West-Central Thailand Pwo Karen Phonology

Phillips, Audra

1. Introduction

This paper represents a start at a phonological description of West-Central
Thailand Pwo Karen. Speakers of West-Central Thailand Pwo Karen live in Tak,
Kanchanaburi, Uthaithani, Suphanburi, Ratchaburi, Phetchaburi and Prachuapkhiri
provinces. The reported population is 20,000 (Tribal Research Institute 1986).

West-Central Thailand Pwo Karen is one of the Karenic languages, a branch of
the Tibeto-Burman language family (Namkung 1996). At least three distinct, mutually
unintelligible Pwo Karen languages exist in Myanmar and Thailand (Atsuhi
or 1995; Phillips 1996). These are the Western Pwo Karen in Myanmar, Eastern Pwo Karen
(Myanmar)/West-Central Thailand Pwo Karen (Thailand), and Northern Pwo Karen
(Thailand). "Phrae" Pwo Karen in east-northern Thailand is a possible fourth distinct
language, although more research is required. The locations of the Pwo Karen
languages are listed in Figure 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Pwo Karen (Bassein)</td>
<td>Irrawaddy Delta, Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Pwo Karen (Moulmein)/West-Central Thailand Pwo Karen</td>
<td>Karen State, Mon State, Tennasserim Division, Myanmar; West-Central Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Pwo Karen</td>
<td>Northwestern Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Phrae&quot; Pwo Karen???</td>
<td>Eastern-northern Thailand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Pwo Karen Languages

Dialectal variation studies of West-Central Thailand Pwo Karen show at least
two major dialects (Phillips 1996). The northern variety is spoken in Kanchanaburi
province and the southern variety is spoken in Ratchaburi, Phetchaburi and
Prachuapkhiri provinces. The results of intelligibility testing in these provinces
show that the variety of Pwo Karen spoken in Sisawat district, Kanchanaburi, is the
most widely understood by Pwo Karen throughout the testing area. As for Tak,
Uthaithani and Suphanburi provinces, Pwo Karen report mutual intelligibility and I
have seen this demonstrated at meetings of Pwo Karen of the language area.
Phonological differences center mainly on the vowels. No tonal variation has been
observed and variation in the consonants is minimal.

Previous research on Pwo Karen phonology is abundant. The first was Jones
1961 which includes short descriptions of Bassein and Moulmein Pwo Karen
phonology. Cooke et. al. 1976 describe Phlong (Northern Pwo Karen) phonology in
detail. Atsuhi Kato (1995) describes and compares the phonological systems of
three Myanmar Pwo Karen dialects: Kyonybyaw (Western Pwo Karen), Hpa-an and
Tavoy (Eastern Pwo Karen). West-Central Thailand Pwo Karen phonologies have
been written for a number of areas: Sisawat district, Kanchanaburi: Griffiths (1976),
Potchanat (1983); Ban Rai District, Uthaithani: Chutima (1982); Suanpheung District,
The paper will begin in Section 2 with a description of the syllable patterns of Pwo Karen. Section 3 follows with comments on stress and rhythm, including suggestions for some possible directions for future research. Section 4 focusses on the segmental phonemes, tonemes, tonal variation and intonation. Finally, Section 5 provides a portion of a text. Data for this paper has been collected at different times since 1992. At present, I am living with the Pwo Karen in Plainasuan village, Sisawat district, Kanchanaburi.

2. Pwo Karen Syllable Patterns

All Pwo Karen syllables are open and of two kinds: reduced “minor” syllables and full “major” syllables. Minor syllables are bound syllables comprised of a single consonant (C₁) with [ə] as the vowel. No tonal contrast is present. They also never occur word-final. In many cases, minor syllables have no apparent morphemic status, for example, the word /pana/ ‘buffalo’. In other cases, the source is clear as in /chačha/ ‘disease; sick one’. The meaning of /cha/ is ‘thing’ and /čha/ is ‘pain’. Thus, ‘thing’ + ‘pain’ = ‘disease; sick one’. The Pwo Karen minor syllable is diagrammed in Figure 2 below.

C₁[ə]

Figure 2. Pwo Karen minor syllable

In major syllables, all consonant phonemes are possible in initial position (C₁). In medial position (C₉), only the consonants /j, w, r, l/ occur. Vowels (V) are either plain, nasalized or glottalized with no distinctive vowel length. The four distinctive tones (T) are high-rising, mid, low-falling and high-falling. Glottalized vowels co-occur with the high-rise and low-falling tones only. The Pwo Karen major syllable is diagrammed in Figure 3 below.

T₉C₁C₉V

Figure 3. Pwo Karen major syllable

3. Stress and rhythm

Pwo Karen, for the most part, exhibits two rhythmic patterns in words. The first is the unstressed-stressed iambic pattern which is typical of languages of mainland Southeast Asia, including Mon-Khmer languages, Thai and Burmese (Donegan et. al. 1983; Wheatley 1987). The other rhythmic pattern is combinations of major syllables where the first major syllable is stressed, which is more typical of Tibeto-Burman languages, including Burmese (Wheatley 1987), as in /m̥t'mf'/ ‘sun’.

Cooke et. al. (1976:216), Griffiths (1976) and Atsubiko (1995:81,88,92) report an inventory of atonic/proclitic morphemes with unstressed [ə]. These include the subject/possessive pronouns, [mə] ‘IRR’, [čbə] ‘thing’ and [lə] ‘one, a’. All of these morphemes have stressed variants in other contexts. Except for [čbə] ‘thing’ which serves as a nominalizer in words and is unstressed in that context, I have not observed a Pwo Karen awareness of these proclitic morphemes. It seems more likely that these destracted variants are due to the rhythmic patterns at the phrase and clause level. Donegan et. al. (1983:345) suggest that most Southeast Asian languages have stress-
timed rhythm, "...an unmistakable symptom of which is the polarization of their accented and unaccented syllables into "major" and "minor" types, the latter having a vowel we would call "reduced" in English." It is likely, then, that Pwo Karen rhythm also functions similarly to English stress-timed rhythm where syllables are reduced based on their position in a phrase or clause rather than their inherent morphemic quality.

As yet, evidence is limited on Pwo Karen rhythm, intonation and word boundaries, although Cooke et. al. (1976:205) report for Northern Pwo Karen that "...all utterances must have at least one phrase or sentence stress which is superimposed on a normal syllable, causing the syllable in question to be pronounced with slightly more loudness and duration than other adjacent syllables...."

4. **Pwo Karen Phonemes and Distribution**

The phoneme inventory of Pwo Karen is fairly standard for Pwo Karen languages. The possible consonant clusters with medial approximants are extensive. The nasalized vowels seem to be undergoing a change where nasalized vowels are being diphthongized with a lessening of the nasalization effect. Finally, the tonal system seems to be transparent with some typical tonal alteration.

### 4.1. Consonant Phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unaspirated</th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Dental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Postalveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stops</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>c</td>
<td></td>
<td>k</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aspirated</td>
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<td>th</td>
<td>ch</td>
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<td>kh</td>
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<td>Stops</td>
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<td>d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implosives (pre-voiced)</td>
<td>m</td>
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<td>Nasals</td>
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<td>Voiced</td>
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<td>Fricatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voiceless</td>
<td>θ</td>
<td>θ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Fricatives</td>
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<td>Approximants</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>j</td>
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<td></td>
<td>w</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
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<td>n</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.1.1. Labials

/p/ voiceless unaspirated bilabial stop [p].

/pʰ/ 'little', /pə/ 'lpl', /pʰi/ 'tease', /plə/ 'allow' /pʰ/ 'CL:thread hank'

/ph/ voiceless aspirated bilabial stop [pʰ].

/phʰ/ 'rice husk', /phə/ 'cooking pot', /pʰi/ 'skin', /pʰ/ 'younger sibling',

/pʰlə/ 'weed out', /phí/ 'pus'

/b/ voiced bilabial implosive [ɓ].

/bʰ/ 'pull', /blə/ 'full, satisfied', /bai/ 'massage', /bʰu/ 'paddy rice',

/bʰ/ 'goat', /bê/ 'correct', /bê/ 'CL:flat things'

/m/ voiced bilabial nasal [m].

/mʰ/ 'drunk', /mɛ/ 'tooth', /mʰi/ 'female', /mʰi/ 'fire', /mái/ 'fun, well',

/mʰ/ 'do, want'
4.1.2. Alveolars

/t/ voiceless unaspirated alveolar stop [t].

/th/ voiceless aspirated alveolar stop [tʰ].
/thî/ ‘CL:instance’

/d/ voiced alveolar implosive [d̥].

/n/ voiced alveolar nasal [n].

/θ/ voiceless dental fricative [θ]. On occasion, some speakers will pronounce /θ/ with [s]. However, there seems to be no pattern to this and I do not hear it often.

/r/ voiced alveolar approximant [ɾ]. As an initial consonant, /r/ is rare.
/rwî/ ‘choose’, /râi/ ‘burlap bag’

/l/ voiced alveolar lateral approximant [ɭ].
/là/ ‘one, a’, /láí/ ‘completely’, /lû/ ‘four’, /láí/ ‘motorcycle’

/j/ voiceless postalveolar fricative [ʃ].
/jô/ ‘poor’, /jû/ ‘lunge’, /já/ ‘star’

4.1.3. Palatais

/c/ voiceless unaspirated palatal stop [c].

/ch/ voiceless aspirated palatal stop [cʰ].

/j/ voiced palatal approximant [j].

4.1.4. Velars

/k/ voiceless unaspirated velar stop [k].
/ke/ ‘is’,

/kh/ voiceless aspirated velar stop [kʰ].

/ŋ/ voiced velar nasal [ŋ]. Thus far, I have only discovered three instances of this phoneme.

/x/ voiced velar fricative [x].

/y/ voiced velar fricative [y].
/ýé/ ‘spicy’,

/w/ voiced labial-velar approximant [w ~ v ~ b].
/wê/ ‘fishnet’
4.2. Consonant Clusters

Pwo Karen has four consonants that can occupy the C_M position in the syllable. These are /j/, w, r, l/. The distribution of initial and medial consonants discovered thus far is illustrated in Figure 4 with examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C_1</th>
<th>/j/</th>
<th>/w/</th>
<th>/r/</th>
<th>/l/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/p/</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>/ph/</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>/b/</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>/m/</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>/θ/</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>/t/</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<td>/d/</td>
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<td>/n/</td>
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<td>/r/</td>
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<td>/l/</td>
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<td>/ʃ/</td>
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<td>/c/</td>
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<td>/ch/</td>
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<tr>
<td>/j/</td>
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<td>/k/</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>/kh/</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>/ɲ/</td>
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<tr>
<td>/x/</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>/ɣ/</td>
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<tr>
<td>/w/</td>
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<tr>
<td>/ʔ/</td>
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<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/h/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/pjǜ'/ 'vomit'
/pwà'θà' 'tired'
/prâ'/ 'thresh'
/plò'/ 'plain'
/kɔmàitwè'/ 'small yellow metal bowl'
/cjò'/ 'saute'
/kjàθà' 'lazy'
/kwè'/ 'play'
/krúcàicè'/ 'depressed'
/klà'/ 'crow'
/ʔwà'/ 'white'
/phja'/ 'temple'
/phlé'/ 'fast'
/thwè'/ 'dish'
/chwí'/ 'beetle'
/khwà'/ 'scratch'
/tshkhríʔà'/ 'sugar'
/khù'/ 'snail'
/bjɔ'/ 'treat'
/brà'/ 'quick'
/bìè'/ 'full, satisfied'
/mjà’bà'/ 'granule'
/mwe'/ 'is'
/mìð'/ 'elephant trunk'
/njà'/ 'Tuesday'
/nwè'/ 'seven'
/ʔwâ'/ 'clear (v)'
/jwémjù'/ 'siblings'
/xwí'/ 'buy'
/jwà'/ 'mirror'
/phùthòwjà'/ 'Wednesday'
/chərjà'/ 'noodle-kneading bowl'
/rwí'/ 'choose'
/lwí'/ 'fine pieces'

Figure 4. Pwo Karen consonant clusters
4.3. *Vowels*

The Pwo Karen vowel phonemes are of three types: oral, nasalized and glottalized.

### 4.3.1. Oral Vowel Phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-mid</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>ə</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-mid</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/i/ Close front unrounded oral vowel [i].
/li/ ‘go’
/e/ Close-mid front unrounded oral vowel [ɛ ɛ ə æ].
/khê/ ‘type of forest fruit’
/i/ Close central unrounded oral vowel [i].
/ə/ Close-mid central unrounded oral vowel [ə].
/a/ Open-mid central unrounded oral vowel [a].
/u/ Close back rounded oral vowel [u].
/o/ Close-mid back rounded oral vowel [o] ~ [ɔ]. When stressed, /o/ is pronounced [ɔ]. For example, /jò/ ‘this, here’ is often pronounced [jɔ] when calling someone’s attention to something so you can give it to them.
/phlò/ ‘coconut’

### 4.3.2. Nasalized Vowel Phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Back</th>
<th>Diphthong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>ì</td>
<td>ì</td>
<td>ù</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-mid</td>
<td>ê</td>
<td>ə</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>âi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-mid</td>
<td>ə</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nasalized vowel phonemes /í, ù, ò, õ/ are articulated as steady-state monophongams with strong nasalization, often involving a post-vocalic velar coda [Vŋ]. The remaining vowel positions /ì, ë, ţ, âi/ are diphthongized phonetically with weak nasalization and no postvocalic nasal effect.

/t/ Close front unrounded nasalized diphthong ['tì].
/mù/ ‘fruit for making alcohol’, /nì/ ‘pasin’¹ /phi/ ‘grandmother’,
/li/ ‘wind (n)’, /chí/ ‘urine, /li/ ‘four’

¹ A pasin is the lower garment typically worn by women in Southeast Asia.
Close-mid front unrounded nasalized diphthong [ɛ́].
/ï/ Close central unrounded nasalized vowel [ï].
/phê/ ‘younger sibling’
/ɔ/ Close-mid central unrounded nasalized diphthong [ɔ́].
/nɔ/ ‘win’, /phɔ/ ‘in’
/ʊ/ Close back rounded nasalized vowel [ʊ].
/ø/ Close-mid back rounded nasalized vowel.[ɔ ~ ɤ]. Some words pronounced
[ɔ] by older speakers are pronounced with the close-mid back unrounded
diphthong [ɤ́] by younger speakers. For example,
[nû ‘thɔ/num thɔn] ‘spoon’,
/dɔ/ ‘place’
/ʌ/ Open-mid back rounded nasalized vowel [ʌ].
/æ/ Open-mid central front unrounded nasalized diphthong [ǽ].
/cæ/ ‘walk’

4.3.3. Glottalized Vowel Phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Back</th>
<th>Diphthongs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>ï’</td>
<td>ï’</td>
<td>o’</td>
<td>ai’ ai’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-mid</td>
<td>e’</td>
<td>æ’</td>
<td>o’</td>
<td>ai’ ai’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open-mid</td>
<td>a’</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

/ï’/ Close front unrounded glottalized vowel [i’].
/mï’/ ‘eye’, /lï’/ ‘switch (for spanking)’, /blï’/ ‘grind’, /phï’/ ‘weed out’
/e’/ Close-mid front unrounded glottalized vowel [e’ ~ e’ ~ æ’].
/ï’/ Close central unrounded glottalized vowel [i’].
/kfï’/ ‘intensifier’, /pfï’/ ‘Pue’
/æ’/ Close-mid central unrounded glottalized vowel [e’].
/pɔ’/ ‘Poe’
/a’/ Open-mid central unrounded glottalized vowel [a’].
/u’/ Close back rounded glottalized vowel [u’].
/o’/ Close-mid back rounded glottalized vowel [ɔ’].
/lɔ’/ ‘ten thousand’, /dɔ’/ ‘more, again’
/ai’/ Open-mid central front unrounded glottalized diphthong [ɛ́’].
/chài’/ ‘rice field’
/ai’/ Open-mid central unrounded glottalized diphthong [ɛ́’ ~ ə́’].

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4.4. Tone and Intonation

The Pwo Karen tonal system is straightforward. No co-occurrence restrictions between tones and initial consonants have been observed. The study of intonation is in the beginning stages with one intonational pattern observed thus far.

4.4.1. Tonemes

West-Central Thailand Pwo Karen has four phonemic tones. These are:

- High rise /' /
- Mid / /
- Low Falling /~/
- High Falling /~~/

/~/ : [45] The high rising tone is pronounced with a rise from high to extra-high. It co-occurs with plain, nasalized and glottalized vowels. /mi/ 'fire', /má/ 'wrong', /nú/ 'pasin', /thuí/ 'instance', /mí/ 'face', /thó/ 'small drum'

/ / : [33] The mid tone is pronounced at mid-level with a slight rise before a slight fall. It co-occurs with plain and nasalized vowels. /yi/ 'rattan', /mí/ 'tail', /chá/ 'thing', /nú/ 'laugh, smile', /thó/ 'pound (in mortar)'

/~ : [21] The low falling tone begins a little lower than the mid tone and falls to low. It co-occurs with plain, nasalized and glottalized vowels. /yí/ 'good', /má/ 'do', /mí/ 'cooked rice', /nú/ 'two, CL:day', /mí/ 'box', /thó/ 'iron, needle'

/~ : [51] The high falling tone begins high and quickly falls to low. It co-occurs with plain and nasalized vowels. /má/ 'wife', /chá/ 'sweet', /thuí/ 'water', /mí/ 'sleep', /thó/ 'gold'

4.4.2. Alternation of Tones

Several tonal alterations have been observed in utterances. These are presented in informal rules below.

\[ 45 \rightarrow 33/_{[45]} \]
\[ 33 \rightarrow 51/_{[51]} \]
\[ 51 \rightarrow 45/_{[45]} \]
\[ 45 \rightarrow 21/_{[45]} \]
\[ 31 \rightarrow 33/_{[21]} \]

/Phúθá/ [p^hθá] 'child'
/núthí/ [núθhi] 'milk'
/thí khlé/ [thí kʰlé] 'cold water'
/mínθi/ [mínθ] 'lie down'
/yó jài/ [yó jài] 'finished'
4.4.3. Intonation

In yes/no questions with no question particle, rising intonation (↗) serves to indicate a question.

/ʔò thɨ/  [ʔò thɨʔ]  ‘Do you want a drink?’

/khùlə nɔ/  [kʰùlə nɔ]  ‘Did the foreigner win?’

/nɔ mái’ lɔ/  [nɔ mái’ lɔ]  ‘Are you well?’

5. padè de khùlú ‘The Rabbit and the Snail’

(1) padè ʔo lə dî lî thô câi kwè lə khùlû dû dá khùlû lə phîlû
rabbit exist one CL.animal go up walk play at mountain mountain.top see snail one CL.fruit:snail
A rabbit went walking for fun up to the top of a mountain and saw a snail.

(2) khùlû lə phîlû nô câi xè’ Dûp lô
snail one CL.fruit:snail that walk deliberate:careful INTENS !!
That snail walked very carefully!

(3) câi ʔwî kî’
walk slow INTENS
(He) walked really slow!

(4) padè juphû wê dá ʔo lə njàdû
rabbit watch so ? exist one hour
The rabbit watched for one hour.

(5) juphû khùlû câi ʔwî
watch snail walk slow
(He) watched the snail walk slowly.

(6) khùlû dá padè chînô ʔèkʰû’ juphû
snail see rabbit sit wait watch
The snail saw the rabbit sitting, waiting and watching.

(7) ʔà lô wê dá nà mà nô lê padè
3p tell so ? 2p do what QUES rabbit
He asked, “What are you doing, rabbit?”

(8) nô juphû já bô Dûp jô
2p watch 1s INTENS INTENS here
“You have been really watching me.”

(9) padè câi’ chà nô câi chà jô khùlû lê lə nî ni lə cê’ lô
rabbit answer biting:sarcastic 2p walk like:kind this snail EXCLM one CL:day able one bit !!
“You go like a snail. In a day you cover very little.”

(10) mə thô thô dái’ ʔá khùlû câi’ wê dá
IRR to until still QUES snail answer so ?
“Is there anything else?” the snail responded.

(11) nà mə câi prə de jà ʔá padè
2p IRR walk compete with 1s QUES rabbit
“Will you race with me, rabbit?”

(12) nè cài' wè nè cài thi
  2p answer so 2p walk fast
  "You say that you walk fast."

(13) nè chômô jà cái ?wè nái nè dài'
  2p think 1s walk slow comparison.marker? 2p part.of.comparison?!
  "You think that I walk slower than you."

(14) mwe jà ma cái prà báthà' de nè chí lô
  to.be 1s IRR walk compete want with 2p some !!
  "If that's the way it is, I want to race with you."

(15) jà cái thi nái nè dài'
    padè lô
  1s walk fast comparison.marker? 2p part.of.comparison?? rabbit tell
  "I walk faster than you," said the rabbit.

(16) jà ?ô k'hù' nè nô njâdi' ká jài'
  1s exist wait 2p part hour almost already
  "I've waited for you almost one hour already."

(17) nè cái nô phlaôf ni dài' ?è
  2p walk part 50.centimeters able yet NEG
  "You have not been able to walk even 50 centimeters yet."

(18) khû cài' wè ?è mwe ca nô Ô' keyokhû yêthài jô
  snail answer so EXCLM to.be like that ? tomorrow morning return here
  The snail responded, "If it's like that, tomorrow morning (we'll) come back here."

(19) pô ma cái prà lû'Ô'ha'
  IPL IRR walk compete together
  "We'll race together."

(20) pô ma Ô'Ô'ha' bô po lè cái thi lô yà lê
  IPL IRR determine ba po 1s.claus walk fast one CL.person QUES
  "We will be able to determine who walks faster."

(21) khû cài thi nái
    padè ?á padè cài thi
  snail walk fast comparison.marker? 2p part.of.comparison? rabbit QUES rabbit walk fast
  nái khû ?á
  comparison.marker? snail QUES
  "Does the snail walk faster than the rabbit? Does the rabbit walk faster than the snail?"

(22) pô lè ma nô lô khû lô ca nô yô nô
  who QUES IRR win QUES snail tell like that finish that
  "Who is going to win?" the snail finished.

(23) padè thài lô
  rabbit return !!
  The rabbit went back then.

(24) lô keyô lô khû pô yêthài mô cài prà lû'Ô'ha' de
  one morning one section:part rabbit return IRR walk compete together with
  khû lû' khôlô dô ?á
  snail yonder mountain mountain.top beyond
  The next morning, the rabbit returned to race with snail to the very top of the mountain beyond.
(25) ?evë bâ ?ə khâ me cái prë khû nô ná‘ wê ?ə thâ’ lê phîô
next:then? NOM time IRR walk compete snail that count remain 3p heart one CL.fruit:snail
lê phîô lê phîô nû wê phîô ?ô lû’ khû lô khû
one CL.fruit:snail one CL.fruit:snail seven CL.fruit:snail exist yonder mountain top
lê phîô lê phîô lê phîô
one CL.fruit:snail one CL.fruit:snail one CL.fruit:snail
Before the time of the race, that snail arranged for seven (snails) to be on the tops of the mountains.

(26) bâ ?ə khâ cái nô pôdë cái lô pôdë càîtaî:ái brë
? NOM time walk that rabbit walk !! rabbit run quick
When it was time to walk, the rabbit walked. The rabbit ran quickly.

(27) khû ?ô wê thô nô lî dâi’ ?ê
snail exist remain to that go still NEG
The snail stayed right there. (He) hadn’t gone yet.

(28) pôdë phê thû cho’ cho’ cho’
rabbit jump to thump! thump! thump!
The rabbit jumped. Thump! Thump! Thump!

(29) thô lû’ khû lû khû ?û hê khû hû
to yonder mountain top beyond EXCLM snail ***
When he got to the top of the mountain, he called the snail.

(30) pôdë mà ?ə na thô lû’ lô khû khû ye thô ?ə ?ô dái’ wá
rabbit do 3p ear loud yonder down back section:part come to 3p exist still NEG
The rabbit heard something loud behind him. He (the snail) was not there yet.

(31) ?evë phê thô dô’ lê jë
dô’ phê phê phê phê
next:then jump up more one CL:period.of.time more jump jump jump jump
Then (he) continued jumping....
References


