

CHAPTER 2

YONG PHONOLOGY

2.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes research done on the phonology of the Yong dialect.

2.1 Yong Phonology

The Yong language belongs to the Tai-Kadai language group of the Austro-Thai language family. According to Schliesinger (2001a:84), Tai-speaking groups in Thailand into twenty groups. Tai Yong was considered to be a distinct branch of the Tai-speaking group, even though Yong people are ethnic Tai Lue and they are linguistically quite similar to their main ethnic dialect-speakers.

2.1.1 Consonants

There are 20 consonant phonemes in the Yong language (Somchit 1979) (Table 1).

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops						
Voiced	b		d			
Voiceless Unaspirated	p		t	tɕ	k	ʔ
Voiceless Aspirated	p ^h		t ^h			
Fricative		f	s		x	h
Nasal	m		n	ɲ	ŋ	
Lateral			l			
Semivowel	w			j		

Table 1: Consonants Sounds of the Yong dialect.

2.1.1.1 Initial Consonants

There are 19 initial consonants, as in Table 2.

p	p ^h	b	t	t ^h	d	tɕ	k	ʔ	f	s	x	h	m	n	ŋ	w	l	ɲ
---	----------------	---	---	----------------	---	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Table 2: Initial consonants.

2.1.1.2 Final Consonants

There are 9 final consonants, as in Table 3.

p	t	k	ʔ	m	n	ŋ	w	j
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Table 3: Final Consonants.

2.1.1.3. Consonant clusters

There are only 2 consonant clusters in the Yong dialect, as in Table 4. The Yong dialect does not have any consonant clusters that are followed by /l/ or /r/ as Standard Thai /kr/ or /kl/.

kw	xw
----	----

Table 4: Consonants cluster.

2.1.2 Vowel Sounds

The Yong dialect has 18 phonemic vowels, the same as Standard Thai and Kammuang. The Yong dialect is different from Kammuang and Standard Thai in that it does not have any diphthongs. Yong single vowels have phonemically distinct short and long forms (Ruengdet 1978:2).

	Front		Central		Back	
	Short	Long	Short	Long	Short	Long
High	i	i:	ɯ	ɯ:	u	u:
Mid	e	e:	ɤ	ɤ:	o	o:
Low	ɛ	ɛ:	a	a:	ɔ	ɔ:

Table 5: Single Vowel Sounds of the Yong and Kammuang dialects.

There are closing phone clusters which can be interpreted as single vowels or semivowels followed by /j/ and /w/.

The correspondence between Kammuang and Yong vowels can be divided into two types (Ruengdet 1978). The first type is vowel correspondence with no environment. This type is a fixed pattern of correspondence between phonemes. This pattern obtains between Kammuang diphthongs and Yong single vowels. The second type is vowel correspondence with environmental conditioning. The correspondence between Kammuang and Yong single vowels is environmentally conditional.

Table 6 gives the correspondences between Kammuang diphthongs and Yong single vowels with no environmental conditioning.

Kammuang	Yong	Examples
/ia/	/e/	/pía/- /pe/ λ 'to be wet'
/i:a/	/e:/	/mīa/ - /me:/ † 'wife'
/ua/	/ɤ/	/pūak/ - /pɤk/ λ 'bark'
/u:a/	/ɤ:/	/hū:an/ - /hɤ:n/ λ 'house'
/ua/	/o/	/súa/ - /so/ † 'to drop'
/u:a/	/o:/	/hǔa:/ - /ho:/ λ 'head'

Table 6: Yong single vowel correspond with Kammuang diphthongs.

Table 7 gives the correspondences between Kammuang and Yong single vowels (short vowels) with conditioning environment noted.

Kammuang	Yong	Examples
/ɤ/	/u/ (before nasal consonants)	/ŋɤn/ - /ŋu/ † 'silver'
/o/	/u/ (before nasal consonants)	/lōm/ - /lum/ † 'wind'
/e/	/i/ (before nasal consonants)	/tēm/ - /tim/ † 'to be full'
/a/	/ɛ/ (after initial consonants /t/, /s/, /l/, /j/, and before nasal consonants)	/tàm/ - /tɛm/ † 'to be short'

Table: 7 Yong single vowels correspond with Kammuang single vowels with environmental conditioning

2.1.3 Tone

According to Somchit (1979:29-31), the Yong language has 6 tones on live syllables (open syllables and closed syllables that are not followed by stop final consonants), 4 tones on dead syllables (closed syllables followed by stop final consonant), and neutral tone on syllabic m̩ and ɸ as in the word / m̩ pa:w/ 'coconut', or in the word /ɸ pha:/ 'cliff'. The names of the tones are taken from Somchit 1979.

2.1.3.1. Live Syllables

Tones	IPA Tones symbols	Examples
1. Mid Level Tone	˥	/na:/ 'rice-field'
2. Lower Low Level Tone	˨	/ba:/ 'shoulder'
3. Mid Falling Tone	˥˩	/ba:n/ 'house'
4. High Falling Tone	˥˨	/na:m/ 'water'
5. Rising Tone	˨˥	/ha:/ 'to come', 'to see'
6. Higher Low Level Tone	˥˩ (Halfway between mid level and mid falling tone. This tone does not exist in Kammuang or Standard Thai.)	/mɛ:/ 'mother'

Table 8: Yong tone and tone symbols on live syllables.

Kammuang, like Yong, has six tones, but a number of the tones have distinct contours. See Table 9.

Tones	IPA Tones symbols	Examples
1. Mid-level	/a/	/na:/ 'rice-field'
2. Low-falling	/â/	/bâ:/ 'shoulder'
3. High-level with glottal closure	/ã/	/bã:n/ 'house'
4. High-rising	/á/	/tçi:/ 'to point'
5. Low-rising	/ǎ/	/hǎ:/ 'to come', 'to see'
6. High-falling	/â/	/mâ:n/ 'curtain'

Table 9: Tones represented in Kammuang.

2.1.3.2. Dead syllables

Tones	Tones' symbols	Examples
1. Mid Level Tone	┆	/lak/ 'to steal'
2. Lower Low Level Tone	┆	/ŋɜ:k/ 'gum'
3. Higher Low Level Tone	┆	/la:k/ 'to pull along'
4. High Level Tone	┆	/mat/ 'flea'

Table 10: Yong tones and tone symbol on dead syllables.

Note: When a mid level tone occurs on the second syllable after lower low level, high falling level, and rising tone, it will be changed to another tone (Tone Sandhi). This tone is similar to high falling level tone (Ruengdet 1978:16)

There is an additional tone; it is a neutral tone for syllabic m̩ and b̩. "It tends to vary, sometimes having low pitch, sometime having high pitch, and sometime having other pitches depending on the syllables that come after" (Somchit 1979:31).

Table 11 shows tones on dead syllables in Kammuang.

Tones	Tones' symbols	Examples
1. High	/á/	/pít/ 'poison'
2. Low	/à/	/pi:k/ 'wing'
3. High-falling	/â/	/ɲâ:t/ 'relative'
4. Mid	/ā/	/māt/ 'flea'

Table 11: Kammuang tones and tone symbol on dead syllables.

If a word in Yong is cognate with a word of the same meaning in Kammuang, the tones will usually match with a tone of the same number from the above tables, even though the contour of the tone may be different.