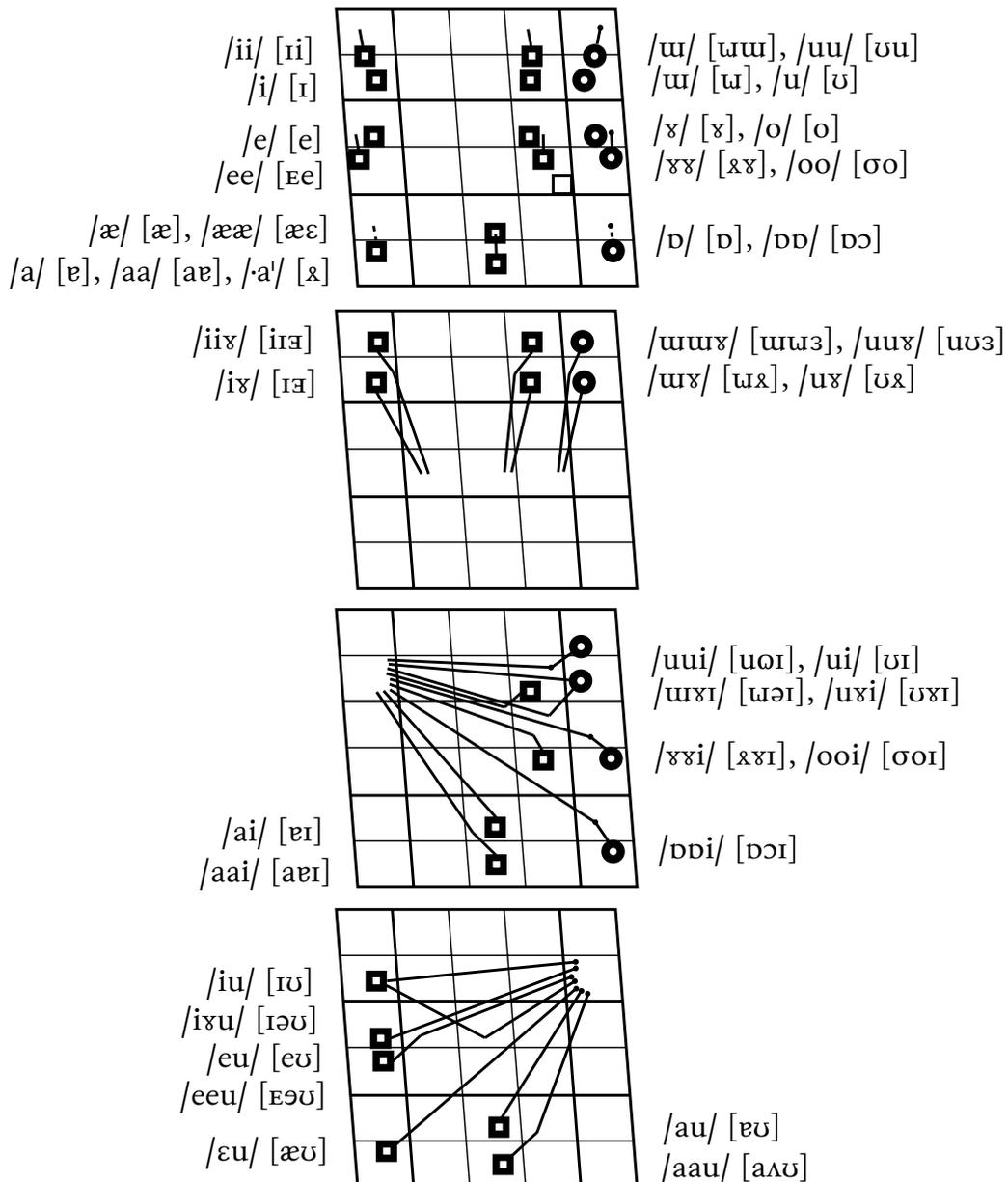


# Thai Pronunciation

Luciano Canepari – © 2019

1. *Thai* (Tai) has nine *vowels*, both short and long (ie narrow diphthongs), and three peculiar phonemic diphthongs, /iɤ, uɤ, uɤ/ [ɪɤ, uɤ, uɤ], as well as many others resulting from the juxtaposition of either short or long *vowels* with /i, u/ [ɪ, u]; the most frequent are /ai, au; aai, aaui/ [ɛɪ, ɛu; aɛɪ, aɛu].

In addition, /·a/ [ɤ] is frequent, ie /a/ with a mid, unmarked tone, in free syllables, immediately before stressed (generally final) syllables, realized as [ɤ]; initial *vowels* are /#ʔV/ and final short *vowels* are /Vʔ#/.



2. The phoneme /ʔ/ often becomes ‘zero’, in word-internal or utterance-final unstressed syllables; it presents opposition between /C̣, C̣h, C̣v/ [C̣, C̣h, C̣v], for stops and stopstrictives; final /p, t, k, ʔ/ are [Cʰ]; /t, th, d̥/ are denti-alveolar; /b, d/ can be creaky voiced, [b̤, d̤]; there are frequent free variants of /tʃ/ [tʃ̤, dʒ̤], /tʃh/ [tʃ̤h, dʒ̤h].

In fast or colloquial (or less careful) speech, /z, l/ [z, l] often alternate with either [ɹ] or [l], or merge into one of them; [r] can even be found for /z/.

3. There are five tonemes, as shown. The third and fourth are accompanied by creaky voice, [ʏ], eg *khāa* [kʰaə] ‘to be dangling’, *khàa* [kʰaə̤] ‘galangal’, *khâa* [kʰaə̤̤] ‘to kill’, *kháa* [kʰaə̤̤̤] ‘to trade’, *khǎa* [kʰaə̤̤̤̤] ‘leg’. Besides, /ʌ/ [ʌ] becomes [ʌ̤] in checked syllables with short vowels + /p, t, k, ʔ/, or [·] in unstressed syllables.

4. The fundamental intonation patterns present a possible variant for /ʔ/, as shown.

m		n	[ŋ]	ŋ	
p <sup>h</sup> b		t <sup>h</sup> d		[k <sup>h</sup> ]	k <sup>h</sup>
	f	s	t <sup>h</sup> [dʒ̤]		ʔ
			[ʃ̤]	j	w
		z			h
		[r]			
		l			

