Thai Pronunciation

Luciano Canepari & Daniel Paganini – © 2021

1. Thai (Tai, formerly, Siamese). Its syllables have a rather simple structure. They necessarily begin with a consonant, including /#ʔV/. Besides, /p, t, k/ [p, ƭ, k, ƙ], may be followed by /h, w, ɾ, l/ (including /khw/).

Of course, in spite of poorly inherited from traditional spelling, /ph, th, kh; ʧh/ are simple and normal sequences, and nothing like circus-like things as '/þ, ƭ, ƙ, ʧ/'.

In syllable-final position, /V/ may be followed only by /p, t, k, ʔ; m, n, ŋ/ [pˀ, ƭˀ, kˀ, ƙˀ, ʔˀ; mˀ, nˀ, ŋˀ, ŋˀ] (including /b, d, g; f, s, h; ɾ; l/, in loans, and initial /st, stɾ/, but speakers behave differently in such cases). The diphthongs and triphthongs shown in fig 1 are also typical of the final position, including short vowels, which are followed by /ʔ/, too.

Of course, /Vi, Vu/ diphthongs must not be humiliated as if they were '/Vj, Vw/'.

2. *Vowels.* Thai has nine vowels, both short and long (*ie* narrow diphthongs), and three peculiar phonemic opening diphthongs, /iɤ, ɯɤ, uɤ/ [ɪɤ, ɯɜ, ʊɐ], as well as many others resulting from the juxtaposition of either short or long *vowels* with

fig 1. *Neutral* Thai main vocalic elements: short and long vowels and opening diphthongs.
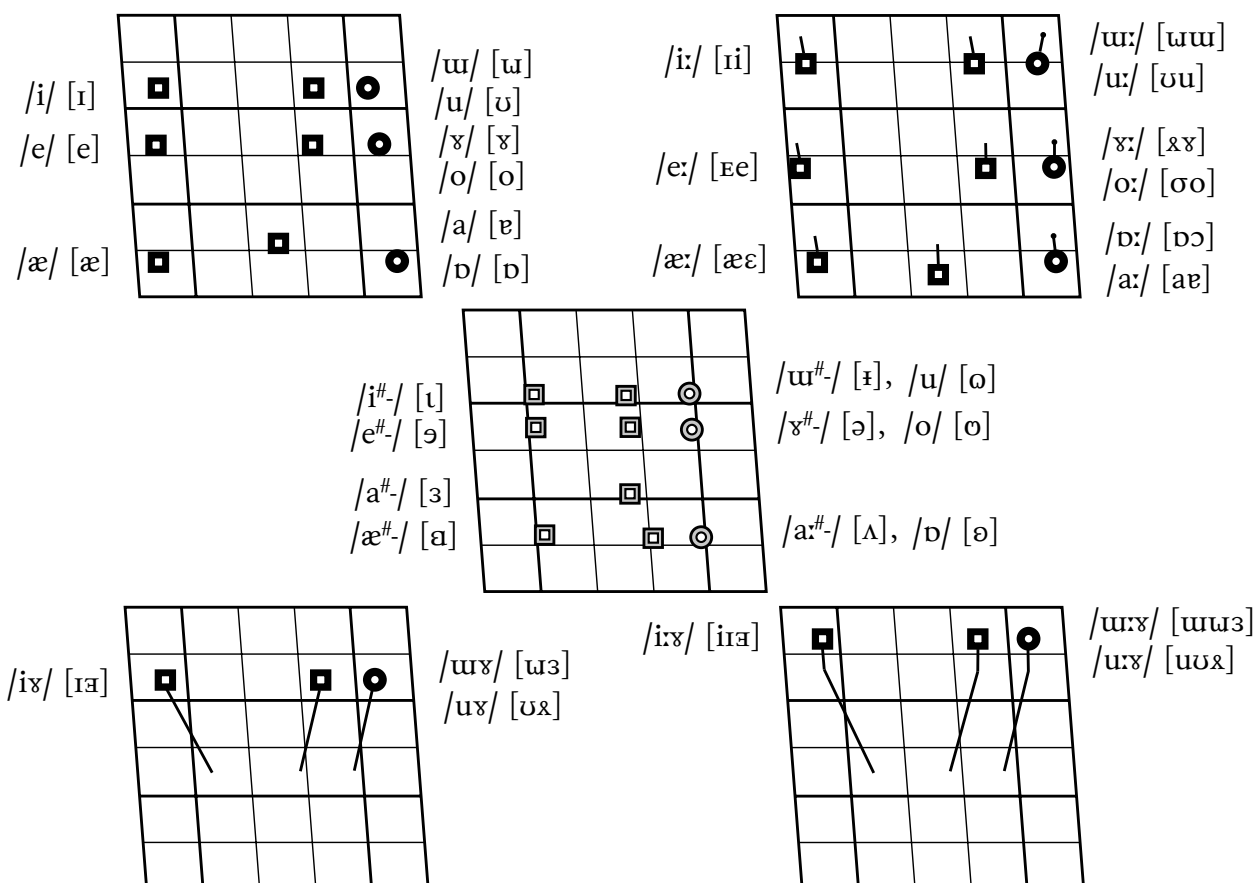
/i, u/ [ɪ, ʊ] (fronting or backing diphthongs). The most frequent are /ai, au; aːi, aːu/ [ɐɪ, ɐʊ; aɐɪ, aʌʊ]. Initial *vowels* are /ˈʔV/ and final short *vowels* are /Vʔˈ/ [Vʔ], but generally [V] if unstressed. The third vocogram provides the possible realizations of the short vowels in reduced open syllables (with weaker stress and tones).

fig 2 shows the vowels and diphthongs (and triphthongs) of neutral Thai. For useful comparison, fig 3-4 and fig 5-6, respectively, show their counterparts of the *mediatic* and *traditional* accents.

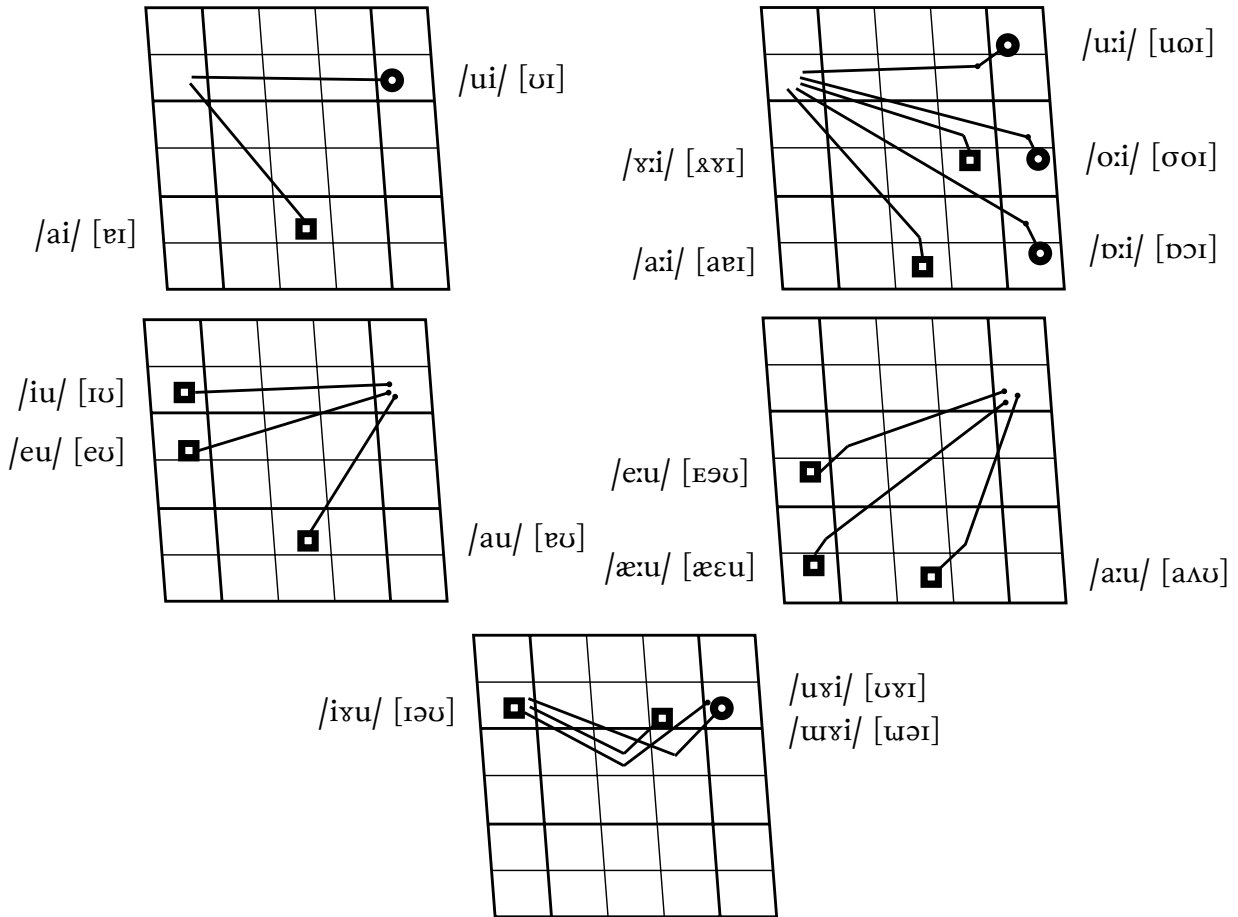fig 2. *Neutral* Thai further diphthongs: fronting /Vi/ & backing /Vu/.

fig 3. *Mediatic* Thai main vocalic elements: short and long vowels and opening diphthongs.
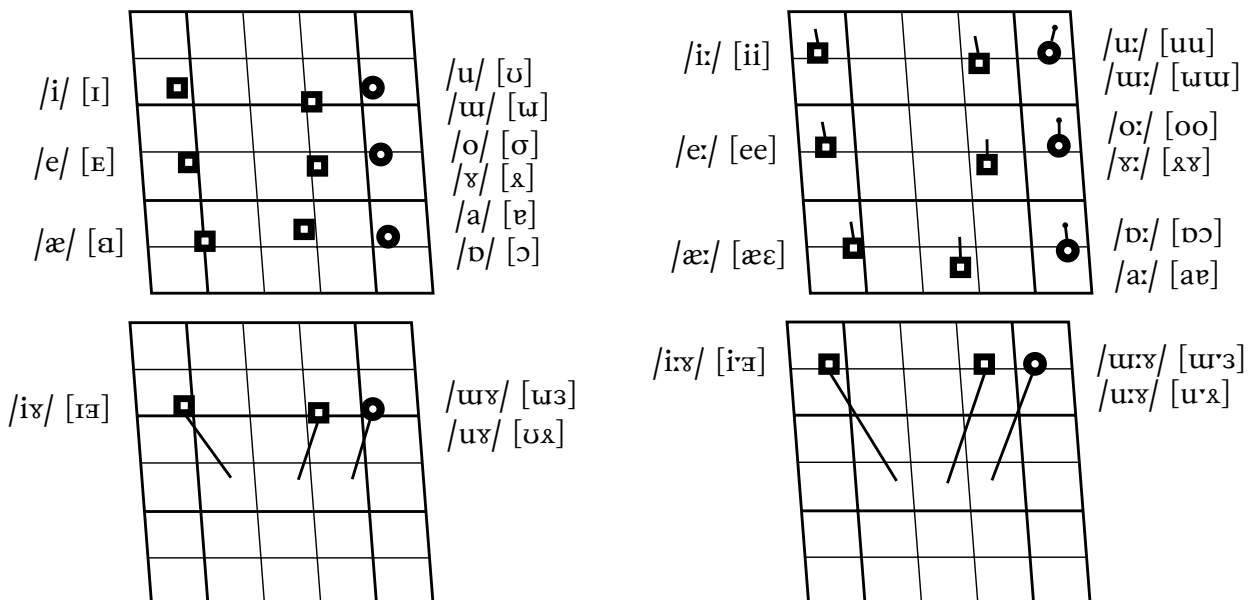
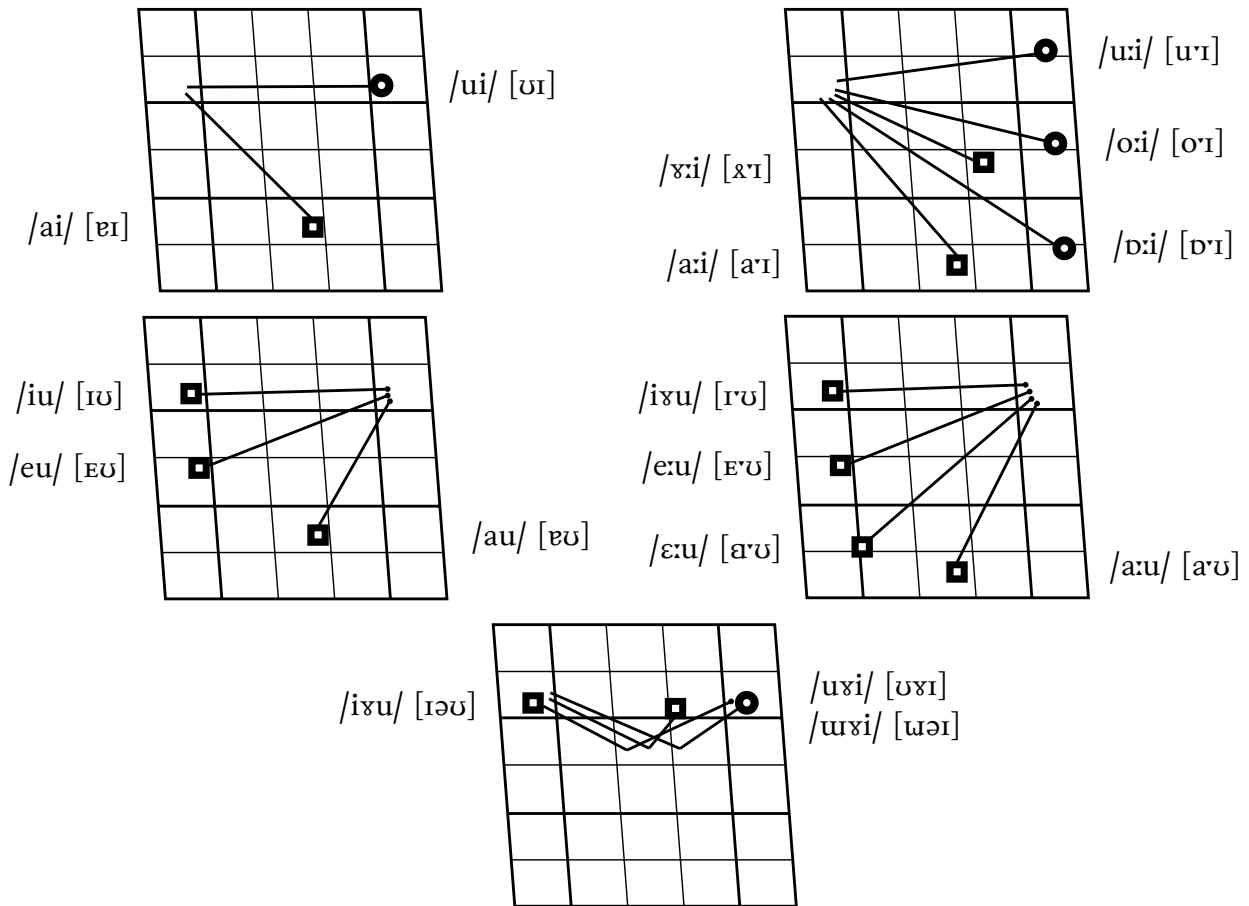fig 4. *Mediatic* Thai further diphthongs: fronting /Vi/ & backing /Vu/.

/ui/ [ʊɪ]

/ai/ [ɐɪ]

/uːi/ [uˑɪ]

/ɤːi/ [ɤˑɪ]

/oːi/ [oˑɪ]

/aːi/ [aˑɪ]

/ɒːi/ [ɒˑɪ]

/iu/ [ɪʊ]

/eu/ [ɛʊ]

/au/ [ɐʊ]

/iɤu/ [ɪʊ]

/eːu/ [ɛˑʊ]

/ɛːu/ [ɐˑʊ]

/aːu/ [aˑʊ]

/iɤu/ [ɪəʊ]

/uɤi/ [ʊɤɪ]
/ɯɤi/ [ɯəɪ]

fig 5. *Traditional* Thai main vocalic elements: short and long vowels and opening diphthongs.

/i/ [ɪ]

/e/ [e]

/æ/ [æ]

/ɯ/ [ɯ]
/u/ [ʊ]

/ɤ/ [ɤ]
/o/ [o]

/a/ [ɐ]
/ɒ/ [ɒ]

/ːi/ [ɪi]

/eː/ [ɛe]

/æː/ [æɛ]

/ɯː/ [ɯɯ]
/uː/ [ʊu]

/ɤː/ [ɤɤ]
/oː/ [oo]

/ɒː/ [ɒɔ]
/aː/ [aɐ]

/iɤ/ [ɪɐ]

/uɤ/ [ʊɤ]
/uɤ/ [ʊɤ]

/iɤ/ [ɪˑɐ]

/ɯːɤ/ [ɯˑɐ]
/uːɤ/ [uˑʌ]
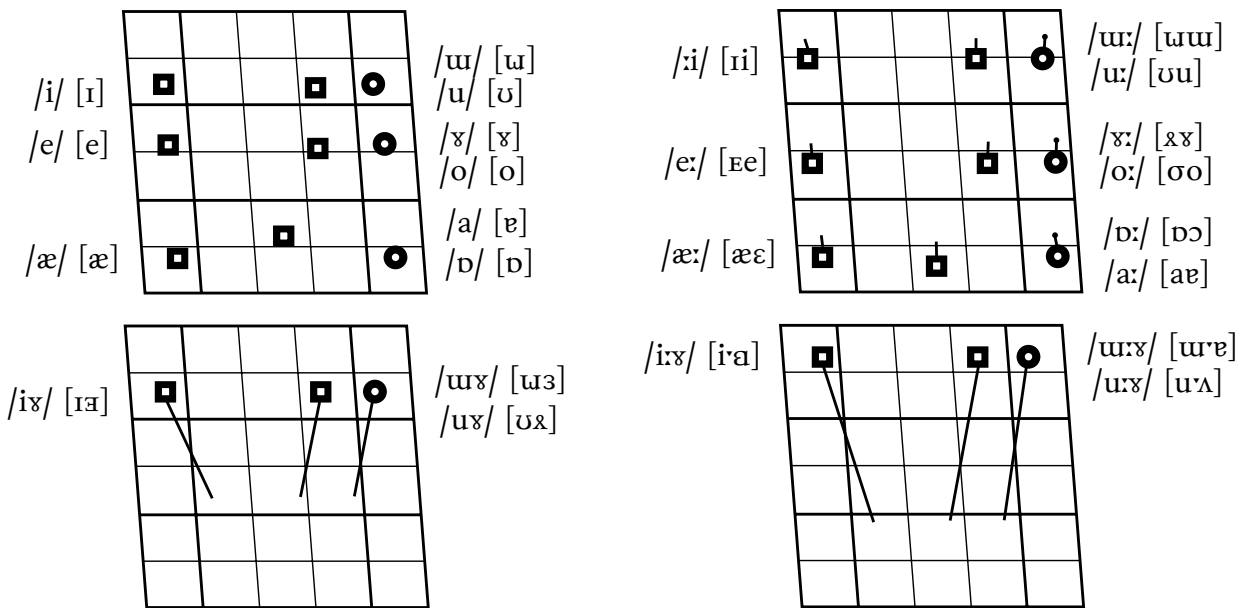
fig 6. *Traditional* Thai further diphthongs: fronting /Vi/ & backing /Vu/.

/ui/ [ʊɪ]

/u:i/ [uˑɪ]

/ɤ:i/ [ɤˑɪ]

/o:i/ [oˑɪ]

/ai/ [ɐɪ]

/a:i/ [aˑɪ]

/ɒ:i/ [ɒˑɪ]

/iu/ [ɪʊ]

/eu/ [eʊ]

/au/ [ɐʊ]

/e:u/ [ɛˑʊ]

/ɛu/ [æʊ]

/a:u/ [aˑʊ]

/iɤu/ /uɤi/

/ɯɤi/ [ɯəɪ]
/uɤi/ [ʊɤɪ]

/iɤu/ [ɪəʊ]
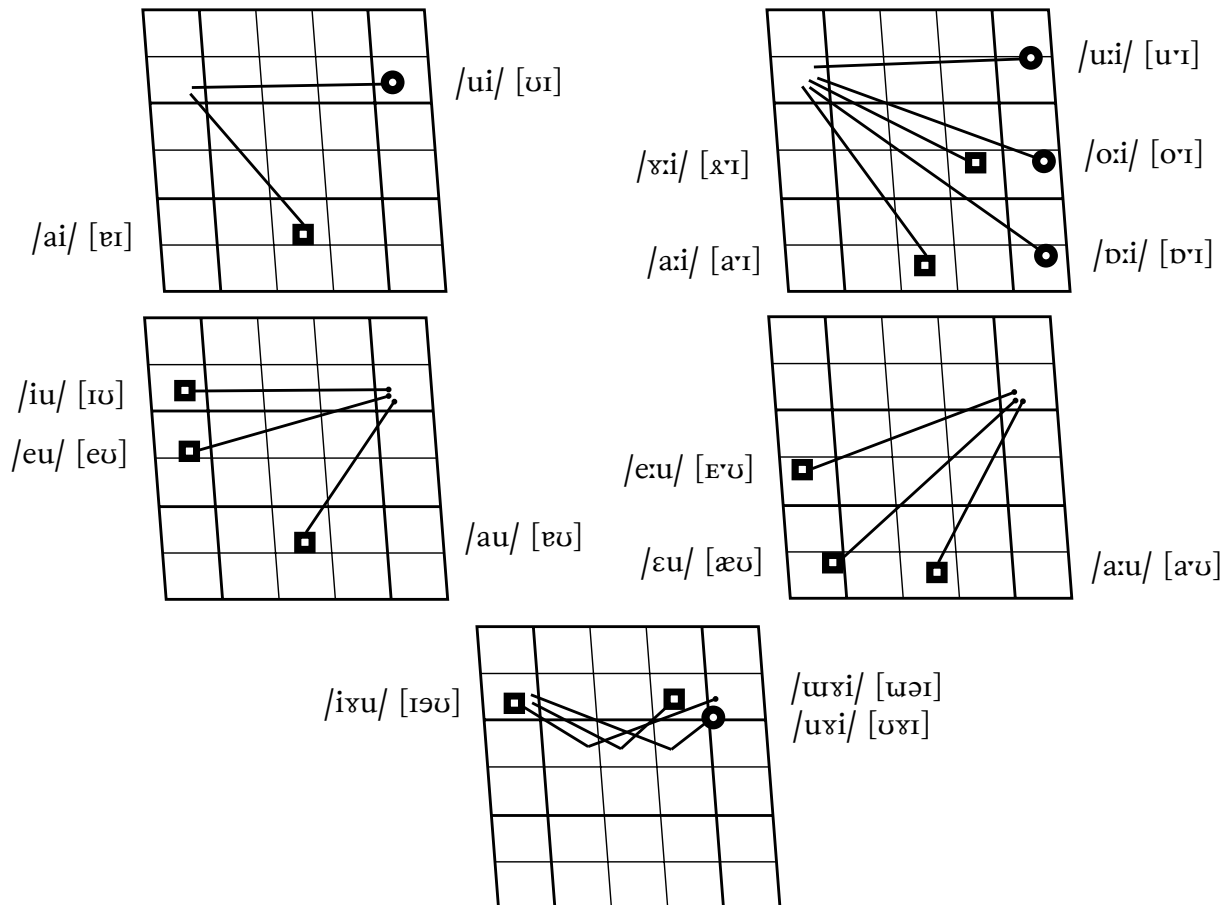
3. *Consonants*. *fig* 7 shows the consonants of neutral Thai. The phoneme /ʔ/ often becomes 'zero', in word-internal or utterance-final unstressed syllables.

Thai presents opposition between /C, Ch/ [C, Ch], for stops (/p, t, k/, and the stopstrictive /tʃ/ [tʃ], certainly not *off*IPA [tɕ]). Final /p, t, k, ʔ/ are [Cʼ]; /t, d/ are mostly denti-alveolar, [t̪, d̪]; in addition, we usually have /ɾ, l/ [ɾ, l].

fig 7. *Neutral* Thai consonants.

m		n		[ŋ]	ŋ	
p b		t̪ d̪		[k̪]	k	ʔ
			tʃ			
f s			j			w h
	ɾ					
	l					

& /ph, th, kh, tʃh/ (= /C/+/h/, *not* '/p̪, t̪, k̪, tʃ/' *nor* '/pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, tʃʰ/')

4. There are five *tonemes*, as shown in *fig* 8.1-2: /ʼ/ [ˈ], /_/ [ˌ], /ʻ/ [ˌ], /ˉ/ [ˉ], /ˌ/ [ˌ]. The third and fourth are accompanied by creaky voice, [V̰], *eg khaa* /ˈkha:/ [ˈkhaɐ] 'to be dangling', *khàa* (better: *khạa*) /ˌkha:/ [ˌkhaɐ] 'galangal', *khâa* (*khàa*) /ˈkha:/ [ˌkhạɐ̰] 'to kill', *kháa* (*khāa*) /ˉkha:/ [ˉkhạɐ̰] 'to trade', *khǎa* (*khₐa*) /ˌkha:/ [ˌkhaɐ] 'leg'.

In this case, we also show the five words in a widespread, but unsatisfactory, transliteration type, followed by a much more intuitive type, because more simi-

lar to the phonemic transcription, which is certainly an advantage, rather than a drawback.

Besides, in *protunes*, we have the taxotones shown in rows just below those occurring in *tunes*. Let us also consider an average realization of all tonemes, in the *mediatic* and *traditional* accents, indicated together (in *fig* 8), to facilitate useful (and necessary) comparisons.

fig 8.1. Thai *neutral* tonemes and taxotones, followed by their attenuated forms occurring in protunes (including weaker syllables), and in emphatic contexts.
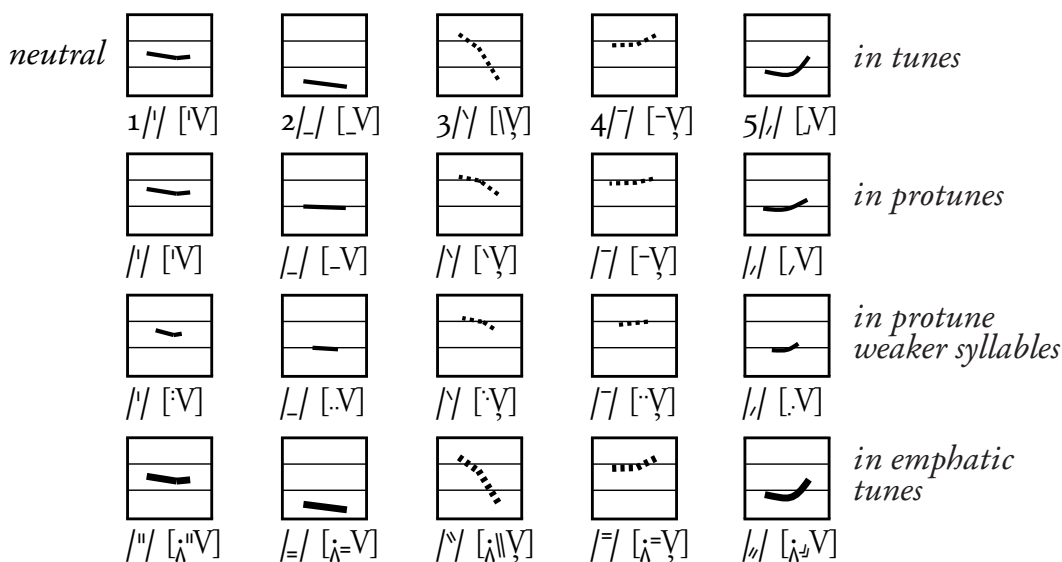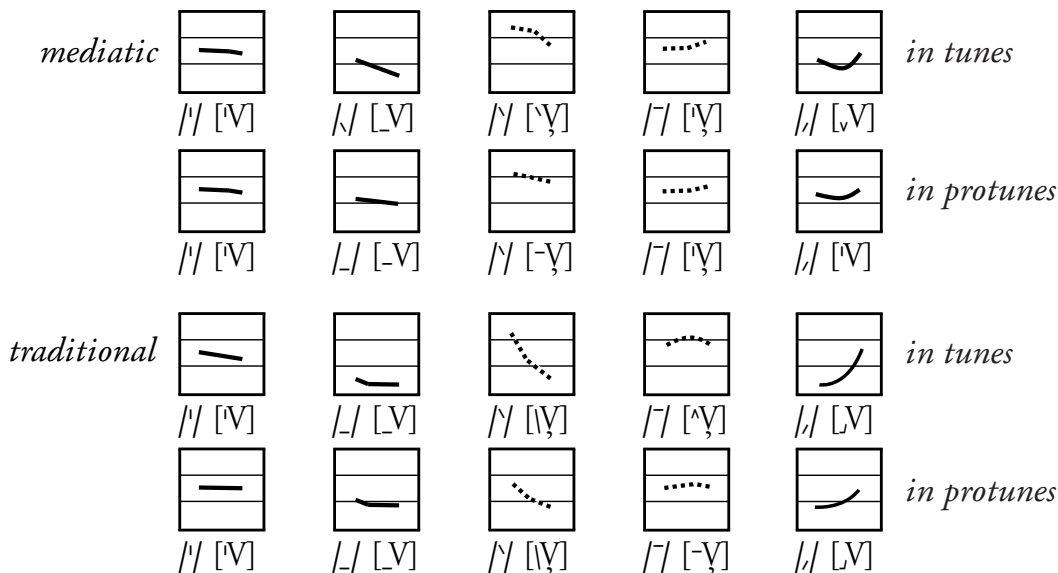

neutral   *in tunes*

1/'/ ['V]   2/_/ [_V]   3/'/ [ıV̱]   4/ˉ/ [ˉV̱]   5/,/ [ˌV]

in protunes

/'/ ['V]   /_/ [_V]   /'/ ['V̱]   /ˉ/ [ˉV̱]   /,/ [ˌV]

in protune weaker syllables

/'/ ['V]   /_/ [ˑV]   /'/ ['V̱]   /ˉ/ [ˑV̱]   /,/ [ˌV]

in emphatic tunes

/'/ [ʌˈV]   /=/ [ʌ=V]   /ˇ/ [ʌıV̱]   /=/ [ʌ=V̱]   /„/ [ʌˌV]

fig 8.2. Thai *mediatic*, and *tradional* tonemes and taxotones, followed by their attenuated forms occurring in protunes.

mediatic   *in tunes*

/'/ ['V]   /ˎ/ [_V]   /'/ ['V̱]   /ˉ/ ['V̱]   /,/ [ˌV]

in protunes

/'/ ['V]   /_/ [_V]   /'/ [ˉV̱]   /ˉ/ ['V̱]   /,/ ['V]

traditional   *in tunes*

/'/ ['V]   /_/ [_V]   /'/ [ıV̱]   /ˉ/ [ʌV̱]   /,/ [_V]

in protunes

/'/ ['V]   /_/ [_V]   /'/ [ıV̱]   /ˉ/ [ˉV̱]   /,/ [_V]

4. Only for the neutral accent, *fig* 9 shows, more analytically, the behavior of the tonemes, indicating their taxotones inside the four typical protunes.

The first one represents their complete realizations occurring isolated, in citation form, as it happens inside the emphatic protune, /ʌ/.

In addition, *fig* 10 shows how the tonemes are reduced when uttered inside the four neutral tunes (including traditional /ʔ/).

Again, the first one corresponds to the emphatic (and citation) forms, not influenced by any of the other tunes.

fig 9. *Neutral* Thai protunes and the taxotones occurring inside them.
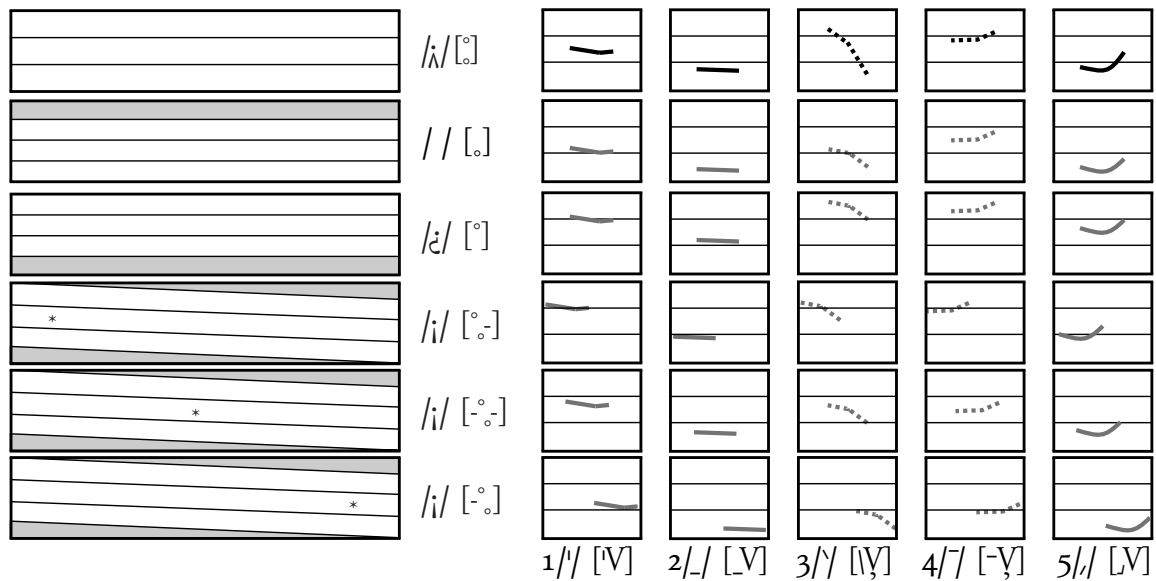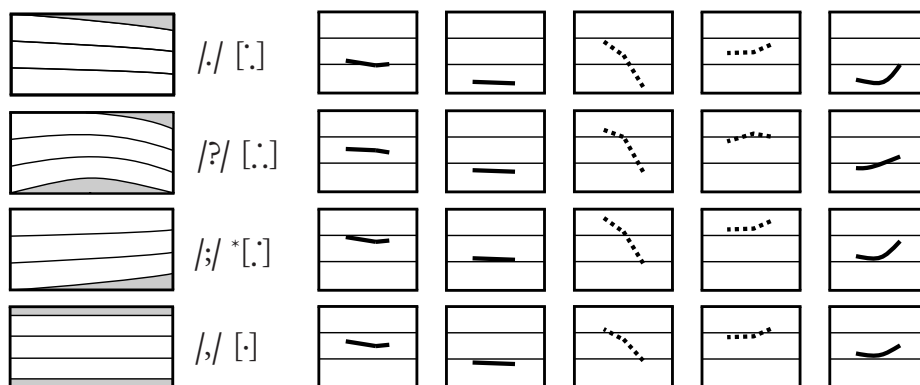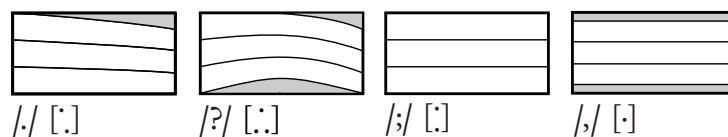

fig 10. *Neutral* Thai tunes and the taxotones occurring inside them.

5. The fundamental *intonation* patterns are also shown (fig 11).

fig 11. Thai fundamental intonation patterns.

6. In this section, we will show examples for the vowels and consonants of neutral Thai pronunciation.

There is no generally accepted transliteration for Thai. In fact, its official spelling uses several different gliphs for what correspons to a simpler phonemic inventory. The fact is that foreign loans are often not adapted to pronunciation, but kept more like in the languages from which they were drawn.

Particularly Sanskrit and Pali words are a clear indication of this 'problem'. Also loans from modern languages are generally treated likewise…

Thus, an etymological transliteration would have too many 'variants' especially for /Ch/ sequences. On the other hand, a transliteration which hinted at the phonemic elements would present other problems, including the way to show the tonemes above vowel letters.

Therefore, we decided to use the phonemic transcriptio instead of any sort of Roman transliteration. Of course, that could be almost sufficient, but, as we aim to be fairly accurate in our description of the pronunciation of Thai, we certainly add a ^can^IPA phonotonetic transcription.

Thus, we will first show examples of the vowels (and some additional diphthongs) and consonants. After those, we will illustrate the intonation patterns, by adding the transcription of a number of sentences, followed by the usual *IPA* story *The North Wind and the Sun*.

7. Vowels

/ˌkɾit, ˈʔen, ˉphæʔ, ˌfan, ˌklɒŋ, ˋkhon, ˍsut, ˋkhɯn, ˈŋɤn/
[ˌkɾɪtʼ, ˈʔen, ˉphæʔʼ, ˌfen, ˍklɒŋ, ˋkhọn, ˍsʊtʼ, ˋkhʉn, ˈŋɤn]

/ˌkɾiːt, ˈʔeːn, ˉphæː, ˌfaːn, ˌklɒːŋ, ˋkhoːn, ˍsuːt, ˋkhɯːn, ˈŋɤːn/
[ˌkɾɪtʼ, ˈʔeen, ˉphæɛ̣, ˌfaen, ˍklɒɔn, ˋkhọọn, ˍsʊʊtʼ, ˋkhʉ̣ʉ̣n, ˈŋʌɤn].

Basic and additional diphthongs and triphthongs (others are present in the sentences and text transcribed below)

/ˈɾiɤn, ˈɯ̃ɤn, ˈuɤn/
[ˈɾɪɜn, ˈɯ̃ɜn, ˈʊʌn]

/ˉkiɤ/, /ˌsiːɤ/, /ˋdai, ˈkui/, /ˈkau, ˉniu/, /ˈdoːi, ˉlæːu/, /ˋduɤi/
[ˉkɪɜ̣], [ˌsiɪɜ], [ˋdẹɪ̣, ˈkʊɪ̣], [ˋkẹʊ̣, ˉnɪʊ̣], [ˈdoʊɪ, ˉlæɛʊ̣], [ˋdʉ̣ɣɪ̣].

As the third vocogram of *fig* 1 shows, in quick colloquial speech, the short vowels occurring in prosodically weaker open syllables before the prominent one, are subject to centralization (in the vocogram, and shortening for /aː/, too), as in: /ˈpra-ˈtuː/ [ˈprɐˈtʊu, ˈprɜ-] (door), or /ˈsa_duɤk/ [ˈsɐ_dʊɤkʼ, ˍsɜ-] (convenient), /ˈʔaːˌhaːn/ [ˈʔaɐˌhaen, ˈʔʌ-] (food), /ˈphaːˌsaː/ [ˈpaɐˌsae, ˈpʌ-] (language).

8. Consonants

/ˈmaː, ˈnaː, ˈŋaː/, /ˋpaː, ˋbaː, ˈtam, ˈdam, ˋkaːŋ, ˈʔuɤn/, /ˈt͡ʃaːm/, /ˌˌfai, ˌsai/, /ˈjaːm, ˈwan, ˌhai/, /ˉɾak, ˋlak/
[ˈmaɐ, ˈnaɐ, ˈŋaɐ], [ˋpạɐ̣, ˋbạɐ̣, ˈtem, ˈdem, ˋkạɐ̣ŋ, ˈʔʊɣn], [ˈt͡ʃaɐm], [ˌfɐɪ, ˌsɐɪ], [ˈjaɐm, ˈwen, ˌhɐɪ], [ˉɾẹkʼ, ˋlẹkʼ]

Including the /Ch/ sequences (not any 'special', 'mysterious', 'alien' consonants):
/ˈphaː, ˈtham, ˋkhaːŋ, ˈt͡ʃhaːm/,
[ˋphạɐ̣, ˈthem, ˋkhạɐ̣ŋ, ˈt͡ʃhaɐm].

9. Sentences for intonation, too

Let us observe that certain grammemes usually change their tones in normal conversation, from rising to high. Among these are the personal pronouns /ˌt͡ʃan/

[ˌʨaŋ, ˉʨ̬ɐŋ] (I), /ˌkhau/ [ˌkhɐʊ, ˉʨ̬ɐʊ̯] (he, she, they), and the interrogative particle /ˌmai/ [ˌmɐɪ, ˉmɐ̬ɪ]. In addition, in order to emphasize a given word like, for instance, /ˌsuɤi/ [ˌsʊɤɪ] (beautiful), by reduplicating it, again, we get /ˌsuɤi ˌsuɤi/ [ʌˉsʊ̬ɤ̣ɪ ˌsʊɤɪ] (so beautiful!).

Further tone changes regard sequences of two rising tonemes, as in: /ˌnaŋ ˌsɯː/ [ˉnɐ̬ŋ ˌsɯɯ] (book), or /ˌsɔːŋ ˌaːm ˈkhon/ [ˉsɔ̬ɔŋ ˌsaɐm ˈkhon] (two or three people).

/ˌʨhan, ˎjaːk ˎʨa ˈphuːt ˈphaːˌsaːˈthai ˋdaːiˈdiː./
[ˌʨhɐn, ˎjaɐk ˎʨa ˈphʊ̬ʊt˺ ˈphaɐˌsaɐˈthɐɪ ˋdạ̣ɐ̣ɪˈdɪɪ˙]
I'd like to speak Thai well.

/ˈrau ˉru ˋwaː ˈkhun, ˌmaːiˌthɯŋ ˎaˈrai./
[ˈrɐʊ ˉrʊ̬ʊ ˋwạ̣ɐ̣ ˈkhʊn· ˌmaɐɪˌthɯŋ ˎɐˈrɐɪ˙/
We know what you mean.

/ˎkhɒːpˈkhun ˋmaːk./
[ˎkhɒɔpˈkhʊn ˎmạ̣ạ̣ɐ̣k˺˙]
Thank you very much.

/¿ˈkhun ˉkhit ˎjaːŋˈrai, ˎkiɤuˎkap ˋrɯɤŋ ˉniː./
[¿ˈkhʊn ˉkhɪ̣t˺ ˎjaɐŋˈrɐɪ· ˎkɪɐʊˎkɐp˺ ˋrɯɜŋ ˉnɪɪ˺]
What do you think about it?

/¿ˈwan ˉniː, ˈkhun ˉru ˎsuk ˎjaːŋˈrai./
[¿ˈwɐn ˉnɪ̣ɪ· ˈkhʊn ˉrʊ̬ʊ ˎsʊk˺ ˎjaɐŋˈrɐɪ˺]
How are you feeling today?

/¿ˈrau ˎʨa ˈpai ˋthiːˌnai./
[¿ˈrɐʊ ··ʨ̬ɐˈpɐɪ ˋthɪ̣ɪˌnɐɪ˙]
Where are we going?

/¿ˈkhun ˌsaːˋmaːt, ˋphuːt ˈphaːˌsaːˈthai ˋdaːi ˌmai?/
[¿ˈkhʊn ˌsaɐˎmạ̣ɐ̣t˺· ˋphʊ̬ʊt˺ ˈphaɐˌsaɐˈthɐɪ ˋdạ̣ɐ̣ɪ ˉmɐ̣ɪ˺˙]
Can you speak Thai?

/¿ˋphiːˈʨhaːi, ˌkhɒːŋ ˈkhun ˋkhauˈʨai ˈphaːˌsaːˈthai ˌmai?/
[¿ˋphɪ̣ɪˈʨhaɐɪ· ˌkhɒɔŋ ˈkhʊn ˋkhạ̣ʊ̯ˈʨɐɪ ˈphaɐˌsaɐˈthɐɪ ˉmɐ̣ɪ˺˙]
Does your brother understand it?

/¿ˋphruŋ ˉniː, ˌkhau ˎʨa ˈmaː ˌmai?/
[¿ˋphrʊ̬ŋ ˉnɪɪ· ˌkhɐʊ ˎʨ̬ɐ ˈmaɐ ˉmɐ̣ɪ˺˙]
Is he coming tomorrow?

/ˋthaː ˈkhun ˈmaː ˈwan, ˌsau ˋmaiˋdai ˈrau ˎʨa ˎdɯɤˉtrɒːn./
[ˋthạ̣ɐ̣ ˈkhʊn ˈmaɐ ˈwɐn· ˌsɐʊ ˋmɐ̣ɪˋdɐ̣ɪ| ˈrɐʊ ··ʨ̬ɐˎdɯɜˉtrɒɔn˙]
If you can't come on Saturday, we'll be in trouble.

/ˋthaː ˈkhun ˈmaː ˈwan, ˌsau ˋmaiˋdai, ˋkɒ ˋmai ˈmiːˈpanˌhaː./
[ˋthạ̣ɐ̣ ˈkhʊn ˈmaɐ ˈwɐn· ˌsɐʊ ˋmɐ̣ɪˋdɐ̣ɪ¦ ˋkɒɔ ˋmɐ̣ɪ ˈmɪɪˈpɐnˌhaɐ˙]
If you can't come on Saturday, there's no problem.

/'phɒː ˌthɯŋ 'saˌthaːˈniː;| ˉrotˈfai 'kɒ 'pai ˉlæɛ./
['phɒɔ ˌthɯŋ 'sɛˌthaɐˈnɪi| ˉro̞tˈfei ˌkɒɔ̞'peɪ ˉlæɛ̯ʊ̆.]
When I arrived at the station, the train had gone.

/¿ˈrau _tʃa 'pai 'doːi ˉrot_praˈtʃamˈthaːŋ;| ˌrɯ 'dɤːnˉthaːu./
[¿ˈreʊ ˌtʃɛˈpeɪ 'dɔoi ˉrod̯_prɛˈtʃemˈthaɐŋ| ˌrɯɯ 'dɤɐnˉthaʌʊ̆.]
Shall we go by bus, or on foot?

/¿ˈkhun 'dɤːnˈthaŋ 'doːi ˉrot_praˈtʃamˈthaŋ, ¿ˉrotˈfai; ¿ˌrɯ ˉrotˈjon./
[¿ˈkhʊn 'dɤɐˈthaɐŋ 'dɔoi ˉro̞t̯_prɛˈtʃemˈthaɐŋ| ˉro̞tˈfeɪ| ¿ˌrɯɯ ˉro̞t̯ˈjon.]
Are you going by bus, by train, or by car?

/'miː _nɯŋ, ˌsɒːŋ, ˌsaːm, _siː ˋhaː; 'an./
['mɪi _nɯŋ| ˌsɒɔŋ| ˌsaɐm| _sɪi ˋhaɐ̯| 'ɐn.]
There are one, two, three, four, five.

/'miː _nɯŋ, ˌsɒːŋ, ˌsaːm, _siː ˋhaː, 'an,/
['mɪi _nɯŋ| ˌsɒɔŋ| ˌsaɐm| _sɪi ˋhaɐ̯| 'ɐn]
There are one, two, three, four, five...

/ˉniː, 'pen ˉphotˈtʃaˈnaː _nuˈkrom, ˋthiː 'miː_pra joːt ˋmaːk./
[ˉnɪi| 'pen ˉpho̞t̯ˈtʃɛˈnaɐ _nuˈkrom| ˋthɪi 'mɪi_prɛ_jo̞ot̯ ˋmaɐ̯k.]
This is a very useful dictionary.

/ˌkhau _klaːu ˋwaː;ˌ| ˥ˋmai ˌtʃhan 'jaŋ ˋmaiˋdai 'tham.˥/
[ˌkhɐʊ _klaʌʊ ˋwaɐ̯| ˥ˋmeɪ ˌtʃhen 'jeŋ ˋmeɪˋdeɪ 'thɐm.˥]
'No', he said, 'I haven't done it'.

/ˋnæːnɒːn, ˋthiːˉrak./
[ˋnæɛˈnɒɔn· ˌˋthɪiˉrɛk̯̯.ˌ]
Of course, my dear.

/ˋnæːnɒːn, ˌˋthiːˉrak.| ˋphruŋˉniː, 'khun _tʃa ˋdaːi./
[ˋnæɛˈnɒɔn· ˌˋthɪiˉrɛk̯̯.˥| ˋphrʊŋˉnɪi· 'khʊn ˌtʃɛˋdaɐ̯ɪ̆.]
Of course, my dear. You'll have it tomorrow.

/ˋnæːnɒːn, ˌˋthiːˉrak;| ˋphruŋˉniː, 'khun _tʃa ˋdaːi./
[ˋnæɛˈnɒɔn· ˌˋthɪiˉrɛk̯̯.ˌ| ˋphrʊŋˉnɪi· 'khʊn ˌtʃɛˋdaɐ̯ɪ̆.]
Of course, my dear, you'll have it tomorrow.

/ˌkhau _klaːu ˋwaː,| ˥ˋtaːm 'khwaːmˈpenˈtʃiŋ ˌtʃhan ˋmaiˋnæːˈtʃai.˥/
[ˌkhɐʊ _klaʌʊ ˋwaɐ̯| ˥ˋtaɐm 'khwaɐmˈpenˈtʃiŋ ˌtʃhen ˋmeɪˋnæɛ̯ˈtʃeɪ.˥]
As a matter of fact, he said, I'm not at all sure.

/¿ˋthiːˉrak· 'khun 'tʃam ˋmaiˋdai ˌrɒ ˋwaː;| ˋrau ˋdaai ˌhen ˌnaŋ ˋrɯɤŋ ˉniː ˋmɯɤ
    _sapˈdaː ˋthiːˉlæːu?/
[¿ˋthɪiˉrɛk̯· 'khʊn 'tʃem ˋmeɪˋdeɪ ˌrɒɔ ˋwaɐ̯| 'reʊ ˋdaaɪ̆ ˌhen ˌneŋ ˋrɯɐŋ ˉnɪi ˋmɯɐ
    _sɐp̯ˈdaɐ̯ ˋthɪiˉlæɛʊ̆.]
Don't you remember, dear, we saw that movie last week?

/¿ˌtʃhan ˌsoŋˌsai,| ˋwaː 'thamˈmai 'khun ˌthɯŋ ˋphuːtˋwaː;| ˥ˌtʃhan ˋmai ˌraŋ_kiɤt,˥|
    ˋmɯɤ 'troŋˈkanˋkhaːm, _kap 'khwaːmˈpenˈtʃiŋ./

[¿˩ʧʰɛn ˌsoŋˌseɪ˩ ˋwa̤ə̯ ˈtʰɛmˈmɛɪ ˈkʰʊn ˌtʰɯŋ ˋpʰy̤y̯t˥ˎˋwa̤ə̯˩ ⌐ˈʧʰen ˋmɛ̤ɪ ˌɾeŋ˥kɪat˥˩]
    ˋmɯ̤ɜ ˈtɾoŋˈkɛnˈkʰa̤ə̯m˙ ˍkɛp ˈkʰwaɐmˈpenˈʧɪŋ˙]
I wonder, why did you say 'I don't mind', when the opposite is true?

/ˈɾau ˋtɒŋˈkaːn ˉthukˍjaːŋ./
[ˈɾɐʊ ˋtɒŋˈkaɐn ˉtʰʊk˥ˍjaɐŋ˙.]
We need everything.

/˨ˈɾau,| ˋtɒŋˈkaːn ˉthukˍjaːŋ./
[˨ˈɾɐʊ˙| ˋtɒŋˈkaɐn ˉtʰʊk˥ˍjaɐŋ˙.]
We need everything.

/˨ˈɾau ˋˋtɒŋˈkaːn,| ˉthukˍjaːŋ./
[ˈɾɐʊ˙ ˨ˋtɒŋˈkaɐn˙| ˉtʰʊk˥ˍjaɐŋ˙.]
We *need* everything.

/˨ˈɾau ˋtɒŋˈkaːn ˉthukˍjaːŋ./
[ˈɾɐʊ ˋtɒŋˈkaɐn˙ ˨ˉtʰʊk˥ˍjaɐŋ˙.]
We need *everything*.

10. The following *text* is habitually used by the International Phonetic Association (*IPA*) to illustrate the pronunciation of different languages and accents. Here is its non literal English version.

The North Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger, when a traveler came along wrapped in a warm cloak. They agreed that the one who first succeeded in making the traveler take his cloak off should be considered stronger than the other.
Then the North Wind blew as hard as he could, but the more he blew the more closely did the traveler fold his cloak around him; and at last the North Wind gave up the attempt. Then the Sun shone out warmly, and immediately the traveler took off his cloak. And so the North Wind was obliged to confess that the Sun was the stronger of the two.
Did you like the story? Do you want to hear it again?

/ˈkhaˍnaʔ ˋthi ˈlomˌnɯɤ,¦ ˉlæ ˉphraʔaˉthit,‖¦ ˈkamˈlaŋ ˌthiɤŋ ˈkan ˋwaː.‖ ˈkhɾai ˈʧa ˈmiː¦ ˈphaˈlaŋ ˋmaːk,¦ ˌkwa ˈkan‖¦ ˋkɒ ˈmiː ˉnakˈdɤːnˈthaːŋ,¦ ˋphuː ˍnɯŋ ˈdɤːn,¦ ˍphaːn ˈmaː.‖ ˍsai ˋsɯɤˈkanˌnaːu‖ ˈlomˌnɯɤ ˉlæ,¦ ˉphraʔaˉthit| ˈʧɯŋ ˍtokˈloŋ ˈkan ˋwaː‖¦ ˈkhɾai ˋthi ˌsaːˋmaːt ˈtham ˈhai ˉnakˈdɤːnˈthaːŋ ˋphuː ˉniː;‖ ˍthɒːt ˋsɯɤˈkanˌnaːu;¦ ˌʔɒk ˋdaːi ˌsamˍɾet ˍkɒːn,‖¦ ˈʧa ˌthɯː ˋwaː,‖¦ ˈpen ˋphuː,¦ ˋthi ˈmiː,¦ ˈphaˈlaŋ ˋmaːk ˍkwaː.‖

ˉlæʔ ˉlæːu;| ˈlomˌnɯɤ,¦ ˋkɒ ˈkraˈphuː ˉphat,¦ ˍjaŋ ˍsut ˈɾæːŋ.‖ ˍtæ ˋjiŋ,¦ ˉphat ˈɾæːŋ ˋmaːk,¦ ˋkhɯn ˈphiɤŋ ˈdai‖¦ ˉnakˈdɤːnˈthaːŋ,¦ ˋkɒ ˋjiŋ ˈdɯŋ ˋsɯɤˈkanˌnaːu,¦ ˈhai ˈkraˉʧhap ˍkap ˈtuɤ,¦ ˋmaːk ˋkhɯn ˈphiɤŋ ˉnan‖¦ ˉlæʔ ˈnai ˋthi ˍsut,| ˈlomˌnɯɤ,¦ ˋkɒ ˋlɤːk ˉlom ˈkhwaːm ˈphaˈjaˈjaːm‖ ˍʧaːk ˉnan,¦ ˉphraʔaˉthit, ˈʧɯŋ ˍsaːt ˌsæːŋ,¦ ˀan ˉɒːn ˈɾæːŋ,¦ ˌʔɒk ˈmaː;‖¦ ˉnakˈdɤːnˈthaːŋ¦ ˋkɒ ˍthɒːt ˋsɯɤˈkanˌnaːu,¦ ˀɒːk ˈthan ˈthiː‖¦ ˈnai ˋthi ˍsut,‖¦ ˈlomˌnɯɤ,¦ ˈʧɯŋ ˈʧam ˋtɒŋ,¦ ˈjɒːm ˉrap ˋwaː;‖ ˉphraʔaˉthit ˈmiː ˈphaˈlaŋ ˋmaːk,¦ ˍkwaː ˈton.‖/

/¿ˈkhun ˋʧhɒːp ˋɾɯɤŋ ˈɾaːu ˌmaiʔ‖ ¿ˈkhun ˋtɒŋ ˈkaːn ˋthiː ˍʧa ˈfaŋ ˍʔiːk,¦ ¿ˉkhraŋ ˌmaiʔ/

[ˈkhɛˌneʔ˺ ˈthɹ̩ˈlomˌnɯɜ˧ ˑlæˑphɾɛ̞ʔɐ ˉthɹ̩t˺ˑ‖ ˈkemˈleŋ ˌthɹaŋ ˈken\waɛ̞˧‖ ˈkhɾɛɪ ˈʧe̞ˈmɹi˧ ˈphe̞ˈleŋ \mɛ̞k˺˧ ˌkweˈken˧‖ ˈkɔˈmɹɪ ˉne̞k˺dɐɣnˈthaeŋ˧ ˈphʊ̞ʊ̞ ˌnɑŋ ˈdɐɣn˧ ˌphaen ˈmae˧‖ ˌsɛɪ ˈsɯ̞ɣˈkenˌnaʌʊ˧‖ ˈlomˌnɯɣˑlæ˧ ˉphɾɛ̞ʔɐˉthɹ̩t˧ ˈʧɯŋ ˑˑtok˺ˈloŋ ˈken\waɛ̞˧‖ ˈkhɾɛɪ ˈthɹ̩saeˈmɛ̞t˺ ˈthem ˈhɛɾˈne̞k˺dɐɣnˈthaeŋ ˈphʊ̞ʊ̞ ˉnɹɪ̞˧‖ ˌthɔɔt˺ ˈsɯ̞ɣˈkenˌnaʌʊ˧ ˑˑʔɒk˺ˈdɐɹ ˌsemˌɾet˺ ˌkɔɔn˧‖ ˈʧeˌthɯɯ \waɛ̞˧‖ pen\phʊ̞ʊ̞˧ ˈthɹ̩ˈmɹi˧ ˈphe̞ˈleŋ \mɛ̞k˺˧ ˌkwae˧‖

ˉlæʔ ˉlæɕʊ˧ ˈlomˌnɯɜ˧ ˈkɔˈkɾeˈphɯɯ ˉphɛ̞t˺˧ ˌjaeŋ ˌsʊt˺ ˈɾæɛŋ˧‖ ˑtæ\jɹŋ˧ ˉphɛ̞t˺ ˈɾæɛŋ \mɛ̞k˺˧ ˈkhʊn ˈphɹaŋ ˈdɐɪ˧‖ ˉne̞k˺dɐɣnˈthaeŋ˧ ˈkɔˈjɹŋ ˈdɯŋ ˈsɯ̞ɣˈkenˌnaʌʊ˧ ˈhɛɹ ˈkɾeˉʧe̞p˺ ˑkep˺ˈtʊɣ˧ ˈmɛ̞k˺ ˈkhʊn ˈphɹaŋ ˉnɛ̞n˧‖ ˉlæʔ ˈnɛɪ ˈthɹ̩ˌsʊt˺˧ ˈlomˌnɯɜ˧ ˈkɔˈlɐɣk˺ ˉlom ˈkhwaem ˈphe̞je̞ˈjaem˧‖ ˌʧaek˺ ˉnɛ̞n˧‖ ˉphɾɛ̞ʔɐˉthɹ̩t˧ ˈʧɯŋˌsaet˺ ˌsæɛŋ˧ ˈʔɛnˑɾɔɒn ˈɾæɛŋ˧ ˑˑʔɒk˺ˈmae˧‖ ˉne̞k˺dɐɣnˈthaeŋ˧ ˈkɔˌthɔɔt˺ ˈsɯ̞ɣˈkenˌnaʌʊ˧ ˌʔɒɒk˺ ˈthen ˈthɹi˧‖ ˈnɛɪ ˈthɹ̩ˌsʊt˺˧‖ ˈlomˌnɯɜ˧ ˈʧɯŋˈʧem \tɒŋ˧ ˈjɔɒm ˉɾɛ̞p˧ \waɛ̞˧‖ ˉphɾɛ̞ʔɐˉthɹ̩t˧ ˈmɹiˈphe̞ˈleŋ \mɛ̞k˺˧ ˌkwae ˈton˧‖

¿ˈkhʊnˈʧhɔɒp˺ ˈɾɯ̞ɣŋ ˈɾaʌʊ ˉmɛ̞ɹ˧‖ ¿ˈkhʊnˈtɒŋ ˈkaen ˈthɹɪ ˑʧe̞ˈfeŋ ˌʔɹik˺˧ ¿ˉkhɾeŋ ˉmɛ̞ɹ˧]

11. The *mediatic* Thai accent, mostly based on Bangkok, has the following peculiarities. Especially, /i, iː; ɯ, ɯː; u, uː; e, eː; ɤ, ɤː; o, oː/ may be merged for their qualities and length, at least occasionally, although criticizedly (because, doing so, their phonemes are not distiguished). In addition, /NV/ sequences may be [NṼ] (more rarely, we may also find /hV/ [hṼ]).

Instead of a systematic use of /#ʔV, Vʔ#/ (with short vowels), more or less frequently, we may have [#V, V#].

Initial /p, t, k; ʧ/ may be ejective, [p', p̪'; t̪'; k', k̪'; ʧ'] ([p̪] is a labiodental stop). Final /p, t, k/, in addition to normal [p̚, t̚, k̚, k̪̚], may become [b̚, d̚, ɡ̚, ɡ̪̚]. Between a voiced phone and an unstressed vowel, /p, t, k/ may become [b̥, d̥, ɡ̊, ɡ̊].

For /kh/, we may quite frequently have [kʜ, k̪ʜ], or even [kɥ, k̪ɥ, ʜ, ɥ] (stop-semi[con]strictive and semi-constrictive). Also for /khw/ we may have peculiar realizations: [pɸ, ɸ] (bilabial stop-strictive and constrictive). Also /ɾ/ [ɾ, ʐ].

12. Besides, /p(h)ɾ, p(h)l; k(h)ɾ, k(h)l/ may be reduced to simple /p(h), k(h)/, respectively. /ɾ, l/ [ɾ, l] often alternate with [ɭ], or merge into [l]; [ʐ] can even be found for /ɾ/, or [ʟ] (velar) for /l/.

Further additional peculiarities: when /m, n, ŋ; ɾ; l/ are preceded by /ŋ/, they may be reduced [ᵐ, ⁿ, ᵑ; ˠ; ˡ], or completely dropped, becoming 'zero', [ø].

Besides, /p, t, k; f/ (not /Ch/) may insert [ɰ] (a provelar semi-approximant) before a following vowel, which gives the impression of a 'darker' timbre, especially for front vowels.

We often have /ʧ/ [ʧ, ʤ], and /ʧh/ [ʧh, ʃh]. In addition, rather frequently, /b, d/ become either creaky, [b̰, d̰], or injective, ['b, 'd]. Also /j/ [j], frequently ['j]; we also find /w/ [w, ɯ̯, ʋ̥, ʋ], and ['w, 'ɯ̯, 'ʋ̥, 'ʋ].

In addition, loans, with particular consonants, are realized differently by different speakers. While some try to 'respect' more the original language phonic structure, others simply realize them according to the typical Thai structure. Thus, for instance, final /b, f/, or /d, s/, become /p/ or /t/, respectively, while final /l/ changes to /n/ or /u/.

Besides, loans with initial /stɾ/, as /sˈtɾaik/ '(labor) strike' may become [sˈtɾɛ̝ɪ̯kˀ], or, more commonly, [sɤˈtɾɛ̝ɪ̯kˀ], even [sɤˈtɛ̝ɪ̯kˀ].

13. Notice that, in addition to our own material, we also used parts of J. Moore & Saowalak Rodchue's *Colloquial Thai* (1999) and M.R. Kalaya Tingsabadh & A.S. Abramson's *Thai* (JIPA 1993), necessarily retranscribing some of their examples, for better results.

14. Let us end with a series of useful articulatory illustrations for the consonants and contoids, that we introduced in this article, including similar (but not identical to) ones occurring in other languages, for necessary comparisons.

fig 12. Thai consonants: nasals.

m   n   ŋ̟   ŋ
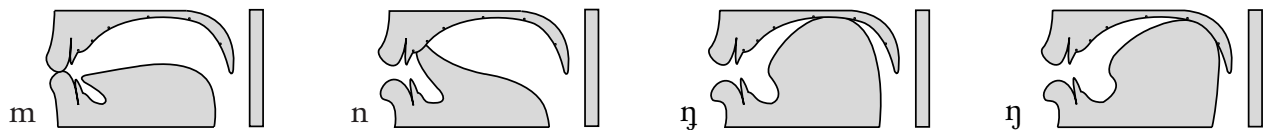
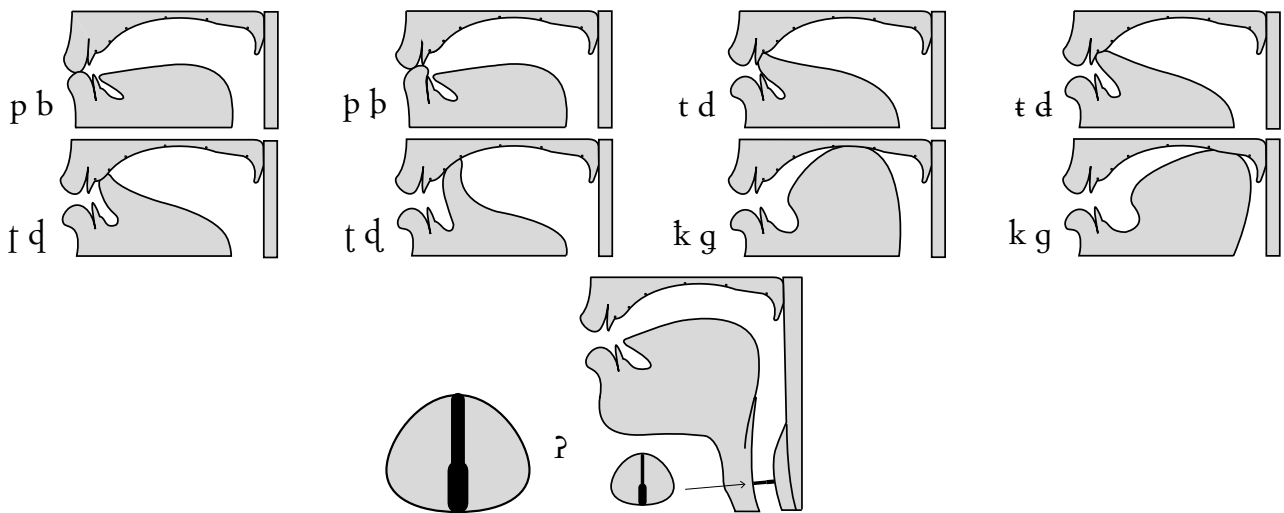*fig* 13. Thai consonants (including mediatic ones and others for comparisons): stops.

p b   p̪ b̪   t d   ƫ ɖ

ƫ ɖ   t̪ d̪   k g   k g

ʔ

fig 14. Thai consonants (including mediatic ones and others for comparisons): stop-strictives.

tʃ (dʒ)   tʃ (dʒ)   tʃ (dʒ)

p̪ɸ (b̪β)   tɕ (dʑ)   kꭓ (gɣ)
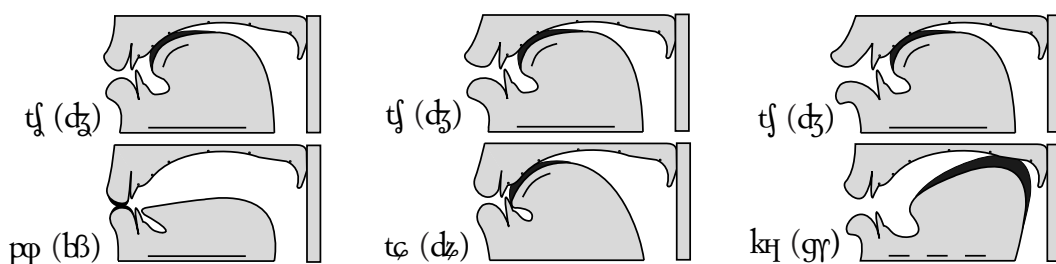
fig 15. Thai consonants (including mediatic ones and others for comparisons): constrictives.

φ (ß)   f (v)   s (z)   ʃ (ʒ)

ʃ (ʒ)   ʃ (ʒ)   ħ (j̊)   ɧ (ɣ̊)

ɧ (ɣ̊)   (ɦ) w

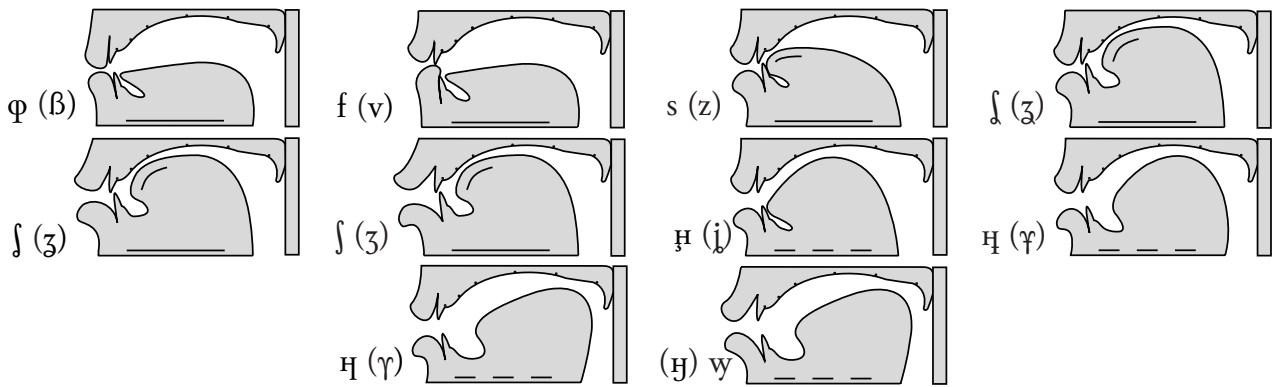fig 16. Thai consonants (including mediatic ones for comparisons): approximants.
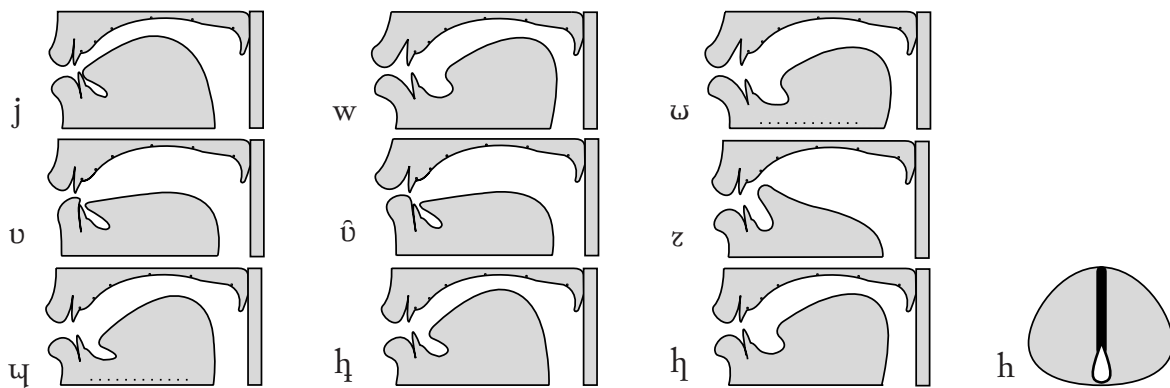
j   w   ɯ

ʋ   ʋ̂   ʐ

ɥ   ɧ   ɧ   h

fig 17. Thai consonants: rhotics (including and others for comparisons, especially British [ɹ] and American [ɻ], unfortunately still absurdly confused by too many even native 'experts').
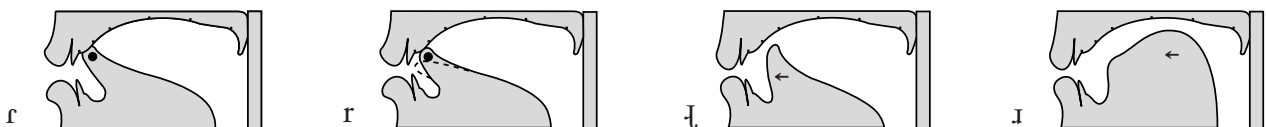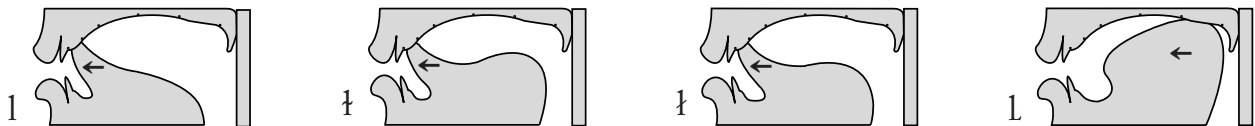
ɾ   r   ɭ   ɻ

fig 18. Thai consonants (including and others for comparisons): laterals.

l   ɫ   ɬ   ʟ

15. Let us arlso see the mechanism of ejective and injective contoids, by simply considering a general set of frequent elements. Oral and nasalized vocoids follow.
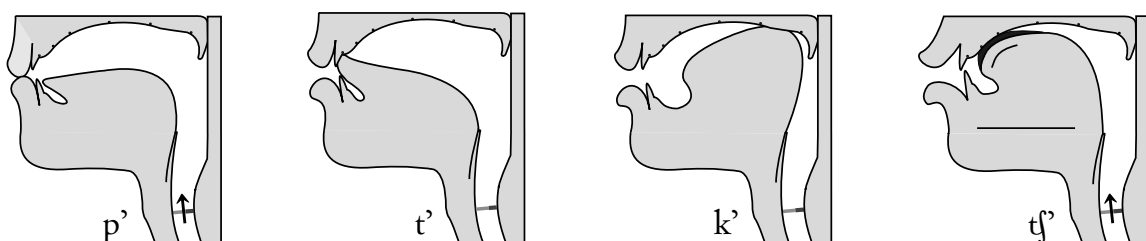
fig 19. Some ejective consonants.

p'   t'   k'   tʃ'

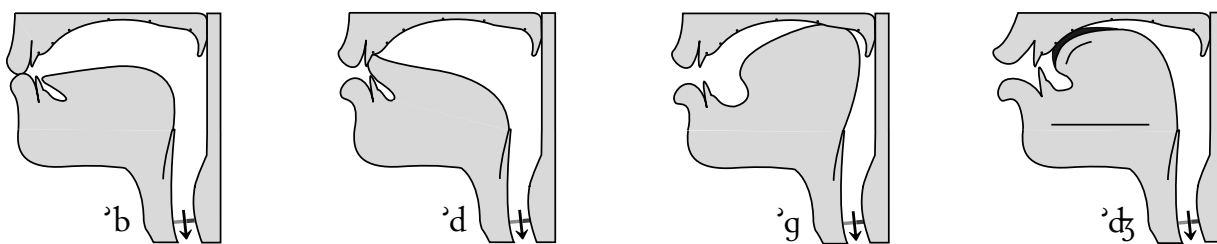*fig* 19. Some injective (or 'implosive') consonants.

fig 20. Comparisons between *oral* vocoids (top), seminasalized (middle) and nasalized vocoids. The extreme vocoid positions in the vocogram are shown for more useful identifications.
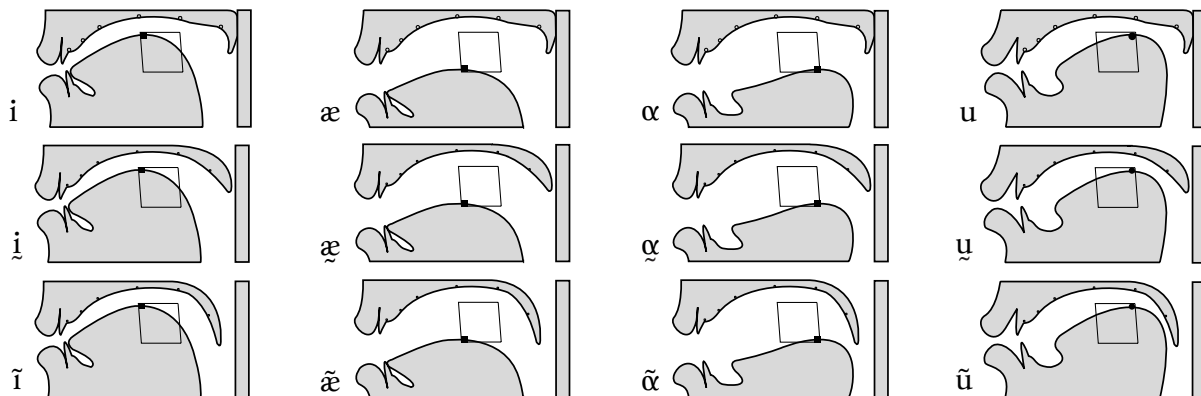

fig 21. Phonation types and positions of the glottis (and their laryngoids).

A. breathing
[ ] ( )

B. occlusion
[ʔ, p̥]

C. voicelessness
[f, s, ɦ̥]

D. voicing
[v, z, ɦ, m, a]

whisper

breathy voice

whispery voice

E. lenis voicelessness
[f̰, s̰, h, m̰, a̰]

F. lenis voicing
[v̰, z̰, ɦ, a̰]

F+. lenis mix. voicing
[ɦ, ɦ̰, ɦ̰, ɦ̰, ɦ̰]

G. mixed phonation
[v̰, z̰, m̰, a̰] 1, 2, 3, 4

H. creaky voice
[m̰a̰]

I. falsetto
[★ma]

J. tense voice
[⟨÷⟩ ma]

K. harsh voice
[⟨×⟩ ma]