are:

- Simple vowel: simply repeat the vowel.
- Compound vowel: repeat the last vowel letter except when it contains an “**a**”, then repeats “**a**”.

Examples: h**ii** (*fish*); he**e** (*shrimp*); anzoa**an** (*safty*)

5.2 Short tone

A short tone is derived from the act of stopping the outgoing breath. There are two groups of short tone: high stops and low stops.

- High stop -- abruptly stopping at the high-pitch with tone indicators: **h**, **p**, **t**, and **k**.
- Low stop -- abruptly stopping at the low-pitch with tone indicators: **q**, **b**, **d**,

and **g**.

Both high and low stop can further be divided into the following four categories:

5.2.1 Mouth-Open stop

An mouth open stop is derived from giving out a puff of breath with the mouth remaining open and is represented by adding a tone indicator "**h**" or "**q**" after a vowel, where "**h**" is a high stop, and "**q**" is a low stop.

Examples: **ciah** (*eat*); **phaq** (*hit*)

Exceptions: If the vowel "m" followed by these two stops, the mouth remains closed. Examples: **hmq** (*hit*); **hmqhlaang** (*hit someone*)

5.2.2 Bilabial stop

A bilabial stop is derived from stopping the air stream between the lips, and is represented by adding a tone indicator "**p**" or "**b**" after a vowel, where "**p**" is a high stop, and "**b**" is a low stop.

Examples: **hap** (*close*); **ciab** (*catch*)

5.2.3 Alveolar stop

An alveolar stop is made with the tip of the tongue touching against the gum behind the upper front teeth, and is represented by adding a tone indicator "**t**" or "**d**" after a vowel, where "**t**" is a high stop, and "**d**" is a low stop.

Examples: **kut** (*slippery*); **kud** (*bone*)

5.2.4 Velar stop

A velar stop is made with the back of the tongue near the soft palate, and is represented by adding a tone indicator "**k**" or "**g**" after a vowel, where "**k**" is a high stop, and "**g**" is a low stop.

Examples: **lok** (*deer*); **kog** (*country*)

5.3 MTL Seven-tone examples

Table IV MTL Seven-tone Examples

High	Basic	Low-Falling	Shouting-out	Curving	High stop	Short stop
say (lion)	chviu (elephant)	pax (leopard)	hor (tiger)	hiim (bear)	lok (deer)	piq (snapping turtle)

6. Tone Sandhi

The tones of syllables in MTL when spoken in succession are different from those of the same syllables when spoken in isolation. This kind of tone change is called tone sandhi, which is an important feature in spoken Taiwanese. Rules of tone changes are applied to the following two different categories:

- Articulation of a sentence
- Accentuation of a word

6.1 Tone change in articulation of a sentence

For a beginner in learning Taiwanese, this category of tone change is the most important concept to grasp, because a sentence is not pronounced as what is written. In conversation, there are natural fluctuations in pitch to make the speech stream easier for the human mind to process. Subsequently, each word may be subject to a tone change in spoken Taiwanese **except** when there is a pause in speech; however, there are exceptions, namely, the words **ciaf**(*here*), **hiah**(*there*), **zef**(*this*), and **hef**(*that*) are always pronounced as written. The following example will demonstrate where the tone changes take effect in a series of sentences proceeding step by step: (Note: the words in bold require tone changes. The pronunciation is denoted in brackets.)

Goar [goar]

goar ee [goaf ee]

goar ee siøfti [goaf e siøfti]

Goar **kab** **goar** ee siøfti [Goar, kap goaf e siøfti]

khix [khix]

khix [khie]

khvoax tiexnviar [khvoar tiexnviar]

khix **khvoax** tiexnviar [khie khvoar tiexnviar]

Goar **kab** **goar** ee siøfti **khix** **khvoax** tiexnviar. [Goar, kap goaf e siøfti khie khvoar tiexnviar]

(I and my younger brother went to watch movie.)

In the above example, each word in standard, wherein there is a short pause, is

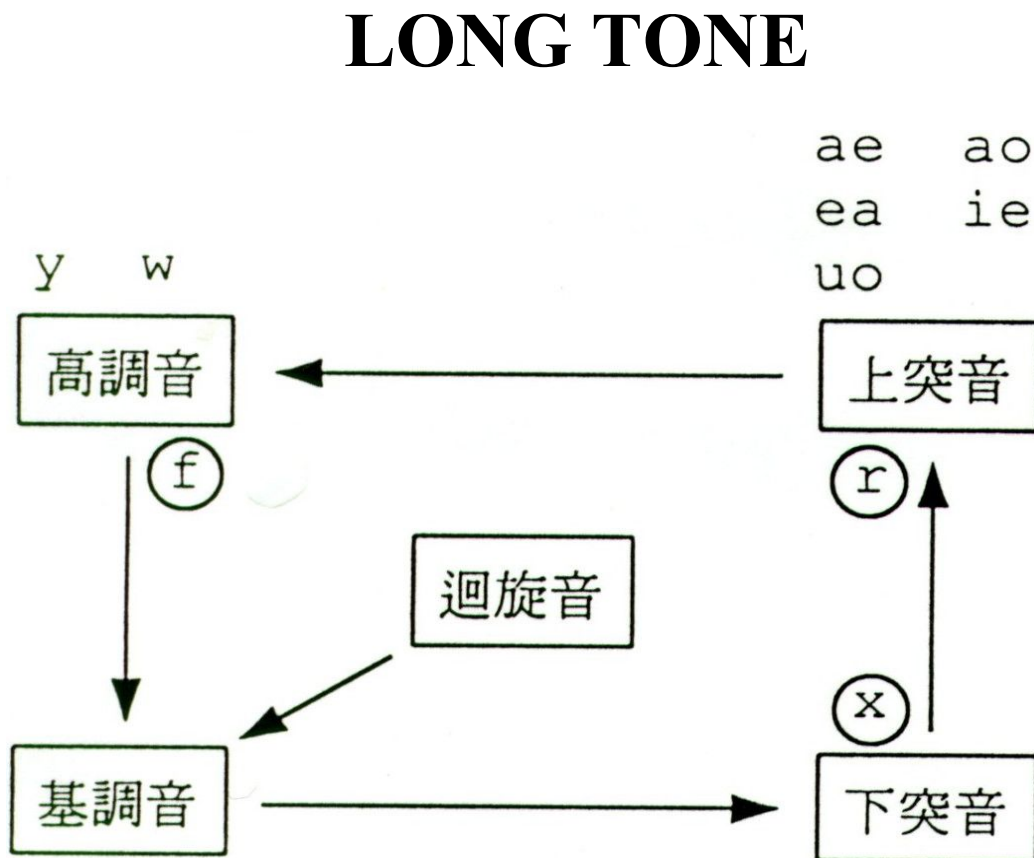
pronounced without a tone change; those words in boldface (**kab**, **goar**, **ee**, **khix** and **khvoax**) undergo tone changes in conversation.

- **kab** is pronounced as [kap]
- the second **goar** is pronounced as [goaf]
- **ee** is pronounced [e]
- **khix** is pronounced [khie]

The rules of tone changes are explained in the following two sections:

6.1.1 Long tone

There is a unique logical sequence behind long tone changes. The first four tone changes forms the unique “tone circle”, the one and only phenomenon in human language history. The following diagram illustrates this sequence:



As shown in the above diagram, the rule of tone changes follows the arrow schematically:

- A high tone will change to a basic tone when tone change is required.
- A basic tone will change to a low-falling tone when tone change is required.
- A low-falling tone will change to a shouting-out tone when tone change is required.
- A shouting-out tone will change to a high tone when tone change is required.
- A curving tone will change to a basic tone when tone change is required.

Examples:

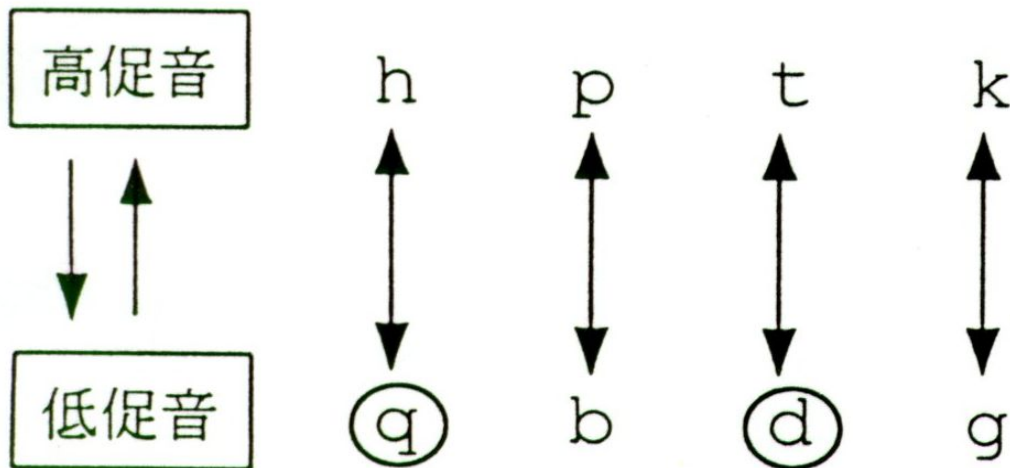
- **goar** is a word of shouting-out tone. It changes to high tone [goaf] when there is no short pause during the conversation.
- **ee** is a word of curving tone. It changes to basic tone [e] when there is no short pause during the conversation.
- **khix** is a word of low-falling tone. It changes to shouting-out tone [khie] when there is no short pause during the conversation.

6.1.2 Short tone

The rule of short tone changes is illustrated in the following diagram:

SHORT TONE

(high <---> short)



As shown in the above diagram, the high short tone and low short are swapped when tone change is required.

Example: kab is a word of low stop tone. It is pronounced in a high stop tone

[kap] when there is no short pause during the conversation.

6.2 Tone change in accentuation of a word

When a word contains a back-quote, all the syllables behind the back-quote are accented in a weaker tone -- either a low-falling tone or a low stop.

Examples:

- **Khia`khylai** (*stand up*): The syllables behind back-quote “**khy**” and “**lai**” are both pronounced in low-falling tone. “**Khia**” is pronounced as written.
- **Kviaa`zhutkhix** (*walk away*): The syllables behind back-quote **zhut** and **khix** are pronounced in low stop, and low-falling tone respectively. **Kviaa** is pronounced as written.

7. Articles

Tøe-1 Khøx *(Lesson 1)*

Zef si symmih?
(What is this?)

Zef si tee.
(This is tea.)

Hef si symmih?
(What is that?)

Hef si gulefng.
(That is milk.)

Zef si-mxsi tee?
(Is this or is this not tea?)

Si, zef si tee.
(Yes, this is tea.)

Mxsi, si kapy.
(No, this is not. This is coffee.)

Mxsi, zef mxsi tee, si kapy.
(No, this is not tea, but coffee.)

Hef si-mxsi gulefng?
(Is that or is that not milk?)

Si.
(Yes.)

Si, hef si gulefng.
(Yes, that is milk.)

Mxsi, si pengzuie.
(No, that is not. That is ice water.)

Mxsi, hef mxsi gulefng, si pengzuie.
(No, that is not milk, but ice water.)

Tøe-2 Khøx
(Lesson 2)

Zef karm si gulefng ?
(*Is this milk?*)

Si.
(*Yes.*)

Mxsi, si pengzuie.
(*No, this is not. This is ice water.*)

Mxsi, hef si pengzuie.
(*No, this is not. That is ice water.*)

Mxsi, hef mxsi gulefng, si pengzuie.
(*No, that is not milk, but ice water.*)

Mxsi, hef mxsi gulefng, hef si pengzuie.
(*No, that is not milk. That is ice water.*)

Hef karm si køfciab?
(*Is that fruit juice?*)

Si.
(*Yes.*)

Si, hef si køfciab.
(*Yes, that is fruit juice.*)

Si, hef si phoxngkør-ciab.
(*Yes, that is apple juice.*)

.
Mxsi, hef si Cola.
(*No, that is not. That is Coke.*)

Mxsi, hef mxsi køfciab, si Cola.
(*No, that is not fruit juice, but Coke.*)

Citpoef karm si kam'ar-ciab?
(*Is this a glass of orange juice?*)

Si.
(*Yes.*)
Mxsi, hitpoef si leborng-pefng.

(No, this is not. That is a glass of icy lemonade.)

Mxsi, hitpoef mxsi kam'ar-ciab, si leborng-pefng.

(No, that is not a glass of orange juice, but of icy lemonade.)

Mxsi, hitpoef mxsi kam'ar-ciab, hitpoef si leborng-pefng.

(No, that is not a glass of orange juice. That is a glass of icy lemonade.)

Hitpoef karm si phoxngkør-ciab ?

(Is that a glass of apple juice?)

Si.

(Yes.)

Mxsi, hitpoef si leborng-pefng.

(No, that is not. That is a glass of icy lemonade.)

.

Mxsi, hitpoef mxsi phoxngkør-ciab, hitpoef si leborng-pefng.

(No, that is not a glass of apple juice. That is a glass of icy lemonade.)

Tøe-3 Khøx.
(Lesson 3)

Ciaf u yar, chviar laai ciaf ze.
(Here is a chair. Please come here and sit down.)

Citpeeng u yar, chviar laai citpeeng-ciaf ze.
(There is a chair over this side. Please come over this side and sit down.)

Hiaf u yar, chviar khix hiaf ze.
(There is a chair over there. Please go over that site and sit down.)

Hitpeeng u yar, chviar khix hitpeeng-hiaf ze.
(There is a chair over that side. Please go over that side and sit down.)

Ciaf u tøh'ar.
(Here is a table.)

Tøh'ar-terng u kam'ar kab phoxngkør.
(On top of the table, there are oranges and apples.)

Kam'ar kab phoxngkør ti tøh'ar ee tefngbin.
(There are oranges and apples on top of the table.)

Tøh'ar-terng ma u tee kab kapy.
(On top of the table, there are also tea and coffee.)

Chviar iong.
(Please help yourself.)

Chviar ciah kam'ar iafoi phoxngkør.
(Please have some oranges or apples.)

Chviar iong tee.
(Have some tea, please.)

Chviar iong kapy.
(Have some coffee, please.)

Toaxlaang aix lym tee kab kapy.
(Grown-ups like to drink tea and coffee.)

Gyn'ar aix ciah kam'ar kab phoxngkør.
(Children like to eat oranges and apples.)

Tøe-4 Khøx
(Lesson 4)

Goar si hagsefng.
(*I am a student.*)

Lie si hagsefng.
(*You are a student.*)

Y maxsi hagsefng.
(*He/She is also a student. He/She is a student, too.*)

Taixkef lorng si hagsefng.
(*We are all students.*)

Taan siøfcia si lauxsw.
(*Miss Chen is a teacher.*)

Y si larn ee lauxsw.
(*He/She is our teacher.*)

Larn si y ee hagsefng.
(*We are his/her students.*)

Lauxsw kax.
(*Teachers teach.*)

Hagsefng øh.
(*Students learn.*)

Lauxsw kax Taiguo.
(*The teacher teaches Taiwanese.*)

Hagsefng øh Taiguo.
(*The student learns Taiwanese.*)

Larn ze ti yar-ternng.
(*We are sitting on the chair.*)

Lauxsw khia`teq.
(*The teacher is standing.*)

Lauxsw ti opafng siafji.
(*The teacher is writing on the blackboard.*)

Tøe-5 Khøx
(Lesson 5)

Kaoseg-lai u cidtex opafng.
(*There is a blackboard in the classroom.*)

Lauxsw ti opafng ee tefngbin siafji.
(*The teacher is writing on the surface of the blackboard.*)

Y eng hwnpid siafji.
(*He writes with a piece of chalk.*)

Goar u cidpurn zheq, nngxpurn pho'ar, kab svaky ienpid.
(*I have one book, two notebooks, and three pencils.*)

Goar eng ienpid siafji.
(*I write with a pencil.*)

Goar øexhiao siafji, mxkuo bøexhiao oextoo.
(*I can write, but cannot draw.*)

Goar ee ahviaf maxsi hagsefng.
(*My older brother is also a student.*)

Y u zheq, pho'ar kab ienpid.
(*He has books, notebooks, and pencils.*)

Y ma u kngrpid kab goanzwpid.
(*He also has pens and fountain pens.*)

Y øexhiao siafji, ma øexhio oextoo.
(*He can draw as well as write.*)

Siøfmoe mxsi hagsefng.
(*My younger sister is not a student.*)

Y bøexhiao siafji.
(*She cannot write.*)

Y ma bøexhiao oextoo.
(*She can't draw either.*)

Tøe-6 Khøx
(lesson 6)

Papaf ti khehthviaf.
(*My father is in the living room.*)

Y ti hiaf teq khvoax pørzoar.
(*He is reading newspaper there.*)

Mamaf ma ti khehthviaf.
(*My mother is also in the living room.*)

Y teq khvoax tiexnsi.
(*He/She is watching television.*)

Tøh'ar-terng u tee kab kapy.
(*On top of the table, there are tea and coffee.*)

Tee si papaf ee.
(*This is my father's tea.*)

Papaf aix lym tee.
(*My father likes to drink tea.*)

Kapy si mamaf ee.
(*This is my mother's coffee.*)

Mamaf aix lym kapy.
(*My mother likes to drink coffee.*)

Goar kab siøfmoe mxaix lym tee, ma mxaix lym kapy,
(*My younger sister and I don't like to drink tea,*
nor do we like to drink coffee.)

Goarn aix lym gulefng kab tauxlefng.
(*We like to drink milk and soya-bean milk.*)

Toaxhviaf mxaix lym tee kab kapy.
(*My eldest brother does not like to drink tea or coffee.*)

Y ma mxaix lym gulefng kab tauxlefng.
(*Likewise, he does not like to drink milk or soya-bean milk.*)

Y kantvaf aix lym køfciab.

(He only likes to drink fruit juice.)

Y siong-aelym kam'ar-ciab kab phoxngkør-ciab.

(He extremely likes to drink both orange juice and apple juice.)

Gulefng kab tauxlefng khaq-u eng'iorng.

(Milk and soya-bean milk have comparatively more nutritive value.)

Papaf kab mamaf nar øe aix lym tee kab kapy? Goarn sviu-bøø!

*(We can't figure out why dad and mom should like to
drink tea and coffee!)*

Tøe-7 Khøx
(Lesson 7)

Chiu'ar-terng u cidee ciawar-siu
(*At the top of the tree, there is a bird nest.*)

Ciawar-siu ee laixbin u nngxciaq sœeciaq ciawar.
(*In the bird nest, there are two little birds.*)

Sœeciaq ciawar iao bœexhiao pœef.
(*Little birds still can't fly.*)

Ciawar-buo cviagaau ciaokox ciawar-kviar.
(*The mother bird takes good care of her little ones.*)

Ciawar-buo kaxtiøh cidbœea thaang.
(*The mother bird caught a worm.*)

Y bœeq ka ho ciawar-kviar ciah.
(*She held a worm in the mouth for her little ones to eat.*)

Ciawar-kviar ee zhuix khuikhuy.
(*The mouths of little birds are wide open.*)

Yn teq tarn bœeq ciah thaang.
(*They are waiting to eat the worm.*)

Ciawar-buo kuijit bœ'eeng zhœe thaang laai ho ciawar-kviar ciah.
(*Every day the mother bird was busy searching for worms for her little ones.*)

Armsii, y kab ciawar-kviar zørhœea khuxn.
(*At night, she and her little ones sleep together.*)

Afnny, ciawar-kviar ciah bœexkvoaa.
(*In this way, the little birds won't feel cold.*)

Ciawar-buo cinthviax ciawar-kviar.
(*The mother bird loves her little ones dearly.*)

Papaf kab mamaf ma cinthviax goarn.
(*Dad and mom also love us dearly.*)

Tøe-8 Khøx
(Lesson 8)

Papaf cviazar tø khyzhngg.
(My father got out of bed very early.)

Y pøhtiarm tø aix khix sioxngpafn.
(He has to go to work at eight.)

Mamaf ma cviazar tø khyzhngg.
(My mother also got out of bed very early.)

Y khylaai zwnpi zafngx ho taixkef ciah.
(She got up and prepared breakfast for everybody.)

Goar kab toaxhviaf ma cviazar tø khyzhngg.
(My eldest brother and I also got out of bed very early.)

Goarn pøhtiafmpvoax tø aix khix haghau sioxngkhøx.
(We have to go to school and attend class at 8:30.)

Siøfmoe mxbiern khix haghau.
(My younger sister doesn't have to go to school.)

Y lorng khuxn-kaq cviavoax ciah khie`lai.
(She always got up very late.)

Uxsii goarn ciah mixpaw, ienchiaang kab cien'nng.
(Sometimes we ate bread, sausage, and fried eggs.)

Uxsii goarn ciah moee phøex bahhuo, thotau kab chvizhaix.
(Sometimes we ate porridge with dried meat in threads, peanuts and vegetables.)

Lexnggoa, papaf aix lym cidpoef tee, ar mamaf aix lym
cidpoef kapy, toaxhviaf aix lym cidpoef køfciaab, ar
goar aix lym cidpoef gulefng.
*(In addition, my father likes to drink a cup of tea,
and my mother likes to drink a cup of coffee;
my eldest brother likes to drink a glass of fruit juice. And
for myself I like to drink a glass of milk.)*

Mamaf tagjit lorng bø'eeng zwnpi svatngx, søea
voar-ti, kiafm saux laixtøea.

*(Every day my mother was busy preparing three meals,
washing dishes, and sweeping the inside of the house as well.)*

Papaf tagjit zhutmngg khix sioxngpafn.
(Every day my father is going away from home to work.)

Papaf kab mamaf ciahniq'thviax goarn.
(My father and mother love us so dearly.)

Goarn ma tiøh zunkexng yn.
(We should respect them in return.)

Bøea Miqkvia
(Buying things)

Siøfcia, lie bøeq bøea symmih?
(Miss, May I help you?)

Goar kantvaf bøeq khvoarkhvoax leq.
(I just want to look around.)

Chviafmng (ciøh'mng) , lie (lirn) karm u teq bøe toaxtaai ee tiexnsi?
(Do you sell big size TV?)

U. Lie si aix jixzabchid-zhuxn`ee? Iafsi aix svazablak-zhuxn`ee?
(Yes, we do. Do you like 27" or 36" TV?)

Goar aix svazablak-zhuxn`ee hittaaai.
(I like that 36" one.)

Siøfcia, lie karm u køq bøeq bøea tiexn'oe, tiexnhofng kab tiexnpengsviw?
(Miss, would you also like to have a telephone, fan, and a refrigerator?)

Bøeq. Chvia, lie sngx`cide. Afnni lofgnzorng si joaxzøe-cvii?
(Yes, please sum it up and let me know how much does the total cost?)

Siøfcia, afnni lofgnzorng si cidban-khof.
(Miss, the total is 10,000 dollars.)

Hiahniq'kuix! Karm øexsae phahcied`cide?
(Too expensive! Is possible to have any discount?)

Hør laq! Sngx lie kawcied tiøh hør! Sofie zofngkiong si kawzhefng-khof.
(OK! I'll give you 10% discount. So the total is 9,000 dollars.)

Tøsia! Chvia, lie yau øextaxng køq laai kaukoafn.
(Thanks! Please come again.)

Siangchiuo
(Two Hands)

Biaulek, Hoxlioong
3-nii Ngg Jupheeng

Papaf ee chiuo cviaa-uxlat, si goarn cidkhawzaux ee thiauar (*My father, whose hands are very strong, is a pillar of our family*). Y tharncvii chi goarn, kiorng'exng goar kab siøfmoe thagzheq, cviaa-sinkhor (*He makes money to support our family, and makes provision for the education of both my sister and me. He is really hard-working*).

Mamaf ee chiuo cviaa-unjiuu (*My mother's hands are very gentle and soft*). Goar na u svakhox phoax`khix, y ciu ka goar thvi-høfsex (*When my clothes were ragged, she would mend them*). Goarn paktor iaw ee sii, mamaf tø zuo cviaa-honghux ee zhaix ho goarn ciah (*When I was hungry, she would cook very plentiful and delicious food for me*). Kui'zhuolai ee khangkhøex lorng si mamaf cidchiuo paupan`khylaai ee (*Mom single-handedly takes care of the entire family chores*).

Akofng ee chiuo cviaa-khinløo (*My grandfather's hands are very untiring*). Muyjit zafsii goxtiafmpvoax, akofng tø khylaai khauzhao, akzuie (*Every morning at 5:30, grandpa would weed the grass and water plants*). Y ka zhuozeeng-zhuo'au tag'ui tø zefnglie-gaq cviaa-suosi (*He would put things in good order everywhere around the house*).

Amar ee chiuo cviagaau zøx khangkhøex (*My grandmother's hands are very good at work*). Y siong-zoanbuun`ee ciuxsi zerngzhaix, sokto køq si itliuu`ee (*She is most skillful in planting vegetables with the amazing speed*).

Siøfmoe ee chiuo si oextoo ee koanchiuo (*My sister's hands are dexterous in drawing*). Tagtviw too tø oe-gaq zabhwn ee byle (*Every drawing of hers looks extremely beautiful*).

Goar ee chiuo ma cviaa-høfeng, øextaxng siar cinsuie ee ji (*My hands are also very useful: they can write beautiful characters*). Mxkuo, na kiøx goar cviuxtaai khix korng korsu, goar tø siangchiuo phiqphiq'zhoa laq (*But, if I would be asked to go up on the platform and make a speech, then I would have shaky hands*).

Goarn-zhux ee laang lorng u cidsiafng cviagaau ee chiuo (*Each family member all has two good hands*). Cit'kuysiafng chiuo toarlaai hexnghog, chiongsit ee seng'oah (*These good hands bring us fortune and worthiness in life*). Goarn bøeq tinsioq goarn ee siangchiuo kab hexnghog (*We will cherish our both hands and the ensuing happiness*).

Aesuie ee Khofngchiog
(A Beauty-Loving Peacock)

Gaan Kahui

U cidciaq ciog-aesuie ee khofngchiog (*There was a peacock who loved beauty a great deal*). Tagjit zafkhie ti søea-zhengkhix liawau, tø voa cidsw suysvaf ciao khix goaxbin sarnpo (*After washing himself in the morning, he would change into a suit of pretty clothes and would go out to take a walk*).

Uxcidjit, khofngchiog zheng cidsw zoeakin twteq liuheeng ee sinsvaf ti lo`nih teq sarnpo ee sii twtiøh zhuociawar (*One day the peacock was taking a walk with his lately fashionable clothes. He came across a magpie*)

"Khofngchiog Siensvy, lie cioksuie`ee neq! (*Mr. Peacock, you are very good-looking!*)" Zhuociawar cviaa-himsien, afnny korng (*Magpie said in a very envious tone*).

"Karm afnny? (*Oh, really?*)" Khofngchiog ka sengkhw tngr-cidliexn, paai cidee iubie ee zusex, jien'au ciu toaxpan-toaxpan kviaa-lixkhuy (*Peacock made a full turn of himself with a graceful pose, and then swaggeringly walked away*).

"Khofngchiog Siensvy, lie nar øe ciah'ientaau? (*Mr. Peacock, how come you are so handsome?*)" Vie'ar twtiøh khofngchiog, ia ka y phaq-ciøhof (*Coming across the peacock, a swallow also greeted him and said*).

"Karm afnny? (*Oh, really?*)" Khofngchiog køkhqaf safngsex laq (*Peacock became even prouder*). Y kekzhud kiaugvo ee zuthaix(*He put on arrogant and conceited airs*) .

Tngf y kviakaux zuyti'ar-pvy ee sii, twtiøh peqlexngsy (*When walking near the side of a pond, he saw an egret*). Mxkuo peqlexngsy zngzoex bøø khvoartiøh y, ar keasiok teq limzuie (*However, the egret pretended not seeing him and thus continued wading across the water*).

"Oea, oea, peqlexngsy, lie si teq bø'eeng symmih? (*Hey, hey, you egret, what are you busy at?*) Lie thaukhag giah`khylaai, khvoax goar citthøx sinsvaf, khvoax-u suie`bøø ? (*Raise your head and have a good look at my new dress, wouldn't you say it is beautiful?*)"

"Suie si suie, mxkuo hef karm øextaxng pangzan lie pøef? (*It is pretty all right, but could it make you fly?*)" Peqlexnsy afnny korng (*Egret said*)

thus).

"Lie nar øe korng citkhoarn oe? (*How could you say such words?*)"
Khofngchiog u cidsut'ar siuxkhix (*Peacock was a little angry*).

"Goar korng`ee si cviasit`ee ax! (*What I said is very true!*)"
Peqlexngsy korng-soaq, khinkhin'ar pøef khylai (*After saying so, the egret was lightly flying up*).
Khofngchiog khia ti hiaf, kafmkag cviaa-mxsi zubi (*Seeing this, the peacock just stood there and felt rather embarrassed*)

Papaf tuix imgak ee hoafn'exng

*Dad's reaction to the music
old*

Jamie Wang 15 years

Papaf tuix imgak ee hoafn'exng chinchviu cidliap ciøqthaau kangkhoarn.
Dad's reaction to music is like a rock.

Goar tvoaa kngrkhiim tvoaa bøø hør ee sii, y lorng bøø hoafn'exng.
When I play piano badly, my dad has no reaction.

Goar tvoaa kngrkhiim tvoaa cyn hør ee sii, y ma iaxsi bøø hoafn'exng.
When I play piano beautifully, he still also has no reaction.

Papaf tuix imgak ee hoafn'exng chinchviu citliap ciøqthaau kangkhoarn.
Dad's reaction to music is like a rock.

Mxkoarn imgak si hør iafsi bae, y ee hoafn'exng lorng kangkhoarn.
Whether the music is good or bad, he always has the same reaction.

*Einstein khix thiethaau
Einstein Got His Haircut*

U cidjit, *Einstein* khix thiethaau.
One day, Einstein went to a barber shop.

Thiethaau-saihu khvoax *Einstein* ee thauzafng phoxng-saisay,
A barber noticed Einstein's fluffy hair style,

ar khorkhaf si sviutea. Saihu chirnzhæ kay y lulw`ee.
and his pant was too short. So the barber clipped his hair with casualness.

Einstein ho saihu ee siøfhuix khiog ho saihu zhoax-cidtiø.
After it was done, Einstein gave the barber a good amount of tips that surprised the barber.

Cid-kørgoeh au, *Einstein* køq khix thiethaau.
A month later, Einstein went to the barber shop again.

Saihu jixnzhud si tefnghoeë hit'ee hør langkhex.
The barber recognized that he was the customer who gave him a big tips.

ka y hogbu kaq huisioong ciutøx.
So the barber cut his hair carefully and served perfectly.

Einstein ho y 5-siern ee siøfhuix.
However, Einstein only gave 5 pennies tips to the barber.

Saihu korng nar e afnny.
The barber said: "Why such big differences."

Einstein korng, zef si tefnghoeë ee siøfhuix,
cit'hoeë ee tefnghoeë ho lie log.
Einstein said: "This is last month's tips. I already gave you this time's tips last month."

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