

# FINAL FRICATIVES \*-s AND \*-h IN PROTO T'IN LEXICON

Theraphan L-Thongkum<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*Final /-s/ does not exist in Modern T'in; however, \*-s in Proto-T'in can be reconstructed. The distinction between \*-s and \*-h in Proto-T'in phonology is suggested by two types of final correspondences, i.e., \*-s has become /-yh/ in Mal but /-t/ in Pray, and \*-h has been kept as /-h/ in both Mal and Pray. This fact was pointed out by Filbeck in 1978; however, no Proto-T'in forms were reconstructed by him.*

*To show a clearer picture of the phonological history of T'in, 68 Proto-T'in forms were reconstructed, 17 with final \*-s and 51 with final \*-h. The 68 Proto-T'in reconstructed lexical items, (1) – (17) and (34) – (84), including 16 Proto-Mal reconstructed forms having \*-s, (18) – (33), are presented in this paper with Thai and English glosses. Khmu' and Mlabri cognates from the author's corpus are also provided.*

## Introduction

Many aspects of the T'in or Lua' language of Nan Province, Thailand, were studied by Filbeck (1972, 1978, 1991), Ratanakul (1975), Satayawadhna (1987), Singnoi (1988) and Jirananthanaporn (1993). T'in

comprises two major dialects, Mal and Pray, and both dialects consist of many sub-dialects or varieties caused by the geography and history of the area where the T'in inhabit.

The author collected data on Mal and Pray spoken in Bo Kluea District in the year 2005. A wordlist of 2,452 lexical items was devised for investigating the 13 languages of Nan. This paper is only a minor output of the research project on "Linguistic Diversity in Nan Province: A Foundation for Tourism Development" sponsored by the Thailand Research Fund (TRF) for three years (May 1, 2004 – April 30, 2007).

## Sketch of Proto-T'in phonology

Based on the author's Pray and Mal wordlists, about 440 cognates have been found.<sup>2</sup> Proto-T'in phonology can be reconstructed as shown in Table 1. In comparison with Filbeck's reconstruction (Filbeck, 1978), this present reconstruction is less complex, especially the initials, because prenasalization of the initials of major-syllables, e.g., mb-, nt-, ŋkh-, is analyzed as the finals of pre-syllables in Proto-T'in, see items (2), (4), (7), (19), (21) and so on.

## Reconstructed forms with \*-s and \*-h

\*-s has become /-yh/ in Modern Mal and /-t/ in Modern Pray. In Mal, \*V (vowels) before \*-s had been diphthongized (\*Vs > \*V<sub>i</sub>s) and later \*-s became h-like sound. This process of sound change yields /-yh/ or /-y̥/ (devoiced palatal fricative [j̥]) in

<sup>1</sup> Professor, Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

<sup>2</sup> The number of cognates is less than expectation. The explanation is that the wordlist devised is for synchronic investigation not for comparative purposes.



Table 1 Proto-T'in phonology

<i>Initial</i>							<i>Final</i>					
*p-	*ph-	*t-	*th-	*c-	*k-	*kh-	*ʔ-	*-p	*-t	*-c	*-k	*-ʔ
*m-	*hm-	*n-	*hn-	*ɲ-	*hɲ-	*ŋ-	*hŋ-	*-m	*-n	*-ɲ	*-ŋ	
		*l-	*hl-					*-w	*-l	*-y		
		*r-							*-r			
		*s-			*h-				*-s			*-h
*pr-	*pl-	*tr-	*tl-	*cr-	*kr-	*kl-	*kw-					
*phr-	*phl-	*thr-	*thl-	*khr-	*khl-	*khw-						

*Vowel*

*i	*ī	*u	*ii	*īī	*uu
*e	*ē	*o	*ee	*ēē	*oo
*ɛ	*a	*o	*ɛɛ	*aa	*oo
	*iə	*ia	*ue	*ua	*uo

Modern Mal dialect and sub-dialects. Khmu' (KM) and Mlabri (MB) cognates are also given for a comparison of Khmuic languages, see Table 2, 3 and 4.

Regarding Pray /-t/ which has been from Proto-T'in \*-s, the process of sound change is different from Mal, i.e., voiceless alveolar fricative \*-s became voiceless alveolar affricate \*ts- in one stage of Pray phonological history. In a more recent stage, this affricative lost its fricative release, then, has become voiceless alveolar plosive /-t/ in Modern Pray. This phenomenon (\*-s becoming -t) is not unusual since it also occurs in other Southeast Asian languages spoken in Thailand. In Thai, English loanwords, such as <gas> is pronounced [két~

kéet~káat] by speakers who do not know English.

Besides the 17 reconstructed forms and some cognates in Modern Khmu' (KM) and Modern Mlabri (MB) given above, the final /-yh/ in the other 16 Modern Mal words also suggests \*-s in Proto-Mal and perhaps Proto-T'in, although the Pray cognates have not been found for a comparison. It is noticeable that some Pray native words have been replaced by Tai loans, e.g., items (19), (20), (22), (23), (25) and (33) in Table 3.

Table 2 Proto-T'in \*-s

	<i>Thai gloss</i>	<i>English gloss</i>	<i>Mal</i>	<i>Pray</i>	<i>Proto-T'in</i>
(1)	เข็ม	needle	naayh	ŋaat	*()aas
(2)	จาม	to sneeze	ŋkhayh	ŋkat	*ŋ-k(h)as (KM: nʔáyh; MB: pres)
(3)	คืบ (นิ้ว)	to snap (fingers)	phlayh	phlat	*phlas (KM: plíyh; MB: plɹlh)
(4)	ตั๊กแตน	grasshopper	nsɔoyh	nchoot	*n-sɔos (KM: hóoyh)
(5)	ถล่ม	tumble down	kləyh	klət	*kləs
(6)	นั่ง	to sit	khuyh	khut	*khus
(7)	ปาด (ก.)	to slice	nsuəyh	cuət	*n-suəs (MB: sɔolh)
(8)	ฟัก (ไข่)	to hatch	thayh	that	*thas (KM: khlàyh; MB: tas)
(9)	ไฟ	fire	paʔooyh	ʔoot	*p-ʔoos (MB: ʔuulh)
(10)	ราก (น.)	root	kíeyh	kiet	*kies (KM: rìəyh; MB: rɛɛlh)
(11)	ริมฝีปาก	lips	nooyh	sanoot	*s-noos
(12)	ลัก	to steal	loooyh	loot	*loos (MB: looyh)
(13)	หนี	to escape	payh	pat	*pas
(14)	หอก	spear	khoooyh	khoot	*khooos (KM: phlíəyh)
(15)	เห็ด	mushroom	thiyh	thit	*this
(16)	หวี (ก.)	to comb	kaayh	kaat	*kaas (KM: chrìəyh)
(17)	อີเก้ง	barking deer	phoooyh	phoot	*phooos (KM: púəyh; MB: poolh)

Table 3 Proto-Mal \*-s

	<i>Thai gloss</i>	<i>English gloss</i>	<i>Mal</i>	<i>Proto-Mal</i>	<i>Pray</i>
(18)	กระทืบ	to stamp one's foot	biəyh	*biəs	(ŋcət)
(19)	คี (น.)	gall bladder	nthayh	*n-thas	(bi)
(20)	คั่ง	stool, bench	nuyh	*nus	(taŋ)



	<i>Thai gloss</i>	<i>English gloss</i>	<i>Mal</i>	<i>Proto-Mal</i>	<i>Pray</i>
(21)	ตะแกรง	screen for sifting	gyəyh	*ŋ-krəs	(ŋkiəŋ)
(22)	บวม	to swell	ʔayh	*ʔas	(phuu, pooŋ)(KM: ʔáyh)
(23)	เป็น	to be	kayh	*kas	(pen)
(24)	ร่อน	to sift	ŋəyh	*ŋəs	(kiəŋ)
(25)	ลั่น (ไก)	to pull the trigger	klayh	*klas	(biip) (KM: rliəyh)
(26)	ลาน (บ้าน)	courtyard, lawn	laayh	*laas	(khon teʔ)
(27)	สันเขา	mountain ridge	khooyh	*khoos	(nuan)
(28)	ส่าย (หัว)	to sway (the head)	ŋəyh	*ŋəs	(ŋiəy)
(29)	แสงแดด	sunlight	ʔəyh	*ʔəs	(nchan)
(30)	แสบ	stinging pain	sayh	*sas	(saŋaar) (MB: birsalh)
(31)	หวี (น.)	comb	naayh	*naas	(ŋkrap) (KM: nthriəyh)
(32)	เหว	chasm, abyss	təyh	*təs	(beŋ-beŋ)
(33)	อับ (ว.)	unventilated	ʔooyh	*ʔoos	(ʔop)

Many Proto-T'in forms having \*-h can be reconstructed with more certainty because \*-h has been kept very well in both

Modern Mal and Modern Pray as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Proto-T'in \*-h

	<i>Thai gloss</i>	<i>English gloss</i>	<i>Mal</i>	<i>Pray</i>	<i>Proto-T'in</i>
(34)	กรอบ, เปราะ	crisp, brittle	ŋkhah	ŋkhah	*ŋ-khah
(35)	เกลียด	to hate	seh	seh	*seh
(36)	เกา	to scratch	kih	kih	*kih
(37)	แก่, เฒ่า	old (of people)	byəh	mprəh	*m-prəh
(38)	ใกล้	near, close	noh	nuh	*nuh
(39)	ขวาก	spikes (of traps)	gyah	ŋkrah	*ŋ-krah (KM: sráh)

Thai gloss	English gloss	Mal	Pray	Proto-T'in	
(40) เขา (พวก~)	they	ʔah	ʔah	*ʔah	
(41) เขียง	chopping board	noh	noh	*noh	(KM: nnòoh)
(42) ไข, เปิด	to open	phiəh	phiəh	*phiəh	(MB: krɯɯh)
(43) เครื่องดนตรี	musical instrument	pih~plih	plih	*plih	
(44) เธอ, มึง	you	mah	mah	*mah	
(45) เงย	to raise (one's head)	ŋoh	ŋoh	*ŋoh	(KM: ŋèəh)
(46) จมูก	nose	moh	muh	*muh	(KM: mùh; MB: mɔh)
(47) จุด (ไม้ขีด)	to light (matches)	thayh	thəh	*thəh	(MB: kləh)
(48) ซักผ้า	to wash clothes	phuh	phuh	*phuh	(KM: púh; MB: səpuh)
(49) คอย, ภูเขา	mountain	mbloh	loh	*m-pləh	(MB: cəboh)
(50) ด้าน, เบื้อง	side	phiəh	phiəh	*phiəh	(KM: mɸhlàh)
(51) เคี่ยว	boiling	poh	mpoh	*m-poh	(KM: nthròh)
(52) ตก	to drop, to fall	khlih	khlih	*khlih	(KM: kaséh)
(53) ตบ	to clap, to slap	phoh	mpah	*m-ph( )h	(KM: ntáh)
(54) ตื่น	awake	yoh	rɔh	*rɔh	(KM: rèh; MB: puɯh)
(55) เตา	fireplace	puəh	puah	*puah	(MB: bɔh)
(56) ถอน	to pull up	thoh	thoh	*thoh	(KM: tréh; MB: yooh)
(57) นิ้ว	finger	nuəh	nuəh	*nuəh	
(58) นิ่ง	to steam	ʔoh	siʔoh	*s-ʔoh	(KM: hóh- ʔóh)
(59) บอก, เล่า	to tell	duəh	ntuah	*n-tuah	(KM: rthòh)
(60) บาน	to bloom	yah	rah	*rah	(KM: ŋkhráh; MB: plah)



	<i>Thai gloss</i>	<i>English gloss</i>	<i>Mal</i>	<i>Pray</i>	<i>Proto-T'in</i>	
(61)	ปลุก	to wake (someone up)	phyoh	phroh	*phroh	(KM: phrêh; MB: papumh)
(62)	ผลัก	to shove	noh	sanhoh	*s-noh	
(63)	ผ่า	to split (firewood)	phoh	phoh	*phoh	(MB: poh)
(64)	ผ้าห่ม	blanket	nah	nah	*nah	
(65)	ผืน	clf. for cloth, mat	phlah	phlah	*phlah	(MB: kəplah)
(66)	มา	to come	leh	leh	*leh	(KM: lèh 'near')
(67)	เมีย	wife	ʔiəh	siʔiah	*s-ʔiah	
(68)	ยาว	long	cuəh	cuəh	*cuəh	
(69)	ร้อน	hot	ʔoh	saʔoh	*s-ʔoh	
(70)	ราง (อาหาร)	trough	mphoh	mphoh	*m-phoh	
(71)	ล้าน (หัว~)	bald	khleh	khleh	*khleh	
(72)	ลืม (ตา)	to open (one's eyes)	bah	mpah	*mpah	
(73)	เลี้ยงผา	mountain goat	khəh	khəh	*khəh	(KM: kèyh; MB: kəh)
(74)	สว่าง	bright	pah	pah	*pah	(KM: phàh)
(75)	สุก	ripe	khreħ	khreħ	*khreħ	
(76)	สูง	tall, high	thih	nthih	*n-thih	
(77)	ใส่	to put in/on	sih	sih	*sih	(KM: séh)
(78)	หนัก	heavy	cih	cih	*cih	
(79)	หนัง	skin, leather	thuəh	sathuah	*s-thuah	(MB: gu-guh)
(80)	หน้าผาก	forehead	tah	satah~ntah	*sn-tah	(KM: nthàh)
(81)	หว่าน	to sow	sah	sah	*sah	
(82)	เห่า	to bark	yoh	roh	*roh	
(83)	แห้ว, บิ่น	chipped, nicked	weh	weh	*weh	(KM: wèh; MB: peeħ)
(84)	อ้า (ปาก)	to open (one's mouth)	wah	nah	*()ah	(MB: yeeħ 'to spread apart')

## Discussion

As stated earlier in the introductory part, this paper is only a product of our macro-research project on "Linguistic Diversity in Nan Province: A Foundation for Tourism Development". Four Mon-Khmer languages are spoken in Nan: Mal, Pray, Khmu' and Mlabri. However, only three ethnic groups have been recognized by Nan people, i.e., T'in or Lua', Khmu' and Mlabri. There are many varieties of the Nan Lua' language. The reconstruction of Proto-T'in phonology by Filbeck (1978) is good; however, there is a lack of Proto-T'in lexicon. This paper is only a small contribution for a more sophisticated reconstruction of Proto-Khmuic by professional Austroasiatic or Mon-Khmer comparativists.

One more interesting thing that should be pointed out is that Mlabri cognates have three groups of fricative-like sounds: a. /-s ~ -yh/, b. /-lh [ɿ ~ ʰ]/ and c. /-h/, see examples (2), (3), (7), (8), (9), (10), (12), (17), (30), (42), (46), (47), (48), (49), (54), (55), (56), (60), (61), (63), (65), (73), (79), (83) and (84). The a. and b. groups correspond with Proto-T'in \*-s and the c. group always corresponds with Proto-T'in \*-h. This phenomenon suggests the idea that perhaps three final fricatives should be reconstructed at the Proto-Khmuic level.

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