

## SOME CHANGES IN THE FINAL COMPONENT OF THE TAI SYLLABLE

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In the past few years the author has had an opportunity to study the Puyi dialects data while studying Comparative Tai under Dr. Gedney.<sup>1</sup> The amount of data collected on the Puyi dialects and their diversity in initial consonants and vowels from the rest of the Tai dialects make the Puyi data most valuable for comparative and historical reconstruction of the Tai family.

For the purposes of this paper we have used the Puyi data to (1), reconstruct some changes that have taken place in the final component of the Tai syllable and (2), examine cases in which rule ordering is necessary with regard to these changes in the final component.

The Puyi data was collected and published by the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 1959. These dialects form a part of the Northern Tai branch following Li's (Li 1960) classification of Tai into the South-western, Central, and Northern branches. That is, the Puyi dialects agree with the vocabulary and phonological features Li notes for the Northern group. For example, the Puyi dialects use \*mum B4 'beard', the word for 'to be' Siamese pen<sup>1</sup> has a tone reflecting a voiced initial, and the reflex of Proto-Tai \*ɽ has a reflex of Puyi \*r.

The data consist of a study of 40 dialect localities in the southern part of Kweichow province in China.<sup>2</sup> The area is reported to be very mountainous and the 40 locality points are often quite isolated from one another.

In discussing some of the changes that have taken place in the final component of the Tai syllable we analyze the Proto-Tai syllable in terms of an initial consonant or consonant cluster, a vocalic nucleus, an optional final consonant or glide, and a tone.

### Tai Syllable

tone		
initial	vocalic nucleus	ending

In citing vocabulary items Proto-Tai forms will be indicated by (\*). The Gedney system (Gedney 1973) will be used in marking Proto-Tai tones as follows:

# Proto-Tai Tones

Initial Category		Tones				
		A	B	C	DS	DL
1	voiceless friction sounds (*s, *ʃ, *ph, *w etc.)					
2	voiceless unaspirated stops (*p etc.)					
3	preglottalized sounds (*ʔb etc. and ?)					
4	voiced sounds (*b, *z, *m etc.)					

smooth
checked

The Puyi tones are indicated by a number. The historical tonal patterns and the range and contours of the tones can be found in the appendix.

We will only look at some of the changes in the final consonant that have taken place since the time of the Proto-Tai syllable. Changes in the Proto-Tai diphthong and glide combinations which have resulted in vowel and glide correspondences in some dialects and a vowel with no final component in other dialects will not be considered.

Not all the Puyi dialects have made changes in the final consonant; for example, the correspondences at dialect point 1: are as follows:

Proto-Tai			Puyi Point 1	
*ke:m	C2	'cheek'	čem	2
*ʔba:n	C3	'village'	ʔba:n	4
*mɨŋ	A4	'you'	mɨŋ	2
*thra:p	DL1	'carry on two ends of a bamboo pole'	da:p	5
*ʔba:t	DL3	'scar'	ʔba:t	5
*tak	DS2	'dip up liquid'	tak	3
*ʔbay	A3	'leaf'	ʔbay	1
*ma:y	C1 SW, C B1 N	'widow'	ma:y	5
*ʔba:w	B3	'young man'	ʔba:w	5

The Puyi final correspondences are as follows: Final Proto-Tai \*-n and \*-ŋ remain unchanged in all 40 Puyi dialects; final \*-m goes to the velar -ŋ for dialect points 13, 14, 31 and 36: Proto-Tai \*sa:m A1 'three', point 13 ʔa:ŋ 1. In addition points 13, 14 and 31 have the labial stop changed to a velar stop: \*-p > -k, Proto-Tai \*thra:p DL1 'carry on two ends of a bamboo pole', point 14 ɛa:k 3. At point 36 the labial stop along with the dental and velar stop have been lost: \*-p, \*-t, \*-k > ∅ : Proto-Tai \*pa:k DL2 'mouth', point 36 pa:5, Proto-Tai \*thra:p DL1 'carry on two ends of a bamboo pole', point 36 ʔi:5, Proto-Tai \*ʔba:t DL3 'wound', point 36 ʔba:6. At point 8 the labial stop goes to the dental stop: \*-p > -t, Proto-Tai \*thra:p 'carry on two ends of a bamboo pole', point 8 ɛa:t 1.

The changes in the final glides are as follows:

- \*-w \*a:w > o: points 29-31, 35 Proto-Tai \*sa:w A1 'young woman' point 35 ʔo:l
- \*aw > i: point 36 Proto-Tai \*ɭaw C1 'liquor' point 36 li: 3
- \*-y \*a:y > e: points 29-31, 35 Proto-Tai \*ŋa:y SW C C1, N B1 'widow' point 31 me: 5
- \*ay > e: point 36 Proto-Tai \*ʔday C3 'to get' point 36 ʔde: 3
- \*-ɣ \*aɣ > ay points 3, 5, 10, 13-15, 21, 23 Proto-Tai \*ʔbay A3 'leaf' point 3 ʔbay 1
- \*aɣ > i: point 36, Proto-Tai \*ʔbay A3 'leaf' point 36 ʔbi: 1
- \*aɣ > a: points 29-35 Proto-Tai \*bay A3 'leaf' point 31 ʔba: 1

The most unstable final in the Tai language has been the final velar stop. In the Puyi dialects the most drastic changes are at point 36 with complete loss of all final stops. Other changes in the velar stop final are as follows:

Puyi locality points	Changes
7-9, 36	*-k > ∅ Proto-Tai *pa:k DL2 'mouth' point 7 pa: 5
10, 22-24, 30, 40	*-k > ʔ Proto-Tai *pa:k DL2 'mouth' point 10 pa:ʔ 5
30, 31, 19	*-k > ʔ/ short vowel _____ Proto-Tai *ŋak DS1 'heavy' point 19 naʔ 1
3-9, 13-17, 29-35, 19	*-k > ∅/ long vowel _____ Proto-Tai *pa:k DL2 'mouth' point 3 pa: 5

At points 13 and 14 this change is not fed by the change already noted of the labial to velar:

		*-p > -k	
		*-m > -ŋ	
Proto-Tai *pra:k	DL2	'expose to the sun'	point 13 ta: 5
Proto-Tai *tak	DS2	'dip up liquid'	point 13 tak 3
Proto-Tai *tap	DS2	'liver'	point 13 tak 3
Proto-Tai *thra:p	DL1	'carry on two ends of a shoulder pole'	point 13 ɛa:k 3

# Puyi points Changes

- 19            \*-k > ?/a: \_\_\_\_\_ Proto-Tai \*pra:k DL2 'expose to the sun'  
point 19 ta: 5  
\*-k > ?/short vowel \_\_\_\_\_ Proto-Tai \*nrok DS4 'bird' point  
19 ɛɔ? 2  
\*-k > ø/elsewhere Proto-Tai \*nro:k DL4 'outside' point 19  
ɛu: 6

- 20            \*-k > ø            C  
                                 [-voiced] a: \_\_\_\_\_  
Proto-Tai \*pra:k DL2 'expose to the sun'            ta: 5  
Proto-Tai \*tak    DS2 'to dip up liquid'            tak 5  
Proto-Tai \*vak    DS4 'to incubate'            vak 2  
Proto-Tai \*m or \*va:k 'classifier for tools' va:k 6

Apparently the velar stop final was lost after the long low central vowel only if the initial was of the voiceless class. This would indicate that loss of the final was at least as early as when initials were distinguished as to a voiced or voiceless category.

- 37            \*-k > ø / non-high long or short vowel \_\_\_\_\_

That is, the final velar was lost in all cases except after the high vowels.

Proto-Tai	*klik	DL1	'lazy'	čik	6
Proto-Tai	*ʔb+k	DS3	'girl'	ʔb+k	6
Proto-Tai	*ruk	DS4	'room'	ruk	2
Proto-Tai	*rwia:k	DL4	'vomit'	ru:k	6
Proto-Tai	*ŋiak	DL4	'dragon'	ŋi:k	6
Proto-Tai	*zak	DS4	'wash'	ray	2
Proto-Tai	*pa:k	DL2	'mouth'	pa:	5
Proto-Tai	*m̥ok	DS1	'to bury'	mo:	5
Proto-Tai	*m̥o:k	DL1	'fog'	mo:	5

We would like to see more data in the form of cognate forms to confirm this conditioning for the loss of the velar final stop.

The Tai syllable is a closely knit unit, changes in the initial caused changes in tones. Now the writer would like to examine the interaction of changes in the finals in the Puyi dialects with some changes that have taken place in the vocalic nucleus.

In general, when a new change takes place and a new rule is added to the grammar the rule need not be ordered in relation to other rules but would have a feeding relation. However, we find that the interaction of the rules for changes in the final component often do not have a feeding relation with other rules and must be ordered.

We will discuss 7 such cases where extrinsic ordering is necessary.