

# THE ACCENTUAL SYSTEM OF THAI POLYSYLLABIC WORDS

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## Abstract

Many Thai grammarians seem to ignore intonational rhythms that exist in the pronunciation of Thai words. It is erroneous to think that Thai words are monotonous and without rhythms. The Thais have pronounced words with fixed pronunciation patterns for years but many grammarians and Thai scholars ignore them. At the moment pronunciation of the language is chaotic because many Thai people do not know how to pronounce Thai words. They often make the wrong cuts at morpheme or word boundaries. The Royal Institute rules for the pronunciation of Thai words concerning the gemination of the final consonant of a syllable with an inserted [a] in conjoining words, as found in the dictionary of the Royal Institute of B.E. 2525, must be held responsible for these problems. This paper points out the word rhythms of Thai as found in daily speech of the Thai people.

## 1. Introduction

At present, the pronunciation of Thai language is in a state of chaos. No one knows for sure how to pronounce certain words in the Thai language. If one looks through the *Dictionary of the Royal Institute of B.E. 2525*, one will find words with more than one pronunciation more often than one will find in an English, French, or German dictionary. Nowadays radio and television announcers often mispronounce words and are influential sources of mispronunciation. If you turn on two different radio stations, you will find two different pronunciations of the same word. It is very confusing for young children who must decide which one is correct. The Royal Institute of Thailand seems to compromise that two pronunciations are acceptable.

## 2. The origin of the problems

We cannot really blame the radio and television announcers for their mispronunciations. They have to take the oral diction examination administered by the Department of Public Relations and supervised by the Royal Institute of Thailand in order to acquire an announcer certificate. The Department of Public Relations of Thailand follows pronunciation rules written in the *Dictionary of the Royal Institute of B.E. 2525* and usually invites representatives

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from the Royal Institute to be present during the oral diction examination. Thus, the Royal Institute of Thailand cannot avoid being blamed for causing the pronunciation chaos that is rampant in Thailand these days.

There are a number of reasons why people consider the Royal Institute to be the origin of the problems (Phasit Chitphasa 1998).

2.1 The pronunciation rules on page (7) of the *Dictionary of the Royal Institute of B.E. 2525* (6th edition) says; “Conjoining Pali-Sanskrit words must be read according to the principles-i.e. the word final must be geminated together with an intruding /a/. The pronunciation of this type of words is provided, such as ทารุณกรรม [ทารุณนกะกา] [thaarunná kam], สุขนาฏกรรม [สุกขณาดตะกา] [sukkhāṇāattakam], รุปธรรม [รูปปะ-ท่า] [rūppaṭham] and another type that can be pronounced two ways -- i.e. the pronunciation according to the principles and the pronunciation according to popular usage, where the pronunciation according to the principles will come first, such as ประวัติศาสตร์ [ประหวัดติสาด, ประหวัดสาด] [prawāt-tisāat, prawātsāat], มัชฌมศึกษา [มัดทะยมมะศึกษา, มัดทะยมศึกษา] [máttáyommásàksaa, máttáyomsàk saa], อุดมการณ์ [อุดมมะกาน, อุดมกาน] [udommákāan, udomkaan]”.

This statement is incorrect on several counts. Firstly, some conjoining Thai words must be pronounced with the syllable final gemination plus an intruding /a/, such as กรมขุน [krommákhun] ‘the title of the prince of the fourth rank’ (a Cambodian and a Thai word), ทุนทรัพย์ [thunnásáp] ‘money invested; collateral or funds used as capital’ (a Thai and a Sanskrit word),สรรพสิ่ง [sapphá sīṅ] ‘all the things’, (a Sanskrit and a Thai word), สักวัน [sákkàwan] ‘even one day’ (a Thai and a Thai word). Secondly, certain conjoining Pali-Sanskrit words are not pronounced with a syllable final gemination plus an intruding /a/, such as ชัยนาท [chaynâat] ‘the name of a province in Central Thailand’, ปทุมธานี [paṭhumthaanii] ‘the name of a province north of Bangkok’, พิชิตมาร [phíchítmaan] ‘one who conquered Mara, i.e. the Buddha’ (a modified Sanskrit word (by changing a /v/ to a /ph/) and a Sanskrit word), ภาพลักษณ์ [phâaplák] ‘image’ (a Sanskrit and a Sanskrit word), มัชฌิมประเทศ [máttchimprathêet] ‘India’ (a Pali and a Sanskrit word). Thirdly, not only conjoining words must be pronounced with the syllable final gemination plus an intruding /a/, this phenomenon occurs within the word itself, such as มุขย [múkhayá] ‘the first; a chief; one principal or superior one; that

which is in, coming from or belonging to the mouth, or face; that being at the head, or at the beginning' from Sanskrit 'mukhya' where *kh* is written as a combined character and no /a/ is present between *kh* and *y*, รัตนา [ráttanaa] 'gem' from Pali 'ratana' and Sanskrit 'ratna', วิชฌา [wíthchá yaa] 'a wise or learned man' from Sanskrit 'vijñā', วิษณุ /wítsanú/ 'Vishnu' but the syllable final gemination plus an intruding /a/ appears in all the preceding three words in Thai.

2.2 The compilers of the *Dictionary of the Royal Institute* allow too much influence of the Pali-Sanskrit pronunciation over Thai words. We all know that a long time ago the Thais changed the pronunciation of Pali-Sanskrit characters to suit their pronunciation system. For example, ก, ข, ช, ฉ, ฅ, ฌ, ญ, ฎ, ฏ, พ, or ภ is no longer a voiced consonant, ฏ, ฐ, ฑ, ฒ, ณ, ษ, or ฬ is no longer a retroflex, and certain characters, such as ฐ [t] has become [d], ฑ [t] has become ฒ [d], ฎ [p] has become ฏ [b], and ฏ [v]<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> v written as ฏ in Thai is a voiced labio-dental consonant in Sanskrit and it can cluster with r or ฤ such as *vrddhi* or ฤพฐิ. Since ฏ cannot cluster with r in Thai, ฏ is changed to ฬ for the reason that they both have the same point of articulation at bilabial in order to suit the Thai phonological system.

has become ฬ [ph] in certain words. Thus, it is impossible to pronounce Thai words in the same way the Hindus pronounce Pali-Sanskrit words. The Thais pronounce Pali-Sanskrit words according to the Thai pronunciation system. It is no use to try to retain the Pali-Sanskrit pronunciation. We must accept that all borrowed words from Pali or Sanskrit are now Thai words, and follow the Thai pronunciation rules.

2.3 Most Thai scholars of the Thai language ignore the importance of word rhythms or lack an understanding of the nature of the Thai language. If one surveys the textbooks on Thai grammar or on the Thai language from the Ayudhya periods up to present, word rhythms and prosody have never been an issue, with the exception of poetry meters found in *Chindamani*, where again modern Thai textbooks had misinterpreted the heavy and light scheme as intended by the authors of *Chindamani*. It would be more appropriate to incorporate linguistic knowledge in an explanation of Thai pronunciation. Research on phonology and prosody (Gandour 1976, Haas 1964, Henderson 1973, Hiranburana 1971, Luangthongkum 1977, Luksaneeyanawin 1983, Noss 1972, Sagarik 1965, Sutadarat 1978, Thawisomboon 1955, Warotamasikkhadit 1965, 1967, 1999) has been conducted by Thai and foreign scholars, but

it is ignored by the Royal Institute of Thailand. It is hard to believe that the compilers of the *Dictionary of the Royal Institute* have not heard about this research that clearly establishes the importance of word rhythms and prosody in the Thai language.

### 3. Nature of the language

3.1 The Thais prefer to pronounce four-syllable words as three-syllable words, a phenomenon also found in many other languages. For example, in the English words *vegetable* or *comfortable* the second syllable is omitted. In the Thai case, นนทบุรี /nonburi/ ‘the name of a province adjacent to Bangkok in the north’, or อินทรธนู /inthánuu/ ‘epaulet’ is pronounced with three syllables instead of four.

3.2 Syllable omission or syllable contraction often appears in rapid or connected speech, for example พิษณุโลก /phítlôok/ ‘the name of a province in northern Thailand’ for พิษณุโลก /phítsanúlôok/, มหาวิทยาลัย /máhaalay/ ‘university’ for มหาวิทยาลัย /máhaawíttháyaalay/, โรงพยาบาล /roonbaan/ ‘hospital’ for โรงพยาบาล /roonpháyaabaan/.

3.3 A silent character in a word is found in many languages including Thai such as *debt* where b is silent, *salmon* where l is silent in English. For example พรหมณ์

/phraam/ ‘Brahman’ where ฑ is silent, เกียรติ /kijat/ ‘honor’ where ฑ and ธิ are silent, and อินทรธนู /inthánuu/ where ทร are silent in Thai.

3.4 The phonological hiatus must coincide with a morpheme boundary such as รัฐวิสาหกิจ /rátwísāahàkít/ ‘state enterprise’, วิทยาการ /wíttháyaa/koon/ ‘resource person’.

### 4. Points of articulation overrule gemination rules

Point of articulation plays a very important role in gemination rules of the Thai language. It must be noted that the following rules are very crucial to gemination rules.

4.1 If the point of articulation of the final consonant of the preceding syllable is at the same place or close to the point of articulation of the initial of the following syllable, gemination of the final consonant of the preceding word is not needed. We can see in กัมพล /kamphon/ ‘woolen cloth’, where the final ม /m/ of the preceding syllable has the same point of articulation with the initial พ /ph/ of the following syllable, อารักขา /ʔaarákkhāa/ ‘protect, guard’, where the final ก /k/ of the preceding syllable has the same point of articulation with

the initial ข /kh/ of the following syllable, ชัยนาท /chaynâat/ ‘the name of a province north of Ayuddhya’, where the point of articulation of the final ย /y/ of the preceding syllable is close to the initial น /n/ of the following syllable.

4.2 Tongue moving forward is easier than moving backward, for example ชัยนาท /chaynâat/ ‘the name of a province north of Ayuddhya’, and ชัยภูมิ /chayyá phuum/ ‘the name of a province in the northeastern Thailand’. ย /y/ in ชัยนาท /chaynâat/ has the point of articulation at the palatal and น /n/ has the point of articulation at the alveolar which are considered very close to each other and the tongue moves forward, gemination is not needed. ชัยภูมิ /chayyá phuum/ ‘the name of a province in the northeastern Thailand’, where ย /y/ in ชัยภูมิ /chayyá phuum/ has the point of articulation at the palatal and ก /ph/ has the point of articulation at the bilabial which is far away from the palatal, gemination with an intruding /a/ is needed in this case.

4.3 When the two points of articulation are far apart, the tongue must be placed at a neutral position before pronouncing the next syllable. For example สัปดาห์ /sappādaa/ ‘week’<sup>3</sup>. ป /p/ has the point of articulation at the bilabial which is far front and ด /d/ has the point of articulation at the alveolar which is further in the mouth. The tongue must be placed at a neutral position /a/ before pronouncing the following syllable beginning with /d/. Thus, gemination of the final /p/ of the preceding syllable is needed.

## 5. Gemination rules

5.1 Gemination rules will never apply in the following cases:

5.1.1 When two of the same consonants stand next to each other, for example สัมมา /sammaa/ ‘rightly’, อัสสุ /àtsu/ ‘tears’.

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<sup>3</sup>Some traditional Thai grammarians who cling to Pali-Sanskrit pronunciation often tell Thai students to pronounce this word as /sāpdaa/ because it comes from สัปดาห์ /sapta/ ‘seven’ in Sanskrit and no gemination with an intruding /a/ is present in Sanskrit.

5.1.2 When a consonant of the same series<sup>4</sup> stands in front of another consonant of the same series, for example กัญชา /kanchaa/ ‘marijuana’, สิทธิ /sìt/ ‘right(s), privilege(s)’.

5.1.3 When ข stands in front of ฐ, for example เศรษฐี /səthii/ ‘a millionaire’, อธิษฐาน /ʔàthítthāan/ ‘to make a wish, to pray’.

5.1.4 When ง /ŋ/ stands before any consonant, for example กังวล /kaŋwon/ ‘worry’ สิงหารา /siŋhāraa/ ‘lioness’.

5.1.5 When น /n/ stands before any consonant, except ก /k/ and น /n/<sup>5</sup>, for example ก้นยา /kanyaa/ ‘girl’, ชนม /chonmá/ ‘age’, สันสกฤต /sānsākṛit/ ‘Sanskrit’.

5.2 Gemination within a word. Gemination rules can be established for multi-syllable words as follows:

5.2.1 If the preceding part of a word ends with a nonseries consonant and the second part of it begins with a series consonant or a nonseries consonant, the final of the preceding part of the word must be geminated and an /a/ is inserted after it, for example บรรยาย = บรร + ระบาย /banráyaay/ ‘lecture’, วาสนา = วาส + สนา /wātsanāa/ ‘fate, luck’, อลเวง = อล+ละเวง /ʔonláween/ ‘confusing, chaotic’, อัสว = อัส + สว /ʔātsāwá/ ‘a horse’.

<sup>4</sup>There are five series of consonant and several nonseries consonants in the Thai as follows:

Series Consonants	
velar	ก ข (ข) (ค) ฅ ฆ ง
alveopalatal	จ ฉ ช (ช) ฌ ญ
retroflex	(ฎ) ฏ ฐ ฑ ฒ ณ
alveolar	(ด) ต ถ ท ธ น
bilabial	(บ) ป ผ (ฝ) พ (ฟ) ภ ม

Nonseries Consonants	
	ย ร ล ว
	ศ ษ ส ห พ (ฮ) (ฮ)

The characters in parentheses are Thai characters added to the Sanskrit characters.

<sup>5</sup>ชนนี /chonnánii/ is pronounced with a gemination of น /n/ plus an intruding vowel /a/. ทินกร /thinnákoon/ is also pronounced with a gemination of น /k/ plus an intruding vowel /a/.

5.2.2 If the preceding part of a word ends with a series consonant and the second part of it begins with a nonseries consonant, the final of the preceding part of the word must be geminated and an /a/ is inserted after it, for example อุณหิธ = อุณ + ณะหิธ /ʔunnáhìt/ ‘an ornament or decoration for the head, a crown, a turban, a diadem, a coronet, a chaplet, or a wreath’, อุปโลกน์ = อุป + ประโลกน์ /ʔùppàlòok/ ‘temporarily appointed by consensus’

5.2.3 If the preceding part of a word ends with a series consonant and the second part of it begins with a consonant of different series, the final of the preceding part of the word must be geminated and an /a/ is inserted after it, for example วัฒนา = วัฒน + ฒนา /wátthánaa/ ‘grow’, วิชนี = วิช + ชนี /wítchánii/ ‘fan’, สักตะ = สัก + กตะ /sakkata/ ‘Sanskrit’, อุปถัมภ์ = อุป + ประถัมภ์ /ʔùppàthǎm/ ‘to patronize, to support, to assist’.

5.3 Gemination rules for conjoining words. Gemination rules for conjoining words follow the same rules for a single word, but 5.1.5 is ignored, for example ชนบท = ชน + นบท /chonnábòt/ ‘rural area’.

The gemination rules for conjoining words are overruled by three-syllable word rhythms in 7. If the conjoining words contains three syllables, gemination rules 5.2 will be ignored, for example อุณหภูมิจี /ʔunhàphuum/ ‘temperature’, not /ʔunnáhàphuum/, เพชรบุรี /phétburii/ ‘the name of a province west of Bangkok near Ratburi’, ราชบุรี /râatburii/ ‘the name of a province west of Bangkok and east of Petburi’.

## 6. Syllable structure of Thai words

Syllable structure of Thai words can be classified into eight levels of syllable structure ranging from the heaviest to the lightest.

6.1 A syllable composed of an initial (or an initial cluster) and a long diphthong with or without a final, or an initial (or an initial cluster) and a short vowel, อัวะ /ua/, เอะ /e/, เออะ /ə/, เอาะ /o/, เอียะ /ia/, เอือะ /iə/, แอะ /æ/, โอะ /o/ is considered the first level of heavy syllable structure or the heaviest syllable structure, for example เตรียมอุดม /triamʔudom/

‘preuniversity’, เพลียใจ /phliacay/  
‘to be exhausted at heart’  
เหมาะเจาะ /m̀d̀c̀d̀/ ‘fitting, suitable’,  
โป้ะเซะ /póché/ ‘excellent’.

6.2 A syllable composed of an initial (or an initial cluster) and a long vowel with a sonorant final is considered the second level of heavy syllable structure, for example ซ็องนางรำ /ch̀ẁnnaangram/ ‘the telegraph plant, whose small leaflets make curious jerky movements’, วันซึน /waansiin/ ‘the day before yesterday’.

6.3 A syllable composed of an initial (or an initial cluster) and a long vowel with a stop final is considered the third level of heavy syllable structure, for example ราบคาบ /râapkhâap/ ‘to have been completely subdued’, โลกประทีป /l̀ookprathîip/ ‘the world’s radiant rays--i.e. a title for the Buddha’, โสตประสาท /s̀dot pràsàat/ ‘the auditory nerve’.

6.4 A syllable composed of an initial (or an initial cluster) and a long vowel without a final is considered the fourth level of heavy syllable, for example กากี /kaakii/ ‘a female crow; khaki’, บูชา /buuchaa/ ‘to pay homage to, to adore’.

6.5 A syllable composed of an initial (or an initial cluster) and a

short vowel with a sonorant final is considered the fifth level of heavy syllable, for example จัณฑาล /canthan/ ‘a rafter’, นัยนา /nayyanaa/ ‘eye’, สำคัญ /samkhan/ ‘important’, เหาฬาร /h̀awlaan/ ‘magnificent, large’.

6.6 A syllable composed of an initial (or an initial cluster) and a short vowel with a stop final is considered the sixth level of heavy syllable, for example กษมด /katsa mon/ ‘foul, dirty’, อิจฉา /itchaa/ ‘to envy’.

6.7 A syllable composed of an initial (or an initial cluster) and a short vowel which is not a blank or อะ /a/, อัวะ /ua/, เออะ /e/, เออะ /ə/, เออะ /ɔ/, เอียะ /ia/, เอือะ /ia/, แอะ /æ/, โอะ /o/ without a final is considered the seventh level of heavy syllable structure, for example จิระ /çirá/ ‘lasting a long time, lengthy’, พิริยะ /phiriyá/ ‘strength, vigor’.

6.8 A syllable composed of an initial (or an initial cluster) and a vowel /a/ is considered the eighth level of heavy syllable structure or the lightest syllable structure of all, for example จะ /ca/ ‘will’, ะนี /chánii/ ‘gibbon’.

A syllable containing a vowel /a/ always becomes a light syllable.

The relative degree of light/heavy syllable is applied in the word of two syllables or more. If a lower level syllable stands next to a higher level syllable, by applying to the leftmost of the word first, the lower level syllable becomes a light syllable and the other syllable becomes a heavy syllable. For example, มโน /mánoo/ ‘mind, heart’, ตะแบก /tàbææk/ ‘a kind of hard wood tree’, where the second syllable will be a heavy syllable, โมระ /moora/ ‘a peacock’, ภาพลักษณ์ /phâaplák/ ‘image’, where the first syllable will be a heavy syllable, กริยา /kàriyaa/ ‘verb’, สุรสีห์ /sùrásíi/ ‘lion’, where the second syllable is a light syllable and the last syllable of a word is always a heavy syllable. If the two syllables are of the same level, both can be light syllables if containing a short vowel according to 6.5, 6.6, 6.7 or 6.8, for example มะระ /márá/ ‘bitter melon’, สระ /sarə/ ‘vowel’, กิ๊กกิ๊ก /kikkák/ ‘to giggle’. or both can be heavy syllables if containing a long vowel. For example, สีกา /sǐikaa/ ‘woman’, เฮฮา /heehaa/ ‘the sound of hearty laughter’. This relative degree of light/heavy syllable will be applied in 7 below.

The Thais should be proud of their forefathers’ ingenuity in devising the combined vowel forms for certain short vowels, อัวะ /ua/, เอะ /e/, เอาะ /w/, เอียะ /ia/, เอือะ /ia/, แอะ /æ/, and โอะ /o/ to signify a heavy syllable in contrast to simple short vowels, อะ /a/, อิ /i/, อี /i/, อุ/น/, โอะ /o/ to signify a light syllable. Thai poetry in the Ayuddhya period such as *Anirut Kham Chan. Samutthrakhot Kham Chan, Suea*

*Kho Kham Chan* follows the above light/heavy scheme.

## 7. Word rhythms

7.1 One-syllable words. Prominence must be placed on one-syllable words, no matter whether it is a light or heavy syllable, with exceptions of a preverb such as จะ /ca/ ‘will’, ก็ /kô/ ‘consequently, quite’, etc., a one-syllable pronoun such as ฉัน /chán/ ‘I’, ผม /phom/ ‘I’, a noun functioning as a relator such as นอก /nôwk/ ‘outside’, ใน /nay/ ‘inside’, a final particle such as อะ /khá/ ‘question final particle for a female speaker, or a final particle after นะ /ná/ ‘an insist final particle’, ครับ /khráp/ ‘a final particle for a male speaker’.

7.2 Two-syllable words. There are two types of two-syllable words.

7.2.1 When the first syllable of the word is a light syllable, the second syllable takes prominence, no matter whether it is a light or heavy syllable, for example, มณี /mánii/ ‘ruby’, บัณฑิต /bandít/ ‘a degree graduate’, ศึกษา /sìksǎa/ ‘study’. If both syllables are a light syllable, the last syllable takes prominence, for



syllable, prominence will be placed on the second and the third syllable, for example อธิการ /ʔàthíkaan/ ‘abbot’, อธิบาย /ʔàthíbaay/ ‘to explain’.

- 7.3.3 If the first syllable of the three-syllable words is a light syllable and the second syllable is a heavy syllable, prominence is placed on the second and the last syllable, for example กุฎาธาร /kùdaathaan/ ‘top’, ประจวบเหมาะ /pràcùapmè/ ‘to be coincident’, พยาบาล /pháyaabaan/ ‘to nurse’ พิชิตมาร /phíchítmaan/ ‘one who conquered Mara, i.e. the Buddha’, สุมาลี /sùmaalii/ ‘flower’, มโนมัย /mánoomay/ ‘mental, spiritual’, สมานฉันท์ /sàmaanchǎn/ ‘agreement, congruence’, สั่งมานัฑี /sǎnkhaanát/ ‘the command of the Patriarch to Bhuddist monks’, อุบัติเหตุ /ʔùbàthèet/ ‘accident’<sup>6</sup>.

7.4 Four-syllable words. There are four types of four-syllable words as follows:

- 7.4.1 The popular pattern for four-syllable words is to place prominence on the second and the last syllable. If the first and the third syllable is a light syllable, or the second syllable is a heavy syllable, prominence is placed on the second and the last syllable, for example ตั๊กตะบาย /tàwàktàbuay/ ‘some nonsense matter’ ปทุมธานี /pàthumthaanii/ ‘the name of a province adjacent to Bangkok in the north’, พันสนิกม /phánátníkhom/ ‘a town in Chonburi’, มัชฌิมประเทศ /máçhimpràthèet/ ‘India’, สภาการณ์ /sàphaawákaan/ ‘situation’, สุพรรณบุรี /suphanburii/ ‘the name of a province west of Bangkok’, เอรีคอร่อย /ʔàrètʔàròy/ ‘delicious’.

- 7.4.2 If the first and the third syllable of the four-syllable word are a light syllable, prominence is placed on the first, the third, and the last syllable. It is possible that there may be a light to heavy syllable shift occurring within the word, for example เจตนาารมย์ /ceettanaarom/ ‘intention,

<sup>6</sup>Some people will pronounce it as /ʔùbàttihèet/ as a four syllable word.

purpose’, รัฐมนตรี  
 /rátthàmontrii/ ‘cabinet  
 minister’, ราชบัณฑิต  
 /râatchábandit/ ‘member  
 of the Royal Academy’,  
 วิทยาเขต /wíthháyaakhêet/  
 ‘campus’, สัมปชัญญะ  
 /sǎmpàchanya/ ‘con-  
 ciousness’. อิริยาบถ  
 /?iríyaabòt/ ‘movement,  
 action’.

7.4.3 If the first and the second  
 syllable of the four-  
 syllable word are a heavy  
 syllable, prominence is  
 placed on the first, the  
 second and the last  
 syllable, for example  
 กัตติกมาส /kattikkamaat/  
 ‘the twelfth lunar month  
 which is about  
 November’, โปศฆมาส  
 /phaysăakhâmâat/ ‘the  
 sixth Thai lunar month  
 corresponding to April  
 and May’, โมฆียกรรม  
 /mookhiiyá kam/ ‘a  
 disannulled legal act’.

7.4.4 If the second and the third  
 syllable of the four-  
 syllable word are a light  
 syllable, prominence is  
 placed on the first and the  
 last syllable, for example  
 โบกษรพฤษ /bôokkhàráphát/

‘a shower of rain that  
 wets only those who want  
 to be wet as compared to  
 drops of rain collected on  
 lotus leaves’, วัฒนธรรม  
 /wátthánátham/ ‘culture’,  
 วิศวกร /wít sawákoon/ ‘an  
 engineer’.

7.5 Words of more than four  
 syllables are usually composed of  
 words of one, two, or three  
 syllables conjoining together. One  
 should be careful that hiatus  
 should coincide with a morpheme  
 boundary.

## 8. Conclusion

It is evident that word rhythms can  
 overrule syllable structure in some cases  
 because the pattern prominence-light-  
 prominence or light-prominence-  
 prominence dominates the pronunciation  
 pattern where gemination rules can be  
 ignored. The gemination rule provided on  
 page (7) of the *Dictionary of the Royal  
 Institute of B.E. 2525* should be revised  
 because the statement is incorrect in many  
 respects. It is also important to note that  
 the last syllable of Thai words always  
 takes prominence, except in preverbs, one-  
 syllable pronouns, nouns functioning as a  
 relator, and final particles. Syllable  
 omission or syllable contraction often  
 occurs in rapid or connected speech.

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